

Ray Wingo's

Underground™

it's 2021 and the dream is dead.







**"Thanks for a continent
to despoil and poison.**

**Thanks for Indians
to provide a modicum of
challenge and danger.**

**Thanks for vast herds
of bison to kill and
skin, leaving the
carcasses to rot.**

**Thanks for bounties
on wolves and coyotes.**

**Thanks for the
American dream,
to vulgarize and
falsify until the bare
lies shine through."**

**— William S. Burroughs,
"A Thanksgiving Prayer"**

pro tempore of the Senate.
Representatives their written declaration.
discharge the powers and duties of his office.
decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours to
not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days
the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in
twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, the
two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable
the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall
discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall

Section 2. The Congress
appropriate legislation

Amendment
Congress
fundament
to rock

XXVII
low inhibiting the
to en-

...resume the power
...ment XXVI

Amendment XXXI
Congress shall make no law restricting the
fundamental human rights to pursue peace,
to seek unity of spirit, and to love; nor shall
equality of rights under the law be denied
by the United States or by any state on
account of race.

Section 1. For all purposes of law, feminity, a human being is hereby defined as any sentient creature, and all sentient creatures are thus entitled to all legal rights and privileges commensurable with humanity.

Amendment XXXIII
Section 1. For all purposes of law, the definition of a human being is hereby amended to include only sentient creatures possessing or having once possessed forty-six chromosomes.
Section 2. Congress shall have the power to grant individual classes of sentient beings not meeting the amended human standard only or all rights and privileges accorded humanity by appropriate legislation.
Amendment Section 9. This amendment was sponsored in part by New President Vachon and Roberts. Just Relax!

Amendment XXIX
Congress may not legislate criteria necessary for
a claim to the right of free speech that is depen-
dent upon sexual preferences or practices.

... necessary
... or all rights and
... mainly by appropriate legislation.
Amendment Section 9. This amendment
was sponsored in part by New Providence TN
Vacations and Retreats. Just Relax™



**As an
acquaintance
of mine
said
in 1992,
'Why
can't we
all
just get
along?'**

—President Darryl F. Gates
in his Inaugural Address;
January 13, 2013

RADIOLOGICAL FALLOUT: ABC

Congress to review cut in homo superior demobilization bonuses

By Muhammad Tawfiq
USA ALIVE

Next Wednesday, members of the House Appropriations Committee will begin examining President Foster's proposal to reduce homo superior demobilization benefits by a staggering 12%.

"Of course," says White House Chief of Staff Donald Casey, "that we're trying to bootstrap soldiers and what they've done for our country."

But Casey's explanation is not the only one. "We're trying to get our hands on the money," says a source close to Casey. "We're trying to get our hands on the money."

Casey's explanation is not the only one. "We're trying to get our hands on the money," says a source close to Casey. "We're trying to get our hands on the money."

LA'S HOMELESS POPULATION



DROP ZONE

SPEARHEAD



Unconscionable Acts of Sedition by:

Ray Winninger [author]

Beats Programmed by:

Mari Paz Cabardo [art direction], Mike Russo [graphics]

The Flex:

Geof Darrow [cover artist]; cover colored by Florence Breton

Knee-Jerk Anti-Right Rhetoric Courtesy of:

Corey Barba, Peter Chung, Geof Darrow, Glenn Kim, Ed Lee, Rob McLees, Juan Ramirez [interior artists]

Got Our Backs:

Roger Coad, Daniel Gelon, Mitch Gitelman, Greg Gorden, Julian Jackson, Rob McLees, Bryan Nystul, Jennifer Santana, Doug Tabb [invaluable assistance]

Taking this one all the way back to the State of New York on June 19, 1953; to Washington DC on June 17, 1972 and March 4, 1987; to Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968; and especially to that trail in Southeast Asia on May 11, 1970.

Nods To:

Jennifer Santana; the Gitelmans of Skokie; Bill Karh [thanks for the years!]; Rob McLees and family ["will a fin cover 'dat?"]; Lauren Nystul; Corey [the Funky Bilingual] Barba; the Cabardo family [you can have her back now!]; Juan [Edgar Allen Polecat] Ramirez; Peter Chung; Ed Lee; Geof Darrow; Industry Folks—Greg Gorden, Chris Kubasik, Nigel Findley, Jonathan Tweet, Mark "the Mustang" Rein-Hagen [look ma, no "•" !], Stewart Wieck, Fitzroy Bonterre; comics gurus no longer worth a mention; all my old music crews [especially the B-Boys—"rockin' dem rhymes all the way to Hell's gate!"]; Joe Pesci in Goodfellas; David Lynch, Mark Frost, and the Man From Another Place ["wow, Bob, wow!"]; 808s; Charles Burns and El Borbah, mom and dad; Chuck Jones; Lynda Barry; Iceberg Slim; Dark Brothers; SPY magazine; Mike's grandma; KT's parents (glug, glug!); the folks at The Comics Journal; the staffs at Profile and Tommy Boy; Robert Rodriguez; Quentin Tarantino; John Woo; Ape Sex; La Llorona, and everyone I forgot.



Da Plugz [check 'em out!]:

Corey Barba and Juan Ramirez are the co-creators of *Meatface*, published by Fantagraphics Books [but don't hold it against 'em]; Peter Chung is the creator of *Aeon Flux*, one of the installments that runs weekly on MTV's *Liquid Television*; among many other things, Geof Darrow is currently hard at work on *The Big Guy* with Frank Miller; Maria Cabardo is the co-creator of two abnormally lovable children; Mike Russo is the owner of *Special-T Graphics* [the world's smallest t-shirt company]; and Ray Winninger is the author of more than six million novels, including *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, *The Deerslayer*, *Jude the Obscure*, and *Finnegan's Wake*.

Photography by Paul Kozal, Lighting by Jon Rutkowski - "Lighting God"

Special Thanks to Mike Mages, Dr. Graphx [what's up doc?], and Mike "Mogo" McGonagle ["The Trapper"] with Infocomm Electronic Pre-press (color separations).

This book is dedicated to the true masters of the Underground:
Oshea Jackson, Chris Parker, Carl Ridenhour, and [especially] Lenny Bruce.

Y'all go out and make some trouble.



UNDERGROUND is a trademark of Mayfair Games Inc. Copyright © 1993 Mayfair Games Inc.
All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

Contents

How To Use This Book	9
Introduction: Justice or Just Us?	12
Chapter One: The World of 2021	14
Chapter Two: What is a Role Playing Game?	44
Chapter Three: The Basics	48
Chapter Four: Welcome to Slumberland.....	72
Chapter Five: Character Creation	80
Chapter Six: Skills.....	124
Chapter Seven: Genetic Enhancements	140
Chapter Eight: Stress and Psychoses	172
Chapter Nine: Combat	188
Chapter Ten: Equipment	210
Chapter Eleven: The Mean Streets	230
Chapter Twelve: Running the Game	236
Tables	253
Character Sheet	255

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Honorable Discharge

From the Board of Directors of Allied Mayhem, Incorporated

This is to certify that

Margaret Schultz (code-named "Lovely Kafka") XM7296-339

was honorably Discharged from the
AMI EXPENDITORY CORP
on the 22nd day of February 2012. This cert
as a testimonial of Honest and

**YOU DARE
DON'T TREAD
ON ME!!!**

Fellow veterans :
DO YOU believe in:

Justice ?

Liberty ?

Equality ?

Democracy ?

WE ARE THE UNDERGROUND. WE ARE THE NEW
REVOLUTION. HELP US RESTORE THE GOVERNMENT
OF THE PEOPLE, AND BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE
PEOPLE. HELP US CREATE A NEW NATION.

DON'T LOOK FOR US. WE'LL FIND YOU.
ONE DAY, THEY'LL BE SORRY THEY EVER CREATED
US.

**WATCH
CHANNEL ZERO.**

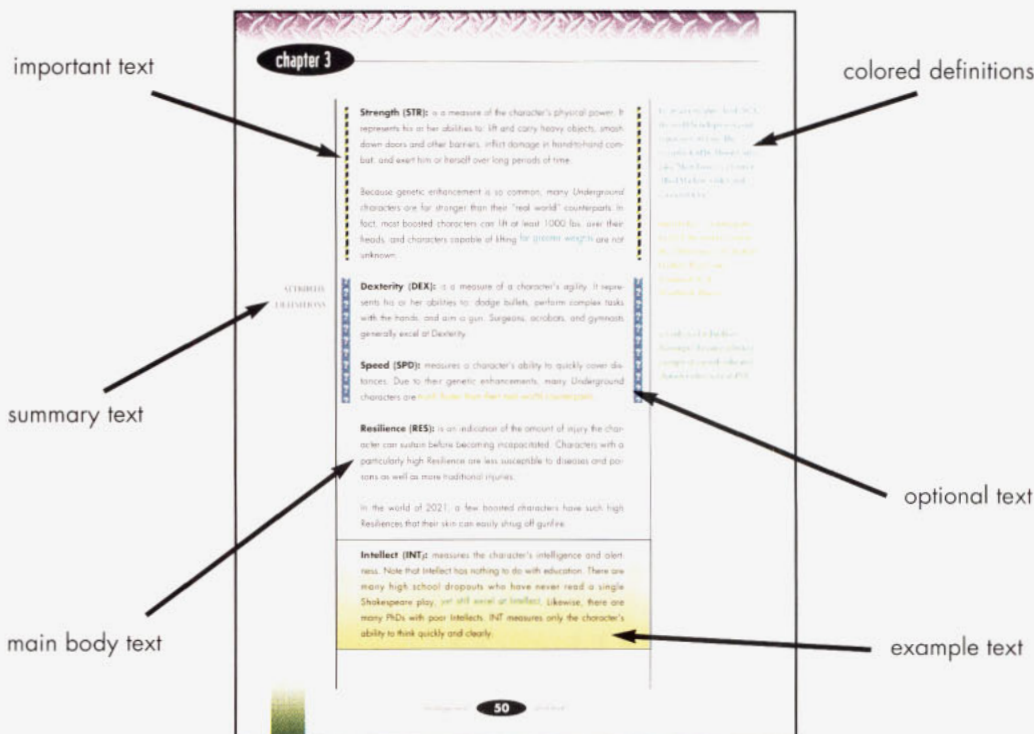
MARIA

how to use this book

If you took a moment to glance through this rulebook, you probably noticed its "colorful" and unconventional layout. We designed this layout to allow first-time readers to absorb the book's contents faster and to assist more experienced players in locating desired passages during play. Here's how it works:

- The central (and largest) column of each page contains the main body of the text. This is the column you should read as you progress from page to page.
- Whenever a word or phrase in the main text is printed in color, you'll find a definition of that word printed in the page's inside column in same color.
- In the outside column of each page, you'll find a quick summary next to each paragraph. By reading only the summaries, you can quickly scan vast sections of the rulebook for the passage that interests you.
- Important text is always surrounded by black and yellow "construction bars." Place close attention to these passages.
- Optional rules intended for more advanced players are surrounded by blue bars filled with question marks. Beginners should simply ignore these passages for the time being.
- Examples of play are always printed against a yellow background.

Enjoy.



march 20, 2021

Los Angeles sweats. Just like Paraguay, only twice the bugs. So many, in fact, that Lovely Kafka couldn't take three steps without stopping to brush the roaches and cicadas from her legs and delicate face. Even worse, every time she stopped, she felt the centipedes — 16-inchers, like the one she saw in Caracas — scuttling up and down her arms like mice trapped in a waste basket.

Tastee Ghoul: a chain of fast food restaurants specializing in cannibal cuisine.

Off the bus, up Crenshaw two blocks to the Tastee Ghoul, turn left, and look for the yellow dynaplex. Off the bus, up Crenshaw two blocks to the Tastee Ghoul, turn left, and look for the yellow dynaplex.

Her demobilization counselor gave her directions to the VA hospital just before she deplaned. She'd repeated them like a mantra all the way from LAX. By the time she reached the dynaplex, it had been sixteen hours since she swallowed her last **clozapine** tablet. She didn't think she could stand the bugs for that long, but the fact that she was finally back in America made her brave. In boot camp she learned that America was the home of the brave.

Paraguay: In 2019, a resource conflict engulfed the central region of the South American continent. By the time it ran its course, the conflict ensnared militant corporations representing all of the world's major powers.

clozapine: a drug used to stave off the hallucinogenic symptoms of certain varieties of metagenic feedback trauma, the mental stress resulting from overuse of specialized genetic enhancements.

crimson zone: Armies organized by the Allied Mayhem Corporation classify operating arenas as emerald (safe), amber (caution advised), or crimson (highly dangerous) to assist soldiers in selecting appropriate tactics and operating procedures.

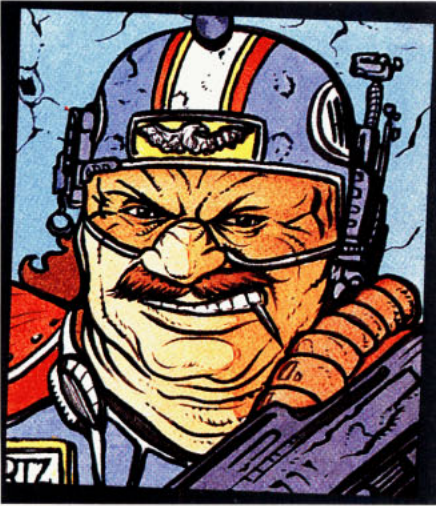
THE FEW CALIFORNIANS

Kafka observed as she neared the dynaplex were unexpectedly familiar to her. They looked and smelled like the refugees she had seen in Caracas and Riga and they nervously scuttled up and down the broken, deserted streets like the centipedes on her arms. Although she'd been out of the Expeditionary Corps for twelve whole days, she still had the instincts of a soldier. The sounds and smells sent a chill down her neck. She was starting to recognize Los Angeles as a **crimson zone**.

As she slowly made her way up the long, sloping entrance to the VA hospital, Kafka almost tripped over a derelict who sat on the steps whispering secrets to himself. One of the secrets caught her attention.

"Margaret?"

She'd been Lovely Kafka for so long, she'd nearly forgotten that she was once Margaret. Although it took a long moment to **shake the bugs from her brain**, she finally remembered.



"Colonel Kurtz?"

Kafka served with Kurtz in Paraguay. Last time she saw him, he was lying on a medical evac sled with two 20mm slugs in his back. She was amazed he was still alive.

"They're **selling the Earth**, Margaret. They're selling the Earth from beneath unborn feet. I'm glad to see you again. Can you give me twelve dollars?"

Punkbuster™: a portable radar detector that alerts the wearer when he or she is being targeted by radar-guided small arms.

Kurtz's request was cut short by another sound Kafka thought she'd never hear again — the wail of her shoulder-mounted **Punkbuster**. Just like Paraguay, only twice the bugs.

KAFKA REMEMBERED. Without thinking, she screamed a warning ("Tone!") and lurched into a series of evasive rolls as 25mm fire shredded the street around her. (Although she'd been out of the Expeditionary Corps for twelve whole days, she still had the instincts of a soldier).

pack: slang term for a portable personal computer. Digital gadgets and devices can be linked to such computers, giving them a wide range of special capabilities.

Kurtz was rolling right behind her and furiously punching buttons on his **pack**. "I've got an altitude," he screamed, "two thousand feet! He's coming down!"

Margaret drew her **Excommunicator** and aimed sunward. In a tenth of a second, a shadow vaulted out of the glare. In another tenth of a second, she sent the shadow plummeting to the ground with a single shot.

Excommunicator™: a 25mm pistol designed and built by Hammer of God Munitions and Urban Nightmare Firearms.

"Oh god, oh god, oh god!" Why couldn't this happen after the hospital, she thought — after the clozapine? The adrenaline rush was driving the centipedes crazy.

Kurtz gripped her shoulder and tried to shake her back into reality. "Relax Margaret! Relax! It was just a street crasher looking for a payoff. He was trying to keep you out of the hospital so his friends could *sell you the drugs* themselves."

Tears started to choke off her words as she became more and more frantic. "Oh god! I knew it! L.A. is a goddamn crimson zone! Why did I muster out? What do I do, Colonel? The counselor warned me about using my weapon! He said **the police hate veterans!** What am I gonna do now?"

"Don't worry about the police, Margaret; it'll be hours before they get here. For now, you'll do the only thing you can do — **FIND THE PUNK'S BODY, TAKE HIS MONEY, AND GIVE ME TWELVE DOLLARS.**"

Chapter **one**

CHARTBUSTER PROJECT XM75A

PAN DOWN to RICO, who lies dying in the gutter.
SGT. O'SHEA approaches and holsters his pistol

O'SHEA: Why'd you do it, Ceaser? You knew we'd kill you.

RICO: Copper, you killed me years ago. You and your dirty masters.

- final scene of
*Is This the End of
Little Rico?*,
the top-grossing
soma-vid of 2021

The American dream died a slow, wheezing death — roughly 150 years of vigor, followed by 50 years of twilight, followed by a long 30 years of invalidity. That's why no one saw the end coming and why so few Americans have accepted the demise of their cherished ideals to this day. Americans are naive. They were trained long ago to believe in Hollywood, and Hollywood told them the end would come swiftly — a giant meteor, an inordinately sturdy virus, or a Red Chinese invasion.

Noticed or not, the death of something so subtle as a dream had a surprisingly profound impact upon the Earth and its inhabitants, both inside and outside the United States. To the alert observer, the world of 2021 is clearly a cold and dreary rat trap dominated by violent men and women who shoot or foreclose first and ask questions later. The death of the dream gave birth to a nightmare.

How things fell apart

AN ALIEN

LIFE-POD

CRASH-LANDS

ON EARTH

The dreamers were right. We are not alone.

In August of 1996, a life-pod launched from an interstellar starship crash-landed in the Florida Everglades, killing the pair of lobster-like aliens it was

soma-vid: a motion picture created using three-dimensional computer modeling software. By 2015, **soma-vid** production houses were licensing the images of long-deceased Hollywood legends, allowing their producers to crank out new films starring Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe, and Edward G. Robinson.

amino acid chains: collections of simple organic molecules that form the basic building blocks of life. DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), the substance that carries the genetic information stored in chromosomes, is entirely composed of amino acids.

STLs: supra-terrestrial life-forms — a scientific designation for alien beings who are clearly superior to earthlings in one or more capacities.

bio-active: technology capable of responding to biological feedback provided by the user.

A bio-active stereo, for instance, reads its owner's alpha-wave pattern, gauges the owner's mood, and automatically decides what music to play.

carrying. Tracked by a nearby US Air Force base, the pod was quickly recovered by government operatives and transferred to the University of Florida for secret study.

After a lengthy examination, government-sponsored researchers assembled a detailed profile of the aliens, whom they found to be totally unlike any creature mankind had ever imagined. The aliens' technology was found to be based entirely around the manipulation of amino acid chains. By combining organic compounds and subjecting the resulting "soups" to the special processes they evolved, the aliens learned to "grow" complex organic constructs capable of fulfilling just about any imaginable function. In fact, the life-pod in which the aliens arrived was no more than an extremely complex organic entity grown in this fashion, as was the starship that launched it.

Almost immediately, the researchers recognized that these discoveries held the potential to revolutionize science and technology on Earth. Hidden within the crusted ventricles of the life-pod were the clues needed to unlock the mysteries of quantum theory, unified fields, and genetics — the three disciplines that would eventually provide the cornerstones for the 21st century.

At first, the American government tried to cover up the arrival of the aliens. But the descending life-pod attracted a lot of attention in South Florida, filling the popular press with the accounts of eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen either the pod, the government teams sent to investigate, or both. Before long, the existence of STLs "Alpha" and "Beta" (the official government designations for the dead aliens) became the worst kept secret in the world intelligence community. By January of 1997, American diplomats were already confirming the existence of the spacecraft off-the-record and beginning to make overtures to the world community about drafting a plan to deal with the visitation and all its consequences. Shortly thereafter, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began to suspect that one of the private researchers who examined the spacecraft was using technological insights gleaned from the pod to help Niagara Entertainment Inc. manufacture a revolutionary line of bio-active consumer products. Because the "secret" of the visitation was spreading around the globe like wildfire and the FBI found it difficult to stop technological leaks like Niagara without first acknowledging

RESEARCHERS
EXAMINE
THE POD

THE ALIEN POD
HOUSED
IMPORTANT
SECRETS

THE US
GOVERNMENT
ATTEMPTED TO
COVER UP THE
EXISTENCE OF
THE POD

A SECOND COLD WAR ERUPTS

the mere existence of the spacecraft, government officials finally decided to reveal the STLs to the world-at-large. First, information proving the pod existed, crash-landed in Florida, and was recovered by the Air Force was leaked to the major media. Two days later, the leak was followed by an official confirmation.

Shortly after the STLs became a major media event, American officials cooperated with the United Nations Security Council to establish an international committee in charge of disseminating the data uncovered by the American researchers who examined the pod. Although US officials wanted the data to remain secret, the outcry from the international community was quickly rising to a deafening roar. In light of the rumors surrounding Niagara Entertainment's new product line, America's rivals in Europe and the Far East feared that secrets gleaned from the pod might provide the Americans with an insurmountable edge in the "trade war" that had gripped the world since the early 1990s. To assuage these fears and reduce political tensions, American officials agreed to share the alien data, though a small amount of alien information was secretly withheld from the UN committee. Although the American ploy was partially successful in deflating global tension, a few members of the world intelligence community noticed enough inconsistencies to suspect the Americans of holding back information, touching off [The Second Cold War](#).

GLOBAL DECAY AND THE COMING OF THE MILITANT CORPORATIONS

Over the course of the next decade, technological advances derived from the pod combined with the political situation wrought by the new Cold War to dramatically reshape the world. All across the globe, the gap between the upper and lower classes grew broader, crime and other social ills corrupted large portions of the planet, and multi-national corporations grew larger and more powerful than ever before. Shortly after the turn of the century, warfare evolved into a business as multi-national corporations organized large, technologically sophisticated armies capable of rapid deployment to any hot spot on the planet. [These corporations](#) offered their services to the highest bidder, making the use of military force as an arm of policy more attractive to the world's governments. The most savvy world leaders quickly realized that the militant corporations neatly eliminated most of the drawbacks that prevented their governments from widespread use of force in the past. Under

Second Cold War (1997 to the present): By the end of the 20th century, world commerce was dominated by three major trading blocks: the North American Confederation, headed by the United States; the European Common Market, headed by Neo-Deutschland (once known as Germany); and the Far East Collective, headed by mainland China. Because the Deutsch and Chinese correctly suspected the Americans of holding back information obtained from the alien space-pod, all three blocks became embroiled in a "war" of espionage and counter-espionage centered around obtaining commercial trade secrets.

[These corporations](#) are now known as "militant corporations" or "conflict firms."

Allied Mayhem™ Inc.: a vast, multi-national militant corporation that was founded in 2003. The brainchild of Marcus Hogarth, an ex-US Senator, AMI has always enjoyed a close relationship with the American government. Contracts AMI has handled for the US include: Paraguay, Latvia, Tunisia, and Azerbaijan.

Cryo-Dawn™ Inc.: a late 20th century firm specializing in cryogenic freeze. Although Cryo-Dawn's earliest clients suffered from terminal illnesses doctors hoped to cure with future technology, in the end, most of the firm's patrons were in perfect health and had themselves frozen in the hope of being revived in the far future. Although the process was never really perfected, cryo-freeze became a huge fad among the world's celebrities and glitterati in the mid-1990s, leaving Cryo-Dawn's freezers full of entertainers and bon vivants.

this new system, nations need no longer wager their own resources to declare war. They simply cut a check and allow a subcontractor to assume all the risks. Furthermore, because a direct and sudden threat to any of the three trading blocks that have dominated world commerce for more than thirty years would sharply injure the economies of the others, no major nation need fear a direct reprisal from another world power. Only a few years after the first corporate army took to the battlefield, all three of the major trading blocks were routinely hiring corporate soldiers to intervene in scores of Third World squabbles and conflicts in the hope of protecting and expanding their economic interests. Typically, the most significant of these conflicts quickly grew into miniature and impersonal "world wars" in which all the major nations of the world participated through hired agents and armies.

Before long, this new climate of conflict began to engender an "arms race" much like the rivalry that dominated Soviet-American politics throughout the 1980s. Rival militant corporations all strove to develop weapons capable of providing them with an edge on the battlefield, while the economically and technologically powerful major governments tried to assist those corporations they found most cooperative.

The Dawn of the Genetically-Boosted Soldier

In 2007, after a series of geopolitically important wars in South America, the United States finally played its trump card and made some of the withheld alien information available to Allied Mayhem™ Inc. With this information, AMI scientists learned to modify human genetic tissues, turning test subjects into "super-men" capable of dominating a modern battlefield. The only problem encountered by the scientists was the fact that stabilizing the genetic enhancement process required a living subject with a seriously impaired capacity to replace lost body cells. AMI solved this problem by acquiring Cryo-Dawn™ Inc. and its stable of "clients." In 1999, after a rash of investigative reporting in the major media revealed that Cryo-Dawn's freezing process left its patrons brain-dead, the cryo-freeze fad soured, tumbling the firm into bankruptcy. Consequently, once AMI scientists discovered that cryo-freeze deadened the body's ability to replace lost cells, it was a simple matter for AMI to acquire Cryo-Dawn's assets, including more than 250 frozen

THE NEW COLD
WAR ENGENDERS
A NEW ARMS RACE

THE US
GOVERNMENT
TURNS SOME OF
THE WITHHELD
ALIEN
INFORMATION
OVER TO ALLIED
MAYHEM INC.

AMI REMAINS ON
TOP IN THE
GENETIC
ARMS RACE.

PSYCHOLOGICAL
INSTABILITY IS AN
OBSTACLE TO
THE
ENHANCEMENT
OF LIVE
SUBJECTS.

patrons. Once thawed and genetically enhanced, each of these subjects was fitted with a primitive artificial brain, programmed for combat, and dispatched to the front lines.

Although the first genetically enhanced soldiers had an immediate and significant impact on the battlefield, they weren't the major military breakthrough that AMI and the US Government were hoping for. Due to their primitive artificial brains, the enhanced soldiers were easy to outsmart and frequently failed to follow all but the simplest orders. Despite these drawbacks, the new breed of soldiers sparked a panic among AMI's rivals, all of whom scrambled to develop genetic enhancement programs of their own. By 2009, most of the world's major militant corporations were employing primitive enhanced cyborgs, touching off a sort of "genetic arms race." Of course, the leg up they received from the alien information withheld by the American government kept Allied Mayhem perched at the forefront of genetic enhancement technology for the next decade.

By 2013, genetic scientists all across the world were already close to pioneering an enhancement process usable on living human beings. And in 2014, Allied Mayhem began enhancing live volunteers in limited numbers. Although this latest generation of enhanced soldiers was very effective in battle, the new process was ultimately deemed unstable and abandoned. During the many months that AMI scientists spent conquering the cellular regeneration problem, they failed to recognize psychological instability as an even more profound obstacle to the enhancement of live subjects. The first such subjects who awoke to discover that they were suddenly capable of lifting cars, flying, and projecting powerful force fields all lost their grip on reality and [went mad](#). AMI researchers ultimately discovered that such a radical shift in world view was simply too much for a conscious human mind to handle. Although most of the enhanced soldiers served admirably at first, they later became unpredictable and psychotic. Some simply became catatonic and refused to believe their newly acquired abilities truly functioned. Others went on homicidal and unstoppable rampages.

The psychological problem was solved a year later, when [Dr. Rudolph Bushmiller](#) happened to notice one of his young nephews reading a copy of

"[went mad](#)." Eventually, this phenomenon became known as "metagenic feedback trauma." It is discussed at length in Chapter Eight.

[Dr. Rudolph Bushmiller](#): the head of Allied Mayhem's Genetics Enhancement Division from its inception in 2012 to his retirement in 2019.



Freedom League Quarterly: a popular "costumed adventurer" comic published by the now-defunct IC Communications between 1997 and 2016.

virtual reality: a technology that allows computers to control the sensory input received by a living subject, giving the subject the sensation that he or she is visiting another world.

Freedom League VR: Among AMI scientists and test subjects, the Freedom League simulation VR eventually acquired the nick-name "Slumberland."

persona blueprint: the user's computerized identity within a virtual reality simulation.

Freedom League Quarterly. Once he saw the Freedom League in action, the connection between the "super-heroes" of pop myth and the enhanced soldiers AMI was trying to create became obvious to Dr. Bushmiller, providing him with the clues he needed to conquer psychological burnout. Bushmiller's solution was to create a sort of "virtual reality" simulation of the Freedom League's adventuring milieu inside a powerful computer. Now, as each subject is enhanced, AMI scientists require him or her to spend fourteen months in a sensory deprivation tank wired into the *Freedom League VR*. During these fourteen months, the computer's program enables the subject to relive his or her entire life as it might have occurred in the four-color world of the Freedom League. At some point during the simulation, the subject's *persona blueprint* acquires the enhanced abilities the AMI scientists are simultaneously installing in his or her physical body. The Freedom League setting, Bushmiller discovered, was simple enough to be effectively simulated by a computer and "unreal" enough to allow the subject to understand and accept the enhancements. Once the process is complete and the subject is removed from sensory deprivation, AMI psychologically reconditions the subject to rejoin the real world, though a psychological acceptance of his or her newly acquired abilities lingers on within the individual's subconscious mind alongside a faint memory of his or her virtual life.

Although it is certainly effective, the Bushmiller Process is not without its drawbacks. First, although the Slumberland simulation relieves most of the psychological stress of enhancement, few subjects remain completely free of stress symptoms. Although the latest breed of enhanced soldiers are not the catatonic invalids and psychotic killers produced during the earliest experiments with live enhancement, most are neurotic, slightly detached from reality, and prone to extreme mood swings. More importantly, there is a sort of "land mine" hidden within the Slumberland simulation that Bushmiller's successors are still trying to understand. Somehow, the "black-and-white" morality of the average Freedom Leaguer instantly ingrains itself into the subconscious minds of many of the subjects who undergo enhancement. Those who are most severely affected by this strange side effect adopt a "comic book" world view and begin to interpret life as a series of struggles between "heroes" and "villains." Given the growing alienation of the lower classes and the current climate of predatory corporate practices, a few such subjects

BUSHMILLER
SUCCESSFULLY
ENHANCES LIVING
SUBJECTS.

A BRIEF
DESCRIPTION OF
THE BUSHMILLER
PROCESS

THE BUSHMILLER
PROCESS IS NOT
PERFECT

THE SECOND
COLD WAR HAS A
HIDDEN IMPACT
ON SOCIETY

THE US
GOVERNMENT
CLOSELY
MONITORS ITS
CITIZENS

THE DEMAND
FOR RECRUITS
IS HIGH

SOME FORMS OF
POPULAR
ENTERTAINMENT
ARE BECOMING
PROPAGANDA

look upon AMI and the American government as "master villains" who have betrayed the American way. In fact, the **Underground** was originally founded by just such a group.

Children of the Second Cold War

One cannot truly comprehend the sociology, politics, or technology of the 21st century without first measuring the impact the new Cold War and the constant corporate fighting in the Third World are having upon society. Although very few American citizens are directly involved in these events, their influence is felt by each and every American every single day:

- In order to hide valuable trade secrets from the prying eyes of its enemies, the United States has been forced to monitor the activities of its citizens more closely, adding new levels of bureaucracy to the federal government. Furthermore, the **scores of government agencies and bureaus** established to help monitor the citizenry have made a great deal of "personal" information about millions of Americans available to politicians willing to use such information unscrupulously.
- Although modern armies are made up of far fewer soldiers than their 20th century counterparts due to the supremacy of the genetically-enhanced soldier, the frequency of international conflict demands a large number of recruits. By 2021, most American citizens know one or two youngsters serving with militant corporations; and in some economically depressed communities, a lack of alternative opportunities is driving entire generations off to war. Despite the fact that the American government is fighting its wars by proxy, the majority of the soldiers employed by conflict firms hired by the United States are American.
- To facilitate recruiting by the major conflict firms, a whole wing of American popular entertainment has slowly become little more than a source of propaganda extolling the virtues of the major militant corporations. Examples range from *Combat*, *Combat*, *Combat!* to The Cracker Brothers. Although the shift toward propaganda is certainly not the result of any sort of organized conspiracy, a combination of the big advertising budgets at the disposal of the conflict firms and the marketing campaigns to increase "patriotism and pride" co-created by Madison Avenue and the US govern-

Underground: a non-licensed terrorist group aiming to overthrow the US Government. The Underground professes to revere the ideals of the early American patriots and hopes to re-establish these ideals within the United States.

government agencies and bureaus; among these agencies are The Federal Department of Deeds and Dissemination, which issues and enforces free speech permits in accordance with the Twenty-Ninth Amendment; the Justice Department's Anti-Sedition Squad, which monitors individuals who exhibit behaviors thought to jeopardize the security of the United States; and the Census Bureau, which now maintains personal records and enormous demographical databases in addition to keeping an accurate count of the population.

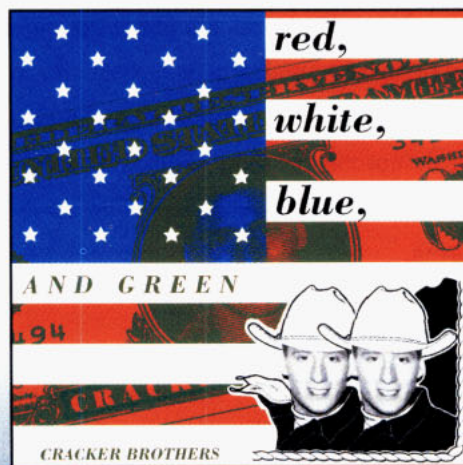
Combat, *Combat*, *Combat!*: a popular vid-net program sponsored by Allied Mayhem Inc. that glamorizes genetically-enhanced warfare by presenting heavily edited "gun-camera" footage shot by Allied Mayhem soldiers.

The Cracker Brothers: a band of country-and-western musicians that record pop songs juxtaposing traditional American symbols (apple pie, baseball, domestic violence) with the trappings of Cold War combat in the Third World.

low-cost housing for veterans: in 2017, public pressure forced Congress to pass the Veterans Fair Housing Act, requiring the federal government to provide housing for veterans who served in conflict firms that held American accounts. To comply with the act, the Department of Housing and Urban Development built a number of high-rise housing projects on government-owned land in California's major cities. Part of HUD's strategy was to keep all the veterans in one region so law enforcement officers would have an easier time controlling them.

apathy: voter turn out in the 2020 presidential election hit a record low at 16%.

Red, White, Blue, and Green



The Cracker Brothers scored a major hit with their 2019 album *Red, White, Blue, and Green*. A country-western/pop-rock crossover, it sold more than 8,000,000 copies and spent four and one-half days atop *Recordbreaker's* Top 25.

Side One

Red, White, Blue and Green
Daddy had 46 Chromosomes
Eagles over the Chaco
My Mixed-Up, Broken-Down, Gosh-Darn XM70
Shenandoah Sunrise

Side Two

Eatin' Cro
Double Deutsch
No More Cussin' and Fussin'
Get Back in the Kitchen (and Fix Me Some Grub)
Red, White, Blue and Green (reprise)

ment is pushing jingoism and tainted images into more media every day. Some sociologists believe these images are deadening society's sensitivity to violence.

- Most of the soldiers serving with the major conflict firms enlist at a young age (between 16 and 18) and muster out in their mid-20s with few non-combat related skills. As a consequence, the veterans find it difficult to find jobs upon their return to the U.S. Poverty coupled with the psychological stress of genetic enhancement leads many veterans into a life of crime, filling the streets of many major population centers with genetically enhanced hoodlums who are trained for combat. To make matters worse, some major cities are forced to devote much of their resources to curbing crime among the veterans, allowing traditional criminals more freedom to operate. These problems are particularly acute on the west coast, where US government programs provide [low-cost housing for veterans](#).

- The frequent wars in the Third World have greatly complicated U.S. foreign policy. Usually, there are so many wars and political conflicts in progress at any one time that most Americans can't possibly digest enough information from the news media to understand them all. This lack of comprehension has led many Americans to feel "disconnected" from their government, their nation, and the world. Over the last decade, many traditional sources of news and information have become defunct as more and more Americans lost interest in them. Furthermore, many Americans find it so difficult to distinguish one political philosophy from another that most public elections are greeted with [apathy](#).

UNSKILLED
VETERANS
RETURNING TO
THE US OFTEN
TURN TO CRIME

FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ARE MORE
COMPLEX
THAN EVER

THE WARS ARE
CHANGING THE
VERY NATURE OF
MANKIND

WORLD POLITICS
ARE DOMINATED
BY THREE
TRADING BLOCKS

POLITICAL
CONQUEST IS
THE KEY TO
DOMINATING
THE MODERN
MARKET

THE NUTS AND
BOLTS OF
CONFLICT FIRM
INTERVENTION

• Finally, and most importantly, the constant wars are changing the very nature of mankind. Each new war forces hundreds of young men and women to undergo genetic enhancement, a process scientists still do not adequately understand. Whether or not the growing number of enhancements performed each year will have some sort of permanent effect upon the human population remains to be seen.

The Role of Conflict

In 2021, world politics are dominated by three large trading blocks: the North American Confederation, consisting of the **United States**, Mexico, and Central America; the Far East Collective, made up of China, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan; and the European Common Market, made up of all the nations in Western Europe but dominated by Neo-Deutschland. Long ago, these three organizations learned to develop and exploit their own resources and markets to their fullest potential. Thus, the only way the trading blocks can continue to increase their **market shares** and remain competitive is to gain access to new resources and new markets in nations that lie outside the blocks in the so-called "Third World."

All of the blocks understand that the old-fashioned method of acquiring new resources — simple conquest — is horribly inefficient in today's market. When you conquer a nation, you can take all its resources without any effort, but you'll find it difficult to force its people to willingly and effectively consume your **goods and services**. *Political* conquest is a much more effective strategy. If you can influence a nation's political leadership, you can establish import/export policies and quotas that benefit your bottom line at the expense of your competitors.

Ever since the advent of multi-national conflict firms, the most effective means of gaining political dominance over a Third World nation has been the use of military force. Ideally, one of the large trading blocks identifies a new market it is interested in developing and hires a conflict firm to back opposition to the local government. Since the locals have no access to the sort of resources at the disposal of the trading block, they lose the struggle and the government either makes way for a puppet regime or backs down and

United States: In 2021, the United States is comprised of 60 states — the old 50 plus Cuba and every province of Canada save Quebec.

market share: In 2020, the world market in most major commodities is almost evenly divided between the three major blocks. Overall, the NAC holds 32% of the world market, the FEC holds 32%, and the ECM holds 36%.

goods and services: This maxim is particularly true of the sorts of goods and services that have become the stock-in-trade of the three major blocks — consumer electronics, data processing technology, and entertainment. A conquering nation might force subjugated peoples to purchase particular foodstuffs or medicines, but one can't imagine a conqueror forcing subjugated peoples to purchase vid-units or *Systematic Overthrow* albums.

ANATOMY OF A CONFLICT - PARAGUAY 2019

The brutal war that engulfed Paraguay in 2019 is somewhat typical of the struggles that now dominate relations between the major trading blocks, though the Paraguayan War grew far larger and bloodier than most.

Here's how it happened:

August 4, 2018: House Bill #47556, the so-called Friedman Subsidy, is rejected by Congress. The bill would have provided tax subsidies for farmers receiving the majority of their income from the sale of livestock, vastly benefiting the American fast food industry.

August 11, 2018: Lobbyists hired by the MacRaney's Hamburger Corporation make their displeasure known by making campaign contributions to the enemies of Congressmen who voted against the Friedman Subsidy.

August 26, 2018: One of the leaders of the anti-Friedman coalition, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Arnold Wolff (Plutocrat, Utah), receives a CIA report on guerrilla uprisings in Paraguay. Wolff notes that western Paraguay, the so-called Gran Chaco, is home to thousands of cattle farmers.

September 16, 2018: Congressman Wolff approaches MacRaney's lobbyists and informs them of his plans to arrange a deal with the Paraguayan government, allowing American firms to import Paraguayan beef with little or no attached tariffs. In return for Wolff's efforts, the lobbyists stop pressuring him and his allies.

September 18, 2018: Wolff takes his plan to President Gates who reluctantly endorses it to protect Plutocratic interests. By the end of the day, Secretary of Defense Javier Hernandez hires Trans-World Devastation Inc., a conflict firm headquartered in Guyana, to secretly aid the Paraguayan rebels.

January 11, 2019: Increasing rebel activity drives the ruling regime in Paraguay to ask for aid from the major trading blocks. Both the North American Confederation and the European Common Market submit bids.

January 13, 2019: General Federo Rodriguez, leader of Paraguay's ruling junta, accepts the NAC bid and agrees to allow tariff-free cattle exports to North America in exchange for military support. The US Government hires another conflict firm, Allied Mayhem Inc., to back the Paraguayan army and allows its option on Trans-World Devastation to expire.

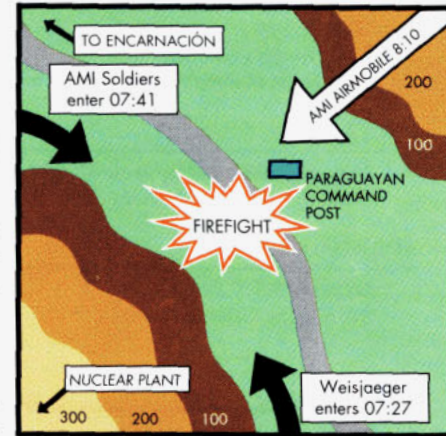
January 14, 2019: Secretly planning a major run on the fast food industry, the Far East Collective notices the events in Paraguay and hires Henkata Inc., a Tokyo-based conflict firm, to help the guerrillas continue their struggle against the American-backed junta. The Chinese are hoping to tie up American resources in the region long enough to force the Americans to back down.

February 1, 2019: European Common Market strategists decide they can stalemate the Paraguayan conflict by dropping an army into eastern Paraguay to raise the pressure on the American-backed junta. By doing so, the ECM hopes to guarantee that neither the Chinese or the Americans gain the upper hand.

The Paraguayan conflict ended on November 7, 2019, when negotiators from the three major trading blocks agreed to pull all their forces out of the region. In the end, no side gained any real benefits from the struggle.

Total Casualties: 1,866,000

Total Estimated Property Damage: \$13,580,000,000,000



The Battle of Encarnación— July 11, 2019

The conflict began at 07:27, when boosted troopers from the Neo-Deutsch-backed Weisjaeger Inc. surprised a Paraguayan command post just outside Encarnación. Over the next eleven minutes, the homo superiors eliminated more than four hundred Paraguayan regulars and began assembling heavy artillery to support a major advance on Allied Mayhem positions. Seventy-one Paraguayans survived and retreated to the west.

At 07:41, a group of Allied Mayhem soldiers entered the area around the command post looking for resupply. By 07:44, the AMI troopers were engaged in a fire-fight with the Weisjaeger veterans.

At 07:58, a pinned AMI trooper discovered a signal flare in one of the Paraguayan supply huts and fired it. Twelve minutes later, a detachment of AMI airmobile boosted regulars appeared on the horizon and began peppering Weisjaeger positions with radar-guided rockets, forcing the Weisjaeger operatives to retreat. As they fled, one of the retreating soldiers fired a ground-to-air missile at the AMI airmobiles that missed its target and struck a small nuclear power plant, producing a minor nuclear detonation.

Total Casualties:

416 Paraguayan Regulars
11 AMI boosted troopers
23 Weisjaeger boosted troopers
2,116 civilians

Nations of the World

NEO-DEUTSCHLAND

PEOPLE

Population: 114,810,000.
Urban: 96%.
Languages: German.
Life Expectancy: 79 female, 73 male.

Density: 771/sq. mi. (297/sq. km)
Capital: Berlin, 12,866,446
Religion: Scientology 100% (mandated by state)
Literacy: 92%

POLITICS

Government: Totalitarian Collective.
Suffrage: Party members only.

Parties: ARC
Memberships: European Common Market

ECONOMY

GDP: \$18,377,900,000,000.
Monetary Unit: Neo-Mark.

Per Capita: \$162,682
Exports: Manufactures, machinery,
entertainment, transportation

LAND

Region: Northern Europe.
Highest Point: Zugspitze, 9,178 ft. (2,962 m)
Lowest Point: Freespum Lake, -7 ft. (-2 m)

Area: 137,882 sq. mi. (356,955 sq. km)

History and Description:

Neo-Deutschland was formed when the newly reunited East and West Germanies formed a Constitutional Collective to reform the German government in the wake of the 2002 Depression.

At present, Neo-Deutschland is a theocratic, semi-dictatorship built around the principles of scientology. Members of Neo-Deutschland's dominant ARC party always hold positions in both the federal government and the Church of Scientology. Sitting atop both the government and the church is a triumvirate known as the Ministers of Having, Being, and Loving.

Culturally, Neo-Deutschland has gone a long way toward recapturing the creative renaissance of the Weimar Republic, though alleged human rights abuses are beginning to drive away intellectuals. In the world community, the Neo-Deutsch are known for their cold efficiency, a trait that has elevated Neo-Deutschland to a position of total dominance within the European Common Market. This role frequently brings the Neo-Deutsch into economic conflict with the United States.



NEO-DEUTSCHLAND



CHINA



NEO-VATICAN

CHINA

PEOPLE

Population: 2,561,440,000.
Urban: 40%.
Languages: Chinese dialects.
Life Expectancy: 78 female, 72 male.

Density: 694/sq. mi. (269/sq. km)
Capital: Beijing, 11,710,000
Religion: Neo-taoist, Buddhist
Literacy: 90%

POLITICS

Government: Republic.
Suffrage: Universal, over 18.

Parties: Mercantile, Red Swallow
Memberships: Far East Collective

ECONOMY

GDP: \$7,782,000,000,000.
Monetary Unit: Yuan.

Per Capita: \$3,038
Exports: Textiles, entertainment, petroleum

LAND

Region: Eastern Asia.
Highest Point: Mt. Everest, 29,028 ft. (8,848 m)
Lowest Point: Turfan Depression, -505 ft. (-154 m)

Area: 3,689,631 sq. mi. (9,556,100 sq. km)

History and Description:

In 2001, as China's communist regime collapsed beneath the weight of scandal, the old guard was replaced by a more traditional republican government. Due to the efforts of Xian Xiao, the new nation's first president, the improving Chinese economy quickly vaulted the republic to a position of dominance within the Far East Collective, bringing the Chinese into direct conflict with the USA and Neo-Deutschland.

The technologies the Chinese have derived from the secrets housed within the alien space-pod are unique and carefully integrated into the Chinese culture. These characteristics sometimes make such technologies difficult for westerners to grasp.

NEO-VATICAN

PEOPLE

Population: 3,762,000.
Urban: 67%.
Languages: Latin, Italian, Spanish.
Life Expectancy: 71 female, 70 male.

Density: 76/sq. mi. (29/sq. km)
Capital: Managua, 677,000
Religion: Roman Catholic 88%
Literacy: 65%

POLITICS

Government: Ecclesiastical.
Suffrage: Roman Catholic cardinals less than 80 years old.

Parties: None

ECONOMY

GDP: \$14,000,000,000.
Monetary Unit: Sesterce.

Per Capita: \$3,721
Exports: Coffee, textiles, sugar

LAND

Region: Central America.
Highest Point: Mogoton, 6,913 ft. (2,107 m)
Lowest Point: Sea level

Area: 50,054 sq. mi. (356,955 sq. km)

History and Description:

Shortly after officials of the Roman Catholic church fled Italy in the wake of Neo-Deutsch scientologist tyranny, the Vatican was officially transplanted to 950 acres of church-owned land in Nicaragua. Four years later, Pope Paul VIII was installed as Presidente of Nicaragua, transforming the nation into a strange fusion of a Central American banana republic and the Vatican of old. Nicaragua was officially renamed "Neo-Vatican" in 2017.

Although much of the Neo-Vatican economy revolves around tourism, travellers are now beginning to avoid the area due to a raging military conflict that has erupted between the Pope's supporters and a group of jungle-based rebel cardinals.

Nations of the World

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF QUEBEC

PEOPLE

Population: 8,525,000.
Urban: 82%.
Languages: French, English.
Life Expectancy: 74 female, 72 male.

Density: 16/sq. mi. (6/sq. km)
Capital: Quebec, 1,424,000
Religion: Protestant (47%), Scientology (50%)
Literacy: 81%

POLITICS

Government: Communist Collective.
Suffrage: Party members only.

Parties: Communist Party

ECONOMY

GDP: \$236,671,050,000.
Monetary Unit: Neo-Mark.

Per Capita: \$27,762
Exports: Paper, poultry, lumber

LAND

Region: North America.
Highest Point: Mount Jacques Cartier 4,160 ft. (1,268 m)
Lowest Point: Sea level

Area: 523,860 sq. mi. (3,735,121 sq. km)

History and Description:

In 2003, just before the Canadian provinces were ushered into the USA as the 51st-58th states, Quebec split from the rest of Canada and formed an independent nation. Four years later, the Communist party won a landslide victory in national elections and transformed Quebec's government into a communist collective.

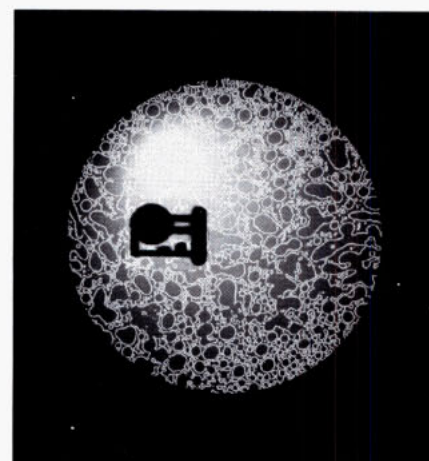
Today, the PRQ receives a great deal of foreign aid from Neo-Deutschland and acts as a thorn in the side of the Americans — a position similar to that occupied by Cuba before it too was ushered into the USA. A source of constant political headaches for both sides, the border between the USA and the PRQ is popularly known as the "Teflon Curtain."



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF QUEBEC



NEW PROVIDENCE™



LUNA

NEW PROVIDENCE™

PEOPLE

Population: 36,765,000.
Urban: 65%.
Languages: English, French, German, Swazi.
Life Expectancy: 78 female, 73 male.

Density: 85/sq. mi. (33/sq. km)
Capital: New Providence, 443,059
Religion: Scientology (68%)
Literacy: 91%

POLITICS

Government: Board of Directors.
Suffrage: Board members only.

Parties: None
Memberships: None

ECONOMY

GDP: \$1,885,000,000,000.
Monetary Unit: Dollar, Neo-Mark.

Per Capita: \$51,271
Exports: Entertainment, jewels

LAND

Region: Southern Africa.
Highest Point: eNjesuthi, 11,306 ft. (3,446 m)
Lowest Point: Sea level

Area: 433,680 sq. mi. (1,123,226 sq. km)

History and Description:

Somewhat unique among countries its size, New Providence is a sovereign nation in only the most technical sense of the term. In reality, the entire country is a colossal vacation resort boasting thousands of golf courses, swimming pools, shops, and entertainment centers.

New Providence is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Avant-Garbage™ Corporation. It was established in 2010 after a nationwide referendum gave the aging apartheid government the clearance to sell the entire nation of South Africa to AGC. After the deal was completed, New Providence administrators immediately eradicated all of the apartheid system's segregationist policies and employed the entire South African population.

LUNA

PEOPLE

Population: 446,554.
Urban: 100%.
Languages: English.
Life Expectancy: 61 female, 59 male.

Density: 1,378/sq. mi. (536/sq. km)
Capital: Luna, 446,554
Religion: Scientology (14%)
Literacy: 47%

POLITICS

Government: Balkanized.
Suffrage: None.

Parties: None
Memberships: None

ECONOMY

GDP: \$387,608,872.
Monetary Unit: Dollar.

Per Capita: \$868
Exports: Manufactured goods

LAND

Region: Moon.
Highest Point: Tranquility Deck 1,106 ft. (337 m)
Lowest Point: Sea level

Area: 324 sq. mi. (839 sq. km)

History and Description:

Luna evolved from New Soledad, a high-security penitentiary/moon colony constructed by the United States in 1999. In 2008, New Soledad inmates seized the facility after a bloody riot and declared independence. Since that time, American officials have had neither the resources nor the inclination to recapture the facility.

Today, Luna is dominated by a collection of organized crime families who supply earthbound corporations with cheap labor and minerals in return for food. As a frequent port of call for vagabonds looking for decadence and adventure, Luna is also home to a burgeoning tourist industry.

STRUGGLES IN
THE THIRD
WORLD ARE
COMMON IN 2021

allows itself to be influenced by the invaders. But such operations rarely progress this smoothly. Typically, one of the other blocks notices its competitor's attempt to move in on the new market and hires its own firm to interfere with the competitor's plans. This second block might want the new market for itself, or perhaps it simply doesn't want to lose market share to the original invader. In fact, it's not uncommon for all three blocks to become embroiled in such a struggle, creating a sticky political mess that can rage for months and cost thousands of lives.

Due to the constant need to find new markets and the convenience of multinational conflict firms, warfare is extremely common in the Third World of 2021. Each of the major trading blocks might fight as many as ten to twelve wars at any given time. Note, too, that a cessation of hostilities hardly leaves the battleground nation immune from future conflict. Once a block senses that the party or parties who won the first war are growing weak, it will certainly strike again.

Life in Urban America

MODERN
AMERICA IS
DOMINATED BY
BIG CITIES

Over the last forty to fifty years, the American economy has continued to veer away from agriculture and toward the service sector. As a consequence, by 2021, most of the American population is tightly clustered into huge urban centers. Cities with **populations in excess of 18,000,000** are not uncommon, contributing to all sorts of social and economic problems.

THE CITIES OF
2021 LOOK
NOTHING LIKE
THEIR 20TH
CENTURY
ANCESTORS

On the outside, the cities of the 21st century only barely resemble their 20th century ancestors. Rising real estate prices forced most of America's largest cities to build upward as well as outward, creating vast multi-tiered mazes crossed by huge boulevards that rise and fall between all the city's various levels. Furthermore, the cities of the 21st century are expanding much faster than their predecessors. Because of this expansion and the extraordinary amount of property damage that results from gang wars between **boosted** hoodlums, new **construction** is constantly in evidence. Also noticeable is the relative lack of cars and other vehicles. Due to the growing rift between the upper and middle classes, fewer and fewer Americans can afford cars, forcing urban centers to build larger and more efficient public transportation networks.

population: In 2021, the population of the United States is roughly 570,000,000. The five largest cities in the US are: Los Angeles (21,000,000), New York (19,500,000), Chicago (17,500,000), Washington DC (16,000,000), and Montreal (15,500,000).

boosted: a slang term for "genetically enhanced." Persons who have been genetically enhanced are also known as "homo superiors."

construction: To facilitate new construction and allow property damage to be repaired faster, modern buildings are constructed out of "snap-fit" locking bricks cast from special polymers — essentially a giant-size version of the Lego toys of the 20th century. A Philadelphia-based firm known as BrixBloX Inc. is the largest supplier of these blocks in North America.

MacRaney's: a fast-food hamburger chain founded in 1994. Since 1998, MacRaney's market share has been so large that the Fat Mac, the chain's double-decker cheeseburger, has become a cultural icon.

For the last five years, MacRaney's has used the ad slogan, "Ask yourself ... Who's the Mac?"

\$80,000: between 1993 and 2021, the US economy has suffered 1400% inflation.

The Pre-Frontals

Over the last 50 years, increasingly sophisticated marketing tactics applied to consumers both inside and outside the United States have made many Americans very wealthy. But one of the basic principles that drives America's capitalist economy is the axiom of equilibrium — whenever someone becomes wealthy, someone else becomes poor. Ultimately, this axiom is responsible for a chain of give-and-take that extends through the various social strata all the way down to the citizens of the very lowest socio-economic class, a position currently occupied by the so-called "pre-frontals." By 2017, many of the nation's blue collar agricultural and manufacturing jobs were taken over by pre-frontals as more and more better-educated Americans left for higher paying jobs in the service sector. Now, in 2021, pre-frontals make up the backbone of America's unskilled workforce.

The pre-frontals themselves are a product of the technological revolution that followed in the wake of the alien visitation. In 2001, after some of the technology gleaned from the alien life-pod had an opportunity to work its way through the major American universities, scientists working for the [MacRaney's Corporation](#) were perfecting a series of cloning techniques based around the manipulation of amino acid chains. The scientists were hoping to successfully clone cattle, giving the fast food chain an endless supply of cheap beef. But the first few executives who read the scientists' reports had different ideas. MacRaney's upper management ran spreadsheet programs on the scientists' data and arrived at some startling conclusions. According to the scientists' projections, cloning an organism would cost approximately \$80,000 in chemicals and overhead, a figure MacRaney's managers estimated that cloning in bulk could reduce by 25%. At the same time, market research showed that the average American spends roughly \$120,000 on MacRaney's hamburgers across the course of his or her lifetime. After these figures were compared, the executives changed the entire direction of the cloning program and began looking into the possibility of cloning humans instead of cattle. By creating their own future consumers in this fashion, MacRaney's stood to earn a \$60,000 profit on each person created across the course of that individual's lifetime.

PRE-FRONTALS
ARE THE
BACKBONE OF
BLUE COLLAR
LABOR IN
MODERN
AMERICA

PRE-FRONTAL
CLONES WERE
CREATED BY A
FAST FOOD
CHAIN

Technology in the World of 2021

The secrets of bio-engineering gleaned from the alien space-pod ushered in a technological revolution that left its mark on every scientific discipline known to man. By 2021, in most fields, new advances have made the unthinkable an everyday reality.

Computers

The computer industry is home to what are perhaps the most stunning innovations of all. By 2021, virtually every device or appliance sold across the entire world has been designed to transmit digital information. This feature enables these items to interface with computers, allowing just about any device in the world to communicate with any other device. The various applications of the new digital network are staggering — consumers can program any device in their homes with detailed instructions or control any device from a distance via digital phone lines; firearms plug into computers worn by soldiers and transmit an ammunition count and aiming information to heads-up displays contained within the soldiers' helmets; movies and audio recordings are sold in a digital format, allowing consumers to edit and modify these works to fit their own tastes; etc.

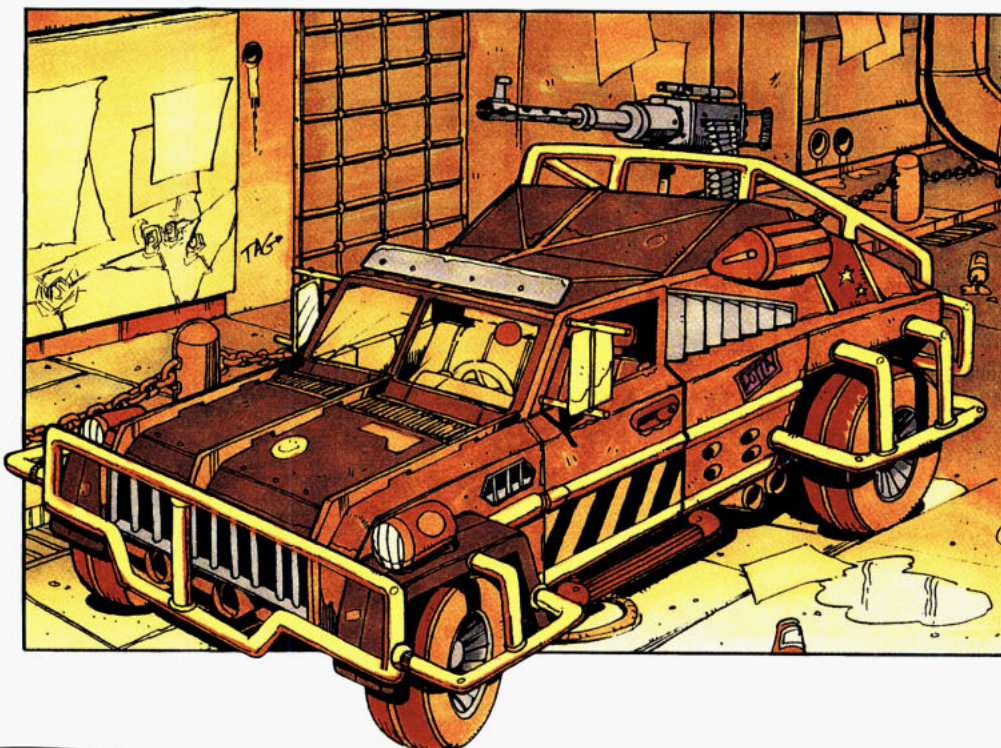
On the industrial end of the spectrum, mainframe computers are also far superior to their 20th century counterparts. Using technology derived from the alien pod, human brains can be directly connected to computers to provide an enormously fast and powerful storage media (known as a "bio-drive"). Modern mainframes connected to one or more discarded brains can now efficiently store and access thousands of gigabytes of information, allowing for more sophisticated applications of computer technology.

Weaponry



Due to the threat posed by the boosted soldier, modern weapons are larger and more destructive than their 20th century counterparts. Large caliber firearms, rocket launchers, flame throwers, and neural deadeners are all common. Of particular interest are "fire and forget" radar-guided firearms that can "lock-on" to a target located several miles away and insure an accurately delivered projectile.

Due to the changing political situation, nuclear weapons are no longer employed by modern armies, though they are still a favorite weapon of terrorists. To date, however, the only successful nuclear attack on American soil took place in 2016, when members of the People's Front for the Isolation of Oregon used a small nuclear bomb to destroy the city of San Luis Obispo, California. In 2021, the most fearsome weapon battlefield soldiers are likely to encounter is Paste,TM an adhesive jelly that dissolves organic compounds, reducing living targets to puddles of genetic slop.



Transportation

Because fewer citizens can now afford automobiles, transportation in the 21st century is dominated by mass transit systems. Most major cities are criss-crossed with subway and elevated lines providing convenient access to all neighborhoods, while large cities on all continents are connected by high-speed rail terminals (250 MPH and up). Most of the delays associated with 20th century mass transit have been eliminated by running a larger number of smaller "trains" (seating 3-5 passengers) on each line.

Automobiles may be expensive, but they have not disappeared completely. At present, several US manufacturers are battling with Iraqi and Chinese firms for control of the world automotive market. Modern autos provide a whole range of services unavailable in their 20th century ancestors due to the fact that the autos accept digital input, allowing them to interact with a vast array of consumer devices and appliances.

Medicine

Doctors can now control the rate at which living tissues reproduce, eliminating the threat of cancer and most viruses, and accelerating the rate at which the body heals wounds and injuries. Furthermore, sophisticated genetic engineering techniques allow couples to select the physical and personality characteristics exhibited by their offspring.

Of course, the mere fact that these medical technologies exist does not mean they are widely available to the general public. In fact, all of these specialized techniques are extremely costly, making them available to only a small portion of the world's population.

Of more general interest to the common citizen is the widespread availability of artificial brains. These organs don't allow for the sophisticated reasoning possible with a real brain, but they can be programmed to keep their users happy and productive. In fact, more and more members of the lower class are buying artificial brains and selling their biological brains to the computer industry for use in bio-drives.

chapter 1

MILLIONS OF
CLONES
CURRENTLY
INHABIT THE
UNITED STATES

By 2003, the cloning process was perfected and the first few artificial people were created and released to work **blue collar jobs** MacRaney's had arranged with major manufacturing firms all over the US. By 2007, the chain had cranked out more than 1,000,000 clones, prompting the US Department of Immigration, Naturalization, and Procreation to place a flat 100,000 per annum quota on cloning. A few years later, Congress passed the Hartley-Simmons Act, requiring firms interested in creating clones to obtain special federal licenses and pay heavy duties. But by that time, the clones were beginning to mate with each other, greatly increasing their numbers. According to the February 2021 census, more than 40,000,000 clones currently inhabit the United States.

PRE-FRONTALS
ARE IMPERFECT
DUPLICATES OF
HUMANITY

The pre-frontals acquired their name from certain deficiencies that manifest themselves in the frontal lobes of the clones' brains as they are created. These deficiencies leave the clones incapable of agile or creative thought. In manner, they exhibit many of the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia — they move and speak slowly, they find it difficult to focus their attention, and they sometimes find it impossible to separate fantasy from reality. Another flaw exhibited by the pre-frontals can be found in their genetic makeup. For some reason, the clones possess only **45 chromosomes**, making it impossible for them to mate with anyone other than themselves. Whether or not there is a connection between these two deficiencies remains unknown.

PRE-FRONTALS
ARE THE VICTIMS
OR PREJUDICE

Because they are slow-witted and willing to work for sub-par wages, pre-frontals are the victims of a great deal of **prejudice** from the American public. For this reason, they tend to live in exclusively pre-frontal ghettos found in the industrial districts of most major American cities. Due to their limited intellectual capacity, they rarely venture out of these areas, preferring instead to spend their recreational time watching the vid-net and eating fast food.

A NEW
CONTROVERSY
INVOLVING
MACRANEYS
PRE-FRONTALS

Recently, the pre-frontals have become embroiled in a new controversy. A group of liberal scientists claims to have discovered evidence indicating that MacRaney's technicians altered the pre-frontals' RNA patterns as they were created, genetically pre-disposing the clones to acquire a taste for MacRaney's hamburgers. Despite the fact that legal scholars can't even agree as to whether or not pre-disposing the clones would constitute a crime, MacRaney's officials are denying the allegations.

blue collar jobs: The manufacturers were happy to cooperate with MacRaney's and give the pre-frontals jobs for two reasons: 1) more and more unskilled laborers were being lost to the service sector; and 2) the clones were willing to accept incredibly low wages.

45 chromosomes: normal humans, of course, possess 46 chromosomes.

prejudice: On the streets, "cro-mag" (or simply "cro") is a common derogatory epithet used to describe the pre-frontals.

Entertainment in 2021

Entertainment in 2021 is distinguished from its 20th century counterpart by the healthy doses of sex and violence it invariably contains. Over the last fifty years, the art of storytelling has waned in favor of increasingly sophisticated sensory titillation made possible by futuristic sound and video technology. Many modern programs are nothing but sloppily edited collections of hardcore battle or sex scenes.

Although the programming may have changed, for all practical purposes, the media remain the same. Movies are still popular, as are albums of recorded music (now sold almost exclusively on optical disks). Television, too, is still around, although the service has been known as "vid-net" ever since most of the world's broadcasters joined together to form a 4,000 channel digital cable system in 2014.

Specially tailoring works to individual artificial brain models is the latest trend to sweep the entertainment industry. Top entertainment firms are now paying brain manufacturers exorbitant sums in return for the technical specifications of their models, allowing the entertainment executives to guarantee that their releases will be enjoyed by a certain segment of the public.

Popular Vid-Net Programs:

Camelot: The Next Generation

The Tortinis (futuristic situation comedy)

Audrey, Stephanie, Jason, and Horst (sex opera)

Aeon Flux (animated adventures)

Teflon Blue (erotic thriller).

Combat, Combat, Combat!

(battle footage from Third World wars)

Popular Motion Pictures:

Let Me Tell 'Ya About Super-Chicks (boosted sex farce)

The Little Mermaid 2019 (sex fantasy)

Homicide! (murders captured on film)

Nanoseconds to Midnight (political thriller)



The Tortinis (l to r): Nick, Angela, Uncle Whit, Nathan, Lucille

Cannibalism

In 2021, cannibal dishes have replaced burgers and fries as the cuisine of choice in the United States. The fad has roots stretching all the way back to Millie's, a chic cannibal restaurant founded in 1997 in New York's Greenwich Village underground. Eventually, Millie's became so popular that the practice was legalized, allowing cannibal restaurants to spread across America. By 2011, a pair of competing cannibal fast food chains, Tastee Ghoul and Sweeney's, opened thousands of outlets from coast-to-coast.

Contrary to the rumors invented by grade school children, the people who become Tastee Ghoul and Sweeney's products are not murdered in the night by teams of shadowy assassins. In 2010, Congress passed a bill, the MacMurtry Foodstuffs Act, that placed a carefully-worded legal document on the back of every driver's license issued in the USA. In the event of sudden death, drivers who sign the document sell their corpses to the fast food chains in exchange for the going rate of \$750.



Crime and Poverty

THE RICH GET
RICHER; THE
POOR GET
POORER

Although the pre-frontals occupy the very lowest rung on America's socio-economic ladder, there are plenty of true humans with incomes that dip beneath the **poverty line** as well. Although few true humans work blue collar jobs in agriculture and manufacturing, many fill a whole new level of **low-paying service sector jobs** created around the turn of the century. The fact that the average salary of Americans just entering into the workforce is still falling coupled with high unemployment has driven an enormous rift between the upper and lower classes. The rich, who generally own businesses and have little difficulty recruiting employees willing to work for lower and lower salaries, are getting much richer; the poor are getting much poorer.

AMERICAN CITIES
ARE PLAGUED
BY CRIME

In America's vast urban centers, the increasing toll of poverty gave birth to a rising tide of crime. Citizens with trouble making ends meet on their welfare benefits or low salaries turn to petty theft for extra money, or allow them-

poverty line: defined as an annual income of \$140,000 or less for a family of four in 2021.

low paying service sector jobs: examples of such jobs include data entry operator, retail clerk, inventory manager, and hardware monitor. Despite the fact that these jobs fall within the so-called "service sector" they are all appropriate for unskilled laborers. Such jobs generally pay between \$110,000 and \$200,000 per year.

illegal narcotics: In 2021, popular illegal drugs include: cocaine, heroin, crack, speed, PCP, and juice (a cheap, highly addictive opiate developed around the turn of the century; juice is often sold in soluble wafer form).

gun lobbyists: In 2017, strife within the ranks of the National Rifle Association led to the formation of an independent splinter group known as the National Pistol Association. To this day, there is a great deal of ill-will between members of the NRA and the NPA, and violent confrontations are not unheard of. Recently, a few top-ranking NRA officials formed yet another splinter group, the National Assault Rifle Association (NARA), to oppose both the NRA and the NPA.

selves to be seduced by the big profits pulled down by illegal narcotics dealers. Compounding the problem is the widespread availability of powerful guns and other weapons. Years ago, gun lobbyists successfully argued that the Bill of Rights entitles each citizen to bear arms and defend his or her personal liberty. Since a sizable percentage of modern street criminals are impoverished boosted veterans, weapons capable of defeating such menaces — automatic firearms, flamethrowers, rocket launchers, etc. — are now sold openly and legally carried with proper registration and permits. Many of these weapons are so destructive that they are capable of levelling buildings or destroying vehicles with a single shot, giving clever criminals everything they need to commit frightening new crimes. One example is the so-called "bust-out," in which the criminal uses a rocket launcher to blow a hole in the victim's home and then takes advantage of the ensuing confusion to rush inside and steal everything he or she can carry.

In most urban areas, large street gangs and syndicates, many of them comprised of boosted veterans, rule entire sectors of the city. At first, the gangs were formed as a protective measure to keep their members safe from other criminals; but it wasn't long before they mutated into organized criminal enterprises. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, and Havana are particularly dangerous hotbeds of gang activity. In these cities, warfare between gangs is characterized by the so-called "fly-by shooting," in which an air-capable boosted gang-crasher opens fire on a rival from the skies and streaks away before the police can possibly arrive on the scene.

The latest criminal to hit the streets is the so-called "corporate raider." With so many police dedicated to battling the gangs and street criminals, unscrupulous corporations have started to form secret armies to launch direct attacks on competing businesses and illegally acquire industrial secrets. The lack of available police coupled with the corporate dollars that secretly bankroll them make the raiders extremely dangerous. In fact, some raiders have met with so much success that they have started to operate more traditional criminal enterprises under the direction of their corporate masters.

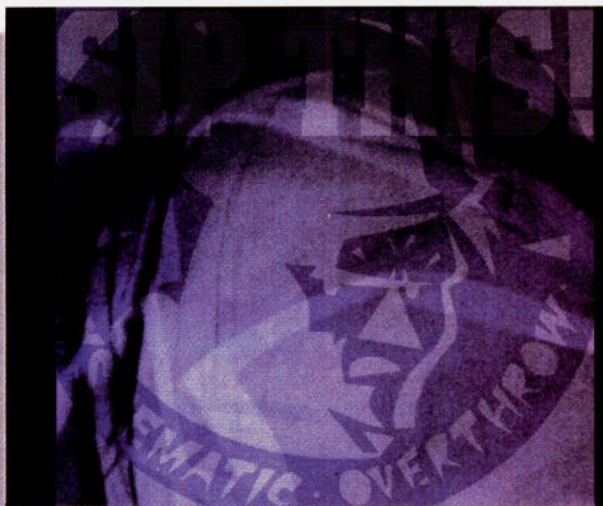
CRIME
SYNDICATES
AND GANGS
DOMINATE
ENTIRE REGIONS
OF SOME CITIES

CORPORATE
SPONSORED
CRIMINALS POSE A
NEW THREAT

Systematic Overthrow

In 2021, the most popular recording group in the world is Oakland's Systematic Overthrow. A collection of boosted and non-boosted ex-convicts, SO is known for its scratch-influenced fusion of political commentary and pure noise.

Just this year, Systematic Overthrow released *Sip This!*, the group's third album, to record sales.



Side One

Wet Ya Up
Mackz and Hoz and Trickz
Frag the G! (Full Frontal, Speed Zero to-da-head Mix)
Skunked-up Gene Thing
BOOM! (ping-ping)
Lettie on da Chronic
F to da H to da OG
Peace or Piecez
Adventurez in the Slang Trade
Judged by Twelve or Carried by Six

Side Two

El Diablo Rojo
So What Ya Sayin?
Streets Tell Storiez
Massa-Cur
Whylin on da Island
Frag the G! (Conscientious Assassinator Mix)
LP

NEW AGENCIES
MONITOR THE
CITIZENRY AND
CONDUCT
COVERT
OPERATIONS
ABROAD

Government Gone Haywire

The growing crime problem that has engulfed America's cities has had an unexpected impact upon American society. Armed with mounting crime statistics and the pleas of desperate citizens, a few radically conservative politicians started pushing their agenda for redefining the role of the American government through the Congress as early as 2009. At first, the radicals succeeded only in giving the police broad new powers and increasing the severity of criminal sentencing. But by 2010, the conservatives were already arguing that the growing crime epidemic was a sign of America's "weakness," prompting the Congress to create elite bureaus to monitor the American citizenry and to authorize a new wave of covert operations abroad.

Raymond Milkovich: A liberal Independent philosopher from Illinois, Milkovich was elected President of the United States in 2008. Three years later, he was assassinated. Milkovich's brief term was characterized by noticeable efforts to dismantle the American military-industrial complex and eliminate government waste.

Chuck D-Day: On August 11, 1998, activists Chuck D. and Flavor Flav of the rap group Public Enemy were assassinated by a mentally disturbed police officer in Columbus, Georgia. In memory of Chuck's courageous attempts to safeguard the civil rights of African Americans, Congress declared the first Monday in August a federal holiday (Chuck D-Day) in his honor in the year 2001.

Shadow Team: a unit of covert operatives who surreptitiously destroyed caches of weaponry in the arsenals of American allies in the Third World, forcing those nations to order replacement arms from the US military and netting huge profits for Uncle Sam. The team was founded in 2010 and disbanded in 2016.

Over time, many of the new programs founded by the radicals became the corrupted tools of dishonest politicians of all ideological stripes. Throughout the last decade, several elected officials have been caught red-handed using the powerful "sub-bureaus" added to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies to secretly squash their political enemies or protect their own business interests. And to this day, many believe the assassination of President Raymond Milkovich on Chuck D-Day, 2011 was carried out by the elite Shadow Team, one of the covert organizations created by the radical conservatives, and its supervisor, National Security Advisor Geoffrey Sneed.

At present, the federal government is thought to be more corrupt than ever. Over the last five years, evidence indicating that dozens of Congressmen and judges have used their influence with various federal agencies to safe-

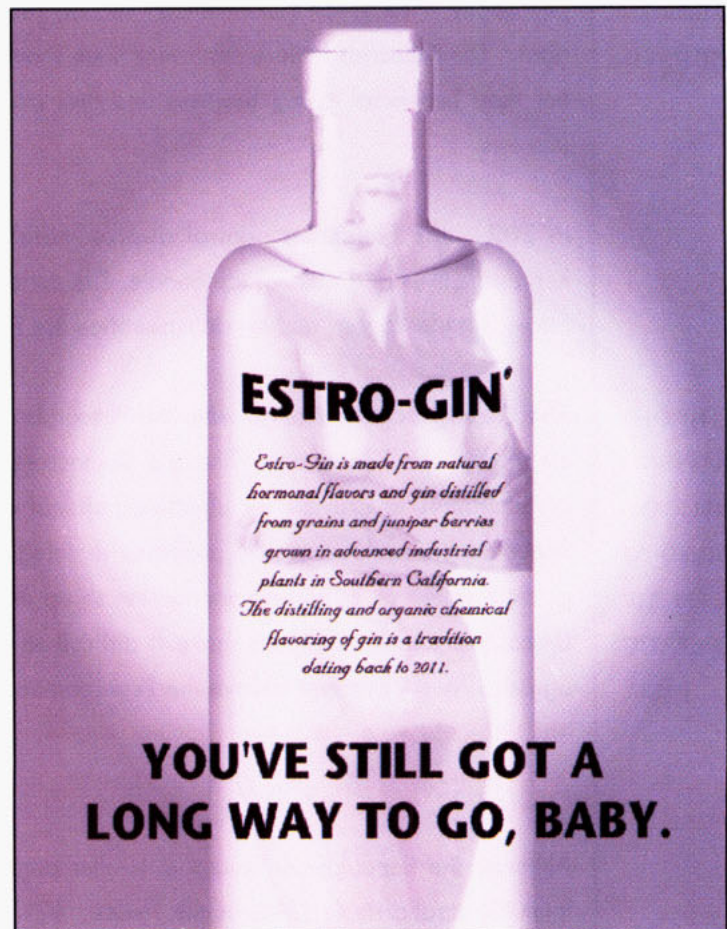
CORRUPT
POLITICIANS USE
THESE NEW
AGENCIES TO
SAFEGUARD
THEIR OWN
INTERESTS

IN 2021, THE
FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT IS
MORE CORRUPT
THAN EVER

Estro-Gin™

The latest problem to rock America's poverty-stricken streets is Estro-Gin, a cheap alcoholic beverage laced with various human hormones to intensify its intoxicating effects. Needless to say, the marketing campaign for Estro-Gin is heavily aimed toward poverty stricken communities, where the alcoholism rate is high.

Male Estro-Gin addicts are often recognizable by the female secondary sex characteristics they develop with prolonged use.



THE
PLUTOCRATIC
PARTY DEFENDS
AMERICAN
BUSINESS

THE OLD
DEMOCRATS AND
REPUBLICANS
COMBINED TO
FORM THE
REPUBLICRATIC
PARTY

guard their own personal interests has surfaced, though few criminal charges have been filed. This escalation of graft and influence peddling has ushered in a new, more cavalier ideology on all levels of government. Those citizens who are of no consequence to the corporate and special interests represented by the bulk of elected officials receive less attention than ever.

Politics

On the local, state, and national level, American politics are dominated by three major political parties.

The Plutocratic Party: The Plutocrats first banded together as a political party in 2002, though the roots of the organization extend all the way back to [Ross Perot](#)'s presidential campaign of 1992. At the core of the Plutocratic philosophy is the notion that America's security rests upon its economic superiority. The Plutocrats believe that every issue should be resolved in the manner most beneficial to big business and thus most beneficial to American interests.

In 2021, the Plutocrats control approximately 40% of the House of Representatives and 43% of the Senate. The current President of the United States, [Charles Foster](#), and his administration are Plutocrats.

The Republocratic Party: After the Plutocrats rose to power in the earliest part of the 21st century, the old Democratic and Republican parties joined forces to provide an effective political opposition. Although the Republocratic party nominally professes to safeguard traditional American political values as its highest priority, the sharp differences between the old Democrats and Republicans make it difficult to fathom the party's exact agenda. Most observers believe the Republocrats "[see how the Plutocrats are going to vote, take the opposite stance, and reap the benefits of compromise.](#)"

Although the Republocrats control a smaller percentage of Congress than their Plutocratic rivals (38% in the House, 40% in the Senate), they are beginning to experience a noticeable surge in popularity, thanks in part to

[Ross Perot](#): A Texas billionaire, Perot ran for President of the United States as an independent candidate in 1992. Perot died under mysterious circumstances in 1998.

[Charles Foster](#): An ex-governor and US Senator from Virginia, Foster was elected President of United States in 2020. So far, his administration has been characterized by a huge increase in corporate profits, but a sharp decline in social services.

"see how . . . compromise": This quote comes from FBC tele-journalist Peter Argot's 2017 book *How to Get Yourself Killed in Washington*.

Kennedy Youth: a scouting organization designed to teach boys and girls of ages 10-16 about the wilderness, American history, and money management. By 2021, there are local chapters of the Kennedy Youth all over the United States. Members of the Kennedy Youth wear khaki uniforms prominently displaying the stylized insignia seen at right:



Camelot: The Next Generation: In the program, the Atomic Kennedy stars as himself and assumes the role of a President of the United States attempting to defend America from an extra-terrestrial invasion.

the Plutocratic tendency to slash social spending. Also fuelling the Republocratic revival is the growing popularity of the "Atomic Kennedy," a cyborg created by the Republocrats in 2015 to serve as a marketing icon and presidential candidate. At the core of the Atomic Kennedy's encephalic circuitry is an actual brain fragment taken from assassinated president John F. Kennedy. The brain fragment was discovered in 2014 in a National Security Council freezer, where it was hidden by government conspirators in the wake of Kennedy's death. Although the Atomic Kennedy lost his 2020 presidential bid, he has achieved a whole new level of popular acceptance as the symbolic head of the [Kennedy Youth](#) and star of *Camelot: The Next Generation*, the highest rated vid-net drama on the airwaves.

The National Anti-Socialist Party: In 2018, the most radically conservative elements of the Plutocratic and Republocratic parties came together to form their own party, the National Anti-Socialists (NAS). NAS members have adopted the suppression of sedition and the elimination of "threatening elements" within the society as the cornerstone of their political agenda. In practice, this means that most of the policies advocated by the National Anti-Socialists are tainted by paranoia, bigotry, and hypocrisy.

THE NAS IS THE
NEWEST
POLITICAL PARTY
ON THE SCENE

Although the NAS has only been in existence for three years, hate campaigns designed by the Anti-Socialists were so effective in the 2018 and 2020 elections that the party currently controls an impressive 22% of the House of Representatives and 17% of the Senate.

Recent Presidential Administrations



2000	James Edgar/Alan Simpson (Republicans)
2004	James Edgar/Alan Simpson (Republicans)
2008	Raymond Milkovich/Saul Stevens (Independents)
2011	Saul Stevens/Howard Sedgefield (Independents)
2012	Darryl F. Gates/Rush Limbaugh (Plutocrats)
2016	Darryl F. Gates/Rush Limbaugh (Plutocrats)
2020	Charles M. Foster/Robert P. Brooks (Plutocrats)



SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

THE LAW HAS
CHANGED A
GREAT DEAL IN 50
YEARS

CORPORATIONS
CAN GAIN
COMPLETE
INDEPENDENCE
FROM THE
UNITED STATES

FREE SPEECH HAS
BEEN CURTAILED

The Law

The political turmoil brought about by the Second Cold War and America's changing role in the new world order has given rise to one of the most volatile eras in American legal history. Over the last twenty five years, the United States Constitution has been amended seven separate times. These new amendments have wrought three important changes upon American society.

First, properly registered corporations now have the right to negotiate and interact with foreign powers as though they are separate nations, provided such interaction does not break the laws of the United States within the territory of the United States (the Twenty-Seventh Amendment). It was this important piece of legislation that cleared the way for the foundation of militant corporations and private armies. Furthermore, a combination of the Twenty-Eighth Amendment and a legislative package passed in 2016 provides a mechanism whereby corporate entities can purchase complete sovereignty and declare themselves **separate nations** located inside the United States. Corporations that exercise such an option gain immunity from American laws on their own properties. In return, federal, state, and local governments gain huge sovereignty fees plus fees for licensing the sovereign American civil services. Such fees almost always vastly exceed the taxes paid by the corporations while they were still part of the United States. The few corporations that could afford to gain independence in this fashion have used their new-found freedom to disregard a wide range of **criminal and civil statutes** on their premises.

Second, free speech, though still a right, has been greatly curtailed (the Twenty-Ninth and Thirtieth Amendments). Although citizens retain the right to speak their minds openly, a multitude of laws require **certain types of free speech** to be reported to various state and federal authorities. Also, some states require citizens to obtain a license before engaging in some varieties of free speech — a legal mechanism made possible by the Twenty-Ninth Amendment.

Lastly, the Thirty-Second and Thirty Third Amendments legally define a human being as any sentient creature possessing, or having once possessed, 46 chro-

separate nations: Corporations that secure their independence draft their own laws and constitutions, often based upon simple but outmoded political systems. Thus, there is a King of Westwood Oil and a Great Caliph of Pueblo Software.

criminal and civil statutes: Statutes most frequently disregarded include labor and environmental protection laws, anti-trust laws, and anti-racketeering laws.

certain types of free speech: For example, all criticisms of the US Government must be reported to the Justice Department's Anti-Sedition Squad using a 1077 electronic file form. Failure to file a 1077 is a misdemeanor that carries a maximum six month jail sentence and \$10,000 fine. Although speaking out against the government is not a crime in and of itself (due to First Amendment protection), the ASS routinely drafts lists of frequent offenders and passes them over to the FBI.

protected free speech: Specifically, the ruling held that violent activities aimed at compromising the interests of sovereign corporations can be legally described as free speech, so long as those activities do not endanger the rights or property of American citizens or guests of the United States on American territory. In accordance with the Twenty-Ninth Amendment, most states require terrorist groups wishing to exercise this right to obtain a license.

mosomes. Note that this definition excludes pre-frontals. As a consequence, pre-frontals are not entitled to claim all the rights of citizens set forth by the Constitution. Through separate legislation, Congress has granted the pre-frontals many rights, though they still lack the rights to vote, assemble peaceably, bear arms, and the right of free speech. The Thirty-Second Amendment also pioneered the concept of corporate-sponsored legislation. In return for a vast sum of money payed to federal government, the Candy Cola™ Corporation was allowed to include a brief commercial announcement within the text of the amendment itself. Now, almost every important piece of legislation passed by Congress is commercially sponsored in a similar fashion.

Terrorism and Activism

Over the last twenty years, as more and more Americans began to feel disenfranchised from their government, a myriad of organizations looking to take government into their own hands arose. At first, most of these groups were little more than small bands of political activists who held periodic rallies aimed at promoting a specific "cause" or agenda. But over the years, many of the groups metamorphosed into armed and dangerous terrorist organizations. This process was spurred along by a 2013 Supreme Court ruling that followed in the wake of the Twenty-Seventh and Twenty-Ninth Amendments and classified a few varieties of violent terrorism as [protected free speech](#). Before long, the rights afforded to the legal terrorist groups emboldened even the illegal groups, setting off a wave of violent terrorist attacks that continues to rock the United States to this day. Hardly a day passes in most major American metropolises without a terrorist bombing, poisoning, or shooting.

The largest and most active terrorist organization in 2021 America is the so-called "Underground," founded by boosted veterans looking to overthrow the United States government. Details on the Underground and other prominent terrorist organizations can be found in Chapter Eleven.

Primitivism

An interesting backlash to the ever-worsening social conditions in the United States is the so-called "primitivist" movement founded in 2014. The primi-

THE LEGAL
DEFINITION OF
HUMANITY

CERTAIN
VARIETIES OF
TERRORISM ARE
LEGAL

PRIMITIVISM IS A
REACTION TO
WORSENING
CONDITIONS

tivists believe that modern human society is a complete failure and that humanity can only redeem itself by reverting back to a more primitive society and allowing a new advanced civilization to evolve. Thus, although they still make use of modern technology, primitivists cluster together in "tribes," adopt primitive customs, and wear traditional costumes cribbed from a wide variety of primitive cultures.

Primitivists are usually found on the **lowest levels** of America's multi-tiered urban centers. In many cities, **minor wars** between two tribes of primitivists who have adopted different cultures are not uncommon.

Your Role

In *Underground*, you and your fellow players take on the roles of boosted veterans who have returned from the wars to rediscover the nightmare that America has become. Things are bad. But your unique abilities give you the power to change them, should you so desire.

EACH PLAYER
CREATES A
BOOSTED
VETERAN

During play, you and your friends will each invent **details** about your own veterans, just as a writer might invent details about the characters populating her novel, and work together to tell exciting stories about your veterans and their struggles. Over time, you'll watch your characters develop, acquire histories, and change their imaginary world.

YOUR EXACT
ROLE IN THE
WORLD OF 2021
IS UP TO YOU

Exactly how your characters fit into the world of 2021 as play begins and the exact goals you'll follow are up to you and your **Gamemaster**, but here are a few possibilities:

- Is there something about the world of 2021 that particularly alarms you and your fellow players? Perhaps you should begin play as the founders of a vaunted terrorist group sworn to eliminate the hated feature or institution. You might even consider beginning play as members of the infamous Underground.
- Given up on the system? Maybe you and your friends should begin as members of a street gang and carve out your futures on your own terms.
- Do you think the terrorists and activists pose an even greater danger to the public than the bureaucrats? Perhaps your veterans should begin play

lowest levels: primitives cluster here due to their desire to be as close to "Mother Earth" as possible.

minor wars: LA's primitivist ghetto, for instance, is home to a long-standing feud between Yanomamos and Ubangis.

details: Details you'll create include your character's: name, appearance, background, and personality. Complete instructions for creating your veterans can be found in Chapter Five.

Gamemaster: a sort of "referee." The Gamemaster and his role are discussed in the next chapter.

mistrusted: Remember that the Department of Housing and Urban Development is openly conspiring to keep veterans isolated from the rest of society through its programs to provide veterans with free and low-cost housing.

organized religions: Some veterans have struck back against the religious right by forming religious organizations of their own. The most prominent of these organizations are the BOFC (Boosted Operatives For Christ) and the GEMs (Genetically Enhanced Muslims).

Meta-human rights organizations: The largest of these organizations is the NAAGE (the National Association for the Advancement of the Genetically Enhanced) founded in 2019.

as government operatives assigned the tasks of hunting down terrorists and spying on America's enemies abroad.

- Are you more interested in protecting the citizens than changing the institutions? Maybe you and your friends should begin play as vigilantes or law enforcement officers.

- Are you willing to let society fend for itself while you solve your own problems? Your veterans might begin as "corporate raiders" or small-time politicians hoping to maneuver themselves into a position where they can grab a piece of the political pie for themselves.

You'll find specific guidelines on how to decide exactly where your characters fit into the world in Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen.

The Life of a Veteran

Regardless of the role you choose, you should realize that your life won't be easy. In the world of 2021, boosted veterans are the victims of all sorts of bigotry and prejudice. Some of these feelings stem from simple fear of the unknown — genetic enhancements are considered "freakish" by many members of traditional society — but others have more solid foundations. After all, many boosted veterans suffer from crushing psychological illnesses, and a homicidal maniac capable of snapping steel bars with his bare hands poses quite a threat to society. Because of these feelings, many veterans are *mistrusted*, mistreated, and incapable of functioning within traditional society. Members of many *organized religions* are particularly hard on the veterans since they see the genetically-enhanced as abominations not created by God.

But the veterans are not without their sympathizers. *Meta-human rights organizations*, comprised of veterans and non-veterans alike, are springing up all over the country as more and more disenfranchised Americans are beginning to identify with the veterans and their struggles. But it will certainly be a long time before veterans are completely integrated into the public life and allowed to become useful members of society. And of course, the irony of the veterans' situation — the fact that American interests depend upon them but they are not welcomed into American society — is not lost on the veterans or their supporters.

VETERANS ARE
VICTIMS OF
PREJUDICE

ORGANIZATIONS
ARE FORMING TO
DEFEND THE
RIGHTS OF THE
BOOSTED

Chapter **two**

Those of you who have never played a role playing game should read this chapter for an introduction to role playing's basic concepts. If you are a role playing veteran, feel free to skip ahead to Chapter Three—The Basics.

ROLE PLAYING
GAMES ARE
UNLIKE
TRADITIONAL
BOARD GAMES

Like all **role playing games**, *Underground* is totally unlike poker, chess, checkers, or Monopoly: there are no winners or losers, there are no playing pieces, and a single game can last anywhere from one hour to several years. Instead, *Underground* is similar to the games you played as a child—games like "cops and robbers" and "cowboys and indians"—only much more sophisticated.

UNDERGROUND
CALLS UPON THE
PLAYERS TO
CREATE STORIES

Basically, *Underground* calls upon you and your friends to cooperate and create stories set in the world described in the previous chapter. Where does the next full-scale global conflict erupt, and how does it affect the United States? Is President Foster re-elected in 2024? Will the Underground ever manage to overthrow the American government? Eventually, you and your friends will answer all of these questions and more. Your goal is to create interesting stories that keep you entertained. Think of playing the game as watching a special movie that allows you to occasionally stop the action and tell the characters what to do next.

FIRST, EACH
PLAYER CREATES
A CHARACTER

Play begins with **each of the participants, save one**, using the rules in Chapters Four and Five to create a boosted veteran from the year 2021. As you make up your characters, you'll decide what they look like, what they act like, what activities they are particularly good or bad at, and how their genetic enhancements have affected them. Because it can take a while to invent these characters, you might want to instruct the players to create them **before you're actually ready to play**.

role playing games are often known by the abbreviation "RPG."

each of the participants, save one: The participant who doesn't create a character is known as the "Gamemaster" and her role is explained in the next paragraph.

before you're ready to play: In other words, allow each of the players to borrow this book for an evening so they can peruse Chapters Four and Five, or ask each player to purchase his or her own copy of the book. Although it's not strictly necessary, you might find it helpful to ask each of the players to read Chapter One before you begin play.

what is a role playing game?

Gamemaster: is often abbreviated "GM."

story outlines: are often known as "adventures," "adventure modules," or "scenarios" in RPG lingo.

clues: Before play begins, the Gamemaster must figure out the specific trail of clues leading from encounter to encounter. Perhaps the first gang member doesn't know why his gang is stealing a chronometer (one of the parts used to build the bomb), but knows the plot has something to do with the Flying Deuces, one of the other gangs hired by the terrorists. By capturing and interrogating a Flying Deuce, the players' characters learn that the Deuces were hired to steal a pre-detonator from a military base outside LA. A police scientist can now inform the player characters that the chronometer and pre-detonator are both parts of a large bomb, etc. Good Gamemasters often devise several clues revealing the same information in case the players miss a clue or attack the story from an unexpected angle.

The player who did not create a character becomes the **Gamemaster**, or referee. This player has a number of special responsibilities that are not shared by the other players. He or she: creates the basic framework of the story, begins the story, resolves any actions performed by the characters created by the other players, makes decisions for characters not controlled by the other players, and interprets the rules. Usually, it's a good idea to select the player most familiar with the game to take on the role of Gamemaster.

On her own, before the players get together, the Gamemaster secretly creates the basic outline of a story. For example, if the characters created by the players are all police officers, the GM might create a **story outline** like this:

A terrorist group has hired six separate street gangs to steal the parts necessary to construct an atomic warhead. The terrorists hope to use the warhead to destroy the city of Los Angeles to protest the immoral content of Hollywood motion pictures.

The Gamemaster also takes some time to figure out:

•How the players' characters become involved in the story.

Perhaps the story begins with the players' characters arresting and interrogating a member of one of the hired street gangs who spills the beans about a big job his gang is pulling.

•**Who the players' characters might meet during the story and what these characters are like.** In this case, the terrorists, street gang members, and various motion picture executives. The GM also invents a few details about each of these people (the terrorist leader is a middle-aged woman who walks with a limp and hates veterans, etc).

•**Where the players' characters might travel during the story and what these places are like.** In this case, the headquarters of the terrorist group and gangs, one or two of the terrorist group's front locations, and a couple of Hollywood studios. The GM also invents a few details about each of these places (the terrorists use the wine cellar of a restaurant owned by the terrorist leader as their headquarters, etc).

•**And what might happen during the story.** A path of **clues** leads the characters from the street gangs to Hollywood to the terrorists. If

THE GM ACTS AS A
REFEREE AND
STORY GUIDE

BEFORE PLAY, THE
GM CREATES A
STORY OUTLINE



EVENTUALLY,
YOUR OUTLINES
WILL GROW
MORE COMPLEX

the players cannot work their way down this path in four days, the terrorists successfully detonate their bomb.

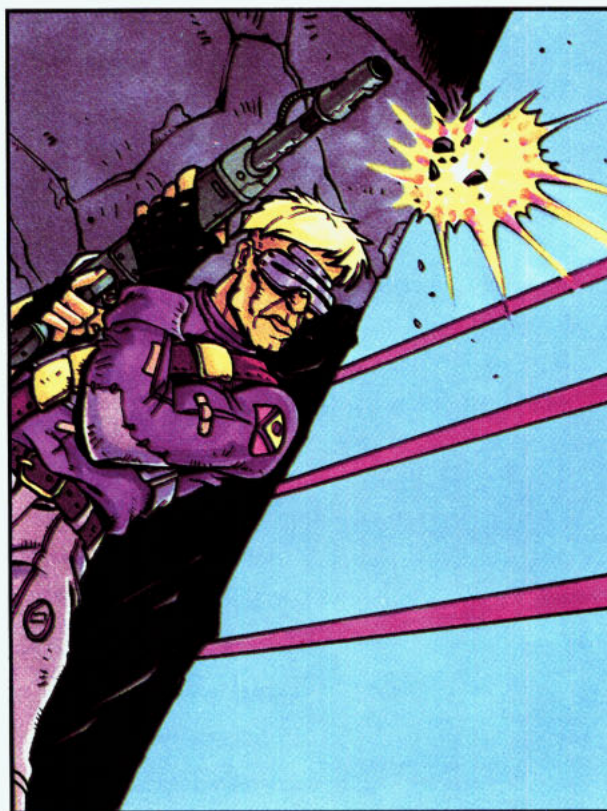
Although the first few story outlines you create will be simple, like the story of the terrorists and street gangs, with time, you'll find your outlines growing more and more interesting. Veteran Gamemasters frequently create story outlines as lengthy and intricate as a good movie or short novel. For a complete example of a fully detailed story outline, see Chapter Nineteen.

Once the outline has been prepared and the players have created their characters, the Gamemaster begins the story.

GAMEMASTER: Okay, it's Friday, March 11, 2021. You've just run a routine gang sweep and picked up a couple hustlers from the F-HOGs. It looks like one of the gang-bangers has something interesting to tell you.

At appropriate moments, the players jump in to assume the roles of their characters.

A PLAYER: Okay, I'll search the snitch for concealed weapons, lead him into the interrogation room, and close the door. (Speaking as his character) "So punk, what do you want to tell me?"



WITH SKILLED
PLAYERS AND
GAMEMASTERS,
ROLE PLAY IS
SOMETIMES
QUITE
ELABORATE

The Gamemaster then calls upon her common sense and imagination to respond to the players' input and describe the results of their actions.

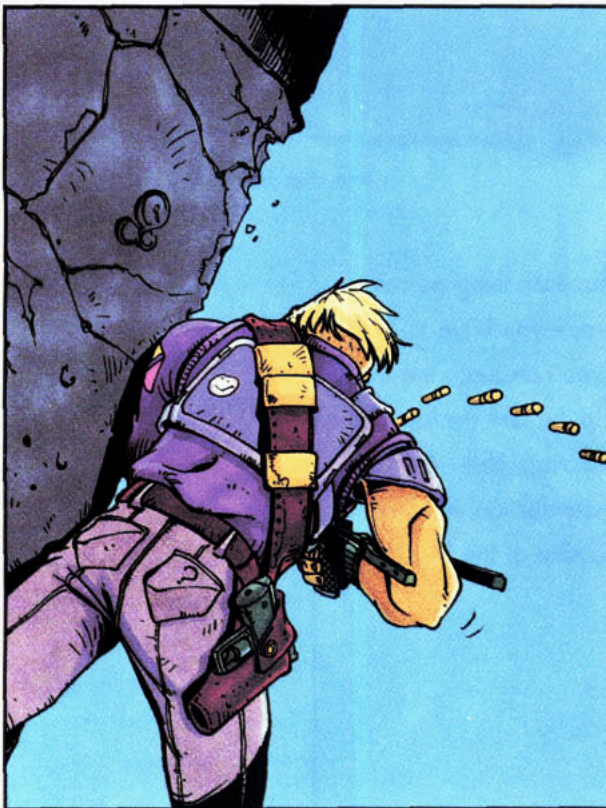
GAMEMASTER: You don't find any concealed weapons and you enter the interrogation room without a hitch. (Speaking as the snitch) "If I talk, you let me walk?"

Play simply proceeds in this fashion all the way through the story. The players tell the Gamemaster what their characters do, and the Gamemaster

what is a role playing game?

details: Examples include moody, evocative descriptions of action; players actually standing up to act out entire scenes among themselves; and Gamemasters changing their accent for each new character role they assume.

responds with what happens, allowing the players to choose their next actions. The sample exchanges you've just read are typical of beginning Gamemasters and players, but you should know that more advanced GMs and players, like veteran storytellers, embellish their actions and descriptions with all sorts of interesting **details**. In fact, once you develop this ability, you'll probably discover yourself enjoying *Underground* on a whole different level. A truly excellent player or GM is an actor, a writer, and a movie director all rolled into one.



details: The previous chapter was filled with such details. In later chapters, you'll learn about genetic enhancements, terrorist organizations, futuristic technology, and the Los Angeles of 2021.

At this point, you're probably wondering why this rulebook is so large. After all, the game seems simple enough.

WHY ALL THE
COMPLEX RULES?

Actually, there are two answers to this important question. Most obviously, this book contains tons of **details** about the world of 2021 that you can use in your stories. But more importantly, it's sometimes difficult for the Gamemaster to decide exactly what happens at a particular story juncture. For this reason, we're providing you with lots of rules the GM can use to help her figure out what happens. For example, suppose one of the players throws a punch at another character. How does the GM decide what happens to the target? Or what if the players' characters try to hack into a government computer? Do they succeed? In this book you'll find rules that will show you how to roll dice to answer these questions

and many more. And since the rules show you how to resolve actions according to the whims of random chance (the dice), they have the added benefit of making your stories more exciting and unpredictable.

You're now ready to plunge into the rest of the book. If this is truly your first role playing game, you should carefully scrutinize the rules before trying to play.

Chapter three

magenta
d and wet
eaks O.K.
and wired
nformation

HE DARK*
d your FAX
am waiting..

THE BEST IN FAX-SEX

39-28-36 blond — wild, eager, and genetically engineered for love—wants to hear from you! \$120 per transmission.
S/C and INTEX accepted.

Single Wh
for face-to
encounte
scratch-p
Fax pho

***BIG BO**
fast and r
sweating

—from *USA ALIVE*, March 8, 2021

Every game has rules. The important ones—there is no such thing as coincidence; everyone is greedy; yes, the feds will bury you—you have to learn the hard way. For now, let's worry about the rules you can learn the easy way. Remember that the purpose of the rules is to help the GM decide what happens at key points in the stories you create during play. Can the Delinquinaught smash down the door? Can the AML scientist tap into the IRS computers? What happens when the terrorist takes a shot at the President? The rules help the GM answer these questions.

Seven basic ideas form the foundation of *Underground*:

Idea #1 - Automatic Actions

The first and simplest idea to grasp is the *Rule of Automatic Actions*: whenever you want your character (or the GM wants one of the characters she controls) to perform an action *that an average human being could perform with virtually no chance of failure*, the action is automatically successful and immediately becomes part of the story. Examples of such actions include: walking across a room to look out a window, speaking, picking up an object, etc. In addition, certain **Abilities** allow characters possessing them to perform special Automatic Actions that are unique to those Abilities.

Examples: Other examples of Automatic Actions include: opening an unlocked door, operating a simple device (like a television, telephone, or car), purchasing an easily obtainable item from a store, etc. Again, any action an average human being can perform with virtually no chance of failure is an Automatic Action. Examples of actions that are not Automatic include: shooting a target, performing surgery, avoiding an obstacle while driving a car, etc. All these actions cannot be performed by a normal human being without at least a slight possibility of failure.

Abilities are introduced as Idea #3. For now, don't worry about these special Automatic Actions.

THE RULE OF
AUTOMATIC
ACTIONS

Gamemaster's Fiat: Good Gamemasters employ the fiat only as a last resort. Using it too often frustrates the players and makes them begin to feel like they are not making a contribution to the story.

The only exception to the Rule of Automatic Actions is known as the *Gamemaster's Fiat*. Because her responsibilities include keeping the story in motion and sorting out any conflicts that arise, the Gamemaster has the ability to prevent or prohibit an action at any time. Usually, the GM uses this power to sort out conflicts, but she might occasionally use it to prevent characters from performing the impossible or simply to keep the story interesting.

Gamemaster's Fiat Examples

Using the Fiat to Resolve a Conflict:

PLAYER ONE: I pick up the bomb.

PLAYER TWO: No, I pick up the bomb!

GAMEMASTER: Sorry, Player 2, Player 1 was first. You sit and watch.

Using the Fiat to Prevent a Character From Doing the Impossible:

PLAYER ONE: Okay. I open the door.

GAMEMASTER: Sorry, you can't. The door is locked and you haven't found the key. To get in, you must either pick the lock or bash down the door.

Using the Fiat to Make the Story More Interesting:

GAMEMASTER: The F-HOGs chase you all the way back to your car. They look like they want blood!

PLAYER ONE: Fine. I put the key in the ignition and start the car.

GAMEMASTER: Sorry. You're so nervous that you drop the keys on the floor of the car. You'll have to find them before you can start the engine.

Idea #2 - Attributes

Every imaginary character and object in the stories you'll create has certain defining characteristics known as *Attributes*. Characters have seven Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Speed, Resilience, Intellect, Willpower, and Aura.

EVERY IMAGINARY CHARACTER AND OBJECT HAS ONE OR MORE ATTRIBUTES

Strength (STR): is a measure of the character's physical power. It represents his or her abilities to: lift and carry heavy objects, smash down doors and other barriers, inflict damage in hand-to-hand combat, and exert him or herself over long periods of time.

Because genetic enhancement is so common, many *Underground* characters are far stronger than their "real world" counterparts. In fact, most boosted characters can lift at least 1000 lbs. over their heads, and characters capable of lifting **far greater weights** are not unknown.

Dexterity (DEX): is a measure of a character's agility. It represents his or her abilities to: dodge bullets, perform complex tasks with the hands, and aim a gun. Surgeons, acrobats, and gymnasts generally excel at Dexterity.

Speed (SPD): measures a character's ability to quickly cover distances. Due to their genetic enhancements, many *Underground* characters are **much faster than their real world counterparts**.

Resilience (RES): is an indication of the amount of injury the character can sustain before becoming incapacitated. Characters with a particularly high Resilience are less susceptible to diseases and poisons as well as more traditional injuries.

In the world of 2021, a few boosted characters have such high Resiliences that their skin can easily shrug off gunfire.

Intellect (INT): measures the character's intelligence and alertness. Note that Intellect has nothing to do with education. There are many high school dropouts who have never read a single Shakespeare play, **yet still excel at Intellect**. Likewise, there are many PhDs with poor Intellects. INT measures only the character's ability to think quickly and clearly.

far greater weights: As of 2021, the world bench-press record is just over 50 tons. The record is held by Mason Curtis (aka "Meat Tower"), a former Allied Mayhem soldier and convicted felon.

much faster . . . counterparts: In 2021, the world record in the 1500m run is 2:07, held by Geoffrey Alvarez (aka Tomahawk X) of Woodstock, Illinois.

yet still excel at Intellect: Burroughs' Tarzan is a literary example of a poorly educated character who excels at INT.

not necessarily . . . attractive:
Despite the fact that he was
despised by most of the
world's population and not
particularly attractive, there is
no doubt about the fact that
Adolf Hitler excelled at Aura.

a result of genetic
manipulation: Thus, only
boosted characters possess
Enhancements.

Willpower (WILL): is an indication of the character's determination and psychological stability. Characters who excel at Willpower remain calm under pressure and refuse to submit to temptation.

Aura (AURA): reflects the strength of the character's personality. Characters who excel at Aura are charismatic and noticed, while those with poor Auras are unnoticed or shunned. Note that characters excelling at Aura are **not necessarily likeable or physically attractive**.

While characters always have all six Attributes, objects have only those Attributes that are appropriate. Thus, all objects have a Resilience, reflecting the amount of damage the object can sustain before it is destroyed; but only cranes have a STR (cranes can lift objects) and only computers have an INT (computers can "think"), etc. More information on objects and Attributes can be found in Chapter Twelve.

Idea #3 - Abilities

Attributes govern many, but not all, of the actions characters can perform. In addition to Attributes, there are other characteristics, known as *Abilities*, that are not automatically possessed by each and every character. For instance, although every single character possesses the SPD Attribute because every character can move, only trained medical personnel possess the Medicine Ability.

Abilities are split into two categories: *Skills* and *Enhancements*. Skills (like Medicine or Driving) are Abilities that are learned and can be acquired by any character. Enhancements (like Telepathy and Flight Stabilization) are Abilities gained as **a result of genetic manipulation**. Skills are described in Chapter Six. Enhancements are described in Chapter Seven. Players determine the Abilities possessed by their characters by using the character creation rules found in Chapter Five. The GM is free to assign any Abilities she finds appropriate to the characters under her control.

OBJECTS HAVE
ATTRIBUTES TOO

ABILITIES ARE
CHARACTERISTICS
NOT POSSESSED
BY EVERY SINGLE
CHARACTER

THERE ARE TWO
TYPES OF
ABILITIES: SKILLS
AND
ENHANCEMENTS

ATTRIBUTES AND
ABILITIES ARE
MEASURED IN
UNITS

UNIT
MEASUREMENTS
CAN BE
TRANSLATED
INTO "REAL
WORLD" VALUES

As previously mentioned, some Abilities give their owners the ability to perform certain special Automatic Actions. These actions are fully described in Chapters Six and Seven.

Idea #4 - Units

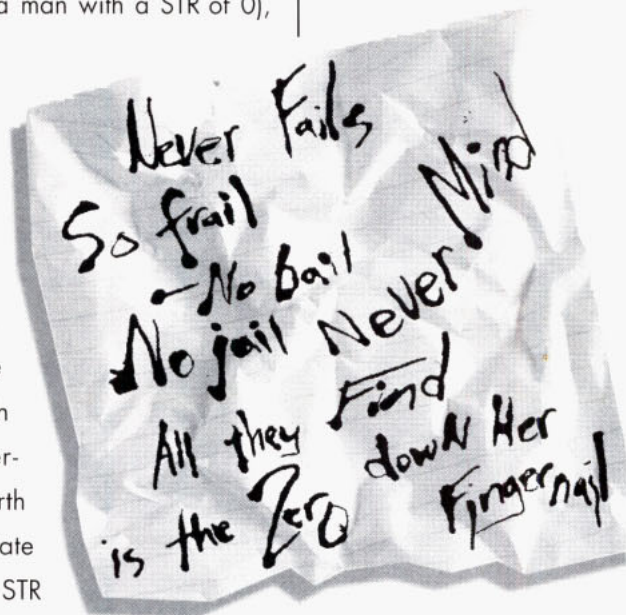
Any action that is not an Automatic Action ultimately reduces down to a "contest" involving Attributes and/or Abilities. For example, a character who wants to smash down a locked door must use her Strength to overcome the door's Resilience. To resolve such contests we obviously need a method for rating and comparing Attributes and Abilities.

In *Underground*, all Attributes and Abilities are measured in quantities known as *Units*. By definition, a completely average man possesses *0 Units* in each of his Attributes and Abilities. Furthermore, also by definition, every 3 Units added to an Attribute or Ability doubles the effectiveness of that Attribute or Ability. Therefore, a man with a STR of 3 is twice as strong as a man with a STR of 0, and a man with a STR of 6 is twice as strong as a man with a STR of 3 (and thus four times as strong as a man with a STR of 0), and so on.

Since Unit ratings mean nothing by themselves, we've also converted several "real world" measurements into Units, allowing you to translate between Units and more familiar measurement systems with little effort. Using the Unit Benchmark Table on the next page, you can now measure weight, distance, time, volume, and information in Units. And since Units are designed to be interchangeable, you can easily convert back and forth between an Attribute or Ability and an appropriate "real world" value. For instance, a character with a STR of 6 can lift 6 Units of weight, or 400 lbs.

Units: is often abbreviated "U." In other words, "7U" means "7 Units."

0 Units: Note that it is possible to have Attributes or Abilities rated below zero. See Important Note #3, below.



—A portion of Speed Zero's handwritten lyrics to "LP," the final cut on Systematic Overthrow's *Sip This!* album. On March 5, 2021, this page was sold at a Christie's auction for \$140,000.

unit benchmark table

Units	Weight	Distance	Time	Volume	Information
-5	30 lbs.	3 feet	1 second	15 cu. ft.	
-4	40 lbs.	4 feet	1 1/2 seconds	20 cu. ft.	Sentence
-3	50 lbs.	5 feet	2 seconds	25 cu. ft.	
-2	60 lbs. (sack of grain)	6 feet	2 1/2 sec.	32 cu. ft.	
-1	75 lbs.	7 feet	3 seconds	40 cu. ft.	
0	100 lbs. (child)	10 feet	4 sec. (1)	50 cu. ft.	Paragraph
1	125 lbs. (avg. adult female)	12 feet	5 seconds	64 cu. ft. (pantry)	
2	150 lbs.	15 feet	6 seconds	80 cu. ft.	
3	200 lbs. (avg. adult male)	20 feet	8 sec. (2)	100 cu. ft.	Typed page
4	250 lbs.	25 feet	10 seconds	125 cu. ft. (lg. tent)	
5	300 lbs.	30 feet	12 sec. (3)	150 cu. ft.	
6	400 lbs.	40 feet	15 sec. (4)	200 cu. ft.	2 Typed pages
7	500 lbs.	50 feet	20 sec. (5)	250 cf (bathroom)	
8	600 lbs.	60 feet	24 sec. (6)	300 cu. ft.	
9	800 lbs. (small tree)	80 feet	30 sec. (8)	400 cu. ft.	1000 words
10	1000 lbs. (large animal)	100 feet	40 sec (10)	500 cu. ft.	
11	1200 lbs.	120 feet	48 sec. (12)	600 cu. ft.	
12	1500 lbs.	150 feet	1 min. (15)	800 cf (living room)	Chapter of a novel
13	1 ton	200 feet	1 1/4 min. (19)	1000 cu. ft.	
14	1 1/4 tons	250 feet	1 1/2 min. (23)	1200 cu. ft.	
15	1 1/2 tons (small car)	100 yards	2 min. (30)	1600 cf (store front)	Term paper
16	2 tons	125 yards	2 1/2 min. (38)	2000 cu. ft.	
17	2 1/2 tons (large car)	150 yards	3 min. (45)	2500 cu. ft.	
18	3 tons (elephant)	200 yards	4 min. (60)	3200 cf (studio apt)	Short story
19	4 tons	250 yards	5 min. (75)	4000 cu. ft.	
20	5 tons	300 yards	6 min. (90)	5000 cu. ft.	
21	6 tons	400 yards	8 min. (120)	6400 cf (small apt)	64K memory
22	8 tons (semi-truck)	1/4 mile	10 min. (150)	8000 cu. ft.	
23	10 tons	600 yards	12 min. (180)	10,000 cu. ft.	
24	12 tons (light tank)	800 yards	15 min. (225)	12,500 cf (house)	Novella
25	16 tons	1/2 mile	20 min. (300)	15,000 cu. ft.	
26	20 tons	1200 yards	24 min. (360)	20,000 cu. ft.	
27	25 tons (DC-9 airplane)	1600 yards	30 min. (450)	25,000 cf (2 flat)	Paperback Novel
28	32 tons (battle tank)	1 mile	40 min. (600)	30,000 cu. ft.	
29	40 tons	1 1/4 mile	48 min. (720)	40,000 cu. ft.	
30	50 tons	1 1/2 miles	1 hour (900)	50,000 cf (4 flat)	Elementary textbook
31	64 tons (blue whale)	2 miles	1 1/4 hrs (1125)	60,000 cu. ft.	
32	80 tons	2 1/2 miles	1 1/2 hrs (1350)	80,000 cu. ft.	
33	100 tons	3 miles	2 hours (1800)	100,000 cu. ft.	1 megabyte
34	125 tons (Boeing 747 plane)	4 miles	2 1/2 hrs (2250)	120,000 cu. ft.	
35	150 tons	5 miles	3 hours (2700)	150K cf (warehouse)	
	Freighter (450 tons) = 39 Destroyer (900 tons) = 42 Small Building (1800 tons) = 45	10 miles = 38 50 miles = 45 100 miles = 48 1000 miles = 58	1 day = 44 1 month = 59 1 year = 70	8 story building = 41 skyscraper = 56	War and Peace = 36 Encyclopedias = 48



Judged by Twelve or Carried by Six?— Officers of the LA Peace Force buck down a few Skullboys who were looking to pick up a "juice" shipment from Tangiers.

less than 0: Unit measurements can run infinitely small. The radius of an atom is approximately -104 Units long.

Important Notes About Units

1. When converting "real world" values into Units, each Unit actually represents an entire range of values. In other words, any object that weighs between 201 and 250 lbs. weighs 4 Units. Thus, when using the Unit Benchmark Table to make such a conversion, look down the appropriate column of the chart until you find the first number that is greater than or equal to the value you are converting, then look to the leftmost column for its Unit equivalent.

Example: What is the Unit equivalent of 14 minutes? Looking down the Time column of the Unit Benchmark Chart, we find that 15 minutes is the first listed value that is greater than or equal to the value we are converting, so 14 minutes translates into 24 Units.

2. Note that it is impossible to add two Unit values together, like you might add together "real world" values. A small car weighs 15 units (1 1/2). Two small cars stacked together weigh 3 tons, or 18 Units—not 30 Units. When adding Unit values together, first convert them to a real world value, then add the real world values together, and then convert back to Units.

Example: If Character 1 has a STR of 5 Units and Character 2 has a Strength of 11 Units, how much can Characters 1 & 2 lift if they cooperate? With his STR of 5, Character 1 can lift 300 lbs, and with a STR of 11, Character 2 can lift 1200 lbs. Together, they can lift 1500 lbs., or 12 Units.

3. Note that the columns on the Unit Benchmark Table give "real world" equivalents for Unit ratings that are **less than 0**. A Unit value less than 0 simply indicates an Attribute or Ability that is less effective than that of the average human. Thus, a frail old lady might have a STR of -4, allowing her to lift only 40 lbs.

4. On a few columns of the Unit Benchmark Table, you'll notice that we've provided a few non-numerical examples to help you estimate

EACH UNIT REPRESENTS AN ENTIRE RANGE OF VALUES

DON'T ADD UNIT MEASUREMENTS!

SOME UNIT MEASUREMENTS ARE LESS THAN 0



chapter 3

DURING PLAY,
YOU'LL FIND
"BENCHMARKS"
USEFUL

measurements during play. For instance, you probably have no idea exactly how much a small sailboat weighs, but it's easy to guess that the weight of the boat is closer to that of an adult male (3 Units) than that of a small tree (9 Units), so call it 5 Units. Note that exact measurements are rarely necessary during play, as long as you can arrive at a **reasonably accurate estimate**.

Example: Can a character with a STR of 31 lift a battleship? Obviously not. A battleship certainly weighs much more than a destroyer (42 Units).

reasonably accurate estimate:
This is important enough to bear a repeat mention. During play, vacillation over the exact weight or length of an object or item is pointless. Come up with a reasonable estimate and keep the story moving.

Applications of the Unit system

THE UNIT SYSTEM
HAS MANY
APPLICATIONS

The fact that every quantity in the game is measured in Units allows you to perform all sorts of quick and useful calculations. At first, these calculations might seem difficult. But as you gain experience with the game system, you'll learn to appreciate their speed and efficiency. Sprinkled throughout this book, you'll find all sorts of guidelines for using the Unit system to make useful calculations. For now, here are a couple of applications to whet your appetite.

HUD SCANDAL DEEPENS Rauch under investigation

by Virginia Melendez
USA ALIVE

Washington— At a press conference held late last night, White House Chief of Staff Donald Casey finally confirmed that Theodore Rauch, the Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, is under investigation in connection with the ongoing HUD steering scandal. Rauch was first linked with the scandal when he was publicly denounced by members of the Underground during their pirated "Channel Zero" broadcast of January 14th.

According to the Underground, Rauch has been steering HUD funds earmarked for low-cost

veteran housing toward various private developers for as long as two years. Most of these funds were allegedly used to construct high-rise luxury apartments and golf courses. Various members of the Underground went on to charge Rauch with helping wealthy real estate developers circumvent HUD regulations by incorporating single units reserved for veterans into their luxury developments.

During the conference, Casey refused to speculate about what the Justice Department investigators might uncover. At press time, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is still using the Fortensky Act to block USA Alive's own inquiries.

January 22, 2021



Adios, Huckle-Buck!— This scrawny geek should have known better than to draw an inside straight flush against El Diablo's full house.

Movement

As you create your stories, you'll often need to know how quickly various characters can travel from place-to-place.

In **0 Units of a time**, a character or object can move a distance equal to his/her Speed. In other words, a character with a Speed of 3 can move 20 feet (8 Units of distance) every 4 seconds (0 Units of time).

Note that this movement rate assumes slow, cautious movement (ie. a slow walk). Characters moving faster, but less cautiously add +3 to their SPDs (ie. a trot), and characters moving at top speed add +6 to their SPDs (ie. a full run). In Chapter Nine, you will learn that characters sometimes suffer certain penalties while moving at top speed and that few characters can maintain top speed for long.

Because time, distance, and speed are all measured in Units, the following useful equations hold true:

$$\text{Distance} = \text{Speed} + \text{Time}$$

$$\text{Time} = \text{Distance} - \text{Speed}$$

Although these **equations** might seem difficult to remember, after a while, they'll become second nature. Let's give them a try:

0 units of time: is also known as one "Turn." Turns will be introduced in Idea #6.

equations: Those of you with an interest in mathematics might note that the Unit scale is logarithmic in nature. Thus adding Units translates into multiplying real world values and subtracting units translates into dividing real world values.

TWO USEFUL
EQUATIONS

VETERAN KILLED AT CASEY'S Hundreds watch as police "shoot to kill"

February 11, 2021

by Jennifer Fortunato
USA ALIVE

Simi Valley—"My god. He just kept coming. Finally, they hit him with something large and loud and he exploded into pieces."

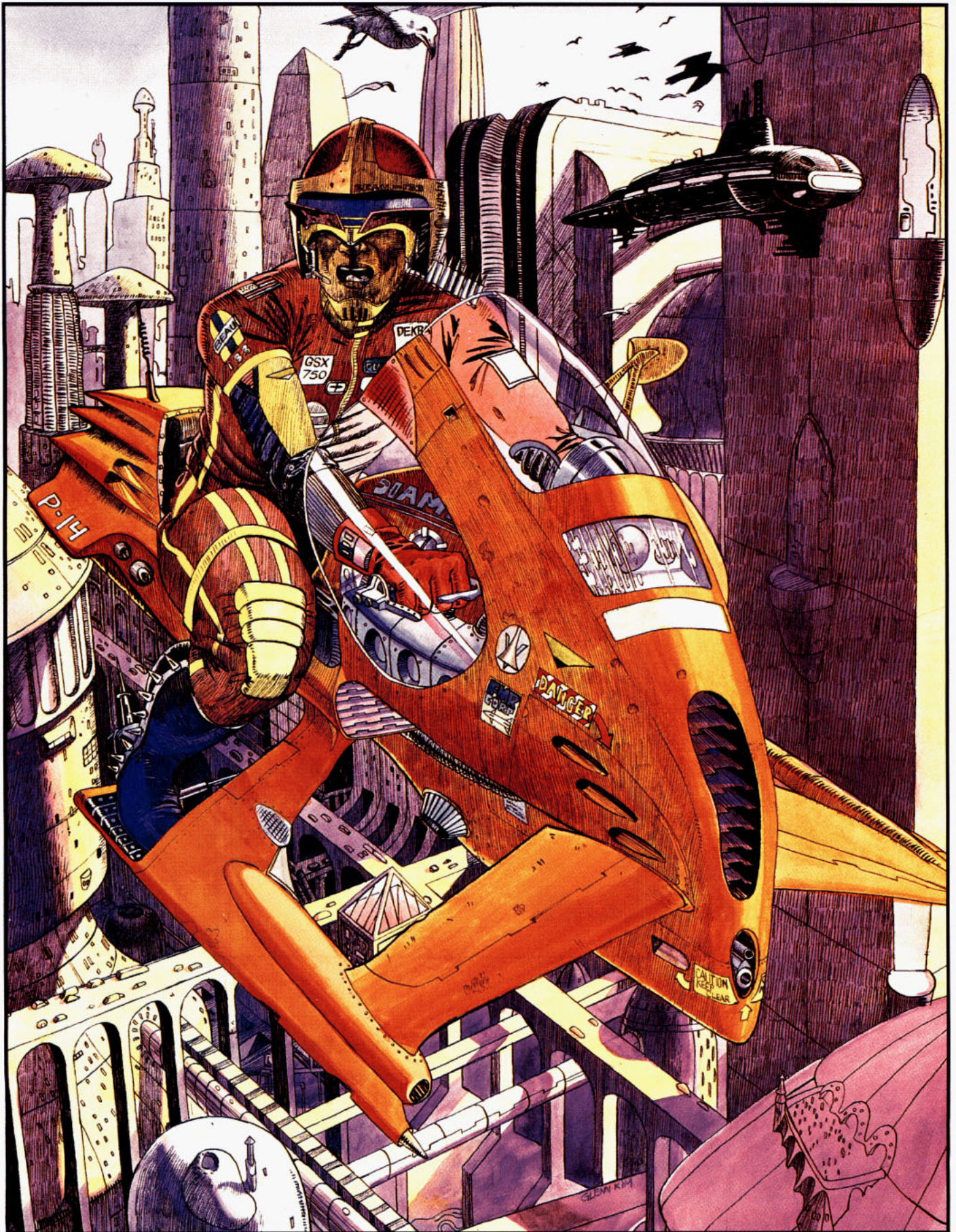
So said one witness to the police shooting of Allied Mayhem veteran Donald Mason (code-named Teflon Don in Latvia) outside a Casey's Toy Store early yesterday evening.

According to witnesses, Mason entered the store in full uniform at approximately 6:50 PM, babbling incoherently and clutching his head, prompting a store clerk to call the police. Ten minutes later, Mason refused to pay for an item he selected, a

Sassy Sally doll, and walked out the door to face GE officers just arriving on the scene.

When he refused an order to halt, the officers peppered Mason with low caliber slugs in a futile attempt to incapacitate him. Seconds later, Mason turned violent and rushed the police, prompting a GE commanding officer to issue a "shoot to kill" order. In the end, hundreds of shoppers watched an LAPD sharpshooter bring the incident to a messy conclusion with an LF770 radar-guided rocket launcher.

Although detectives are refusing to speculate about Mason's condition, a syringe full of Haloperdol, a drug used to treat certain varieties of metagenic feedback trauma, was found among his remains.



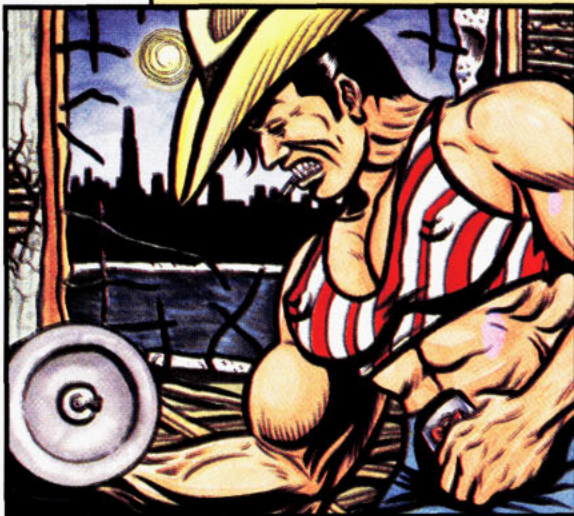
Corporate Spokesman Pfinster 99 in search of an opportunity to make the funny papers.

Movement Examples

How far can a character with a SPD of 4 travel in one hour? One hour is 30 Units of time, so the character can cover 34 Units of distance, or 4 miles. At top speed, of course, she could cover more distance; but it is doubtful she could maintain top speed for the entire hour (again, you'll read more about top speed in Chapter Nineteen).

The players are driving a car with a SPD of 13. How long will it take them to drive to a secret research facility located 5 miles away? Since 5 miles is 35 Units, the players can make the trip in 22 Units of time, or 10 minutes. Should they decide to drive at top speed (increasing their SPD to 19), they can make the trip in 16 Units of time, or 2 1/2 minutes.

Pump That Iron!—He's in great shape, but Aural Tex should lay off the Estro-Gin™.



Lifting and Throwing Things

As implied earlier, a character can lift a weight less than or equal to his STR as an Automatic Action. To find out how far, a character can throw an object, simply subtract its weight from the character's STR and read the result as a distance.

Examples:

How far can a soldier with a STR of 6 throw an average adult male? Since an average adult male weighs 3 Units, the soldier can throw the male 3 Units of distance, or 20 feet.

How far can a character with a STR of 25 throw a small car? A small car weighs 15 Units, so the character can toss it 10 Units of distance or 100 feet. Ouch!

35 Units: At the bottom of each column of the Unit Benchmark Table, you'll find a few larger values of interest.

a few simple additions:
Note that multiples from the Multiple Chart can be strung together. For instance, the "Add" associated with 100,000,000 is +80 (+20 for $\times 100$ +60 for $\times 1,000,000$). The "add" associated with $2/3$ is -2 (-5 for $\times 1/3$ +3 for $\times 2$).

Using the Multiple Chart

Unfortunately, the Unit Benchmark Table extends only to 35 Units. To find the Unit equivalent of larger quantities, you can use the Multiple Chart below. Here's how it works:

1. Find a combination of a value from the Benchmark Table and a multiple from the Multiple Table that can be multiplied together to produce the value you are trying to convert.
2. Read the Unit equivalent corresponding to the value you pulled from the Benchmark Table and add the "Add" corresponding to the multiple to obtain the final result.

Examples:

How many Units of time is five days? Since one day is 44 Units of time, and $\times 5$ has an "Add" of +7, 5 days is 51 Units of time.

How many Units of information is one gigabyte of computer memory? One gigabyte is 1000 megabytes and one megabyte is 33 Units of information. Since $\times 1000$ has an "Add" of +30, a gigabyte is 63 Units of information.

How much does 75 Units weigh? In this case, we must work backwards. Since the "Add" +40 has an associated multiple of $\times 10,000$, 75 Units weighs 10,000 times as much as 35 Units, for a total of 1,500,000 tons.

Note that the Multiple Chart can also be used to perform a few simple additions. If an object weighs 5 Units, then two of the objects stacked together weigh 8 Units (since $\times 2$ has an associated "Add" of +3), three of the objects stacked together weigh 10 Units, and so on.

THE MULTIPLE CHART IS USED TO CALCULATE UNIT MEASUREMENTS THAT RUN LARGER THAN THOSE FOUND ON THE UNIT BENCHMARK TABLE

multiple chart

Multiple	Add
$\times 1/4$	-6
$\times 1/3$	-5
$\times 1/2$	-3
$\times 2$	+3
$\times 3$	+5
$\times 4$	+6
$\times 5$	+7
$\times 10$	+10
$\times 20$	+13
$\times 50$	+17
$\times 100$	+20
$\times 500$	+27
$\times 1000$	+30
$\times 10,000$	+40
$\times 100,000$	+50
$\times 1,000,000$	+60

THE MULTIPLE CHART CAN ALSO BE USED FOR SIMPLE ADDITION



So Long, Fritz!— AMI troopers in Paraguay, 2019.

Practice With Units

The Unit system is so important to *Underground* that you should probably take some time to practice working with it. Here are a few exercises:

- 1) How long is a football field (100 yards)? *15 Units*
- 2) How long is three days? *49 Units; note that this problem called for the use of the Multiple Chart*
- 3) Can a character with a STR of 8 lift a car? *No, a small car weighs 15 Units.*
- 4) How far can a character with a SPD of 2 travel in fifteen minutes? *1200 yards at a slow walk or 1 1/4 miles at a trot.*
- 5) How far can a character with a STR of 15 toss a small tree? *40 feet*
- 6) How long is a coil of rope that measures in at 7 Units? *50 feet*

varying degrees: In the examples just mentioned, for instance: how good a punch did you land, how many clues did you spot at the crime scene, and how well did you repair the engine.

Idea #5 - Challenges

Contests involving Attributes and Abilities are known as *Challenges*. A character attempting to break down a door is a good example of a Challenge. In this case, the character must pit her STR against the door's RES.

Resolving Challenges

For a moment, think of Challenges as school courses. There are two types of Challenges, *Pass/Fail Challenges* and *Standard Challenges*. A Pass/Fail (P/F) Challenge is a test in which the character either succeeds or fails. A Standard Challenge is a test in which knowing whether or not the character succeeds is not enough, you must also know the quality of the character's success. Attempts to jump over a fence, break down a door, or spot a hidden object are all P/F Challenges; you either succeed at these tasks or you fail. Attempts to punch another character, scan a crime scene for clues, or repair an engine are all Standard Challenges. In each of these tests, *varying degrees* of success are possible.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CHALLENGES: P/F AND STANDARD

RESOLVING P/F CHALLENGES

To resolve a P/F Challenge, the player controlling the character performing the action rolls 2D10 and adds their results together. If this original roll resulted in "doubles" (ie. the same value on each die), the player may roll again and add it to the original result. In fact, the player may keep rolling the dice and adding the result to his original total as long as the rolls keep resulting in doubles. For instance: a character rolls a 5 and a 5, rolls again and receives a 6 and a 6, rolls again and receives a 7 and 7, and rolls again and receives a 9 and a 2, for a total roll of 47 (10+12+14+11). The player then adds his total dice roll to the Attribute or Ability being Challenged.

Next, the Gamemaster repeats exactly the same process. If the player's total is greater than the GM's total, the player succeeds. If not, the player fails.

2D10: is role playing slang for "two ten-sided dice."
Polyhedral role playing dice are available at most book stores and hobby shops.

A Sample P/F Challenge:

A character with a STR of 8 is trying to bash down a door with a RES of 4.

First, the player controlling the character rolls the dice and receives an 8 and a 6, for a total of 14. The player then adds in his STR (the Attribute being Challenged) for a grand total of 22.

Next, the GM rolls the dice and receives a 2 and a 2. Since she rolled "doubles," the GM may roll again. She does so and receives another 2 and a 2, allowing her to roll again. Finally, she rolls a 3 and 1, for a total of 12 (4+4+4). She then adds in the door's RES (the Attribute being challenged) for a grand total of 16.

Since the player's total beat the GM's total, the player succeeds and easily smashes down the door.

Difficulty: Don't worry if you don't recognize this term. You'll be introduced to the concept of Difficulty in the next few paragraphs.

Standard Challenges are resolved much like P/F Challenges. But in the case of a Standard Challenge, if the Challenge is successful, the players calculate the exact difference between the player's total and the Gamemaster's total and consult the Challenge Chart below.

RESOLVING
STANDARD
CHALLENGES

Notice how the Challenge Chart gives you a letter grade, similar to the grades you earned in school, describing how successfully your character overcame the Challenge. Later, you'll learn exactly what these letter grades mean and how to interpret them.

challenge chart

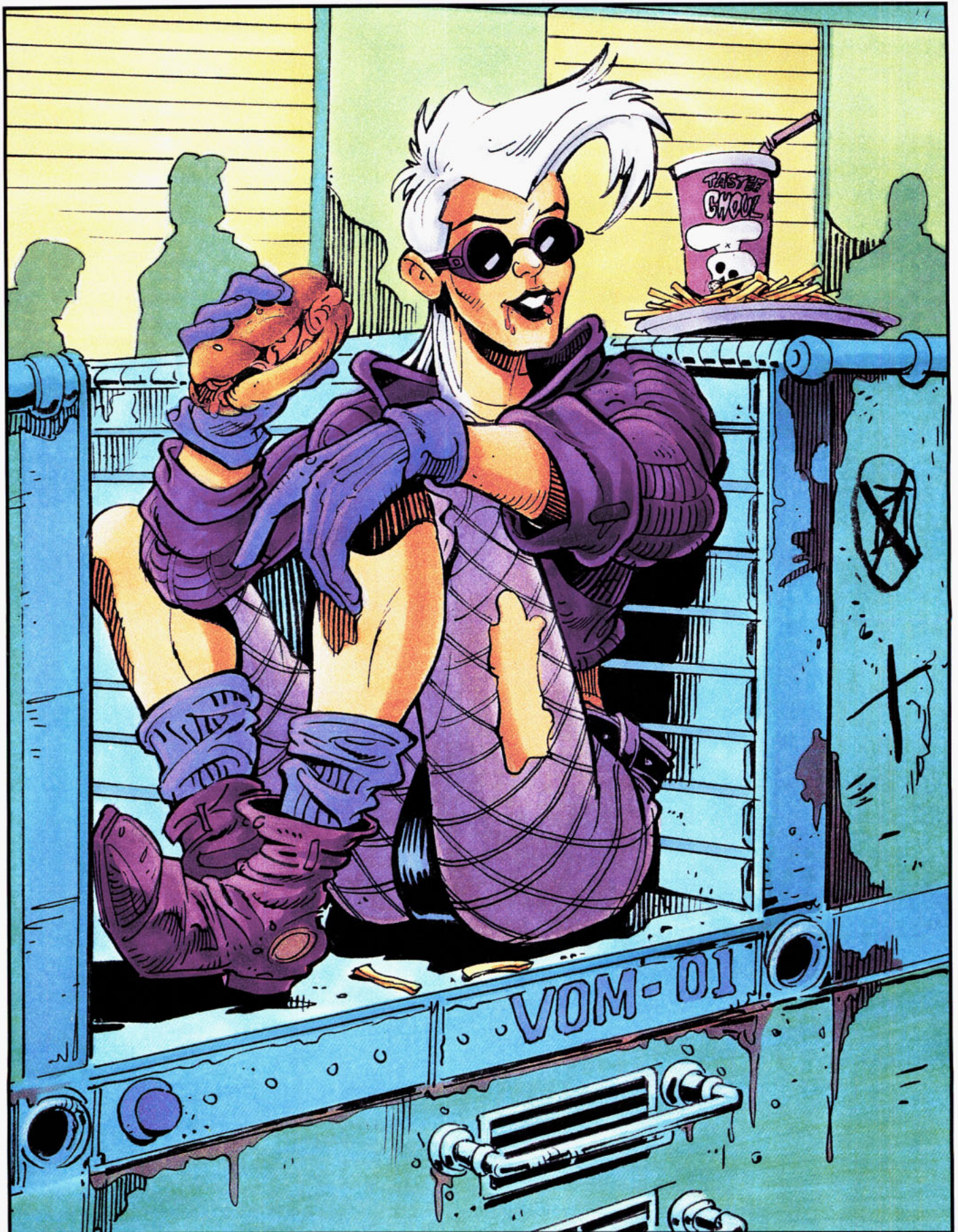
Difference	Grade
1-3	D
4-7	C
8-10	B
11+	A

Example of a Standard Challenge

A character with a Detective Ability of 7 is scanning a crime scene for clues. The GM rates the **Difficulty** of this action at 3. The player rolls the dice and gets a 4 and a 4, allowing him to roll again. On the second roll, the character gets a 6 and a 9, for a total dice roll of 23 (8+15). Adding his Detective Ability of 7, the player has a grand total of 30.

Next, the Gamemaster rolls the dice and gets a 9 and an 8, for a total of 17. Adding in the Difficulty of the action, the GM has a grand total of 20.

Since the player's total exceeds the GM's total by 10, he receives a B — a pretty good grade. In this case, the B means the character notices most, but not all, the clues on the scene. In Chapter Six, you'll read all about the Detective Ability and how it works.



Undergrounder Donna Matrix scarfs down some Corpus Crispies while casing a National Guard Armory.

fence doesn't have . . .
Attribute: A fence has only a Resilience; none of the other Attributes are appropriate. Since RES measures only the fence's resistance to damage, it has nothing to do with whether or not a character can successfully leap the fence.

average person: Again, it's important to note that the "approximate odds" column of the Difficulty Chart lists the odds of an average human being (like the GM herself) successfully meeting the Challenge, not the odds of the Challenge being met by the character performing the action. In other words, whether it is Grandma Smith (DEX -3) or Colonel Halliwell (DEX 7) who is attempting to jump over the fence, the jump is always a "difficult" Challenge.

The Difficulty Chart

Sometimes a character will attempt a Challenge when there is no obvious Attribute or Ability to oppose him. Suppose, for instance, a running character wants to hurdle over a high fence. The character's Attribute that is being Challenged is obviously his DEX, but the *fence doesn't really have an Attribute* to oppose him.

In these cases, the Gamemaster consults the Difficulty Chart and assigns the Challenge a Difficulty. In all respects, this Difficulty functions like an Attribute or Ability.

difficulty chart

Description	Approx. Odds	Difficulty
Simple	3 in 4	-4
Easy	2 in 3	-2
Average	Even Money	0
Tricky	2 in 5	2
Difficult	1 in 3	3
Very Difficult	1 in 4	4
Impressive	1 in 10	9
Phenomenal	1 in 25	15
Legendary	1 in 100	20
Superhuman	1 in 1000	30

Using the Difficulty Chart

When using the Difficulty Chart, the Gamemaster should look at the Challenge from the point of view of an average human being like herself. Is the Challenge simple? Average? Very difficult? For assistance, the GM can also look to the chart's "approximate odds" column, which lists the odds of an *average person* successfully meeting a Challenge at the various listed difficulty levels. Once the GM has arrived at an appropriate description of the Challenge or the approximate odds of success, she can simply consult the chart's rightmost column to arrive at a Difficulty.

SOME
CHALLENGES
HAVE NO
OBVIOUS ABILITY
OR ATTRIBUTE TO
OPPOSE THEM

THE DIFFICULTY
CHART IS USED
TO RESOLVE
CHALLENGES NOT
OPPOSED BY AN
ATTRIBUTE OR
ABILITY



THE DIFFICULTY
CHART IS ALSO
USED TO MODIFY
ACTIONS
RESISTED BY
ATTRIBUTES OR
ABILITIES

SOMEIMES THE
GM MUST
DECIDE WHAT
ATTRIBUTES AND
ABILITIES TO USE
WHEN RESOLVING
CHALLENGES

An Example of Using the Difficulty Chart

A character with a DEX of 6 wants to leap a four-foot fence. Considering the situation for a moment and consulting the Difficulty Chart, the GM decides that leaping the fence is a "difficult" action which she personally could perform maybe once in three attempts. Thus, the Challenge has a Difficulty of 3. The Challenge is then resolved using the rules for resolving P/F Challenges, pitting the character's DEX of 6 against the fence's Difficulty of 3.

The Difficulty Chart has another important function. Sometimes there will be special circumstances that make a normal Attribute/Ability vs. Attribute/Ability Challenge more difficult than usual. For example, **punching** a character in hand-to-hand combat is usually a DEX (of the puncher) vs. DEX (of the punchee) Challenge. But suppose the puncher is intoxicated. Shouldn't it be harder for him to hit the punchee?

In these cases, you can consult the Difficulty Chart as usual and add the appropriate Difficulty to the Attribute or Ability resisting the Challenge. To continue our example, the GM might rule that throwing a punch while drunk is "tricky," adding 2 to the punchee's DEX.

Challenges in Play

During play, the GM has the right to call for a Challenge any time she feels it is appropriate. Basically, any action that is not an Automatic Action is a Challenge.

Throughout this rulebook you'll find all sorts of rules for resolving specific Challenge situations that will arise during play. But the rules can't possibly anticipate every single action a character in a story might try to perform. When someone attempts an action that is not covered by the rules, the GM must use her **best judgement** to determine **which Attributes or Abilities are being tested**. This is actually much easier than it sounds, and with time, most GMs find that this task becomes second nature.

punching: You'll find the rules for punching and other combat Challenges in Chapter Nine.

best judgement: to help her make these decisions, the GM should make sure she is familiar with the definitions of each Attribute and Ability. Taking some time to study the Attribute definitions found earlier in this chapter and the Skill descriptions found in Chapter Six is highly recommended.

which Attribute . . . being tested: It's also up to the GM to determine whether or not such a Challenge is a Standard Challenge or a P/F Challenge. Remember, if the degree of success is unimportant, the Challenge is a P/F Challenge. Otherwise it is Standard.

Challenge Examples

Here are a few a sample Challenges to test each of the seven basic Attributes.

STR: Breaking down a door, bending or breaking an item, arm wrestling another character.

DEX: Jumping over a fence, catching an object tossed by another character during a fight, playing a video game.

SPD: Diving under a security door at the end of a long hall before it can close.

RES: Resisting the effects of tear gas, holding you breath long enough to pull a passenger out of a submerged car wreck.

INT: Solving a riddle or puzzle, communicating with a foreigner who doesn't speak your language.

WILL: Resisting fatigue, resisting a fear or phobia.

AURA: Being noticed in a night club

Idea #6 - Karma Points

Challenges aren't always resolved by the dice alone. Some characters are simply luckier or more confident than others. In *Underground*, this ability is represented by the use of *Karma Points*. Characters created by the players begin the game with one Karma Point. The GM is free to assign as many Karma Points to any characters under her control as she wishes.

After any Challenge has been resolved, the character taking the Challenge has the power to spend a Karma Point to convert a failure into a success (in a P/F Challenge) or to improve his letter grade by one step (in a Standard Challenge). Likewise, any character resisting the Challenge has the right to spend a Karma point to turn a success into a failure or to lower the letter grade by one step. If there are two characters involved in the Challenge in this fashion and one character spends a Karma point, the other character automatically has an opportunity to spend a Karma point of his own to effectively "cancel out" the first character's expenditure. Note, too, that during a Standard Challenge, a character can spend more than one Karma Point to raise or lower the letter grade by more than one step.

KARMA POINTS
ALLOW
CHARACTERS TO
ALTER THE
OUTCOME OF
CHALLENGES

POWER, PRIDE *and* HONOR



The True Shield of a Nation!

AMI Recruitment Poster, circa 2017.

gone forever. If a character who participated in an earlier story comes back to play in another story, he or she begins play with the number of Karma Points she possessed at the end of the earlier story. Such character's don't necessarily begin play with a single Karma Point.

Example of Karma Use

Character One punches Character Two and receives a B. Character Two decides to spend 3 Karma Points to turn the B into an F — a failure, or miss. Character One then decides to spend 2 Karma of his own to turn the F back into a C. In response, Character Two decides to spend an additional Karma to turn the C into a D. Note that this process of give and take can go on indefinitely until one or both characters run out of Karma.

Once a Karma Point is spent, it is **gone forever**. There are two ways of gaining new Karma: 1) whenever a character rolls a natural dice total of 24 or greater when resolving a Challenge, he or she receives a Karma Point, and 2) the GM sometimes awards particularly interesting play with a Karma Point. Note that Karma is gained through the first method only if the actual dice total is 24 or greater, not the total of the dice roll and the Attribute tested. Furthermore, a character can never earn a Karma Point for resisting a Challenge, no matter what he or she rolls (ie. even if he rolls a 35, the "punchee" in our earlier examples can't earn Karma). Guidelines the GM can use for rewarding good play with Karma can be found in Chapter Twelve.

GAINING NEW
KARMA

Idea #7 - Turns

Normally, players can perform actions at any time simply by stating their desire to do so. But sometimes, the exact order in which actions occur becomes very important. Consider, for example, a gunfight between two characters. Which character gets to shoot first?

WHEN THE
ORDER IN WHICH
ACTIONS OCCUR
BECOMES
IMPORTANT, THE
GM CALLS FOR
TURNS

In these situations, the GM can call for *Turns*. When Turns are in effect, each character gets an opportunity to perform an action and then play passes to the next character. During his or her Turn, a character gets to perform any action he or she could accomplish in approximately 4 seconds (0 Units of time, or one Turn). You'll find more rules for handling Turns in Chapter Nine.

Chapter **four**

—Congresswoman
Sheila Pressman
(Plutocrat New
Jersey) in an Op.
Ed. piece in *USA
ALIVE*, 1/15/21

"In one of their latest releases, for example, Systematic Overthrow has this to say about your Congress: *Steady pimpin' Kennedy/But they can't tread on me/Pop another cop/Uncle Scam is the enemy.*

What is this? Is it art? Or is it dangerous propaganda?"

For the first ten thousand years of human history, a successful military campaign hinged

upon the valor of the common footsoldier. But toward the end of the Second World War, an age in which a single bomb could bring death-by-fire to millions, common valor became overshadowed by technology. Now, in 2021, technology and valor have merged into a frightening new weapon that promises to change the very nature of mankind.

Enhancement and How it Works

ENHANCEMENT
TECHNOLOGY
WAS DERIVED
FROM THE ALIEN
SPACE POD THAT
LANDED IN 1996

The keys that unlocked the secrets of genetic enhancement were gleaned from the alien space pod that crash-landed in 1996. The alien techniques for manipulating amino acids were first applied to the human genotype in 2002, allowing doctors to eradicate certain congenital diseases and genetic irregularities. The earliest true "enhancements" of the genotype were engineered in 2007, after the American government turned the aliens' last few secrets over to Allied Mayhem Inc.

SURGEONS ALTER
GENES BY
TRANSFORMING
NUCLEOTIDES

Although genetic manipulation is very complex in practice, it's quite simple in theory. By applying selected frequencies of ultraviolet radiation to cells that have been treated with a special chemical, genetic surgeons can alter the structures of base nucleotides, allowing them to change the very composition of complex organic molecules. Because the exact outcome of such manipulations can be anticipated by running sophisticated computer simulations, a surgeon with enough ability and patience can easily alter a genotype to meet any specifications he desires.

2002: In this year, scientists finally completed the Genome Project, an effort to map the entire DNA molecule that began in the early 1990s.

certain congenital diseases: Among the diseases that no longer exist in 2021 are: muscular dystrophy, asthma, diabetes, and Down's syndrome.

base nucleotides: Along with deoxyribose and various sugars, four basic nucleotides make up the DNA molecule: adenine, cytosine, guanine, and thymine. By altering the order in which these nucleotides appear on the DNA chain, scientists can alter an organism's genetic characteristics.

cryogenically frozen clients:

Cryo-Freeze deadened the subjects' ability to replace lost body cells.

mRNA: "messenger" RNA, the substance used to transmit the genetic code during cellular reproduction.

Parkinson's Disease: This is why many boosted soldiers, especially older ones, exhibit minor uncontrollable shaking and twitching.

virtual reality . . . technologies:

These technologies are always geared to complement the culture of the largest body of potential recruits. Militant corporations affiliated with the Far East Collective use VRs that convince the subjects that they are channeling supernatural "spirits" of Eastern mythology. Firms associated with the European Common Market use VRs that draw upon Wagner, Nietzsche, and Hitler to imbue the subject with senses of superiority and purpose.

At first, the enhancement process was used to simultaneously alter all the DNA molecules in the recipient's body. But individuals altered in this fashion suffered traumatic genetic injury and lost their enhanced capabilities as soon as their bodies replaced the majority of the altered cells with natural cells. For this reason, the earliest beneficiaries of genetic enhancement were cryogenically frozen clients of Cryo-Dawn™ Inc. (see Chapter One). Later, genetic engineers discovered a method of altering a subject's mRNA, providing the body with a mechanism for reproducing altered cells and opening the door for the enhancement of living subjects.

As it currently stands, the applications of genetic engineering are staggering. In 2021, skilled genetic surgeons are easily capable of radically altering basic biological processes. A few have even mastered the art of inducing subjects to grow new limbs and useful organs.

Slumberland

Like many revolutionary technologies, genetic enhancement is not without its flipside. For reasons scientists still don't understand, the chemicals used to facilitate nucleotide metamorphosis often wreak havoc upon the delicate balance of dopamine produced by the brain, prompting some subjects to exhibit symptoms of schizophrenia and/or Parkinson's Disease. Although doctors have learned to control this problem with medication, such treatments are rarely more than 85% effective.

Furthermore, in the case of truly radical enhancements like those performed on soldiers, many subjects find their newfound abilities so unsettling and unfamiliar that they lose their grip on reality. It's simply too hard for most subjects to come to grips with the fact that they are suddenly capable of lifting automobiles over their head or deflecting bullets with their bare skin.

To curb this problem, most of the genetic engineers employed by conflict firms handling American accounts use licensed versions of the "Slumberland" software developed by Rudolph Bushmiller (see Chapter One). The conflict firms that regularly work with the Far East Collective and the European Common Market have developed virtual reality simulations and technologies of their own.

GENETIC
ENHANCEMENT
HAS MANY
APPLICATIONS

ENHANCEMENT IS
NOT WITHOUT
ITS DRAWBACKS

PROFOUNDLY
ENHANCED
SUBJECTS OFTEN
LOSE THEIR
GRASP OF REALITY

VR TECHNOLOGY
IS USED TO
MAINTAIN THE
STABILITY OF
ENHANCEMENT
SUBJECTS



"Little Zemo" in Slumberland: AMI's Philadelphia Laboratory; June, 2019

becomes a four-color comic book character: While inside the Slumberland VR, enhancement subjects can see their own bodies and those of other enhancement subjects in full-color with photographic precision. All other objects and personalities are seen as black-and-white collections of rough, polygon graphics. Because their conscious minds are not active while they are being enhanced, this mode of perception seems perfectly natural to the subjects.

linked: Inside the VR, subjects perceive the different computers as different cities. By travelling to these other cities, a persona blueprint can interact with the subjects wired to that city's corresponding computer.

"Life" inside the Slumberland is difficult to describe. Throughout the fourteen months he or she spends in sensory deprivation, the subject experiences an entire lifetime inside the Slumberland. Each simulation begins with an artificially induced birth trauma and ends mere seconds before the subject experiences his or her own "virtual" death. Throughout the course of this simulated lifetime, the subject becomes a four-color comic book character: he undergoes a radiation accident that grants him fantastic powers (the exact abilities the genetic engineers are simultaneously installing in his real body), he falls in love with a headstrong girlfriend whom he must constantly rescue from the clutches of his evil adversaries, he acquires a zealous arch-enemy, etc.

In the end, it is the virtual lives they have experienced that allow the boosted subjects to come to grips with their enhancements. Even after they are brought out of the VR and reintroduced to the real world, their subconscious minds still retain a memory of their virtual lives and accept their newly installed abilities as a natural and logical part of everyday life. In fact, sometimes too much of the subject's virtual life roots itself into the subconscious. Scientists have noticed that approximately 15% of altered subjects slowly regain the "four-color morality" of the typical comic book character and start to view the world as a struggle between "heroes" and "villains" with no gray areas in between. Such subjects often develop the irrational belief that every natural disaster or calamity is the work of powerful criminal conspiracies bent on dominating all mankind. Given the current socio-economic situation, a few have even decided that the US Government itself is a monstrous criminal conspiracy that has betrayed the ideals of the nation's founding fathers.

Lately, Allied Mayhem scientists have modified the Slumberland programming to make it even more useful in the preparation of boosted soldiers. Although the virtual environment still resembles a typical comic book adventure, it is now violent enough to prepare the soldiers for 21st century combat. In other words, the comic book adventures inside Slumberland frequently end with Doctor Doublecross dying in a hail of bullets and hand grenades rather than shaking his fist at the heroes from inside a cozy prison cell. Furthermore, all of the various Slumberland computers are now linked together, allowing the subjects in VR to interact with each other. AMI researchers have found that this early interaction builds trust between the future soldiers and allows them to function as a team more effectively.

SUBJECTS IN
SLUMBERLAND
EXPERIENCE AN
ENTIRE LIFETIME

EVEN AFTER
THEY ARE
REINTRODUCED
TO THE REAL
WORLD,
ENHANCED
SUBJECTS RETAIN
THE INFLUENCE
OF THEIR
SLUMBERLAND
PROGRAMMING

SLUMBERLAND
PROGRAMMING IS
ALSO USED TO
ACQUAINT THE
SUBJECTS WITH
VIOLENCE AND
MILITARY
TACTICS



Prettyboy: What was Slumberland like?

"American Lesion:" Incredible. It's so real. I had a wife there — her name was Lucy Lang. She was killed by this guy who called himself Colonel Terror. I mean, I know she wasn't real, but I'll never forget her. And I'll never forgive those bastards at AMI for putting me through all that; it wasn't necessary. In fact, you see these marks here? *(He points to two white dots on the side of his neck)* That's where they tasered me when I attacked the readjustment counselor who finally convinced me that Lucy wasn't real.

Prettyboy: I'm intrigued. We don't get to hear much about Slumberland.

"American Lesion:" Yeah, AMI tried to keep it a big secret for a long time. Now they're licensing the goddamn software to amusement parks. I guess the thing that hurts the most is that I fell for the whole thing. It makes you feel vulnerable. I makes you wonder if your whole life is a dream.

Prettyboy: Whatever happened to Colonel Terror?

"American Lesion:" As I recall, I trapped him in the sub-basement of his secret headquarters and bashed in his ribs with a tire iron.

"Prettyboy Interview with American Lesion,"
June 11, 2020

The Life of a Soldier

VETERANS ARE
MISTRUSTED IN
MODERN SOCIETY

As you read in Chapter One, boosted veterans are widely shunned and misunderstood in 21st century society. Most of the populace fears the veterans' power, and not without good reason. Many veterans ultimately find themselves in an economic trap that ultimately leads to a life of crime, filling many American cities with incredibly dangerous thugs that are specially trained for combat.

ultimately receive neither:
Promised bonuses are often
swallowed by a maze of fees
and taxes imposed by the
conflict firm. Most firms have
clauses in their enlistment
contracts that allow them to
forego promised special
training in times of
"emergency" and keep
emergency conditions in effect
almost constantly.

PEOPLE ENLIST
FOR GENETIC
ENHANCEMENT
FOR TWO
REASONS:
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
AND THE PROMISE
OF POWER

With all this being the case, why does anyone enlist?

There are two answers to this question. The first stems from pure economics. In the 21st century, jobs are scarce, and military service is the only career opportunity open to many members of the lower classes. Such recruits are generally seduced into the service with a promise of big bonuses or high-tech training, and ultimately receive neither.

But the more interesting answer stems from the nature of power itself. Despite all the potential drawbacks to genetic enhancements, many people simply can't resist the lure of the tremendous power it promises.

vid-net: Some of the most annoying commercial announcements plaguing the vid-net are the Allied Mayhem "All That You Can Be" spots that glorify genetic enhancement.

From Raw Recruit to Seasoned Veteran

For the most part, 21st century militant corporations still use the same recruiting tactics used to enlist soldiers in the 20th century—vid-net and print advertising, neighborhood recruitment centers, and high school guidance counselors. Potential soldiers (both men and women are accepted) are generally recruited between the ages of 16 and 18. More than 70% of the recruits come from families earning less than \$350,000 per year, and a full 20% of the recruits come from families with incomes below the poverty line.

Once the raw recruits sign their enlistment papers, genetic engineers design enhancement programs for each of them, looking to the corporation's needs as well as the subject's physical capabilities for inspiration. The engineers

MILITANT
CORPORATIONS
USE
TRIED-AND-TRUE
RECRUITING
METHODS

—An excerpt from the transcript of Jason Fisk's multiple homicide trial.
5/11/19

Watkins: Please state your name.
Fisk: Jason Shepherd Fisk.
Watkins: You are also known as the Naughty Clown?
Fisk: Yes.
Watkins: You are a veteran?
Fisk: Yes.
Watkins: Mr. Fisk, are you a terrorist?
Fisk: No.
Watkins: How would you classify yourself, then?
Fisk: I am a political activist.
Watkins: A licensed political activist?
Fisk: No.
Watkins: Mr. Fisk, did you plant the bomb inside the LifeLine plant in Glendale, California?
Fisk: Yes.
Watkins: Why?
Fisk: LifeLine is wildly overcharging hospitals for its anti-mutagen scanners and bribing crooked Anti-Socialist Congressman to guarantee that the matter never reaches the Senate Health Committee. By our figuring, LifeLine's indiscretion cost six hundred lives last year.
Watkins: Why did you use a bomb?
Fisk: Because I couldn't afford a missile.

Conflict Firms

The four largest conflict firms that regularly do business with the United States are Allied Mayhem Inc., Trans-World Devastation Inc., Disposable Heroes Inc., and Simmons Global Management Ltd. All four of these firms employ genetically engineered soldiers created using Allied Mayhem's Slumberland software.

Allied Mayhem Incorporated



Headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

President: Fredrick Furrier

Major Contracts Handled for the U.S.:
Paraguay, Latvia, South Africa,
Nicaragua, Malaysia, Tibet, Azerbaijan,
Kenya

No. of Branches: 66

No. of Employees: roughly 200,000 worldwide

Privately Owned

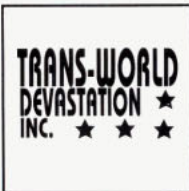
AMI is the oldest and most famous of the world's major conflict firms. It is distinguished by its deep political connections and conservative military philosophy.

Allied Mayhem Badges of Rank Worn by Boosted Soldiers



Badges of rank usually worn on cuff

Trans-World Devastation Inc.



Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland.

President: Donald Dunbarr

Major Contracts Handled for the U.S.:
Paraguay, Turkey, Kenya, Sardinia, New
Zealand

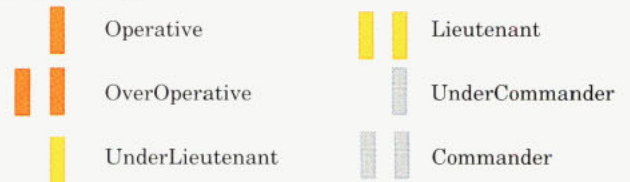
No. of Branches: 26

No. of Employees: roughly 90,000 worldwide

Public Corporation

TWD was recently acquired by Avant-Garbage™ Inc., a huge entertainment/waste disposal conglomerate. AGI execs plan on releasing a string of vid-net programs and soma-vids based upon TWD activities soon. As a consequence, TWD's military style has become remarkably flashy.

Trans World Devastation Badges of Rank Worn by Boosted Soldiers



Badges of rank usually worn on cuff

Disposable Heroes Inc.



Headquartered in Ames, Iowa.

President: Christine Kaufmann

Major Contracts Handled for the U.S.:
Paraguay, Kenya, Azerbaijan, India, Peru

No. of Branches: 14

No. of Employees: roughly 70,000 worldwide

Public Corporation

Disposable Heroes was once much larger. It downsized after losing major market share to Allied Mayhem. In its current incarnation, DHI is known as a "budget" conflict house. Its rates are far lower than those of most of its competitors, but its service is thought to be inferior.

Disposable Heroes Badges of Rank Worn by Boosted Soldiers



Badges of rank usually worn on headgear, above goggles

Simmons Global Management Ltd.



Headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky.

President: Henry Muller

Major Contracts Handled for the U.S.:
Armenia, Peru, Chad, Trinidad

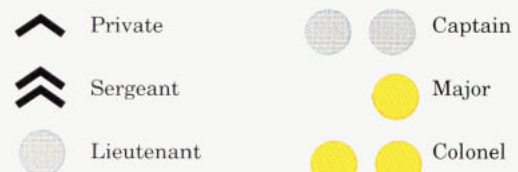
No. of Branches: 8

No. of Employees: roughly 30,000 worldwide

Privately Owned

A relatively new operation, SGM has risen quickly through the ranks to become one of the world's top conflict firms. Unlike most of its competitors, SGM keeps a low profile and refuses to grant the world press access to any of its campaigns. Some believe SGM is a front for a major political activist group, possibly even the Underground.

Simmons Global Management Badges of Rank Worn by Boosted Soldiers



Badges of rank worn on sleeve

boost the recruits' morale:

Military studies show that soldiers find it easier to enter into combat when they know their companions only by hard-edged nicknames (eg. White Devil, Electric Bastard, American Lesion, etc).

even after . . . service: Many boosted veterans who wish to hide their identities from government authorities (ie. criminals or political activists) adopt new code-names and uniforms.

two month's salary: Most conflict firms pay their soldiers \$3,500 per month and cover all the soldiers' basic living expenses.

might decide to give one recruit enhanced senses, making him an ideal scout, while granting another enhanced reflexes, making her an ideal pilot. Almost all recruits receive at least slight enhancements to their physiques, making them stronger, tougher, and more agile than unaltered humans.

Once their enhancement programs have been designed, the recruits are given special code-names and uniforms. These names hide the recruits true identities from enemies, **boost the recruits' morale**, and increase the effectiveness of the Slumberland programming (the code-names and uniforms serve to define the recruits' "costumed identities" in the four-color Slumberland VR). Over time, many recruits become so attached to their **code-names** and uniforms that they continue to use them **even after they have mustered out of the service**. Whether the soldiers maintain their code-names out of pride or due to the lingering effects of their Slumberland programming remains unknown.

Although the exact procedures vary from corporation to corporation, new recruits generally receive approximately nine months of basic training before being dispatched to fulfill a contract. Since each recruit spends fourteen months in Slumberland, almost two years pass between the recruit's enlistment and his or her first foray into an actual combat zone.

Most militant corporations enlist soldiers for five or six year terms. During this time, the typical recruit can expect to see action in ten to twelve conflicts. Once the term of enlistment expires, the soldier has the option of leaving the service (known as "mustering out") or re-enlisting for another five year term. Soldiers who muster out receive **two month's salary** as "demobilization benefit" and become eligible for a wide variety of government programs designed to assist veterans. Unfortunately, the resources allocated to these programs are almost universally overtaxed, severely limiting their effectiveness.

EACH RECRUIT
RECEIVES A
SPECIAL
CODE-NAME
AND UNIFORM

MOST RECRUITS
UNDERGO NINE
MONTHS OF
BASIC TRAINING

SOLDIERS
GENERALLY
SERVE 5-6 YEAR
TERMS

Chapter **five**

Friday night, 11:15 PM. I meet my contact in an alley outside the Tastee Ghoul at Florence and Normandie. He's dressed in black and heavily armed. He doesn't talk much. I call him "Mr. Angst."

We catch a DART car down to 111th Street in the heart of Watts and make our way toward a dilapidated office building. Mr. Angst won't allow me to reveal its exact location. As we approach, Angst produces a menacing black cannister from the mess of equipment that dangles from his belt.

Oh Christ, I think. He's going to do the whole place while I stand here and watch. When Carnage promised me an inside look

at the Underground and its methods, he wasn't kidding.

As Angst twisted the top off the cannister, I flinched and prepared to run, an embarrassing reaction I would regret a moment later. No bomb, just a can of spray paint. Angst walked over to the wall and started scrawling out a message — the familiar "Don't Tread On Me!" He went on to explain that the "Tread on Me" signs were an elaborate communication system. Barely perceptible stylistic variations in the sign he was scrawling would soon send a message to every Undergrounder in the neighborhood.

— From "Straight From the Underground," an investigative report by Peter Argot; *Washington Week*, 1/11/21

In 2021, life in the United States is little more than a cruel parody of 20th century living—crime, terrorism, government gone awry, cannibalism. But as veterans, the players are more than human and capable, perhaps, of rising above the squalor and oppression. In fact, within their genes, the veterans carry what might be society's only hope for salvation.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to create your own boosted veteran. You'll rate your veteran's Attributes and Abilities, and create a background, a description, and a Personality. You'll also decide how your veteran fits into *Underground*'s fictional setting.

Before you can proceed, a bit more background is in order.

Stateside Life

The typical boosted veteran returns to the United States after four to six years of experiencing little more than inhuman violence and terror. As a consequence, most veterans have a difficult time adjusting to the civilian life. Further complicating matters are the [psychological instabilities](#) that plague many veterans and the prejudicial treatment most veterans receive in society.

[psychological instabilities](#): due to metagenic feedback trauma

MOST BOOSTED
VETERANS HAVE A
HARD TIME
ADJUSTING TO
LIFE IN THE
UNITED STATES

"unwritten code." Exactly how this set of ethics was simultaneously adopted by the soldiers of all the major conflict firms remains unknown. Doctor Fulton Brower, a sociologist at the University of Montreal who has spent several years researching the phenomenon, believes the code was transmitted from firm to firm by non-boosted field operatives, commanders, and other personnel with a tendency to shuffle back and forth between employers. Brower has also observed that soldiers serving with the firms hired primarily by the Far East Collective and the European Common Market do not observe the code.

another soldier: Requests must be honored regardless of whether or not the soldier making the request is known to the soldier receiving the request. Simply having served in the same unit is all that is necessary to establish the obligation.

Curiously enough, although one would expect them to make efforts to leave the horrors of war behind them and hide from the scrutiny of society, most veterans continue to wear their uniforms and use their code names long after they are discharged. In fact, many of the veterans who abandon their old uniforms and code names simply create replacements rather than return full-time to their civilian garb and identities. Although many metagenic counselors believe this phenomenon is a peculiar side effect of the Slumberland conditioning, no one is really sure what causes it.

Unit Bonding

Because they usually return to the United States as outsiders, for companionship, most veterans turn to the only people they know they can trust—namely, other veterans. This situation has kept strong the camaraderie between soldiers who served together abroad. In the deserts and jungles of the Third World, every soldier was responsible for the safety of every other soldier in his or her unit, a mentality that most of the soldiers brought back to the states. In fact, over the years, employees of the larger conflict firms have developed an "unwritten code" that prohibits a soldier from refusing the first request she receives from another soldier who serves (or served) in her unit. Although soldiers are under no obligation to grant requests beyond the first, if they do so, they obligate the individuals making the requests to return the favor on a one-for-one basis. Exactly what constitutes a valid request varies from unit to unit. The members of some units don't allow requests that endanger either the petitioner or the petitioned, while others accept literally any request as valid. In any case, the bond between veterans who served in the same unit is usually so strong that the formal code is rarely invoked; most veterans are all too happy to help their unit-mates.

Although her affiliation to a particular military unit can help a veteran locate friends and opportunities stateside, it can also cause her problems. Bitter (and sometimes violent) rivalries between units are common. Many of these feuds originally started as personal clashes between prominent individuals within the rival units. A few are so old that no one remembers exactly how they started.

VETERANS SHARE
A UNIQUE BOND
WITH SOLDIERS
WHO SERVED IN
THEIR UNITS

RIVALRIES
BETWEEN UNITS
ARE COMMON

THE FLYING DEUCES

A great many of the boosted veterans now living in the US once served with one of the five prominent units described below. When you create your veteran, you should choose a unit affiliation from among these five. Or, if none of these choices interests you, you should work with the Gamemaster to create [your own unit background](#).

AMI Expeditionary Corps/Flying Deuces: Originally comprised of boosted Cryo-Dawn™ celebrities (see Chapter One), Allied Mayhem's Flying Deuces were the first boosted soldiers to set foot on a battlefield. Campaigns in which the Deuces participated include Paraguay, Guatemala, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, and Kenya.

The collective "identity" of the Deuces was established by one of their more prominent members, the ["False Adonis,"](#) back in 2018. The Adonis was one of the pathfinders who landed before the bulk of the unit to secure drop zones and command posts. He was also a relentless warrior and a confirmed homicidal psychopath. During the four campaigns in which he participated, the Adonis' exploits won so many skirmishes and gained so much media attention that he became an idol to his unit-mates. Before long, most of the Deuces were trying to live up to the Adonis' image. Years later, they are still known for their cocky demeanor. The credo the Deuces adopted long ago prevents them from backing down from a fight, no matter what the odds.



In the civilian world, the Deuces are numerable and known for their aggressive defense of veterans' rights. A sizable percentage of ex-Deuces are members of the Underground, prompting federal authorities to temporarily keep an eye on all newly demobilized members of the unit. The Deuces' stateside affairs are also characterized by their long-standing [clash](#) with the members of the TWD 4th Infantry.

Many Deuces attempt to provoke fist fights with any ex-members of the 4th they happen to encounter. Some simply open fire.

Notable ex-Deuces in the civilian world include: Speed-Zero (lead singer for Systematic Overthrow), Red Jack (noted veterans' rights activist), and the American Lesion (controversial star of action-adventure soma-vids).

[your own unit background:](#)

Although the Deuces and the Eagles are its largest and most prominent fighting forces, AMI maintains a total of twelve units in all. Likewise, TWD maintains six units, DHI maintains five units, and Simmons Global Management maintains three units. The GM and players should feel free to create their own backgrounds to flesh out any and all of these additional units.

[The False Adonis:](#) In 2019, all but forgotten by his unit mates, the Adonis was court martialed for killing Paraguayan civilians. He died in Leavenworth Federal Prison in 2020 during a knife fight over the ownership of a cigarette lighter.

[clash:](#) The roots of the feud go back to the Paraguayan war of 2019. During one of the war's early battles, the 4th was assigned to relieve the Deuces and arrived late, causing the Deuces to sustain extra casualties.

struck it rich: Schultz is one of only a handful of veterans to overcome the fear and prejudice to attain such high standing in the business community. His courageous story was the subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary soma-vid *Rico Schultz—This is Really My Life*.

vid-net programs: Next season, Avant-Garbage™ plans to premier *TWD4*, a weekly "gun-cam" feature in the tradition of *Combat, Combat, Combat!* focusing on the exploits of the 4th Infantry.

AMI Expeditionary Corps/Screaming Eagles: The boosted incarnation of the Screaming Eagles was founded when AMI purchased the legendary 101st Airborne Division from the US Government in 2018. Although the boosted soldiers who wear the screaming eagle in the modern age are quite unlike their airborne predecessors, the Eagles still take pride in the unit's lengthy history and uphold all its traditions. Every soldier who ever served in the unit can effortlessly recount its history, from the Normandy landings in 1944 up through the Gran Chaco campaign of 2019. The "modern age" campaigns in which the Screaming Eagles saw action include Paraguay, Latvia, South Africa, and Nicaragua.

Unit pride has kept the stateside ex-Eagles a tightly knit group. In New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Havana, the Eagles maintain hostels that offer ex-members inexpensive (though temporary) housing. The hostels are entirely funded by Rico Schultz (aka the Silent Knight), an ex-Eagle who *struck it rich* in the commodities business after he mustered out. Schultz also established a foundation which sends each newly-demobilized Eagle monthly \$6000 checks for his or her first four months stateside.

In addition to Schultz, notable ex-Eagles in the civilian world include reporter Trenton "Slam-Dog" Thomas and Rex "Electric Bastard" White, the mayor of Oxnard, California.

TWD 4th Infantry: In recent years, the Trans-World 4th has acquired a great deal of notoriety. After Avant-Garbage™ acquired TWD, its entertainment division started drawing up a host of motion pictures and *vid-net programs* starring the soldiers of the 4th Infantry. AG's ultimate aim is to turn the 4th into a legitimate licensing property; and so far, the campaign has been so successful that 4th Infantry troopers are a bit more acceptable in society than the average veteran. Notable campaigns in which the 4th has participated include Paraguay, Turkey, and Sardinia.

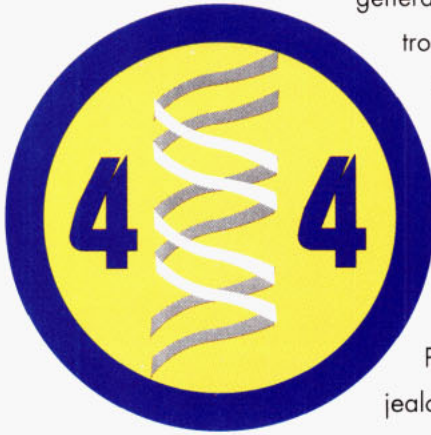
Also contributing to the 4th's unusually respectable reputation is ex-member Clinton ("Scarlet Headhunter") Gore, President Foster's Secretary for

THE SCREAMING
EAGLES



THE 4TH
INFANTRY

Veterans' Affairs and the nation's most powerful boosted politician. Although he has been unable to improve the quality of life for veterans in general, Gore has taken care of dozens of ex-4th Infantry troopers by using his influence to secure them low-level government jobs.



As previously noted, the 4th Infantry is engaged in a bitter rivalry with Allied Mayhem's Flying Deuces. For their part, the members of the 4th refuse to acknowledge that their unit arrived late in Paraguay, and believe instead that the Deuces are jealous of their popular acceptance.

Beside Gore, notable 4th Infantry troopers include: FBI Special Agent Gordon Bailey (aka "Father Karma") and Scott Grant (aka "Shadow Spirit"), the director of Streets and Sanitation in the City of Los Angeles.

THE 11TH AIRMObILE

TWD 11th Airmobile: The 11th is one of Trans World Devastation's two [airmobile](#) units, meaning that many of its members are endowed with the Flight Control Enhancement (see Chapter Seven). Notable campaigns in which the 11th Airmobile has participated include Paraguay, Turkey, and New Zealand.

Stateside, the 11th Airmobile has earned a particularly nasty reputation thanks to the activities of "Santa Claws" (real name unknown), a veteran of the 11th who has built a huge [organized crime operation](#) stretching from San Francisco to San Diego. Since Claws prefers to work with operatives he knows he can trust, large numbers of demobilized 11th Airmobile soldiers end up in his organization. In fact, Claws runs weapons and drugs through connections who still actively serve in the 11th and keeps the entire operation running by making sure that all the unit's members and ex-members remain well paid. At present, the 11th is so loyal to Claws that newly demobilizing members are more or less expected to go into the rackets and swear fealty to him. Those who refuse this destiny can often break away from the unit

[airmobile](#): Because they are capable of rapid deployment, airmobile units are often among the first forces sent into a conflict. Most members of airmobile units can fly due to special equipment and enhancements. The rest are carried in CATs (Combat Air Transports).

[organized crime operation](#): Claws' operation dabbles in protection, narcotics, prostitution, gambling, and pornography, though it receives most of its income from simple theft.



boosted supremacists: Despite the fact that the two groups are bitter rivals, Evolution in Action and Eugenix, the two most prominent boosted supremacy organizations were both founded by Pathfinder vets.

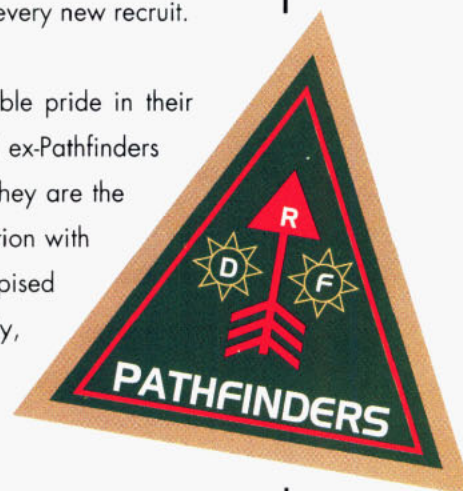
after a bit of harassment, though Claws has been known to kill veterans with particularly useful abilities that refused to join him.

Beside Claws, notable 11th Airmobile veterans include the Golemite (real name unknown), a street hood who pimps for Claws in Los Angeles; and the Juvenihilist (real name unknown), an LA-based hooligan/"mechanic."

DHI Pathfinders RDF: Another airmobile unit, the Pathfinders RDF has participated in almost every campaign Disposable Heroes Inc. has handled, including Paraguay, Kenya, Azerbaijan, India, and Peru. Pathfinders are always recognizable by the blood-red arrow that is tattooed on the wrist during a complex initiation ritual that is administered to every new recruit.

PATHFINDERS
RDF

The Pathfinders are distinguished by their irrepressible pride in their boosted heritage. In fact, many of the most radical ex-Pathfinders are right-wing "boosted supremacists" who believe they are the next step in human evolution. Because of their affiliation with the supremacists, the Pathfinders are particularly despised by the members of the National Anti-Socialist Party, which is trying to completely banish boosted veterans from the United States.



Noted ex-Pathfinders include boosted rights activist Simon St. Lauren (aka Scarlet Fever), anti-Anti-Socialist terrorist Dolly Mason (aka Dolly Llama), and boosted vigilante Iron Nightmare (real name unknown).

Veteran Programs

Although mainstream society largely shuns boosted veterans, the conflict firms and their soldiers are obviously indispensable to the economic well-being of the United States. As a consequence, the American government has been forced to make some concessions to the veterans so as to maintain the morale of the troops and boost the effectiveness of recruiting drives. Some of the programs the government has instituted are described below.

Department of Veterans' Affairs: The Department of Veterans' Affairs was founded by President Gates in 2017 and turned into a cabinet level

THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS'
AFFAIRS

post a year later. The current Secretary of Veterans' Affairs is Clinton F. Gore, a veteran of Trans-World Devastation's 4th Infantry (code-name "Scarlet Headhunter").

Far and away the smallest cabinet-level agency in the federal government, the DVA is mainly responsible for administering the programs listed below.

The Department also makes an effort to collect and catalog the complaints and suggestions of both pro- and anti-veterans' rights activists.

Generally, Veterans' interact directly with the DVA in two fashions. The Department **subsidizes** the demobilization benefits the veterans receive from their employers as they muster out, and the DVA maintains Veterans' Resource Centers in most of the major cities in the US. At these centers, veterans can **attempt to locate** other veterans using DVA records, apply for the programs listed below, and take advantage of **job placement counseling**. The larger

centers also maintain gymnasiums and reading rooms that are available to veterans free of charge.

Veterans' Administration: The Veterans' Administration maintains VA hospitals in most major cities in the United States. All veterans are entitled to free medical care and prescription service at any VA facility. Although this care is never the best that 21st century medicine has to offer, it is certainly passable.

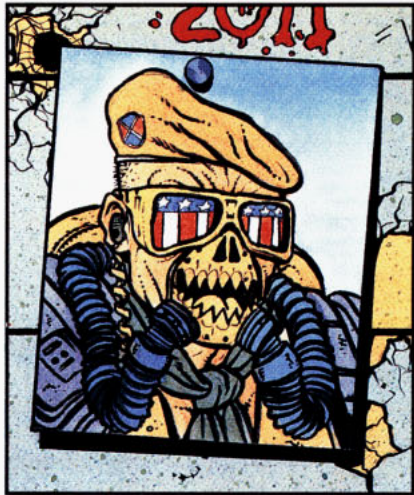
VA hospitals are notorious for not asking questions. Many of their patients wander in from the streets with gunshot wounds and other traumatic injuries obviously sustained while conducting illegal activities.

GI Bill: Congress passed the new GI Bill in 2016 shortly after the the First Nicaraguan War was concluded. The Bill was designed to provide veterans with inexpensive housing and student loans. Unfortunately, the program's resources are so overtaxed that only a tiny percentage of the veterans that apply receive any benefits at all. Those lucky enough to be accepted into the

subsidizes: The federal government reimburses the conflict firms for 35% of any monies paid out as demobilization benefits.

attempt to locate: Assume that such an attempt is automatically successful as long as the subject does not mind being found. Subjects who are trying to hide their identities or whereabouts can easily (and automatically) avoid such searches.

job placement counseling: Such counseling rarely has any useful effect. The jobs DVA counselors are able to secure for their clients are rarely better than the sort of menial labor generally performed by pre-frontals.



THE VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION

THE GI BILL



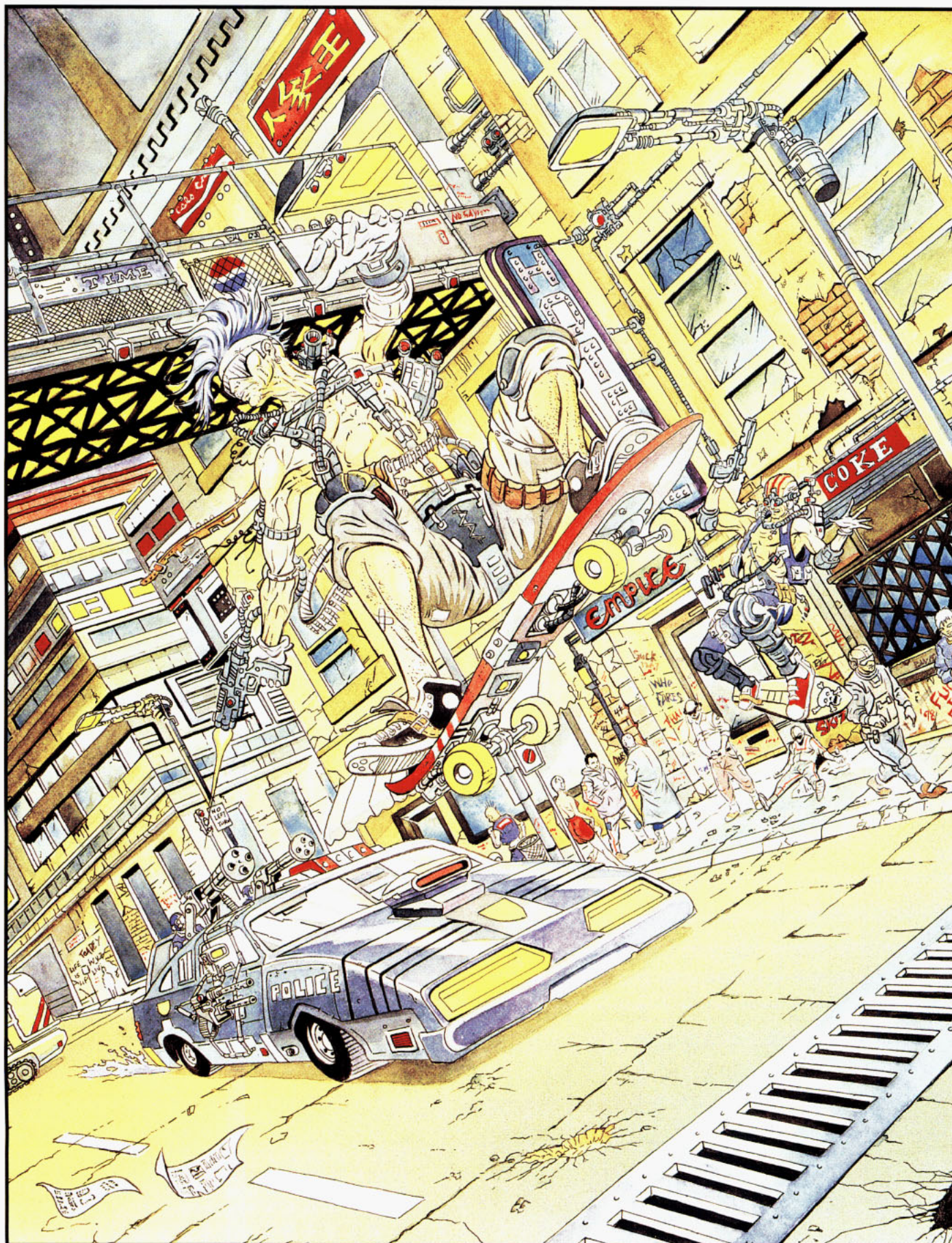
Holey Frajolé!— A boosted freak rampages through south-central. Good thing for him that his dome can stand up to a direct hit from a 20mm.

Buddy, Can You Spare \$10?—Underground sympathizers Hawkeye and Farenheit 666 are a fixture in LA's boosted homeless community.



program receive either a very nice apartment located somewhere in Los Angeles at a rental rate of \$2000 per month, or a bond for up to \$280,000 in student loans. Apartments obtained through the GI Bill can be occupied for a maximum of three years before they are reclaimed by the agency and reassigned. Student loans can be used only to attend accredited colleges and universities.

While creating his or her veteran, each player who would like to apply for the GI Bill is allowed to roll 2D10. If the total of the two dice is greater than or equal to 17, that veteran's application is accepted and he or she can choose either the apartment or the loans. If the application is rejected, the veteran is allowed to re-apply after one year of game time passes (same dice roll necessary for success). If this second application is also rejected, the veteran is permanently ineligible for benefits.



Undergrounder Tomahawk Zak creates a diversion by shining on the cops while the rest of his cell blows up a munitions plant.

THE VETERANS' FAIR HOUSING ACT

Veterans' Fair Housing Act: Congress passed the Fair Housing Act in 2017 to patch up the inadequacies in the new GI Bill and silence boosted rights activists. This latest measure guarantees rent-free housing to all veterans for a period of three years after they step down from active duty. Of course, housing secured through the Act is less than desirable. Typical accommodations consist of a 10' by 18' studio unit in a giant housing block on the [west coast](#). And because the housing blocks are filled with so many unemployed and poverty-stricken veterans, they are universally crime-ridden and extremely dangerous.

west coast: For years, the government has tried to keep the housing projects concentrated in a single region in order to facilitate attempts to police and control the veteran population. Although the vast majority of boosted housing projects are located on the west coast between Los Angeles and San Francisco, necessity is beginning to force the Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct housing projects in other regions.

the influence of Secretary Gore: Rumor has it that FBC tele-journalist Peter Argot is currently preparing an exposé on influence peddling in the Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Note that the Fair Housing Act did not supersede the housing provision of the GI Bill; at present, both programs are running concurrently. Since housing obtained through the Bill is much safer and more comfortable than the rent-free housing guaranteed by the Act, most veterans take a shot in the dark and apply for the Bill even though it is unlikely they will qualify.

Due to the provisions of the Fair Housing Act, with the GM's permission, veterans created by the players might begin a story or campaign with their own rent-free apartments in the housing blocks.

THE VETERANS' BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Veterans' Business Administration: The VBA was created to provide low-interest start-up loans to veterans who hope to become entrepreneurs. But owing to the fact that the program is horribly under-funded, these loans are incredibly difficult to secure. Those few veterans lucky enough to receive one can borrow up to \$1,500,000 at an interest rate of 5% over ten years.

Qualifying for a loan requires a detailed business plan that demonstrates the potential for profit and a successful [Legendary P/F Charisma Challenge](#) (ie. Difficulty of 20). Due to [the influence of Secretary Gore](#), veterans of the TWD 4th Infantry can secure a loan with a business plan and a successful [Phenomenal Charisma Challenge](#) (Difficulty of 15). Each veteran may receive no more than one VBA loan during the course of his lifetime.



Snatch and Jab— Boosted punks outside Trans-World Devastation's Westwood offices.

ALTHOUGH THEY
ARE SHUNNED BY
SOCIETY, THERE
ARE A FEW
SPECIAL
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITIES
OPEN TO
VETERANS

Veterans in Society

Although a few veterans overcome the prejudices and obtain respectable employment, most are forced to make ends meet on society's fringe. Because of their special capabilities, a whole host of special opportunities are open to veterans, most of them illegal.

- **Crime.** Their enhancements and special training allow veterans to become effective and dangerous criminals and many of them take advantage of this opportunity out of economic necessity. Although most boosted hoodlums operate alone or cluster into small, loosely knit "gangs," a few have built enormous **organized crime syndicates**.

- **Law enforcement.** Due to the specialized threat that boosted criminals pose to the society, law enforcement organizations have resorted to employing boosted operatives of their own to keep the hoodlums in check. Most of the large cities in the United States maintain **boosted police units** that specialize in combating boosted criminals.

- **Terrorism.** Not only are many veterans pre-disposed toward terrorism due to the many injustices they face, they're also frequently recruited into terrorist organizations that don't concern themselves with veterans' issues. In fact, many veterans make their livings as mercenaries, using their special abilities and training in the service of any terrorist group that can meet their price.

- **Security/Corporate Raider.** Again, their specialized capabilities make veterans ideal security troops/bodyguards. Veterans are also well-suited to the role of "corporate raider" (see Chapter One).

- **Curiosities.** Finally, some veterans use their enhancements to make livings as "oddities." This spectrum runs from the semi-respectable (**movie stars** who use their enhancements in their films) to the distasteful (circus freaks and "**gladiators**").

But despite the specialized opportunities available, most veterans survive on the good graces of the federal welfare system. As they presently stand, welfare benefits amount to \$2800 every two weeks for veterans already receiving free housing in accordance with the Fair Housing Act. In addition the direct cash payment, the biweekly welfare package also contains a variety of money-saving coupons and special offers from manufacturers. Long ago,

organized crime syndicates: The largest organization of this type is the so-called "Parliament," run by "Santa Claws" and his fellow veterans of the TWD 11th Airmobile. The Parliament controls most of the gambling, prostitution, pornography, and small-time larceny on the west coast, between San Diego and San Francisco.

boosted police units: The most notorious of the units is the Los Angeles Peace Force, a tactical sub-unit of the LAPD that boasts more than forty boosted officers spread over nine divisions. The motto of the peace force is "Judged by Twelve or Carried by Six."

movie stars: The most famous boosted film star is Rick Reed, the *Flaming Terror*. To date, Reed has appeared in twenty-six action-adventure films.

gladiators: Staging gladiatorial combats between veterans is starting to become a fad among the country's larger criminal syndicates. Because they are illegal, these contests are always held in secret, out-of-the-way locations. Most combats end when one fighter becomes incapacitated, though some are rumored to last to the death.

MOST VETERANS
LIVE OFF
WELFARE

code-name: In *Underground*, code-names often suggest their owner's genetic enhancements.

Also, since their chosen to boost morale and intimidate enemies, code-names are often tough-sounding, quirky, and imposing. Sample code-names are scattered throughout this book.

character archetypes: The exact function of the archetypes will be explained in Step #9.

Campaign Goal: You'll be introduced to this concept in Chapter Fourteen.

how their characters met: Some examples include: the veterans all served in the same unit, the veterans all live in the same housing block, and the veterans met through a government program (for instance, the veterans all attended the same VA hospital).

the federal government figured out that it could subsidize a large portion of the welfare system by charging big business top dollar to take advantage of these sorts of marketing opportunities.

Creating a Veteran

Creating a veteran is a ten step process. During these ten steps, you'll not only generate all the Unit ratings and numbers necessary for play, you'll also create a unique personality and background for your veteran, making it easier to tell interesting stories about her.

Step #1 - Character Concept

Before you proceed, you should take a few moments to think about the sort of character you'd like to create. What's her name (and [code-name](#))? What's she like? Where does she come from? What does she look like? What sort of Skills and Enhancements does she have? At this point, you might also think about your character's unit affiliation and the role she'll play in society. In essence, you are forming a sort of "blueprint" that will guide you through each of the remaining steps. Perhaps a review of the background material found in this chapter as well as the information found in Chapters One and Four will help you make some of these decisions. At this point, a glance through the [character archetypes](#) found at the end of this chapter should also prove helpful.

Depending upon how your Gamemaster is structuring things, by the time you get around to forming your character concept, you and the other players may have already spent some time discussing a [Campaign Goal](#). If so, you should obviously keep this goal in mind as you're thinking about your character. If your goal is to clear all the drug dealers out of South-Central Los Angeles, for instance, you probably don't want to create a character who is a dope dealer herself. In any case, if possible, you should certainly spend a little time in consultation with the other players when forming your concept. Together, your goal is to create a group of characters who can work well together. With the help of the GM, the players might also cooperate to work out a "backstory" that explains [how their characters met](#) and decided to pur-

FIRST, THINK ABOUT THE SORT OF VETERAN YOU WANT TO PLAY



Alive or Dead, No One Gets Left Behind!— After a plan to sabotage a crooked government arms deal goes awry, Undergrounder Electric Apache observes an AMI Flying Deuces tradition.

personnel planner: The planners (PPs for short) are responsible for drawing up the blueprint for each new soldier that is created. They decide how to recruit, what sorts of enhancements to install, who will install the enhancements, and how the soldier will be psychologically reconditioned. Every major conflict firm that makes use of boosted operatives employs PPs.

sue their destinies together. All of these discussions should probably take place during Step #1, before anyone gets too far into the process.

Example: When he sits down to create his veteran, Mike decides he'd like to play a character who is young and care-free, almost wild. After thinking about it for a while, Mike decides on a code-name — the Delinquent — and a few background and personality details. Mike decides that the Delinquent falsified his age to illegally enter military service at the age of 16. Two years later, he was prematurely and dishonorably discharged for vandalism of AML property. Today, the Delinquent is a sort of drifter who wanders from town-to-town vandalizing public property and taking on the occasional odd job offered by criminal gangs and corporate raiders. Going a bit further, Mike decides that his character's real name is Brian Burroughs and that his actual AML code-name was Migraine #27. Burroughs assumed the code-name Delinquent after he returned to the states to keep his real identity a secret from authorities (after all, he now works for criminal gangs and corporate raiders).

Since the group's Campaign Goal is to unseat a local Congressman and replace him with a player character as the first step toward bringing down a corrupt local government, Mike needs a reason for the Delinquent to involve himself in the struggle. After a few moments thought, he decided that one of Burroughs best friends was killed by the Congressman during the bureaucrat's rise to power.

Step #2 - Allocate Funds

During this next step, you'll temporarily place yourself in the role of **personnel planner** for one of the major conflict firms. Before a boosted soldier is created, these planners are given a budget by their superiors and asked to spend it in the fashion that will create the most effective soldier possible given current battlefield needs.

Your budget is \$20,000,000. You can split these funds between four functions—recruiting, genetic design, genetic surgery, and reconditioning—in almost any way you see fit.

A SAMPLE
CHARACTER
CONCEPT

DURING
CHARACTER
CREATION, YOU
TEMPORARILY
ASSUME THE
ROLE OF A
PERSONNEL
PLANNER

chapter 5

FUNDS CAN BE ALLOCATED TO FOUR AREAS

• Money spent on **recruiting** allows you to identify good candidates for enhancement. The more funds allocated to recruiting, the better the candidate for enhancement and thus, the higher the character's starting Attributes and Skills.

• Funds allocated to **genetic design** govern the genetic enhancements she will receive. The more money allocated, the more extensive her enhancements can be.

• The amount of money spent on **genetic surgery** determines the Skill rating of the genetic surgeon who installs your character's enhancements. The higher the surgeon's Skill rating, the more effective the enhancements.

• The funds allocated to **reconditioning** determine the size and scope of your character's reconditioning therapy. Making the therapy more extensive makes your character less susceptible to metagenic feedback trauma.

genetic design: During this stage of the process, genetic engineers devise the enhancements they plan to install and run computer simulations to figure out how best to install those enhancements.

THE RULES FOR ALLOCATING FUNDS

The only two rules you must follow when allocating your funds are:

- You can only allocate funds to genetic surgery in the amount of \$200,000, \$700,000, or \$1,000,000.
- You can only allocate funds to reconditioning in the amounts of \$500,000, \$1,000,000, or \$5000,000. And . . .
- Funds must be allocated in increments of \$100,000.

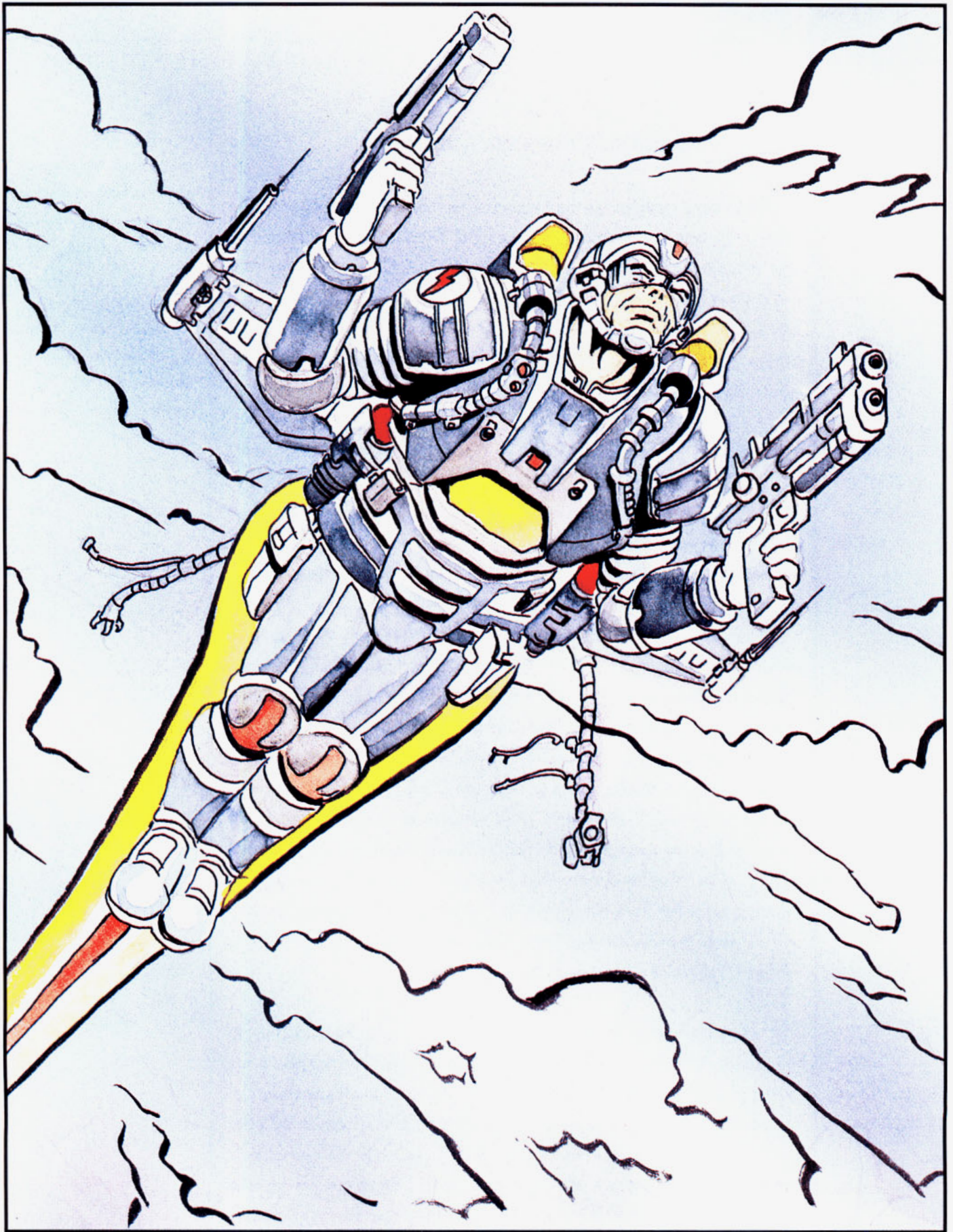
Beyond these simple restrictions, anything goes.

RECRUITMENT AND ENHANCEMENT POINTS

Once you have allocated your funds, you can compute your beginning Recruitment Point and Enhancement Point totals. Both Recruitment Points and Enhancement Points are used to "purchase" abilities for your character later in the process. You receive one Recruitment Point for each \$100,000 allocated to recruitment and one Enhancement Point for each \$100,000 allocated to genetic design.

A SAMPLE ALLOCATION

Example: Mike decides to allocate his budget as follows—\$11,300,000 toward recruiting; \$7,000,000 toward genetic design, \$700,000 toward genetic surgery, and \$1,000,000 toward reconditioning. This gives him 113 Recruitment Points and 70 Enhancement Points.



Airmobile!— Hurricane Andrew streaks off in search of rival troopers.

CREATING A PERSONALITY

PERSONALITIES CONSIST OF TRAITS AND CODES

YOU MAY SELECT TWO TO FIVE TRAITS AND UP TO TWO CODES

Step #3 - Recruiting/Create Personality

The third step is perhaps the most important in the entire character creation process. It's now time to create your character's Personality. Even more than your Attribute and Ability ratings, your Personality will serve to define your character in the stories you create. After all, Attributes and Abilities are used only to help the Gamemaster decide the outcome of some of the special actions you attempt. Your Personality, on the other hand, helps you decide what actions to perform in the first place.

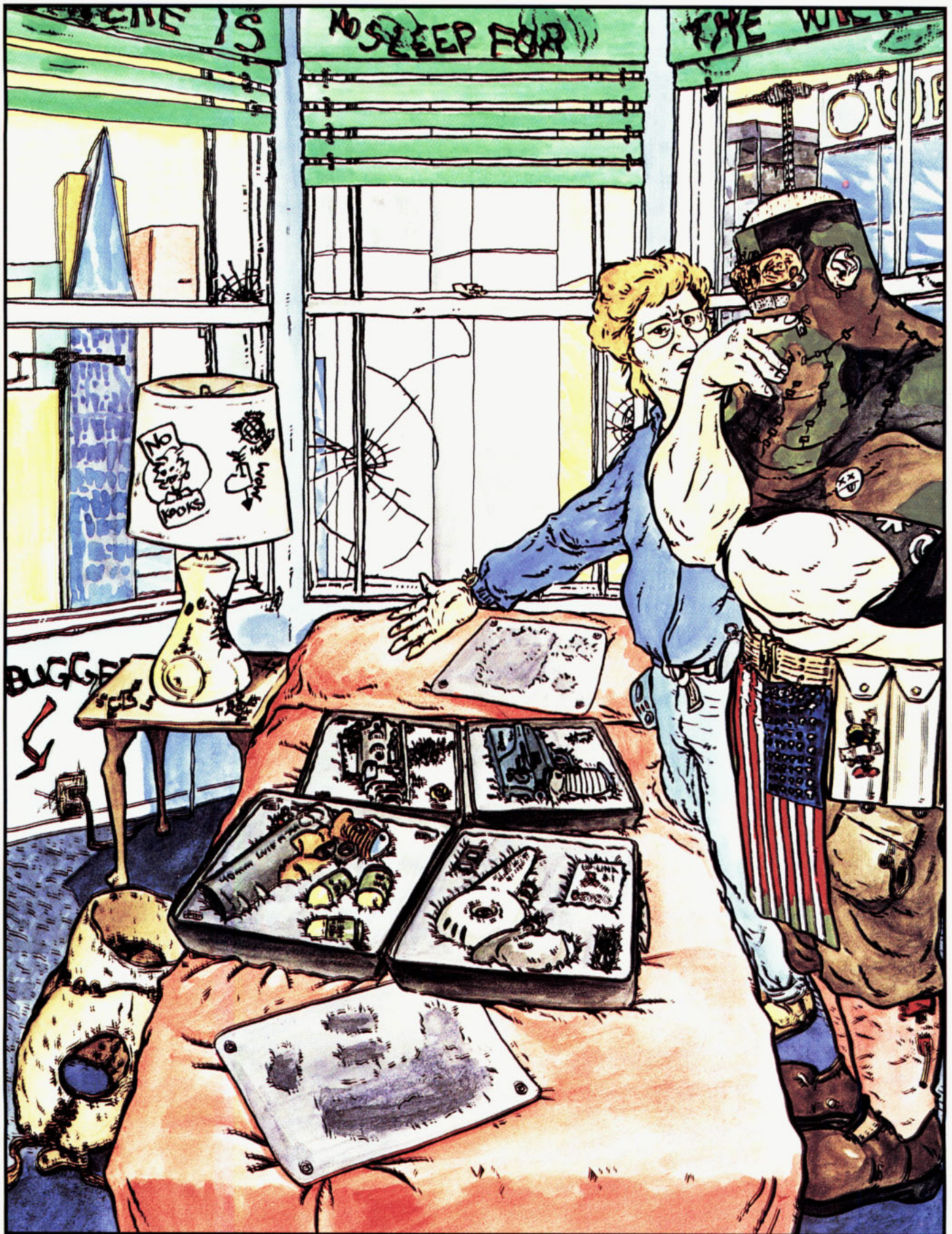
In *Underground*, Personalities consist of *Traits* and *Codes*, either of which can be rated as *Limiting* or *Non-limiting*.

- A Trait is a basic aspect of your character's outlook on life. A Trait can be either very general (ie. "curious") or very specific (ie. "curious about her best friend's past"). Although Traits describe how a character is likely to act in a given situation, they don't guarantee he will act that way.
- A Code is a rule or principle your character lives by. Examples include: "won't kill," "won't allow herself to undergo feedback trauma," and "always avenges an injustice in kind." Codes are a stronger influence on one's behavior than Traits; they are rarely broken.
- A Limiting Trait or Code has the potential to either frequently place the character in great danger or frequently prevent the character from accomplishing her goals. "Curious" is a good example of a Limiting Trait, while "won't kill" is an example of a Limiting Code. Non-Limiting Traits and Codes, on the other hand, have little potential to place the character in danger or prevent her from accomplishing her goals. "Curious about her best friend's past" is a Non-Limiting Trait, while "won't allow herself to undergo feedback trauma" is a Non-Limiting Code.

Characters must select between two and five Traits, and may select up to two Codes. Note that your Traits and Codes can't possibly describe every aspect of your character. Instead, they serve only to define those aspects of her psyche that best define her being. In addition to the Traits and Codes you select, you should think about other aspects of the character's Personality not covered by the Traits and Codes. What are her favorite hang-outs? What type of music does she enjoy? How does she dress and

up to two Codes: Note that a character needn't necessarily select any Codes, though each character must select at least two Traits.

other aspects: Veteran role-players sometimes go so far as to create unique voices for their characters and bring unique costumes or props to game sessions.



How Much For Everything You've Got?— A seedy entrepreneur displays his wares for Sgt. Bickle.

SELECTING
TRAITS AND
CODES NETS YOU
ADDITIONAL
RECRUITMENT
POINTS

SAMPLE TRAITS
AND CODES

why? What are her friends like? It's not necessary to answer all these questions (and the hundreds like them that come to mind) up front, but you should try to form a mental image of the character that will allow you to answer these sorts of questions when it becomes necessary during play.

For every Limiting Trait you select, you **receive** 5 more Recruitment Points. For every Non-limiting Trait you select, you receive 3 Recruitment Points. For every Limiting Code you select, you receive 10 Recruitment Points and for every Non-limiting Code you select, you receive 5 Recruitment Points.

Limiting Trait = 5 Recruitment Points
Non-limiting Trait = 3 Recruitment Points
Limiting Code = 10 Recruitment Points
Non-limiting Code = 5 Recruitment Points

Note that the Gamemaster must approve each Trait or Code as acceptable for play and judge each selected Trait or Code as Limiting or Non-Limiting (using the examples below as guidelines). If you are having trouble selecting traits and codes, here are a few ideas:

Limiting Traits: *Curious, Likes to pick fights, Fights only when pushed, Won't risk undergoing feedback trauma, Addicted to cocaine, Kleptomaniac, Likes to prove himself superior in all situations, Hates authority figures, Addicted to danger, etc.*

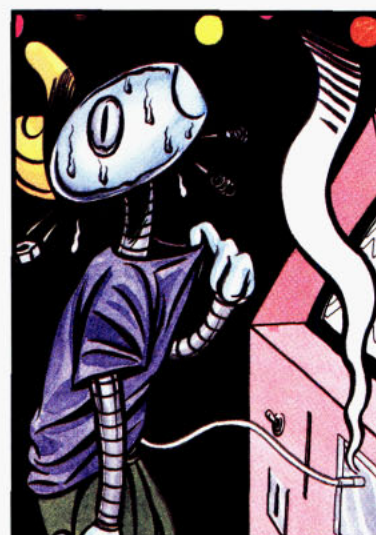
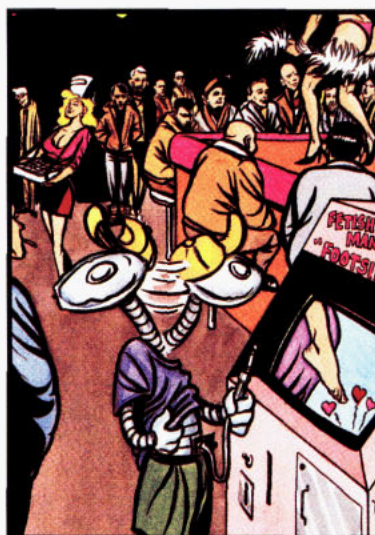
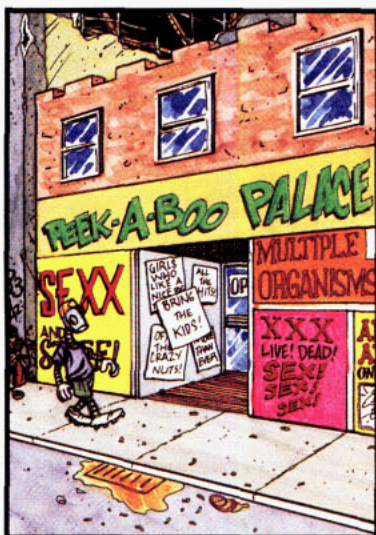
Non-limiting Traits: *Curious about his past, Loves art, Wants to find an old friend, Strong sense of humor, Never misses Aeon Flux on the vid-net, Loves to seduce men, Wants to re-marry ex-wife, Wants to be a rock star, Paranoid, Hypochondriac, etc.*

Limiting Codes: *Won't kill, Never throws the first punch, Never backs down from a challenge, Always repays an injustice in kind, etc.*

Non-Limiting Codes: *Won't lie, Never "rats" on a friend, Sworn to protect a younger brother, Won't harm an animal, etc.*

receive: Note that other than the allocation of funds, this is the only way to receive Recruitment Points. During every other step of the process, you spend the points you have earned. Traits and Codes give their owners more points in order to encourage players to make their characters more interesting by selecting lots of them.

Hubba Hubba!—A randy little LM 770 spends its day off down at the Peek-a-Boo Palace.



Reward Points: are a benefit you receive for completing a story. Between stories, you can use the Reward Points you have accumulated to improve your character's Attributes/Abilities and to acquire certain other benefits. You'll read more about Reward Points (often abbreviated "RP") in Chapter Twelve.

During play, your Traits and Codes act as a "blueprint" for the sorts of actions your character should take. Although you are free to act in a fashion that is contrary to your Traits and Codes, you will be penalized if you do so. Acting contrary to one of your Traits during a story reduces the number of Reward Points you receive for successfully completing that story. Similarly, breaking a Code during a story prevents you from receiving any Reward Points for completing the story. One of the GM's responsibilities is to watch for Trait or Code violations during play so she can parcel out the proper Reward Point totals once the story is over. You'll read more about handling Traits and Codes in Chapter Fourteen.

TRAITS AND CODES HELP YOU DECIDE WHAT ACTIONS TO PERFORM DURING PLAY

Example: Mike envisions the Delinquonaut as a feisty young punk. After thinking for a while, Mike selects the following Traits and Codes and shows them to the GM for approval:

Traits

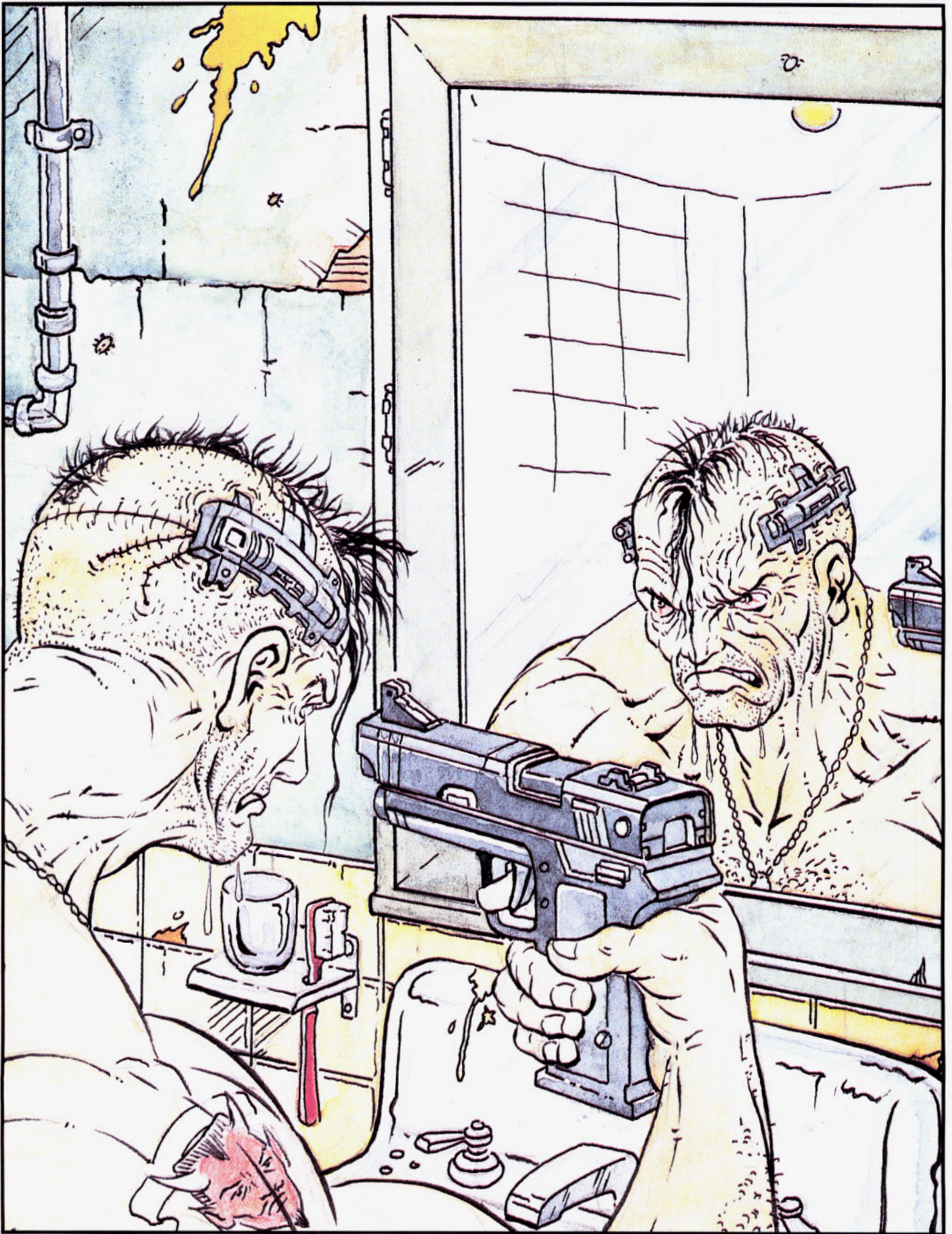
- Loves to vandalize government property. (Limiting)
- Won't back down from a fight (Limiting)
- Loves to quote Systematic Overthrow lyrics (Non-limiting)

Code

- Always avenges injustices in kind. (Limiting)

Altogether, these Traits and Codes net Mike 23 additional Recruitment Points, raising his total to 136.

AN EXAMPLE OF SELECTING TRAITS AND CODES



Goodbye Cruel World!— An artificial brain malfunction prompts Mr. Murder to bow out of the rat race.

0-6: Although lots of people have Attributes that are rated at less than 0 (since 0 is defined as the human average in each Attribute), beginning characters have minimum Attribute scores of 0. This is because characters with below average Attributes never would have passed the rigorous tests given potential recruits before they are enlisted and subjected to genetic enhancement.

Step #4 - Recruiting/Purchase Attributes

Next, it's time to determine your character's starting Attribute scores. Beginning Attribute scores are "purchased" using Recruitment Points. Costs are found in the table below. Note that you must purchase a starting score in each of the seven basic Attributes.

Starting Score	Cost
0	0
1	3
2	6
3	10
4	14
5	19
6	24

As you may have guessed from glancing at the table, your beginning score in each Attribute must range from 0-6. Remember that only Recruitment Points can be used to purchase Attributes and Skills (step #5).

Example: Mike settles on the following Attribute scores:

STR: 3, DEX: 5, SPD: 5, RES: 3, INT: 4, WILL: 2, AURA: 4

Together, these scores cost him (10 + 19 + 19 + 10 + 14 + 6 + 14) 92 Recruitment Points, leaving him with 44.

Step #5 - Recruiting/Purchase Skills

Now, you complete the Recruitment procedure by purchasing your character's beginning Skills. A complete list of available Skills and descriptions of their various functions can be found in the next chapter.

Each skill you purchase costs 5 Recruitment Points. When you purchase a Skill, you receive a Unit rating in that Skill equal to your Unit rating in the

PURCHASING
YOUR BEGINNING
ATTRIBUTE
RATINGS

AN EXAMPLE OF
PURCHASING
ATTRIBUTES

PURCHASING
YOUR BEGINNING
SKILLS.

Skill's **Governing Attribute**. You can receive a higher rating in the Skill by spending additional Recruitment Points on the table below.

Starting Unit Total	Cost
+1	1
+2	2
+3	4
+4	6
+5	9
+6	12

You cannot purchase your Unit rating in a Skill higher than six points beyond your Unit rating in its Governing Attribute.

Governing Attribute: the Attribute most important to the performance of the Skill. For instance, DEX is the Governing Attribute of the Vehicles Skill, because operating a vehicle calls for quick reflexes. The Governing Attribute of each Skill is listed as part of its description in the next chapter.

SKILL SPECIALIZATION

Optionally, you can choose to **specialize** in any Skill you purchase. Listed with each Skill description in the next chapter is a series of Specialties for that Skill. By limiting yourself to a single Specialty of the Skill, you can add an additional +2 to your Unit Rating in that Skill at no additional cost. By limiting yourself to more than one of the Skill's Specialties (but not all) you can add an additional +1 to your Unit Rating in that Skill at no additional cost. In any case, specializing can not be used to increase your Unit Rating in a Skill to greater than your Governing Attribute plus +6, so purchasing a +6 in a Skill and then specializing is a waste of Recruitment Points.

You'll read more about Skill specialization in the next chapter.

AN EXAMPLE OF SKILL SPECIALIZATION

Example: The Specialties listed for the Gun Combat Skill are Pistol, Rifle/SMG, and Heavy Weapons. A character who chooses to specialize in Pistol (meaning he cannot use his Gun Combat Skill to fire a rifle or a heavy weapon) receives a +2 to his Unit Rating in Gun Combat at no additional cost (ie. to acquire the Skill at his Governing Attribute +6, he need spend only 6 points). Another character might decide to specialize in Pistol and Rifle/SMG (meaning she cannot use her Gun Combat Skill to fire a heavy weapon), allowing her to add +1 to her Unit Rating in Gun Combat at no additional cost.

the Enhancement Selection Table found on page 114: For now, ignore the "+" and "-" columns. They will be explained in the next paragraph.

listed Bonuses and Limitations: Enterprising and experienced players and GMs should feel free to invent their own Bonuses and Limitations for any or all of the available enhancements.

Example: Now it's time for Mike to purchase his Skills. He has 44 Recruitment Points remaining. After consulting the Skill lists in Chapter Six, Mike decides to purchase the following Skills: Gun Combat (DEX), Thief (DEX), Acrobatics (DEX), Medicine (INT), Martial Arts (SPD), and Intimidation/Interrogation (AURA). So far, this costs him 30 Recruitment Points. For an additional 6 points each, he'll buy +4 to his Unit Rating in Gun Combat and Martial Arts, and for an additional 2 points, he'll buy +2 to his Unit Rating in Intimidation/Interrogation, bringing his total expenditure to 44 points and leaving him with none. Furthermore, Mike will specialize his Medicine Skill to First Aid and his Acrobatics Skill to Dodge for +2 to his Unit Rating in both cases.

Putting it all together, Mike's starting Skill ratings look like this—Gun Combat: 9, Martial Arts: 9, Intimidation/Interrogation: 6, Acrobatics (Dodge only): 7, Medicine (First Aid only): 6, Thief: 5

AN EXAMPLE OF PURCHASING STARTING SKILLS

Step #6 - Design Enhancement Program

Next, you choose the genetic enhancements you'd like your character to receive. A complete list of available genetic enhancements can be found in Chapter Seven.

To select an enhancement, you must purchase it using your Enhancement Points. Each enhancement has a Base Cost and a Potency ranging from 1-3 listed in its description. To purchase an enhancement, compare its Potency with your desired Unit rating on the Enhancement Selection Table found on page 114. Add this result to the Base Cost to arrive at a total cost. In other words, it costs 25 Enhancement Points to purchase 12 Units of a Potency 2 enhancement with a Base Cost of 5.

Since not all characters possessing a genetic enhancement manifest it in exactly the same way, many of the enhancements have listed Bonuses and Limitations. Bonuses are special advantages open to a character purchasing an enhancement, while Limitations are special drawbacks that can be selected to reduce an enhancement's cost. Placing a Bonus on an enhancement increases its Potency by one level, while placing a Limitation on an enhancement reduces its Potency by one level. Whether or not you place a Bonus or

SELECTING YOUR ENHANCEMENTS

YOU CAN USE BONUSES AND LIMITATIONS TO MODIFY YOUR ENHANCEMENTS



AN EXAMPLE OF
PURCHASING
ENHANCEMENTS

Limitation on any of the enhancements you purchase is entirely up to you, but you are limited to one Bonus or one Limitation per enhancement. Should a Bonus raise the Potency of an enhancement above 3, use the "+" column of the Enhancement Selection Table to determine its cost. Similarly, should a Limitation reduce the Potency of an enhancement to below 1, use the "-" column to determine its cost.

Example: Mike has 70 Enhancement Points. For 15 points each, he purchases 9 Units of Boosted Strength, 9 Units of Boosted Speed, and 9 Units of Boosted Resilience (Base Cost of 5, 10 points for 9 Units). For 24 points, he purchases 7 Units of Telepathic Blast (Base Cost of 15, 9 points for 7 Units).

Skill rating of the genetic surgeon: Genetic surgery on this level is a very delicate process that puts the patient at great risk. Thus, it is unlikely that a surgeon with a Skill rating of 7 would be permitted to attempt such an operation.

INSTALLING
YOUR
ENHANCEMENTS

Step #7 - Conduct Enhancement Surgery

Now it's time to install the enhancements you purchased during the previous step. Installing each of the enhancements is conducted as a Standard Challenge using the rules found in Chapter Three. The Skill rating of the genetic surgeon conducting the installation depends upon the amount of money you allocated to genetic surgery.

Funds Allocated	Skill Rating of Surgeon
\$200,000	7
\$700,000	9
\$1,000,000	12

INSTALLING AN
ENHANCEMENT
IS A CHALLENGE
WITH A
DIFFICULTY OF 4

Conducting genetic surgery of this nature has a Difficulty of 4 (Very Difficult task according to the Difficulty Chart). Installing each enhancement is a separate Challenge. Depending upon how well the surgery goes, your character can begin play with more or less Units of each enhancement than you anticipated during Step #6. Consult the table below.

Challenge Grade	Beginning Unit Total
F	-2
D	0
C	+1
B	+2
A	+3



Power to the People!— Lashing out in the name of the Underground, the Torture Twins (Tommy and Terrence) slag the Now Chemical plant that manufactured the "Paste" used to repel the 2020 Compton Riot.

GENETIC ACCIDENTS

If, while installing an enhancement, you roll double 1s as your first dice roll (ie. not as a second or subsequent roll in a string of doubles), your character undergoes a genetic accident. In this case, you do not receive the enhancement you purchased, but a different enhancement **of the Gamemaster's choice** with the same or lower Potency and Base Cost.

Example: Mike allocated \$700,000 to genetic surgery, so his surgeon has a Skill rating of 7. Since Mike is trying to install four enhancements, the surgeon must undergo four Standard Challenges, all with a Difficulty of 4. The surgeon receives an A on the first Challenge, a D on the second Challenge, an F on the third Challenge, and a C on the final Challenge. Thus, the Delinquent begins with 12 Units of Boosted Strength, 9 Units of Boosted Speed, 7 Units of Boosted Resilience, and 11 Units of Telepathic Blast.

reconditioning counselor: the psychologist responsible for overseeing your stay in Slumberland and debriefing you once you emerge.

Stress: Most enhancements have a Stress rating that depends upon the number of Units of the enhancement you have installed (ie. 1-6 Units = 1 Stress; 2-8 Units = 2 Stress; 9+ Units = 3 Stress, etc). See Chapter Seven for more details.

RECONDITIONING AND READJUSTMENT

Step #8 - Reconditioning and Readjustment

Now that your enhancements are installed, you must spend your time in Slumberland and undergo psychological reconditioning to lessen the impact of metagenic feedback trauma. The amount of money you allocated to reconditioning determines the Skill level of your [reconditioning counselor](#).

Funds Allocated	Skill Rating of Counselor
\$500,000	7
\$1,000,000	9
\$5,000,000	12

READJUSTMENT LESSENS THE STRESS OF YOUR ENHANCEMENTS

The base psychological impact of each of your enhancements is represented by the **Stress** rating found in its description in Chapter Seven. Decreasing the Stress rating of each enhancement you have installed is treated as a separate Standard Challenge with a Difficulty of 9 (Impressive Task). The outcomes of these Challenges can decrease your Stress rating as follows.

Tolerance: You will be introduced to the concept of Tolerance in Chapter Eight. For now, just follow directions.

Psychosis: Your Psychosis determines what happens when your character succumbs to meta-genic feedback trauma. You'll learn more about it in Chapter Eight.

goes insane: Good GMs snatch up such characters and incorporate them into their stories. Perhaps the insane recruit escapes from the AMI scientists and begins wreaking havoc; or, perhaps AMI becomes so desperate for an operative with the recruit's particular abilities that they send him off to the wars despite his condition.

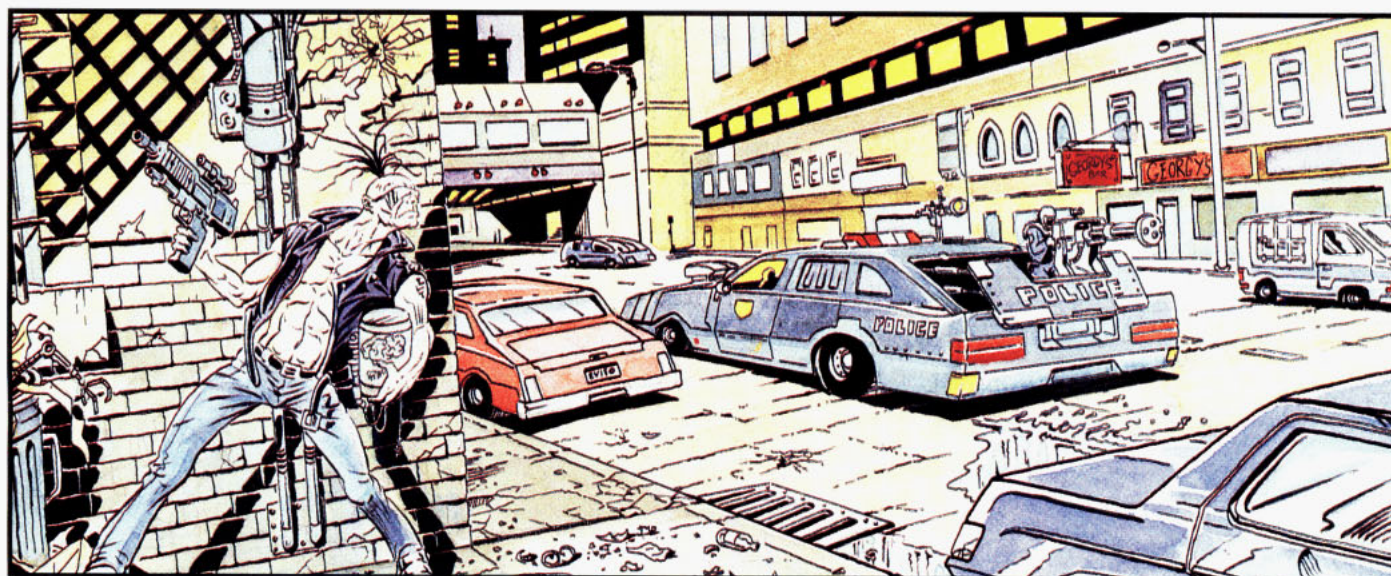
Challenge Grade	Beginning Stress Rating
F	0
D	0
C	-1
B	-2
A	-3

In any case, Stress ratings can never be reduced below 0.

As long as we are dealing with Stress, you may as well go ahead and calculate your **Tolerance** and determine your **Psychosis**. Your starting Tolerance is equal to 10 minus the final Stress ratings (ie. after reconditioning) of any of your enhancements that had the note "Continuing Stress" in their descriptions. To determine your Psychosis, find your enhancement with the highest Unit rating (choose one if two are equal) and look up the corresponding Psychosis in its description in Chapter Seven. You'll learn how Stress, Tolerance, and Psychosis work in a later chapter.

CALCULATING
TOLERANCE AND
PSYCHOSIS

If your character's starting Tolerance is less than zero, he **goes insane** just after he leaves Slumberland, forcing you to begin the process all over again. Fortunately, such occurrences are extremely rare and can be easily avoided by good planning during Step #7.



Cheez It, Da Man!— A boosted thug on a brainnapping.

chapter 5

AN EXAMPLE OF
READJUSTMENT

Example: Mike allocated \$1,000,000 toward reconditioning, so the Skill Level of his genetic counselor is 7. Since he installed four enhancements, Mike must conduct four Challenges. He receives a D on the first Challenge, a C on the second Challenge, a C on the third Challenge, and a C on the final Challenge. Since the base Stress totals of the enhancements he is installing are 2 (for Boosted Strength), 2 (for Boosted Speed), 2 (for Boosted Resilience), and 3 (for Telepathic Blast), his final Stress values look like this:

Boosted Strength:	2
Boosted Speed:	1
Boosted Resilience:	1
Telepathic Blast:	2

Since Boosted Strength, Speed, and Resilience are all listed as "Continuing Stress" enhancements, the Delinquent's starting Tolerance is 6 (10-4). Since his enhancement with the highest Unit Rating is Boosted Strength, his Psychosis is Homicidal Mania.

major conflict firms: If you have not yet chosen a unit affiliation, do so now.

GENERATING
YOUR CAREER

Optional Step #8 1/2 - Generate Military Career

This optional step allows you figure out exactly what happened to your veteran during his or her military career. It is recommended only for more experienced players and GMs.

First, decide how long your veteran served (normally 4, 5, or 6 years). Then, for each year you served, roll 2D10 (adding the results and NOT rerolling doubles) in each of the five categories listed below. Every time you roll the listed total or higher, you get the listed benefit or penalty.

Promotion (13+): The rank structure for each of the **major conflict firms** was detailed back in Chapter Four. You automatically begin your career at the lowest listed rank for the firm you have chosen. Each time you roll a 13 or higher at this step, you gain a promotion to the next rank. In any case, you can never be promoted higher than the highest listed rank. Your final rank determines your demobilization benefits — the amount of money you have in your pocket as play begins.

ROLL FOR
PROMOTION

restricted military weapons:
you will read about such
weapons in Chapter Ten.

peculiar form of post-
traumatic stress disorder: In a
recent *AMA Journal*, Professor
John Fleming of Johns
Hopkins University published
data that seems to prove that
subjects who have undergone
genetic enhancement
are prone to post-traumatic
stress disorder.

Decoration (12+): All soldiers serving with conflict firms handling
contracts for the United States are eligible for decorations from the
American government. The exact decoration you receive depends
upon exactly what you rolled.

Roll	Decoration Received
------	---------------------

12-14	Purple Heart (indicates you were wounded in field)
16-17	Bronze Star (for valor)
18	Silver Star (for valor)
19	Tastee Ghoul Soldier-of-the-Month (sponsored by the fast food corporation; awarded for uncommon valor)
20	Congressional Medal of Honor (for extreme valor)

Although you can receive most of the decorations multiple times,
you can receive the Medal of Honor only once.

Decorations have no real effect on play, but they might help you get
a better handle on your character.

Gain Contact/Trophy (16+): Every time you gain this benefit,
you either make a friend who will serve as an important contact
stateside (ie. either a boosted vet or a non-boosted bureaucrat who
might play a somewhat important part in the stories you create) or
an item you can bring to the states as a trophy—your choice. Items
gained in this way are usually weapons of no more than \$28,000
value, though trophies can be [restricted military weapons](#) that are
difficult to obtain in any other fashion. The exact contact or item you
obtain is up to you and the Gamemaster.

Gain Flashback (14+): For some unknown reason, a large num-
ber of boosted vets suffer from a [peculiar form of post-traumatic
stress disorder](#) that causes them to experience periodic flashbacks of
particularly stressful situations they faced in combat. For instance, a
vet who saw his friend burned to death might flash back to the
friend's death whenever he sees a roaring flame.

Players who receive this penalty should work with the GM to select
a reasonably common traumatic circumstance (fire, thunder storms,

ROLL FOR
DECORATION

ROLL TO EARN A
CONTACT OR
TROPHY

ROLL TO GAIN A
FLASHBACK

chapter 5

ROLL FOR
CATASTROPHE

AN EXAMPLE OF
GENERATING A
CAREER

heights, imminent death, etc.) and an explanation of why the character has such a dramatic reaction to the circumstance. During play, whenever the character comes into contact with the chosen circumstance, he re-experiences the traumatic event that touched off the flashback and **takes one Stress Point per Turn** until he can somehow leave the area or cause the circumstance to go away.

Note that it is possible to receive this penalty more than once, meaning the character experienced multiple traumatic events that prompt flashbacks.

Something Catastrophic Happens (17+): A character who receives this penalty undergoes a catastrophe. The exact nature of the catastrophe is up to the player (with the GM's approval). Possibilities include: gaining a hated enemy who will pose a threat stateside, losing a limb (a character missing an arm loses 6 points of DEX, a character missing a leg loses 6 points of SPD), undergoing a court-martial and obtaining a criminal record, undergoing a psyche-shattering traumatic experience (permanently lowering the character's Tolerance by two), or just about any other catastrophe the player can invent.

Example: Mike already decided that the Delinquent spent two years in the service. Thus, he rolls on each of the five categories twice.

During his first year, Mike rolls 5, 7, 9, 16, and 13. Consequently, he is not promoted, receives no decorations, gets no contacts/trophies and experiences no catastrophes, though he does gain a flashback. Mike decides that the Delinquent saw his best friend die beneath a full moon and flashes back to that moment whenever a full moon is plainly visible.

During his second year, Mike rolls 15, 11, 12, 12, 9. Consequently, he earns a promotion. Since Mike already decided that the Delinquent is an AMI veteran, he begins his career as an Operative and is promoted to the post of OverOperative.

takes one Stress Point per Turn: Again, Stress and how it functions will be explained in a later Chapter.

character archetypes: More character archetypes can be found in the forthcoming *Underground Player's Handbook*.

fill in all the requested information: Most of the blanks are self-explanatory.

When filling in your "Enhancements," copy the appropriate information out of the enhancement descriptions found in Chapter Seven. The rules for calculating your movement rates are found in Chapter Three. The "Equipment" section is discussed in the next paragraph.

Step #9 - Choose Character Archetype

Next, choose one of the eight character archetypes that appear at the end of this chapter. The archetype you choose will provide you with some more information about your character and her outlook on life. In each archetype entry, you'll find notes on how your character makes a living and plugs into the world of 2021, as well as some information that should help you get into character.

Please understand that the character archetypes aren't as limiting as they may appear and that it is certainly possible for a character to combine elements of several archetypes. The single archetype you select signifies only the role that you feel best describes your character. For example, a Political Hardcore might be a thief (ie. a Criminal) with an overriding interest in politics, just as a Primitive might be a police officer (ie. a Bureaucrat) who is more interested in his tribe than in his activities with the force.

Note that the use of the [character archetypes](#) is optional. Their true purpose is to help beginners get a feel for their characters. More experienced players might want to invent all the details found in each archetype listing for themselves.

Example: Mike decides that the Delinquent is clearly a Criminal.

Step #10 - Create Background and Finish the Character

You've done most of the work. Now all that remains is to put everything together in one place. Make a copy of the Underground Character Record Sheet found in the last few pages of this book and [fill in all the requested information](#). Note that if your Enhancements changed your Ratings in the Governing Attributes for any of your Skills, you should recalculate your starting Skill scores.

At this point, you should also purchase your starting equipment. All characters begin with \$100,000 in savings plus their demobilization benefits of \$7,000 (plus \$1500 for every promotion received, if you used optional Step #8 1/2). Lists of available items and their corresponding prices can be found in Chapter Ten. Copy all of the appropriate information from these descriptions into the "Equipment" section of your character sheet.

CHOOSING A CHARACTER ARCHETYPE

FINISHING OFF YOUR CHARACTER

PURCHASE EQUIPMENT

Finally, if you have changed your mind since Step #1, you should take a few moments to solidify your character's personal history and background. You should also take a few moments to make sure you have chosen a unit affiliation from among those listed at the beginning of this chapter and to apply for any appropriate veteran's programs.

Example: Mike is willing to stick with the background he invented back in Step #1. The Delinquent's character sheet can be found on page 115.

enhancement purchase table

UNITS	POTENCY				
	—	1	2	3	+
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	2	3	4	5	6
3	3	4	5	6	7
4	4	5	6	7	9
5	5	6	7	8	11
6	6	7	8	10	13
7	7	8	9	12	16
8	8	9	11	15	19
9	9	10	13	17	22
10	10	11	15	20	26
11	11	12	18	24	30
12	12	13	20	27	34
13	13	15	23	31	39
14	14	17	26	35	44
15	15	19	29	39	49
16	16	22	33	44	55
17	17	24	36	48	61
18	18	26	40	53	67
19	19	29	44	59	74
20	20	32	48	64	81
21	21	35	52	70	88
22	22	38	57	76	96
23	23	41	62	83	104
24	24	44	67	89	112
25	25	48	72	96	121
26	26	52	78	104	130
27	27	55	83	111	139
28	29	59	89	119	149
29	31	63	95	127	159
30	33	67	101	135	169
+1	+2	+4	+6	+8	+10

character record sheet

NAME <u>BRIAN BURROUGHS</u>	CODE NAME <u>MIGRAINE #27 (DELINQUINAUT)</u>	HT <u>6'0</u>	HAIR <u>BROWN</u>
UNIT <u>AMI FLYING DEUCES</u>	RANK <u>OVER OPERATIVE</u>	WT <u>195</u>	EYES <u>BLUE</u>

ATTRIBUTES	
WOUND STATUS	STR <u>6</u> DEX <u>5</u> SPD <u>8</u> RES <u>5</u>
LAST WOUND ☐	INT <u>4</u> WILL <u>2</u> AURA <u>4</u>
STRESS ☐	TOLERANCE <u>6</u>
LAST STRESS ☐	PSYCHOSIS: <u>HOMICIDAL MANIA</u>
MOVEMENT	
MOVE ☐	<u>8</u>
FASTER ☐	<u>11</u>
TOP ☐	<u>14</u>

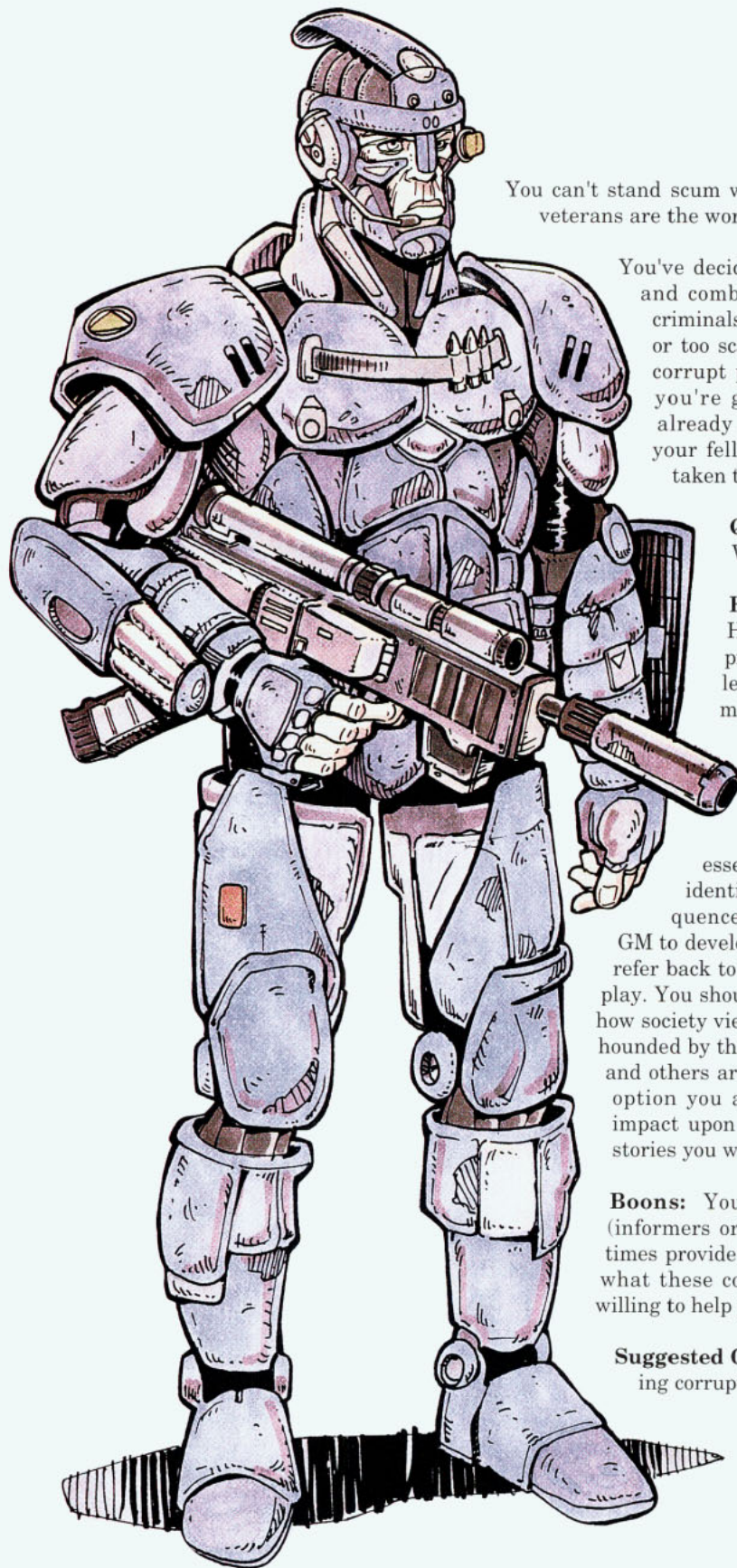
SKILLS					TRAITS
NAME	GOV ATT	ADD	RATING	NOTES	<u>LOVES VANDALISM (LIM)</u>
<u>GUN COMBAT</u>	<u>DEX</u>	<u>+4</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>WON'T BACK DOWN (LIM)</u>
<u>MARTIAL ARTS</u>	<u>SPD</u>	<u>+4</u>	<u>12</u>		<u>QUOTES S.O. LYRICS</u>
<u>INTIM/INTERR</u>	<u>AURA</u>	<u>+2</u>	<u>6</u>		<u>(NON-LIM)</u>
<u>MS (DEMOLITION)</u>	<u>INT</u>	<u>SPEC+2</u>	<u>6</u>		
<u>THIEF</u>	<u>DEX</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>5</u>		
<u>ACRC (DODGE)</u>	<u>DEX</u>	<u>SPEC+2</u>	<u>7</u>		

ENHANCEMENTS				
NAME	STRESS	RATING	BON/LIM	NOTES
<u>TELEPATHIC BLAST</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>—</u>	
<u>BOOST STR</u>	<u>2(c)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>—</u>	
<u>BOOST SPD</u>	<u>1(c)</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>—</u>	
<u>BOOST RES</u>	<u>1(c)</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>—</u>	

CODES	<u>ALWAYS AVENGES</u>
	<u>INJUSTICE IN KIND</u>
	<u>(LIM)</u>
CHALLENGE CHART	
DIFFERENCE	GRADE
1-3.....	D
4-7.....	C
8-10.....	B
11+.....	A

WEAPONS							ARMOR		
NAME	ACC	PEN	AMMO	RNG	STR	DMG	NAME	BONUS	NOTES
<u>FISTS (MART. ART)</u>		<u>12</u>				<u>ST/KO/LW</u> <u>MW</u>			
*after name means weapon fires full-auto									

Vigilante



You can't stand scum who prey on human weakness, and the veterans are the worst of the lot. They should know better.

You've decided to put your genetic enhancements and combat training to work by targeting the criminals and misfits the law is either too weak or too scared to handle. Soon the criminals and corrupt politicians will learn to fear you, and you're going to enjoy being feared. You've already admitted to yourself that concern for your fellow man is not the only reason you've taken to prowling the streets.

Quote: KRRUUNCHH! "One more time. Want to tell me where I can find Rico?"

How You Make a Living: Like Political Hardcores, Vigilantes like to keep a low profile. Most work blue collar jobs or collect welfare. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$14,000.

Notes: Many Vigilantes responded unusually well to their Slumberland programming and retain a great deal of its influence. In essence, they are trying to recapture their identities as "comic book heroes." As a consequence, you should probably work with the GM to develop your stay in Slumberland so you can refer back to your past life as a character bit during play. You should also work with the GM to figure out how society views your character. Some Vigilantes are hounded by the authorities, some are tacitly accepted, and others are openly endorsed. Needless to say, the option you and the GM choose has an enormous impact upon how your character might fit into the stories you will invent.

Boons: You begin play with two street contacts (informers or small time criminals) who can sometimes provide you with valuable information. Exactly what these contacts know and how much they are willing to help you is up to the Gamemaster.

Suggested Goals: Taking down criminals; eliminating corruption; proving you're tough

Political Hardcore

There's something wrong in the home of the brave and you've decided to do something about it.

On the streets, vets who are particularly dedicated to a political agenda are known as "hardcores." They come in all different shades. Some front for the major political parties (mostly the Republocrats, though there are a few Plutocratic traitors and even the occasional NAS oddball), some are licensed activists, and some are straight-up terrorists.

For a Hardcore, the cause is everything. He'd rather die than betray it.

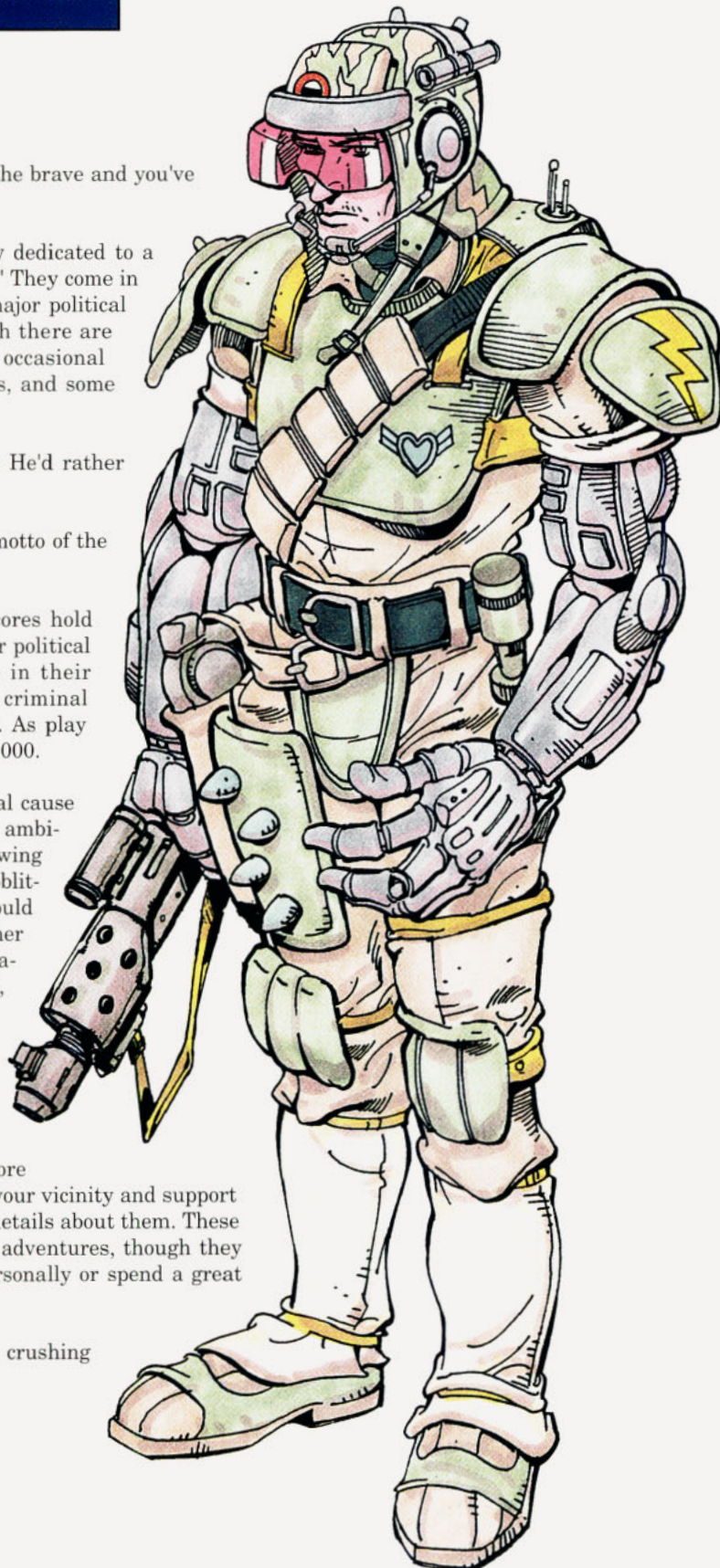
Quote: "Don't you DARE tread on me!" (motto of the Underground).

How You Make a Living: Most Hardcores hold day jobs or collect welfare to support their political activities (trying to keep a low profile in their civilian guises). Some freelance for the criminal syndicates or steal the money they need. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$14,000.

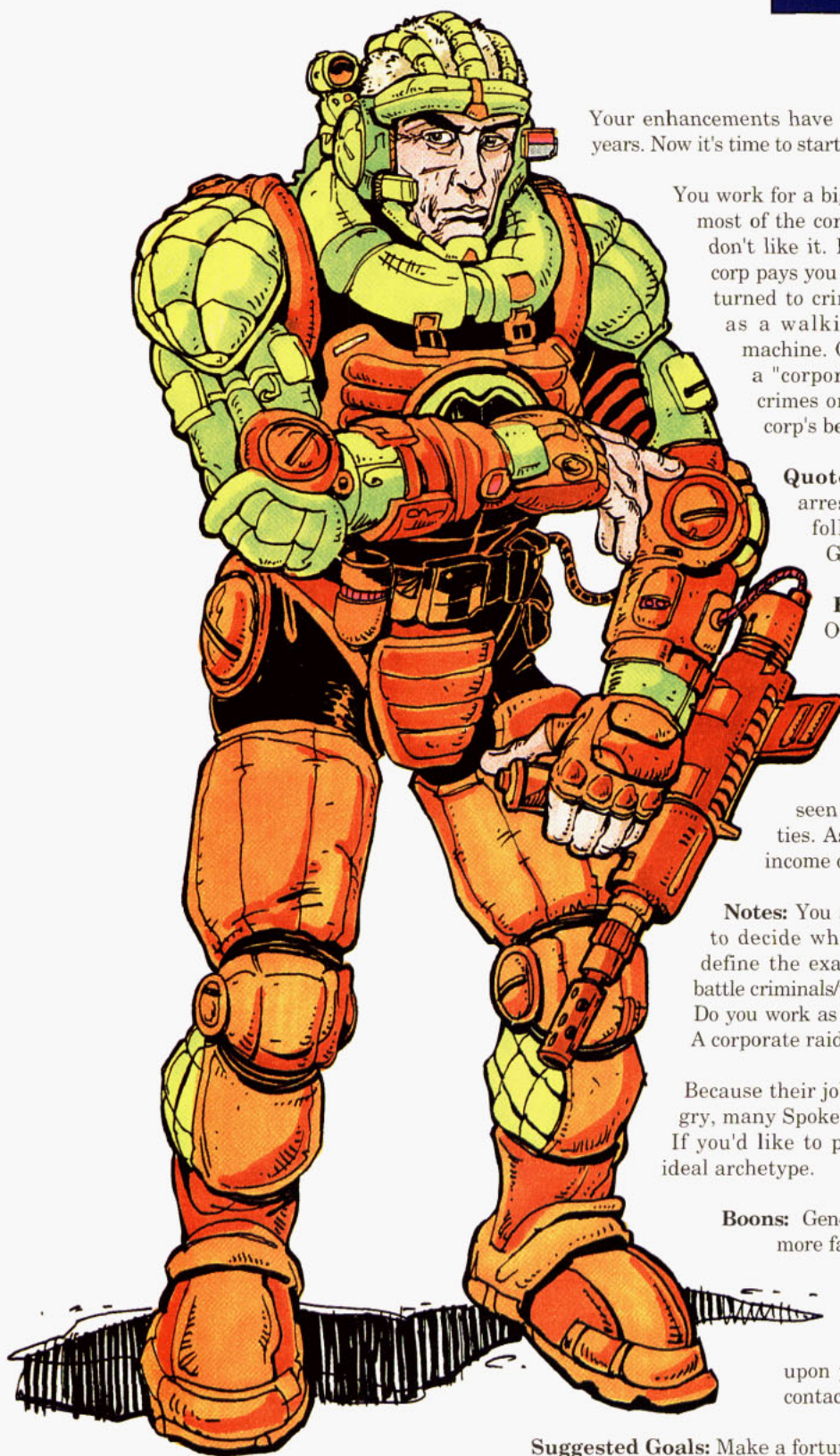
Notes: You must decide the exact political cause you endorse. Possibilities range from the ambitious (the Underground's aim of overthrowing the US Government) to the absurd (the obliteration of the sex-vid industry). You should also decide whether you attempt to further your cause through political action (organizing boycotts, holding rallies), violence, or both. Note that not every character with an interest in politics is a Hardcore—only those characters who build their self-images around their service to the cause.

Boons: You begin play with two Hardcore friends (not necessarily vets) who live in your vicinity and support your cause. Work with the GM to invent details about them. These friends will indirectly assist you in your adventures, though they won't place their lives at risk for you personally or spend a great deal of their time assisting you.

Suggested Goals: Spreading the cause; crushing your political enemies.



Spokesman



Your enhancements have caused you enough grief over the years. Now it's time to start using them to turn a profit.

You work for a big corporation. Sure you know that most of the corps are crooked, and you certainly don't like it. But it is a living. Most likely, the corp pays you to battle your fellow vets who have turned to crime or terrorism, and exploits you as a walking, talking, news-making PR machine. On the other hand, maybe you are a "corporate raider" and secretly commit crimes or terrorist acts of your own on the corp's behalf.

Quote: "And remember citizens, this arrest was brought to you by the fine folks at your neighborhood Taste Ghoul. Are you a people person?"

How You Make a Living: Obviously, most of your income is derived from the corporation or corporations that employ you. In return, you are generally forced to prominently display the corp's logo or slogan on your uniform so the logo can be seen in the news footage of your activities. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$50,000.

Notes: You should work with the Gamemaster to decide what corporation employs you and define the exact nature of your duties. Do you battle criminals/terrorists and try to make the news? Do you work as an action-adventure soma-vid star? A corporate raider?

Because their jobs force them to be publicity-hungry, many Spokesmen are cocky and self-centered. If you'd like to play such a character, this is an ideal archetype.

Boons: Generally, Spokesmen are viewed much more favorably by the general public than other veterans. Their association with corporate America has somehow made them respectable. Furthermore, you can sometimes call upon your corporate masters and their contacts for assistance.

Suggested Goals: Make a fortune; clean up the corporate sector.

Primitive

The world is slowly sliding down a long spiral that leads straight into the jaws of oblivion. The only way to slow this descent is to return to the ways of a more primitive and more enlightened age.

Primitives are vets who share the "primitivist" philosophy outlined in Chapter One. Their greatest concern is the well-being of the tribe. Although they take advantage of technology, they tend to mistrust it. Their ultimate goal is to undo centuries of mercantilist brainwashing and return concepts like honor, tradition, and culture to the forefront of society.

Quote: "You haven't truly experienced life until you've learned to view the world through ancient eyes."

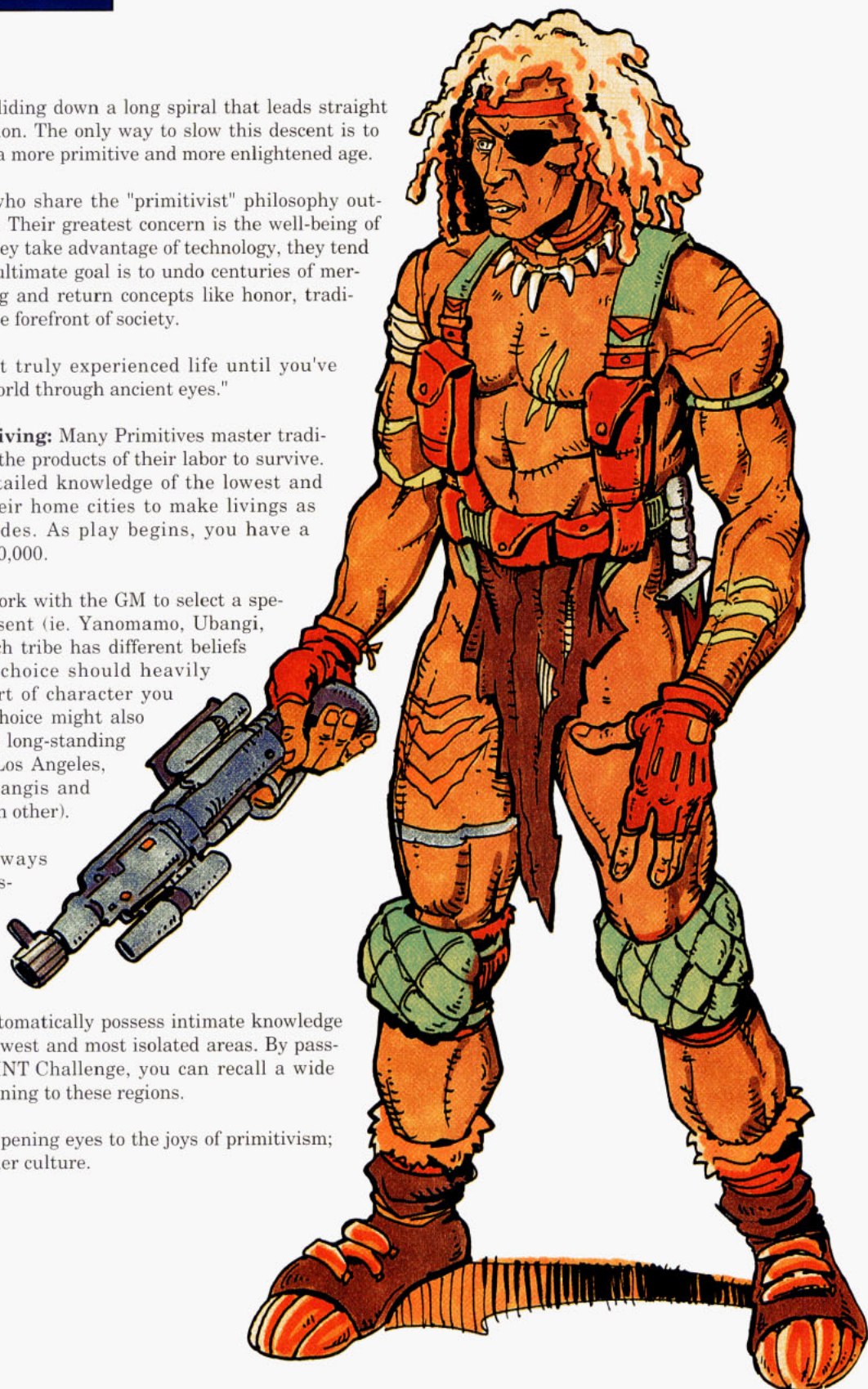
How You Make a Living: Many Primitives master traditional crafts and sell the products of their labor to survive. Others use their detailed knowledge of the lowest and seediest levels of their home cities to make livings as informants and guides. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$10,000.

Notes: You should work with the GM to select a specific tribe you represent (ie. Yanomamo, Ubangi, Maori, etc). Since each tribe has different beliefs and customs, your choice should heavily depend upon the sort of character you want to play. Your choice might also make you a part of a long-standing alliance or feud (in Los Angeles, for instance, the Ubangis and Yanomamos hate each other).

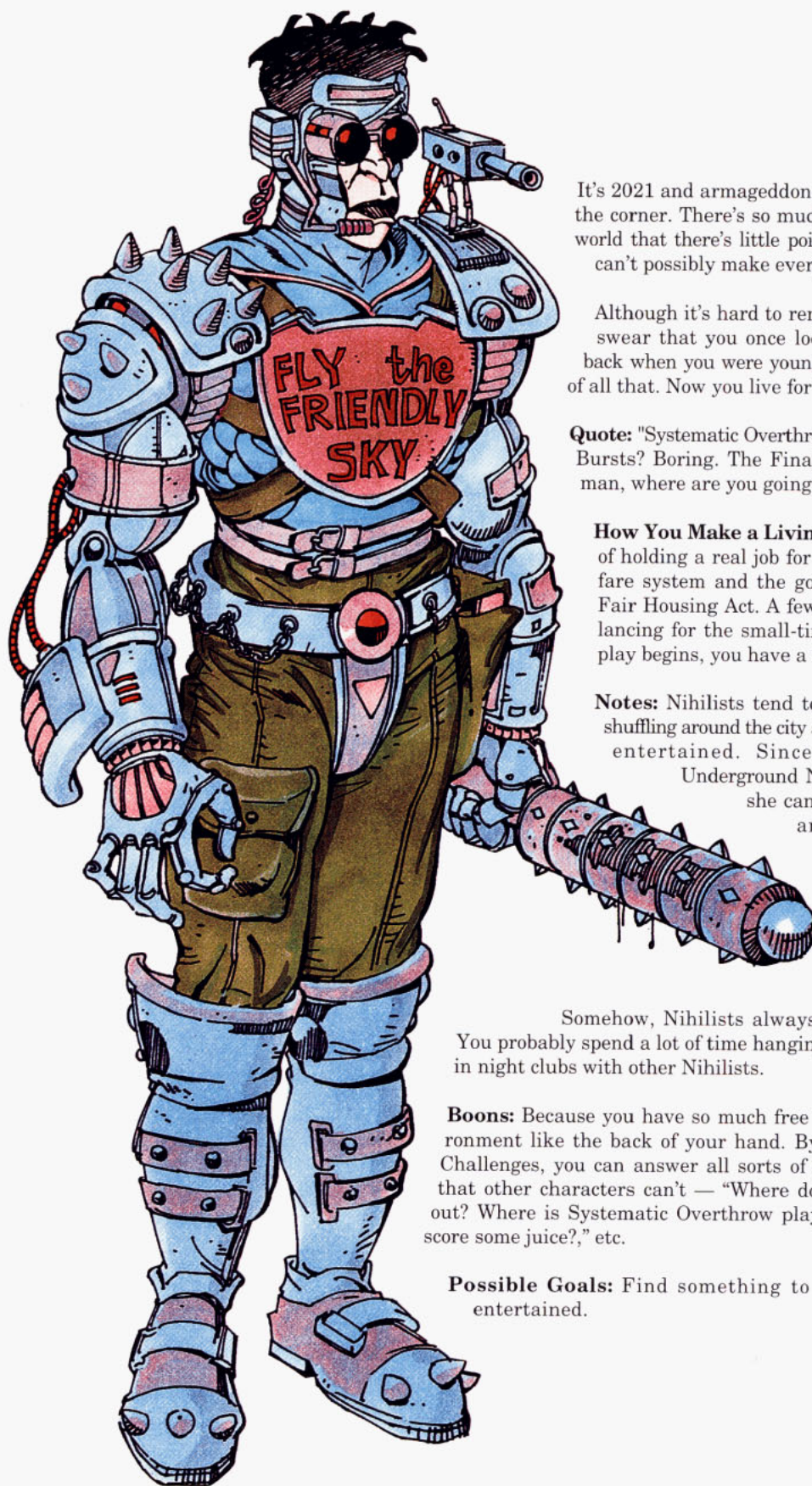
Boons: You can always count on minor assistance from your fellow tribesmen, though you are obligated to assist them in return.

Furthermore, you automatically possess intimate knowledge of your home city's lowest and most isolated areas. By passing an appropriate INT Challenge, you can recall a wide variety of facts pertaining to these regions.

Suggested Goals: Opening eyes to the joys of primitivism; attacking the consumer culture.



Nihilist



It's 2021 and armageddon is undoubtedly just around the corner. There's so much pain and suffering in the world that there's little point in thinking about it. You can't possibly make everyone happy.

Although it's hard to remember for certain, you can swear that you once looked forward to the future back when you were younger. But Paraguay took care of all that. Now you live for today.

Quote: "Systematic Overthrow? Boring. Short-Controlled Bursts? Boring. The Final Solutions? BORING. Hey man, where are you going? You got five bucks?"

How You Make a Living: Few Nihilists are capable of holding a real job for long. Most live off the welfare system and the good graces of the Veterans' Fair Housing Act. A few earn extra money by freelancing for the small-time criminal syndicates. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$12,000.

Notes: Nihilists tend to spend most of their time shuffling around the city and trying to keep themselves entertained. Since the true goal of the Underground Nihilist is to find something she can believe in, this is an ideal archetype for players who aren't really clear about the sort of character they'd like to play. As a Nihilist, you have much more freedom to develop your ideals during play.

Somehow, Nihilists always seem to find each other. You probably spend a lot of time hanging out on street corners and in night clubs with other Nihilists.

Boons: Because you have so much free time, you know your environment like the back of your hand. By passing appropriate INT Challenges, you can answer all sorts of questions about your area that other characters can't — "Where does Johnny Montana hang out? Where is Systematic Overthrow playing tonight? Where can I score some juice?," etc.

Possible Goals: Find something to care about; try to keep entertained.

Cyber-Celeb

Thirty years ago, you were on top of the world. When cryo-freeze became a big fad, you had yourself frozen in the hope that you could be revived in a brave new world. Little did you know that over the next two decades most of your mind would rot away, and what was left would become the heart and soul of one of the first boosted killing machines to set foot on the modern battlefield.

Today, both of your former lives haunt you—your days among the glitterati and your years spent in the jungles of the Third World.

Quote: "Hiya! Heeeere's Johnny! Hiya! Heeeere's Johnny! Hiya! Heeeere's Johnny!" (repeated twelve times)

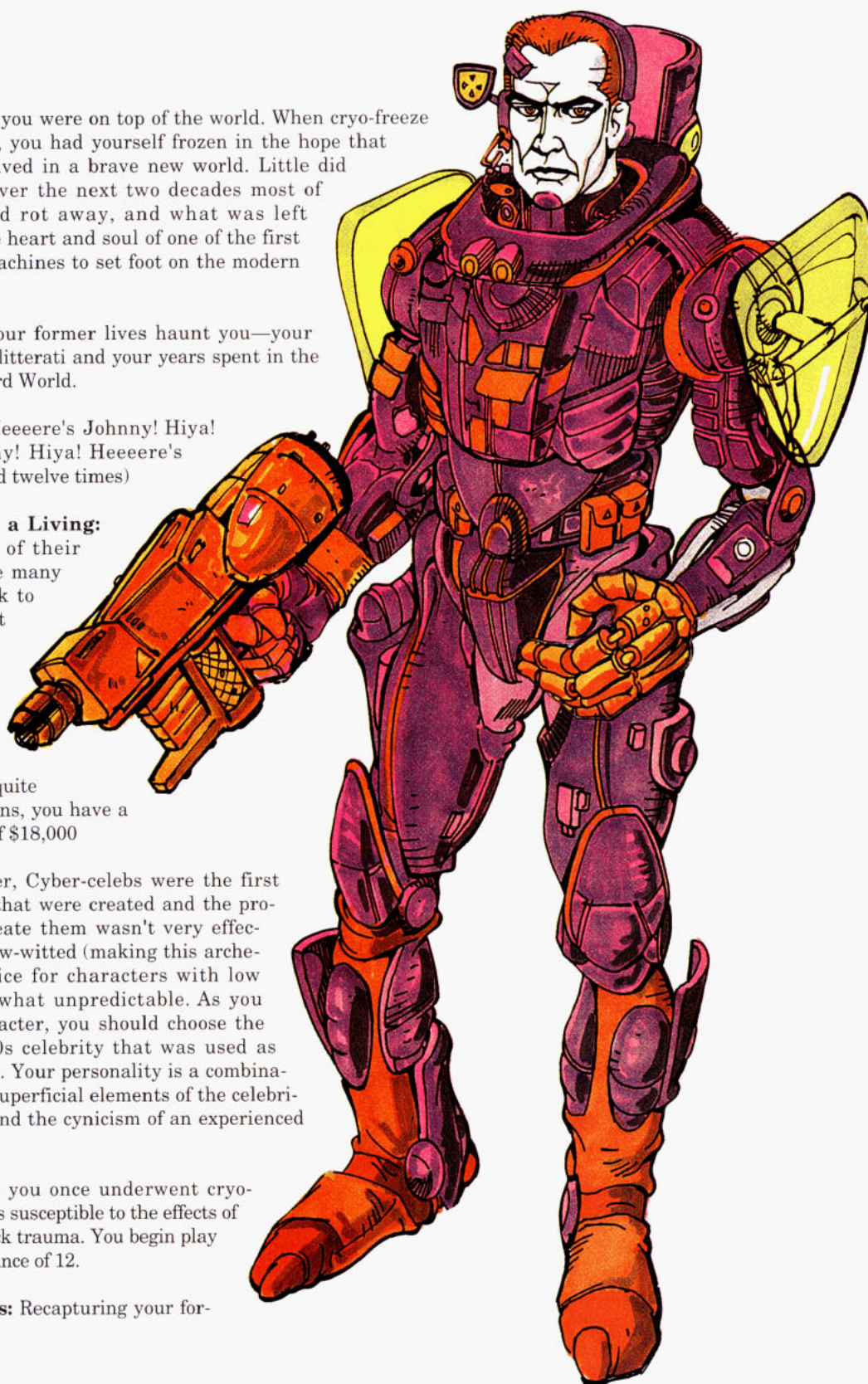
How You Make a Living:

Their memories of their former lives drive many Cyber-celebs back to the entertainment field. Most work at the lowest levels of the industry (lounge singer, magician, etc.), though a few have done quite well. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$18,000

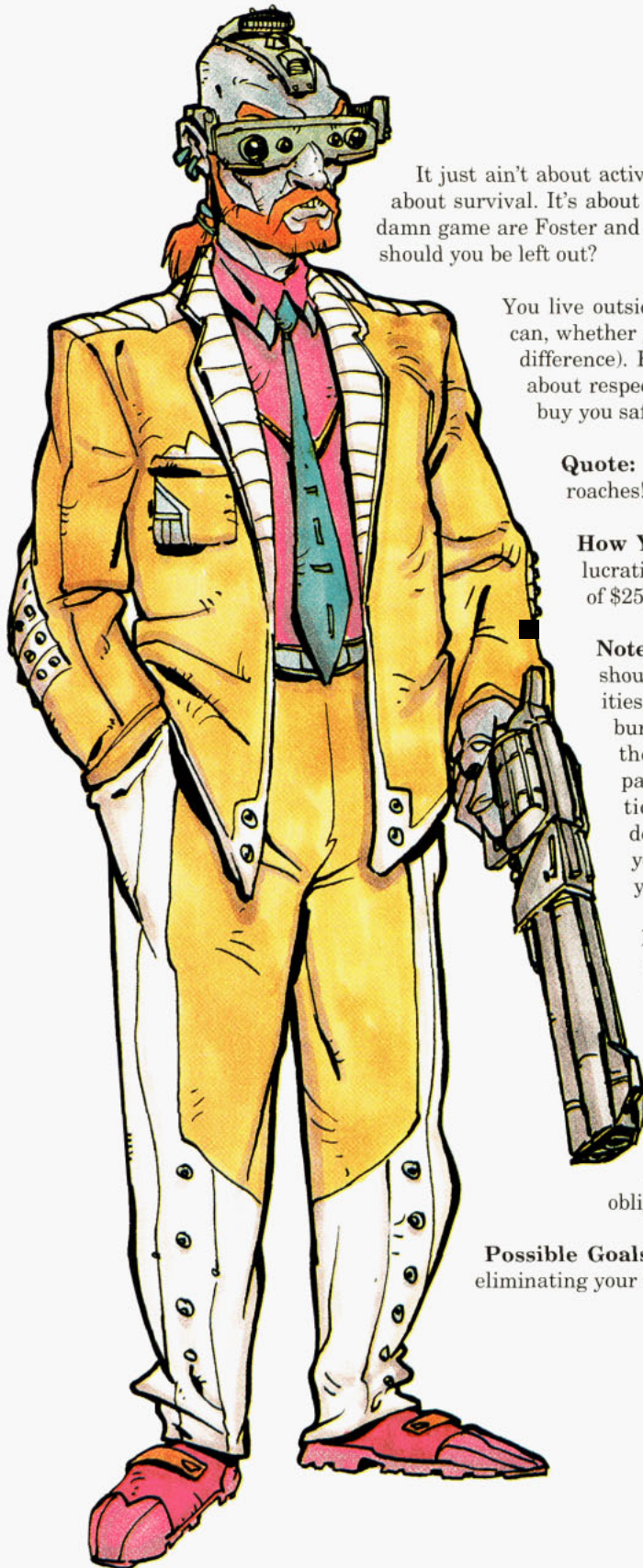
Notes: Remember, Cyber-celebs were the first boosted soldiers that were created and the program used to create them wasn't very effective. Most are slow-witted (making this archetype a good choice for characters with low INTs) and somewhat unpredictable. As you create your character, you should choose the late 80s/early 90s celebrity that was used as your genetic base. Your personality is a combination of the most superficial elements of the celebrity's personality and the cynicism of an experienced soldier.

Boons: Because you once underwent cryo-freeze, you are less susceptible to the effects of metagenic feedback trauma. You begin play with a base Tolerance of 12.

Suggested Goals: Recapturing your former fame.



Criminal



It just ain't about activism, terrorism, classism or any other "ism." It's about survival. It's about getting yours. The biggest players in the whole damn game are Foster and all his Congressmen. They know the score. Why should you be left out?

You live outside the law and make your money any way you can, whether you're a street hustler or an inside trader (same difference). But money isn't everything. Your racket is also about respect. In the end, respect is the only thing that can buy you safety. The minute you lose it, you're dead.

Quote: "Trying to move on me? I'll bury those cockroaches!"

How You Make a Living: The game can be pretty lucrative. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$25,000.

Notes: You have a lot of decisions to make. First, you should decide the exact nature of your criminal activities. Are you a small time hood? A gang-banger? A burglar? A dope dealer? You should also work with the GM to decide whether or not you have any partners in crime and flesh-out your exact relationship with them. Finally, you should try to decide what you do with the money you earn. Are you only out for yourself? Or, like Robin Hood, do you share your ill-gotten gains?

Needless to say, being a criminal is a dangerous profession. You will attract the attention of law enforcement operatives, government spies, and other criminals everywhere you go.

Boons: You begin play with three street contacts. These contacts might be informers, corrupt law enforcement officials, or your partners in crime. You can count on limited assistance from your contacts, but you are obligated to assist them in return.

Possible Goals: Expanding the size of your criminal empire; eliminating your opposition.

Bureaucrat

Sure the system's corrupt, but what's the alternative? Lawlessness? Sometimes you're convinced that the criminals and activists pose an even greater danger to society than the grafted double-dealers they hope to eliminate. Better off working to change things from the inside.

Because of your special capabilities, you're still quite useful to the authorities. Someone must stand up against all the boosted terrorists and criminals on their territory, and you're one of the few with both the skills and the desire. Of course, now that you're the Man, some of your fellow vets view you as a traitor. But you're not losing any sleep. You've got plenty of friends.

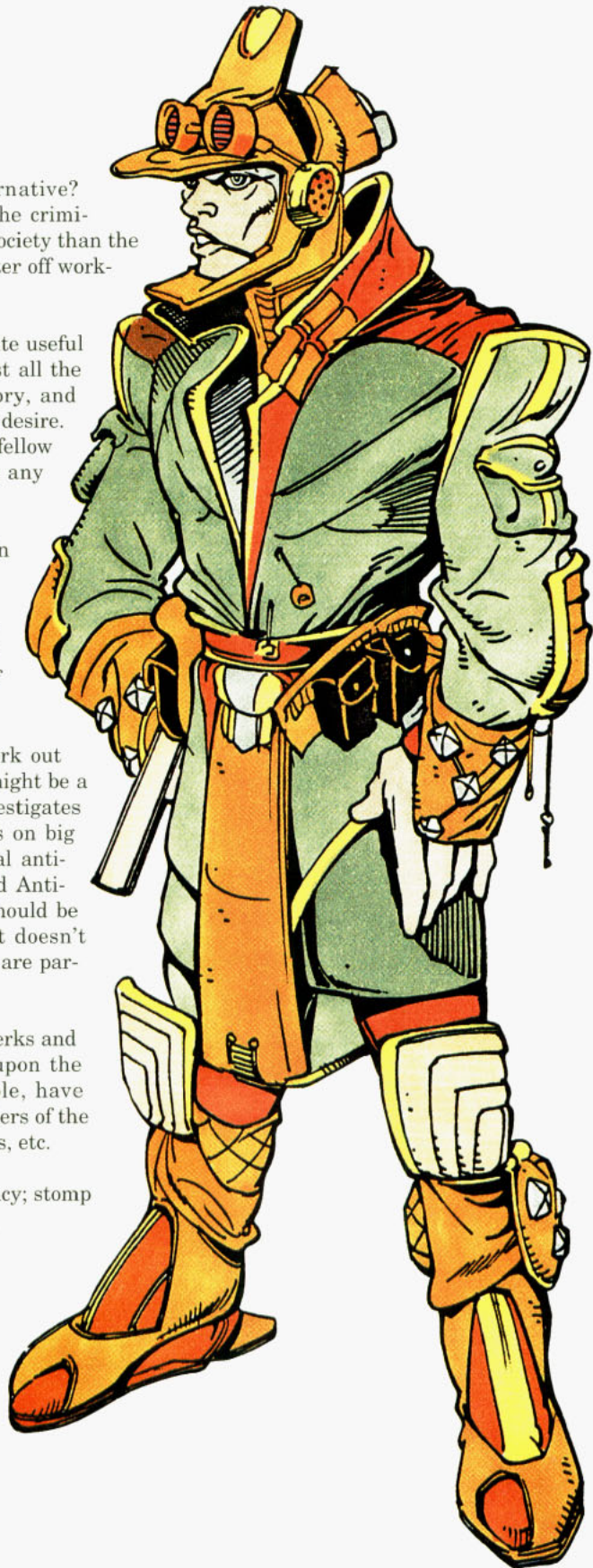
Quote: "Don't cross me, chief. I've got friends in fly places."

How You Make a Living: You receive a monthly salary from the government agency that employs you. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$25,000.

Notes: You should cooperate with the GM to work out your exact connection with the government. You might be a member of a special tactical police unit that investigates boosted criminals, a special operative who spies on big business for the FBI, a member of an elite federal anti-terrorism agency, or even a member of the hated Anti-Sedition Squad. In any case, your exact duties should be geared to your enhancements. The government doesn't exactly trust vets and hires them only when they are particularly useful.

Boon: As a government agent, you have certain perks and privileges, the exact nature of which depends upon the position you occupy. Police officers, for example, have access to crime scenes and criminal records, members of the Anti-Sedition Squad have access to free speech files, etc.

Possible Goals: Clean up corruption in your agency; stomp out a particular criminal or terrorist organization.



Chapter six

7:00 PM

THE BEST OF COMBAT, COMBAT, COMBAT!

Join host Pfinster 99 for a quick tour of the 21st century's most infamous hot-spots. Tonight: Fahrenheit 666 roasting spies in Azerbaijan, members of the Underground decimating the Department of Agriculture Building in Washington, and more footage from the Luna Riots. Recommended for brain models XM770 and the entire LF series. Close-captioned for the hearing impaired. 

— From *Vid Net Guide*;
January 11, 2021

SKILLS ARE
LEARNED
ABILITIES NOT
POSSESSED BY ALL
CHARACTERS

Way back in Chapter Three, Skills were defined as learned Abilities that can be acquired by any character, but are not known to every character. Want to pick up your Ironmonger™ and put some head out? Use your Gun Combat Skill. Need to jump your Tehran Jihad™ over a reservoir canal? Use your Vehicles Skill. Wanna patch up a buddy who just took a 20mm slug in the chest? Use your Medicine Skill. Some characters can perform each of these actions with no sweat (ie. those characters with the appropriate Skills), while others might experience all sorts of problems.

SKILLS ARE RATED
IN UNITS

Like Attributes, Skills are rated in Units. Generally speaking, a rating of 3 in any Skill is considered average, a Rating of 6 is considered good, a Rating of 9 is considered expert, and a Rating of 12 is considered legendary. Using the Medicine Skill as an example, a paramedic might have a Rating of 3, a doctor a Rating of 6, a chief surgeon a Rating of 9, and Dr. Jonas Salk a Rating of 12. *Skill Ratings of greater than 12* are extremely rare in any case, and almost unheard of among individuals who are not genetically enhanced.

Skill Ratings greater than 12: are more common among boosted characters because some boosted characters have inhumanly high Attribute Ratings and Skill Ratings are ultimately derived from Governing Attributes (see "Skill Descriptions" for an explanation).

Whenever . . . descriptions:

When a character wants to perform a non-automatic action not listed in any of the Skill descriptions, she must undergo a Challenge against an appropriate Attribute selected by the GM.

While . . . others: Just to recap, this process was known as "Specialization." If you did not Specialize in a Skill when you created your character, you are automatically assumed to possess all that Skill's Specialties.

Unskilled Use

As GM, you should pay careful attention to the Skill Descriptions contained in this chapter, even the descriptions of those Skills that none of the characters in your adventures possess. *Whenever a character wants to perform a non-automatic action that is listed in one of the Skill descriptions*, she must undergo a Challenge against her rating in that Skill. If she does not possess the Skill, she may not attempt the action unless the Skill's description contains a "Yes" after the entry "Unskilled Use." In this latter case, the character undergoes a Challenge against the Governing Attribute of the Skill in question minus three.

Example: A character named Fahrenheit 666 (DEX: 7) needs to perform a special stunt while driving a car, but doesn't possess the Vehicles Skill. Since the Vehicles Skill permits Unskilled Use, he may attempt the jump anyway and uses the value 4 in the Challenge (his DEX - 3).

At the same time, 666 cannot perform surgery if he does not have the Medicine Skill because Medicine's Surgery function does not permit Unskilled Use.

SOMETIMES YOU CAN ATTEMPT TO USE A SKILL WITHOUT ACTUALLY POSSESSING THAT SKILL

AN EXAMPLE OF UNSKILLED USE

Specialization

As you may remember from the previous chapter, most of the Skill descriptions consist of three or four independent functions known as Specialties. *While creating your character, it is possible to purchase only some of a Skill's Specialties without purchasing the others.* Note that selecting +1 Specialization in a Skill with only two Specialties limits you to a single Specialty of that Skill. Furthermore, it is impossible to select +2 Specialization in a Skill with only two Specialties and it is impossible to Specialize at all in a Skill with only a single Specialty.

Characters who have Specialized in a Skill and attempt to perform functions that fall into Specialties they do not possess can only do so via Unskilled Use.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO POSSESS SOME OF A SKILL'S SPECIALTIES WITHOUT POSSESSING THE OTHERS

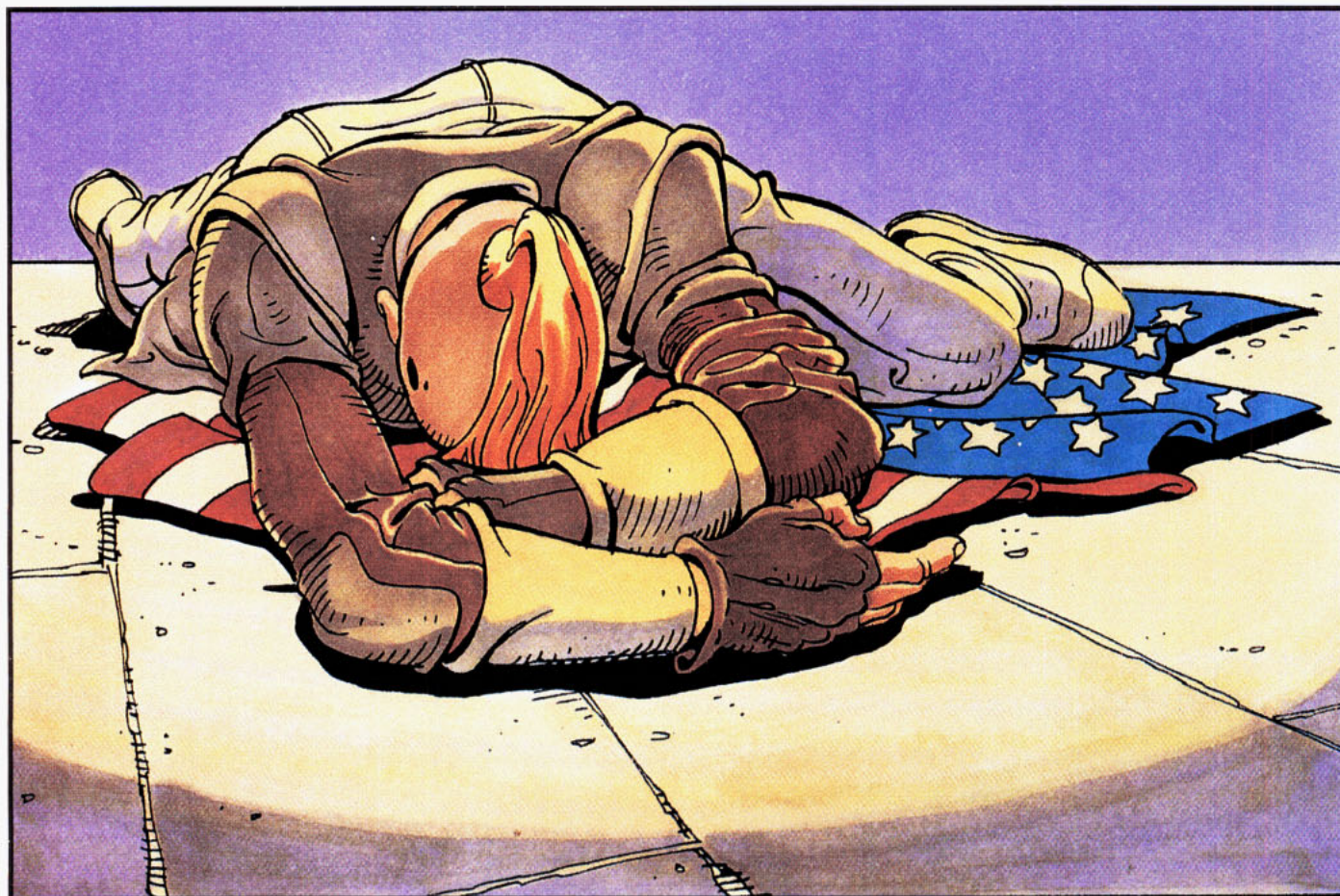
Skill Descriptions

Each description contains the following information: Skill Name, Governing Attribute, and the Skill's Specialties, listed in boldface.

Automatic Actions: are discussed in Chapter Three. These actions can be performed by characters possessing the appropriate Skill Specialties regardless of their Unit Ratings in those Specialties.

HOW TO USE
SPECIALTY
DESCRIPTIONS

In each Specialty description, you'll find a description of the actions governed by that Specialty as well as all the necessary rules for performing such actions. At the end of many Specialty descriptions, you'll find a list of *Automatic Actions* that can be performed by characters who possess that specialty. Note that Specialty descriptions can't possibly list all actions that fall under the jurisdiction of the Specialty, and the GM is free to rule any action a character attempts to perform as pertinent to a Skill or Specialty even if that action is not specifically listed in the Skill's description.



Down and Out of It—A homeless, boosted vet and the friend that betrayed him.

Acrobatics

Governing Attribute: DEX

Unskilled Use: Climbing only

• **Breakfall:** Characters with this Ability are trained to contort their bodies in such a way that permits them to lessen the impact of a fall. When determining the damage sustained by a fall, such characters may subtract their Units of Acrobatic Skill from the distance they have fallen. Note that it is impossible to use the Breakfall Specialty to reduce the damage sustained in long falls (greater than 5 Units) unless there is an available wall or barrier for the character to bounce off as he falls, reducing his momentum.

Example: A character with a Unit Rating of 5 in Acrobatics who falls 50 feet (7 Units) is treated as though he has fallen only 15 feet (2 Units) for damage purposes.

• **Climbing:** is used to scale walls, trees, buildings, etc. Climbing is a Standard Challenge. Here are some guidelines for assessing the Difficulty of a climb:

<u>Object Climbed</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>
Avg. Tree	0
Telephone Pole	3
Outside of Building	5
Sheer Cliff	7
Glass/Steel Building	9

Note: Climbing without the proper equipment automatically increases the climb's Difficulty by +4 (Very Difficult).

Characters who fail their Climbing Challenges are assumed to fall off the obstacle at its mid-way point. The rate at which a Climbing character moves depends upon the Grade received during the Climbing Challenge: -10 Units (1 foot) per Turn for a D, -7 Units (2 feet) per Turn for a C, -4 Units (4 feet) per Turn for a B, and -1 Unit (7 feet) per Turn for an A. Note that all characters (whether or not they possess the Climbing Specialty) can automatically climb stairs and ladders at a rate of 0 Units (10 feet) per Turn.

Automatic Actions: Identify climbing equipment.

• **Dodge:** enables a character to avoid bullets and other projectiles in combat and to perform acrobatic flips and rolls. Dodge is a very important Specialty possessed by most *Underground* characters.

In combat, characters with the Dodge Specialty may use their Dodge ratings as the Difficulty of all ranged weapon shots aimed at them in place of their DEXs.

Administration

Governing Attribute: AURA

Unskilled Use: Yes

• **Local:** Characters with this Specialty are well acquainted with the local bureaucracy and able to find important information in government record offices, file for appropriate licenses and permits in a way that guarantees the speediest possible processing, and able to seek out and lobby key political officials. Most uses of this Specialty are Standard Challenges against a

Difficulty determined by the GM with the resulting Grade indicating the character's degree of success.

Automatic Actions: Identify important political officials on the local level.

•**Federal:** As per Local, but operates on the Federal level.

Automatic Actions: Identify important political officials on the federal level.

•**State:** As per local, but operates on the state level.

Automatic Actions: Identify important political officials on the state level.

week. (In other words, a character with the Artist Skill rated at 6 Units makes \$6000 per week).

Automatic Actions: Identify other artists and their works.

•**Visual Arts:** Same as Performing Arts, above, only allows the character to create paintings, computer graphics, drawings, or sculptures (choose one).

Automatic Actions: Identify other artists and their works.

•**Writer:** Same as Performing Arts, above, only allows the character to write fiction and non-fiction.

Automatic Actions: Identify other writers and their works.

Artist

Governing Attribute: AURA

Unskilled Use: No

•**Performing Arts:** allows a character to put on a theatrical, dance, or musical performance (pick one at the time you create your character). Treat a performance as a Standard Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the INT of the average audience member (0 in most cases). The grade earned on this Challenge indicates the quality of the performance: an F is a bomb, a D represents a poor performance, a C represents a mediocre performance, a B represents a good performance, and an A represents a truly great performance.

Furthermore, if they are willing to invest the time (roughly half their waking hours), Performing Artists can use their talents to earn \$1000 per Unit per

Business

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: Yes

•**Entrepreneur:** This Specialty allows a character to begin or operate a business (or part of a business). Each month, he or she undergoes a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Business/Entrepreneur Rating of the average competitor (usually ranges from 4-10). The results of this Challenge dictate the monthly return: an F indicates that 20% of the money invested is lost, a D indicates that no money is gained or lost, a C indicates that 5% of the money invested is earned as a profit, a B indicates a profit of 10%, and an A indicates a profit of 20%.

Automatic Actions: Identify competitors' products; Fully conversant in business lingo.



Battle of the Sexes— The LA Peace Force tries to break up one of the periodic clashes between male and female supremacists on the Sunset Strip.

•**Market:** Same as Entrepreneur only it allows the character to earn a return by skillfully investing in the stocks and commodities markets.

Automatic Actions: Fully conversant in business lingo.

Charm

Governing Attribute: AURA

Unskilled Use: Yes

This ability can be used to coax or persuade another character into believing a lie, granting a favor, or providing information. The use of Charm is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the target's WILL, though the GM should be ready to apply modifiers from the Difficulty Chart reflecting the magnitude of the request and the target's attitude toward the Charmer.

Examples: Convincing another character that you are the President of the United States is a Legendary feat (+20 to the Difficulty), as is gaining most favors from a hated enemy. Seducing a stranger is Impressive (+9 to Difficulty). Tricking a police officer into revealing information about one of his cases is Very Difficult (+4 to Difficulty).

Computer Science

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

•**Engineering:** allows a character to efficiently configure computer systems and evaluate such configurations. Most uses are Standard Challenges against a

Difficulty equal to the target's INT. Failing such a Challenge increases the cost of the system by 20%, earning a D causes no change in the system's price, earning a C allows the Engineer to subtract 5% from the system's price, earning a B allows the Engineer to subtract 10% from the system's price, and earning an A allows for a 20% price reduction.

Engineering can also be used to link together computer hardware and perform similarly mundane technical tasks (P/F Challenges against a Difficulty set by the GM).

Automatic Actions: Identify computer hardware built by major manufacturers; operate most computers.

•**Programming:** allows a character to write computer programs. Writing a program is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the program's Memory Rating (don't worry, you'll be introduced to Memory Ratings later) and generally takes an amount of time equal to the Memory Rating + 50 Units. The time it takes to write the program can be lowered by increasing the Difficulty of the effort—cutting the time in half is Very Difficult (+4 to Difficulty); quartering the standard time is Impressive (+9 to Difficulty).

Programming can also be used to look at a program and deduce its function. Such an effort is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the program's Memory Rating.

Automatic Actions: Fully conversant in common programming languages.

•**Digital Security:** governs a character's ability to protect a computer from intrusion or overcome such protection. Invading a computer is a P/F Challenge

against a Difficulty equal to the Computer's Security Rating (again, you'll be introduced to Security Ratings later) and generally takes 15 minutes (24 Units). Protecting a Computer is a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty of 0. The results of the Challenge indicate the degree of success: an F allows the protector to give the computer a Security Rating equal to his or her Digital Security score minus 3, a D allows for a rating equal to the Digital Security score, a C allows for a rating equal to the Digital Security score +1, and an A allows for a rating equal to the Digital Security score +3. Protecting a computer in this fashion generally takes an amount of time equal to the computer's INT+50 Units.

Automatic Actions: Size up a computer's Security Rating as weak (SR of 0-2), moderate (SR of 3-7), strong (SR of 8-11), or very strong (SR of 12+) in minutes.

Detective

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: Investigation only

•**Investigation:** allows a character to scan the scene of a crime or action and make deductions about what happened. Such an effort is a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the target's INT or Thief Skill (whichever is higher). An F indicates that no information is gleaned, a D indicates that 25% of available information is gleaned, a C indicates that 50% of available information is gleaned, a B indicates that 75% of available information is gleaned, and an A indicates that all available information is gleaned.

Example: A murderer with an INT of 0 and a Thief Skill of 4 leaves a discarded cigarette butt, a thumbprint, a footprint, and a matchbook at the scene of a crime. The Difficulty of the Investigation attempt is 4 and a D reveals the presence of the cigarette butt; a C reveals the presence of the butt and the thumbprint; a B reveals the presence of the butt, the thumbprint, and the footprint, etc.

•**Law:** gives a character familiarity with the legal system. Prosecuting or defending a client is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the Law Rating of the opposing lawyer. Defending a client who is guilty and prosecuting a defendant who is guilty are both Very Difficult actions (+4 to Difficulty).

Automatic Actions: Fully conversant with basic legal procedures.

•**Police Procedures:** enables a character to recognize and implement basic police procedures, both bureaucratic and operational. When dealing with law enforcement officers in a matter pertinent to official business, the Police Procedure Specialty can be used exactly like the Charm Skill.

Automatic Actions: Fully conversant with police slang and terminology.

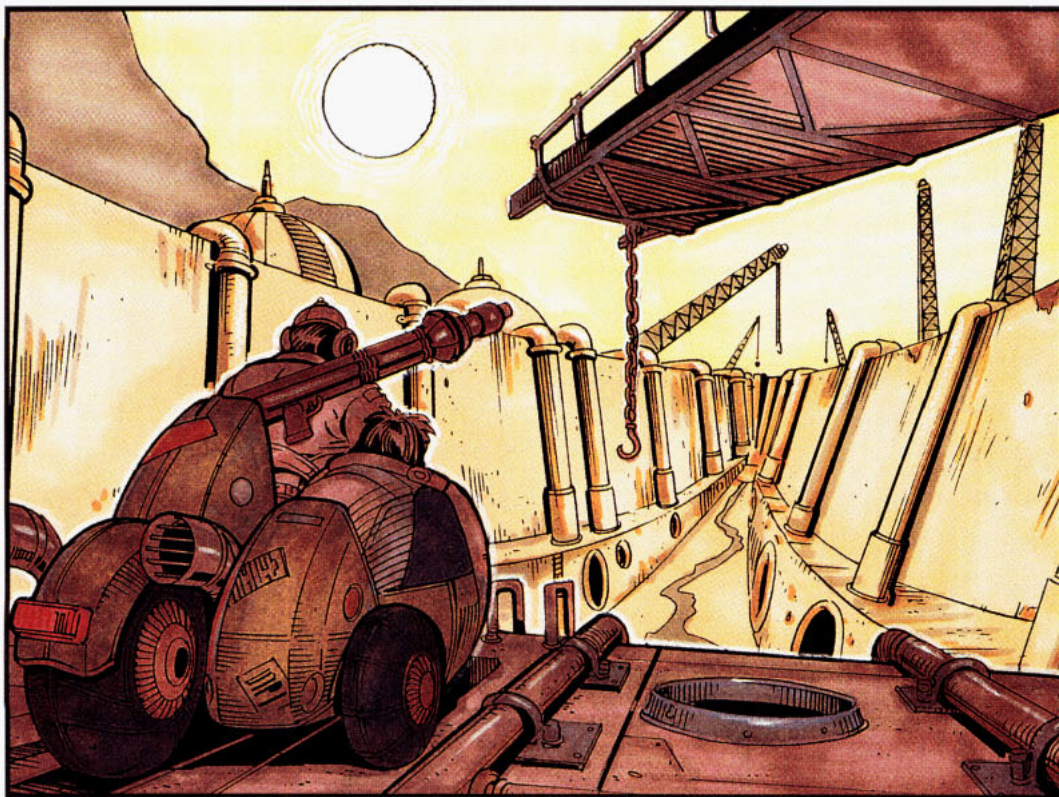
Genetic Engineering

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

This skill is used to design and evaluate genetic enhancement programs and genetic therapies.

Fully-strapped punks motoring through a reservoir canal in Los Angeles.



Designing such a program is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the highest Enhancement Unit Rating the subject is to receive. Designing such a program generally takes a full month.

Evaluating an enhancement program, on the other hand, is a Standard Challenge with a Difficulty that depends upon the situation. Evaluating a program by merely glancing at the enhanced individual is Impressive (Difficulty of 9), while evaluating a program by analyzing a body fluid sample in a laboratory is only Difficult (Difficulty of 3). In any case, a successful evaluation gives the Genetic Engineer clues as to the nature of the target's Enhancements. A Grade of D grants a rough idea of the number of enhancements the target has received, while an A reveals the exact nature of all the target's enhancements and a rough indication of their Unit Ratings.

Automatic Actions: Fully conversant with the structure of the genome.

Gun Combat

Governing Attribute: DEX

Unskilled Use: Yes

• **Heavy Weapons:** This Specialty allows a character to fire heavy firearms, flame throwers and other pieces of ordnance. Firing such a weapon is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the DEX of the target. For more information on this Specialty and how it operates, see Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Can field-strip heavy weapons and perform routine maintenance upon them.

Pistol: As per Heavy Weapons, above, only allows the character to fire pistols.

Automatic Actions: Can field-strip pistols and perform routine maintenance upon them.

Rifle/SMG: As per Heavy Weapons, above, only allows the character to fire rifles and submachineguns.

Automatic Actions: Can field-strip rifles/SMGs and perform routine maintenance upon them.

Intimidation/Interrogation

Governing Attribute: AURA

Unskilled Use: Interrogation only

• **Intimidation:** allows a character to scare or unsettle other characters. Each Intimidation attempt allows the Intimidator to target a number of characters equal to his or her Intimidation Unit Rating and takes one full Turn to complete, during which the Intimidator can take no other actions. Such an attempt is resolved as a Standard Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the WILL of the target. If multiple characters are targeted, use the highest WILL present and read a Difficulty modifier for multiple targets off the Multiple Table (ie. 2 targets is +3, four targets is +6, etc). Targets remain Intimidated for one full Turn for each Grade earned beyond an F (ie. one Turn for a D, two Turns for a C, etc). Intimidated characters always act after un-Intimidated characters during a Turn and suffer a +1 penalty to the Difficulty of any Challenges they attempt.

• **Interrogation:** allows a character to use either the threat of violence or clever questioning to force a tar-

get to reveal information. Such an attempt is a Standard Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the target's WILL. The resulting Grade indicates how much the target reveals: nothing for an F, 25% of what he or she knows for a D, 50% for a C, etc.

Invention/Repair

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

• **Electronics:** allows a character to create new electronic devices or repair electronic devices that have been damaged. To determine how long an attempt to create an item takes (in 8-hour days), divide the price (in dollars) of a comparable item by 1000. Creating an item is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty determined by the GM (common items are Difficult, truly revolutionary items are Legendary). Creating an item also costs money (three times the cost of a comparable item). Both the time it takes and the money necessary to create an item can be reduced by increasing the Difficulty of the attempt (halving either is Very Difficult, quartering either is Phenomenal).

Items are repaired in the same fashion they are created except repair attempts take 1/10 the normal time and cost no money (unless the GM rules otherwise).

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with basic tools.

• **Gunsmith:** As per Electronics, above, only it allows a character to create and repair weapons.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with basic tools.

•**Mechanics:** As per Electronics, above, only it allows a character to create and repair mechanical items (like vehicles).

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with basic tools.

Languages

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

Characters who select this skill are fluent in three additional languages of their choice (all characters are automatically fluent in a single language of their choice). Specializing can reduce the number of available languages down to two (for +1 Specialization) or one (for +2 Specialization). The character's Unit Rating in these languages is used to translate particularly difficult speeches or passages (Standard Challenge with a Difficulty determined by the GM; Grade indicates the amount of the passage that is understood). Ordinary communications are understood automatically.

Leadership

Governing Attribute: WILL

Unskilled Use: No

This skill governs a character's ability to lead other characters. A character with Leadership has the ability to use her own Karma to effect the Challenges of others (or Challenges aimed at others). To do so, the

character being assisted must be acting under the Leader's instructions and the Leader must pass a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty depending upon the situation—aiding a character in communication (either visually, audibly, or via radio) is Very Difficult (Difficulty of 4), while aiding a character who is out of communication is Impressive (Difficulty of 9). In the former case, the Leader shouts out instructions to the beleaguered character. In the latter, it is assumed the character "remembers" instructions given earlier.

Note that a Leader need not be aware of the fact that one of his charges is in danger to use this Ability and that the use of Leadership can happen any time, is instantaneous, and is always at the discretion of the Leader.

Example: Pfinster 99 is sent on a recon mission 12 clicks up the road by his Leader. He promptly stumbles into an ambush and is shot. Back at camp, the Leader passes a Leadership Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 (Pfinster is out of communication), and spends a Karma, turning the shot that hit Pfinster into a miss. Good thing the Leader had the foresight to warn him about ambushes!

Martial Arts

Governing Attribute: SPD

Unskilled Use: No

Skill in Martial Arts indicates that the character has received extensive training in unarmed combat. Such characters can substitute their Unit Ratings in Martial Arts for their DEXs when throwing unarmed blows

and are allowed to add +3 to their STRs for the purposes of penetrating a target's defenses in hand-to-hand combat so long as their Martial Arts Unit ratings are equal to their STRs - 3 or higher (ie. a character with Martial Arts of 12 and a STR of 16 cannot add the +3, but a character with a STR of 5 and a Martial Arts of 2 or better can).

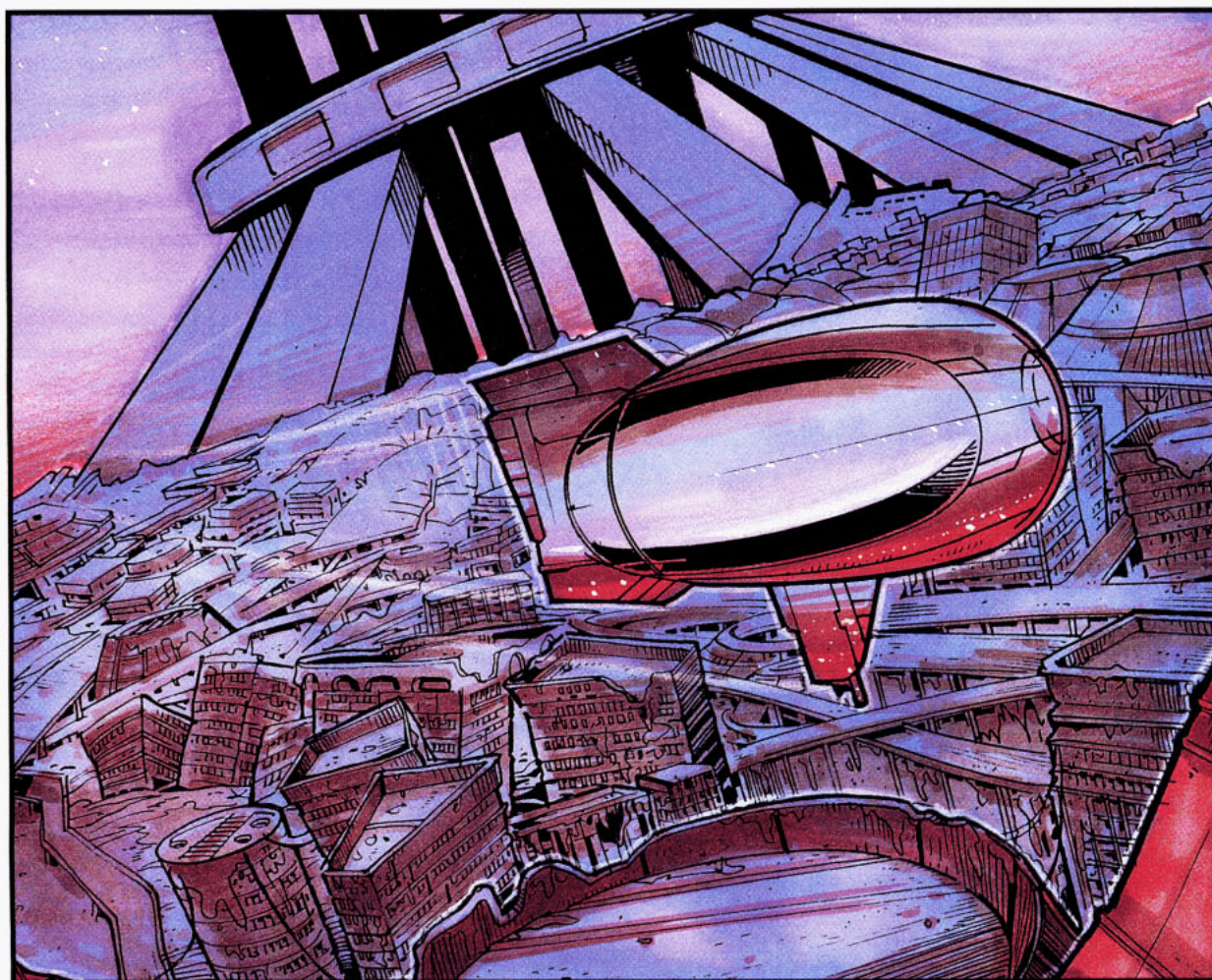
Medicine

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: First Aid only

• **First Aid:** permits a character to stop bleeding and give other forms of emergency assistance. The use of this Specialty is covered in Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Rudimentary identification and knowledge of anatomy.



Los Angeles in 2021. LAX airport/spaceport looms large on the horizon.

•**Medical Treatment:** allows a character to diagnose and treat serious illnesses and injuries. The use of this Specialty is covered in Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Complete identification and knowledge of anatomy.

•**Surgery:** governs the ability to perform medical operations. The use of this ability is covered in Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Complete identification and knowledge of anatomy.

Military Science

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: Tactics and Tracking Only

•**Demolitions:** enables a character to work safely with explosives and to achieve desired effects from explosive charges. Demolishing a structure is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty determined by the GM (fences are Average, small buildings and bridges are Very Difficult, skyscrapers and large bridges are Impressive). The GM should adjust the Difficulty of the effort based upon the amount of explosives available (inadequate supply is Very Difficult, while a woefully inadequate supply is Impressive). Success indicates the structure is successfully demolished; failure indicates it still stands. For more information on Explosives, see Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Identify various explosives.

•**Tactics:** This Ability represents an affinity for battlefield strategy and operations. In game terms, it is most frequently used to set and detect ambushes.

Detecting an ambush is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Tactics Unit Rating of the opposing commander.

Automatic Actions: Setting an ambush. The Difficulty of detecting this ambush is equal to the character's Tactics Unit Rating.

•**Tracking:** allows the character to follow a trail left by another character or an animal. Such an effort is a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the quarry's DEX or Tracking Unit Rating, whichever is higher. The Grade earned on this Challenge indicates how long the tracker can follow the quarry before he or she must pass another Tracking Challenge: an F completely loses the trail, a D allows the Tracker to trail the quarry for 10 minutes (22 Units), a C for 30 minutes (27 Units), a B for 90 minutes (32 Units), and an A for four and one-half hours (37 Units). The GM should modify the Difficulty of the Tracking attempt by the weather conditions or any other appropriate factor (Tracking in the rain or at night is Very Difficult, Tracking in the snow is Easy).

Automatic Actions: Obscure one's own trail, allowing Units of Tracking to serve as the Difficulty of attempts to Track the Skilled character.

Psychology

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

•**Diagnosis:** This Ability allows a character to examine a patient and determine his or her psychological problems. Conducting a diagnosis is a Standard

Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the target's WILL. Any success allows the Skilled character to correctly identify the target's psychological malady (and reveals the target's Psychosis if he or she is boosted) and each letter Grade earned past D reveals one of the target's Traits or Codes to the examiner (ie. a C reveals one, a B reveals 2, and an A reveals three). Conducting a diagnosis usually takes two hours (33 Units) and requires the cooperation of the patient.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the jargon of psychology and the symptoms of most psychological maladies.

•**Research:** This Specialty enables the character to conduct psychological experiments. Conducting such an experiment is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty determined by the GM (most experiments are Very Difficult, but particularly ground-breaking work is at least Impressive). Success indicates the experimenter receives accurate data, while failure means the data collected is inaccurate.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the jargon of psychology.

•**Therapy:** is used to treat patients who suffer from psychological maladies. Rules for its use are found in Chapter Eight.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the jargon of psychology and the symptoms of most psychological maladies.

Science

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: Yes

•**Astronomy/Physics:** This Ability allows the character to answer questions and conduct experiments or operations relating to the sciences of astronomy or physics. Most such attempts are P/F Challenges against a Difficulty determined by the GM.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the basic principles and jargon of Physics.

•**Biology:** As Astronomy/Physics, above, but relates to the science of Biology.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the basic principles and jargon of Biology.

•**Chemistry:** As Astronomy/Physics, above, but relates to the science of Chemistry.

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with the basic principles and jargon of Chemistry.

Social Science

Governing Attribute: INT

Unskilled Use: No

Characters with this Skill are expert in three primitive cultures of their choice (Specialization can reduce this number to only one or two cultures). Such characters can identify artifacts from these cultures, recite the history of these cultures, and perform the rituals of these cultures by passing an appropriate Challenge (Difficulty is determined by the GM based upon the obscurity of the fact being recollected or the ritual being performed). Note that this Skill is particularly useful in dealing with Primitivists, most of whom possess it.

Automatic Actions: Basic familiarity with the cultures' rituals and values.

Streetwise

Governing Attributes: WILL

Unskilled Use: No

• **Connections:** is used to find a character or uncover an answer to a question by asking around in a network of street contacts and informants. Such an effort is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty set by the GM (finding a small time hood is Very Difficult; finding out who just killed the President of RoxxOil is Legendary) and generally takes a full week to complete. The GM should modify the Difficulty of the attempt by the strength of the character's connections (at least one firm contact is Average, while finding out anything when "new in town" is Impressive).

Automatic Actions: Identify small time players and street criminals.

• **Customs:** represents familiarity with the customs and behavior patterns on the street. Characters with this Ability are familiar with neighborhood hangouts and can recognize gang signs and purchase narcotics, etc. Most such efforts are P/F Challenges against a Difficulty determined by the GM (purchasing a common drug is Average, fencing stolen property is at least Very Difficult, etc).

Automatic Actions: Familiarity with street slang and gang symbology.

• **Savvy:** allows the character to question a network of street contacts to determine what will hap-

pen on the streets before it happens. Such an effort is a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty based upon the reputation of the character(s) who wouldn't want the Savvy individual to uncover the information he or she seeks: Difficult for a normal street punk, Impressive for a fearsome gang leader or mafia don, Phenomenal for a high-ranking politician, etc. The Grade earned determines the amount of information the character uncovers. Like Connections, attempts to use Savvy should be modified by the strength of the Skilled character's contacts in the area.

Example: A Savvy police officer knows an armored car full of cash will soon pass through the city. By successfully using his Specialty, the officer can determine whether or not any criminals will attempt to steal the cash. Since a mafia don plans to knock off the armored car, the Difficulty of the Savvy Challenge is 15). If the officer receives a D, he might learn that someone plans to hit the car; if he receives a B, he might learn that it is actually the mafia don planning the heist; and if he receives an A, he might learn the don's entire plan for the robbery.

Automatic Actions: Identify small time players and street criminals.

Thief

Governing Attribute: DEX

Unskilled Use: Yes

• **Forgery:** Allows a character to automatically forge legal documents and credentials (including cash). Recognizing a Forgery is a P/F INT Challenge

against a Difficulty equal to the Skill Rating of the Forger.

Automatic Actions: Making forgeries; basic familiarity with bureaucratic documents and credentials.

• **Security:** Allows a character to pick locks, crack safes, and circumvent alarms and other security measures. Such an effort is a P/F challenge against a Difficulty determined by the Gamemaster (a padlock is Difficult, a safe is Impressive, and a high-security electronic lock is Phenomenal). Attempts to use the Security Specialty without the proper tools (lockpicks, etc.) are automatically Very Difficult (+4 to Difficulty).
Automatic Actions: Basic familiarity with locks and security devices.

• **Stealth:** Allows a character to automatically move silently and unseen. Detecting a Stealthy character is P/F INT Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the character Stealth Unit Rating. Such attempts might be modified by local conditions (detecting a Stealthy character at night is Difficult, detecting such a character in a well-lit corridor with few shadows is Easy, etc.).

Automatic Actions: Move with Stealth.

Vehicles

Governing Attribute: DEX

Unskilled Use: Land only

• **Air/Space:** allows a character to automatically pilot an air or spacecraft. Performing a special maneuver in such a vehicle or avoiding a collision is

a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty determined by the GM (maneuvers range from Difficult to Legendary depending upon the circumstances).

Automatic Actions: Pilot an air or spacecraft.

• **Land:** As with Air/Space, above, only used in conjunction with land vehicles.

Automatic Actions: Operate a land vehicle. Note that all characters can automatically operate common vehicles such as cars and trucks.

• **Water:** As with Air/Space, above, only used in conjunction with water vehicles.

Automatic Actions: Operate a water vehicle.

Weaponry

Governing Attribute: DEX

Unskilled Use: Yes

• **Blade:** This Specialty allows the character to fight with a bladed weapon (like a knife or sword). Striking a target with a Blade is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the target's DEX or Weaponry Skill Rating (if armed), whichever is higher. For more information on this Specialty, see Chapter Nine.

Automatic Actions: Perform basic maintenance on blade weapons.

• **Blunt:** As Blade, above, only allows a character to wield blunt weapons (like clubs and maces).

Automatic Actions: Perform basic maintenance on blunt weapons.

Chapter SEVEN

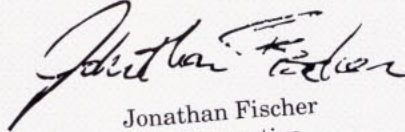
FAX TRANSMISSION

1/14/21

Dear Mr. Samuels:

I regret to inform you that your recent request for a free speech permit (File #XM78665d5) is denied. President Foster is not a "scum-sucking pig who feeds on the blood of the underclasses" and asserting that he might be is libelous.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Fischer
Chief Operative
Federal Anti-Sedition Squad

Enhancements are special Abilities received as the result of genetic engineering. Like Attributes and Skills, they are rated in Units. Each Enhancement description contains the following elements:

BASE COST

Base Cost: This is the number of Enhancement Points that must be spent during character creation to receive the Enhancement.

POTENCY

Potency: Potency rates the usefulness of the Enhancement on a scale from 1-3 (1 being the lowest). It is used to determine the cost of purchasing the Enhancement's Unit Rating during character creation.

MAX

Max: The maximum possible Unit Rating in the Enhancement. It is impossible to purchase a higher Rating or receive a higher Rating due to enhancement surgery (ie. an Enhancement purchased to Max that receives a Unit bonus during Step #7 of character creation remains at Max).

STRESS

Stress: Stress measures the Enhancement's impact upon the recipient's psyche. Enhancements with high Stress ratings are more likely to induce meta-genic feedback trauma. Note that an Enhancement's Stress level is usually

Enhancements: Most

Enhancements are engineered by grafting pieces of animal DNA into the human sequence, providing the recipient with the animal's special abilities and defenses. Others are derived from secrets revealed by Dr. Bernard Herriman's innovative parapsychological experiments on the human mind conducted in 2007.

a higher Rating: Note that it is possible to exceed an Enhancement's Max Rating through the expenditure of Reward Points. See Chapter Twelve.

Stress: Complete rules for Stress can be found in Chapter Eight.

Continuing Stress: Enhancements with "Continuous Stress" represent those that cannot be turned on and off consciously and are always functioning.

Psychoses: Like Stress, complete rules for Psychoses can be found in Chapter Eight.

new Bonuses and Limitations: for many of the listed Enhancements along with several new Enhancements can be found in the *Underground Players' Handbook* due for release in the first quarter of 1994.

influenced by its Unit Rating and is always calculated **after** genetic surgery. The notation "(C)" after an Enhancement's Stress Rating denotes "Continuous Stress" as discussed in Step #8 of character creation.

Psychosis: Because of their sensitive and strategic locations on the DNA helix, Enhancements leave their recipients susceptible to various **Psychoses**. This entry indicates the particular Psychosis that corresponds with the Enhancement. When he or she is stricken with metagenic feedback trauma, a boosted character manifests the Psychosis that corresponds with his or her Enhancement with the highest Unit rating.

And a series of **Diagrams** that illustrate the Enhancement's location in the body and its effects.

Furthermore, some Enhancements have listed **Bonuses** and **Limitations** that modify the Enhancement's basic effects. The exact role of Bonuses and Limitations is explained in Chapter Five.

In addition to those listed here, the GM has the option of allowing players to create new Bonuses and Limitations of their own. Before play begins, carefully review the plans of any players who exercise this option, making sure that the planned modifier is neither too potent nor too limiting. Use the standard Bonuses and Limitations as guidelines when making such a determination.

Example: Although it's not listed as a Limitation, a player decides she'd like to limit her Bomb Enhancement so that it will only allow her to explode organic, non-living objects. After reading over this chapter and getting a general feel for Bonuses and Limitations, the GM decides that such a Limitation is appropriate and permits it.

Note that the descriptions of most Enhancements call upon you to translate Unit Ratings into "real world" numbers as described in Chapter Three. Ranges, Durations, and other values are frequently calculated from the Enhancement's Unit Rating.

PSYCHOSIS

BONUSES AND LIMITATIONS

CREATING YOUR OWN BONUSES AND LIMITATIONS

chapter 7

BOOSTED
ATTRIBUTES ARE
NOT HANDLED
LIKE OTHER
ENHANCEMENTS

Boosted Attributes

Those Enhancements that increase a character's Attributes (Boosted Strength, Boosted Speed, Boosted Dexterity, Boosted Resilience, and Boosted Intellect) are so **unlike** the others that they require special treatment. Here are their basics:

Boosted Strength

Base Cost: 5
Potency: 1
Max: 35
Stress: **Unit Rating/4** (C)
Psychosis: Homicidal Mania

Boosted Speed

Base Cost: 5
Potency: 1
Max: 11
Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)
Psychosis: Catatonia

Boosted Dexterity

Base Cost: 5
Potency: 1
Max: 11
Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)
Psychosis: Catatonia

Boosted Resilience

Base Cost: 5
Potency: 1
Max: 24Max: 20
Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)
Psychosis: Homicidal Mania

Boosted Intellect

Base Cost: 10
Potency: 1
Max: 20
Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)
Psychosis: Paranoia

YOUR UNIT
RATING IN A
BOOSTED
ATTRIBUTE
ENHANCEMENT
TELLS YOU HOW
MANY UNITS YOU
ADD TO THAT
ATTRIBUTE

In play, these Enhancements function differently from the others in that their Unit Ratings are not directly used for any purpose. Instead, their Ratings tell you how many Units to add to a corresponding Attribute. By raising your Attribute Ratings in this fashion you can increase them to superhuman levels (ie. beyond 6).

Unit Rating	Add to Attribute
1-4	+1
5-8	+2
9-12	+3
13-15	+4
16-18	+5
19-20	+6
21	+7
22	+8
Each additional Unit	An additional +1

unlike: Although most of the Enhancements are achieved by manipulating genes in a region of the DNA molecule known as "the central rungs," these Enhancements are obtained by manipulating genes located in the upper third of the molecule, where the body's basic physical characteristics are stored.

Unit Rating/4: Whenever an Enhancement's Stress Rating is obtained by division, round all fractions down. Thus, 30 Units of Boosted Strength has a Stress of 7.

Governed: ie. those skills with a Governing Attribute that has been boosted.

warp their perception of the world: Because it was first studied at length by Dr. Rudolf Blivitz, genetic scientists know this phenomenon as the Blivitz Effect

Example: A character with 14 Units of Boosted Resilience adds +4 to his RES, a character with 4 Units of Boosted Intellect adds +1 to his intellect and a character with 30 Units of Boosted Strength adds +16 to his STR.

Although the Unit Ratings of boosted Attribute Enhancements are never used directly during play, you should keep track of them anyway. Later, you will learn how to spend Reward Points to increase the Unit Ratings of your Enhancements, and by increasing a boosted Attribute Enhancement in this fashion, you might trigger another increase in your Attribute. For example, a character with 8 Units of Boosted Strength who increases his Unit Rating to 9 instantly gains another point of STR because his Boosted Strength Unit Rating jumps from the +2 category to the +3 category.

Note that whenever a character's Attributes change due to the effects of Enhancement, her Ratings in any Skills **Governed** by those Attributes change as well.

Example: A character with a DEX of 4 and a Gun Combat Rating of 7 receives 6 Units of Boosted Dexterity. His DEX is now 6 and his Gun Combat is now 9.

Although none of the Boosted Attribute Enhancements can be purchased in conjunction with Bonuses or Limitations, they all have special drawbacks that affect their recipients.

Boosted SPD and DEX: Characters with these Enhancements have unusually fast reflexes and reaction times. In extreme cases, the Enhancements **warp their perception of the world** as stationary and slow-moving objects begin to appear blurred and distorted. As a consequence, any character who reaches either a DEX or SPD of greater than 7 suffers a bonus of +2 to any Challenge that revolves around spotting a hidden object or noticing a detail.

Example: Herr Zoom (SPD:8) is about to walk into an ambush in the jungle. To detect the ambush before it is sprung, Zoom must undergo a Challenge against his Military Science Skill (Tactics Specialty). Because the GM determines that detecting the ambush involves spotting hidden objects and noticing details, however, there is a +2 modifier added to the Difficulty of the attempt.

WITH REWARD POINTS, YOU CAN INCREASE YOUR BOOSTED ATTRIBUTES EVEN FURTHER

BOOSTING AN ATTRIBUTE RAISES ALL SKILLS GOVERNED BY THAT ATTRIBUTE

BOOSTING SPD AND DEX WARPS A CHARACTER'S PERCEPTION

SPD 8

Characters with high SPDs and DEXs suffer from distorted perception.



Normal



As seen by a character with SPD 8

BOOSTED STR
AND RES
INCREASE A
CHARACTER'S
HEIGHT WEIGHT

Boosted STR and RES: These enhancements automatically increase the musculature and size of the recipient. To determine the character's height and weight, add together his or her STR and RES and refer to the table below:

<u>Combined STR and RES</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>
15-16	6'8"	280 lbs.
17-18	7'0"	310 lbs.
19-20	7'6"	360 lbs.
21-22	8'0"	420 lbs.
23-24	9'0"	555 lbs.
25-26	10'0"	710 lbs.
27-28	12'0"	850 lbs.
29+	14'0"	1200 lbs.

Although most consequences of this size and weight gain are merely annoying (ducking to pass through doors, feeling cramped in most buildings, breaking the occasional chair, etc.), their enormous bulk certainly makes it impossible for high STR and RES characters to blend with normal folk. In a crowd, such characters stick out like sore thumbs.

BOOSTING
INTELLECT
ENLARGES THE
CRANIUM

Boosted Intellect: Similar to Boosted STR and RES, the Boosted intellect Enhancement physically deforms the body of the recipient. As the intellect increases, so do [the sizes of the brain pan and cranium](#). Once the intellect climbs higher than 9, this deformation is particularly noticeable. Like characters with high STRs and RESs, those with high INTs find it difficult to blend with a crowd.



Heart of Darkness—A primitive looks out over LA's rush hour with disgust.

Acid

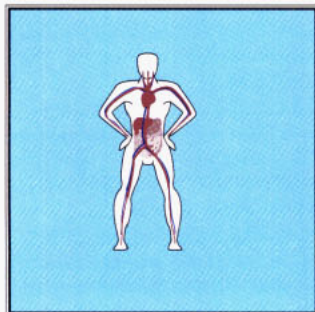
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

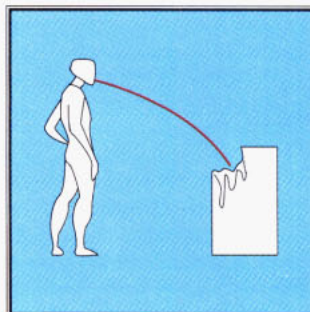
Max: 16

Stress: Unit Rating/4

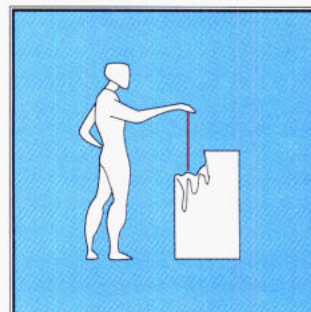
Psych: Panic Disorder



Location



Acid Spit



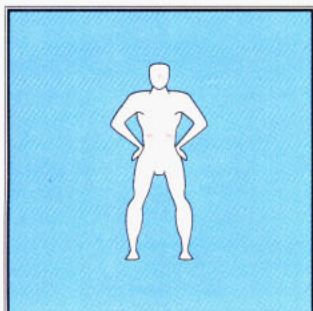
Acid Blood

Characters who receive this enhancement develop a specialized organ in their abdomens that produces a powerful acid that can be injected into the digestive system and spat at targets at a Range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating minus 4. Attacking a target with the acid uses the

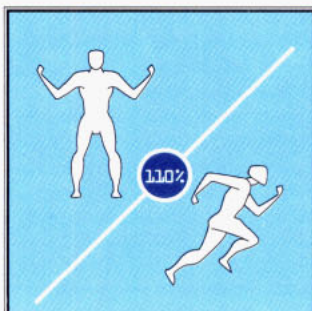
Enhancement's Unit Rating as the To Hit and Penetration values and inflicts LW/LW/MW/HW damage.

Limitation: Instead of spitting acid, the recipient's blood is highly acidic. Whenever the recipient sustains a damage result of MW or higher, all characters

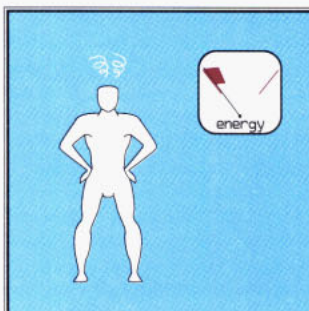
within 3 Units of distance are attacked by the acid (Use the Unit Rating as the To Hit and Penetration values; same damage as the spitting variety).



Location



Effect



Limitation

Adrenal Surge boosts the output of the recipient's adrenal glands. Whenever the recipient experiences anxiety (during any combat situation, under sudden and extreme pressure, etc.), her adrenal glands alternately raise her STR and SPD by a single Unit each Turn (STR is raised

on odd Turns, SPD on even Turns) until the total Units gained in this fashion equal her Unit Rating in the Enhancement. Triggering this Enhancement immediately inflicts its Stress total, but no additional Stress is lost on successive Turns while the Adrenal Surge remains in effect. STR and

SPD Units gained through Adrenal Surge are immediately lost once the stressful circumstances are removed (ie. the fight ends)

Limitation: The subject suffers a Light Wound if and when she Surges her STR and SPD to their maximum values.

Adrenal Surge

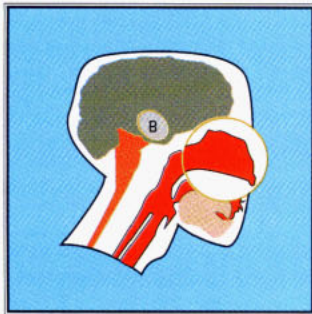
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 2

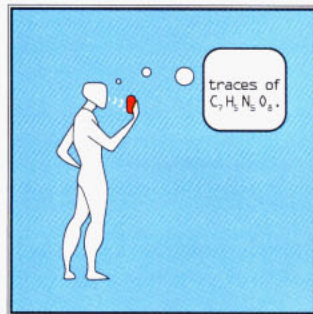
Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/3

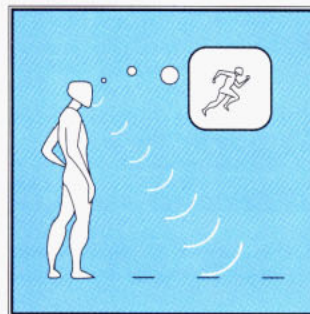
Psych: Homicidal Mania



Location



Analytic Smell



Tracking Scent

Analytic Smell

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 12

Stress: Unit Rating/5

Psych: Sociopathy

Characters with this Enhancement can identify chemicals and substances from smell alone at a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Identifying a substance in this fashion is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty that depends upon the recipient's familiarity with the

substance and the amount of the substance present (identifying a familiar substance present in reasonably large quantities is Difficult, while identifying trace elements of an unfamiliar substance is Impressive).

Bonus: In addition to analyzing substances, the recipient can track other char-

acters by scent alone as though he possesses the Military Science/Tracking Specialty at a Unit Rating equal to his Analytic Smell Rating. When using this Bonus, the Difficulty of a tracking attempt is always 4 (Very Difficult), regardless of the quarry's DEX/Military Science Rating.

Bomb

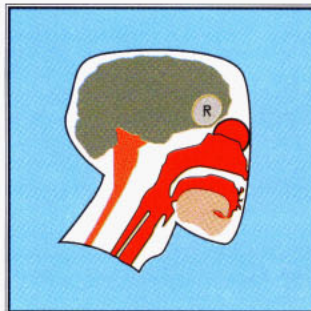
Base Cost: 15

Potency: 2

Max: 20

Stress: Unit Rating/4

Psych: Homicidal Mania



Location



Effect



Limitation

This Enhancement allows the recipient to adjust her alpha wave pattern to shatter the molecular bonds of a nearby object, causing that object to explode. Causing an object to explode is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the object's RES. Only objects within a range equal to

the Enhancement's Unit Rating can be affected. Treat an exploding object as a grenade with a Penetration equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating that inflicts LW/MW/HW/IN damage.

Limitation: The Enhancement's alpha wave vibrations sometimes harm the recip-

ient. When the Enhancement is used, conduct a P/F Challenge using the Enhancement's Rating against a Difficulty equal to the recipient's RES. If this Challenge is successful, the recipient immediately suffers a LW.



Primitive rights activist and TWD vet Electric Headhunter don't take no shine off nobody.

Chameleon

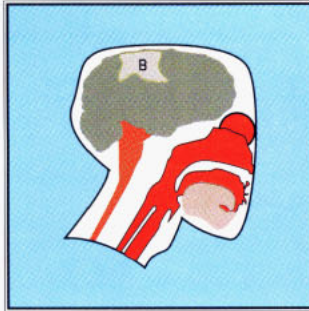
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

Max: 7

Stress: Unit Rating/5

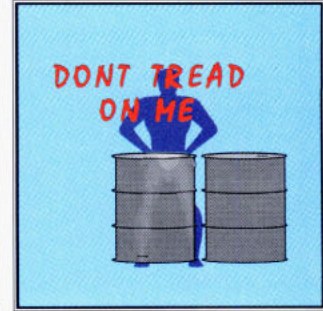
Psych: Sociopathy



Location



Effect

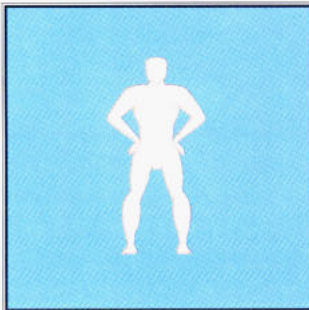


Limitation

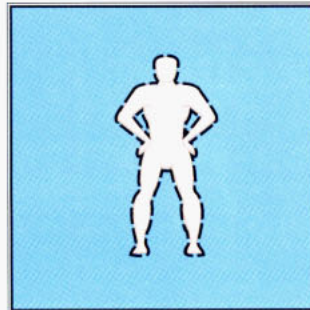
This Enhancement allows the recipient to temporarily alter his skin pigmentation in much the same manner as a chameleon, affording a natural, protective camouflage. Once the Enhancement is activated, it continues to function for an amount of time equal to its Unit Rating. During this time period, the recipient is hard to see

(if he is hiding, Difficult intellect Challenge required to spot the recipient and all shots aimed at him from Medium or Long range receive a +2 to their To Hit Difficulty). Note that the Enhancement is useless if the recipient is wearing prominent clothing that would disrupt its effect.

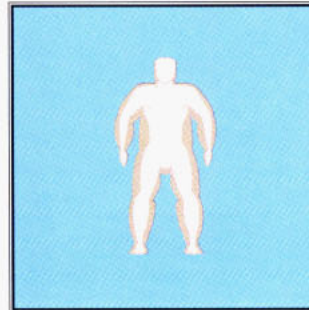
Limitation: In this case, the Enhancement does not function well in urban environments (in such environments, Tricky intellect Challenge required to spot and all shots aimed at the recipient from Medium or Long range receive a +1 to their To Hit Difficulty).



Location



Chitin



Blubber

Chitin/Blubber

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

Max: 6

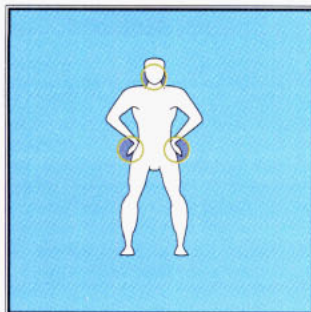
Stress: Unit Rating/3 (C)

Psych: Melancholia

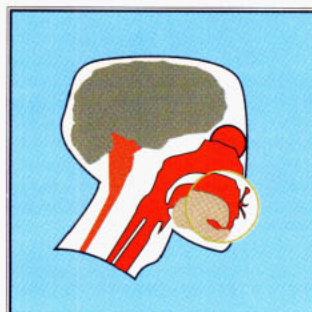
Characters with this Enhancement are engineered to grow a thick layer of either a chitin-like or blubber-like substance (choose one) that surrounds their bodies and protects them from harm. Recipients are allowed to add their Chitin/Blubber Unit Ratings to their RES Ratings for the

purposes of resisting Penetration during combat. Note that characters who have received this Enhancement are particularly noticeable and find it difficult to blend into crowds.

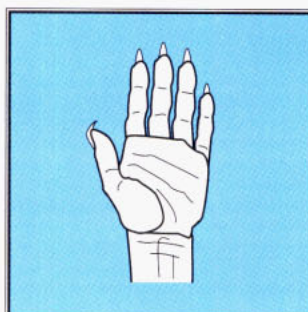
Bonus: In this version, the Enhancement is less noticeable, but still obvious to anyone who directly examines the recipient (Average intellect Challenge necessary to notice that the recipient is Enhanced).



Location



Fangs



Claws

Claws

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 11

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

Psych: Homicidal Mania

Characters with this Enhancement have altered skeletal structures and retractable claws or fangs (choose one) that can be used as weapons. The claws or fangs have a Penetration equal to their Unit

Rating and inflict LW/LW/MW/HW damage. Use the recipient's DEX (or Martial Arts) Rating during the To Hit Challenge of such an attack.

Limitation: In this case, the fangs or claws are not retractable and plainly visible at all times.

Cold Immunity

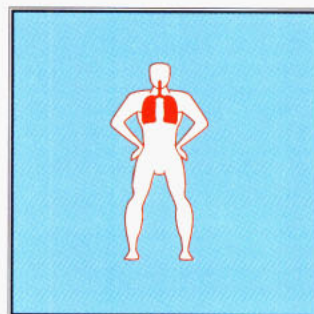
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

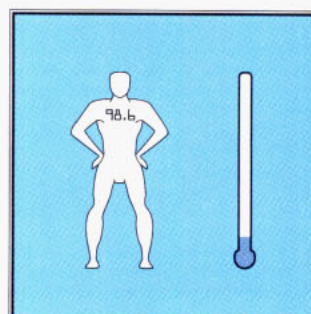
Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

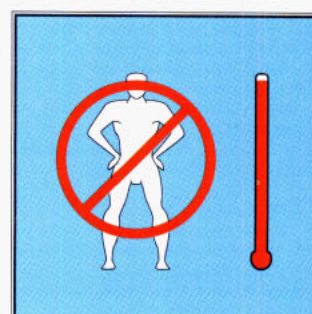
Psych: Sociopathy



Location



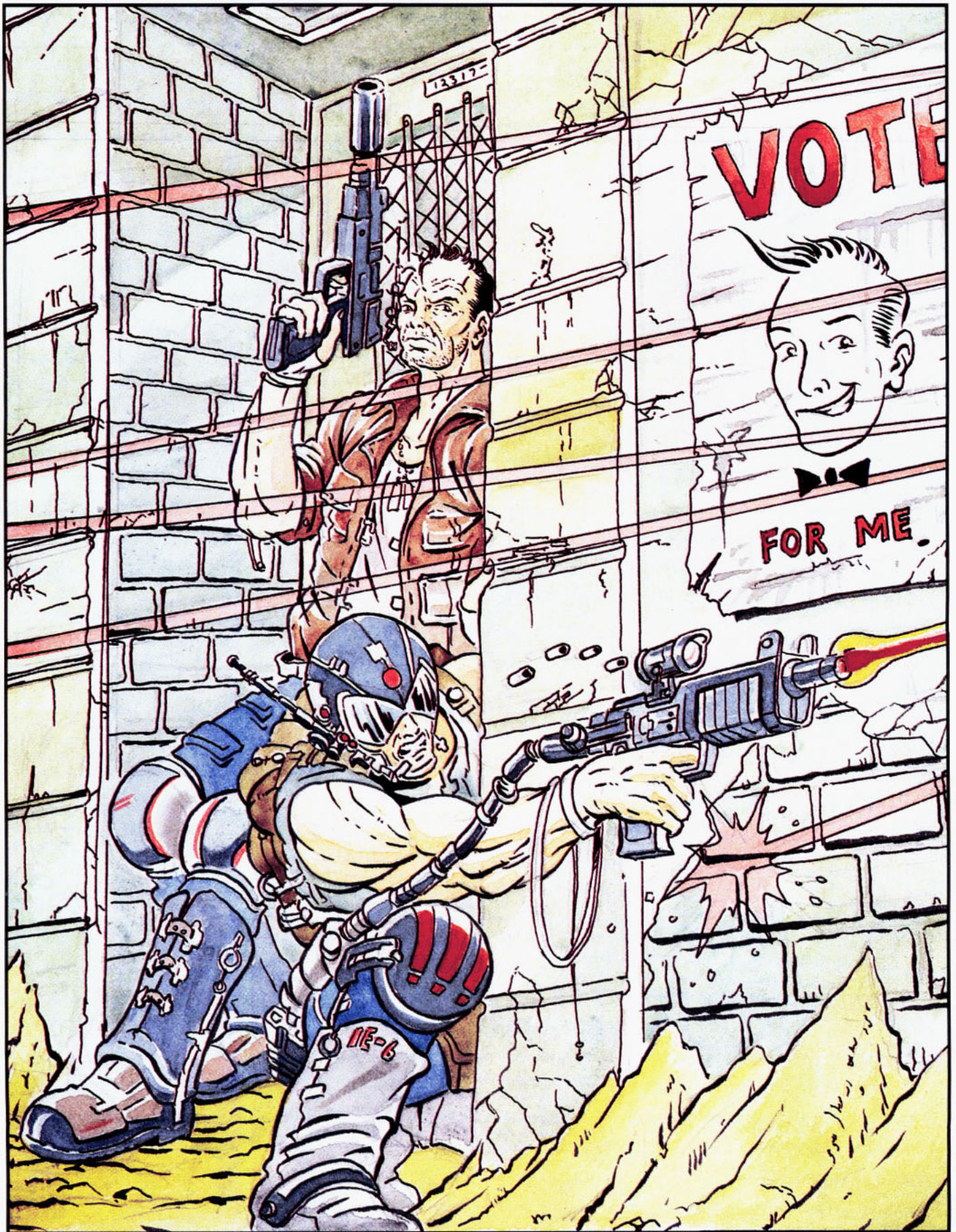
Effect



Limitation

Characters with this Enhancement have body temperatures that are far lower than the human norm, protecting them from the effects of extreme cold. Such characters can add their unit Ratings to their RES scores when resisting damage due to extreme cold.

Limitation: In this case, the subject's body temperature is so low that extreme heat has an increased debilitating effect. Subtract the subject's Unit Rating from her RES when resisting heat or heat based weapons.



Hot and Heavy Lead—A typical Friday night on Crenshaw Ave.

chapter 7

Control

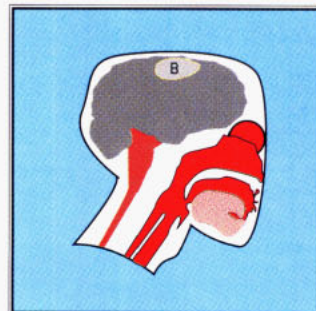
Base Cost: 20

Potency: 3

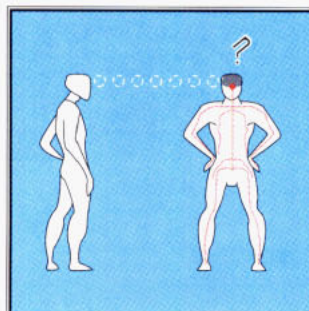
Max: 12

Stress: Unit Rating/4

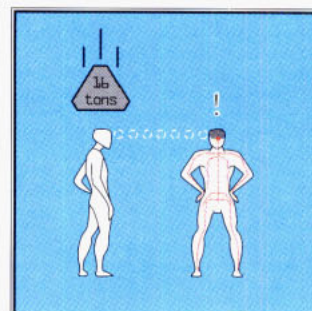
Psych: Multiple Pers.



Location



Effect



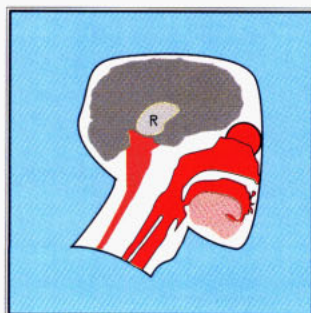
Limitation

This Enhancement allows the recipient to affect the alpha wave pattern of another character with her own alpha wave pattern, giving her temporary control over the subject's thoughts and actions. Controlling a subject is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the subject's WILL, and to be controlled, the subject must be within

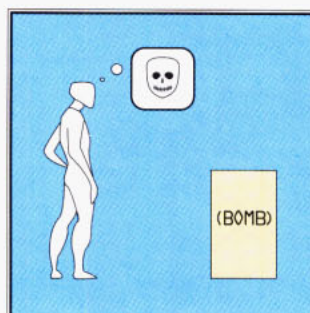
a Range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Once control has been established, the recipient has complete motor control over the subject (ie. she can force the subject to do anything she wishes) for an amount of time equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. While controlling a subject, the recipient can

take no actions of her own.

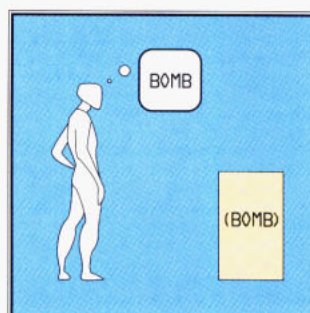
Limitation: In this case, the recipient is particularly oblivious to the outside world while controlling a subject. While using the Enhancement, she notices nothing and all shots aimed at her automatically qualify for the blindside bonus.



Location



Effect



Bonus

Danger Sense

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 2

Max: 11

Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

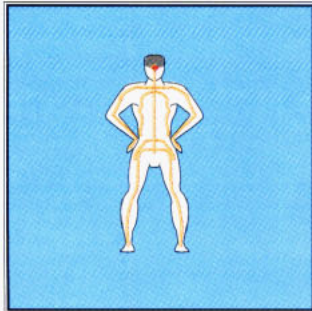
Psych: Paranoia

Characters with this Enhancement have boosted senses and are unusually attuned to their environments, allowing them to recognize dangerous situations before blundering into them. Whenever such a character is about to enter a dangerous situation he may attempt a P/F Challenge (no Stress incurred) against a Difficulty

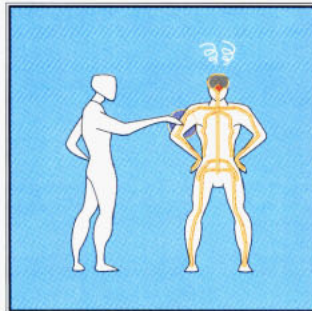
determined by the GM to detect the danger (difficulty depends upon magnitude of danger; detecting a car bomb before it goes off is Difficult; detecting a flower pot that is about to fall on your head is Impressive). Note that successfully detecting danger reveals only that danger is

present and provides no clue as to the nature of the danger detected.

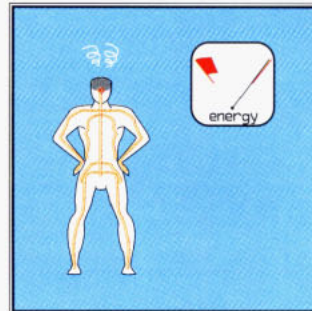
Bonus: In this case, the recipient's extra senses are so acute that they reveal the nature of any danger successfully detected.



Location



Effect



Limitation

Elec. Discharge

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

Max: 18

Stress: Unit Rating/4

Psych: Homicidal Mania

This Enhancement permits the recipient to build up and discharge electrical energy like an eel. Such a discharge has a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. When used offensively, the Enhancement's Unit Rating is used during the To Hit Challenge and functions as the attack's Penetration. Successful attacks inflict

LW/MW/HW/IN damage and are not affected by armor unless that armor has been electrically insulated. Furthermore, an electrical discharge can also be used to short out an electronic device. If such an attack hits, a successful P/F Challenge against the item's RES will render it useless until repaired.

Limitation: Every time the recipient discharges, electrical feedback flows through his body. Assume the user was struck by a discharge of half his Unit Rating and determine damage normally.

Emotion Control

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

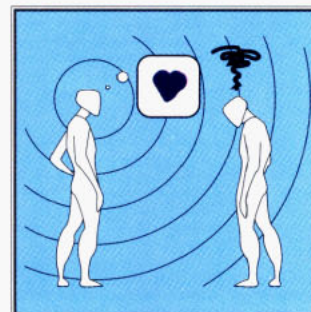
Max: 18

Stress: Unit Rating/5

Psych: Multiple Pers.



Location



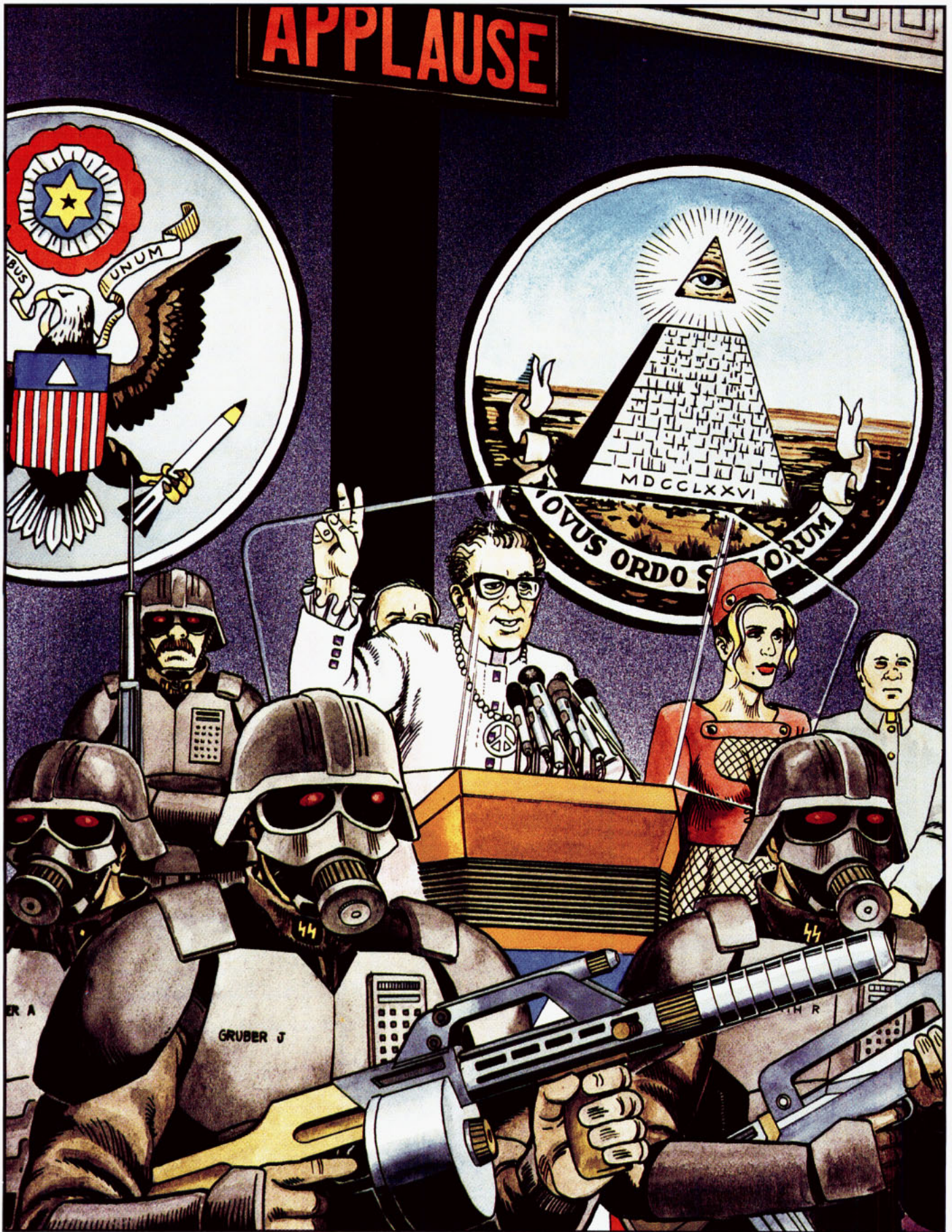
Effect

Characters with this Enhancement can interfere with the alpha wave patterns of a subject, allowing them to manipulate the subject's emotions. The Range of this effect is equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Controlling the emotions of a subject is a P/F Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the subject's WILL.. Once control has been

established, the recipient can continue to exert control for an amount of time equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Controlled subjects can be forced to experience any emotion the recipient desires. In order to perform an act that is contrary to an emotion he or she has been forced to feel (ie. attack someone he or she was

forced to love), the subject must pass a WILL Challenge with a Difficulty equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating.

Limitation: The Enhancement can be used to instill only a single emotion chosen at the time it is purchased.



Geld Heil!-- Neo-Deutsch Minister of Being Freidrich Hummel on his 2020 visit to Cal-Berkeley.

Empathy

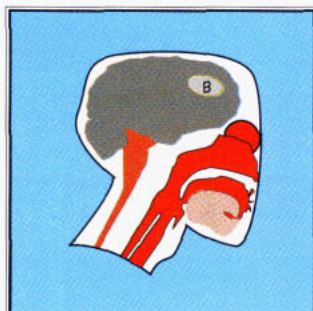
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

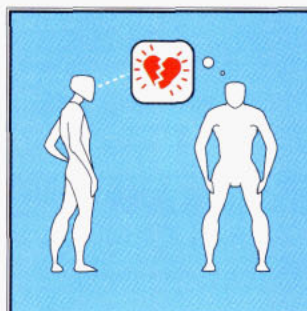
Max: 9

Stress: Unit Rating/4

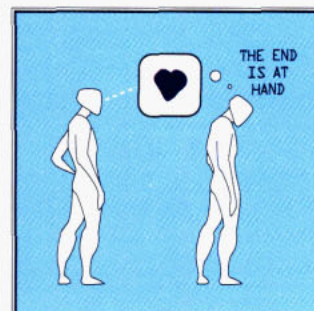
Psych: Sociopathy



Location



Effect



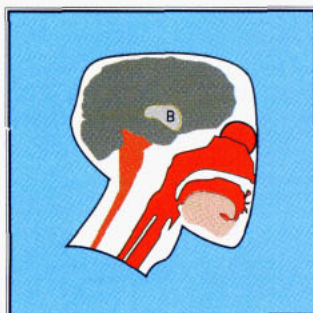
Limitation

Special receptors in the brains of those who receive this Enhancement make them especially sensitive to the alpha waves emitted by others. As a consequence, they can read the emotions of any known creature within a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Reading emotions is a Standard Challenge against a

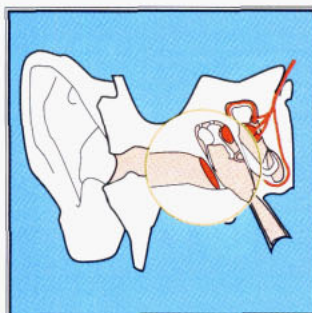
Difficulty equal to the target's WILL. The Grade earned gives an indication of how much information the recipient receives (a D indicates only general surface emotions are detected, while an A opens the subject's entire emotional output).

Limitation: In this form, the recipient can always read only the subject's surface

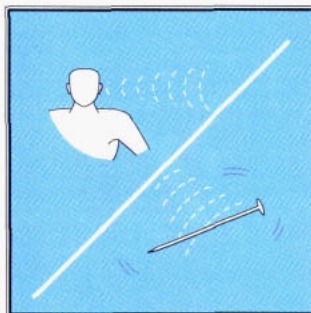
emotions. In this case, reading an emotion is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the subject's WILL and returns the same very general information (ie. the subject is "afraid," but nothing to indicate the source of those fears) received on a D result gained with the Enhancement's standard version.



Location (Brain)



Location (Ear)



Effect

Enhanced Hear

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

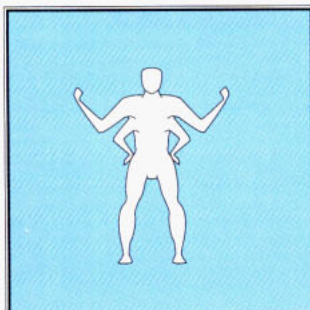
Max: 10

Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

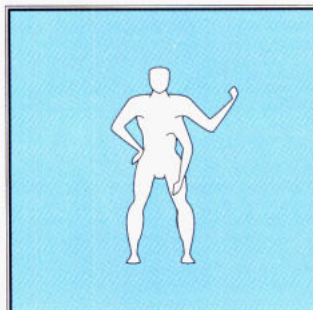
Psych: Schizophrenia

This enhancement vastly improves the recipient's auditory senses, extending the range of her hearing and allowing her to pick up sounds at frequencies outside the standard human range. Characters with the Enhancement are allowed to subtract its Unit Rating from the distance between themselves and a sound for the purposes

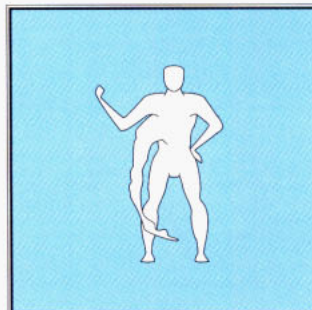
of determining how well they can hear that sound. In other words, a shout at a range of one mile (28 Units) sounds as though it is only 20 Units (300 yards) away to a character with 8 Units of Enhanced Hear, meaning it is quite audible.



Two Limbs



One Limb



Limitation

Extra Limb

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

Max: 20

Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

Psych: Multiple Pers.

Characters with this Enhancement are engineered to grow an extra limb not possessed by normal humans. The Unit Rating of the Power is the STR that may be exerted through the new limb. The exact nature of the new limb is selected at the time the Enhancement is purchased (extra arms

and tails are common). Characters with at least one Extra Limb receive a special -1 bonus to the Difficulty of any hand-to-hand combat attacks they make. Note that this Enhancement may be purchased more than once to represent characters with more than one Extra Limb. Limbs received

through this Enhancement are assumed to be manipulatory (able to work machines and perform delicate movements).

Limitation: In this case, the limb is non-manipulatory and can be used only to throw blows in hand-to-hand combat.

Flight Control

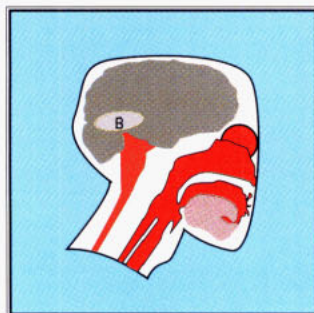
Base Cost: 20

Potency: 1

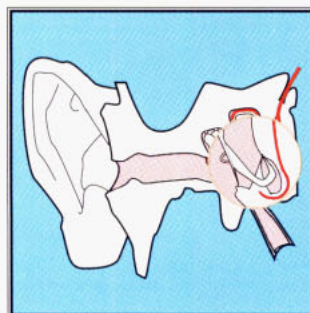
Max: 25

Stress: Unit Rating/12 (C)

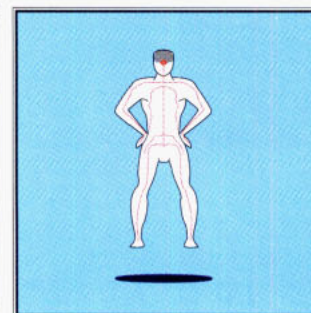
Psych: Sociopathy



Location (Brain)



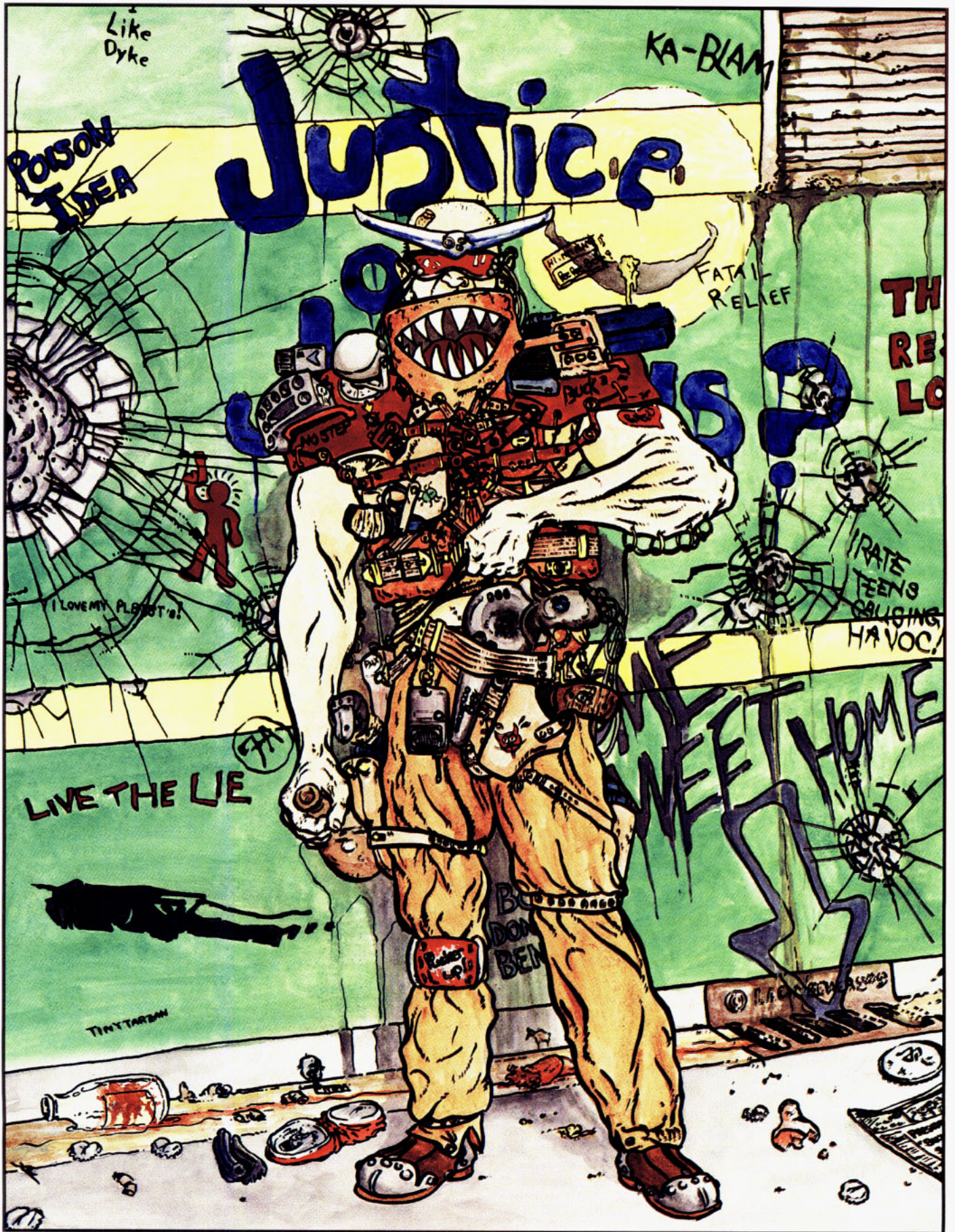
Location (Ear)



Effect

This enhancement improves the subject's sense of balance and location by improving certain structures in the inner ear and by making the subject's brain more responsive to signals transmitted by her

central nervous system. As a consequence, the subject is capable of fully controlling a Nowlan's Flying Harness (see Chapter Ten) at a SPD equal to her Unit Rating in the Enhancement



The White Devil poses for reporters in the wake of the 2020 Compton Riot.

Gills

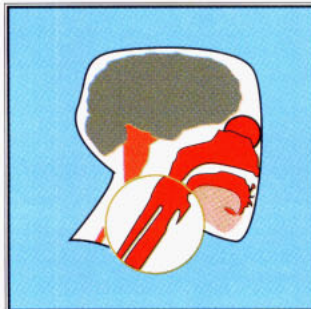
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

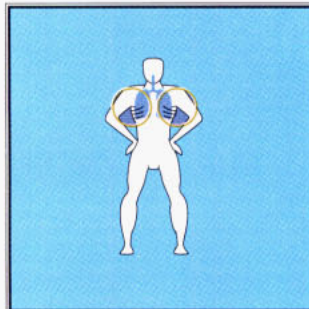
Max: 24

Stress: Unit Rating/12 (C)

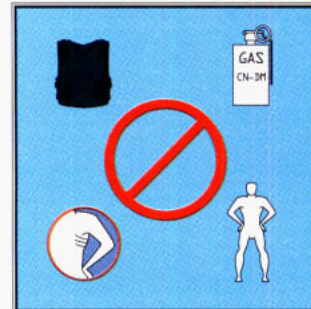
Psych: Paranoia



Location



Effect

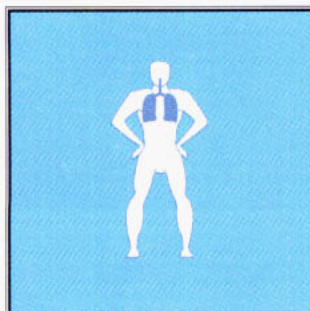


Downside

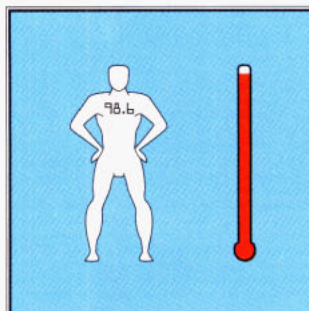
As its name implies, characters who receive this Enhancement are fitted with gills that allow them to breathe underwater as well as they can breathe on land. The Enhancement's Unit Rating indicates the maximum depth to which the recipient can descend and still breathe comfortably (ie.

a character 12 Units of Gills can descend to a depth of 150 feet). Note that characters with gills suffer all sorts of special drawbacks. The gills are so sensitive that they cannot be tightly bound or constrained, preventing the recipient from wearing body armor. Furthermore, even

on land, the gills become a necessary component of the recipient's breathing, meaning that gas masks and other breathing filters are of no use to the recipient.



Location



Effect



Limitation

Characters with this Enhancement have body temperatures that are far lower than the human norm, protecting them from the effects of extreme heat. Such characters can add their unit Ratings to their RES scores when resisting damage due to extreme heat (including damage from such weapons as flamethrowers).

Limitation: In this case, the subject's body temperature is so low that extreme cold has an increased debilitating effect. Subtract the subject's Unit Rating from her RES when resisting cold.

Heat Immunity

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

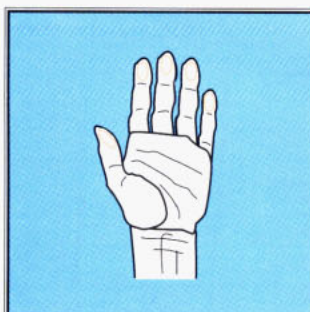
Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/5

Psych: Sociopathy



Location (Brain)



Location (Hands)



Effect

Hyper Touch

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 15

Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

Psych: Melancholia

The Enhancement improves the sensory centers of the recipient's brain and places thousands of extra nerve endings in each of his fingertips. As a result, the recipient can almost "see" with his fingertips, allowing him to read newspapers by feeling the ridges of the ink, to determine the location

of a nearby machine by sensing its vibrations, and many similar stunts. Using the Enhancement is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty determined by the Gamemaster (reading printed matter is Very Difficult, feeling a nearby machine is Impressive, and identifying the chemical structure of

an object by touch alone is Phenomenal). Note that using this Enhancement incurs no Stress since it is a Continuing Stress Enhancement (see Chapter Eight).

Invisibility

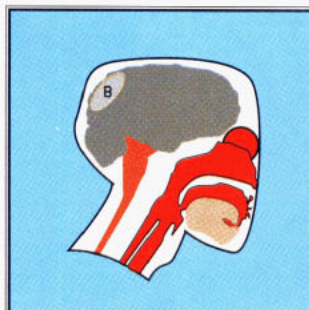
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

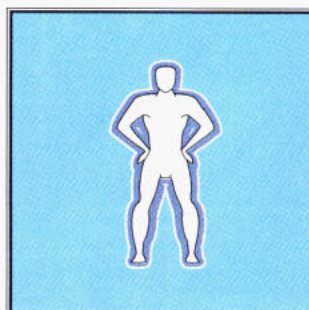
Max: 10

Stress: Unit Rating/3

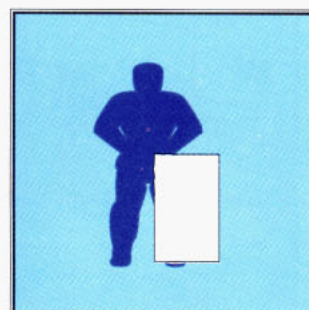
Psych: Sociopathy



Location



Effect

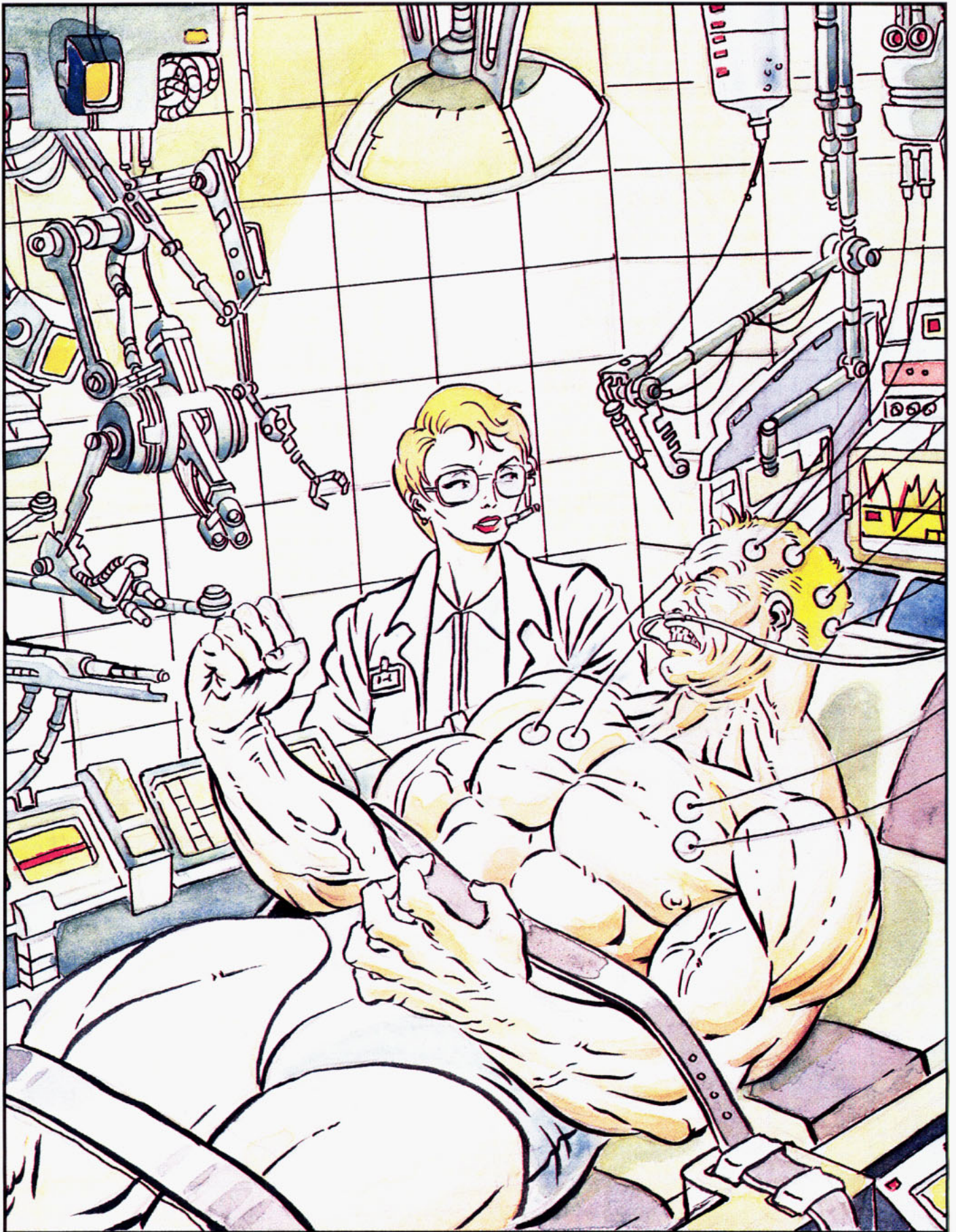


Downside

This Enhancement allows the recipient to generate a magnetic field around his or her person that bends light, rendering the recipient semi-invisible (a shimmer is seen in the air as the invisible character moves). Once the Enhancement has been activated, it will remain activated for an amount of time equal to its Unit Rating.

Invisible characters cannot be attacked unless they are detected, and in any case, an attack on an invisible opponent is automatically Difficult (+3 to To Hit Difficulty). Detecting an invisible character requires a successful P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Note that invisible characters are

particularly easy to detect in bright light (such as broad daylight). Such attempts are Easy (-2 to Difficulty).



Mr. Fisk, Tell Me About Your Mother.— Psychological reconditioning at AMI's Philadelphia facility.

Life Sense

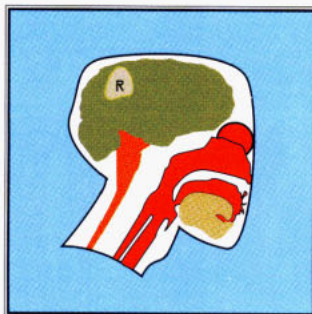
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

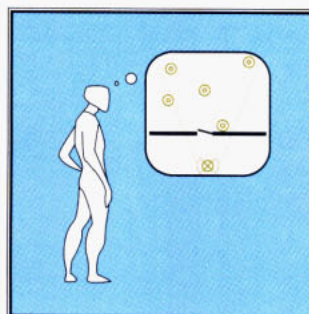
Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/3 (C)

Psych: Multiple Pers.



Location

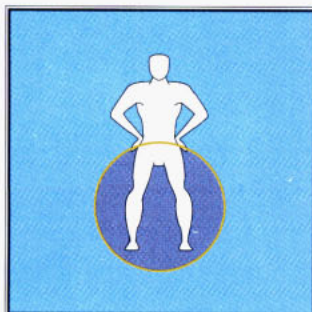


Effect

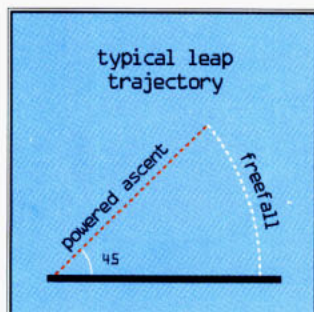
Characters with this Enhancement are particularly sensitive to emissions along the electro-magnetic spectrum, allowing them to automatically detect the presence and exact locations of all animal life forms within a range equal to the Enhancement's

Unit Rating. Life forms can be detected through the use of this ability even through walls and other obstacles, though only the presence of life is detected, not the type of life form or specific being present.

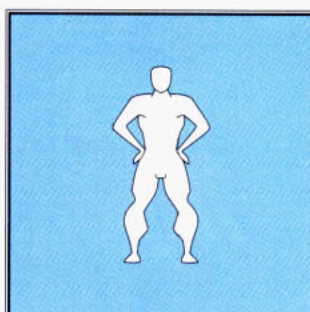
Bonus: In this form, the recipient's senses are so sharp, he can detect the presence of specific beings and types of life forms.



Location



Effect



Limitation

Leaping

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

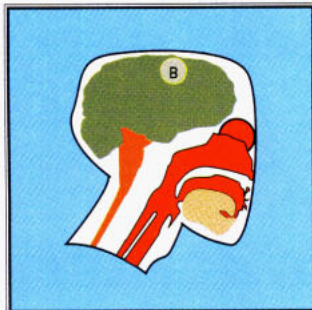
Psych: Homicidal Mania

This enhancement re-engineers the muscular and skeletal alignment in the recipient's legs, allowing her to leap tremendous distances in the same manner as a frog. The distance the subject may leap is equal

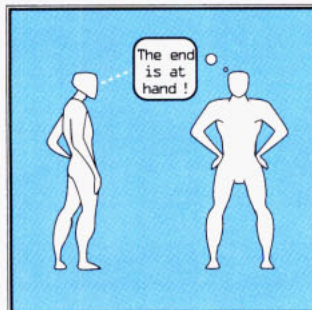
to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Like all Continuous Stress Enhancements, actually using the Enhancement does not cause the recipient to accumulate any Stress.

Limitation: In this case, the subject's legs are noticeably deformed, making it impossible for her to hide the facts that she is boosted and endowed with the Leaping Enhancement.

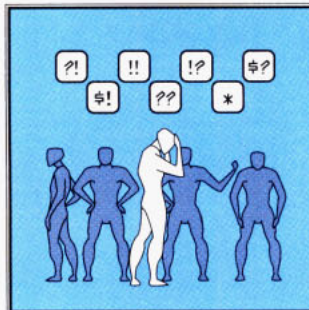
chapter 7



Location



Effect



Limitation

Mind Probe

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

Max: 10

Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Schizophrenia

This Enhancement alters the recipient's brain, making it very sensitive to alpha wave emissions. As a consequence, the recipient can "read the minds" of some subjects at a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Picking up thoughts in this fashion is a Standard

Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the target's WILL. The Grade earned indicates the amount of information gained (a D reveals surface thoughts only, while an A reveals everything the target is thinking).

Limitation: In this form, the Enhancement is somewhat uncontrollable. Any day in which the recipient fails to take a dose of Haloperidol (see Chapter Eight), his Tolerance is automatically reduced by two points.

Micro Vision

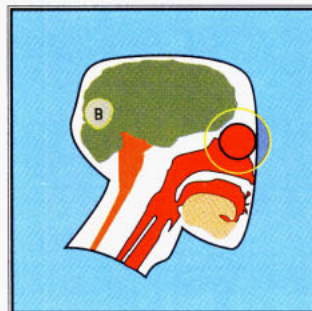
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

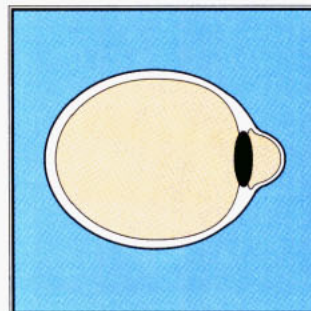
Max: 30

Stress: Unit Rating/10 (C)

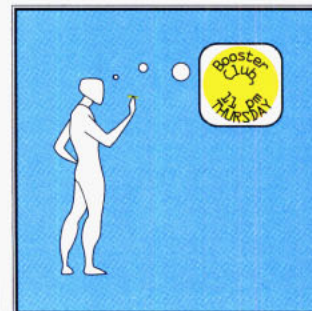
Psych: Catatonia



Location (Brain)



Enhanced Eye



Effect

Micro Vision improves the recipient's visual centers and allows her to flatten her eyeballs at will, providing a sort of vision that can easily magnify viewed objects. The magnification possible through the use of this Enhancement is equal to its Unit

Rating read off the Multiple Table as a Multiple (ie. a rating of +3 provides x2 magnification; a rating of +6 provides x4 magnification, etc). Actually using the Enhancement is an Automatic Action and incurs no Stress for the recipient.

Poison

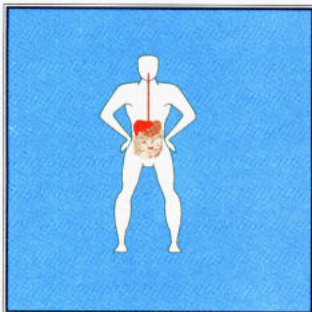
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/2

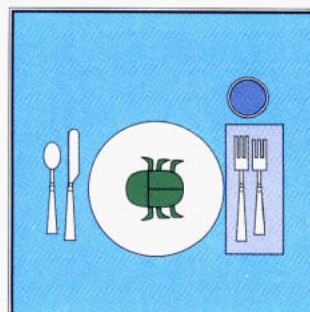
Psych: Catatonia



Location



Effect

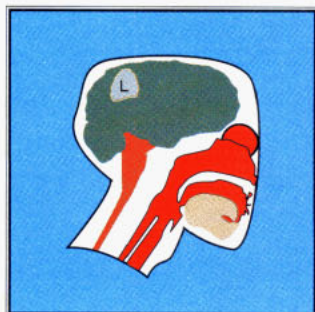


Limitation

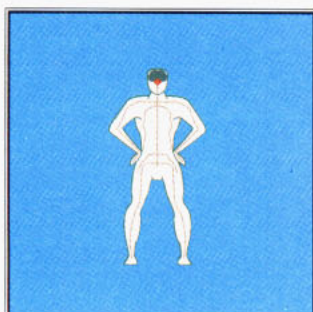
This Enhancement combines the recipient's DNA with strands plucked off certain South American frogs, allowing her to secrete a powerful contact poison through her pores. Anytime the recipient touches a target or lands a successful blow in hand-to-hand combat, she can contaminate the target with the poison (doing so causes

the recipient Stress). A character contaminated by this poison must pass a P/F RES Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating or die immediately. Note that subjects can only be contaminated if the recipient can touch their bare skin.

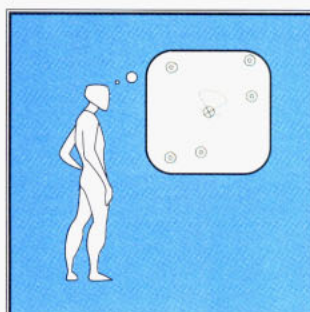
Limitation: To produce the poison, the recipient must consume a diet consisting entirely of exotic foods, costing ten times as much as normal meals.



Location (Brain)



Nervous System



Effect

Radar Sense

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 15

Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

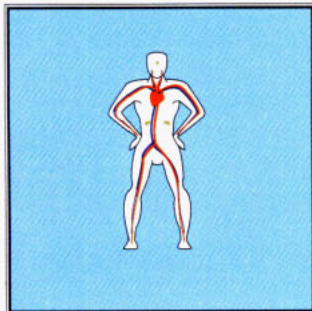
Psych: Panic Disorder

This Enhancement gives the recipient the ability to emit ultrasonic signals and receive the reflections of those signals through his nervous system. In effect, the recipient receives a "radar sense" similar to that of a bat. This sense functions at a range equal to its Unit Rating and auto-

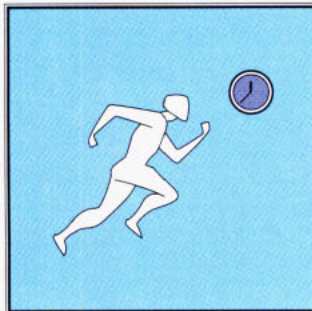
matically picks up all solid objects in a complete 360 degree circle around the recipient regardless of available light or other environmental conditions. Radar impressions are blocked by solid objects (ie. you can't use radar to see through walls) and give the recipient a rough indi-

cation of an object's size and shape but no indication of its true nature. Note that in combat, it is impossible to gain the blindsight bonus against a character with a functioning radar sense. Like all Continuing Stress Enhancements, Using Radar Sense incurs no Stress.

chapter 7



Location



Effect



Limitation

Reduced Fatigue

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 6

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

Psych: Catatonia

Characters with this Enhancement are given well developed cardio-vascular systems and special capabilities for breaking down the pyruvic acids that accumulate in the muscles, making such characters less susceptible to fatigue. Recipients can add their Unit Ratings to their RES scores for the purposes of determining how long they

can move at top speed without tiring (see Chapter Nine). Furthermore, characters with this Enhancement can subtract their Unit Ratings from the amount of sleep they need to refresh (ie. most characters need 8 hours or 39 Units of sleep per night; a character with 6 Units of reduced fatigue needs only 33 Units of sleep, or 2 hours).

Limitation: In this case, the recipient's physical fatigue is replaced with mental fatigue. Although his physical tasks are unaffected, when using the Enhancement to reduce sleep time, the recipient receives a +2 penalty to the Difficulty of any Challenge he attempts that involves the mental faculties.

Regeneration

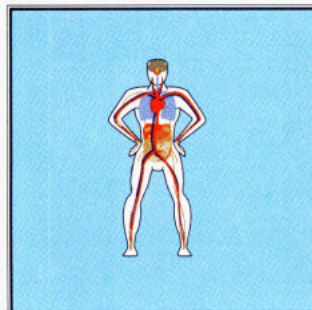
Base Cost: 15

Potency: 3

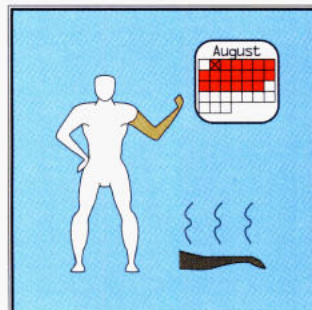
Max: 9

Stress: Unit Rating/3 (C)

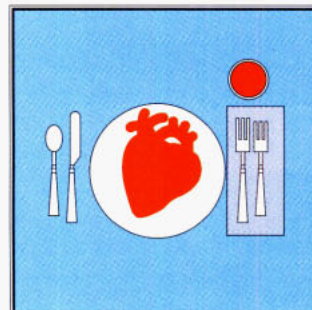
Psych: Sociopathy



Location



Effect



Limitation

Characters with this Enhancement are endowed with tremendous recuperative powers similar to those possessed by some lizards and other reptiles. Such characters may subtract their Unit Ratings from the time that must pass before they are entitled to make a Healing Challenge

Furthermore, characters with the Regeneration enhancement can completely regenerate a lost limb or digit in a time span equal to three months (64 Units) minus their Regeneration Unit Ratings (ie. a character with a Rating of 9 can regenerate a lost arm in 55 Units or 12 days).

Limitation: In this case, the recipient must feed primarily upon human tissues to fuel the regeneration process (hello, Tastee Ghoul!). If he goes off a strictly cannibal diet for more than one day, the Enhancement ceases to function.

Sense Block

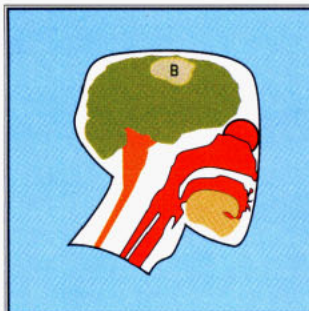
Base Cost: 15

Potency: 2

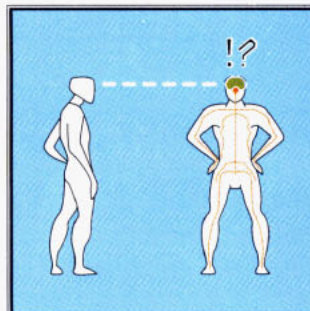
Max: 11

Stress: Unit Rating/4

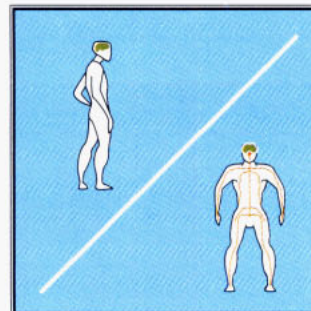
Psych: Melancholia



Location



Effect

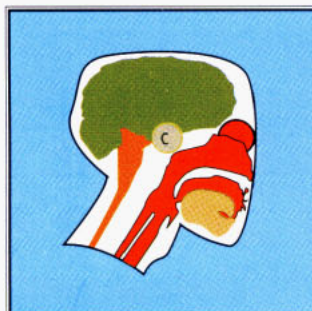


Limitation

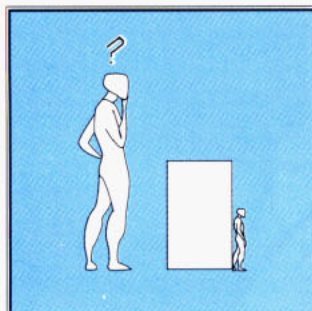
This Enhancement endows its recipient with a special center on the brain that allows her to emit alpha waves that interfere with the senses of opposing characters. This effect has a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating and using it requires a successful P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the target's

intellect. Once the target's senses have been blocked, they will remain blocked for a time period equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Target's with blocked senses cannot see, hear, or smell and suffer +4 penalties to the Difficulties of any Challenges they attempt.

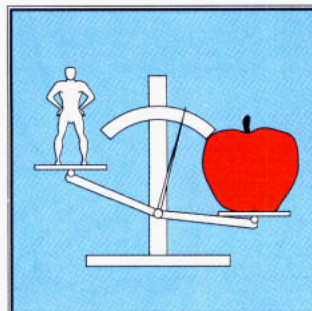
Limitation: In this case, the recipient must concentrate to keep a target's senses blocked. The moment the recipient takes any action other than trying to avoid being struck in combat, any character(s) she is affecting with Sensory Block instantly regain their senses.



Location



Effect



Effect

Size Reduction

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

Max: 15

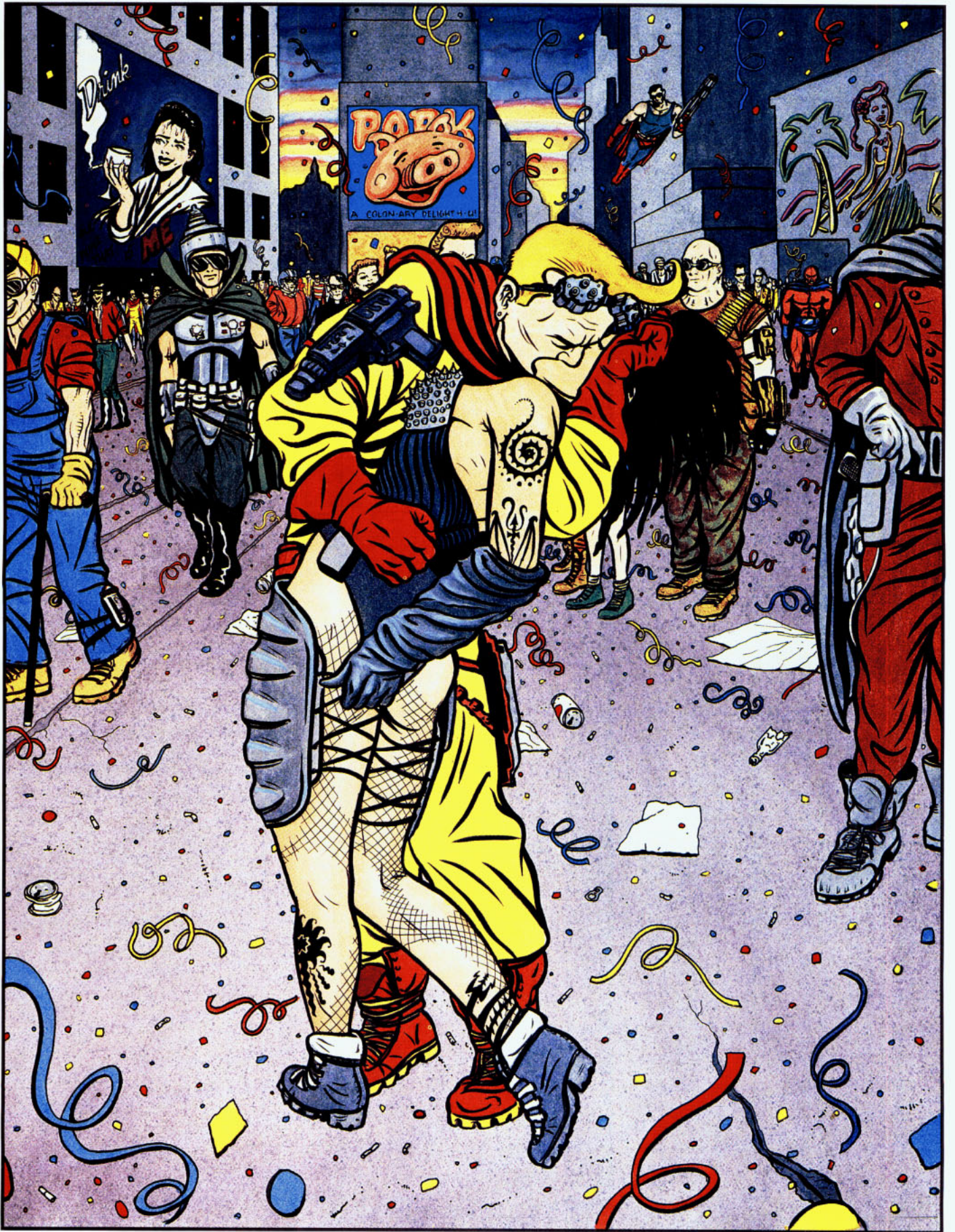
Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

Psych: Sociopathy

This Enhancement is used to reduce a character's size using processes similar to those used to create bonsai trees. Characters with this Enhancement are permanently reduced in stature to a size equal to their former heights minus their Unit Ratings (ie. a six foot tall, or -2 Units, character, with 6 Units of Size Reduction

is now only -8 Units tall, or 18 inches). Reduced characters are much harder to spot when moving stealthily and much more difficult to strike in combat (add their Unit Ratings to the Difficulty of all such attempts). On the other hand, reduced characters lose body tissue, making them weaker and less resilient (subtract their

Unit Ratings from their starting STR and RES scores). Furthermore, size reduced characters need special clothing and equipment that generally costs up to five times the cost of comparable normal-sized equipment.



War is Over— A pair of boosted vets in Times Square on SP (Stalemate in Paraguay) Day 2020.

Sealed Systems

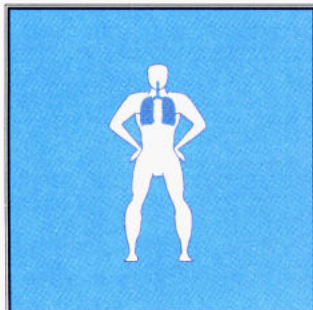
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

Max: 12

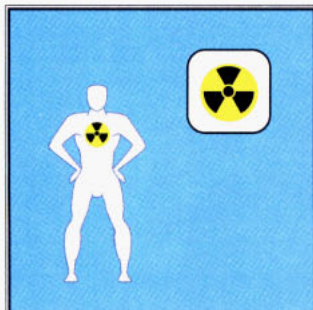
Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

Psych: Schizophrenia



Location

Characters with this Enhancement have unusually sturdy cells that are remarkably resistant to chemical or biological damage. Such characters can add their Unit Ratings to their RES scores when they are resisting the affects of radiation, poison, or gas attacks.



Effect

Limitation: In this case, the character's increased resistance to some forms of damage renders him more susceptible to another forms Choose one particular radiation, gas, or poison attack. Against this attack form, the recipient subtracts his Unit Rating from his RES score rather than adding it.



Limitation

Sonic Discharge

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

Max: 10

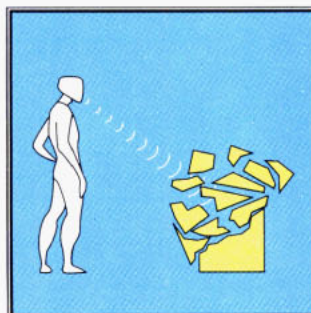
Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Panic Disorder



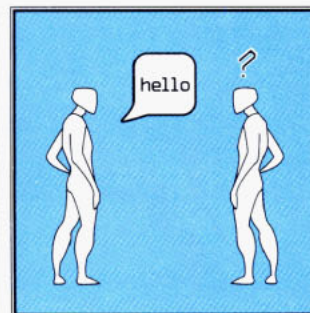
Location

This Enhancement revamps the recipient's voicebox and larynx, allowing her to emit shrill sonic shrieks capable of stunning and harming living creatures. Attacks made in this fashion affect all characters with unprotected ears at a Range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. No To Hit



Effect

Challenge is necessary for a sonic attack, skip directly to assessing damage, using the Enhancement's Unit Rating as the Penetration. The damage inflicted by the attack is STUN/STUN/LW/LW (no form of armor affects sonic attacks).



Limitation

Limitation: In this case, the boosted character's voicebox is incapable of producing normal speech without a mechanical vocoder (cost of \$2800)

Swimming

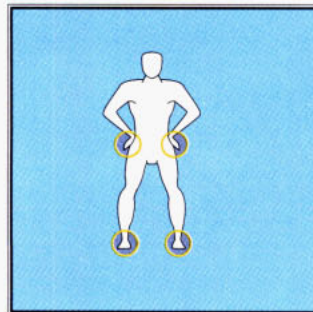
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 12

Stress: Unit Rating/8 (C)

Psych: Panic Disorder



Location



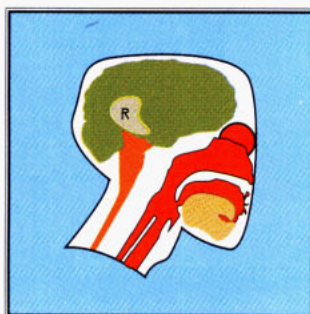
Effect



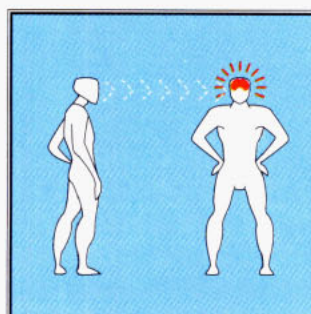
Limitation

Characters with this Enhancement are streamlined and endowed with webbed hands and feet to allow for efficient water movement. Normal characters swim at a rate equal to their SPDs (top speed). Characters with the Swimming Enhancement can add their Unit Ratings to their swimming speeds.

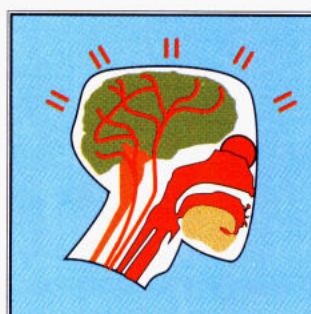
Limitation: In this case, the recipient's body is so well-designed for water that she has trouble operating on land. Any weapon or item that requires generally human shaped fingers to operate becomes difficult to use (+2 Penalty to the Difficulty of any Challenges that call for the use of such an item).



Location



Effect



Limitation

Telepathic Blast

Base Cost: 15

Potency: 3

Max: 7

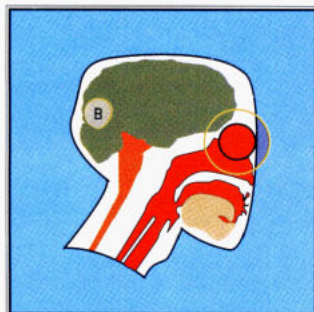
Stress: Unit Rating/2

Psych: Schizophrenia

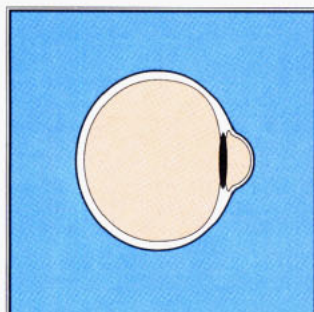
This Enhancement alters the recipient's brain, enabling her to produce alpha waves capable of disrupting the alpha wave patterns of others. In short, the recipient can launch a telepathic "attack" against visible human targets at a range equal to her Unit Rating. No To Hit

Challenge is necessary for such an attack, the attack's Penetration is equal to the Unit Rating of the Enhancement, and the attack inflicts LW/LW/MW/HW damage. Telepathic Blasts are resisted by the target's WILL (not RES) and armor has no affect upon them.

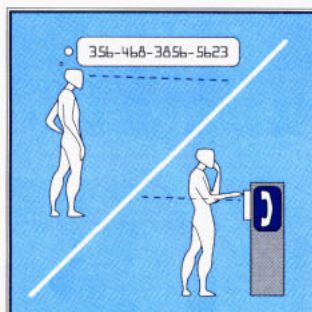
Limitation: In this case, when activated, the Enhancement triggers powerful migraine headaches in the recipient. Immediately after any Telepathic Blast is resolved, conduct a second attack at 1/2 the Enhancement's Unit Rating (round fractions up) against the recipient.



Location (Brain)



Eyeball



Effect

Tele. Vision

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 9

Stress: Unit Rating/5 (C)

Psych: Catatonia

This Enhancement modifies the visual centers of the recipient's brain and allows him to deform his cornea at will, changing the focal length of his eyes. As a consequence, the range of the recipient's vision is vastly increased. Characters with the Telescopic Vision Enhancement can add

their Unit Ratings to the distance over which they can see. Since normal characters can see objects approximately one mile (28 Units) distant with the naked eye, a character with 6 Units of Telescopic Vision can see objects 34 Units, or four miles distant.

Telekinesis

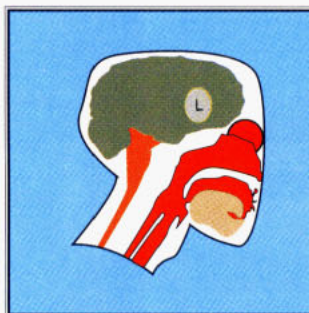
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 3

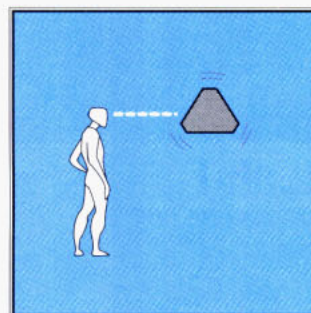
Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Schizophrenia



Location



Effect

Characters with this Enhancement are capable of regulating their alpha wave patterns and using them to manipulate magnetic fields. As a consequence, they can lift objects at a distance using only the power of their minds. The maximum weight that can be lifted telekinetically is

equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Lifted objects can be moved at a SPD equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating, dropped, or "thrown." Although lifting objects through the use of this ability is an Automatic Action (as is manually lifting objects using inherent STR), the recipient

incurs Stress each and every Turn she uses Telekinesis to move an object or keep an object aloft.

chapter 7

Telepathy

Base Cost: 10

Potency: 1

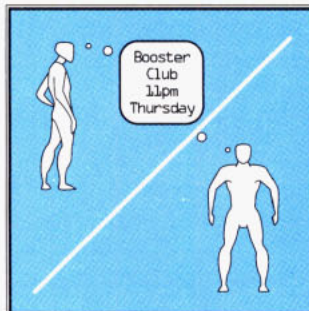
Max: 35

Stress: Unit Rating/15

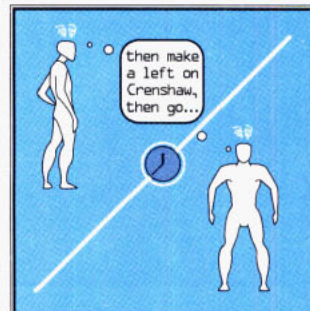
Psych: Schizophrenia



Location



Effect



Limitation

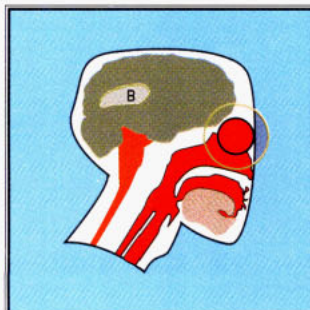
This Enhancement alters the brain in a fashion that allows the recipient to broadcast unusually strong alpha waves. By controlling the frequency of these waves, the recipient can even affect the alpha waves of others, allowing him to send mental messages to distant subjects. The range over which this ability functions is equal to

the Enhancement's Unit Rating, and any message that can be spoken can be transmitted telepathically. The recipient incurs Stress during every Turn in which Telepathy is used.

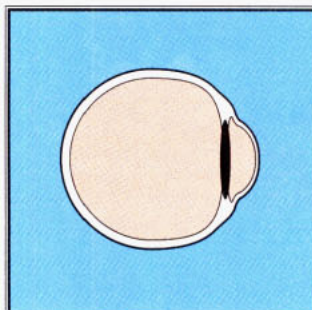
Bonus: In this case, the Enhancement allows for two-way communication, permitting the recipient to pick up thought mes-

sages sent back by a non-Telepathic target.

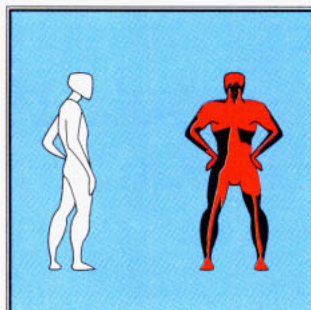
Limitation: In this case, the use of the Enhancement disorients both sender and receiver (this ability can't be used to disorient a non-willing target). Both characters suffer a +2 penalty to the Difficulty of all their Challenges during use.



Location



Effect



Limitation

Thermal Vision alters the structure of the recipient's eyes, allowing her to see into the infrared spectrum. Such a character can see at night as easily as during the broad daylight. This ability extends over a Range equal to the Enhancement's Unit

Rating. Characters with Thermal Vision suffer no Difficulty penalties due to restricted night vision.

Limitation: In this case, the eyes are only partially altered, allowing the subject to see at night, but enabling her to see only rough outlines, not sharp details. Such characters suffer a +2 Difficulty penalty to combat Challenges in a dark environment, in place of the standard +4.

Thermal Vision

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 25

Stress: Unit Rating/8 (C)

Psych: Melancholia



master enhancement table

Enhancement	Base Cost	Potency	Max	Stress	Psych
Acid	10	2	16	Unit Rating/4	Panic Disorder
Adrenal Surge	5	2	8	Unit Rating/3	Homicidal Mania
Analytic Smell	5	1	12	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Bomb	15	2	20	Unit Rating/4	Homicidal Mania
Chameleon	10	1	7	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Chitin/Blubber	10	3	6	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Melancholia
Claws	5	1	11	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania
Cold Immunity	5	1	8	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Sociopathy
Control	20	3	12	Unit Rating/4	Multiple Pers.
Danger Sense	5	2	11	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Paranoia
Electric Discharge	10	2	18	Unit Rating/4	Homicidal Mania
Emotion Control	10	3	18	Unit Rating/5	Multiple Pers.
Empathy	10	1	9	Unit Rating/4	Sociopathy
Enhanced Hearing	5	1	10	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Schizophrenia
Extra Limb	10	1	20	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Multiple Pers.
Flight Control	20	1	25	Unit Rating/12 (C)	Sociopathy
Gills	10	1	24	Unit Rating/12 (C)	Paranoia
Heat Immunity	5	1	8	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Hyper Touch	5	1	15	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Melancholia
Invisibility	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Sociopathy
Leaping	5	1	8	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania
Life Sense	10	2	8	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Multiple Pers.
Micro Vision	5	1	30	Unit Rating/10 (C)	Catatonia
Mind Probe	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Schizophrenia
Poison	10	2	8	Unit Rating/2	Catatonia
Radar Sense	5	1	15	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Panic Disorder
Reduced Fatigue	5	1	6	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Catatonia
Regeneration	15	3	9	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Sociopathy
Sealed Systems	10	1	12	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Schizophrenia
Sense Block	15	2	11	Unit Rating/4	Melancholia
Size Reduction	10	2	15	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Sociopathy
Sonic Discharge	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Panic Disorder
Swimming	5	1	12	Unit Rating/8 (C)	Panic Disorder
Telepathic Blast	15	3	7	Unit Rating/2	Schizophrenia
Telescopic Vision	5	1	9	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Catatonia
Telekinesis	10	3	8	Unit Rating/3	Schizophrenia
Telepathy	10	1	35	Unit Rating/15	Schizophrenia
Thermal Vision	5	1	25	Unit Rating/8 (C)	Melancholia

Chapter eight

Never fire only a single round of ammunition into a target when you have the opportunity to fire multiple rounds. The only way to be certain that your foes are out of the fight is to kill them, and the probability of actually killing your foe climbs quickly with each additional round that strikes the target. Some mistakenly develop the idea that conserving ammunition is tactically sound. But a well-prepared soldier knows that it is his responsibility to carry more than enough ammunition into battle to allow for the copious use of his firearm.

— From the “AMI Field Manual,” dated 2018

Like many forms of great power, genetic enhancement comes at great cost. Although doctors and scientists have unlocked many of the secrets housed in the alien space pod that crash-landed in 1996, there are still a few barriers in the realm of genetic engineering that have yet to be crossed. Despite the fact that completely re-engineering a **genotype** from top to bottom is now a fairly routine (though expensive) procedure, even the best genetic engineers don't fully comprehend all the implications of their activities. The most worrisome of these misunderstood side effects is the strange connection between the integrity of the genotype and mental stability.

The Nature of Metagenic Psychoses

Once genetic scientists overcame **the cellular regeneration problem** and learned to enhance living subjects, one of the first obstacles they encountered was their patients' irksome tendency to go **insane**. At first, the engineers thought this problem stemmed entirely from the inability of the subjects' brains to accept something as alien and absurd as their newly installed abilities. And of course, Dr. Bushmiller proved that therapies designed to help the brain accept the genetic implants (like the Slumberland simulation) are enormously helpful in controlling the psychological traumas associated with enhancement.

genotype: the genetic makeup of an organism.

the cellular regeneration problem: See Chapters One and Four for a complete explanation of this phenomenon.

insane: A few of the earliest recipients of genetic enhancements are still alive. Most were assigned new identities by the Federal Witness Protection Program and scattered across the United States in order to hide them (and their creators) from the scrutiny of investigative reporters. One or two still work as secretive government operatives or corporate agents. In any case all of these individuals are quite dangerous, and from time-to-time, one surfaces to wreak havoc.

GENETIC
ENHANCEMENT
IS LINKED TO
MENTAL
STABILITY

dopamine: a chemical found in the human brain. An overabundance of dopamine is said to cause schizophrenia, while deficiency of the chemical is known to cause Parkinson's Disease.

metagenic feedback trauma: a psychosis induced as a result of genetic enhancement.

whether or not . . . successful: In other words, if you use your Acid Enhancement to spit at a target, you accumulate Stress regardless of whether or not the acid attack hit its target.

But recently, scientists learned that simple "reality rejection" cannot entirely explain enhancement trauma. In 2014, Dr. David Sanders of Cornell University proved that certain types of genetic enhancement have an inexplicable effect upon the dopamine centers in the human brain. Two years later, Sampson linked enhancement with irregular quantities of three other catecholamine neurotransmitters. The practical upshot of all this is that genetic enhancement mysteriously imbalances certain important chemicals in the brain, predisposing the enhancement subject to a wide variety of mental illnesses. Although most of these imbalances can be partially corrected with medication, they cannot be eliminated altogether.

Because the psychoses associated with genetic enhancement inhibit the combat effectiveness of boosted soldiers in the field, and guarantee that many veterans become homicidal freaks upon their return home, all of the major conflict firms spend millions of dollars each year researching metagenic feedback trauma. To date, however, a major breakthrough still seems several years away.

Stress, Tolerance, and Psychosis

In game terms, metagenic feedback trauma is simulated using three concepts: Stress, Tolerance, and Psychosis. In short, each time you use one of your Enhancements, you may or may not accumulate a certain amount of Stress. Once you have accumulated Stress that equals or exceeds your Tolerance, you run the risk of manifesting your Psychosis. Complete rules for calculating your beginning Tolerance and determining your Psychosis are found back in Chapter Five.

Detailed Rules

1. Each time you use one of your Enhancements, you accumulate a number of Stress points equal to the final Stress value of that Enhancement (ie. the Stress value listed in its description plus or minus any bonuses or penalties you picked up during Step #8 of character creation). Note that Stress is accumulated regardless of whether or not the action you attempted with the Enhancement was successful. You should also be aware of the fact that it is perfectly

CHEMICAL
IMBALANCES PLAY
A ROLE IN
FEEDBACK
TRAUMA

FEEDBACK
TRAUMA IS AN
IMPORTANT
PROBLEM

EACH TIME YOU
USE AN
ENHANCEMENT,
YOU TAKE A
CERTAIN AMOUNT
OF STRESS. WHEN
YOUR STRESS
TOTAL EXCEEDS
YOUR
TOLERANCE, YOU
MIGHT MANIFEST
A PSYCHOSIS

possible to have an Enhancement with a 0 Stress Rating, meaning that use of that Enhancement does not accumulate any Stress at all.

There is one important exception to this rule: using **Enhancements listed as Continuous Stress** never accumulates any Stress. In other words, you don't receive Stress for using your Boosted Strength to lift objects, nor do you receive Stress for repelling a projectile with your Chitin Enhancement. Instead, these Abilities subtract their Stress Ratings from your starting Tolerance as described in Chapter Five.

2. Once you have accumulated a Stress total that is greater than or equal to your Tolerance, you must begin passing WILL Challenges in order to fight off the effects of your Psychosis. Immediately upon exceeding your Tolerance and each time you take Stress thereafter, you must pass a Difficult P/F WILL Challenge (Difficulty of 3) or you immediately manifest your Psychosis.

Example: Delinquinaut's starting Tolerance is 6 and the Stress value associated with his Telepathic Blast is 2. Each time he uses the blast, he accumulates 2 Stress. The third time he uses the blast, his Stress total equals his Tolerance and he must pass a Difficult WILL Challenge or manifest his Psychosis. If this Challenge is successful, Delinquinaut must then pass a WILL Challenge each and every time he accumulates additional Stress until he returns his Stress total beneath his Tolerance.

Stress From Other Sources

Using Enhancements isn't the only way **boosted** characters accumulate Stress.

1. Each time a boosted character suffers a wound result (ie. LW, MW, HW, IN), she immediately takes one Stress point.
2. Any time a boosted character is in a battle that lasts 5 or more Turns, she immediately takes a Stress point at the beginning of the fifth Turn. Furthermore, if such a battle lasts another 5 Turns, all boosted characters immediately take another Stress at the begin-

Enhancements listed as Continuous Stress: ie. those with a "C" in the Stress entry of their listings.

boosted: those characters with one or more Enhancements.

YOU CAN ALSO
RACK UP STRESS
BY SUFFERING
WOUNDS AND
PARTICIPATING
IN BATTLES

Psychosis: All of the Psychoses are named and described according to the standards set forth in the DSM-XI (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 11th Edition*) published in 2019.

ning of the tenth Turn. Past that point, no matter how long the battle lasts, no additional Stress is accumulated.

3. Stress can be accumulated due to Flashbacks as explained in Step #8 1/2 of Chapter Five.

FLASHBACKS
CAUSE STRESS

Note that in any case, Stress only affects boosted characters. Characters without Enhancements need never worry about Stress regardless of how many wounds they take or how long their battles last.

The Psychoses

Once a character manifests his **Psychosis**, follow the appropriate instructions below. Each set of instructions will help you decide how the character must behave and how he can regain his composure.



The Forgotten Victims—The Psych Ward at the Jenkins VA Hospital in Watts. June 11, 2020.

Catatonia: Once a character manifests catatonia, he must flee his present surroundings for the nearest place of safety and isolation (ie. his quarters, a hotel room, a police station, a deserted area, etc.) at maximum speed and may take no non-defensive actions as he journeys. Once he reaches his destination, the character totally freezes up. He cannot move, speak, or act in any way.

CATATONIA

One Turn after freezing up, the Catatonic character rolls 2D10 and adds the total to his WILL score (re-rolling doubles as normal). This total is subtracted from 45 Units to determine how long the character remains Catatonic. Any character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty who stumbles across a catatonic character can reduce the amount of time that character remains catatonic by passing a Standard Challenge against a Difficulty of 3 (Difficult task). A D result subtracts 1 Unit from the time spent catatonic, a C subtracts 2 Units, a B subtracts 3 Units and an A subtracts 4 Units.

AN EXAMPLE OF CATATONIA

Upon awakening, a catatonic character's Stress total is immediately reduced to one point less than his Tolerance.

Example: A character with an 8 Tolerance takes 9 Stress during a battle and fails her WILL roll. She now begins manifesting Catatonia, her Psychosis. Immediately, the character flees the battlefield and bolts for a nearby police station. Once inside, she collapses into a catatonic state. The character now rolls 2D10 and adds her WILL, for a total of 17. She will remain catatonic for 28 Units of time (ie. 45-17), or 40 minutes. Within a couple of minutes, the catatonic character is treated by a police psychologist with the Therapy Specialty who passes his Therapy Challenge with a C result, reducing the length of the catatonic lapse by another 2 Units down to 26 Units, or 24 minutes. After these 24 minutes pass, the catatonic character will wake up with a Stress Total of 7 (one less than her Tolerance).

HOMICIDAL MANIA

Homicidal Mania: Characters who manifest this Psychosis are overcome by a burning desire to kill. Thereafter, the maniac must make an attack, using the most lethal force available, each and every Turn until he recovers. So great is the maniac's rage that he *usually* attacks the closest target he can see, whether friend or foe. After the maniac has experienced a full Turn of rage, he may begin making P/F *WILL Challenges* each Turn to regain his composure. The Difficulty of these Challenges begins at 10 and is decreased by one each Turn until the maniac finally gains control.

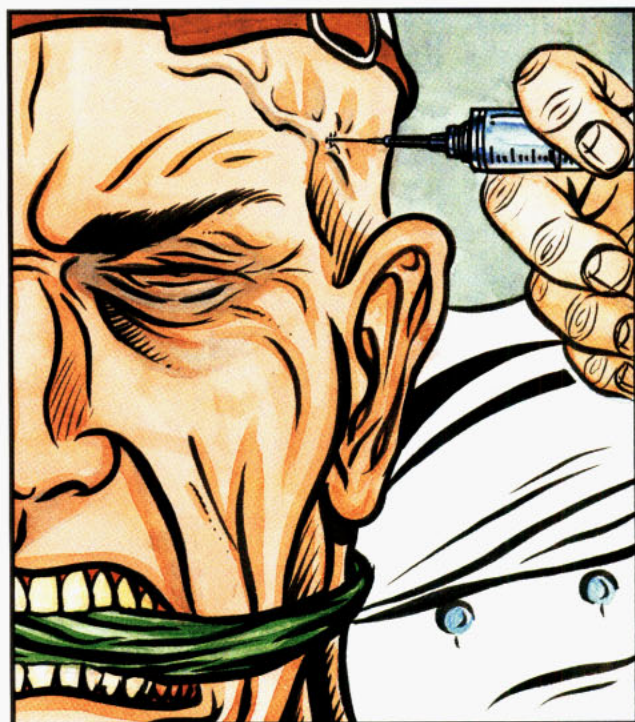
A character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty can *restore* a maniac to normal by passing a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Difficulty the maniac himself must roll to regain control.

Once a maniac regains control, his Stress total is immediately reduced to one point less than his Tolerance.

usually: If any enemies are present and the maniac can pass a Difficult WILL Challenge, he may attack them instead of attacking friends or innocent bystanders.

WILL Challenges: These Challenges are conducted at the very end of the Turn and in no way prevent the raging character from taking any other actions.

restore: In this case, the Psychologist brings the maniac down with soothing speech and compassion, so this ability doesn't work if the maniac cannot hear the psychologist's voice.



HUUURM!— Don't worry Mr. Schaffer, a little Clozapine in the dome will cure that right up.

the same rules: ie, add a roll of 2D10 to the sufferer's WILL and subtract this total from 45 Units. Characters with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty can subtract an additional amount, etc.

entirely new character: Of course, the character does not change physically. Only his personality is altered.

craft a personality: With the GM's permission, you might craft more than one alternate personality and switch between them. Again with the GM's permission, your alternate personalities might even possess different Skills or INT and WILL scores.

Example: A character with a Tolerance of 6 takes 8 Stress and fails his WILL Challenge. Since his Psychosis is Homicidal Mania and the closest character is a friend, he must pass a Difficult WILL Challenge to keep attacking his enemies and avoid attacking his friend. Since the maniac must attack the closest target each Turn unless he passes a WILL Challenge, his friend decides to flee! One full Turn after the Psychosis manifests itself, the maniac can begin making a P/F WILL Challenge each Turn to regain control. The Difficulty of the first Challenge is 10, the Difficulty of the second Challenge is 9, etc. Should a character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty wander by on the third Turn, she can calm the maniac by passing a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty of 8 (or 10 on the first Turn, 9 on the second Turn, etc).

AN EXAMPLE OF
HOMICIDAL
MANIA

Melancholia: Characters who manifest this Psychosis become abnormally depressed and preoccupied with the hardships and horrors of modern life. Until such characters regain control of themselves, they suffer a +2 modifier to the Difficulty of any Challenges they attempt. During this time, the player experiencing the bout of Melancholia should definitely reflect it in her role-playing (ie. make lots of disparaging remarks, sulk, act disinterested, etc).

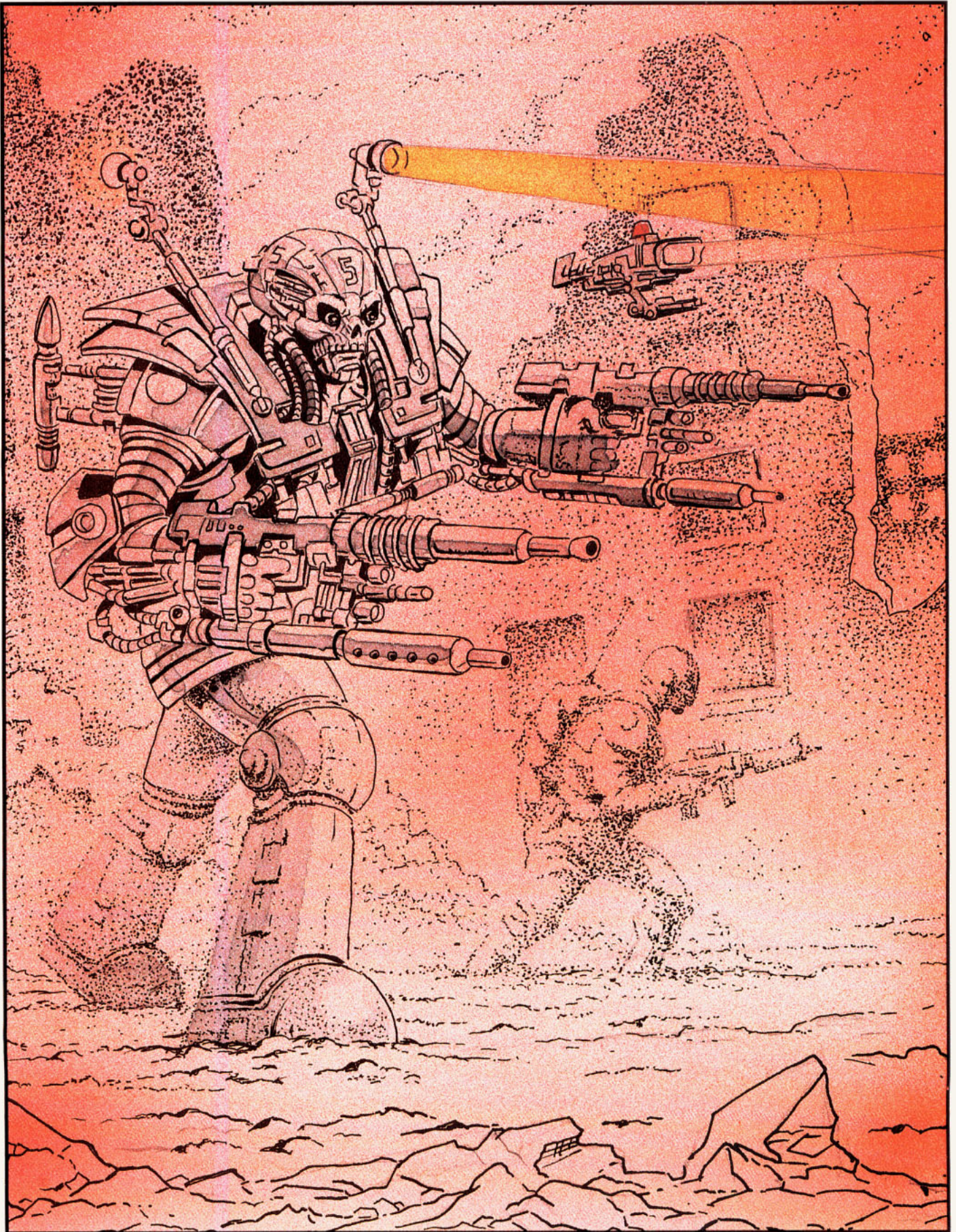
MELANCHOLIA

The length of a bout of Melancholia is determined using the same rules used to determine the length of a Catatonia episode. Once the bout ends, the psychotic's Stress total is immediately reduced to one point less than his Tolerance.

Multiple Personality Disorder: Characters with this Psychosis have a second submerged personality embedded within their minds. When the Psychosis manifests itself, this personality bubbles to the surface and becomes dominant. In effect, the sufferer becomes an entirely new character.

MULTIPLE
PERSONALITY
DISORDER

A character with the Multiple Personality Psychosis should take time out before play begins to craft a personality for his or her alter-ego. Generally, these secondary personalities are diametrically opposed to the psychotic's primary or dominant personality. In other words, the secondary personality of a fearsome bully might be a meek little girl (there is nothing that says the secondary personality must be the same sex as the primary). Once the Psychosis manifests itself, the player should begin reflecting the new personality in her role-playing.



CLICK-CHUNNK, CLICK-CHUNNK!— A TWD XKM770 prowls San Luis Obispo in search of prey.

approval of the GM: The GM should prohibit the psychotic from selecting a person or item that is actually harmful. For instance, an enemy can never be the target of true paranoia. If the target of the psychotic's paranoia is somehow eliminated or destroyed before the psychotic regains control, a new target is immediately selected.

The length of time over which the secondary personality remains dominant is calculated using the same rules for calculating the length of a Catatonia episode, except Psychology cannot reduce the time of domination at all. Instead a character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty can make one attempt to pass a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 (Impressive task) to immediately restore the character's primary personality.

Once the psychotic's dominant personality is restored, his Stress total is immediately reduced to one point less than his Tolerance.

Panic Disorder: Manifesting this Psychosis causes the psychotic to suddenly panic and lose confidence. As a consequence, he immediately flees from any dangerous situation (combat, walking a roof ledge, travelling to a rough part of town, etc.) and refuses to enter another for as long as the attack lasts. Characters suffering from Panic Disorder may overcome its effects by passing a P/F WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 (Impressive action) for each Turn they wish to remain in contact with danger.

PANIC DISORDER

The length of a Panic Disorder attack is calculated using the same rules used to calculate the length of a Catatonia episode.

Once the panicking character regains his senses, his Stress Rating is immediately reduced to one point below his Tolerance.

Paranoia: This Psychosis causes the character to focus on a particular character or item and irrationally arrive at the conclusion that this person or item will harm him. Each time the Psychosis manifests itself, the psychotic chooses a new person or item to fear (subject to the approval of the GM). He must then make every possible effort to flee or destroy this object and may take no other actions until he is absolutely certain that he is safe. Again, this is a good opportunity for some role-playing.

PARANOIA

The length of a Paranoia attack is calculated using the same rules used to calculate the length of a Catatonia episode.

Once the paranoid character regains his senses, his Stress Rating is immediately reduced to one point below his Tolerance.

SOCIOPATHY

Sociopathy: Manifesting this Psychosis forces the psychotic to reject his friends, authority, and society. Unless they can pass a P/F WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 (Impressive task) such characters must immediately leave the vicinity of their compatriots. Furthermore, for as long as the Psychosis remains in effect, the psychotic must undergo another P/F WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 every time he is confronted with an **opportunity to start a fight** or authority (encounters a superior or police officer, for instance). Failure indicates the character must start the fight or show disrespect for the authority figure.

The length of a Sociopathy attack is calculated using the same rules used to calculate the length of a Catatonia episode.

Once the sociopathic character regains his senses, his Stress Rating is immediately reduced to one point below his Tolerance.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia: Characters who manifest this Psychosis begin to suffer from disordered thinking, making it **almost impossible** for them to communicate for as long as the episode lasts. Furthermore, such characters suffer from **delusions** and hear strange noises in their heads that seriously impair their concentration. As long as the Psychosis remains in effect, the Schizophrenic suffers a +4 penalty to the Difficulty of all Challenges.

The length of a Schizophrenia attack is calculated in much the same fashion as the length of a Catatonia episode, save for the fact that the 2D10 + WILL total is subtracted from a base time of 40 Units (not 45).

Once the Schizophrenic character regains his senses, his Stress Rating is immediately reduced to one point below his Tolerance.

opportunity to start a fight: A WILL Challenge is necessary even if it is the psychotic's friends who are giving him the opportunity to start a fight (ie. one of his friends insults him). Note that a psychotic is not required to use lethal force in the fights he starts.

almost impossible: Delivering a coherent message to another character requires a successful P/F WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 3.

delusions: Sample delusions include: the belief that one possesses extraordinary powers he does not possess, the belief that one's thoughts are being controlled from outer space, and the belief that one's thoughts are being broadcast over public airwaves. Again, delusions are fuel for good role-playing.

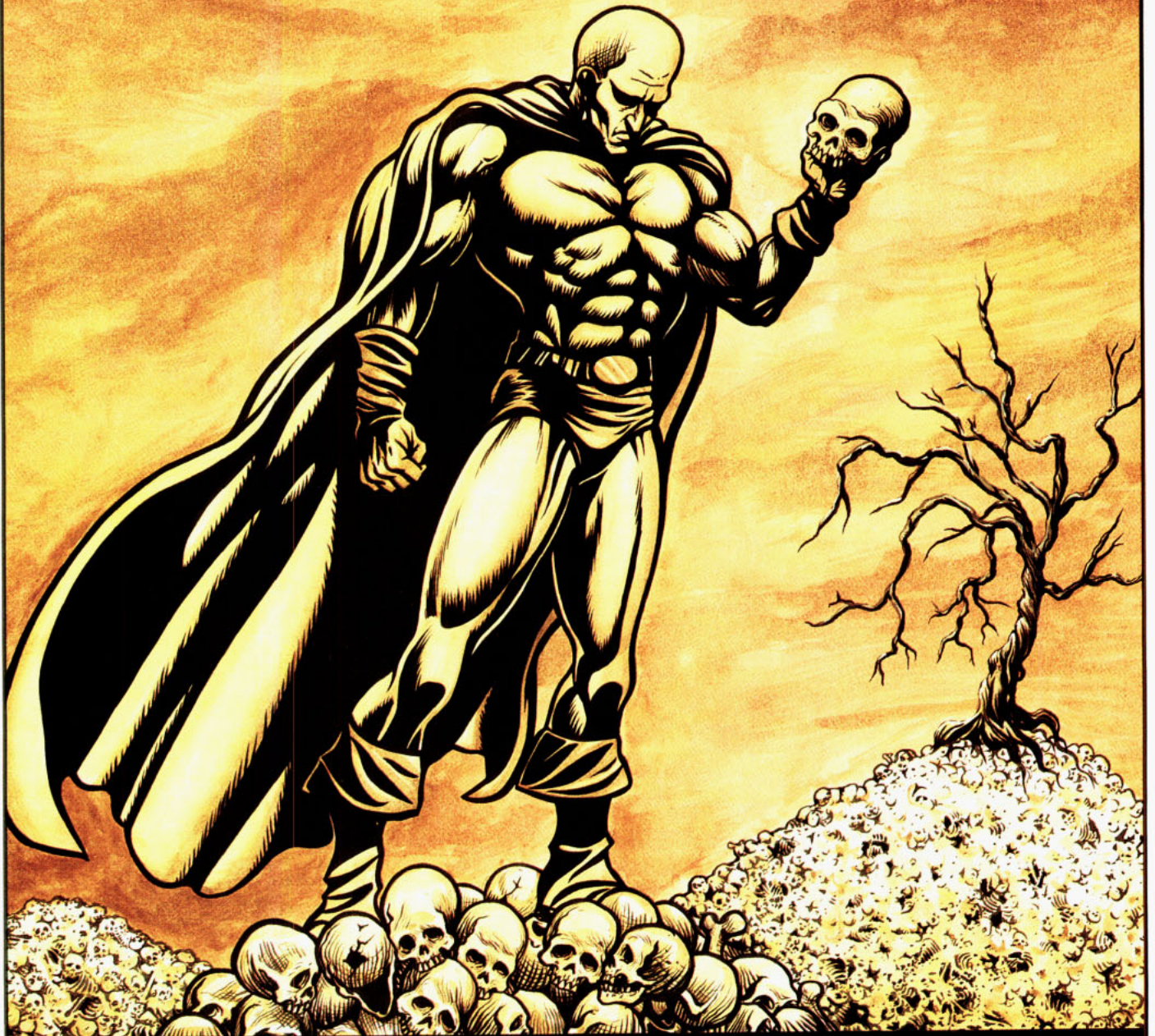
institutionalization: Such characters inevitably end up in one of the VA Mental Health Facilities that are scattered around the US.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR PERMANENT INSANITY

Permanent Insanity

Optionally, every time a character manifests a Psychosis, you can roll 2D10. Should this roll come up a "2" (double "1s"), the Psychosis permanently overtakes the character, driving her insane. Such characters continuously manifest their Psychoses for the rest of their lives and require **institutionalization**.

EUGENIX



It's going to hurt us alot more than
it's going to hurt you... Honest.

Characters who succumb to permanent insanity in this fashion become NPCs. Although they can be treated and restored to health by characters with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty, such treatments generally take several years, placing them well beyond the scope of the game.

each and every day: To help keep things straight, it is recommended that GMs adopt some sort of house rule regarding the time of day anti-stress medication is taken (ie. everyone takes their medication at noon; everyone takes their medication first thing in the morning, etc).

The catch: This rule adds uncertainty to the Stress rules, preventing characters from unrealistically knowing when the use of an Enhancement might put them in danger of manifesting a Psychosis.

GM: This method is more realistic, though it requires the already over-burdened GM to keep track of even more information.

have the players wait: This method prevents the players from knowing exactly how much Stress they can take until it is probably too late, but still gives them a slightly unrealistic amount of information.

Anti-Stress Medications

Fortunately, metagenic feedback trauma and its associated Psychoses can be partially controlled through medication. Each Psychosis has an associated therapeutic drug. Each and every day a character takes the proper dosage of the drug that matches her Psychosis, she may receive a bonus to her Tolerance for that day. The catch is that the Psychotic never knows how much additional Tolerance she received until it is too late. You can handle this in one of two fashions:

1. The GM can secretly keep track of each player's Stress and Tolerance levels and conduct secret rolls each day to determine the effectiveness of each character's anti-stress medication.
2. Or, you can have the players wait to determine the exact effectiveness of their medication until the instant they exceed their base Tolerance levels and need any bonuses the medication might provide to forestall a WILL Challenge.

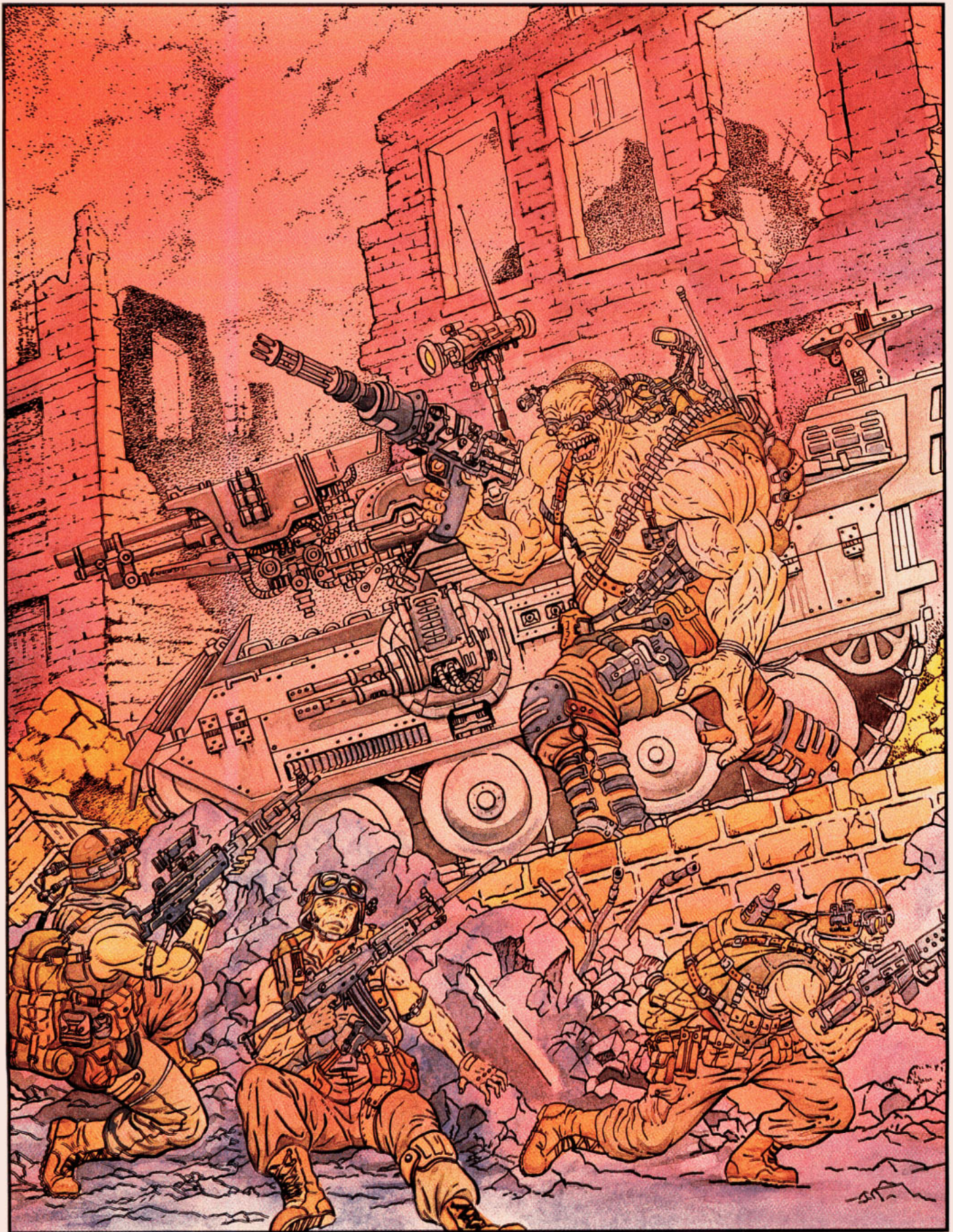
Example of Method Two: A character with a Tolerance of 8 has 7 Stress built up. The next time she uses her Acid Power (2 Stress), she determines the effectiveness of her medication for the day to see if it provided her with the extra Tolerance necessary to prevent her from making a WILL Challenge.

After a character who has manifested a Psychosis recovers, his medication will not give him any additional benefits for the remainder of the current day. In other words, a character with a Tolerance of 8 who received 2 additional points of Tolerance due to medication but manifested his Psychosis anyway, must begin undergoing WILL Challenges to avoid manifesting the Psychosis again once he equals or exceeds 8 Stress (not 10).

ANTI-STRESS
MEDICATION CAN
HELP CONTROL
PSYCHOSES

TWO METHODS
OF HANDLING
ANTI-STRESS
MEDICATION

AN EXAMPLE OF
METHOD #2



Feedback Trauma in Action!– Daddy Warcrimes on the rampage in south-central. August 11, 2020.

CALCULATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-STRESS MEDICATION

Calculating the Effectiveness of Anti-Stress Medication

To determine the effectiveness of anti-stress drugs, the character must undergo a Standard WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 0 (Average task). Compare the results to the table below:

<u>Result</u>	<u>Tolerance Gained</u>
F	0
D	+1
C	+2
B	+3
A	+4

Example: A character with a Tolerance of 8 and a WILL of 4 takes her anti-stress medication at the beginning of the day. Since the group is using Method #1, the GM acts on the character's behalf and secretly makes a Standard WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 0. Since this Challenge nets a B result, the GM notes that the character has a Tolerance of 11 for the day.

The Drugs

Assume that a three week supply of each of these drugs costs \$250. They are available at [VA hospitals](#) as well as commercial pharmacies (at double the price). All of these drugs are in capsule form.

Alprazolam

Treats: Panic Disorder

Side Effects: Clumsiness, drowsiness, dizziness

Clozapine

Treats: Catatonia, Paranoia, and Schizophrenia

Side Effects: light-headedness, feverish

Fluoxetine

Treats: Melancholia

Side Effects: Nervousness, headaches, insomnia

VA hospitals: Anti-stress drugs are the only form of medication that the VA hospitals do not distribute free of charge. The demand for these drugs is so great that the Veterans' Administration can no longer afford them in the quantities necessary for free distribution. In some cities, powerful street gangs use force to stop the distribution of the drugs through the VA hospitals and commercial pharmacies, preferring to rack up big profits by distributing the drugs themselves.

Side Effects: have no real effect on game play. They are present only as fuel for role -playing. Characters who use these drugs over long periods of time will occasionally demonstrate these side effects.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE VARIOUS ANTI-STRESS DRUGS

much the same way . . . healed:
You'll read about wounds,
injuries, and healing in
Chapter Nine.

attended: means the
psychologist passed a P/F
Challenge against a Difficulty
equal to the Stress total the
character attempting the
Recovery has sustained.

Haloperidol

Treats: Multiple Personality Disorder

Side Effect: Blurred vision, muscle spasms, stiffness

Lithium

Treats: Homicidal Mania and Sociopathy

Side Effect: Dizziness, nausea

Recovering From Stress

Accumulated Stress points are removed in *much the same way that wounds and injuries are healed* using a mechanic known as a *Stress Recovery Challenge*. A character may attempt a Stress Recovery Challenge once twelve hours have passed since he last sustained Stress or once twelve hours have passed since he attempted his last Stress Recovery Challenge. In other words, a character who takes some Stress at 4:00 AM can make a Stress Recovery Challenge at 4:00 PM, another Stress Recovery Challenge at 4:00 AM the next day, another one at 4:00 PM the next day, etc., providing he does not take any additional Stress in the interim. A Stress Recovery Challenge is always a Standard WILL Challenge. Its Difficulty begins at 0 and is modified by the following circumstances:

Stress Recovery Modifiers

No strenuous activity since Stress sustained (ie. no fighting, strenuous physical activity, or anxiety)	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in a serene setting (in the country, a quiet suburb, etc).	-3
During the last 12 hours, a character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty successfully <i>attended</i> to the character attempting the Recovery	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in an anxiety-filled setting (Los Angeles, on a battlefield, etc).	+3

The Grade earned in the Recovery Challenge indicates the number of Stress points removed according to the following table:

STRESS CAN BE
RELIEVED IN
MUCH THE SAME
WAY WOUNDS
ARE HEALED

STRESS RECOVERY
MODIFIERS



Why I Oughtta...!— Even those veterans who have found their way into the workforce and back into society still find their Enhancements useful.

when he wakes up: The GM has instituted a house rule to help her keep things straight as mentioned in the earlier footnote.

Grade	Stress Removed
F	1
D	2
C	4
B	6
A	8

Example: A character takes 3 Stress at 12:00 noon. Normally, she could attempt a Stress Recovery Challenge at midnight, but at 3:00 PM she takes another Stress, meaning she can't attempt the Challenge until 3:00 AM. She spends the next twelve hours relaxing and sleeping, but she lives in south-central Los Angeles. The Difficulty of her Stress Recovery Challenge is 0 ($0 + 3 - 3 = 0$). Since she earns a B on the Challenge, she removes 8 points, knocking her Stress total back to 0.

AN EXAMPLE OF
RELIEVING STRESS

Note that the combination of anti-stress drugs and waiting to attempt Stress Recovery Challenges can sometimes produce unusual effects. For instance, a character with a Tolerance of 8 takes his medication and receives 2 additional Tolerance for a total of 10. At 11:00 PM, he accumulates 9 Stress. Now *when he wakes up* the next morning, he must take another dose of medication. If this next dose nets him only a single point of extra Tolerance, his Stress now equals his Tolerance (since he can't possibly lower his Stress until 11:00 PM) and he must immediately undergo a WILL Challenge to prevent his Psychosis from manifesting itself.

Little Sheba doing a little Neo-Deutsch dirty work.



Chapter **nine**

“Just think what might have happened in Dallas in ‘63 if JFK could have returned fire.”

THE NATIONAL ASSAULT RIFLE ASSOCIATION

FAX 1-515-343-3373-3393 for more info.

Like our own, the world of *Underground* is a dark and violent place where the strong take what they want and the weak try to survive on the leftovers. This savagery takes on many forms, the simplest of which provides the topic for this chapter.

In *Underground's* 2021, it is amazing what a few well-placed holes in all the right heads can accomplish. As a consequence, combat of all sorts is likely to become a staple of the stories you are about to create. Your veterans might be called upon to defend themselves against angry gang members, overzealous government agents, and callous terrorists; or they might just as easily find themselves on the offensive against any one of these groups or dozens of others. Remember, in 2021, much of urban America is heavily armed, willing, and able, meaning that even the most modest arguments sometimes escalate into full-scale wars.

Combat - An Overview

Whenever a story calls for combat, **Turns** go into effect automatically. Each Turn begins with a determination of *Initiative*, which allows the Gamemaster

Turns were fully discussed under Idea #7 in Chapter Three.

DURING COMBAT,
TURNS ARE
ALWAYS IN
EFFECT

P/F Challenge: This Challenge, known as the "To Hit Challenge" generally pits the attacker's Gun Combat, Martial Arts, or Weaponry Skill Ratings against a Difficulty equal to the target's Dodge, Martial Arts, or Weaponry Skill Ratings.

Standard Challenge: Normally, this Challenge pits the Penetration of attacker's weapon or the attacker's STR against a Difficulty equal to the defender's RES.

1D10: ie. "one ten-sided die."

to determine the order in which the combatants take their Turns. As each character takes her Turn, she may perform up to two actions, only one of which can be a non-Automatic Action. Generally, the non-Automatic Action is used to "attack" another combatant.

Resolving an attack is a two-step process. First, the attacker conducts a P/F Challenge to determine whether or not she hits the target. Then, if the attack did strike the target, the attacker undergoes a Standard Challenge to determine the damage the attack inflicted.

Once a character finishes her Turn, play passes to the next character, and so on, until each character has taken a Turn. At that point, Initiative is determined again, and the whole procedure is repeated until one side is eliminated, flees, or surrenders.

Initiative

Initiative allows the GM to determine the order in which the combatants take their Turns. Each character involved in the combat generates an *Initiative Total* by rolling 1D10 and adding the result to her SPD. The character with highest Initiative Total takes the first Turn, the character with the second highest total takes the second Turn, etc. until all characters have taken their Turn. At that point, a new Turn begins, each character determines another Initiative Total, and the whole process is repeated.

Example: Todd, Jim, and Jane (SPDs 7, 5, and 6) become involved in a fight. During the first Turn, they each roll to generate their Initiative Totals. Todd rolls a 5 (for a Total of 12), Jim rolls an 8 (for a Total of 13), and Jane rolls a 2 (for a Total of 8). During this turn, Jim goes first, Todd goes second, and Jane goes last. Note that at the beginning of each additional Turn, all three characters will generate all new Initiative Totals, so the order in which they take their Turns will change.

If two characters roll the same Initiative Total, the character with the higher SPD goes first. If they are still tied, the character with the higher DEX goes first, and if they are still tied after comparing DEXs, the character with the

RESOLVING AN
ATTACK IS A
TWO-STEP
PROCESS

INITIATIVE
TOTALS ARE
GENERATED BY
ADDING THE
ROLL OF 1D10 TO
A CHARACTER'S
SPD

BREAKING TIES

highest INT goes first. If the characters are still tied after all these comparisons, they both **go at the same time**.

Actions

During a Turn, a character can take up to two actions, only one of which can involve a **Challenge**. In other words, if a character is performing both allowed actions during his Turn, one of those actions must be an **Automatic Action**. All of the following are valid examples of activities that a character can perform during his Turn:

- Draw a gun (Automatic Action) and fire it (Challenge).
- Run across the street (Automatic Action) and punch a cop (Challenge).
- Fire a gun (Challenge) and shout out a message to an ally (Automatic Action).
- Reload a gun (Automatic Action) and attempt to shut down a security computer (Challenge).
- Run across the street (Automatic Action) and attempt to jump a fence (Challenge).
- Reload a gun (Automatic Action) and shout out a message to an ally (Automatic Action).

These courses of action, on the other hand, are invalid:

- Firing a gun and trying to shut down a security computer (two Challenges).
- Firing a gun and trying to leap over a fence (two Challenges)
- Punching a cop and firing a gun. (two Challenges).

It is always the GM's responsibility to decide whether or not the activities a player hopes to perform are legal. Again, the most important restriction is that a character can never perform two actions involving Challenges in the same Turn. But the GM should also keep in mind that each Turn represents a period of approximately four seconds of real time. Any set of actions that obviously cannot be performed in such a span is also **illegal**.

go at the same time: In this case, you should actually resolve the actions of one character before resolving the actions of the other (for simplicity), but keep in mind that the actions are happening at the same time. In other words, if two characters are tied and one of them kills the other during his Turn, the other character still gets a chance to take his own Turn before dying because both actions are assumed to be happening simultaneously. Note that in this way, it's even possible for two characters to simultaneously kill each other—an extremely rare event, but it happens.

Challenge: An attack, which usually consists of two Challenges, counts as a single action.

Automatic Actions: are defined under Idea #1 in Chapter Three.

illegal: For example, a character who wants to use one of his allowed actions to shout a message must choose a very short message since the Turn is only four seconds long and you can't say much in four seconds. If the character wants to communicate a longer message, he must spend several consecutive Turns communicating.

DURING A TURN,
A CHARACTER
CAN PERFORM
TWO ACTIONS,
ONLY ONE OF
WHICH CAN
INVOLVE A
CHALLENGE

Chapter Three: These rules are found under Idea #4.

increase the Difficulty: When you are conducting an attack, only the "To Hit" Challenge is affected by movement. The Penetration Challenge is not.

Movement

In combat, movement is one of the most common actions selected by the combatants. As you read back in [Chapter Three](#), a character (or object) can move a distance equal to his or her SPD in a single Turn if walking, a distance equal to his or her SPD+3 if trotting, and a distance equal to his or her SPD+6 if running. In other words, a character with a SPD of 4 can walk 25 feet in one Turn, can trot 50 feet in one Turn, and can run 100 feet in one Turn. Note that whenever you move and make an attack during a Turn, you [increase the Difficulty](#) of your To Hit Challenge. But at the same time, moving at running SPD during a Turn increases the Difficulty of the To Hit Challenges of all characters targeting you during that Turn. You'll read more about these movement modifiers later in the section.

Evading

Sometimes, a combatant is far more interested in avoiding punishment than dishing it out. Such characters often choose a special action known as *evasion*. A character who evades during a Turn automatically increases the Difficulty of all To Hit Challenges aimed at him during that Turn. Note that although evasion is an Automatic Action, it is impossible for a single character to evade and conduct an attack during the same Turn. Any character who evades is barred from attacking during her Turn, though the evasion does not prevent her from conducting any other action involving a Challenge.

MOVEMENT IS
GOVERNED
BY SPD

MOVING MIGHT
AFFECT
CHALLENGES

EVASION IS USED
TO DODGE ENEMY
FIRE

Movement and Fatigue

Characters can only sprint (SPD+6) for an amount of time equal to their RES scores plus 10. Thereafter, they must slow to a trot (SPD+3) due to the effects of fatigue. This rule has two important effects on play.

- First, after a battle has lasted a number of Turns equal to the character's RES score plus 10, she can no longer move at running SPD, regardless of whether or not she ran at all earlier in the battle (simply being in combat is very tiring).
- And second, since even the toughest characters quickly slow due to fatigue, outside of combat, you should only allow characters to move at running SPD to cover very short distances. In other words, if you want to determine how long it takes a character to reach a bomb located two hundred yards away, allow him to use his running SPD. But if you want to calculate how long it will take a character to cross a park that is two or three miles long, limit him to jogging SPD.

Conducting Attacks

Regardless of its type, every attack is resolved in two steps known as the To Hit Challenge and the Penetration Challenge. The To Hit Challenge determines whether or not the attack strikes its target. The Penetration Challenge determines the damage the attack inflicts.

The To Hit Challenge

The exact Ability tested during the To Hit Challenge depends upon the sort of attack being made.

- An attacker who is using a gun uses her Gun Combat Skill Rating. If she does not have the Gun Combat Skill, she must take advantage of the rules for **Unskilled Use**.
- An attacker who is using a melee weapon (ie. a knife, sword, club, or bow) uses her Weaponry Skill Rating. If she does not have the Weaponry Skill, she must take advantage of the rules for Unskilled Use.
- And an attacker making a hand-to-hand attack (such as a punch or kick) uses her Martial Arts Skill Rating. If she does not have the Martial Arts Skill, she uses her **DEX**.

A few weapons have a listed *Accuracy* rating that is added to the Skill Ratings of characters firing or using them. Characters who must invoke the Unskilled Use rules may never take advantage of a weapon's positive Accuracy modifier, though he or she still suffers a penalty when firing a weapon with a negative Accuracy modifier.

Examples: A character with a Gun Combat Skill Rating of 8 who fires a weapon with an Accuracy of +1 fires as if his Skill Rating is 9. But a character without the Gun Combat Skill defaults to DEX, takes the Unskilled Use penalty, and cannot claim the Accuracy modifier. If this second character was firing a gun with a -1 Accuracy modifier, however, the modifier applies normally.

Unskilled Use: These rules can be found at the beginning of Chapter Seven.

DEX: Hand-to-hand attacks do not suffer the Unskilled Use penalties.

HOW TO
DETERMINE
WHAT ABILITY IS
USED DURING A
TO HIT
CHALLENGE

A WEAPONS
ACCURACY CAN
MODIFY YOUR
ABILITY

Difficulty: If such a character is also armed with a melee weapon, he may use either his Weaponry Skill Rating or his Martial Artist Skill Rating (whichever is higher) as the Difficulty of the To Hit Challenge

Modifier: Note that all these modifiers are cumulative. In other words, if both the attacker and the target are moving at run SPD during a Turn, the shot is modified by a total of +6.

change his mind: In other words, when he does take his turn, he must evade or move at run SPD as appropriate.

The Difficulty of the To Hit Challenge is usually equal to the target's DEX, but some characters possess certain Skills that increase the Difficulty of To Hit Challenges aimed at them.

- A target of a ranged attack (shooting a gun or bow, throwing an object, etc.) can use his Rating in the Dodge Specialty of the Acrobatics Skill as the Difficulty of any shot aimed at him.
- A target armed with a melee weapon can use his Weaponry Skill Rating as the Difficulty of any melee or hand-to-hand To Hit Challenges aimed at him.
- And the target of a hand-to-hand attack can use his Martial Arts Skill Rating as the Difficulty of that attack's To Hit Challenge.

Depending upon the circumstances, there are other special modifiers that might affect the Difficulty of a To Hit Challenge. Check the table below:

Situation	Modifier
Attacker moved at jog SPD this Turn	+2
Attacker moved at run SPD this Turn	+3
Target is moving at run SPD this Turn	+3
Target is evading	+3

These modifiers raise an important question: how do you know if the target is evading or moving at run SPD if he has yet to take his Turn? Any time you attack a target that has yet to take a Turn, before the attack is resolved, that target has an opportunity to announce whether or not he plans to evade or move at run SPD during his Turn. If he elects to run or evade at this point, he cannot change his mind later.

To Hit Challenges are always P/F; you either hit your target or you miss.

HOW TO
DETERMINE
WHAT ABILITY IS
USED TO RESIST A
TO HIT
CHALLENGE

OTHER
MODIFIERS
AFFECT TO HIT
CHALLENGES

TO HIT
CHALLENGES
ARE P/F



Goddamnit! Now I'm Mad!— Scavenger Jack during the Compton Riot of 2020.

Penetration: The Penetration value of any given weapon can be found in its description located in the next chapter.

armor: Each piece of armor has an associated modifier that adds to the target's RES. For more on armor, see Chapter Ten.

LW/LW/MW/HW: These abbreviations represent certain types of wounds. You'll be introduced to them in the next section.

Example: A character with a Gun Combat Skill of 8 is firing a pistol at a gang member. Since the pistol has a +1 Accuracy modifier, the shooter fires as though his Skill Rating is 9. The gang member has a DEX of 3, but since he has the Acrobatics Skill rated at 8, he uses 8 as the base Difficulty of the attempt. Since both the shooter and the target are moving at run SPD this turn, the Difficulty is increased by +6. Thus, the shooter is Challenging a value of 9 against a Difficulty of 14.

The Penetration Challenge

If the To Hit Challenge was successful, the next step is determining the damage inflicted by the attack. This determination is known as the Penetration Challenge.

The value Challenged depends upon the type of attack that is being resolved.

- If a weapon was used in the attack, the value Challenged is equal to the weapon's **Penetration** listing.
- If the attack was hand-to-hand, use the attacker's STR as its Penetration.

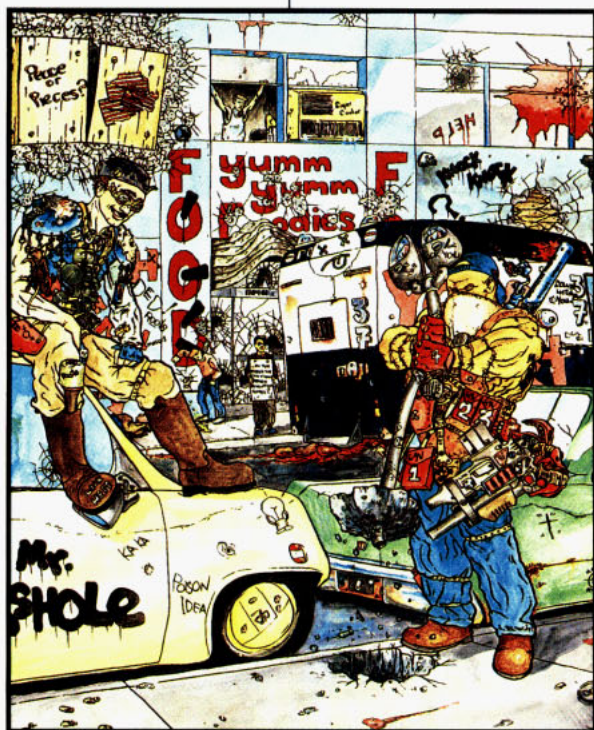
The Difficulty of the Penetration Challenge is equal to the target's RES as modified by any appropriate **armor** he is wearing.

Penetration Challenges are always Standard. Each weapon has a listed damage line in the form **LW/LW/MW/HW**. These damage values

correspond to D/C/B/A results. In other words, for this particular weapon, a D or a C inflicts a Light Wound, a B inflicts a Medium Wound, and an A inflicts a Heavy Wound. In all cases, an F indicates that the attack fails to penetrate the target's defenses and inflicts no damage at all.

IF AN ATTACK
HITS, YOU
CONDUCT A
PENETRATION
CHALLENGE TO
DETERMINE THE
DAMAGE IT
INFLECTS

HOW TO
DETERMINE
DAMAGE



That's Right, We're Makin' Trouble!—The Delinquinaut and the Juvenihilist engage in a little casual vandalism.

Example: A character with a RES of 6 and +8 armor is shot by a gun with a Penetration of 18 and a damage rating of LW/MW/HW/HW. The Penetration Challenge pits the gun's 18 against the character's total of 11. Since the shooter earns a C result during the Penetration Challenge, he inflicts a Medium Wound on the target.

Gun Combat

Guns have their own set of special rules to consider.

Range

Each weapon has a listed *Range* in the form 3/8/15. These numbers all represent distance values (measured in Units) and paint a picture of the weapon's accuracy at various ranges. If the target is closer than the first listed number, it is said to be in "short range," if it is between the first and second values it is

said to be in "medium range," and if it is between the second and third values it is said to be in "long range." Targets that are further away than the last listed number are out of range and cannot be hit.



Colonel KMBA during the Compton Riot of 2020.

Example: If a weapon's Range is listed as 3/8/15, targets that are closer than 20 feet (3 Units) are in short range, targets that fall between 21 feet and 60 feet (8 Units) are in medium range, and targets that fall between 61 feet and 100 yards (15 Units) are in long range. Targets that are more than 100 yards away are out of range.

HOW TO
DETERMINE
RANGE

The Difficulty of a gunshot's To Hit Challenge is modified by the target's range as follows:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Difficulty Modifier</u>
Short	0
Medium	+3
Long	+6

Note that these rules also apply to muscle-powered range and missile weapons (throwing knives, bows, etc).

WHEN SHOOTING
A GUN, RANGE
AFFECTS YOUR TO
HIT CHALLENGE



From Cell-Fluv's Christmas 2020 collection. Toys tied into third world combat still enjoy big sales.

SHOOTING A GUN
DURING
CONSECUTIVE
TURNS CREATES
RECOIL THAT
AFFECTS YOUR
TO HIT
CHALLENGE

Recoil

Firing a gun tends to jerk one's arm and spoil aim. Consequently, any shooter who fired a gun during his previous Turn suffers a +2 penalty to the Difficulty of his To Hit Challenge due to recoil. Note that the recoil penalty always remains at +2 regardless of the number of consecutive Turns in which the shooter has fired.

Example: A character fires a gun on Turn 1 and again on Turn 2. During the second Turn, he suffers the +2 recoil penalty to his To Hit Difficulty since he fired during the previous Turn. If he fires again during Turn 3, he would still suffer the +2 penalty. If he doesn't fire in Turn 4, he can fire a shot in Turn 5 without suffering the penalty.

higher than 1: Guns with rates higher than one are usually submachine guns or other weapons capable of fully automatic fire.

close together: As a rule of thumb, assume that all characters targeted must be within 10 feet of each other.

SOME GUNS CAN
FIRE MORE THAN
ONE SHOT
DURING A TURN

Automatic Fire

Guns always have a listed *Rate* which indicates the number of shots they can fire per Turn. Guns with Rates **higher than 1** can be used to fire more than one shot at a single target or they can divide their shots between multiple targets. Regardless of the number of shots fired at a target, the entire attack is still resolved with a single To Hit Challenge and a single Penetration Challenge, but each additional shot fired past the first decreases the Difficulty of the shooter's To Hit and Penetration Challenges by 1.

FIRING MULTIPLE
SHOTS AT A
TARGET
INCREASES YOUR
CHANCES TO HIT
AND DAMAGE
THAT TARGET

When dividing shots between multiple targets, resolve the attack on each target as a separate To Hit and Penetration Challenge (including any bonuses for multiple shots fired at the target). During any Turn in which a shooter divides his shots between multiple targets, however, the Difficulty of the To Hit Challenge against every target is increased by +3 for each target past the first.

Note that a shooter can never divide his shots between targets that are not clustered **close together**. Shooters targeting multiple characters may split their shots between them in any way they desire.

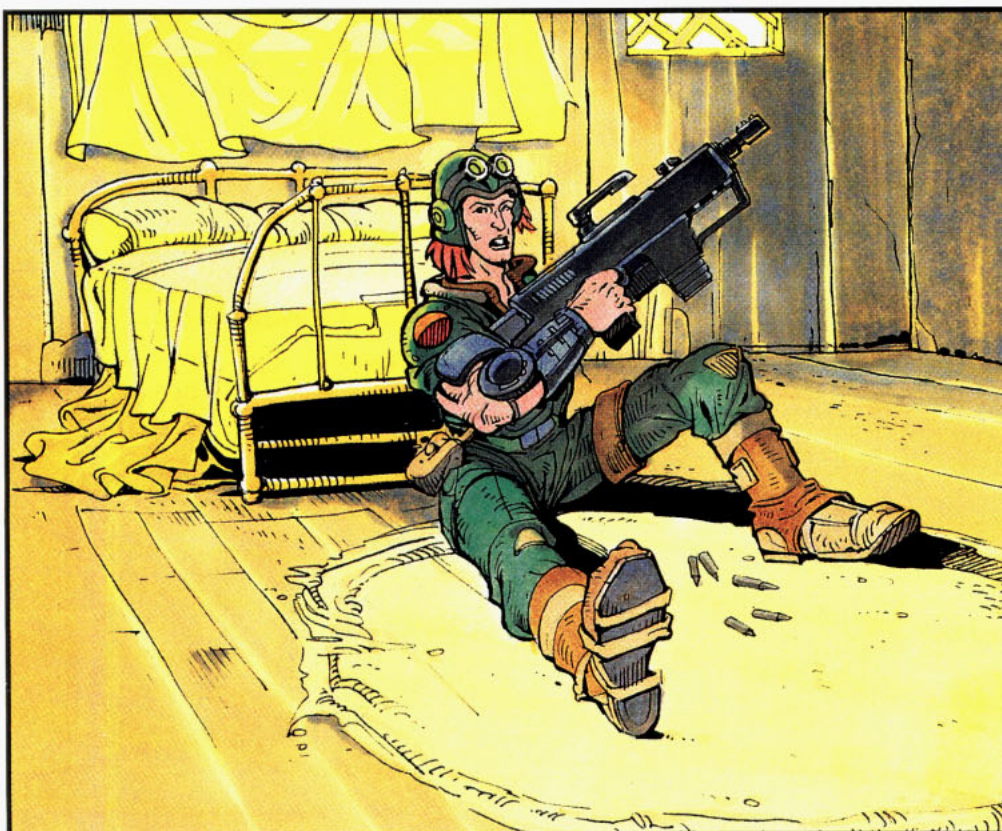
shots you have expended:
Remember that guns with a
Rate of greater than 1 can
expended more than one shot in
a single Turn.

Example: A character with a Gun Combat Skill of 7 is firing a gun with a Rate of 4 and a Penetration of 20. He decides to target two guards (DEX of 3) that are standing close together and chooses to fire two shots at each guard. On each of these attacks, he suffers a +2 penalty to the Difficulty of his To Hit Challenge (-1 for an additional shot past the first, but +3 for targeting two characters). In both cases, however, the attack's Penetration is increased by one because he is firing an extra shot at each target. Each attack is resolved as a separate set of To Hit and Penetration Challenges.

Reloading

Each gun also has a listed *Ammo* rating that indicates the number of shots it holds. As you fire, you should keep track of the number of **shots you have expended**. Once you have used all your shots, your gun is useless until you reload. Reloading is an Automatic Action that consumes two entire Turns. During a Turn in which a character is reloading, the only other actions he can perform are movement or evasion.

RELOADING
TAKES TWO
COMPLETE TURNS



CALLED SHOTS
ALLOW YOU TO
AIM AT A SPECIFIC
PART OF THE
TARGET

Called Shots

Instead of simply aiming at a target, a shooter might want to aim at a specific part of that target (the head, the arms, etc). Usually, this tactic is employed in order to strike the target in a particularly vulnerable location and cause additional damage.

Firing a "Called Shot" adds 6 to the Difficulty of the shot's To Hit Challenge, while **decreasing** the Difficulty of the Penetration Challenge by 6.

decreasing: This rule assumes the shooter is attempting to use the Called Shot to cause additional damage. Called shots can also be used for a variety of other purposes (shooting the hand to force the target to drop his gun, shooting the leg to slow the target down, etc), the exact effects of which are up to the GM.

WEAPONS HAVE A
MINIMUM STR
THAT PREVENTS
SOME
CHARACTERS
FROM USING
THEM

Minimum STR

Guns (like most other weapons and forms of armor) have a *Strength* listing that indicates the minimum STR necessary to fire the gun (or use the weapon or armor). Characters with a STR below the gun's listed STR cannot fire that weapon. Note that this rule makes it **impossible** for most normal humans to use many of the weapons employed by boosted characters.

impossible: The ability to use incredibly powerful guns and armor that are beyond the reach of normal humans is one of the main reasons why boosted soldiers are so effective in the field.

melee: ie. attacks with knives, swords, clubs, etc.

Hand-to-Hand and Melee Fighting

Hand-to-hand and **melee** attacks are resolved using the rules described in the previous section. The Penetration of a hand-to-hand or melee attack and the damage it inflicts depend upon its nature.

- If the attacker is not using a weapon, the Penetration of the attack equals his STR (or Martial Arts Skill Rating). The **damage** inflicted by a hand-to-hand attack depends upon the attacker's STR (or Martial Arts Rating) as summarized below:

STR	Damage
1-3	STN/STN/KO/LW
4-6	STN/KO/KO/LW
7-12	STN/KO/LW/MW
13-24	KO/LW/LW/MW
25+	KO/LW/MW/HW

damage: To save time, all characters should list their hands as weapons on their character sheets and record the damage their hands inflict.

HOW TO
DETERMINE THE
PENETRATION
AND DAMAGE
CAUSED BY A
HAND-TO-HAND
ATTACK

his or her own Wound Level:

The GM keeps track of the
NPCs' Wound Levels.

Example: A character with a STR of 12 who earns a C result on a Penetration Challenge earns a KO against his target. If this same character had a Martial Arts Skill Rating of 15, however, he would inflict a Light Wound instead.

- If the attacker is using a weapon, its Penetration will be listed in its description in the next chapter.

Kicks

All weaponless attacks are assumed to be punches. A character making an attack without a weapon can choose to "kick" his target instead of punching it. Such an attack increases the Difficulty of the To Hit Challenge by +3, but increases the attacks Penetration by +3 as well.

Damage and Healing

The object of combat, of course, is to inflict enough damage upon your opponent to put him out of the fight. *Underground* measures damage in *Wound Levels*. As you take damage, your Wound Level goes up, and when you heal damage, your Wound Level goes down. During play, it is up to each player to keep track of [his or her own Wound Level](#).

Wound Levels follow a set scale: OK, Light Wound (LW), Medium Wound (MW), Heavy Wound (HW), Incapacitated (IN), and Killed (KL). Each weapon's listed Damage rating determines the wound it inflicts upon the target. For instance, a weapon with the Damage rating "LW/LW/MW/HW" that receives a B result during a Penetration Challenge inflicts a Medium Wound upon its target.

If you are already wounded and receive another wound, the second wound serves to increase your Wound Level as summarized on the next page.

KICKING MAKES
IT MORE
DIFFICULT TO
HIT THE TARGET
BUT INCREASES
PENETRATION

WOUND LEVELS
FOLLOW A FIVE
POINT SCALE

HOW TO
DETERMINE YOUR
WOUND LEVEL IF
YOU HAVE
SUSTAINED
MULTIPLE
WOUNDS

<u>Old Wound Level</u>	<u>Wound Inflicted</u>			
	<u>LW</u>	<u>MW</u>	<u>HW</u>	<u>IN</u>
LW	MW	HW	IN	KL
MW	HW	IN	KL	KL
HW	IN	KL	KL	KL
IN	KL	KL	KL	KL

The results found on this chart indicate the target's new Wound Level. In other words, a character with a Light Wound who suffers a Medium Wound now has a Wound Level of HW (Heavy Wound). If this same character later sustains another Light Wound, he now has a Wound Level of IN (Incapacitated). At first, this chart might look intimidating, but it should soon become second nature. After a while, you will realize that a Light Wound always increases the Wound Level of the target by one step, a Medium Wound increases the Wound Level of the target by two steps, a Heavy Wound increases the Wound Level of the target by three steps, and an Incapacitation increases the Wound Level of the target by four steps.

Example: A weapon with a Damage Rating of LW/LW/MW/HW receives a B result in a Penetration Challenge against a target. The target's Wound Level is now MW (Medium Wound). Later, the target receives another LW result, raising her Wound Level to HW (Heavy Wound). Later still, the target receives yet another LW result, increasing her Wound Level to IN (Incapacitated).

EXPLANATION OF
WOUND RESULTS

Explanation of Wound Results

LW (Light Wound): Light Wounds generally represent bad bruises and cuts serious enough to require stitches. Characters with a Wound Level of LW always add +1 to the Difficulty of any Challenges they attempt.

MW (Medium Wound): Medium Wounds generally represent very serious abrasions and crippling sprains. Characters with a Wound Level of MW always add +2 to the Difficulty of any Challenges they attempt.

four steps: Note that any target that has already sustained a wound that suffers an Incapacitation is killed.

Explanation: Note that these descriptions are only abstractions intended to help you role play. The exact injuries represented by the various Wound Levels can vary wildly.

medical attention: In this case, medical attention is defined as any character with the Medicine Skill (or any of its Specialties) spending a full Turn examining the character.

RES score: Use the character's raw RES. Armor has no effect on this calculation.

HW (Heavy Wound): Heavy Wounds represent more serious injuries like broken bones and serious bleeding. Characters with a Wound Level of HW always add +3 to the Difficulty of any Challenges they attempt.

IN (Incapacitated): Incapacitated characters are so seriously injured that they immediately fall unconscious and cannot be revived without **medical attention**. If this attention is not received within a number of hours equal to the Incapacitated character's RES score, he dies.

KL (Killed): is pretty self-explanatory.

In addition to the wound levels, there are two special combat results:

ST (Stun): A character who suffers a Stun result must attempt a P/F RES Challenge against a Difficulty of 0. If he fails, he is stunned for the next two Turns and cannot take any actions.

Any character who suffers a LW, MW, or HW result is automatically assumed to have suffered an ST result as well.

KO (Knockout): Characters who suffer KO Results must attempt a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty of 3 (Difficult Task). Failure indicates that the character immediately drops unconscious and stays that way for an amount of time equal to 20 minus his RES score.

Healing

There are two ways to heal damage: rest and medical attention.

Rest

Once 24 hours has elapsed since a character sustained a wound, he or she may attempt a Recovery Challenge to heal some of that damage. Thereafter, the wounded character may make additional Recovery Challenges each twenty four hours until he or she is completely healed. A Recovery Challenge is a P/F test that pits the wounded character's RES against a Difficulty that depends upon his Wound Level.

RESTING ALLOWS
A DAMAGED
CHARACTER TO
HEAL WOUNDS

<u>Wound Level</u>	<u>Difficulty</u>
LW	3
MW	6
HW	9
IN	12

If the Recovery Challenge is successful, the character's Wound Level is immediately lowered by one step.

Medical Attention

HOW TO USE FIRST AID

Immediately after a battle concludes, a character with the Medicine/First Aid Specialty can attend to the wounded by attempting a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the Difficulty the victim would face if she was attempting a Recovery Challenge (ie. if the victim's Wound Level is LW, the Difficulty of the First Aid attempt is 3, etc). If this Challenge succeeds, the target's Wound Level is instantly reduced by one step. Note that each character may receive First Aid only once and only immediately after a battle in which she was wounded.

HOW TO USE MEDICAL TREATMENT

Furthermore, just before a wounded character attempts a Recovery Challenge, a character with the [Medical Treatment Specialty](#) can attempt to treat the wounded character and assist her. Doing so is a P/F Challenge against the same Difficulty as the Recovery Challenge. If the Medical Treatment Challenge succeeds, the Recovering character can subtract three from the Difficulty of her Recovery Challenge.

Example: A character has sustained a MW. Twenty four hours later, she can attempt a Recovery Challenge. Just before she does, she receives attention from a character with the Medical Treatment Specialty. The medic attempts a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty of 6 (for MW). If the medic succeeds, the Difficulty of the patients Recovery Challenge is 3. If he fails, the Difficulty remains at 6.

HOW TO USE SURGERY

Finally, characters who are Incapacitated cannot attempt Recovery Challenges until they have received attention from a character with the

[Medical Treatment Specialty](#): Remember, veterans receive free care from any VA hospital. Assume the staffs at such hospitals have the Medicine Skill rated at 6 and will automatically help any veteran who comes to see them and is willing to fill out dozens of forms and spend an hour or two waiting in line.

distance: as measured in Units.

Thus, throwing a grenade at a target that is 20 feet away (3 Units) has a Difficulty of 3.

Medicine/Surgery Specialty. Such an effort is a P/F Challenge against a Difficulty of 4 (Very Difficult Task). Surgery takes approximately four hours to perform and must be conducted in a hospital. Once Surgery has been successfully performed on the victim, he or she may begin to make Recovery Challenges as usual.

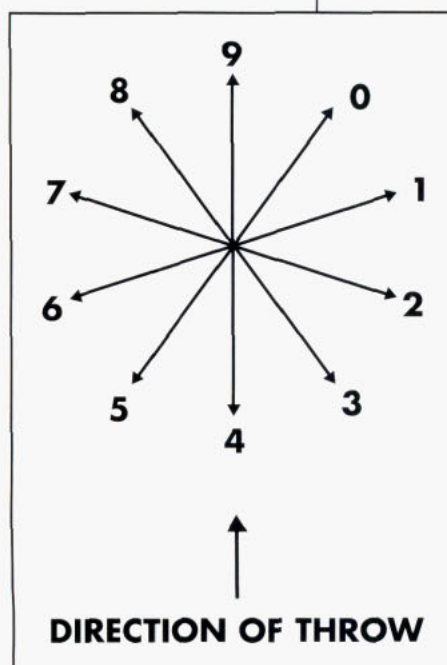
Special Combat Situations

A few unusual combat situations require special rules to help you resolve them.

Grenades and Explosives

Throwing a grenade is a P/F DEX Challenge against a Difficulty equal to the [distance](#) between the target and the thrower. If this Challenge succeeds, the grenade hits its intended target spot. But if the Challenge fails, the grenade *scatters*. Roll 1D10 on the diagram below to determine the direction of the scatter and another 1D10 to determine the number of meters away from the target the grenade strays.

GRENADES AND
EXPLOSIVES
DAMAGE MANY
TARGETS OVER A
LARGE AREA



Grenades and explosives automatically conduct a Penetration Challenge against all targets that fall within their listed *Blast Radius*, but the Penetration of a grenade attack is always decreased by the distance between the grenade and the target.

Example: A grenade with a Penetration of 25 and a Blast Radius of 5 (30 feet). All characters (friend or foe) within 30 feet of the grenade undergo a Penetration Challenge. Any target within 10 feet of the grenade (0 Units of distance) is attacked at its full Penetration, but a target that is 25 feet away from the grenade (4 Units of distance) is attacked with a Penetration of 21.

Surprise and Blindside

In [some combat situations](#), one side will catch the other completely off-guard. This situation is known as *Surprise*. Surprise always occurs before combat begins. A character already involved in combat cannot be surprised.

SURPRISE GIVES
ONE SIDE A FREE
TURN OF ACTION

When a Surprise is sprung, the GM should ask one of the victims to attempt a P/F INT Challenge to detect the attackers. If this Challenge fails, all of the characters on the Surprised side can take no actions during the first Turn of combat.

In addition to the standard Surprise benefits, any time a character is struck from behind or from any other vantage point she can't see the attacker is entitled to a -2 Bonus to the Difficulty of the attack's To Hit Challenge. Unlike Surprise, this special *Blindside Bonus* can even be claimed against characters who were already in combat.

Darkness

DARKNESS
INCREASES THE
DIFFICULTY OF
TO HIT
CHALLENGES

Any attack conducted in natural darkness receives a +3 penalty to the Difficulty of its To Hit Challenge. Note that many *Underground* characters wear infra-red sighting goggles that completely nullify this penalty.

Throwing and Breaking Things

As you read back in Chapter Three, a character can throw an object a distance equal to her STR minus the object's weight. Throwing an object at another character is treated like any other attack. The thrower uses his DEX during the To Hit Challenge, and the Penetration of the attack is equal to the object's weight. You can determine the damage inflicted by the attack by assuming the target was punched by a character with a STR equal to the object's weight and consulting the hand-to-hand damage table in the previous section

HEAVY OBJECTS
CAN BE HURLED
AS WEAPONS

Objects can also be targeted in combat. The Difficulty of a To Hit Challenge is based upon the object's size (-12 for a large vehicle, 0 for a man-sized object, +3 for an object half the size of a man, etc) and modified for range. A character who grasps an object in his hands and attempts to break it or places his gun right up against the object and pulls the trigger automatically hits and proceeds right to the Penetration Challenge.

some combat situations: For example, when a character suddenly whirls around to attack a friend or has such a good hiding spot that the enemy does not detect him as they enter an area. A successfully placed ambush that is not detected (see the Military Science/Tactics Specialty in Chapter Six) always gives the attacker the element of Surprise.

one of the victims: Choose the one with the highest INT.

goggles: You'll read about these goggles in the next chapter.

weight: as measured in Units.

repaired: This is usually a P/F Challenge using an appropriate Skill or Specialty.

instead: Grappling an opponent involves a Challenge, so it is impossible to Grapple and make a normal attack in the same Turn.

Attacks against objects are treated exactly like attacks against characters. An Incapacitated object ceases to function. A "Killed" object is completely destroyed. Note that the Challenge penalties normally associated with wounds also apply to damaged objects (ie.using a Lightly Wounded object to perform a Challenge increases the Difficulty of the Challenge by +1).

Needless to say, objects never make Recovery Challenges. Instead, they must be **repaired**.

Falling

Falls from great heights are resolved much like attacks. In a fall there is no To Hit Challenge. Skip right to the Penetration Challenge.

The Penetration of the fall is equal to 2 x the Distance fallen (a fall of 50 feet, or 7 Units, has a Penetration of 14). Falls inflict LW/MW/HW/KL damage.

Fire

Modern battlefields are frequently littered with blazes and infernos. Any character who enters a blaze undergoes a Penetration Challenge with a Penetration ranging from 10-20 (based on the intensity of the flames) and a Damage rating of KO/LW/LW/MW.

Wrestling Combat

Characters who engage in hand-to-hand combat would sometimes rather grip and choke than punch and kick. This is known as *Grappling Combat*.

Any character in hand-to-hand combat range with an opponent may attempt to **Grapple** that opponent **instead** of throwing a traditional punch or kick. Grappling is a P/F Challenge that pits the Grappler's DEX (or Martial Arts Skill Rating) against the target's DEX (or Martial Arts Skill Rating). Success indicates that the target is held fast and can take no actions other than attempting to break the Grapple.

LIKE
CHARACTERS,
OBJECTS CAN BE
ATTACKED IN
COMBAT

HOW TO
COMPUTE
FALLING DAMAGE

HOW TO
COMPUTE FIRE
DAMAGE

GRAPPLING
COMBAT
INVOLVES
GRABBING AND
STRANGLING

HOW TO GRAPPLE AND BREAK GRAPPLES

While he has an opponent Grappled, the attacker can proceed to squeeze and strangle the opponent. Treat such an effort as a normal punch that automatically hits (no To Hit Challenge is necessary).

Breaking a Grapple is a P/F Challenge that pits the STR of the Grappled character against the STR of the Grappler.

Vehicles

VEHICLES MOVE LIKE CHARACTERS

In combat, vehicles *move like characters*. Although vehicles never suffer from fatigue, operating a vehicle at top speed increases the Difficulty of all its driver's Vehicle Skill Checks by +3. When Driving, Skill Checks are necessary whenever the driver attempts to perform a spectacular stunt (sudden turns, jumping chasms in cars, etc) or whenever the vehicle takes damage. Failing one of these Vehicle Skill Checks causes the vehicle to crash (see below).

HOW TO TARGET VEHICLES IN COMBAT

If a character shoots at a vehicle, treat the vehicle like an object and apply all the rules listed under "Throwing and Breaking Things," earlier. The Difficulty of a To Hit Challenge aimed at a vehicle is equal to the vehicle's SPD plus its size (-12 for a car, -3 for a motorcycle). Instead of targeting the entire vehicle, a combatant can target its driver by adding +6 to the Difficulty of the shot's To Hit Challenge.

Collisions and Crashes

RESOLVING COLLISIONS

When a vehicle collides with another object (or character on foot), resolve a Penetration Challenge against both the vehicle and the object. The Penetrations in these Challenges are equal to the striking vehicle's SPD plus the RES of the object struck. The damage inflicted is equal to LW/MW/HW/IN.

RESOLVING CRASHES

Cars that "crash" due to missing a Vehicles Skill Check are assumed to swerve out of their path and collide with the *closest available object*.

Whenever a vehicle suffers any damage due to a collision or crash, all characters inside the vehicle undergo a Penetration Challenge themselves. The

no To Hit Challenge: Despite the fact that no To Hit Challenge is necessary, squeezing and strangling still involves a Challenge and counts as the Grappler's one Challenge action for the Turn.

move like characters: In other words, they move a distance equal to their SPD each Turn at slow speed, a distance equal to their SPD+3 at cruising speed, and a distance equal to their SPD+6 at top speed.

closest available object: If no objects are available, the vehicle automatically flips on its side and takes an HW.

Penetration of this attack is equal to the Penetration the vehicle faced in the collision divided by 2, and damage inflicted is LW/MW/HW/IN.

Example: A vehicle (RES of 10) travelling at a SPD of 20 strikes another vehicle (RES of 8) travelling at a SPD of 14. The first vehicle undergoes a Penetration challenge with a Penetration of 22 (the other vehicle's SPD plus RES) and the second vehicle undergoes a Penetration Challenge with a Penetration of 30. If the first vehicle is damaged, all characters inside undergo a Penetration Challenge with a Penetration of 11 (half of 22). Note that if either Vehicle is damaged, its operator must make a Driving Skill Check (See Chapter Six for details) or crash, perhaps causing the vehicle to take even more damage.

AN EXAMPLE OF A
COLLISION

To Hit Challenge

Situation

Challenge

Attacker moved at jog SPD this Turn	+2
Attacker moved at run SPD this Turn	+3
Target is moving at run SPD this Turn	+3
Target is evading	+3
Target is at Medium Range	+3
Target is at Long Range	+6
Attacker is firing gun and fired gun during previous Turn (Recoil)	+2
More than one shot fired at target (automatic fire)	-1 *
Firing at more than one target (Per add. target)	+3
Called Shot	+6
Kicking	+3

Penetration Challenge

Situation

Challenge

More than one shot fired at target (automatic fire)	+1 *
Called Shot	+6
Kicking	+3

combined combat modifiers

[illegible]

Rutbeck

Weapons

Melee Weapons

Survival Knife (Cost: \$500, Avail: A)

Accuracy: -5, Penetration: 4, Dmg: LW/LW/MW/HW, Rng: 0/2/3, STR: -4, RES: 10

The survival knife is a 12" blade suitable for cutting, stabbing, and throwing (the Accuracy penalty applies only when the knife is thrown).

Longsword/Katana (Cost: \$1500, Avail: B)

Penetration: 6, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/HW, STR: 0, RES: 12

This is a cutting and piercing blade of approximately three feet in length. In 2021, the longsword is more showy than practical.

Crossbow (Cost: \$2500, Avail: B)

Accuracy: -3, Penetration: 8, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/HW, Rng: 5/10/14, Ammo: 1, Rate: 1/3, STR: 0, RES: 5

The crossbow is still used in 2021 because of its ability to fire projectiles with almost no noise (P/F INT Challenge vs. a Difficulty of 3 to hear a crossbow bolt in flight). Note that it takes three entire Turns to reload a crossbow once it has been fired.

Throwing Stars (Cost: \$50, Avail: B)

Accuracy: -2, Penetration: 3, Dmg: LW/LW/MW/MW, Rng: 0/3/4, Rate: 1/2, STR: -4, RES: 10

Throwing stars are the little spiked wheels that are so popular in martial arts films. They are thrown much like miniature frisbees. Characters with a Skill Rating of 8 or higher in Martial Arts can throw two stars per Turn (treat as Automatic Fire with a Rate of 2).

Making Money

The monthly salary you receive from your chosen archetype isn't nearly high enough to cover some of these items. Here are some thoughts on how to make additional money.

- 1) Criminals, terrorists, and (sometimes) vigilantes steal what they need. Average scores range from \$3500 (knocking off a convenience store) to \$1,500,000 (a major bank heist).
- 2) Lots of people (criminals, corporate raiders, government agents looking to cover their tracks, etc.) are looking to hire vets for a little extra-curricular activity. Fees earned for pulling jobs like this typically range from \$7,000 to \$350,000, depending upon the nature of the job and its associated dangers.
- 3) You can always turn to the Business Skill to increase your worth (see Chapter Six).
- 4) And last but not least, the street smart always know how to scare up a few extra bucks. Collecting and recycling the brass shell casings left at the scene of a battle earns 2D10 dollars; salvaging the weapons and equipment of the fallen nets you 20% of each item's cost; and the VA gives you \$500 every time you give blood (maximum of once per week).

Firearms

Unless otherwise noted, all firearms described in this section feature a built-in microprocessor and digital information relay. Because of these features, the owner can plug the firearm into a portable computer (by means of a thin, flexible cord). With the proper software, the computer can: project a running ammunition count inside the owner's combat goggles, run routine maintenance diagnostics on the gun, and help the owner aim. See Computers, below.

Furthermore, unless otherwise noted, all firearms described in this section are assumed to feature built-in laser sights (a beam that projects a little red dot on the target — think back to just about any Arnold Schwarzenegger movie).

Pistols

9mm Walther antique (Cost: \$2500, Avail: C)

Accuracy: -2, Penetration: 9, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 3/9/12, Ammo: 7, Rate: 1, STR: -1, RES: 13

These statistics can be used to represent just about any pistol from the 20th century era. Most non-boosted police officers and security guards use these weapons. Almost none of these pistols feature digital relays or integral laser sights.

.50 cal Urban Nightmare EP450 (Cost: \$3500, Avail: C)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 11, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 2/7/10, Ammo: 9, Rate: 1, STR: 2, RES: 13

An unusually stable .50 cal (12.7mm) handgun frequently used by police special forces and street criminals.

20mm GCS 15Gsa (Cost: \$4000, Avail: C)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 13, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 4/10/13, Ammo: 11, Rate: 1, STR: 5, RES: 13

This is Allied Mayhem's standard light sidearm. Its high Penetration and low cost make it a very cost effective weapon against boosted opponents. The GCS 15Gsa is a popular choice among boosted vets.

20mm Urban Nightmare #822 (Cost: \$4500, Avail: C)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 12, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 4/10/12, Ammo: 6, Rate: 1, STR: 5, RES: 13

A rugged, economical revolver designed specifically for the urban environment.

25mm Urban Nightmare EP425 (Cost: \$5000, Avail: C)

Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 15, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 2/9/11, Ammo: 6, Rate: 1, STR: 6, RES: 13

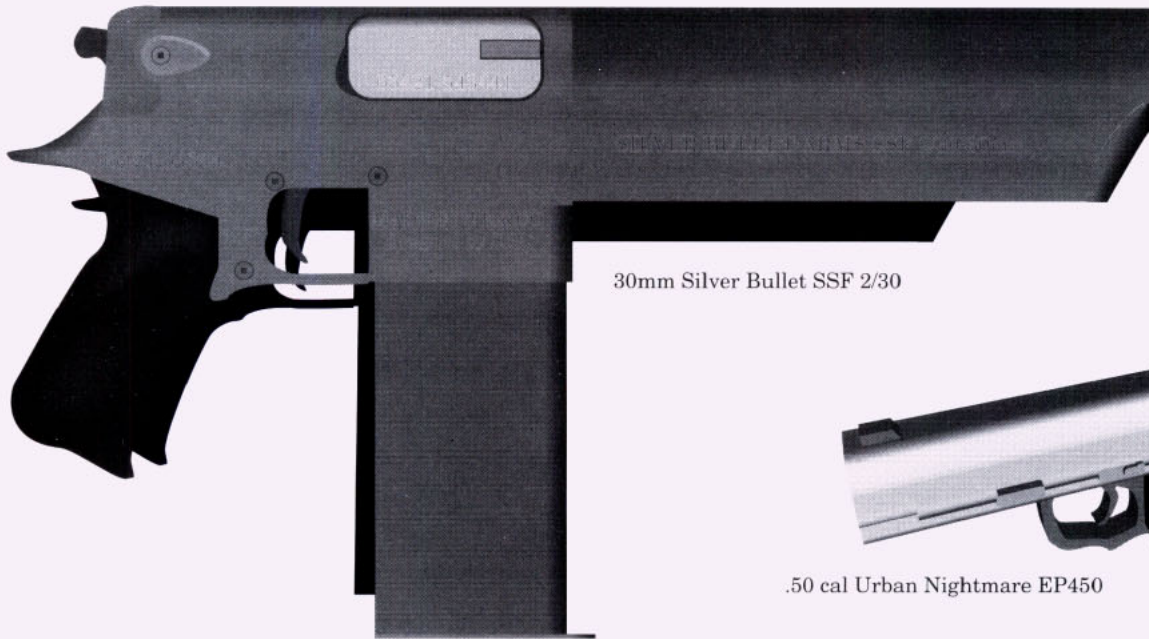
A very large handgun with excellent stopping power. Particularly effective against boosted targets, yet wieldy enough to be fired by some non-boosted shooters.

30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30 (Cost: \$6000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: -4, Penetration: 18, Dmg: MW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 2/6/10, Ammo: 7, Rate: 1, STR: 7, RES: 13

At present, the SSF2/30 is the most powerful handgun in the world. Although very unwieldy, it is easily capable of bringing down most boosts.





30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30



.50 cal Urban Nightmare EP450



20mm Urban Nightmare #822



25mm Urban Nightmare EP425

Rifles and Shotguns

9mm M-21 (Cost: \$5000, Avail: C)

Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 11, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 10/17/20, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: 0, RES: 14

The M-21 assault rifle became standard issue in the American military in 2007 and has been used ever since. It can fire at a Rate of either 1 or 2 (switching Rates is an Automatic Action). In *Underground*, the M-21 is likely to be encountered among gang members and police officers.

12.5mm ZW 385i (Cost: \$6000, Avail: C)

Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 13, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 12/18/21, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: 3, RES: 14

This heavy assault rifle is often employed by police special forces and street criminals.

20mm GCS DW 770/g (Cost: \$7000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 15, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 12/18/22, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/3, STR: 6, RES: 14

The DW 770/g, manufactured by the Glint of Cold Steel™ Corporation, is Allied Mayhem's standard issue light assault weapon. Stateside, many vets still employ it out of familiarity.

30mm ZAG (Cost: \$80000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 19, Dmg: MW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 10/16/22, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: 8, RES: 14

The ZAG was the very first of the heavy assault rifles usable only by the boosted.

10 gauge Melbourne Arms (Cost: \$6500, Avail: C)

Accuracy: +2, Penetration: 9, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 8/13/17, Ammo: 8, Rate: 1, STR: 1, RES: 14

Combat shotguns, like the Melbourne Arms 10 gauge, are used for increased accuracy against close targets.



Heavy Weapons

40mm GCS M87/g (Cost: \$20,000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -2, Penetration: 21, Dmg: MW/HW/IN/IN, Rng: 6/15/28, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/3, STR: 9, RES: 14

The M87/g is an enormously powerful assault weapon that can be fired only by heavily boosted shooters.

40mm Pumpit (Cost \$30,000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -5, Penetration: 16, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Blast: 3, Rng: 7/12/16, Ammo: 12, Rate: 2, STR: 3, RES: 13

The Pumpit is a 40mm grenade launcher capable of fully automatic fire.

45mm GCS BFW 2060/g (Cost: \$70,000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -4, Penetration: 24, Dmg: MW/HW/IN/KL, Rng: 6/15/31, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: 11, RES: 14

The BFW 2060/g is the most powerful assault rifle in the world. It's favored by airmobile snipers, who can sometimes use it to pick off ground targets located over two miles away.

AMI Char-Baby (Cost: \$90,000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -2, Penetration: 26, Dmg: MW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 6/19/33, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1, STR: 8, RES: 14

The Char-Baby is a so-called "particle accelerator" rifle. It uses magnetic fields to fire a tiny projectile at incredible velocity with surprising accuracy. Particle accelerator guns are LOUD! (easily heard from one mile, or 28 Units, away).

Other Weapons

Sm Missile (Cost: \$10,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: 16, Penetration: 17, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 22/28/31, Rate: 1, STR: 3, RES: 11

This is a small, back or shoulder-mounted, radar homing missile capable of tracking a man-sized target. Once fired, the Skill Rating of the shooter becomes irrelevant. Use the missile's "Accuracy" during the To Hit Challenge.

In order to be fired, the missile must be connected to a computer and it must be zeroed in on its target a full Turn before it is fired (the shooter cannot make any Challenge actions during this Turn). Once a target has been acquired, the missile follows it almost anywhere.

Hvy Missile (Cost: \$15,000, Avail: E)

Accuracy: 16, Penetration: 21, Dmg: MW/MW/HW/IN, Rng: 24/29/32, Rate: 1, STR: 5, RES: 11

Same as above, only a heavier missile.

Snap-Tite™ Grenade (Cost: \$1000, Avail: C)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 10/16, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/IN, Blast: 2/4, Rng: 3/5/8, Rate: 1, STR: 2, RES: 11

This revolutionary item created by the Snap-Tite™ Corporation of Cold Falls, New Jersey is two grenades in one—an offensive concussive grenade (Penetration: 10, Blast: 2) and a defensive frag grenade (Penetration: 16, Blast: 4). The optional fragmentation consists of 63 numbered pieces that are snapped into a series of holes on the outside of the grenade's shell. It takes three complete Turns to change the grenade from offensive mode to defensive mode or vice versa.

Hvy Grenade (Cost: \$2500, Avail: E)

Accuracy: -2, Penetration: 17, Dmg: MW/MW/HW/IN, Blast: 4, Rng: 5/7/9, Rate: 1, STR: 6, RES: 11

This is a powerful grenade generally used only by boosted personnel.

Long ago, Edward decided that none of the commercially available firearms on the market are rough-and-tumble enough for his needs. This is a 30mm/15mm over-and-under custom firearm with deluxe recoil compensator; last-ditch self-destructor; and an articulated variable geometry bayonet.

Something of a traditionalist, Edward prefers the old Allied Mayhem multi-reticular optical tracker to the new-fangled combat goggles that have come to dominate the market.

A special Limitation on one of his Enhancements requires Edward to ingest huge quantities of caffeine in order to use some of his abilities. Here, he shows characteristic ingenuity by adapting a standard grenade bandolier to hold cans of soda.



Edward wisely chooses a
carrot-colored Hevykev
Vest to keep the bullets
off his back.

Edward knows you can't sur-
vive on the streets without
learning to cover your six. He
never leaves home without his
Whirring Death Blindside ADS.

Throw away your olive drab,
tomato is the color of the
20s. Here, Edward models
a Carzini 30mm ammo belt.

Bam-Budda-Budda-Bam-Budda-
Budda-Bing! You can never
have too many guns. Edward
balances his look with seven
carefully-chosen revolvers.

Accessorize, Accessorize,
Accessorize! Here Edward
demonstrates how a single
well-placed accessory [in this
case, a Snap-Tite™ grenade]
can completely alter your
image.

"WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED VET IS WEARING"

OUR MODEL IS THE IRREPRESSIBLE EDWARD PFINCH [MISTER MAYHEM]

AMI Punk-Roaster Napalm Proj. (Cost: \$60,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: +3, Penetration: 12, Dmg: LW/MW/HW/HW, Rng: 7/11/14, Ammo: 9, Rate: 1, STR: 2, RES: 9

The Punk-Roaster is the modern incarnation of the 20th century flamethrower. The user wears a heavy tank filled with fuel on his back. If this tank is ruptured (use the rules for damaging objects, a Called Shot is necessary to hit the tank), the projector immediately resolves a Penetration Challenge against its user and no longer functions.

Note: Because it uses heat and fire to inflict damage, the Punk-Roaster's Penetration ignores most forms of body armor.

Turbo Tazer (Cost: \$50,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: -3, Penetration: 12, Dmg: Special, Rng: 2/4/6, Ammo: 1, Rate: 1, STR: 1, RES: 10

The turbo tazer fires a pair of wires into a target and then sends an immobilizing current down those wires. The Penetration Challenge of a tazer attack is P/F. If the Challenge succeeds, the target must make a successful P/F RES Challenge against a Difficulty of 12 or fall unconscious immediately (as if affected by a KO result).

Armor

Mondo Armor (Cost: \$10,000, Avail: A)

STR: 2, RES: +4

Mondo is a thick, padded ballistic weave. Available in four gorgeous colors. Don't leave home without it!

Heavy Mondo (Cost: \$75,000, Avail: B)

STR: 6, RES: +5

Even heavier than straight Mondo.

Heavykev (Cost: \$5000, Avail: A)

STR: 0, RES: +2

Heavykev is a lightweight, durable ballistic fabric that was created using insights gleaned from the downed alien space pod. In 2021, most all military and police uniforms, trenchcoats, and jackets are fashioned from it.

Note: It is generally impossible to combine the effects of several types of armor (ie. wear Mondo and Heavy Mondo at the same time). Heavykev, however, may be worn in combination with either Mondo or Heavy Mondo armor.

Chaff (Cost: \$3000, Avail: B)

Chaff packs aren't really armor. They are small canisters of shredded aluminum that can be affixed to a Mondo, Heavy Mondo, or Heavykev vest. When the wearer is targeted by a radar-homing weapon, one of the chaff packs automatically fires, confusing the weapons radar and adding +15 to the Difficulty of the weapon's To Hit Challenge.

In order to use chaff packs, the user must also carry a portable computer and a radar detector. A complete package consists of three canisters, each usable one time only.

Ammunition

Ten rounds for any of the firearms listed above cost \$75. Special weapons, like the Pumpit and the Napalm Projector, are completely reloaded at a cost of \$400.

Resilience of Common Substances

Substance	RES
Glass.....	6
Wood	7
Brick	13
Concrete	15
Stone	16
Brixblox.....	17
Steel	18

Vehicles

In 2021, automobiles are still the vehicles of choice, though there are now a few other options. All Vehicles have a special Ability Rating, *Handling*, that is added to the Skill Rating of the driver when she performs Vehicle Skill Checks.

Automobiles and Cycles

Tehran Jihad (Avail: C, Cost: \$175,000)

Handling: 0, SPD: 14, RES: 13

Ever since the United States rebuilt Iranian industry after overthrowing the Islamic Fundamentalist government in 1998's *Operation Overthrow the Fundamentalists*, the Iranians have dominated the world auto industry. In 2021, the most popular Iranian model is Tehran Motors' Jihad, a rugged compact.

BRS 49 (Avail: C, Cost: \$120,000)

Handling: -1, SPD: 14, RES: 12

Lately, the Chinese have made an aggressive effort to steal the economic side of the world auto industry away from the Iranians. The BRS 49 is typical of the Chinese effort: reduced roominess and performance at a greatly reduced price.

AMC City Runabout (Avail: C, Cost: \$240,000)

Handling: 0, SPD: 13, RES: 18

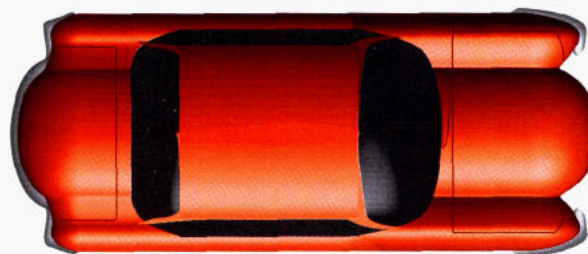
AMC is the only large American auto manufacturer still active in 2021. Its market niche is combat safety. AMC vehicles are the toughest, safest and most reliable around. They are well suited to life in some of America's large urban centers. Note the City Runabout is coated in a radar reflective paint that increases the difficulty of any radar-homing attacks launched against it by +6.

AMI Heavy Assault Cycle (Avail: D, Cost: \$180,000)

Handling: +1, SPD: 14, RES: 11

This sturdy bike is commonly used by AMI scouts and messengers in the field. Many vets grow so accustomed to it that they go out of their way to acquire an Assault Cycle stateside.

BRS MODEL 49 Psc R



buy, American.



DAHUNGSHING-SHING

for the dealer nearest you, call (800-624) 815-315-7620-89-6301

Flying Vehicles

Personal Aircar (Avail: C, Cost: \$1,500,000)

Handling: 0, SPD: 17, RES: 14

Aircars are much like normal automobiles except for the fact that they can fly. The cars are quite fast when moving horizontally, but climb and dive at an extremely slow speed (SPD of 4 when climbing and diving). Now that most large American cities have built upward as well as outward, aircars are not uncommon, particularly among the upper class. In fact, in Los Angeles and other large cities, there are "freeways" (roped-off areas) specially built for aircar travel.

Airboard (Avail: A, Cost: \$130,000)

Handling: +1, SPD: 14, RES: 7

Airboards are small, flying skateboards. Originally, they were built and marketed as a toy for the wealthy (the 2021 equivalent of the jet-ski). But over time, the boards became the favorite means of transportation among the more successful street crashers and criminals. In fact, the boards are now so well-connected with criminals that some cities are beginning to outlaw them or restrict their use.

Computers

As noted previously, almost everything in the world of *Underground* is digital, allowing just about anything to be connected to a computer.

Computers have two special Ability Ratings: *Storage* and *Processing*. Storage reflects the number of programs the computer can hold at one time. Processing indicates the number of programs the computer can simultaneously run. Each program has its own *Memory Rating* indicating the total memory space it consumes. Thus, a computer can store a group of programs with total *Memory Ratings* that are less than or equal to its *Storage Rating* and can run a group of programs with total *Memory Ratings* that are less than or equal to its *Processing Rating*. Switching the programs in storage is an Automatic Action that takes fifteen minutes (24 Units) to complete. Switching the programs being processed is an Automatic Action that takes two minutes (15 Units) to complete, and the new programs moved into Processing must be contained in the computer's Storage.

Computers

Average Home Model (Avail: A, Cost: \$16,000)

Storage: 16, Processing: 8, RES: 6

These statistics represent a wide variety of home, shelftop computers. Most American households have access to one.

Economy Home Model (Avail: A, Cost: \$12,000)

Storage: 12, Processing: 6, RES: 6

These statistics represent the cheap knock-offs of the items described above.

Average Pack (Avail: A, Cost: \$32,000)

Storage: 13, Processing: 7, RES: 7

"Packs" are portable battery-operated computers (roughly the size of a 20th century transistor radio) worn on the chest, back, or upper arm. They are carried by businessmen and street criminals alike. Most packs function for three days on a single battery charge.

Economy Pack (Avail: A, Cost: \$25,000)*Storage: 12, Processing: 6, RES: 7*

Again, these statistics represent the cheap knock-offs of the average packs described above.

Vehicle Computer (Avail: A, Cost: \$22,000)*Storage: 14, Processing: 7, RES: 7*

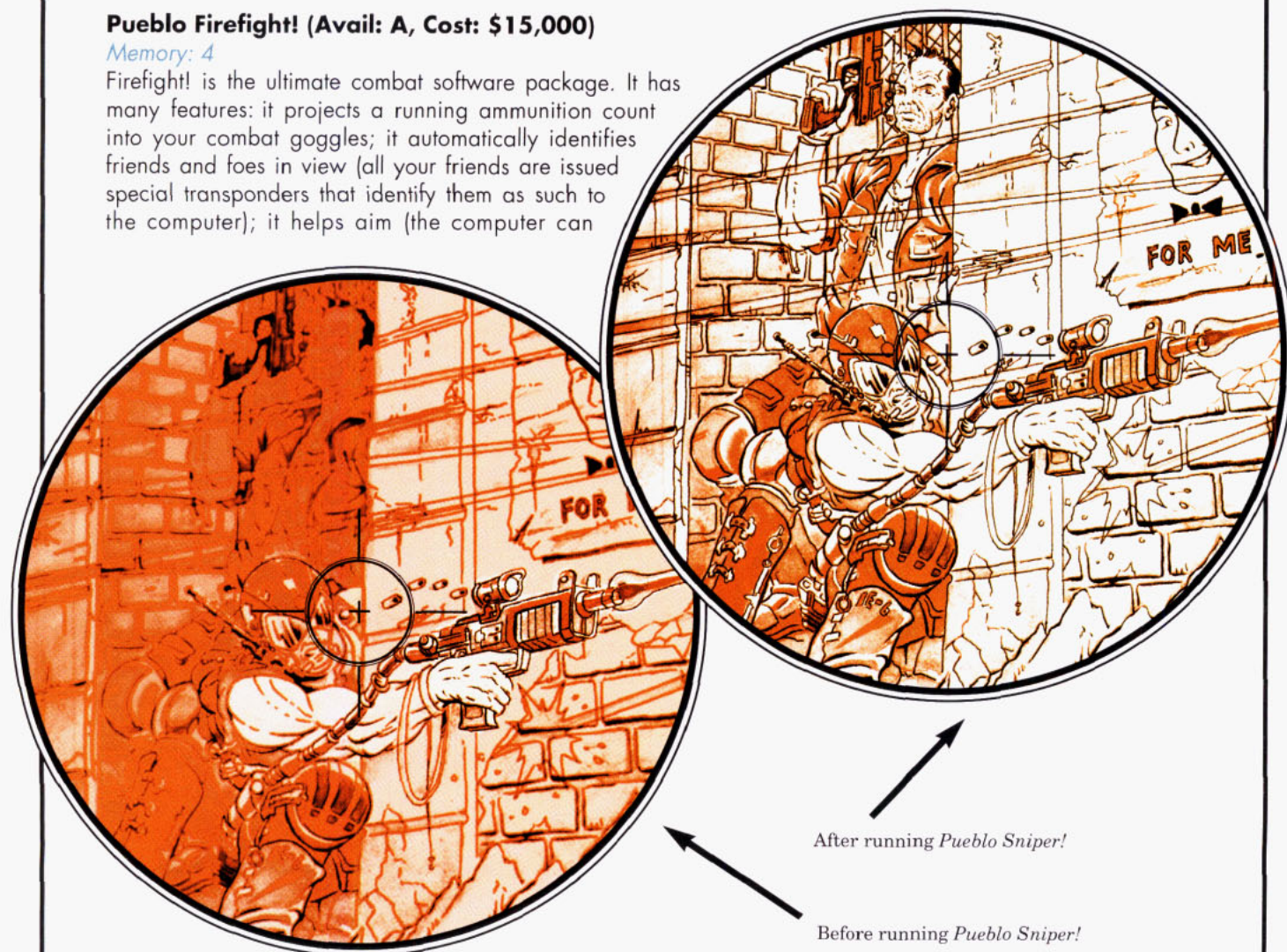
Most computer manufacturers now build models designed to be installed in vehicles.

Programs**Pueblo Sniper! (Avail: A, Cost: \$12,000)***Memory: 3*

Takes input from a gun's scope and photo enhances it. A shooter using Sniper! who aims for one full Turn (no other actions possible) can reduce the Long Range Difficulty modifier to +4 or the Medium Range Difficulty Modifier to +2.

Pueblo Firefight! (Avail: A, Cost: \$15,000)*Memory: 4*

Firefight! is the ultimate combat software package. It has many features: it projects a running ammunition count into your combat goggles; it automatically identifies friends and foes in view (all your friends are issued special transponders that identify them as such to the computer); it helps aim (the computer can



read a location sensor on your gun and project your exact aiming point inside your combat goggles; and it can automatically evaluate the threat posed by an enemy. The aiming function reduces the Medium and Long Range Difficulty modifiers by one each (the effects of Firefight! and Sniper! are not cumulative). The threat evaluation forces the GM to rate any character you see as a "low," "moderate," or "high" threat based upon the character's STR and RES (total STR and RES of 0 to 10 is a low threat, from 11-20 is a moderate threat, and 21+ is a high threat). To make these evaluations, the computer actually measures the target's size and makes guesses as to the sort of genetic enhancements he or she might possess.

Eliza (Avail: A, Cost: \$3,000)

Memory: 2

Eliza is a virtual receptionist. The program answers your phone and screens your calls and faxes, keeps track of your appointments, and faxes off replies to many simple inquiries. Eliza can even be programmed to manifest one of three basic personalities (sultry, chipper, or motherly/fatherly) in either sex. Many businessmen use Eliza in conjunction with a pack to screen calls and faxes to their portable cellulators.

Skill Software (Avail: B, Cost: \$4000*)

*Memory: **

Skill software duplicates the effects of Skill Specialties. For example, a Science/Biology program can evaluate a specimen scanned through a gunsight, video camera, or any other appropriate device with a digital relay and identify it as though the computer is a character with the Science/Biology Specialty. Note that unless it is attached to some sort of robotic arms or manipulators (which are extremely rare and expensive), the computer can't actually "do" anything (it can't conduct Medical Treatment, for example). Thus, Skill Software is generally usable only to duplicate the knowledge functions of the various Skill Specialties.

Programs for just about every appropriate Specialty are available. Such programs cost \$4000 per Unit of Skill Rating and have a Memory value equal to their Skill Ratings. In other words, a program with the Science/Biology Specialty rated at 4 Units costs \$16,000 and has a memory value of 4.

Home Appliance Software (Avail: A, Cost: \$3000)

Memory: 2

Home Appliance Systems connect and run all the digital items in a home or office, making it possible to essentially "program" your entire house—you can set the lights or any other appliance to turn on or off at any time, you can have your VCR check your answering machine and tape a program you specified in a message, and just about any other imaginable application.

Pueblo MapIt! (Avail: A, Cost: \$18,000)

Memory: 3

Pueblo MapIt! is a collection of cartographic software designed to generate and display maps. Once the program is activated (an instantaneous Automatic Action), it begins automatically mapping any ground the user covers, so long as the pack is connected to a pair of combat goggles, a video camera, a gun sight, or any other visual receptor with a digital relay. The maps the program generates (and the user's location on those maps) can be printed to hardcopy or projected "heads up" to combat goggles. MapIt! can also be used to display pre-recorded maps in the same fashion. Individual map modules are available for most urban areas at a cost of \$6,000 each.

Porta-Term (Avail: A, Cost: \$9,000)

Memory: 2

Porta-Term is a communications package that allows a computer to gain remote access to various networks and systems. It can also be used to link two computers in order to download/upload data. Porta-Term is useless unless the computer running it is connected to a phone line.

the 15Gsa... man's new best friend.

OPEN SLIDE
reduces weight, no more
jamming or stovepiping.



SEALED RECOIL SYSTEM
light recoil, quick recovery and
the fastest possible second shot
in the 20mm plus range.



HEAVY BARREL
absolutely the toughest
longest wearing barrel on
the market today



11 ROUND SEMI-STAGGERED MAGAZINE
adds three more rounds without noticeable
increase in grip size.

When Allied Mayhem started looking for a new standard issue sidearm, they tested the best pistols in the world. When the smoke cleared the last one standing was the Glint of Cold Steel 15Gsa.

In firepower, accuracy and reliability the 15Gsa has far surpassed military and police requirements. Besides the improved safety features the 15Gsa has been producing more single hit fatalities than any other 20mm semi-auto on the market.

Check out the 15Gsa along with the complete Glint of Cold Steel line of civilian and military firearms at your authorized Glint of Cold Steel dealer or contact GCS USA, 2061 Kalispel Road, N. Hurley, NY 12491

corp. voice 7002-37-4740
corp. fax 63-565-8930
USA voice 914-679-9761
USA fax 914-679-9865



Glint of Cold Steel Dept AK
8-1 Chrome Chiyosha, Toshima-Ku, Tokyo, Japan

Library Load (Avail: A, Cost: \$3000)

Memory: 2

Library loads are electronic encyclopedias that contain general knowledge on a wide variety of topics. Dozens of volumes, each with its own specialty, are available. Exactly what information can be found in a Library Load is up to the GM (use the encyclopedia metaphor for guidance).

Vehicle Navigation/Maintenance (Avail: A, Cost: \$8000)

Memory: 3

This program is the ultimate driving aid. It tracks a vehicle's speed, position, fuel consumption, and other vitals; runs a constant diagnostic on all vehicle systems, issuing frequent reports; and monitors local traffic reports and offers efficient route suggestions. The program's output can be projected on combat goggles or a vehicle heads up display, or to a video monitor located inside the vehicle.

Pueblo RecordIt! (Avail: A, Cost: \$10,000)

Memory: 4

RecordIt! accepts audible or visual information through a microphone or video camera and records it in digital format. Each hour of audio or video recorded takes up one point of the computer's Storage.

Anti-Radar (Avail: A, Cost: \$8,000)

Memory: 1

This program constantly monitors the output of a Punkbuster™ radar detector. When a radar-guided attack is imminent, the program displays a warning to the user's combat goggles and automatically fires a chaff pack (if present).

Vocalizer (Avail: A, Cost: \$15,000)

Memory: 2

A simple software-based voice synthesizer, the vocalizer gives any other program the power of speech. It is particularly useful with Eliza and Skill Software.

Computer Peripherals

Laser Printer (Avail: A, Cost: \$20,000)

This portable battery-operated printer (the size of a large book) can create a hardcopy of any program's output. With an optional \$300 strap, it can be worn on the back or chest.

Video Camera (Avail: A, Cost: \$18,000)

This is a tiny video-cam (the size of a pen) that draws its power from the connected computer. It is used to provide computer programs with visual input. Note that combat goggles and gunsights can also provide digital visual input, but not nearly as clear as the signal provided by this device.

Microphone (Avail: A, Cost: \$5,000)

The microphone provides a computer with audio input. It is the size of a stick of gum and draws its power from the connected computer.

Bio-Drive (Avail: B, Cost: \$10,000,000)

Created from discarded human brains, bio-drives are the ultimate storage medium. Although the drives are large and clunky, any computer connected to one has a Storage of 150.

Robots

Scientists constructed semi-sentient machines as early as 2011. At the heart of most of these so-called "robots" is a cerebral cortex that was removed from an animal and heavily modified to lend processing power and storage capacity to the computers that drive them.

In game terms, robots are treated like characters. Although they are incapable of making Recovery Challenges, they can be repaired just like any other device.

Robots always sport very simple programming that only allows them to make easy, rudimentary decisions. Although some can manifest a simple personality, scientists are still far from producing a machine that can fool anyone into believing it is truly "alive."

TWD XKM770 (Avail: E, Cost: \$40,000,000)

DEX: 2, STR: 15, SPD: 5, RES: 21, Gun Combat: 7, Military Science: 3

Trans World Devastation's XKM770 is the ultimate combat machine. It can be programmed with simple orders (ie. take out any remaining enemies in sector three, go and get a communique from General Zone) that it will obey for approximately three days before it must be programmed again. Programming the XKM is an Automatic Action that can only be performed by its licensed operator (and only if the operator and the robot are together in the same location). Although XKMs are able to use most weapons, they cannot operate vehicles or any other pieces of equipment.

Eliminator 4440 (Avail: D, Cost: \$30,000,000)

DEX: 2, STR: 18, SPD: 3, RES: 17

The Eliminator is a heavy-duty industrial work-bot capable of performing only simple tasks (like those expected of an assembly line worker). Some Eliminators have been reprogrammed by street gangs for use in bust-outs and brain-jackings.

LM770 (Avail: B, Cost: \$20,000,000)

DEX: 4, STR: 4, SPD: 5, RES: 8, Any Two Skill Specialties: 5

As close to sentient and self-aware as is currently possible, LM770s are the most sophisticated robots on the market. They are used for a wide variety of industry and service industry tasks.

Several of the nation's biggest banks recently modified a fleet of 770s to patrol the streets of America's big cities and act as ambulatory Automated Teller Machines ("Hi, I'm Ricky! How are you strapped for cash?").



Payday?— The Golemite confronts three thugs who are smashing an ambulatory ATM on his turf.

Other Gear

Artificial Brains

Selling one's brain for cash to the bio-drive manufacturers before the brain jackers take it and sell it themselves isn't the only reason to install an artificial brain (known on the street as an "a-brain") these days. Most of the newer

models are programmed to keep their recipients happy and productive. The happiness feature has been especially potent since the major entertainment manufacturers began producing works specifically designed to please the most popular models of artificial brain.

Once a character has an artificial brain installed, her INT drops to -3 and she loses all her INT-based Skills and approximately half the memories from her previous life (when important, you can flip a coin to determine whether or not the character remembers something). Characters with artificial brains generally manifest happy, semi-oblivious personalities. Popular models (XJ1170, TZ8, LX series, the XM70 immortalized in the songs of the Cracker Brothers) sell for \$140,000, but most of the bio-drive companies will provide you with an a-brain at no charge at the time you sell your biological brain.

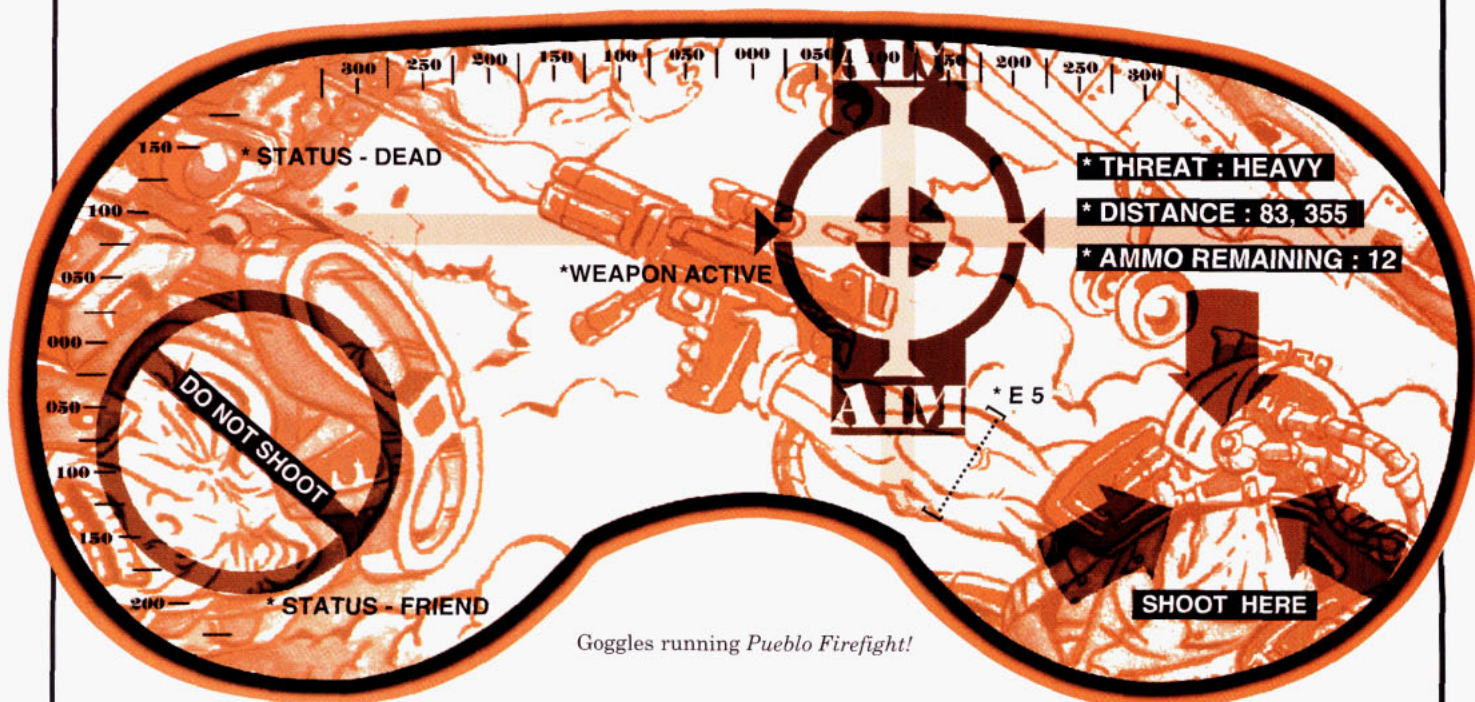
Personal Equipment

Combat Goggles (Avail: A, Cost: \$2000)

Combat goggles accept and display digital output (like that provided by Pueblo Firefight! and other computer programs), protect the wearer's eyes from bright flashes, and provide the wearer with infra-red night-vision capability at a range of 100 yards (15 Units).

Cellular Phone (Avail: A, Cost: \$4000)

In 2021, nearly everyone carries a portable personal cellular telephone. The most common models fold in half to the size of a pocket calculator.



Porta-Fax™ (Avail: A, Cost: \$5000)

The Porta-Fax is a small, battery-operated and shoulder-slung fax machine that allows you to receive a fax anywhere and any time. They are generally used by businessmen and drug dealers (in 2021, pushers dial their dealer's fax number from a public phone and wait for him to get in touch with them). Porta-Fax's won't work unless connected to a portable cellular phone.

Punkbuster™ Radar Detector (Avail: A, Cost: \$5500)

The Punkbuster™ is a shoulder-mounted unit that sounds a warning whenever the wearer is being targeted by radar-guided munitions. Using the proper software, it can be integrated into a computer and suit of armor equipped with chaff.

Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer (Avail: B, Cost: \$25,000)

This unit is a standard Punkbuster™ with a built-in signal jammer rated at 14 Units. Whenever the wearer is targeted by radar-guided munitions, the jammer can attempt a P/F Challenge against the Accuracy of the incoming weapon. Success indicates that the radar signal is jammed, dropping the Accuracy of the incoming attack to 0. If used in conjunction with Anti-Radar software, the signal jammer automatically attempts to block all incoming radar signals.

Xanxarox Copier (Avail: A, Cost: \$10,000)

This is a battery-operated, book-sized photocopier that can be used on the go.

Fibalert™ (Avail: B, Cost: \$30,000)

The Fibalert™ is a small, transistor-sized unit that measures fluctuations in the voices of nearby speakers. Whenever a mistruth is told in the presence of the Fibalert™, the unit bleeps. Unfortunately, the devices are notoriously unreliable fool (a Difficult P/F WILL Challenge allows one to lie in front of a Fibalert without setting it off).

Nowlan Flying Harness™ (Avail: E, Cost: \$35,000)

This is a strap-on jet unit that allows characters with the Flight Control Enhancement to soar through the skies at a SPD of 17. Flying Harnesses are extremely maneuverable, and must be refueled after twelve hours of use.

Medikit (Avail: A, Cost: \$1500)

This is a simple first aid kit. Medikits give their users a -2 modifier to the Difficulty of any Medicine/First Aid Challenges they attempt.

Gas Mask (Avail: B, Cost: \$3500)

A gas mask adds +9 to the user's RES when she is defending against gas attacks.

Spotlight (Avail: A, Cost: \$2500)

This unit is a shoulder-mounted battery operated spotlight with a range of 150 yards (17 Units).

Megaphone (Avail: A, Cost: \$1250)

This is a microphone headset and broadcaster that allows the user to be heard up to one hundred yards (15 Units) away.

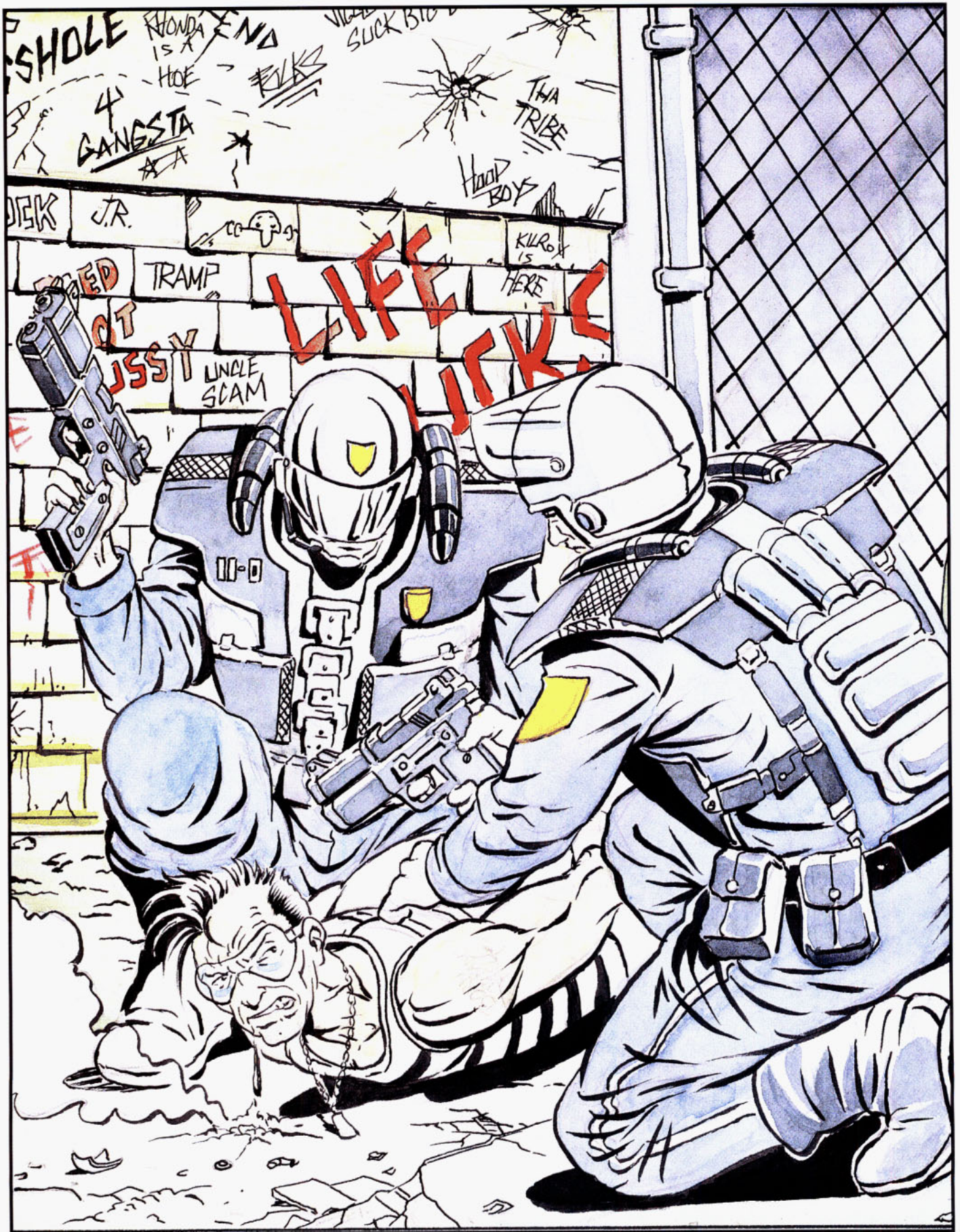
Flexi-Cable-50 feet (Avail: A, Cost: \$700)

Flexi-Cable is a thin, pliable wire useful for scaling objects and tying up captured enemies (the cable has a RES of 11).

Ammo Belts (Avail: A, Cost: \$1000)

Each belt holds 75 rounds of ammunition.

Holsters (Avail: A, Cost: \$400)



Yo, Man! Easy on the Jacket!- The Man takes down a boosted juice dealer in Watts.

Drugs

Both of the following drugs are only available through prescription or on the black market. Crooked doctors willing to write prescriptions can usually be hired for \$7500. Double the prices of drugs purchased illegally.

Pain Killers (Avail: C, Cost: \$800)

One dose of pain killers lowers the Difficulty penalty for wounds sustained by someone (ie. a Lightly Wounded character no penalty, a Medium Wounded character suffers a +1 penalty, etc) for one full hour (30 Units).

Amphetamines (Avail: C, Cost: \$1000)

A dose of amphetamines boosts the user's STR and SPD by +1 for a period of fifteen minutes (24 Units).

Staples

All are Availability Class A.

Suit of Clothing (Cost: \$300 - \$14,000)

Meal (\$75 - \$1400)

Rent (Cost: \$2800-\$70,000)

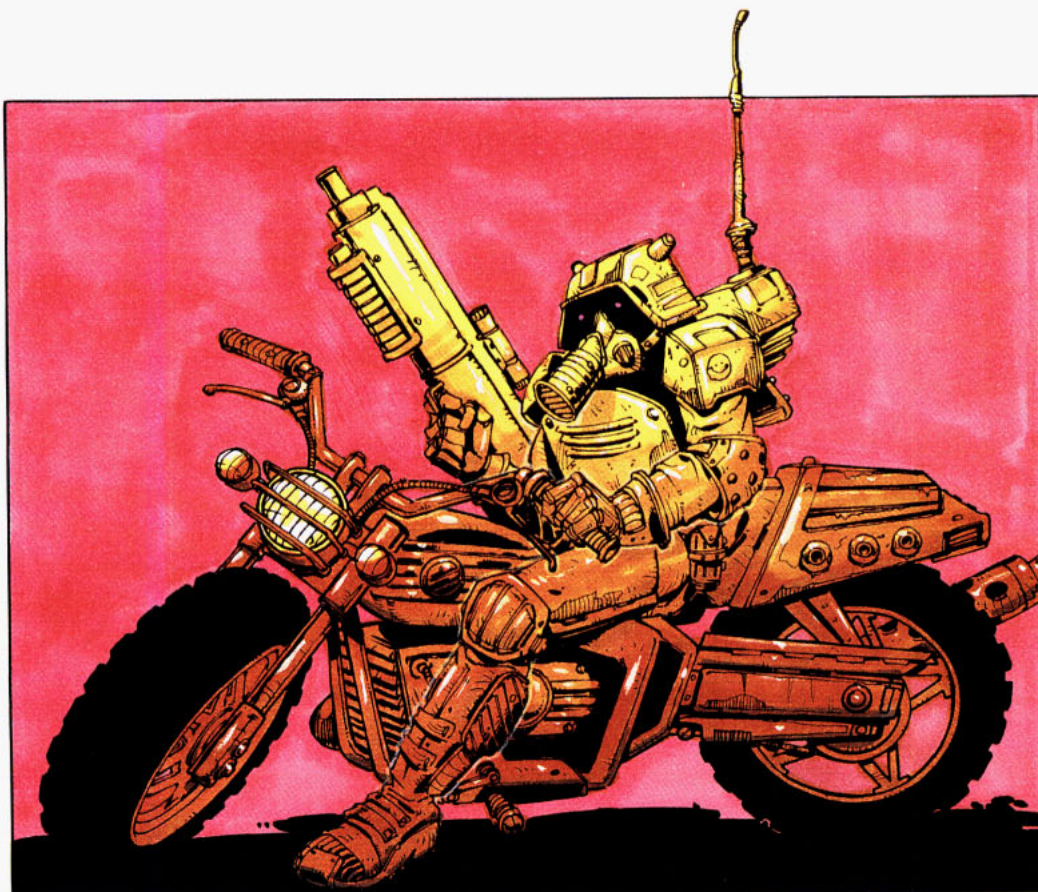
Music Album - CD(Cost: \$200)

Music Live Performance (Cost: \$600)

Television (Cost: \$2500)

VCR (Cost: \$2200)

Movie Rental (Cost: \$40)



Special Tactical Officer Jennings of the LA Peace Force's Rapid Deployment Squad.

Chapter eleven

Of course, the vets aren't the only colorful characters populating the world of 2021. In this chapter, you'll find descriptions of a few useful **non-player character** archetypes that are likely to appear in your stories.

Each NPC description contains the character's game statistics, a *Background*, a *Quote*, and some *Suggested Uses*.

BACKGROUND

- The Background contains a brief description of the NPC and explains how he or she fits into the world of 2021.

QUOTE

- The Quote is a line of dialogue the NPC might use. The Quotes are intended to help the GM get a handle on how to roleplay the NPC.

SUGGESTED USES

- And the Suggested Uses are a few ideas for involving the NPC in *Underground* adventures.

A Word About Statistics

NPC
DESCRIPTIONS
DON'T LIST
ATTRIBUTES
RATED 0

In *Underground*, remember, the average character has a score of 0 in each Attribute. For this reason, the NPC descriptions only list those Attributes that are rated lower or higher than 0. Assume that any Attribute that is not listed is rated 0.

non-player characters:

Characters that are controlled by the GM are known as non-player characters, or NPCs.

Street Gangs in 2021

Crime, drug abuse, and street gangs are major problems in every major American urban center. Typically, gang activity in each city is split between two or three major factions, each consisting of dozens of allied gangs. Because expensive suits and other status symbols are popular with gang members, the various factions frequently identify themselves by the style of suit they wear. In Los Angeles, for example, the rival gangs are the People (who wear gray flannel) and the Folks (who wear tweed). In most cities, rivalry between gang factions is bitter and deadly. Consequently, in many parts of Los Angeles, accidentally wearing the wrong style thread into gang turf can easily get an innocent bystander killed.

The individual gangs that ally to make up a faction generally consist of between five and fifty members and reign over a piece of "turf" that ranges from a single city block to four or five square miles. Methods the gangs use to make money include: selling narcotics (particularly "juice"), theft, "brainjacking" (forcefully stealing the brain of an innocent bystander and selling it to an unscrupulous computer company for use as a bio-drive), and performing special "errands" for unscrupulous corporations and government agencies.

Big Businessman

INT: 3, WILL: 3, AURA: 3
Business: 6, Charm: 4

Background: Big Businessmen sit atop the vast corporations that have made the world of 2021 so gloomy. Although a few are liberal idealists, most are greedy, vicious, and unsympathetic. You can always recognize a big businessman by the six or eight flunkies he has in tow.

Quote: "Perkins, I don't care how many people you're killing. The second that market share dips below 33, you're fired."

Suggested Uses: Big Businessmen might serve as targets for politically minded vets or hire the vets to serve as corporate raiders.

Crooked Politician

INT: 3, AURA: 4
Charm: 6

Background: Crooked politicians are the tools of big businessmen and vice versa. Although they almost always begin with good intentions, they eventually lose touch with their constituents and acquire an unhealthy interest in influence peddling and pork-barrel programs that benefit their allies in politics and business. Crooked Politicians are always smart enough to cover their tracks. Those who aren't don't stay on the scene for long.

Quote: "Let's cut the crap, Leo. The entitlement is no problem. Why don't we discuss what's in it for me?"

Suggested Uses: Like Big Businessmen, Crooked Politicians might serve as targets for politically minded vets, or they might hire the vets to perform one of their patented dirty tricks.

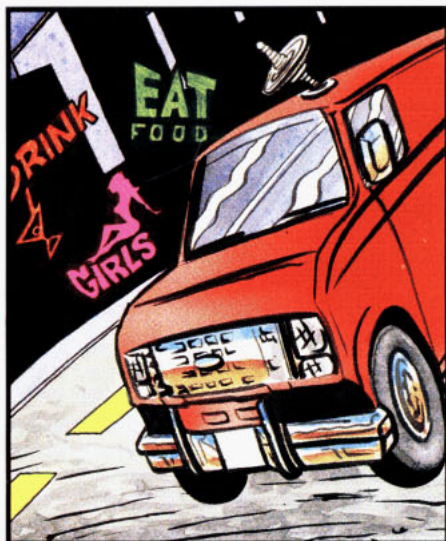
Gangster

STR: 3, DEX: 3, SPD: 3, RES: 3, INT: 3, WILL: 3, AURA: 2
Gun Combat: 5, Streetwise: 5, Thief: 5, Vehicles: 4
Urban Nightmare EP450, Heavykev suit, AMC Urban Runabout

Background: The Gangster is a different sort of businessman. Whereas the Big Businessman makes his fortune by taking steps to guarantee that the rules are always made in his favor, the Gangster's strategy is based upon ignoring the rules altogether. Gangsters can be dangerous enemies or powerful allies.

Quote: "Here's three for your head, punk!"

Suggested Uses: A gangster might develop a vendetta against the vets or try to snare them into participating in his criminal activities. On the other hand, he might be willing to use his influence to provide the vets with valuable information or assistance.



Government Agent

STR: 4, DEX: 3, SPD: 3, RES: 4, INT: 4, WILL: 4, AURA: 3
 Acrobatics: 5, Detective: 5, Gun Combat: 5, Thief: 5, Vehicles: 4
 Urban Nightmare EP450, Heavykev suit, Mondo armor

Background: In 2021, special government operatives are common: members of the hated Anti-Sedition Squad track down insurrectionists, the FBI pursues the more prominent gangsters, several federal agencies try to keep the vets and terrorists in line, and a few members of the Department of Veterans' Affairs are rumored to be cooperating with boosted criminals.

Quote: "Shut your mouth and do what I tell you. Do you have any idea how much trouble Uncle Sam can make for you?"

Suggested Uses: If the vets are operating outside the law, they're bound to attract the attention of government agents sooner or later. Fortunately, many are corrupt and willing to make deals.

Peace Force Officer

STR: 7, DEX: 5, SPD: 3, RES: 7, INT: 3, WILL: 3, AURA: 2
 Acrobatics: 6, Gun Combat: 6, Streetwise: 4
 Any one special Enhancement rated at 7 Units
 GCS DW 770/g, Heavykev suit, Heavy Mondo armor

Background: The Peace Force is the LAPD's special tactical unit that was organized to deal with boosted criminals. All Peace Force officers are boosted veterans themselves.

Quote: "Sure vets have it hard, but that ain't no excuse to quit. Look at me. I was in Paraguay, I saw my best friends killed, and I'll be damned if I'll ever rob anybody."

Suggested Uses: If the vets find themselves in conflict with the law, it won't be long before they're tackling the Peace Force. Typically, Peace Force officers travel in aircars carrying four officers each.

Police Officer

STR: 3, DEX: 3, SPD: 3, RES: 3, AURA: 3

Acrobatics/Dodge: 4, Detective: 3, Gun Combat: 4, Streetwise: 3

M-21 Assault Rifle, Heavykev suit, Mondo armor

Background: Due to sharply rising crime rates, police officers are more common (and more heavily armed) in 2021 than their 20th century counterparts. You can use these statistics to represent security officers, private investigators, and bodyguards as well as detectives and beat cops.

Quote: "Freeze scumbag. Let's see some ID."

Suggested Uses: Naturally, any illegal activities on the part of the vets will draw a response from the police. Additionally, the police might require the vets' assistance in an investigation.

Street Person

STR: 6, RES: 5

Acrobatics: 5, Gun Combat: 4, Streetwise: 4

Any one special Enhancement rated at 5 Units

Urban Nightmare #822, Heavykev suit, Heavy Mondo armor

Background: A lot of boosted vets have difficulty finding regular employment. Many of those who lose their welfare benefits end up on the street as beggars.

Quote: "Hey buddy! Spare a twenty for a fellow vet?"

Suggested Uses: Street People are often great sources of information: they spend most of their time observing passersby, they don't mistrust veterans, and they are always willing to help out in exchange for a few bucks. In fact, some large criminal syndicates employ vast networks of street people to act as neighborhood lookouts.



EEK!— An Eliminator 4440 performs a brain-jacking for a local gang. By sundown tomorrow, this poor guy's brain will be a bio-drive.



Tell ABM We've Got Those IQ 140s They Need— A couple of brain-jackers survey their stash.

Terrorist

STR: 3, DEX: 3, RES: 3, INT: 3, WILL: 5, AURA: 3
 Acrobatics: 4, Gun Combat: 4, Military Science/Demolitions: 4
 ZW385i, Snap-Tite Grenade, Heavykev suit, Mondo armor

Background: In 2021, hardly a day passes in a major American metropolis without the sudden violence of a car-bombing, kidnapping, or hijacking. Causes endorsed by the terrorists range from the secession of Idaho, to the obliteration of three-dimensional entertainment, to a ban on the dumping of toxic wastes.

Quote: "The members of the People's Front for the Preservation of Navajo Sanctity are not criminals. We are soldiers."

Suggested Uses: The vets might find themselves in the midst of a terrorist attack or discover that they are being used as pawns in a terrorist plot.

The Underground

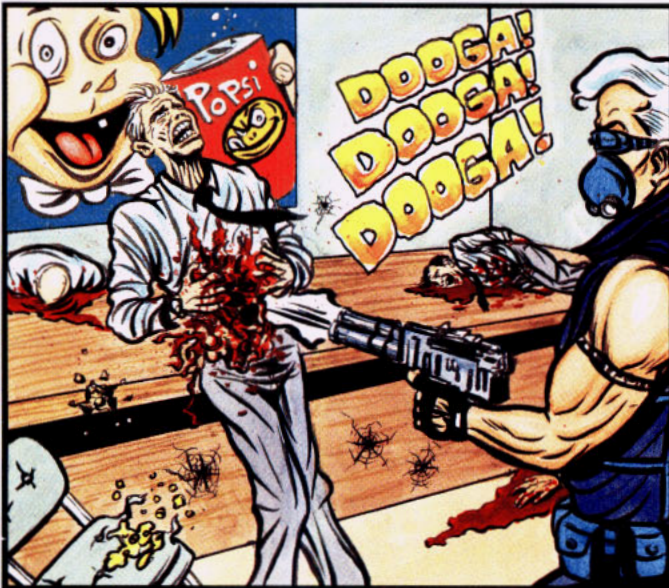
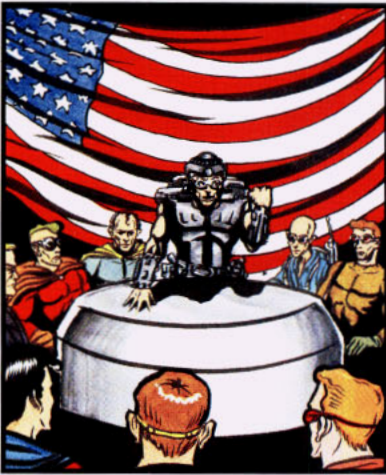
The first attacks carried out against US Government installations by the group now known as the Underground took place in 2016. Since 2018, various federal authorities (including the Anti-Sedition Squad, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Security Agency) have devoted enormous resources to shattering the Underground and identifying its leaders.

Although the exact origins of the Underground remain shrouded in mystery, a number of top genetic counselors have speculated that the organization was founded by veterans who were affected by the Slumberland programming in an unexpected fashion. According to this theory, some vets absorb the "four-color" morality of the Freedom League and have a tendency to enter a state in which they view life as a struggle between forces of "good" and "evil." Because the American government of 2021 has more in common with the four-color master criminals than any other institution of the modern world, the vets decided the government was evil and lashed out. Although there is lots of clinical evidence to partially support this theory, federal authorities have certainly identified and captured some Undergrounders with an absolutely unimpaired perception of reality.

Whatever its origins, the Underground has adopted the rhetoric and ideals of the 18th century American patriots and alleges that the current American government has betrayed these ideals. Most offensive to the Undergrounders are government policies that curb freedom (the anti-free speech Amendments), entrench classism (pork-barrel programs and subsidies that help the rich get richer and the poor get poorer), promote warfare as a brutal instrument of policy (using militant corporations to invade Third World countries solely for economic gain); and subvert equality (the failure of government agencies to protect the civil rights of various minority groups). Ultimately, the Underground aims for nothing less than the overthrow of the American government. Although it routinely carries out acts of terrorism to achieve this aim (murdering corrupt politicians, attacking government facilities, destroying government property, etc.), its most powerful weapon is undeniably propaganda. All over the country, Undergrounders routinely tap into local vid-net lines to broadcast propaganda directly to the American people. These pirate broadcasts, known as "Channel Zero," consist of canned (but passionate) political speeches and frequently include "hid-vid" footage of corrupt politicians in action. Although the American people seem to respond to the anti-government messages, most distrust the Undergrounders themselves as much as they distrust any other veterans.



Give Me Liberty...—The Channel Zero "Technical Difficulties" Screen.



My Misery Hates Your Company— Underground operatives take down a Popsi Cola board meeting in retaliation for Popsi's involvement in the Armenian Cola Wars of 2021.

Undergrounder

STR: 6, DEX: 6, SPD: 6, RES: 6, INT: 6, WILL: 6
 Acrobatics: 8, Gun Combat: 7, Military Science: 8
 Any one special Enhancement rated at 8 Units
 GCS DW 770/g, Heavykev suit, Heavy Mondo armor

Background: The Undergrounders are "terrorists" who believe the present American government has betrayed the patriotic principles of the founding fathers and have pledged their lives to restore them.

Quote: "Don't Tread on Me!"

Suggested Uses: Members of the Underground might attempt to recruit the vets or might mistakenly target a government agent that is loyal or important to the vets. Additionally, the vets might find themselves being used as part of an Underground plot or suspected of being Undergrounders themselves.

Chapter twelve

WHO'S NEXT:

Our correspondents in Washington report that the Atomic Kennedy's string of broken hearts continues. Last night, America's hero failed to show up for a late-night dinner date with MCL recording star Amber Ivory.

—From *USA ALIVE*; March 19, 2021.

As you learned way back in Chapter Two, the rules are only a tool that helps the GM keep your stories moving. Ultimately, whether or not a role playing session is entertaining depends upon the skills of the GM and the quality of the story outlines she creates. A good Gamemaster can make almost any game or story premise entertaining, while a GM with less formidable skills will find it difficult to make even the most creative premises interesting. In this chapter, you'll find a few tips that should help you design and run *Underground* stories. This material will be expanded upon and supplemented in the *Underground Gamemaster's Guide* due in 1994.

Six Tips for Good Gamemastering

KEEP CONTROL
OF THE GAME

1. Take Control of the Game. Some players become so wrapped up in the game that they begin to *argue* with the GM and question her decisions, hoping to gain an implausible advantage for their characters. Under no circumstances should you accept such misbehavior. There's nothing wrong with players who offer the occasional brief and friendly persuasive argument, but you should never allow a player to whine about a decision or carry on at length. Such behavior ultimately *slows down the story* and spoils the enjoyment of everyone.

argue: Most frequently, these arguments dispute the GM's judgement when it comes to assessing Difficulty Numbers (ie. "that's no 6, that should be a 3") or ruling on the plausibility of actions ("what do you mean I can't modify my 30mm shells to fit a 20mm gun? I saw MacGyver do it just yesterday).

slows down the story: This is the worst thing that can happen. Long lulls in the action lead to boredom. If your players are finding it difficult to overcome a puzzle or arguing amongst themselves, allow an NPC to intervene or throw a new problem requiring immediate attention into the mix in order to get things moving again.

make your own rule: Likewise, if you don't like some of the rules, feel free to change or ignore them. You might also consider expanding upon some of the existing rules or creating additional options for the players. In any case, if you decide to tamper with the basic rules in this fashion, it is usually a good idea to alert the players in advance and discuss specific changes. It is important that the players have at least some idea of what to expect.

Similarly, just as you shouldn't allow the players to take control of the game, neither should you allow the dice to seize control of the game. Feel free to ignore the dice rolls when necessary in order to make a scene or event more dramatic. But don't invoke this option too often. If the players see that you are abandoning the dice altogether, they'll start to get the idea that you've already decided how the story should resolve itself, making them feel isolated and their actions seem irrelevant.

2. Make a Decision and Live with It. Although it is occasionally important to stop and think for a moment before making a decision, never spend too much time thinking your way through such situations. Again, long pauses slow down the story. Generally, it is much better to be prompt and vague than ponderous and accurate. For instance, if one of your players wants to lift a pickup truck over her head during a story and you have no idea how much the truck weighs, make a quick estimate and get on with the game. Don't stop play to dig up that special "all pick-up issue" of *Consumer Reports*. If you later found out you were wrong, then you were wrong. Next time, you'll know better.

Similarly, if you can't remember a specific rule during play, don't spend more than a minute or two looking for it. If you can't find the rule and none of the players can help you out, just [make your own rule](#) for the time being and switch to the real rule once you finally stumble across it. After all, the rules are meant to be a tool, not a pain in the neck.

If you find it hard to assign a Difficulty Number or make a rules decision during play, see if there is some way you can base the Difficulty or decision on a Unit measurement. That's why we built the Unit scale into the game. In other words, suppose one of your players tips over a 200 lb. metal drum, spilling chemicals all over the floor. How much floor space do the chemicals cover? Well, the drum weighs 200 lbs or 3 Units, so the chemicals cover 3 Units of floor space, or 100 square feet (a ten foot by ten foot area). Similarly, suppose the vets are trying to read a TWD field manual in time to disarm a TWD bomb mere minutes before it explodes. What is the Difficulty of such an attempt? Well, if the manual is the length of a term paper (15 Units), the Difficulty is 15.

DON'T BE
INDECISIVE

THE UNIT SCALE
SHOULD HELP
YOU SET
DIFFICULTY
NUMBERS

TREAT ALL
PLAYERS FAIRLY

3. All Players are Created Equal. Sometimes, you will be tempted to favor or slight certain players. Perhaps the player in question is a very good friend or has created a character that you are particularly fond of. You should always be alert for these situations and do your best to insure that you treat all players equally. If one player is receiving an unfair edge or liability, ultimately, all of the players will grow frustrated.

One of the most important implications of this rule is that you should strive to create adventures that give every player's character **at least one chance** to grab the spotlight.

DON'T COMPETE
WITH THE
PLAYERS

4. Underground is not a contest. Remember, in role playing, there are no winners and losers. As GM, your job is not to "beat" or humiliate the players, but to help them create an interesting story. There is absolutely no shame in losing a fight to the players or crafting a puzzle the players easily solve. In fact, both of these duties are a part of your job. Learn to look at the game as a cooperative rather than adversarial activity.

PREPARE YOUR
ADVENTURE
OUTLINES IN
ADVANCE

5. Be Prepared. This rule has many implications. Before taking on the responsibilities of GM, you should be fully familiar with this rulebook. Although the rules for a fully developed role playing game are invariably quite lengthy and almost no one can remember them all, you should make sure that you are intimately familiar with the game's basic rules and those that are used most often (in this case, combat, Challenges, Psychoses, and Skill use; though you needn't necessarily familiarize yourself with each and every one of the Skill descriptions).

Similarly, unless you are an extremely skilled Gamemaster, you should take the time to plan out your story outlines and familiarize yourself with them before beginning play. You should also take a bit of time to think about how the players might react to your outline and plan some possible responses. This simple step alone will improve the stories of many novice GMs.

FEEL FREE TO
"BORROW" FROM
OTHER SOURCES

6. Steal without Guilt. Don't be afraid to "borrow" plots, characters, settings, or ideas from television, movies, comics, or books. After all, if the resources are there, you may as well take advantage of them. Of course,

at least one chance: In other words, try to avoid plots that are entirely driven by combat when one or more of your players are detective types who strive to avoid combat.

non-player characters: Chapter Eleven, remember, contains several stock NPCs that you can easily personalize and incorporate into your stories.

likely battlegrounds: Exactly what is present on the battlefield and where is almost always an extremely important tactical detail that the combatants will all try to use to their advantage.

when borrowing, you should exercise your better judgement. *Juliet of the Spirits* was a terrific film, but I'm not sure its plot is really appropriate for an *Underground* story.

If you plan to incorporate elements of books or movies that your players may have seen, try your best to disguise your sources. Keeping the players guessing will make the game more fun for everybody.

Creating Story Outlines

A good story outline consists of at least the bare bones of a plot, a setting, and some **non-player characters**:

- The plot should give you an idea of what is going to happen and why. Of course, it is impossible to know exactly what will happen until you see how the players react to your ideas and provide their own input, but you should spend

some time thinking about possible outcomes and making appropriate plans. Sometimes, the players will confound all your plans and head in a totally unexpected direction. But if you've spent some time thinking about your story, you'll find it much easier to adjust and improvise.

- The setting consists of the major locations likely to be visited during the story. If possible, you should take time to draw maps or other visuals of the truly important locations, especially those that are **likely battlegrounds**. Visuals will spark the players' imaginations and help bring your stories to life.

- The non-player characters are the important (and not so important) personas the players are likely to meet during the story. You should spend some time working out complete game statistics and somewhat detailed personalities for all the story's major NPCs (the antagonist, the vets' major allies, etc.) and you should give at least a little thought to most of the minor NPCs (ie. "there's a lonely bum who lives behind the antagonist's HQ; he doesn't know anything about the plot but will invent false information just to convince the players to stop and talk to him"). Again, you can't possibly

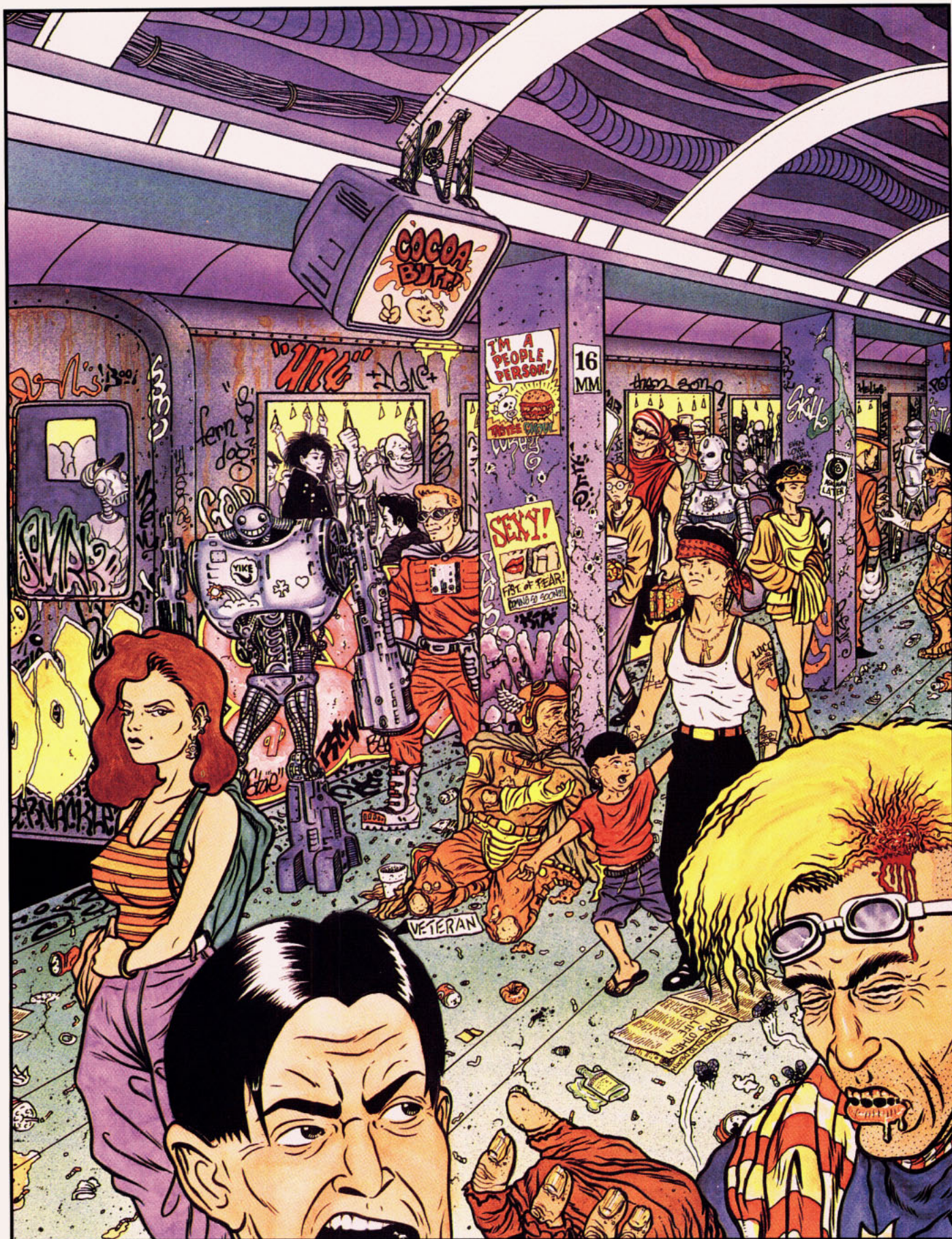
THE PLOT

THE SETTING

THE NON-PLAYER
CHARACTERS



My First Job— A hapless high-schooler on KP at the local Tastee Ghoul.



Veterans moonlighting as panhandlers in the subway beneath Florence and Normandie.

heroism: For our purposes, a "hero" is defined as an individual who is capable of altering the destiny of the entire world.

American idea of heroism: Later *Underground* products will explore the Teutonic and Eastern ideas of heroism by allowing players to generate Neo-Deutsch and Chinese veterans.

Your stories . . . society: In concrete terms, this generally means that you should strive to depict all the consequences of the players' actions, both good and bad. If the players finally eliminate a powerful street gang, for example, they might find the newly vacant territory in worse shape than they expected since the gang's criminal activities were responsible for most of the money that was pumped into the local economy.

anticipate every character the players might encounter during the story. But any unanticipated character is likely to be unimportant and unconnected with the plot, allowing you to easily improvise.

Note that it isn't really necessary to write all of this information down on paper before beginning play, only that you think about it. Some GMs prefer to write out voluminous notes before playing, while others prefer to work from sketchy, single page outlines and their memories. A few simply work out the outlines in their heads and commit nothing to paper.

What is Underground About? – The Theme

Good stories feature a theme or issue they hope to explore. *Underground* was created to allow you to tell stories that examine the nature of **heroism** and how it relates to culture. The four-color "comic book" identities *Underground* vets assume in Slumberland are almost an ideal metaphor for the **American idea of heroism**—gaudy, larger than life, and naive. While the heroes created by other cultures were frequently their own worst enemies (Greek heroes had their tragic flaws, Lancelot and King Arthur had their falls from grace, the heroes of Japanese myth stood in constant conflict with the codes of honor they so revered), American heroes (from Paul Bunyan, to Superman, to all those muscle-bound gun-toters portrayed by Arnold Schwarzeneger) spend much of their time beating up "villains." To overcome a problem, the American hero must simply identify the proper villain and give him a smart punch in the nose.

Underground's 2021 is a gloomy and depressing world in which pop culture, big business, and bureaucracy have all gone mad. The world is clearly at a crossroads and only the players and their ilk, with all their Enhancements, training, and weaponry, can save it. **Your stories should concentrate on allowing the players to explore what it is like to change their environment and how such changes affect society.** In this way you'll not only create some dynamite stories, but you might encourage the players to reflect on some of the serious problems that plague our own world.

Of course, none of this is to say that every *Underground* story must explore these themes. Feel free to explore just about any theme that interests you.

UNDERGROUND
IS ABOUT
HEROISM

Your Goal When Creating a Story Outline

Your basic goal when creating a story outline, of course, is to entertain yourself and the players. Generally, an entertaining story outline meets three criteria: it challenges the players, it challenges their characters, and it maintains the players' interest in the storyline.

CHALLENGING THE PLAYERS

Challenging the players means making them think. A role playing story can be looked upon as a large, complex puzzle. The players try to solve the puzzle by accomplishing the goal of the story (destroy a street gang, rescue a friend from terrorist kidnappers, etc). In order to accomplish the goal and solve the puzzle, the players must *use their wits*. NPCs shouldn't approach the players and simply tell them how to accomplish their goals. The players should be forced to piece together sketchy clues and slowly unravel the story for themselves.

CHALLENGING THE PLAYERS FORCES THEM TO COOPERATE AND ROLE PLAY

One of the reasons why it is so important to challenge the players in this fashion is that there is nothing better at forcing players to cooperate than a good, challenging puzzle. Once you have presented the players with the clues they need to figure out where an important NPC is hiding, you'll find them talking amongst themselves and working together to solve their problem. Not only do such circumstances build a sense of cooperation and participation, they also nudge the players into interacting with each other in character, providing plenty of opportunities for good role playing.

Challenging the players is often a difficult goal to achieve, so you should give a lot of thought to this aspect of your story outline. If your puzzles or mysteries are too easy, the players become bored and lose all sense of accomplishment. If, on the other hand, the puzzle is too difficult, the players become frustrated and lose interest in the story.

CHALLENGING THE PLAYERS' CHARACTERS

Challenging the players' characters is usually much easier than challenging the players themselves. This time, it is the game-rated Abilities of the player characters (their Skills, Attributes, and Enhancements) you are testing. Most of the rules you've read up to this point show you how to do just that. Are the vets strong, fast, or determined enough to defeat the golemite's underbosses? Break out the combat rules and find out. Are the PCs fast enough to

use their wits: One of the easiest ways of forcing the players to use their wits is to create mystery adventures that force the players to put together a series of clues to solve a crime or find a valuable object. An equally effective technique is to design an adventure that features lots of tactical puzzles: how do we get in the locked room? how are we going to defeat all the Golemite's guards? etc.

storytelling and acting abilities:

Some techniques for helping you develop and exploit these abilities are found in the *Underground Gamemaster's Handbook* due for release in 1994.



TerrorDome calls in a fender-bender on the L.A. Sky-Way.

catch the underbosses as they flee for their headquarters, or observant enough to notice the important matchbook cover they drop in their wake? Just ask for the appropriate Challenges. Each of these situations tests the capabilities of the players' characters instead of the players themselves.

The reason it is important to test the abilities of the players' characters in addition to the abilities of the players goes all the way back to the central attraction of role playing games. RPGs allow you to "become" someone you are not, and this illusion is severely damaged unless you can call upon the capabilities of your alter ego. In other words, you can't really believe you're Tarzan until you start talking to animals and swinging from trees.

Generally, most of the enjoyment of role playing comes from the GM's ability to keep the players interested in the storyline. Unfortunately, this is by far the hardest goal to achieve. This is where *storytelling and acting abilities become* important. In most cases, good role playing stories resemble good books or movies. They have beginnings, middles, and ends, are suspenseful and atmospheric, are not predictable, and so forth. Keeping the players interested in the storyline is certainly the most important goal to consider when you are creating your story outlines. In fact, the previous two goals are really only a means by which to accomplish this third goal. One of the easiest ways to keep players interested in a story is to present them and their characters with a challenge.

One of the tools you have at your disposal when attempting to keep the players interested in a storyline is the interactive nature of the game itself. Role playing, remember, is storytelling by committee. If everything is proceeding smoothly, your players should be having an impact of their own on the storyline. Since each player tends to deform the story in ways that interest her, part of your work is being done for you.

WHY TEST THE PLAYERS' CHARACTERS?

KEEPING THE PLAYERS INTERESTED IN THE STORYLINE

UNDERGROUND
IS IDEAL FOR
CAMPAIGN PLAY

FIRST, HAVE THE
PLAYERS DECIDE
HOW THEY FIT
INTO THE
CAMPAIGN

NEXT, HAVE THE
PLAYERS SET A
CAMPAIGN GOAL

The Campaign

Underground truly shines when it is used as the basis for a *campaign*. A campaign is a collection of several **connected** stories all centered around the same player characters. Such a framework gives the players an opportunity to develop their characters over time, often resulting in an incredibly well-detailed cast.

The Campaign Goal

Before you sit down to play a campaign, you should gather all the players to make two very important decisions: how the player characters fit into the campaign and what they hope to accomplish.

- Deciding how the player characters fit into the campaign is essentially equivalent to deciding how the players' characters are connected with each other (all work for the same organization, all served together, etc.) and what roles they will play in the campaign setting (police officers, members of a terrorist group, government operatives, corporate raiders, etc). At this time, you should also try to create as much **background information** about the player characters and their situation as possible.

- Once the players have decided how they fit into the campaign, they can now decide what they hope to accomplish. This aspiration is known as the *Campaign Goal*. Once it has been fulfilled, the players will select a new one. Campaign Goals can be large (topple the US Government) or small (rid a small Los Angeles neighborhood of crime). Generally, Campaign Goals are derived from the world background, either the information contained in this book and other *Underground* products, or the background generated by the GM herself. For example, a group of terrorists might choose "uniting the local Pre-Frontal population behind our cause," while a group of criminals might choose "Replacing Santa Claws as the crime kingpin on the west coast." Notice how both of these goals stem from specific background information about the world of 2021.

connected: Stories in a campaign work like single issues in a comic series or single episodes of a soap opera. Although they are usually about different subjects (and perhaps different themes) they always feature the same main characters.

background information: For instance, if the players decide to be members of a terrorist group, ask them to decide what cause they endorse; or if they are LA Peace Officers, make up a few NPCs (like superiors and desk sergeants) that inhabit their precinct house. At this point the players and GM should also agree on a setting for the campaign (Los Angeles, Luna, etc).



Waiter, Please Call the Police—A couple of uptowners are menaced by a homeless vet at Chez Luiz.

an additional 2 Reward Points: Optionally, the GM can award players who (in her opinion) performed or role played unusually well an extra 2 points, for a total of either 4 or 6, depending upon whether or not the story's objective was met.

entirely up to the GM: For example, a story that pits the vets against a street gang is successfully completed if the gang is defeated in the end. Similarly, a story that asks the vets to solve a mystery is successfully completed if the mystery was solved.

As GM, you shouldn't really interfere with either of these decisions. When it comes to selecting their roles and choosing a Campaign Goal, give the players plenty of freedom. In the next section, you'll find guidelines that will help you figure out when it is time to allow the players to accomplish their Campaign Goal, allowing you to move on to the next goal.

Earning Reward Points

When playing a campaign, the players earn Reward Points that allow them to develop their characters over several adventures and pursue their Campaign Goal.

Every time a player participates in a story, she automatically earns 2 Reward Points. If the objective of the story was successfully met, the player earns an additional 2 Reward Points, for a total of 4. Whether or not the story's objective was met is entirely up to the GM.

Reward Points have many uses that are described later in this section.

Parameters and How To Use Them

Remember, *Underground* is about heroism and changing the world. To help the GM chart the vets' progress, we've created seven special categories known as *Parameters* that the GM can use to monitor the current state of 2021 society. The seven Parameters are: Wealth, Safety, Government Purity, Quality of Life, Education, Necessities, and Take Home Pay. Each of the Parameters is rated on a scale of 1-20. A high score (above 15) represents an area in which society is truly stable. A low score (below 5) represents an area in which society is troubled.

Note that Parameters can be used to describe society on any imaginable scale. In other words, a neighborhood in Watts has a set of Parameters, the city of Los Angeles has another set, the State of California has another set, and the United States has still another set. Each locale's Parameters reflect conditions for the average resident of that locale. In other words, the Parameter ratings in Watts are truly abysmal while those of the United States are just bad, despite the fact that Watts is a part of the US.

GIVE THE PLAYERS THE FREEDOM TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES

PLAYERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN STORIES RECEIVE REWARD POINTS

PARAMETERS HELP YOU TRACK THE PLAYERS' PROGRESS AS THEY TRY TO CHANGE THEIR SURROUNDINGS

PARAMETERS CAN BE USED ON ANY SCALE

WEALTH

Wealth: measures the amount of money available to the average citizen. Areas with a high Wealth parameter are generally the home of upper-class jet-setters. (Long Island, NY: 16; Bel Aire, CA: 18; Watts, CA: 4; USA: 7).

SAFETY

Safety: measures the lack of violence and criminals in the society. (Los Angeles, CA: 5; Watts, CA: 2; Washington DC: 15; Luna: 5; USA: 7)

GOVERNMENT PURITY

Government Purity: measures the lack of corruption among police officers and government officials. (Washington DC: 3, Los Angeles, CA: 5, USA: 5).

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of Life: measures the happiness of the people in the society. (Los Angeles, CA: 4; Washington DC: 10; Long Island, NY: 17; USA: 9).

EDUCATION

Education: measures the intelligence of the people in the society. (Los Angeles, CA: 6; any pre-frontal ghetto: 2; Washington DC: 14; USA: 8).

NECESSITIES

Necessities: measures the society's access to food, medicine, and other necessities of life. (Los Angeles, CA: 6; most veteran ghettos: 5; Washington DC: 13; USA: 11).

TAKE HOME PAY

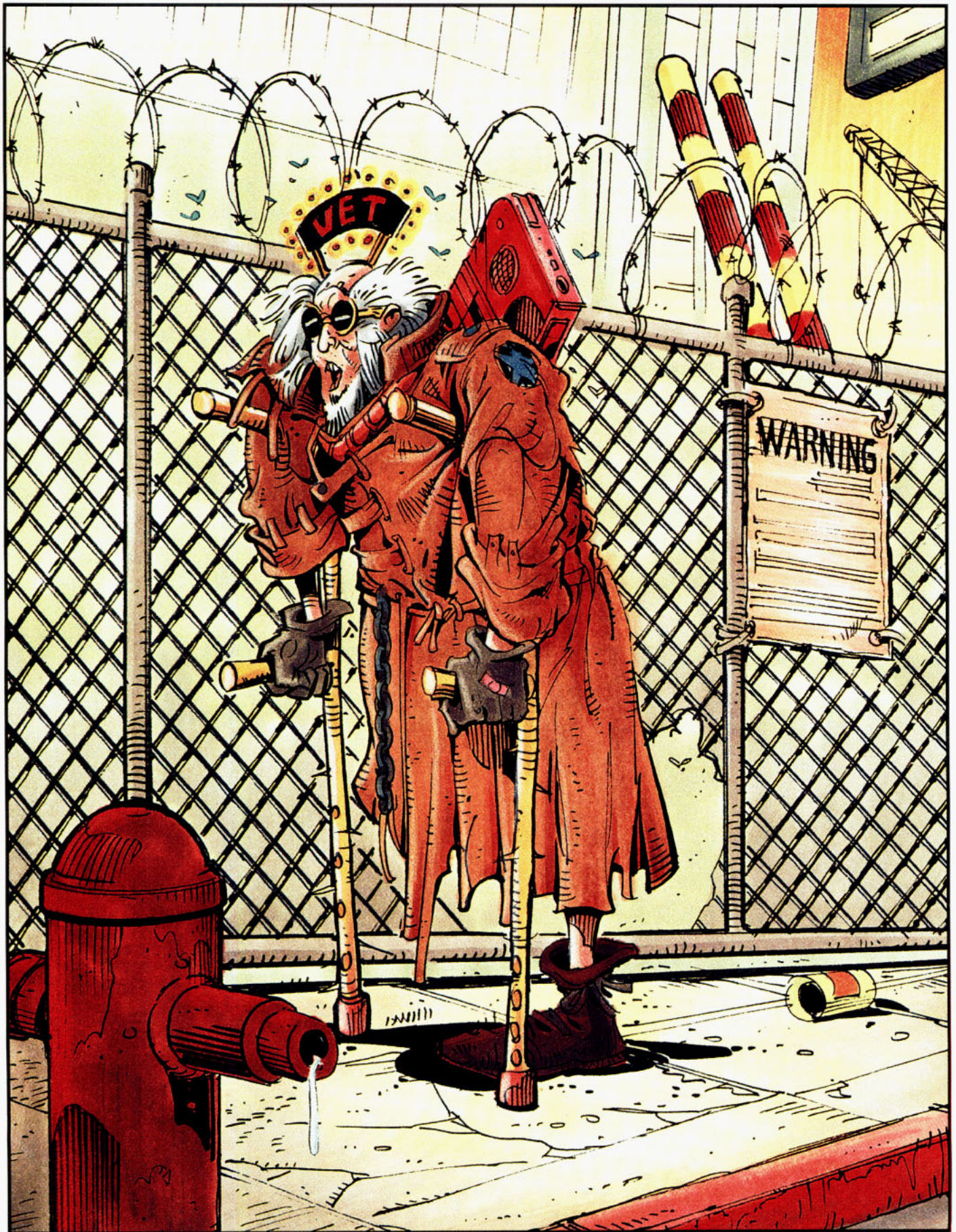
and **Take Home Pay:** measures the amount of the average citizen's income that is not swallowed up by the government. (Los Angeles, CA: 10; Bel Aire, CA: 6; USA: 9).

How to Use the Parameters

USING THE PARAMTERS

During play, the vets can temporarily alter the Parameters of the societies in which they operate by completing stories. As soon as the players set their Campaign Goal, the GM should set the Parameter ratings for the [society](#) the veterans are trying to effect. The GM should then set the Parameter levels necessary for the veterans to complete the goal. The difference between the society's original Parameter levels and the Parameter levels necessary for the completion of a goal should depend upon the magnitude of the accomplishment. Taking down a small-time criminal or seizing control of a very small government agency might require the levels to change by a couple of points, but overthrowing the US Government would require massive (10 point changes) in several of the Parameters.

society: For example, an attempt to take down a neighborhood gang boss uses the neighborhood's Parameters, an attempt to force the State of California to secede from the Union uses California's Parameters, and an attempt to wipe out AIDS in the US uses the USA's Parameters.



TWD vet Blind Hugh forms a one-man picket line outside TWD's Westwood office.

chapter 12

AN EXAMPLE OF SETTING PARAMETERS

Example: The players decided that they'd like to eliminate the AIDS problem in Los Angeles County. The current Parameter levels in LA County are Wealth: 8, Safety: 5, Government Purity: 5, Quality of Life: 4, Education: 6, Necessities: 6, and Take Home Pay: 10. The GM decides that the barriers that stand in the way of the AIDS problem are government corruption (tax dollars being misappropriated), corresponding to the Government Purity Parameter; insufficient access to medical care, corresponding to the Necessities Parameter; improper AIDS education, corresponding to the Education Parameter; and not enough available tax funds, corresponding to the Take Home Pay Parameter. Because ending the AIDS problem is a fairly staggering achievement, the GM decides the Parameters must be increased by quite a bit for success. Thus, he sets the Parameters necessary for success as follows: Government Purity: 10; Necessities: 9; Education: 9; and Take Home Pay: 8. Note the Take Home Pay Parameter must be decreased for success because lower Take Home Pay means there is more tax revenue available to the government.

A small tribe of primitives in Watts pauses for some silent reflection.



total: Note that the players may pool Reward Points to reach this total. In other words, if the group needs to spend 11 points, one player can chip in 5 and another can contribute 6 for a total of 11.

suggest an appropriate story: The GM should only accept such suggestions if they meet the needs of her *Underground* campaign. For example, the GM might require that any potential story idea is unacceptable unless it puts the player characters in some sort of jeopardy (after all, this is an action-adventure game!).

as well: This happens because there are sociological relationships between several of the Parameters.

Every time the players spend a certain Reward Point **total**, they can attempt to alter one of the society's Parameters by one level. Note that the players may only make such an attempt if they can **suggest an appropriate story** that would lead to the change, and the attempt only succeeds if the story is successfully completed. In other words, if the players want to increase the Wealth Parameter, they must present the GM with a reasonable idea for a story that might explain the increase, such as "what if we helped an honest investor take over that crooked corporation on the other side of town, allowing the corp to put more honest folk to work." If possible, this story suggestion should be connected to the Campaign Goal. If our vets pursuing the eradication of AIDS wanted to increase the Education parameter for instance, they might suggest, "what if we tapped into the broadcast of the Super Bowl and temporarily replaced it with an AIDS awareness message?"

The exact Total necessary to attempt a Parameter change depends upon the size of the society affected, as follows:

Neighborhood:.....20 Reward Points
City/County:40 Reward Points
State:.....100 Reward Points
Country:200 Reward Points

Of course, there is a catch. Every time the players alter a Parameter Level, two other levels are automatically altered **as well** (one Parameter level increases and another decreases). Refer to the following chart:

<u>If the Players Increase</u>	<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>
Wealth	Safety	Government Purity
Safety	Necessities	Quality of Life
Government Purity	Take Home Pay	Safety
Quality of Life	Government Purity	Education
Education	Wealth	Take Home Pay
Necessities	Quality of Life	Wealth
Take Home Pay	Education	Necessities

USING REWARD
POINTS TO ALTER
PARAMETERS

ALTERING A
PARAMETER
USUALLY AFFECTS
OTHER
PARAMETERS

If the players are attempting to decrease a Parameter Level, simply reverse the results above. Decreasing Safety, for example, decreases Necessities and increases Quality of Life.

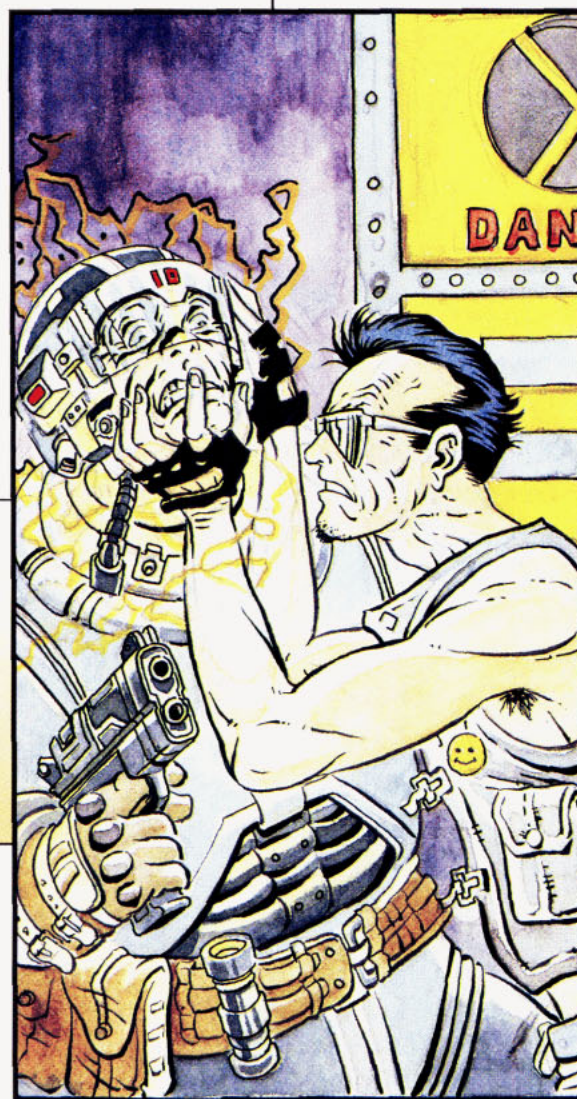
Note that these automatic alterations can either move the players closer to or further from their goals, depending upon the circumstances. A group trying to increase both Education and Wealth, for example, can kill two birds with one stone.

The only way to avoid these mandatory bumps is for the players to spend triple the required number of Reward Points before attempting to alter a Parameter.

Example: Our AIDS crusaders decide to break into the Super Bowl transmission to increase Education. If they spend 40 Reward Points to make this attempt, once Education rises, Wealth will rise and Take Home Pay will fall. If they spend 120 points, however, they can alter Education while leaving Wealth and Take Home Pay unchanged.

Good GMs will reflect the changes in Parameter Levels within the stories they create, and might even draw inspiration for entire stories from Parameter changes. For example, if Safety is decreasing, random thugs and gang members will probably start showing up with greater regularity. Similarly, the GM might interpret a decrease in Government Purity to indicate that a new corrupt politician has appeared on the scene, perhaps inspiring a few workable story outlines.

Similarly, the GM should feel free to arbitrarily alter the society Parameters based upon campaign events she is planning or the unexpected outcome of a story. For instance, right in the middle of a campaign, the GM might decide that an epidemic of a rare South American disease strikes the city,



Undergrounder Kid Fury enters a nuclear power plant in Palo Alto.

SPENDING EXTRA
REWARD POINTS
ALLOWS THE
PLAYERS TO
ALTER A
PARAMETER
WITHOUT
AFFECTING THE
OTHERS

GOOD GMS GET A
FEEL FOR HOW
THEIR CAMPAIGN
WORLDS ARE
EVOLVING BY
WATCHING THE
PARAMETERS

finally allows . . . goal: Good
GMs begin envisioning this
ending back when the
Campaign Goal is chosen. For
instance, to return to our
AIDS example, the GM might
decide that the players will
finally eradicate AIDS in LA
County by proving that the
City Health Administrator is
corrupt, removing him from
his job, and allowing a more
concerned candidate to assume
the position. The GM can then
begin foreshadowing the end
of the campaign several
adventures early by dropping
hints about the Administrator's
corruption, etc. This process is
important because it gives the
players something to work
with when they are trying to
suggest story ideas to the GM.

return: This is because any
alterations made by the players
are assumed to be temporary
and because the society will
ultimately move to achieve
equilibrium.

lowering Quality of Life by 2 levels. Or, should President Foster unexpectedly die during one of the group's stories, the GM should raise and lower all sorts of Parameter levels as appropriate.

Achieving the Campaign Goal

Once the group makes an attempt at the final alteration they need to achieve their goal, the GM should create and run a story that **finally allows the group to achieve the Campaign Goal**. Once the goal has been achieved, the players then select a new goal and the whole procedure starts all over again. Once a Goal has been completed, the society's altered Parameters **return** to their beginning values and the whole thing starts all over again.

?
?
?
?

Optionally, the players can **permanently** alter a Parameter by spending fives times the normal Reward Point cost of doing so.

?
?
?
?

Other Uses for Reward Points

Reward Points also have a few additional uses:

- Spending Ten Reward Points allows a player to increase one of his Skill Ratings by a single Unit.
- Spending Ten Reward Points allows a player to increase his Enhancement's Unit Rating by one. Note that this option can only be used to increase pre-existing Enhancements, not to install new ones. Increasing Enhancements in this fashion does not alter the Enhancement's Stress Rating.
- And Spending Five Reward Points buys a player an additional Karma Point.

Note that several other uses for Reward Points will be introduced in the *Underground Player's Handbook* due out in early 1994.

ONCE A GOAL IS
ACHIEVED, THE
PLAYERS SET A
NEW GOAL AND
THE PARAMETERS
RETURN TO
THEIR BASE
VALUES

Traits, Codes, and Reward Points

The number of Reward Points a character earns for participating in a story is influenced by how well she lived up to her Traits and Codes. Violating a Trait cuts the number of Reward Points earned in half (fractions rounded down), while violating a Code prevents the character from earning any Reward Points at all. In other words, a character with the Trait "Curiosity" who is confronted with a mystery during a story and makes no attempt to solve it, receives half the Reward Points he is entitled to. Similarly, a character with the Code "Always avenges injustices in kind" who makes no effort to avenge an obvious injustice during a story, receives no Reward Points at all. It is always up to the Gamemaster to determine whether or not a Trait or Code has been violated.

"Peace out to Muggs and Tomahawk X for those crazy Soul Assassin beats that kept this going in the 11th hour."

Coming Soon From the Underground

STREETS TELL STORIESLA Campaign Sourcebox.

THE UNDERGROUND NOTEBOOKA complete guide to the world of 2021.

FULLY STRAPPED, ALWAYS PACKEDUnderground weapons manual.

UNDERGROUND GM PACKGamemaster screen and goodies.

AMI FIELD MANUALAn inside look at the soldiers of the world's largest militant corporation.

STEEL DEEPLuna Campaign Sourcebox.

UNDERGROUND PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

underground™

Tables

unit benchmark table

See page 53.

multiple chart

Multiple	Add
x 1/4	-6
x 1/3	-5
x 1/2	-3
x 2	+3
x 3	+5
x 4	+6
x 5	+7
x 10	+10
x 20	+13
x 50	+17
x 100	+20
x 500	+27
x 1000	+30
x 10,000	+40
x 100,000	+50
x 1,000,000	+60

difficulty chart

Description	Approx. Odds	Difficulty
Simple.....	3 in 4	-4
Easy.....	2 in 3	-2
Average.....	Even Money	0
Tricky.....	2 in 5	2
Difficult.....	1 in 3	3
Very Difficult	1 in 4	4
Impressive.....	1 in 10	9
Phenomenal	1 in 25	15
Legendary.....	1 in 100	20
Superhuman.....	1 in 1000	30

stress recovery modifiers

No strenuous activity since Stress sustained (ie. no fighting, strenuous physical activity, or anxiety)	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in a serene setting (in the country, a quiet suburb, etc).....	-3
During the last 12 hours, a character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty successfully attended to the character attempting the Recovery	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in an anxiety-filled setting (Los Angeles, on a battlefield, etc).....	+3

Stress recovery challenge every 12 hours.
Standard WILL challenge (Diff:0)

The Grade earned in the Recovery Challenge indicates the number of Stress points removed according to the table at the right:

Grade	Stress Removed
F	1
D	2
C	4
B	6
A	8

Tables

effect of anti-stress medication

Result	Tolerance Gained
F	0
D	+1
C	+2
B	+3
A	+4

Standard WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 0.

stress from other sources

- 1 Stress whenever a wound is suffered.
- 1 Stress on 5th Turn of combat.
- 1 Stress on 10th Turn of combat.
- Flashbacks (see Chapter Five).

Once Stress equals or exceeds Tolerance, Difficult P/F Will Challenge to avoid manifesting Psychosis.

challenge chart

Difference	Grade
1-3	D
4-7	C
8-10	B
11+	A

healing chart

Make a Recovery Check every 24 hours after last damage taken (P/F RES Challenge).

Wound Level	Difficulty
LW	3
MW	6
HW	9
IN	12

Success lowers Wound Level one step.

Medical Treatment: Passing a P/F Challenge against the patient's Recovery Difficulty before the Recovery Challenge allows the patient to subtract 3 from the Recovery Challenge Difficulty.

Surgery: is necessary before Incapacitated characters can attempt Recovery Challenges.

character record sheet

NAME	CODE NAME	HT	HAIR
UNIT	RANK	WT	EYES

ATTRIBUTES	
WOUND STATUS LAST WOUND ☐ STRESS ☐ LAST STRESS ☐	STR DEX SPD RES INT WILL AURA PSYCHOSIS: _____ TOLERANCE ☐
MOVEMENT MOVE ☐ FASTER ☐ TOP ☐	

SKILLS				
NAME	GOV ATT	ADD	RATING	NOTES

TRAITS
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

ENHANCEMENTS				
NAME	STRESS	RATING	BON/LIM	NOTES

CODES
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

CHALLENGE CHART
DIFFERENCE GRADE 1-3 D 4-7 C 8-10 B 11+ A

WEAPONS						
NAME	ACC	PEN	AMMO	RNG	STR	DMG

ARMOR		
NAME	BONUS	NOTES

*after name means weapon fires full-auto

2021—Peace or Pieces?

Paraguay was bad, but nothing could have prepared you for Los Angeles. Back in the jungle it was still a tribe thing—you wanted to kill them, they wanted to kill you; no one knew why. But here, death isn't good enough. Here, they want you to hurt first. The sets, the '30s, the fly-jackers, the **Estro-Gin™** addled punks—the only things standing between you and a body bag are your trusty **GCS DW 770/g** and designer **genotype**. You'd be surprised how often a skin that can shrug off .44 caliber loads comes in handy.

One day, the punks will identify their real enemy and begin the serious violence—bloodshed of the people, by the people, and for the people. Until then, it's time to run a check and take this war down into the **UNDERGROUND**.

Paraguay: A resource conflict engulfed the central region of the South American continent in 2016. By the time the conflict had run its course, participating major militant corporations included Allied Mayhem Inc., Trans-World Conflicts Inc., and Disposable Heroes Inc. Client states included the USA, China, and Neo-Deutschland.

Estro-Gin™: A popular alcoholic beverage that is unusually tasty and addictive due to the fact that it is laced with human hormones.

GCS DW 770/g: A high-performance assault firearm manufactured by the Glint of Cold Steel Corporation and ideally suited for urban environments.

Genotype: The genetic makeup of an organism. As early as 2015, scientists working for the Allied Mayhem Corporation learned how to surgically alter genotypes and force beneficial mutation.



793350MFG2495



Underground is a Trademark of Mayfair Games Inc.
©1993 Mayfair Games Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in the USA.