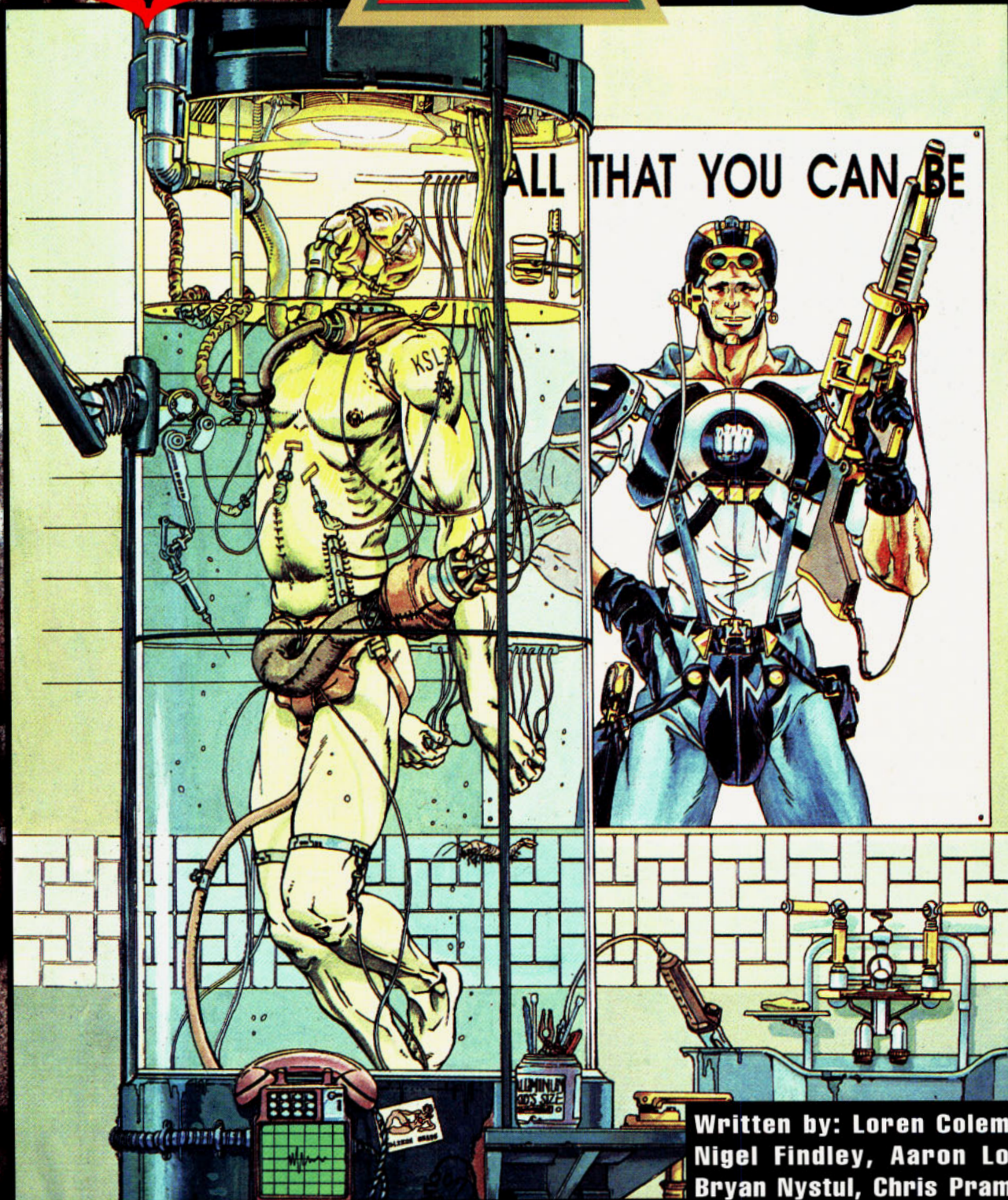


under
ground

PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

PATHFINDERS

Don't You Dare Tread On Me



Written by: Loren Coleman,
Nigel Findley, Aaron Loeb,
Bryan Nystul, Chris Pramas,
Ray Winner, and Scot Yonan

**"I thiNk that our
existiNg political aNd
moral structures are
goiNg to explode.
There's NothiNg that
remotely prepares us
to cope with say,
geNetically
eNgineered armies or,
for that matter,
goverNmeNts capable
of practical eugeNics**

**It's
going
to be
a stRange
world."**

**Alvin Toffler;
Wired,
November
1993**

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Things that currently annoy Ray:

The whiny, self-lauding final ARSENIO (hope you enjoyed your 15 minutes); the religious right's stealth campaign to take over YOUR local school board; bad movies that were bad TV shows (the Flintstones, Beverly Hillbillies, Maverick); MTV's The Real World (for god's sake!); Slackers; Winona Ryder; The New York Knicks (especially John Starks); and, last but not least:

Buck vs. Bell Decision (Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1925):

We have seen more than once that the public welfare may call upon the best citizens for their lives. It would be strange if it could not call upon those who already sap the strength of the state for this lesser sacrifice [sterilization], often not felt to be such by those concerned, in order to prevent our being swamped with incompetence. It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind.

STATES APPROVING STERILIZATION LEGISLATION (1907-1931):

Indiana, Washington, California, Connecticut, Nevada, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Kansas, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Oregon, South Dakota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Alabama, Montana, Delaware, Virginia, Idaho, Utah, Minnesota, Maine, Mississippi, West Virginia, Arizona, Vermont, Oklahoma.

I'm ghost, baby.

underground player's handbook

ON POINT Mitch Gitelman, Bryan Nystul, Ray Winniger [Original Concepts/Authors]

"WE ALL COME OUT ALIVE OR NO ONE COMES OUT ALIVE!" Loren Coleman, Nigel Findley, Aaron Loeb, Chris Pramas, Scot Yonan [Authors]

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DRAWING UP THE PLANS Rob McLees, John Ramirez, Roger Raupp [Interior Art]

MAPPING THE ASSAULT Mari Paz Cabardo [Art Director]

A SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT goes out to the punks who are biting our stuff. Like Bogle said, "Next time I slap you, you'll take it and like it!"

A WORD FROM THE UNDERGROUND In addition to all the stuff we been yackin' about [Ways and Means, Steel Deep, and the AMI Field Manual], you can also start watchin' for the Underground Companion with info on things like conflict firms and their units, campaign frameworks, and a whole mess of cybernetics. Take it off the damn store shelf and look at it!

THE UNDERGROUND BOOKSHELF (CHECK 'EM OUT) Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver; The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man by James Weldon Johnson; Yellow Wallpaper by Charlotte Perkins Gilman; Wired magazine

SPECIAL UNDERGROUND BOOKSHELF ENTRY Beyond Cyberpunk!, a hip and entertaining Hypercard stack that forms one of the most complete reference works on the next wave of technology and entertainment ever compiled. BCP is available from:

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underground



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Dressed in the black street clothes of today's fashion, he carries his mission-bag up to the voice-print box mounted by the mansion gate. Speaking his name into the little crackling mic, he was worried — worried like he hadn't been since his last fire fight in Cairo. As he stands, exposed, waiting for a reply, he surveys the area about him and notes that the ornate grill work of the gate forms the initials of the mansion's owner, Warren Worthington, L.A.'s Tastee Ghoul king.

A voice made metallic by the voice-print speakers buzzes back after a moment. "We've been expecting you, Mr. Stigmatador. Please, come up the drive." With a faint whirl and a loud click, the gates pop open, parting just enough to allow the Stigmatador entrance.

The walk to the mansion doors is longer than most city blocks. He sees a gaggle of groundskeepers trimming Worthington's enormous hedge sculptures. The only green lawn in L.A., he thinks to himself. One of the gardener's makes eye contact with him, smiling thinly. Dark impulses welling up within him as they once had in Cairo, he looks hard into the gardener's eyes and fingers the grip of a gun that is no longer there. His lips curl into a growl and the young gardener, frightened, snaps back to his work. Smiling inwardly with satisfaction, he stalks on, pretending not to think about the fact that he himself almost lowered his eyes first.

The mansion grows until it looms before him. Some insane neo-classical-gothic-modern crap. At the door, he fumbles with a door knocker shaped like the Tastee Ghoul, the knocker being a big ring in the ghoul's nose. The three evenly paced thuds of brass on brass reminded him for all the world of the sound of 40mm rounds slipping smoothly into the chamber of a GCS Autocannon. What was taking them so long? Wasn't this job hard enough without making him stand still long enough to think about what he was about to do? But soon he found himself face to face with Warren Worthington, a man who had more money than God.

The Stigmatador instinctively sized up the man facing him. Worthington stands before him in bermuda shorts, knee socks and a button up plaid shirt, not a large man, but clearly in the kind of shape that a personal trainer could provide. He might last five minutes.... might. "Good to see you Mr. Stigmatador," he said with the over-practiced oh-so-sincere smile of a suit. "You're right on time, and let

me tell you, they're pretty excited."

"Just Stigmatador," the Stigmatador manages to get out in a throaty, almost even, whisper. Most would mistake his whisper for the voice of a man so tough that he didn't need to speak up. The Stigmatador knows the truth: He feels the acrid bite of fear reaching up from his gut. Worthington, this worthless, unassuming man in plaid who the Stigmatador could kill before the grin vanished from his face, could, ironically, give the Stigmatador life. He could give him work, a place in the world and much-needed ducats—he could give the Stigmatador hope.

"Sorry?" Worthington looks bemused, his head cocked slightly, his left eyebrow raising slowly.

"My name is Stigmatador, not Mr. Stigmatador. Just Stigmatador." The Stigmatador feels a little stupid now, correcting someone about something so simple as his name. But it is his name, and on the street, sometimes your name is all you have left to fight for.

"Of course. Please, come in." It is only now that the Stigmatador realizes he is still standing in Worthington's doorway. Depression wells up within him. He slowly steps inside, his eyes trained downward, resistant to his training to scan a new environment — and you don't look at the eyes of someone more powerful than you. "Perhaps you would like to step into my office for a moment. Discuss the day's agenda and get ready," Worthington says. They walk down a long corridor, Van Goghs and Matisse's slipping by them, carelessly hung in poorly lit rooms. Trophies. Silent. Meaningless. "Stigmatador?"

He doesn't know how to behave. He met a vice-president of Trans-World Devastation once. He yelled in the face of the mayor of Los Angeles once. Until this moment, they were the most important men he had ever met. But what were those powerful men in comparison to this mighty titan of commerce? Nothing. He was nothing. "Stigmatador?" Worthington says again. Worthington looks at the Stigmatador, and for the briefest of moments, his brow furls. He continues to walk obediently behind Worthington and he continues to say nothing. How can he? Suppose he said something wrong. He would ruin the only chance to reclaim his life.

"Er, yes, please. Let's go to your office." At last the Stigmatador speaks, his voice sounding like a rake dragged across a sheet metal roof. He hopes that Worthington takes his reticence to mean that he is

the silent and lethal type. He doesn't want to show Worthington his fear, or Worthington might use that fear against him, or worse yet, decide he is useless.

They continue down the hall, passing a bronze Rodin on a coffee table, and coming to Worthington's office. "Please, sit." Worthington gestures to a plush chair before the desk as he evades the massive thing to find his own chair. The Stigmatador watches for Worthington to sit before seating himself.

"So, you're a flyer? TWD's Second Scouts wasn't it?" Worthington asks these questions with a polite smile, his hands resting in his lap.

"Yes. I fly." His head fills with memories of his days in the Second. Memories to the Stigmatador are like background noise to most. He can filter them out, but they're always there, just behind his eyes. He can see himself soaring over Cairo, gun in hand. The city is on fire below him, and even from hundreds of feet up, he can hear the people of Cairo scream; imagine their faces contorted in pain and fear. "I used to, at least."

Worthington laughs. His laugh is horsy and irritating. He closes his eyes and puckers his lips when he laughs — it makes him look stupid, like that mook Stigmatador popped in Iraq. He is surprised to hear Worthington laugh like this, such a powerful man with such a common laugh. Worthington must see his surprise because he stops laughing and says "Oh, I'm sorry—I'm not laughing at you, it's just, well it's not like you can stop flying, is it? You're boosted, that's kind of permanent. I mean, you can give up the harness, but you'll always be a flyer."

"Yea," the Stigmatador grunts. "I haven't done any flying since I left the Second." The Stigmatador pictures himself again, in that air fight over Tripoli. He is with four other flyers from the Second. It's night and they're scouting out the Neo-Deutsch gun placement. Next to him is Mary, the Fly Bi, the only person he's ever loved. When the tracer fire starts, it is a lucky hit from one of the guns that causes Bi's head to explode. He doesn't think it's lucky. "It reminds me too much of the African Copier King campaign."

"Right, right. That must have been very hard. I sold a lot of my TWD stock after that report was

released. I had no idea TWD was so callous with the life of their soldiers.” Worthington makes an effort at looking sincere, but the Stigmatador can tell it’s a stinking act. He knows these things. He knows that titans like Worthington care only for themselves. “What were the casualties on that campaign? One point five million? Appalling. To think it could have been kept under five hundred thousand.”

“I don’t know. I never read the papers.” He crosses his legs uncomfortably. He glances up at Worthington and sees that unmistakable look, that fearsome and infuriating look: pity. Worthington pities him for a poor, pathetic boosted vet who used to fly and now does odd jobs for money. The Stigmatador sees it in his eyes.

There is another pause. Again the pause extends into silence. He stares at Worthington. Worthington looks at him sadly, shaking his head. At last, Worthington takes a deep breath, opens his desk and pulls out a check book. “Well, I’m always glad to help out a veteran. I mean, I really feel for what you must have gone through over there....I really do. That’s why I take whatever opportunity I can to give veterans like yourself who are... well, you know... between jobs... a chance to work. When Michael told me about you, I knew you’d be perfect for the job. Did he tell you about it?”

Oh, yea. Michael, the associate director of the vet center, told the Stigmatador about the job. Michael said it would be hard, but that Worthington is his best chance to get on his feet again. The Stigmatador nods his head. “He told me.” He begins to consider telling Worthington to stuff his job. He begins to think that taking this job would be like selling his soul (or like enlisting all over again).

“How does ten thousand sound?” Worthington asks casually. The Stigmatador gags on his pride. Ten thousand dollars will keep him in home, food, and meds for months. How can he turn down this offer? And yet, he’s started to rethink Worthington. Worthington won’t save him. Worthington will use him. Worthington will buy him. “Oh alright, twelve,” Worthington chuckles, like this’s an old joke between them.

“I’ll take it,” the Stigmatador hears himself croak, and next thing he knows the check is in his hands. He holds twelve thousand dollars of Warren Worthington’s money. He’s sold himself for the day like some death whore.

"Great," Worthington says, "They'll want you to talk for a while, maybe a question and answer session. I think we should focus mostly on the flight. I think they'll really love that... if you let them ride you for a while... you know. That okay?" He'd sold himself. "Oh, hell, I just gave you twelve thousand dollars." He'd sold himself. "I guess I say what's okay and what isn't, huh?" Again, Worthington fills the room with his horsy laugh. He'd sold himself. "Well, if you've got everything you need, I'll go down and join them. This ought to be a fun day." Worthington gives him a toothy grin.

He'd sold himself.

A wash of images. The Stigmatador sees himself standing over Worthington. His arms are elbow deep in Worthington's chest, and in his palms, he holds Worthington's still-beating heart. His blood is the richest red the Stigmatador has ever seen. His blood is richer than the scores of Africans the Stigmatador has killed. His blood is richer than the Neo-Deutsch and Chinese boosts the Stigmatador has torn apart. His blood is richer than Worthington himself. And yet, after all is said and done, Worthington still bleeds.

"I'll be ready in a few minutes," he says as Worthington leaves the room.

The Stigmatador pulls the required uniform out from his mission tote, and begins to undress. The uniform is heavy, weighed down by the Nowlan Flying Harness, but no worse for disuse. Once undressed, he pulls on the uniform, the one he hasn't worn since Africa, since Fly Bi died and he refused to fly again. But for twelve thousand dollars... he puts the uniform on once more. Once he is dressed, he takes the face paint from the tote and, like Michael showed him, he begins to apply it to his face, just like the camo he used in Kenya. First he coats his face with death white. Then he puts lines around his eyes. Next he takes red make-up and paints his nose and a smile over his mouth. Now, in costume and makeup, he is ready to face them.

He strides down the corridor. He ignores the weight of his humiliation and concentrates on the pride and strength his uniform provides. He's a part of something again — a part of the Second Scouts, the best troop in the TWD. The feeling is fleeting. He knows the truth, no matter how much he wishes to avoid it; he was run out of the Second as a coward and now he wears the uniform as a clown.

As he opens the door at the end of the hall, he's greeted by the shouts of children. A whole mess of

them run around the enormous room, which can only be a recreation room considering the massive vid-net screen taking up one wall and the scores of games strewn around the floor. Opposite from the vid-net screen are two huge windows opening out to a large balcony. In the center of the room, at the center of the pack of brats, stands Worthington's son. The brat this party is being held for. He looks like his father, yet without the personal trainer. He is a chubby ten year old in clothes as bad as his dad's, with the same horsy laugh.

One of the children sees him and yelps. The rest cease their running and screaming and all look up at him, at the clown-hero, their mouths open wide. "It's a boost!" one yells, and the rest join in, yelping with joy. He stands frozen as the children crowd around him, touching him and shouting gleefully. "Oh is he really real, daddy?" Worthington's son bellows in over the din.

"Yes he is, Danny. He even flies!" Worthington smiles and winks at the Stigmatador who is watching himself bury his foot deeply in the soft pulp of Worthington's head. He sold himself.

"Does he really? Oh, Daddy, thank you! Can I ride him?" He sold himself.

"Sure son, that's what I got him for!" Worthington screws up his face in a fit of equine laughter, and Danny, more bovine than equine, tugs on the Stigmatador's sleeve. The Stigmatador is lost now in his memories. He is with Mary on R&R in New Providence™, as they watch the sun set: deep red meets the blue of the ocean. He is in love, and he says so. She smiles and says "I know."

"Hey, Boost! Put me on your back and fly!" The Stigmatador finds himself again in Worthington's mansion. He looks down at Danny and thinks about smiling until he realizes his efforts are pointless — the makeup will smile for him. As he bends down, the brat scrambles on his back. He can feel the boy's breath on the side of his face. It smells of milk and cookies and caviar.

"Just once around the house" Worthington calls in that over-protective-but-not-wishing-to-appear-over-protective parent voice as he opens the rec room's enormous windows.

He reaches back for Danny. "Hold onto my front," he says forcibly turning the brat around so that they are momentarily looking each other in the eye. He walks to the window and activates the flying harness. For the first time in half a year, he is airborne.

"Only the most skilled boost candidates are selected to be flyers," his recruiting officer is telling him. "To operate a Nowlans takes a great deal of control and a very expensive enhancement." There was a time when he felt honored to become a flyer, but they never told him what it really means... about the suicide scouting missions, the first strikes, the saboteur missions behind enemy lines.

He slowly becomes aware that the brat's screaming. Looking around, he notices that they're several hundred feet up. "Happy Birthday!" the Stigmatador screams.

"My daddy said once around the house only!" Danny gasps.

"You're daddy isn't here." It would be so easy to let him go.... The thought scares him: his thoughts of dropping the boy; of killing the boy's father. There's no reason for these thoughts, and yet they appeal to the Him. They seem right. They seem like justice. "How old are you?"

"I'm thirteen today!" Danny says, for some reason defensively.

"Don't join the army, kid." The Stigmatador is not sure why he's telling this to one of the richest kids in the world. Of course the brat won't. He will own armies. He will move armies and kill one and a half million people for oil.

"Of course I won't, dummy. Daddy says only poor idiots join the army."

The Stigmatador, emotionless, flies back into the house and places Danny back on the floor. "I can fly ten more before I'll need to refuel," he mutters to Worthington.

"I want to go again!" Danny shouts.

"You have to let your friends go now, Danny. Otherwise you'd be a bad host." Worthington winks at him again, and then he looks away. He can't bear to meet Worthington's gaze anymore. While the children climb on his back and he flies around the house, he listens to the memories again.

He is scouting Cairo. The fire bombing hasn't begun yet, and he's on a sabotage mission. In the still night sky, he flies into the city and locates his objective — a hospital. He understands why the hospital must be destroyed. The enemy will mobilize... trying to stop the blaze, and then the bombing will begin, catching them all unaware. It's a good strategy and he knows it will help win the war, but when he reaches the hospital and plants the explosives... He radios in, "I can't do this," his OverOperative yells back some-

thing about cowardice, discharges, honor, and missions. Snapping out of his funk, he mutters an apology and plants the explosives, slipping off into the velvety dusk. Moments later there is an explosion. His emotions die. "Mission accomplished," he speaks into the headset as he flies away.

He lowers the child down — he is not sure how many he has flown now, eight? nine? — and, startled, mumbles "excuse me" as he rushes to the bathroom. He closes the door and rushes to the toilet as he vomits up the very little he's had to eat today. Once his stomach has finished its mutiny, he waits for a moment, panting over the bowl, and then goes to the sink. He washes out his mouth, rinses his face, and looks up into the mirror. There is a clown staring back at him.

The Stigmatador blinks. The clown blinks. The Stigmatador closes his eyes and reopens them. The clown stares out at him. Clown and Stigmatador both reach for a towel by the sink, pick it up, and they both begin to wipe their face. When the Stigmatador lowers the towel, he sees himself in the mirror... his face peering through a ruptured facade of greasepaint.

He smiles.

He walks out of the bathroom and straight to Worthington. "What happened to your make-up?" he asks. The Stigmatador says nothing as he hands Worthington a crumpled check, ignites the Nowlans flying harness, and flies through the window. "Hey! Hey!" he hears Worthington shout after him "What about my son's party? If you don't come back here right now, you'll never work in this town again!"

As the Stigmatador flies toward his flop house in central LA, he knows there are many things he'll never do again. He'll never again be a soldier, a scout, or a saboteur. He'll never again have twelve thousand dollars of some rich bastard's money and he'll never again commit murder for another man's profit. He'll never again hold Mary against his chest, and he'll never be a clown.



-From Underground Biographies, the true stories of ten Underground members, by F. Scott MacElroy.

chapter one • character creation

DELECTA-BONES™

HEY KIDS!

LOOK WHAT'S NEW AT



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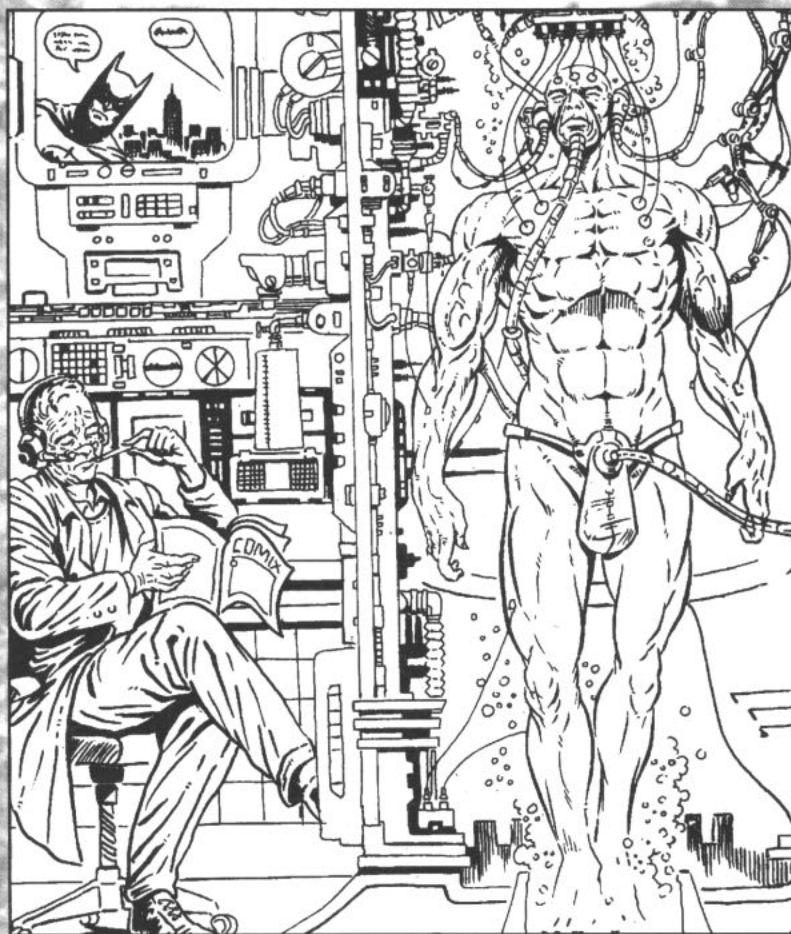
Welcome back, Citizen, where have you been? It's all right... we know where you've been...

Interesting and well-developed player characters are the heart and soul of any successful role playing campaign. The more interesting and the better-developed those characters are, the better the stories, and the more enjoyable the role-playing experience. In this chapter, you'll find lots of new material that will help you add depth to your existing *Underground* characters and allow you to create new characters that exhibit more variety. We begin with an in-depth look at . . .

MORE TIPS ON
CHARACTER
CREATION

The Ins and Outs of Recruiting

For conflict firms, recruiting is a year-round, 24-hour-a-day business. To maintain a constant level of "asset assignment" — in other words, to keep a constant number of boosted troops "in country" (wherever "in country" happens to be this week) — militant corporations like AMI must work to replace those troops who "muster out," along with those many more who don't live to the end of their tour. Among the "major players" in the conflict industry, however, no company is faced with a constant level of asset assignment: the war business is (to coin a phrase) booming, and the militant corporations are struggling to meet demands. In all conflict firms, Personnel Planners (PPs) are being pressured to deliver ever more "raw meat," and are passing that pressure on to the in-house personnel and external recruiting consultants responsible for putting "warm bodies in the uniforms."



"raw meat": The less-than-respectful — but oh, so accurate — phrase for new recruits, in common use across the conflict industry.

recruiting consultants: Many American conflict firms are starting to contract out their recruiting to independent "conscription agencies." These contracts are generally limited-term and exclusive. For example, while under contract to Allied Mayhem, Dallas-based Shanghai Surprise Inc. can't perform recruiting services for AMI's competitors. When these highly lucrative contracts are up for renewal — generally every year to eighteen months — among competing conscription agencies, the level of infighting, backstabbing and dirty-tricks campaigns is downright epic.

"A six letter word for the genetically enhanced."—A third-shift DHI Gen-Sci hard at work.

veterans' entitlements: The government institutes these programs due to pressures exerted by the major conflict firms. Whenever recruiting is slow, the firms drop a hint to the effect that the manpower shortages will impair the firms' ability to handle US contracts. Typically, the Congress passes a new incentive entitlement two or three days later. Many of the veterans' entitlements are described on pages 85-91 of the *Underground* rulebook.

underhanded accounting tricks: Allied Mayhem, for instance, promises all new recruits a \$12,000 Enlistment Bonus. What they don't tell the recruits is that this bonus is paid in the form of additional psychological counseling that takes place between Slumberland orientation and basic training. In fact, the "bonus" reconditioning isn't even a new program implemented above and beyond AMI's traditional measures. Instead, the cost of administering the final phase of reconditioning has now shifted into the bonus budget on AMI's books, allowing recruiters to pull off their deception.

In 2021, despair is the recruiter's greatest weapon. Poverty, unemployment and a certain sense of emptiness are so common among the disenfranchised masses that thousands of youngsters continue to enlist with the major conflict firms each year. Effective recruiters convince potential enlistees that a stint in a conflict firm still translates into a couple of bounds up the socio-economic ladder, despite the treatment that veterans receive from society. This seduction is accomplished through a combination of education/compensation packages drafted by the conflict firms and US Government-backed veterans' entitlements.

Of course, the world being what it is (and the Man being who *he* is), few veterans actually receive anything remotely resembling the benefits they are promised. Invalidation and substitution clauses are carefully buried within the fine print of the enlistment contracts offered by most major conflict firms. Typically, benefits are revoked through the application of underhanded accounting tricks, allowing the conflict firms to weasel out of deals while publicly reporting that they are meeting their obligations.

Selling the Sizzle: The Mechanics of Recruiting

Considering the very real stigma suffered by boosted vets returning to civilian life — not to mention the very real chance of leaving vital parts of one's anatomy strewn over some Third World battlefield — why would anyone in his right mind even *think* of enlisting? This is the question that recruiters have to answer — if not to their own satisfaction, then at least to the satisfaction of their prospective "subjects."

Despair is one of the recruiter's best tools — poverty, unemployment and hopelessness her best friends. All too many youths — disenfranchised, hard-pressed to eke out the meanest living, and painfully aware they'll never come anywhere *near* the standard of living their parents (let alone their *grandparents*) enjoyed — enlist with the conflict firms simply because they can't think of anything they'd rather do. When civilian life is as nasty, brutish and short as it is for too many people, it doesn't take much to make life as a boosted soldier look attractive in comparison.

RECRUITERS
OFFER COMPEN
SATIONS PACK-
AGES

THESE PACK-
AGES ARE
MAINLY A
SHAM

RECRUITERS
PLAY OFF THE
FEARS OF THE
UNEDUCATED

EXTENSIVE AD
CAMPAIGNS
ARE USED

Recruiters today use "hooks" that would look familiar to recruiters throughout history: the "triple threat" of self-esteem, adventure, and education.

Recruiting pitches based on self-esteem date back at least as far as the middle of the last century — with slogans like, "It's a Man's Life in the Royal Army" — and probably much further. The most famous contemporary example is, of course, AML's famous catch-phrase, "All That You

self-esteem, adventure and education: Some recruiting consultants have seen reasonable (albeit short-term) successes with other approaches. Many innovative campaigns have failed miserably, however.

Generally, it's hard to recruit based on money; most people know that soldiers get paid squat.

Recruiting campaigns based on patriotism usually turn out to be expensive failures.



One for the boys at home. Femme Fatale gives one last mug before her ill-fated date at the Angola/MacRaney's Food Drive.

vid-net and radio ads: The most ubiquitous of these ads is AMI's infamous "All That You Can Be" campaign, spotlighting the amazing physical and mental feats made possible by genetic enhancement.

cooperate: This cooperation takes many forms. Many militant corporations own large amounts of stock in media/communications conglomerates, a practice that is technically in violation of federal law, though such restrictions are easily bypassed. Also, don't forget that "gun-camera" footage of homosuperior combat currently plays an important role in the American entertainment industry (the popular vid-net program, *Combat, Combat, Combat!*, for example). By carefully controlling access to this footage, the militant corps force the major entertainment conglomerates to "play ball."

Can Be." Campaigns like this cynically play on people's need to be someone, to have some worth in their own eyes.

Twenty-first century recruiters use the same direct tactics to reach youngsters that were employed by their twentieth century counterparts: vid-net and radio ads, high school lecturers, and neighborhood enlistment centers. But far more important than any of these direct tactics are the indirect recruiting techniques employed through the mass media. All of the major conflict firms cooperate with soma-vid producers, vid-net program directors, and execs at major record labels as part of an overbearing, systematic effort to propagate a message of discord throughout mainstream society. The largest obstacle standing in the way of recruiters, of course, is society's fear and loathing of boosted vets. Through their excursions into mass media, the major conflict firms exploit social problems in order to latch on to a certain segment of society and convince its members that they are already outsiders. The trick lies in convincing the unfortunates that by undergoing genetic enhancement, they can at least become *powerful* outsiders. A recent example of such media manipulation was *Lock and Load*, the top-grossing soma-vid of 2020. *Lock and Load* is the story of a chronically depressed, unemployed steel worker from Gary, Indiana. One day, while standing in line at an ATM, the steel worker meets an AMI recruiter, who ultimately befriends him, helps him draw up his repressed childhood memories of ritual Satanic abuse, and persuades him to undergo genetic enhancement. The soma-vid ends as the steel worker is named Tasteless Ghoul Soldier-of-the-Month after single-handedly attacking an enemy pillbox during the Armenian Cola Wars. Needless to say, all of the specialized military operations and equipment depicted in the vid were provided by AMI at no cost, in return for portraying the firm in a "favorable light."

Vid-net shows like *Combat! Combat! Combat!* and soma-vids like *Lock and Load* glamorize modern boosted combat, and make it appear to be sheer, rollicking adventure — the most fun you can have, with your clothes on or off. (Shows like this also desensitize viewers to pain, blood and death, of course — even the viewers' own pain, blood and death...) Scenes of victorious heroes returning to base after a successful mission, pounding each other on the backs as they accept the adulation of their

ENTERTAIN-
MENT MEDIA
GLAMORIZES
CONFLICT

SOME
RECRUITERS
USE LESS
ETHICAL
TACTICS

rear-echelon support personnel, make a big impression on the viewing audience, and make their own lives seem even emptier and more meaningless than they actually are. Throw in the joyfully jingoistic music of the Cracker Brothers, and the military/industrial/entertainment complex has its finger firmly on the hot-buttons of many would-be recruits.

As with self-esteem, recruiting campaigns based on the concept of education have been around for almost a century. Ads paint rosy pictures of boosted vets mustering out, possessing skills which will get them the high-paying jobs necessary to drag them out of the gutters where all too many of them grew up. Fantasy, of course: today's boosted soldiers learn few if any skills that would be of value to any civilian employer... or, in fact, that they could use on the streets without risking arrest for attempted murder.

Some campaigns are specifically targeted to overcoming the (all too true) perception that boosted vets are treated as outsiders when they return to civilian life. These specialized recruiting pitches are aimed specifically at certain market demographics — that is, certain segments of society that already feel alienated and ignored. The sub-text of these campaigns is something like, "You're *already* an outsider... so why not be a *powerful* outsider...?"

Recruiting consultants use the same channels of communication that have served recruiters since the 20th Century: billboards, vid-net ads and "commercial docudramas," print advertising, and even direct-mail (and direct-E-mail) pieces. (School visits and lectures have fallen into disfavor as not cost-effective... simply because so few people remain in school.)

"Active Recruiting"

All these methods are more or less "passive." They deliver a message to prospective recruits, and get them into the right frame of mind... but then they require the candidates to contact a recruiting office or agent on their own initiative. Initiative is rare — and sometimes not a good trait in a prospective soldier — so some recruiters are working to take it entirely out of the equation. These attempts are known in the trade as "active recruiting."

any civilian employer: With the exception of criminal masterminds, drug cartel bosses, and mercenary officers, of course...

certain market... ignored: When the marketing gurus initially created the "packaged phenomenon" that was Systematic Overthrow, the band was tailor-made to appeal to — and to deliver targeted messages to — some of these demographic groups.

For obvious reasons, conflict firms and recruiting consultants won't admit to active recruiting, and generally won't even discuss it. Investigative journalists have unearthed a staggering variety of active schemes, however. Some recruiters fund, or even actively infiltrate, street gangs... and then use their influence to orchestrate conflicts between rival sets. Experts "scout" the ensuing rumbles, and recruit exceptional performers. (There



Here's *four* for your head!—Mister 4-3-2-1 does his part to clean up the streets.

RECRUITERS
MANIPULATE
THE LEGAL
SYSTEM TO
GAIN RECRUITS

GENETIC
ENHANCING
ISN'T AN
EXACT
SCIENCE

MULTIPLE
GENE MANIPU-
LATION

are rumors — unsubstantiated, but recurring — that some sets have been *created*, out of whole cloth, by recruiting agencies as “farm teams” for conflict firms.)

Although it's generally illegal, some militant corporations exert certain kinds of influence over judges, particularly within the juvenile system. Recruiters watch for hot prospects to enter the system, and arrange for them to be given a choice: jail time, or a tour of duty with a conflict firm. (Predictably, most juveniles given this choice immediately enlist...)

In a recent vid-net exposé, Peter Argot claimed that some conflict firms recruit directly from hospitals, effectively kidnapping — and recording as officially dead — prospects that fit the skill-sets they're currently looking for.

Creating Boosted Soldiers Using Skill Packages

No matter how much the bigdome scientists might claim otherwise, genetic surgery in 2021 isn't an exact science. In fact, some cynics would argue it's not a science at all, but an art, constrained and guided by empirical “rules of thumb.” In some ways, these cynics claim, genetic surgery is similar to the ancient practices of alchemy, before its knowledge and procedures were codified into modern chemistry. Genetic surgeons follow established procedures because they work — most of the time, at least — without really understanding exactly *why* they work, or what might cause them to fail.

Why is this? Countless billions of dollars have been invested in examining — through computer simulations, and animal and human studies — exactly how enhancement works. Still, there are some major questions that still have to be answered.

The central issue is one of complexity. There are many millions of genes in the human genome. In some cases, there's a one-to-one correspondence between a gene and a specific trait: one gene codes for one trait. Most traits aren't that simple, however — particularly those traits of interest to a conflict firm's genetic surgery team. There isn't a single gene that codes for Danger Sense, for example. Typical enhancements involve modifications to hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of interrelated genes,

one gene codes for one trait: An example in the human genome is the disease hemophilia.

introns: Stretches of genetic code that lie between, and sometimes within, the stretches of DNA that make up individual genes.

MOS: "Military Operations Specialty" — a kind of general "job description."

often on different chromosomes. These multiple genes interrelate and modify each other's actions in complex ways.

To further add to the complexity of the issue, genetic surgeons also have to be aware of introns. According to the theories of classical genetics, introns code for no proteins, and so have no true function. Modern research, however, has discovered that the genetic code within introns can and does activate — under certain, barely-understood conditions — and affect the results of other, "normal" genes.

The upshot is that it's impossible to predict with complete accuracy the result of *any* genetic implementation. Things become even more unpredictable when *multiple* enhancements are being engineered. For example, modifying the *tel_5* locus on Chromosome 9 — required for Boosted Strength — sometimes activates a nearby intron, which in turn affects the *int_a* locus on Chromosome 12 — important in Boosted Intellect. Even the best genetic surgeon in the world can't categorically predict the outcome of *any* set of manipulations. An enhancement might turn out more potent than expected — or desired — or less potent. And, in a statistically significant number of cases, the desired result isn't achieved at all.

"Packages"

This basic unpredictability is one of the reasons that most conflict firms have adopted the concept of "MOS packages." An MOS package comprises a certain standardized combination of enhancements, specifically tailored to a particular battlefield function. (For example, the standard "scout" MOS package comprises Boosted Speed, Enhanced Hearing, Flight Control, and Telescopic Vision.)

These standardized enhancement packages have several advantages. Conflict firm Personnel Planners (PPs) don't have to design enhancement programs "from scratch" for each individual recruit. Genetic surgeons get to follow familiar "genetic road maps," where the interactions between different enhancements are at least a *little* better understood.

INTRONS ARE ALSO A FACTOR

MULTIPLE ENHANCEMENTS ARE MORE COMPLICATED

GENETIC ENHANCERS USE "PACKAGES"

PACKAGES REDUCE COMPLICATIONS

SOME PACK-
AGES HAVE
CUSTOM
“SLOTS”

And on the battlefield, officers are in for fewer surprises, because they can predict with at least *some* confidence what the abilities of their scouts (for example) will have. (For *Underground* players, too, there's an advantage to MOS packages. Rather than combing through the rule-book and selecting specific enhancements, players interested in a “quick start” can select the MOS packages that appeal to them.)

Note that not all recruits are given MOS packages, although the majority are. Sometimes, Personnel Planners will be given very specific “slots” they have to fill — slots that don't conform to any existing package. Also note that these MOS packages aren't exhaustive — that is, many recruits will be given enhancements *in addition* to those listed as part of their package. These additional enhancements “tailor” the soldiers to fit specific battlefield needs.

PACKAGES
ALSO INCLUDE
SKILLS

In addition to sets of enhancements, MOS packages include certain basic skills. (Depending on the MOS involved, PPs either select personnel with the appropriate skills to start with, or include training in those skills as part of the personnel development program.) As with enhancements, these packages are *not* exhaustive: soldiers with these MOSs can, and often do, have skills in addition to those listed with the packages. Again, players can use these suggested skills to help them get a handle on their characters.

PACKAGES
GIVE RELIABLE
PSYCHOLOGI-
CAL PROFILES

Each MOS package also carries with it a certain “psychological profile.” This represents two different factors. One is that PPs will select certain types of people — certain combinations of personality traits, self-image and world-view — for particular MOS packages. The other is that the packages themselves will actually *enforce* certain changes in personality, through the Slumberland program and the reconditioning and readjustment that follows. (For players, these psychological profiles provide simple “touchstones” on which to develop the personality of their characters — starting points and “story starters” to get their imaginations churning.)

don't conform to any exist-
ing package: In other
words, if *Underground* play-
ers don't want to use any
pre-existing packages, they
can certainly create their
veterans from scratch.



"Coochie-Coo!"—Another satisfied customer brought to you by the folks at MacRaney's.

Combat Medic

Enhancements

Analytic Smell 10, Empathy 7, Choice of combat-related enhancement

Basic Skills

Gun Combat, Medicine, Psychology, Science

Personality Profile

A medic's main job is to patch up people who've been wounded in combat; a *combat* medic has the additional job of fighting like an angry buzzsaw, keeping himself alive long enough to patch up the wounded. Combat medics must combine a true concern for their fellow troopers with an appreciation of their own value, and must constantly balance the need for providing medical aid with their own self-preservation. The best combat medics have a well-developed sense of empathy, but can suppress it when circumstances require. Combat medics are only rarely trained in the use of heavy weapons; instead, they become adept with more defensively-oriented weapons.

keeping himself alive: This is more of an issue since several conflict firms have the (unwritten and unacknowledged) policy of specifically targeting medics when the opportunity arises. Killing a medic is an efficient way of "leveraging" casualties; not only the medic dies, but also troopers who he might otherwise have saved.

Quotes

"Quit screaming, you wuss. They'll hear you."

"Sorry, man, it's too hot around here. Hang tough, I'll be back to you when it quietens down."

Commando/Infiltration

COMMANDO/
INFILTRATION

Enhancements

Chameleon 7 **or** Invisibility 10, Adrenal Surge 6, Danger Sense 10, Life Sense 6

Basic Skills

Acrobatics, Charm, Gun Combat, Intimidation/Interrogation, Martial Arts, Thief (Stealth), Weaponry

Personality Profile

Commandos and infiltration specialists are the ultimate chameleons. While their missions are usually stealth-type infiltrations — where they have to sneak past guards to reach a high-value target — sometimes they're tasked with "social infiltration" missions. On these missions, they must conceal their true nature and abilities, merging with the generally non-boosted populace. Commandos are skilled with all kinds of weaponry, although they usually specialize in light, easily-concealed, and preferably *silent* tools of mayhem and bloodletting. They are experts at hitting hard and fast, and fading away before the echoes fade. The best commandos are sociopaths; they can *pretend* to have true human feelings, but they generally are emotionless killers who can take down any victim, any time and anywhere.

Quotes

"No-one's ever heard my footsteps and lived."

"Don't make the mistake of thinking of them as people. They're just targets — just assets to be zeroed, quick and clean."

Demolitions**Enhancements**

Acid 13 **or** Bomb 18, Heat Immunity 8

Basic Skills

Gun Combat, Invention/Repair, Military Science (Demolitions), Thief (Stealth)

Personality Profile

Demolitions experts have steady hands and steady nerves, and have no qualms about carrying on their persons enough plastique to reduce them to a deep, smoking crater if they take a round in the wrong place. While most demolitions personnel are lethal in close combat, they're usually trained to avoid situations where they have to prove it. On missions, they're usually supported — i.e., escorted, screened and guarded — by more combat-capable troopers. The best demolitions experts love their jobs: they relish blowing things up, not purely to see the flames rise, but because figuring out the best way to do the most damage with the least ordnance is an art form. They have to trust their support troops to keep them alive — sometimes difficult, since trust rarely comes easy on the modern battlefield.

Quotes

"Hey, relax, willya? This shit isn't going to go off... until I want it to."

"I did a bridge once with only 15 grams of Semtex. It was *beeeeyootiful*..."

Fire Support Specialist

FIRE SUPPORT
SPECIALIST

Enhancements

Boosted STR 15, Boosted RES 10, Reduced Fatigue 6

Basic Skills

Gun Combat (Heavy Weapons), Invention/Repair (Gunsmith), Military Science

Personality Profile

These are the gunners, the heavy artillery personnel. In modern combat, fixed-piece guns and self-propelled artillery are rarely used, simply because they can't move fast enough to respond to the fluid realities of the boosted battlefield. In their place are the fire support specialists, the huge, hulking "line animals" who pack around weapons like the 40mm M87/g Autocannon, the 75mm Man-Howitzer 2021, and the dreaded 9mm "Cerberus-Wardog." Even with Boosted Strength, it's impossible to move fast packing this heavy ordnance. Thus, fire support specialists have to trust to lighter-armed troopers to keep them alive long enough to get off their shots. The best fire support specialists have a simple, straightforward approach to combat (and to life in general), leaving subtlety to the light-fighters and other wimps.

Quotes

"More power!"

"You do it right, and you've never got to look at their faces."

Forward Observer/Fire Control

Enhancements

Radar Sense 10, Telescopic Vision 8

Basic Skills

Acrobatics (Dodge), Gun Combat, Leadership, Military Science

Personality Profile

With the increased popularity of long-range weapons like the Man-Howitzer on the battlefield, more engagements — and more kills — are taking place “BVR,” or “beyond visual range.” While Telescopic Vision and technological advances make it possible to hit targets accurately at ever-greater range, there’s still a need for forward observers (FOs) and fire control officers. These troopers are similar to scouts. They advance ahead of the main force and find observation points, preferably hidden and protected enemy action, from which they can watch incoming fire and direct or “register” the shots by radio. Like scouts, FOs have to be loners. They operate without support, often out of visual contact — and out of support range — of their comrades. The best FOs have nerves of steel, able to hunker down and do their jobs without breaking and running if the enemy force moves in their direction. Casualties among FOs are usually quite high, and members of this MOS have to have the psyche necessary to handle that fact.

beyond visual range: Since BVR engagements don’t make for good video, Combat! Combat! Combat! and other similar shows often enforce Rules of Engagement (ROEs) on their participants, requiring visual contact with a target before it can be “zeroed.” For obvious reasons, troopers hate ROEs...

Quotes

“First rounds are fifty meters short. Pick it up a couple of degrees, and fire for effect.”

“Hold fire... hold fire... Okay, now! Paste’em!”



"Scat!"—Daddy Warcrimes surprises some poor grunt from the DHI 112th Infantry.

HEAVY
INFANTRY

Heavy Infantryman

Enhancements

Boosted STR 15, Boosted RES 10, Reduced Fatigue 4, Regeneration 3

Basic Skills

Acrobatics (Dodge), Gun Combat, Intimidation/Interrogation

Personality Profile

Heavy infantrymen are the "ground-pounders," the grunts who take and hold the territory once the scouts and light-fighters have disrupted the enemy. They do the nasty work and take the heavy casualties while the scouts and commandos get all the glory. More than any other MOS, the heavy infantrymen are parts of a well-oiled machine. They work together, coordinating their actions: leapfrogging fireteams, providing mutual support and suppression fire. While light-fighters and scouts are expected to withdraw from superior forces, the heavy infantry are supposed to hold fast and take their punishment: making contact, maintaining contact, and inflicting casualties on the enemy. Mutual support is the only way they can succeed... and survive. The best heavy infantrymen are the ultimate team players. They know they can't cover all fire-lanes and killing zones, and have to trust their comrades to do their own jobs. They pride themselves on their ability to take punishment and keep on dishing it out.

Quotes

"Commandos take the glory. We take the real estate."

"A fire-team is a single organism with ten eyes, ten brains... and a shit-load of guns."

"Light-Fighter" Rifleman

"LIGHT-
FIGHTER"
RIFLEMAN

Enhancements

Boosted SPD 8, Adrenal Surge 6, Leaping 6, Reduced Fatigue 3

Basic Skills

Acrobatics, Gun Combat, Martial Arts, Military Science (Tactics), Thief (Stealth), Weaponry

Personality Profile

The concept of light infantry saw a resurgence in the 1980s, and has become even more popular on the battlefields of today. While standard heavy infantry depend on interlocking zones of fire, mutual support and punishing fire-power, "light-fighters" depend on speed, stealth and precision. Like commandos, they come in close — almost knife-fighting range — hit fast and hard, then melt back into the surrounding terrain. Light-fighters avoid toe-to-toe, stand-up engagements... largely because they'd get slaughtered by any standard infantry force. Instead, they use guerrilla tactics — feint-and-strike, ambushes and booby-traps — to whittle away at the enemy force. The best light-fighters combine the "lone wolf" initiative of scouts with the mutual support and trust of heavy infantrymen. They often have to operate out of sight and immediate contact with their fellows, while still following a specific mission plan. Most light-fighters consider themselves the highest manifestation of the military art.

Quotes

"We own the night, suckers."

"If we're coming after you, the first time you'll know we're there is when your brain parts company with your skull."

Sapper**Enhancements**

Boosted DEX 6, Danger Sense 10, Hyper Touch 5, Micro Vision 15

Basic Skills

Gun Combat, Invention/Repair, Military Science (Demolitions), Science

Personality Profile

The flip-side of the demolitions expert, the sapper's job is to disarm demolition charges, mines and booby-traps emplaced by the other side. They know all there is to know about the art and science of explosives, and have the twisty, snaky mind-set that lets them figure out where and how the enemy might have set up booby-traps. Sappers have steady hands, and nerves of steel. The best among them have an unshakable confidence in their own abilities — otherwise how would they be able to work on disarming traps that might at any moment blow up in their faces? — but manage to keep from getting carried away with arrogance. Even though they're usually surrounded by support personnel, they do their best work alone — at least, from a psychological perspective. When they're working on disarming a booby-trap or land mine, their own skills are all that matter; they can't depend on anyone else to help them. Obviously, these skills make them the best-equipped to set up booby-traps of their own. A good sapper can look at any locale — from a clearing in a forest to a hotel room — and quickly come up with a dozen ways of turning it into a lethal killing zone.

Quotes

"Now isn't *this* one a joy? Three-way triggering, with a slick little anti-tamper circuit built in."

"Hey, hey, where you going? It's perfectly safe as long as you don't hit that tripwire over there..."

REMFs: "Rear Echelon
Mother-F****ers"

Scout

SCOUT

Enhancements

Boosted SPD 7, Flight Control 15, Life Sense 3, Telescopic Vision 9 **or**
Thermal Vision 9

Basic Skills

Acrobatics, Gun Combat, Military Science, Thief (Stealth), Weaponry

Personality Profile

Scouts are the ultimate loners. Operating far beyond the reach and support of their comrades, they've got to scope out enemy activity, while keeping themselves alive long enough to report back to their own officers. Although they don't get involved in unit-based tactics themselves, they've got to *understand* those tactics well enough to make sense of enemy activity, and discern ways for their own troops to counter it. The best scouts *could* operate effectively as officers, leading men... but wouldn't want to. After all, officers often have to "lead from the front," and depend on their troops to follow orders well enough to keep them alive. Scouts can rarely trust anyone well enough to put their lives in others' hands. To a scout, regular infantrymen are just one step above animals: well enough trained not to make messes in the house, but generally incapable of any initiative and original thinking. Most scouts are regularly disgusted by the way their comrades foul up plans the scouts were instrumental in devising.

Quotes

"Here we go. Another perfect opportunity for those REMFs to screw up for us."

"If you want something done right, do it yourself... and that includes watching your own back."

Sniper**Enhancements**

Boosted DEX 8, Telescopic Vision 9, Thermal Vision 15

Basic Skills

Gun Combat, Invention/Repair (Gunsmith), Military Science (Tactics)

Personality Profile

Most snipers view themselves as technicians, rather than soldiers. If they do their job right — and if their colleagues do *their* jobs right — snipers never get into the rough-and-tumble of a stand-up fight. The only time they should see the enemy, if things go right, is through the scopes of their rifles: a face or just a shape that, with a pound or two of pressure on the trigger, just... goes away... Snipers are dependent on their colleagues to keep them alive if the ebb and flow of battle shifts around them. After all, most sniper rifles are single-action and sighted in for ranges measured in kilometers — not the best weapons for use in a toe-to-toe scrap. The best snipers combine an almost inhuman patience with the uncanny ability to “selectively decouple” their emotions: the people they see through their rifle-scopes aren’t people, not really — they’re just targets. Snipers generally have an appreciation for subtlety. They recognize that sometimes a single 9mm bullet, right on the money at 4,000 fps, can be more effective than a whole barrage of autocannon rounds. They also understand that, sometimes, cacking one single person — the true decision-maker of an opposing force, for example — can do more overall damage than inflicting 75% casualties.

Quotes

“Say the word and he’s meat.”

“It was a perfect shot: center-head at five thousand meters. It *still* gives me wet dreams...”



The Second Amendment says: "Yea, you got the right to pack it!"

SLUMBERLAND
IS THE STAN-
DARD IN
RECONDITION-
ING

OTHER
METHODS ARE
BEING TRIED

AVOIDING THE
"FOUR COLOR"
PROBLEM

NSC & NSA ARE
TRYING OTHER
METHODS

New Boosted Programs

The Slumberland program is the primary paradigm used to train and recondition boosts after their genetic enhancement surgery. Slumberland works, after all (most of the time...), although it does have some problems. Most organizations in the "boost biz" are willing to put up with those problems, rather than wandering off into *terra incognita*.

Most, but not all. Despite vigorous attempts to keep matters secret, rumors are reaching the streets that various outfits — specifically, a couple of the richest conflict firms, plus several agencies within the US government — are investigating "post-enhancement reconditioning paradigms" (PERPs) quite different from Slumberland (although they still use the same extended virtual reality immersion).

The main incentive to try new PERPs is to avoid the so-called "four-color problem", which arises when boosts slip back into the simplistic, two-valued good-evil dichotomy present in Slumberland simulations. Too many boosts have wiggled out under pressure, getting their (highly valuable) comrades killed when they made decisions based on Slumberland concepts of "justice" and "fairness", rather than on battlefield realities. Too many sanity-blasted vets in the throes of metagenic feedback trauma have decided that they're "superheroes" honor-bound to fight the monolithic "evil" institution that is the United States government. In the long term, these "incidents" are costing the conflict firms and the US government money, both in lost or destroyed assets and in resources that must be diverted to deal with the "veteran problem". Thus it makes sound business sense to earmark some R&D funding for investigating PERPs that avoid the four-color problem.

For certain agencies of the US government — specifically, intelligence agencies like the National Security Council (NSC) and the very-shadowy National Security Agency — the four-color paradigm just isn't appropriate at all. Too much of the work that intelligence operatives have

NSA: The National Security agency has become one of the pre-eminent intelligence agencies, unseating the CIA as the "king of black operations". Under its current director, Rodrigo Albeniz, the NSA is locked in a major "funding war" with the larger — and equally unscrupulous — Census Bureau.

seem to be: It's important to remember that everyone conceivably involved in this research is strenuously denying that the research is taking place at all. Any descriptions of new PERPs are based on suspicion, inference, educated guesswork, and wild-assed conjecture.

to do simply doesn't match a good-bad, right-wrong paradigm, and can't be *made* to match it. To mix color-based metaphors, the four-color world is too "black-and-white" — too simplistic, too binary — while the world of intelligence operations is generally finely-differentiated shades of gray. While the directors of intelligence agencies were almost literally drooling over the idea of running boosted operatives in the field — genetically enhanced "super-spies" — they recognized that any such operative reconditioned through Slumberland would almost immediately turn against his own case officers... Obviously, the intelligence community, too, had strong incentives to find other effective PERPs.

So far, this research has progressed in only a few directions — so say the rumors, at least. The central limitation is that any PERP must address the acquisition of "super-powers" in some way. Slumberland takes the "comic-book paradigm" — a radioactive accident, a bite from an irradiated arachnid, a fortuitous accident in the chemistry lab, etc. So far, there seem to be only two other paradigms that have shown any promise at all:

THE MOST PROMISING OPTIONS



"Just hold still Mr. Armbruster... Wouldn't want to connect this wrong."

THE BIONIC EXCUSE

"The Eighty-Four Million Dollar Man"

Under this paradigm, the subject believes she has been critically injured while serving her country in some capacity (sometimes as a uniformed military officer, sometimes in some other function). Under the care of a concerned surgical reconstruction team, her injuries are repaired, replacing those parts of her body that were traumatically amputated with sophisticated "bionic" prostheses. Since these "bionics" aren't limited by flesh and bone, they can be much stronger than normal tissue, and can include some pretty elaborate functions. The virtual reality program covers the post-operative period, where the subject comes to terms with her new abilities, and starts to consider her bionic replacements as truly part of her body. When she emerges from the VR immersion, she subconsciously accepts all her enhancements as resulting from her "bionic implants", rather than from a change in her genetic makeup.

believe: documentable proof to substantiate these claims has never been provided. However, six reporters for various news networks have gone missing in action while investigating this story, and reporters consider such an assignment to be the equivalent of a death sentence.

THE PSIONIC EXCUSE

"The Champions"

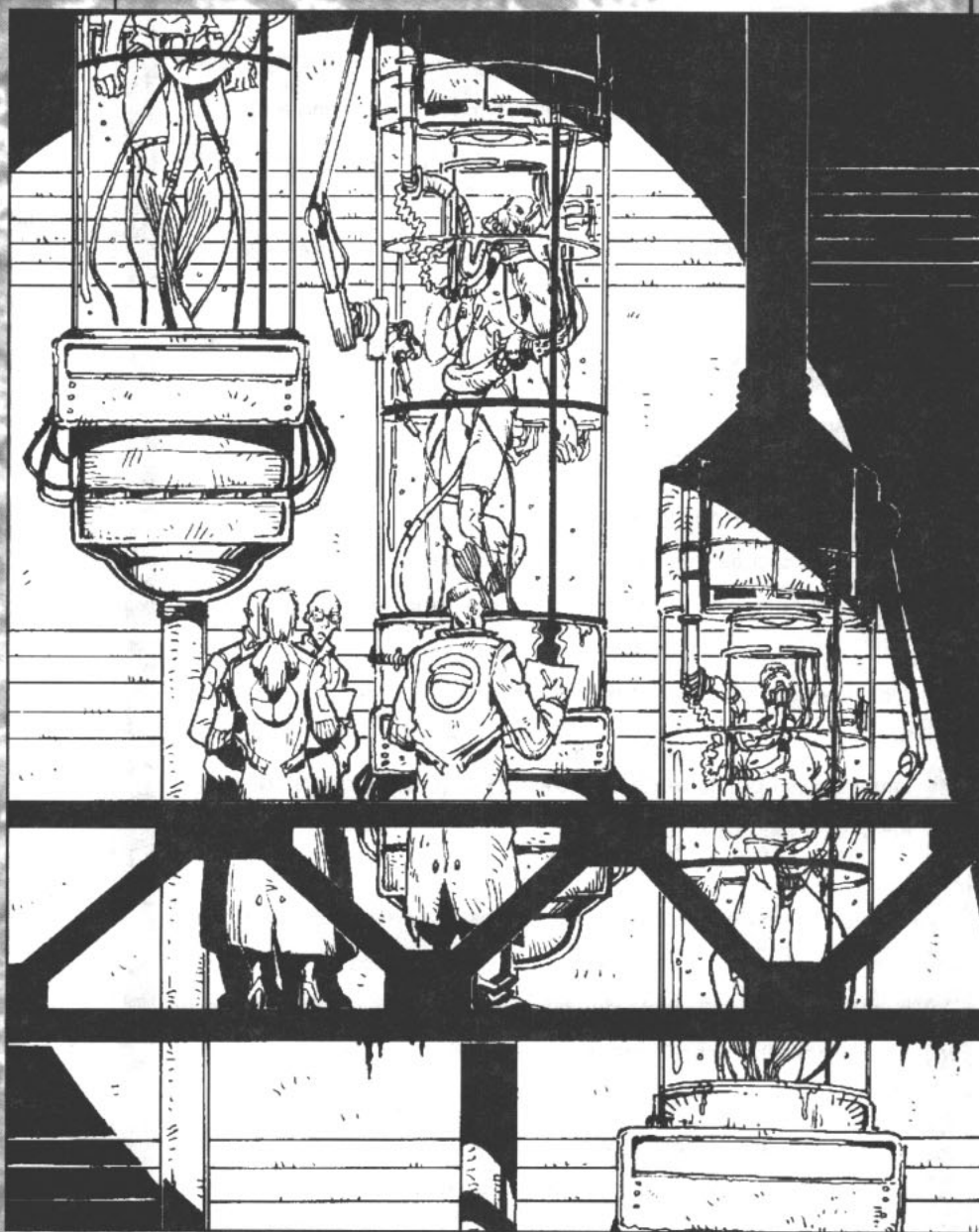
In this PERP, the VR immersion begins with a plane crash on some remote mountain, somewhere in Tibet. The subject is critically wounded, and would certainly die... except for the arrival of mysterious, silent "monks" who rescue him and return him to their Shangri La-like monastery. Over a period of months, the monks train the subject to harness the full capacity of his mind, not just the 10% or so that most people use. His first use of this additional capacity is to heal his injuries at a superhuman rate. Then he learns how to use his new-found mental abilities to perform other "miraculous" effects. His training complete, he returns to the world beyond the mountains... but carries with him forever the wisdom and sense of wholeness the monks taught him. When he emerges from the VR immersion, subconsciously he accepts all his enhancements as "mind-over-matter" effects — "psionics", perhaps — taught to him by his mysterious benefactors.

Bionics or Psionics

Independent analysts — and some pure muckrakers like Peter Argot — believe that some experimental subjects have already emerged from these new PERPs. If conflict firms are using these PERPs to train soldiers, it

doesn't seem likely that they'll be integrated into standard, Slumberland-conditioned units. Rather, they'll probably be compartmentalized, either working alone or exclusively with others of their own kind.

Nobody knows whether any genetically enhanced "super-spies" are yet in the field. The odds are good that there are... but to dig too deeply into the matter is an invitation to be "vanished" some dark night.



Inspected by 10.-AMI's quality control technicians hard at work.

Advantages and Drawbacks

The Traits and Codes described in Step #3 of the Character Creation rules are great tools to help you get a handle on your character's personality. In a sense, they describe how the character views the world around him, and what he considers to be his place in it.

Traits and Codes are "active." In the real world, however — and in the world of *Underground* — many of the formative events and factors in a person's life are *passive*. In other words, they happen to the character, and are beyond his control. These formative factors and events are reflected in the optional rules for Advantages and Drawbacks.

If you and your Gamemaster decide to use these optional rules, you choose Advantages and Drawbacks in Step #3 of character creation, when you choose your Traits and Codes. An Advantage costs Recruitment Points; if you want to it will cost you a certain number of Recruitment Points. In contrast, Drawbacks give you additional Recruitment Points to use for other parts of character creation. (In that sense, Drawbacks are comparable to Traits and Codes.)

No player is required to take Drawbacks if he doesn't want to or if he doesn't think they're appropriate for his character. Players are limited to ten points worth of Drawbacks. (Gamemasters can waive this limit if they wish, of course.)

The following sections list and describe a number of Advantages and Drawbacks. Obviously, this list isn't — and *can't* be — exhaustive. If you want your character to have an Advantage or Drawback that's not included on this list, discuss it with your Gamemaster. If the Gamemaster approves it — if she thinks it's a good idea, and would add to the enjoyment of the game — she can adjudicate the point cost or value by comparison with listed Advantages/Drawbacks.

"active": In other words, they are "character-driven": the character has chosen, on her own initiative, to follow her Traits and Codes.

buy an Advantage: There are no limits to the number of Advantages a player can "buy" for his character. Also, no player is required to buy any Advantages at all.



"Where were you on the night of the thirtieth?"—Mister Ø secures a government witness.

LIGHT SLEEPER
ADVANTAGE

TIME SENSE
ADVANTAGE

ACUTE SENSE
OF SMELL
ADVANTAGE

SENSE OF
DIRECTION
ADVANTAGE

Advantages

Light Sleeper (1 point)

You wake quickly, coming alert instantly, without the moments of disorientation that most people experience. Even the slightest noise or hint of danger is enough to wake you. In game terms, a character without the Light Sleeper advantage is entitled to a Tricky WILL challenge (P/F) to respond to a noise, to wake and to act in a single Turn. With this advantage, waking becomes an Automatic Action.

Time Sense (1 point)

You have an accurate "internal clock." You always know what time it is — give or take a minute or so — and can set an "internal alarm" to wake you or alert you at a particular time.

Acute Sense of Smell (2 points)

Your sense of smell is unusually acute, as is your memory for scents. (While another character might recall that she's smelled a certain perfume before, you recognize that it's Channel #9.) Subtract -1 from the Difficulty of any Challenges involving the sense of smell.

Sense of Direction (2 points)

You have an accurate "bump of direction," making it very difficult for you to get lost. Even after wandering for hours through a pitch-black maze-like sewer, you always know roughly which direction you're facing. Subtract -2 from the Difficulty of any Challenges involving direction, location or getting lost.



"Adios Alibastard!"—The White Devil, stuck between a rock and a .38.

ACUTE
HEARING
ADVANTAGE

Acute Hearing (3 points)

You can hear a pin drop in a crowded auditorium... well, almost. Subtract -2 from the Difficulty of any Challenges involving the sense of hearing.

LINGUIST
ADVANTAGE

Linguist (3 points)

You have a natural knack for languages. If you also have the Languages skill, you are fluent in four additional languages of your choice, rather than the regular three. (This number is modified by Specialization, as stated in the rules.) Also, subtract -1 from the Difficulty of any Challenges involving reading, speaking, writing or understanding a foreign language.

ACUTE VISION
ADVANTAGE

Acute Vision (4 points)

You have much better than 20/20 vision. Subtract -2 from the Difficulty of any Challenges involving vision.

CONTACT
ADVANTAGE

Contact (5 points)

You have a street contact — maybe an informer, a local ganger, a neighborhood shopkeeper, or someone similar — who can sometimes provide you with valuable information. Exactly what this contact knows and how much he/she is willing to help you is up to the Gamemaster. (Note: You can buy this Advantage multiple times.)

FAME
ADVANTAGE

Fame (5 points)

Your reputation precedes you. Somehow your name and your face have found their way into the public ken. (Maybe you enjoyed your fifteen minutes of fame on *Combat! Combat! Combat!* and won the Kill of the Week award...) Subtract -1 from the Difficulty of any AURA Challenge involving the general public.

Wealth (5 points)

You're rich. Maybe you earned it, maybe you inherited it; it doesn't really matter. Instead of the base \$100,000 with which characters usually start, you begin with \$250,000. (Note: You can buy this Advantage multiple times. Each time you buy it, add \$150,000 to your starting wealth.)

Contact, Influential (8 points)

You have a contact who carries a little more clout than the typical street informer. Maybe he's a quartermaster with a conflict firm, or a local politician, or a corporate executive. Exactly what this contact knows and how much he is willing to help you is up to the Gamemaster, but an influential contact should certainly be more valuable than a run-of-the-mill contact. (Note: You can buy this Advantage multiple times.)

Destiny (10 points)

Your life has a grand purpose. You don't know what it is, but you're pretty well convinced you're going to make a difference... *somehow*. Unless you really screw up along the way, you're going to live long enough to attain that grand purpose. Note that this doesn't make the character invulnerable or invincible. A foolish decision or general incompetence can still splatter the character's innards across the landscape. The Gamemaster should keep a character's Destiny in mind, however, and try to avoid killing him off through sheer dumb luck. Remember that the character doesn't know what his destiny is. This gives the Gamemaster a lot of latitude.

Photographic Memory (10 points)

You have an eidetic memory. Once you've seen or heard something, you can recall it with almost 100% accuracy. Subtract -3

WEALTH
ADVANTAGE

INFLUENTIAL
CONTACT
ADVANTAGE

DESTINY
ADVANTAGE

PHOTOGRAPHIC
MEMORY
ADVANTAGE

STRONG WILL
ADVANTAGE

from the Difficulty of any Challenge involving memory.

Strong Will (10 points)

You are tough-minded in the extreme. You receive a +2 bonus to all Challenges that involve resisting interrogation or intimidation. More importantly, subtract -1 from the Difficulty of any WILL Challenge to resist the effects of your Psychosis.

Drawbacks

DEEP SLEEPER
DRAWBACK

Deep Sleeper (1 point)

You could easily sleep through *The Guns of Navarone*. To wake up in response to an outside cue more subtle than vigorous shaking or a glass of water in the face, you must make a Tricky P/F Will Challenge. You are disoriented and incapable of taking action in the first Turn after you awake.

INTOLERANCE
DRAWBACK

Intolerance (1 point)

You harbor an unreasoning hate for some identifiable class of people: politicians, boosted vets, norms, long-hairs, gun-control activists, etc. Your instinctive reaction is to torque them off any chance you get. To be polite to a member of your "target group," you must make an Average P/F WILL Challenge. If you fail, you'll get in their faces (and probably enjoy it).

OVERCONFIDENCE
DRAWBACK

Overconfidence (1 point)

You're convinced you can do it all. The possibility of failure rarely, if ever, enters your mind. You tend to act before you think through all the possible consequences. If you want to soberly consider the consequences of an action before taking it, you must first make an Average P/F WILL Challenge; otherwise, you'll leap before you look.

Phobia, Mild (1 point)

You have an irrational, but manageable, fear of some object, stimulus or condition. (Common phobias include fear of spiders, fear of heights, fear of crowds, and fear of the dark.) Being in the presence of your phobic object makes you quite uncomfortable, and you must make an Easy P/F WILL Challenge to directly interact with that object (i.e., pick up the spider, climb the tall ladder, enter the crowd, etc.). Unless you actually have to interact with the phobic object, a mild phobia doesn't significantly affect your behavior.

Shy (1 point)

You're uncomfortable around people, particularly around people you don't know. To actually strike up a conversation, or otherwise interact with, people you don't know, you must first make an Easy P/F WILL Challenge.

Speech Impediment (1 point)

You stutter, or some other impediment to your speech. Whenever you talk in character, you should manifest this impediment. Further, add +1 to the Difficulty of any Challenge involving making yourself understood under adverse conditions (e.g., when trying to get a message across over a partially-jammed radio circuit). With an immense effort of will, you can suppress your speech impediment for one Turn. This requires a Very Difficult P/F WILL Challenge.

Absent-Minded (2 points)

You'd forget your head if it weren't securely attached. Add +1 to the Difficulty of any Challenge involving memory.

MILD PHOBIA
DRAWBACK

SHY
DRAWBACK

SPEECH
IMPEDIMENT
DRAWBACK

ABSENT-MINDED
DRAWBACK

EASILY
DISTRACTED
DRAWBACK

Easily Distracted (2 points)

Your attention-span is so short that you need a bookmark when reading a postcard. To keep focused on a single task or subject for more than one consecutive Turn, you must make an Easy P/F WILL Challenge on each subsequent Turn after the first.

SKELETON IN
THE CLOSET
DRAWBACK

Skeleton in the Closet (2 points)

You have a "dark secret" in your past — something you will go to almost any length to keep secret. If your secret becomes known, you might find yourself in real trouble — legal consequences, for example — but at the very least you'll find it highly humiliating. You should sit down with the Gamemaster and decide just what your "skeleton" is, and what the consequences will be if the secret is revealed.

BAD VISION
DRAWBACK

Bad Vision (3 points)

You've got lousy eyesight, so bad that corrective lenses can do only so much for you. Add +2 to the Difficulty of any Challenge involving vision (except targeting weapons; modern gunsights are sophisticated enough to negate this penalty).

OBSESSION/
COMPULSION
DRAWBACK

Obsession/Compulsion (3 points)

You're obsessive or compulsive about some action or condition. For example, you're an absolute neat freak, or you're obsessed with the possibility of your phone being tapped. Add +1 to the Difficulty of any AURA Challenge when you're dealing with a person who is aware of your obsession/compulsion.

RAGE
DRAWBACK

Rage (4 points)

Into every life a little rain must fall... and that *really ticks you off*.



Forest Slaznick "pulls a Keanu" with his '09 AMC Royale.

CRIMINAL
RECORD
DRAWBACK

Your typical response to even the slightest setback is a towering rage. This doesn't necessarily lead to violence, but it certainly can. To suppress your natural response and take a setback calmly, you must make an Average P/F WILL Challenge.

Criminal Record (5+ points)

You have a criminal record. If you're a vet, you are ineligible for GI Bill, Fair Housing Act, and VBA benefits. You're ineligible for certain jobs — bonded security guard, corrections officer, police officer, etc. — and may well be hassled by the cops. Add +1 to the Difficulty of any AURA Challenge involving peaceful dealings with law-abiding citizens who know your record. Your Gamemaster might come up with other suitable complications as well. The value of this disadvantage depends on just what you were convicted for. A conviction for armed robbery or assault with a deadly weapon might be worth 5 points. If you're a convicted mass murderer, on the other hand, your record might be worth up to 10 points. The social stigma associated with this kind of record will be much worse, of course (e.g., a penalty of +3 to the Difficulty of any AURA Challenge involving peaceful dealings with law-abiding citizens who know your record).

FATE
DRAWBACK

Fate (5 points)

You're hell-bound and you know it. No matter how hard you try to do good, you're destined to screw things up, and leave the world just a little bit worse than when you entered it. Hope springs eternal that you can turn things around, however.

ONE EYE
DRAWBACK

One Eye (5 points)

You've lost an eye (pick which one), and for some reason a cybernetic replacement won't "take." Add +2 to the Difficulty of any Challenge that requires accurate perception of distance or depth

(e.g., jumping a gap between two buildings, for example). Also, add +3 to the Difficulty of any Challenge involving noticing something in your peripheral vision on the same side as your missing eye.

Phobia, Extreme (5 points)

You have a *strong* irrational fear of some object or condition. So strong is this fear that you must make an Average P/F WILL Challenge to act normally in the presence of your phobic object. If you fail the Challenge, you'll either stand petrified with fear or flee — Gamemaster's choice. If you're a boosted character, you also receive one Stress Point each time you encounter your phobic object.

Weak Will (5 points)

While some people have a will of iron, yours is made of aluminum foil. You suffer a -2 penalty to all Challenges that involve resisting interrogation or intimidation. More importantly, add +1 to the Difficulty of any WILL Challenge to resist the effects of your Psychosis.

Deaf (7 points)

You've completely lost your hearing (perhaps you could never hear), and cybernetic replacement simply hasn't worked for you.

Blind (10 points)

You've totally lost the sight in both eyes. In a pinch you can still fight, but you suffer the standard Darkness penalty (+3) to all To Hit Challenges.

Flashbacks (10 points)

You suffer from a form of post-traumatic stress disorder that causes you to experience periodic flashbacks of particularly stressful situ-

EXTREME
PHOBIA
DRAWBACK

WEAK WILL
DRAWBACK

DEAF
DRAWBACK

BLIND
DRAWBACK

FLASHBACKS
DRAWBACK

ENEMY DRAWBACK

ations you faced in combat. Normally, a character can acquire a flashback only through a roll during Step #8 1/2 in the Character Creation process. If you choose, however, your character can acquire a single flashback as a Drawback. Refer to pages 111-112 in the *Underground* rulebook for details on flashbacks.

Enemy (variable)

Someone hates you and is out to get you. Maybe it's a high-school rivalry taken too far, or maybe you stepped on someone's toes during your military career. Either way, there's someone out there who wants to do you harm, and who has the ability to do so. The point value of this Drawback must be negotiated between you and your Gamemaster, but basically depends on three major factors. How powerful is your enemy (i.e., what resources can he bring to bear on you)? How much ill-will does he feel toward you (i.e., how much does he want to hurt you)? And, Do you know who your enemy is...?

For example, a non-boosted Primitive ganger who wants to embarrass you in front of your colleagues might be worth 4 points. In contrast, a senior IRS investigator who wants to bust you for tax fraud might be worth 5 points. A psychopathic boosted murderer who wants your guts for garters might be worth 10 points, while crime-boss Santa Claws himself might be worth 15. In general, if you don't know who your enemy is — just that you have one — add between 2 and 4 points to the value.

ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE	COST
Acute Hearing	3
Acute Sense of Smell	2
Acute Vision	4
Contact	5
Contact, Influential	8
Destiny	10
Fame	5
Light Sleeper	1
Linguist	3
Photographic Memory	10
Sense of Direction	2
Strong Will	10
Time Sense	1
Wealth	5

DRAWBACKS

DRAWBACK	VALUE
Absent-Minded	2
Bad Vision	3
Blind	10
Criminal Record	5+
Deaf	7
Deep Sleeper	1
Easily Distracted	2
Enemy	variable
Fate	5
Flashbacks	10
Intolerance	1
Obsession/Compulsion	3
One Eye	5
Overconfidence	1
Phobia, Extreme	5
Phobia, Mild	1
Rage	4
Shy	1
Skeleton in the Closet	2
Speech Impediment	1
Weak Will	5

Step #8 1/2 Revisited

"Step #8 1/2", on page 110 of the *Underground* rulebook, describes how players can generate a military career for their veteran characters — how to determine the key events during their tour(s) of duty that might reasonably affect the rest of their lives. This section adds new material to enhance and enlarge this process. Note that, like the original Step #8 1/2, this material is entirely optional. With the agreement of the gamemaster, players can develop their characters' careers along whatever lines they like.

Overall, the procedure for Step #8 1/2 is unchanged. For each year that the character is on active duty, the player rolls 2D10 four times (*without* re-rolling doubles). Each of these four rolls represents one of four possible outcomes in that year of service: Promotion, Decoration, Gain Contact/Trophy, Gain Flashback, Something Catastrophic Happens.

Promotion

As described on page 110 of the *Underground* rulebook, on a roll of 13 or more on 2D10, the character receives a promotion. All characters start at the lowest listed rank for the conflict firm the player has chosen, and progress through the ranks in order.

Although the ranks are given different names in different conflict firms, the progression of responsibilities, duties, authority and perquisites is more or less the same between corporations. (Understandably, since all rank structures are based more or less on the US Army model.)

Operative/Operative/Soldier/Private

This is the base rank in all four major conflict firms. The soldier is more or less a "grunt", the "line animal", the bottom of the pyramid, with no freedom of choice and little freedom of action. The only

Operative/Operative/Soldier/Private: In this and following sections, the words separated by slashes are the rank designations used by the four major conflict firms: Allied Mayhem Incorporated, Trans-World Devastation Inc., Disposable Heroes Inc. And Simmons Global Management Ltd., respectively. For convenience, in the body text the AMI designations will be used.

In Angola: Another Johnson from SGM who won't be punching out after another day on the job.



decisions soldiers at this rank are allowed are moment-to-moment tactical decisions based on their Military Operations Specialty (MOS). Most conflict firms consider this lowest rank as little more than an extension of training (although, of course, the very real chance of painful death is an added element...). These soldiers must obey all orders issued by any higher rank, regardless of where those issuing the orders stand within the overall hierarchy: in other words, whether the person issuing the order is in the soldier's unit or not. Soldiers of this rank live in communal barracks when on base, and privacy is often more highly valued than additional pay or other bonuses.

OverOperative/OverOperative/Master Soldier/Sergeant

There's really little difference between this rank and the one below it, except for experience and — perhaps — increased competence. (Don't let OverOperatives overhear you *saying* that, however...) Soldiers are often promoted to this rank in the field. Generally, no

A SLIGHTLY
MORE
COMPETENT
"GRUNT"

THE LOWEST
RANK OF
OFFICER

additional training is required, and certainly no academic or classroom work is necessary. If she survives, and if she isn't a total screw-up, the chances are good that a trooper can expect promotion to this rank within a couple of years of entering active duty. (This is partially because casualties at this rank are higher than for any other, except for "greenies".)

OverOperatives are often considered the "backbone" of most forces. They're close enough to the "rank and file" to remember what it's really like to be a "line animal", and they don't have their heads filled with — and their attention distracted by — the academic training and more esoteric concerns over which the higher ranks have to worry. Many soldiers of this rank consider themselves mentors to those who serve under them. As for the higher ranks, some are okay; the vast majority, though, have lost track of what really counts on the battlefield, and are destined to become the REMFs that get good soldiers killed.

Soldiers of this rank typically command squads and fireteams. In the field, they bunk with their men; on base, however, they usually share semi-private rooms with three or four others of their rank.

UnderLieutenant/UnderLieutenant/UnderLieutenant/Lieutenant

Most conflict firms view this rank level as the division between "non-coms" and officers. Although OverOperatives are sometimes promoted to UnderLieutenant in the field — to replace casualties, typically — under ideal circumstances the candidate should go through additional training, including considerable classroom instruction on logistics, military history, military science, and advanced operational doctrine. This training is obviously necessary; Operatives and OverOperatives are too concerned with their own moment-to-moment duties to think about the "big picture", after all. Unfortunately, all too many "raw" UnderLieutenants are too busy

"greenies: recruits fresh out of reconditioning and on their first missions in the field.

platoons: On the boosted battlefield, platoons are usually smaller than they were in the past, rarely more than a dozen troopers (often divided into three squads of four, each of which is divided into two fireteams of two).

thinking about the "big picture" — sometimes to the terminal detriment of the troopers under their command. Conventional wisdom holds that most UnderLieutenants "settle down" pretty quickly, however, once they're out of the classroom and back in the field. If they manage to avoid getting themselves and their platoon killed in their first three missions, the odds are they'll turn into fairly good officers.

In most theaters of operation, UnderLieutenants command platoons.

Lieutenant/Lieutenant/Officer/Captain

At this level, the rate of advancement starts to slow down. There are many more qualified candidates for Lieutenant slots than there are actual open slots (unless something goes *really* wrong in the field...).

TYPICAL
REAR-ECHE-
LON OFFICER

"Ya missed me!"—This AMI grunt's about to show the enemy why they call him Angry Pete.



COLONELS
OVERSEE
COMBAT
FROM A DIS-
TANCE

While troopers can often reach the rank of UnderLieutenant just by doing a good job within their MOS and keeping their noses clean, the rank of Lieutenant isn't usually achieved through simple seniority and competence. In other words, there's no free ride to this rank.

Except in the rarest of cases, would-be Lieutenants have to actively strive for this rank. They have to decide that they want it, and go out of their way to be noticed by their superiors. Often, this "being noticed" involves putting themselves — and, perforce, their platoons — into significant danger... and, of course, surviving it.

On the boosted battlefield, with its reliance on fewer, more lethal personnel, Lieutenants are usually rear-echelon officers, coordinating the actions of platoons by radio. When "in country", Lieutenants rarely leave the (relative) safety of reinforced and fortified "firebases". Here, they have access to the Operational Support Computer AdviseR (OSCAR) systems and enhanced communication nets that keep them in contact with their troops in the field and with their superiors. (This doesn't mean that Lieutenants never get shot at, however; modern combat is fluid and exceptionally lethal, and it doesn't take many "leakers" — enemy infiltration troops who make it into the rear echelons — to turn a firebase into a firestorm...)

Colonel/UnderCommander/Master Officer/Major

On the boosted battlefield, Colonels rarely so much as get their dress boots muddy. They're still in country, but almost never find themselves in harm's way. While Lieutenants are typically assigned to firebases, Colonels spend most of their time even further behind the lines. As well as overseeing the combat aspects of an operation, Colonels are also responsible for personnel, transportation and logistical issues as well. Although many Colonels in the "boosted forces" worked their way up from "line animal", for most it's been so long since they fired a shot in anger that they've forgotten many of the

Except in the rarest of cases: Every militant corporation has "urban myths" about troopers — generally, patent screw-ups who didn't give a damn but stumbled into the right place at the right time — who were promoted to Lieutenant... sometimes against their will. This kind of thing doesn't happen often.

This is... conflict firms:
Boosted soldiers are useful,
even essential... but that
doesn't mean they're trust-
ed. Every conflict firm
senior executive knows all
too well about the inherent
instability of enhanced per-
sonnel, and no-one is going
to risk too many valuable
corporate assets to the
whims of a potential homici-
dal psychopath.

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dal psychopath.

moment-to-moment realities of combat. Colonels are fully immersed in "the big picture"... and all too many of them are deeply committed to their own advancement, investing more skull sweat in the politics of promotion than in the continued survival of the troopers under their command. The skill-set for a successful Colonel is more like that of a corporate middle-manager than a soldier. They enjoy their perks, usually including an extensive support staff.

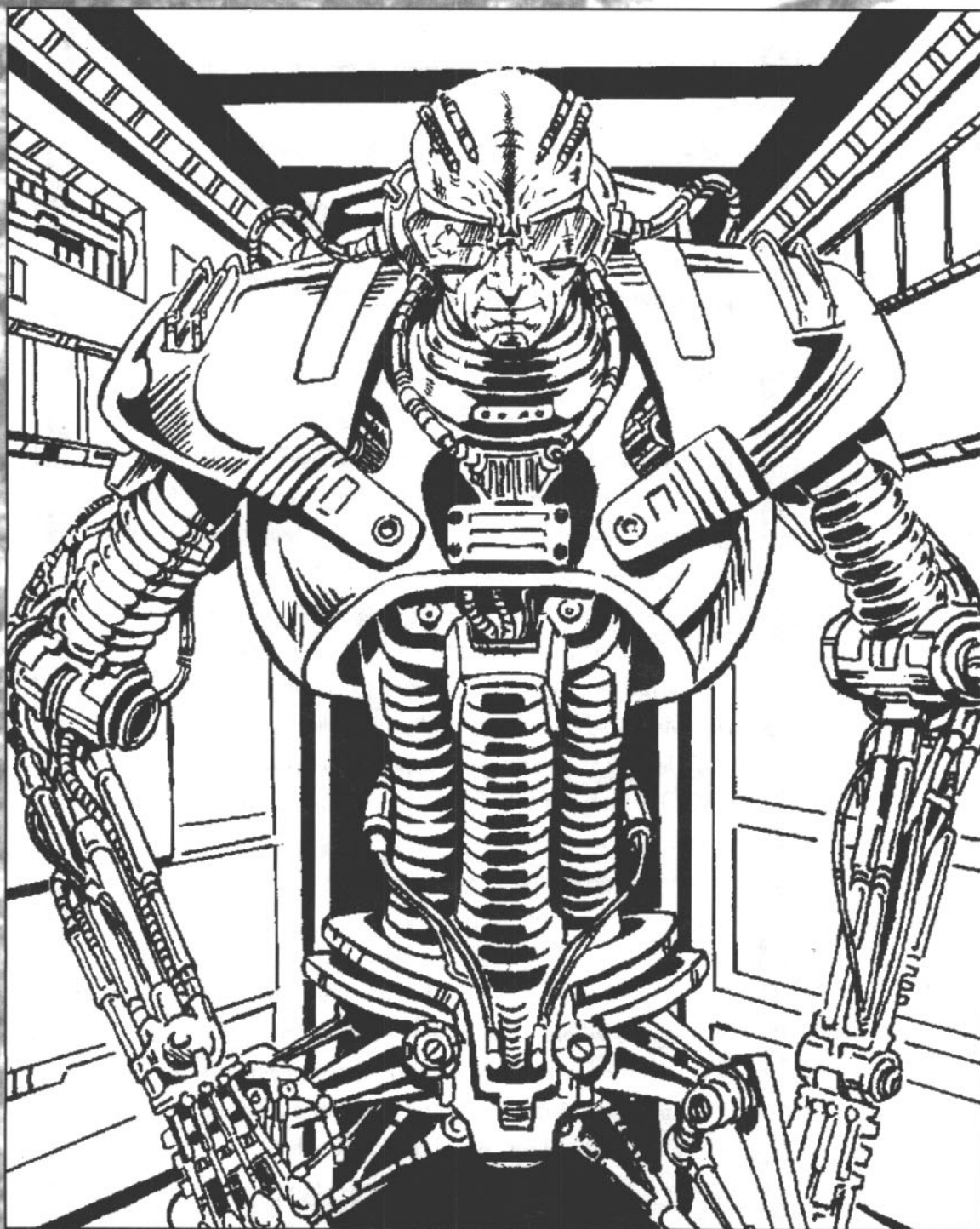
Commander/Commander/Colonel/Colonel

This is the highest rank that can be held by a boosted operative in any of the major conflict firms. There are higher ranks, of course, with more authority, but these slots are filled with "political appointees" — often accountants, lawyers, time-and-motion analysts, and other business types. Commanders have the overall military responsibility for entire operations. In such positions, they're too valuable to risk to the vicissitudes of the modern battlefield; Commanders rarely so much as set foot "in country", spending all their time at corporate headquarters and controlling the conduct of the operation over the communications net. (Many soldiers are horrified by this, believing that a commander should lead from the front... or, at least, from the same continent. The conflict firms privately admit that this might be true... but if the Commanders were in country, how could the senior managers — the *real* power and authority — keep close enough control over them without risking their own precious skins?)

In many conflict firms, Commanders are little more than figureheads. They enjoy even greater perks than Colonels, and have larger staffs — boosted and un-boosted. They know everything there is to know about ongoing operations, on a moment-to-moment basis. To people outside the upper officer corp, it would seem that Commanders have more freedom of action than anyone else in service.

In fact, they often have *less* freedom of action than all but the line

THE HIGHEST
RANK A
BOOST CAN
ACHIEVE



"Diiiiismissed!"—The Klemperomaniac after his latest field promotion.

animals themselves. While they're the "top of the pyramid" with regard to soldiers, they're under very tight control by bean-counters, pollsters, public relation types, and all the other vultures and parasites of big business. While a Commander might realize that the best way to achieve an operational objective is a high-risk assault on a certain communication nexus, her strike orders might be countermanded by a senior cost accountant on purely economic grounds ("The projected expenditure of ordnance for the strike is too great," or something like that.)

Few boosted ops ever reach these rarefied heights, but those who do invariably become crushingly cynical about the whole conflict "industry."

Decoration

On a roll of 12 or more on 2D10, the character receives a decoration: a medal or citation. The chart on page 111 of the *Underground* rulebook lists decorations awarded by the United States (or by the corporate sphere, which is increasingly the same thing...). Sometimes the conflict firms employing the soldiers award decorations and citations of their own, in addition to those issued by the grateful government. If you want to include corporate decorations in your game, replace the table on page 111 with the following table:

Roll Decoration Received

12-14	Purple Heart (indicates you were wounded in field)
15-16	Corporate decoration (see below)
17-18	Bronze Star (for valor)
19	Silver Star (for valor)
20	Tastee Ghoul Soldier-of-the-Month (sponsored by the fast food corporation; awarded for uncommon valor) or Congressional Medal of Honor (for extreme valor) — 50% chance of each.

CONFLICT
FIRM DECORA
TIONS

Corporate Decorations

If the table above indicates you've received a corporate decoration, roll 1D10 on the following table that matches the conflict firm in which the character serves.

Allied Mayhem Incorporated

Roll	Decoration Received
1-3	Meritorious Conduct Citation (for valor)
4-6	Distinguished Service Medallion (for valor)
7-8	Bronze Diamond (for saving a comrade's life at risk to one's own)
9	Silver Diamond (for uncommon valor)
10	Gold Diamond (for an act of extreme valor that significantly benefits the corporation's bottom line)

Another satisfied customer field testing Pueblo Firefight v.9.0.



posthumously: Not to play-
er characters, of course...

reasons for award never
publicized: In keeping with
SGM's low profile and
"mediaphobia", the details
of this award are kept
secret. (Players whose vet-
erans earn this award
should concoct a suitable
background with the
gamemaster.)

Trans-World Devastation

Roll Decoration Received

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1-3 | Silver Starburst (for valor) |
| 4-6 | Gold Starburst (for valor) |
| 7-8 | Gold Starburst with Clusters (for an act of uncommon valor recorded on soma-vid) |
| 9 | Shooting Star (for extreme valor) |
| 10 | Nova (for extreme valor and conspicuously spectacular destruction of enemy assets) |

Disposable Heroes Inc.

Roll Decoration Received

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-3 | Distinguished Service Order (for performance above and beyond the call of duty) |
| 4-6 | Distinguished Service Cross (for valor under fire) |
| 7-8 | Guardian Angel Citation (for saving a comrade's life at risk to one's own) |
| 9 | Eagle's Eye (for attracting positive media attention to the corporation) |
| 10 | Star and Bar (for extreme valor) |

Simmons Global Management Ltd.

Roll Decoration Received

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-3 | Order of Merit (for valor) |
| 4-6 | Order of Valor (for uncommon valor) |
| 7-8 | Order of Bravery (for extreme valor) |
| 9 | Order of Gallantry (for extreme valor under fire; often awarded posthumously) |
| 10 | Order of Simmons (rarely awarded; reasons for award never publicized) |

TRANS-WORLD
DEVASTATION
DECORATIONS

DISPOSABLE
HEROES INC.
DECORATIONS

SIMMONS
GLOBAL
MANAGEMENT

Gain Contact/Trophy

In the *Underground* rulebook, it states that the player and the gamemaster should decide together just what the character receives. The following tables let you determine randomly what contacts or trophies the character receives. (If you don't want to roll randomly, you can still use the tables to help get ideas...)

First, roll 1D10 to determine if the character gains a contact or a trophy: 1-5 — Contact; 6-10 — Trophy. (Or choose.) Then roll another 1D10 and consult the appropriate table.

Contact

Roll Contact Gained

1-3	Another boosted soldier, similar or related MOS; a close acquaintance, not a true friend
4-6	A non-boosted low-level employee of the conflict firm (a supply clerk, cargo pilot, quartermaster, etc.); an acquaintance, not a true friend
7-8	A civilian indirectly involved in an operation (a vid-net reporter, a local civilian caught in the crossfire, etc.); an acquaintance, not a true friend
9	An employee of a <i>rival</i> conflict firm — boosted or non-boosted, your choice; a distant acquaintance.
10	A close friend, a real bosom buddy: boosted or non-boosted, your choice.

Trophy

Roll Trophy Gained

1-3	Mondo armor
4-6	Sound suppressor, uplinked scope, or radiation scope
7-8	Any single Availability D weapon with base cost less than \$28,000
9	Any single Availability E weapon with base cost less than \$28,000 (note that this includes certain missiles...)
10	Three (3) TWD E.M.P. grenades or one (1) AMI "Golden BB" biogrenade (paste!!!)

friend: The player and the gamemaster should decide together what "acquaintance" and "friend" really mean. (As an example, a friend might risk his life for the character; an acquaintance probably won't.)

even if they didn't roll them: The player and GM should always discuss this option in advance, of course.

Gain Flashback

Flashbacks can be a lot of fun from a role-playing perspective — so much fun that gamemasters might consider allowing players to take flashbacks even if they didn't roll them... For maximum enjoyment, any flashback a character gains should be closely tied in to some life event. (These things don't happen for no reason... *usually*...)

Although the mechanics for handling flashbacks are always the same — as described on pages 111-112 of the *Underground* rulebook — the player should take some time to figure out exactly how his character reacts to the flashback. What is his emotional response (for example, terror), and how does that affect his behavior (for example, a violent outburst of rage)? Note that the emotion and the behavior will always be related, but they won't necessarily be "coherent". For example, let's assume a veteran gained a flashback when he saw his best buddy burned to death by a white phosphorous grenade. The character's emotional response whenever he sees a raging fire is absolute terror. Logical... but how does he react to that terror? He could immediately try to flee the area, trampling his aged mother into the ground in his panic as he tries to save his own life at any cost. Or, equally believably, he could fly into a homicidal fury, lashing out his rage at the system and society that condemned his best friend to death by burning, to these many years ago now...

Player and gamemaster should work together to concoct some combination of triggering circumstance, "backstory", emotional reaction, and overt behavior that are interesting, believable and — above all — entertaining.

GAINING RANDOM FLASHBACKS

TRIGGERING FLASHBACKS

The following tables present some example triggering conditions, emotional reactions and overt behaviors. Although you *can* use them for random determination, it's probably better to use them as starting points to develop your own flashbacks.

Triggering Circumstance (Roll 2D10)

Roll	Result
2	Massed and continuous autofire
3	Aircraft approaching at low altitude
4	Loud noises nearby
5	Large stashes of explosives
6	Waterfalls
7	Extreme heights
8	Plane/car crash
9	Raging fire
10	Total silence
11	Prolonged screams of agony
12	Ground shaking (earthquakes, large explosions, etc.)
13	Someone messily killed nearby
14	Being totally immobilized
15	Large bodies of water
16	Climbing tall ladders
17	Thunderstorm
18	Imminent death
19	Receiving an order to retreat
20	Multiple laser aiming dots in a dark environment



"Time for nine holes at lunch?"—Mr. Smith & Wesson can easily handle the grueling tedium of eye-witness interrogation as well as arrange his busy personal life.

GENERATING
EMOTIONAL
REACTION

Emotional Reaction (Roll 1D10)

Roll	Result
1	Anger
2	Despair
3	Extreme sentimentality
4	Fatalism
5	Loss of all emotion
6	Overwhelming amusement
7	Paranoia
8	Sense of impending doom
9	Suspicion
10	Terror

GENERATING
BEHAVIORAL
RESPONSE

Behavioral Response (Roll 1D10)

Roll	Result
1	Flee
2	Lash out in anger
3	Deny that the situation exists
4	Revert totally to the moment the trigger occurred (i.e., act as if people present now were the people present at the time, etc.)
5	Break down and cry uncontrollably
6	Lose all memory of the current event after the fact
7	Try to talk your way out of it (e.g., try to convince someone else to help you so you don't have to take action yourself, etc.)
8	Treat the whole thing as a harmless and hilarious joke
9	Surrender immediately (or try to)
10	Full, gonzo attack

Something Catastrophic Happens

There are too many possibilities here to do more than scratch the surface. Ideally, the player and the gamemaster should sit down

and come up with something entertaining, that the player can live with and is interested in exploring, and that will add to the storytelling possibilities. (The best "catastrophes" are those that have both extensive role-playing possibilities and innate "story starters" or adventure hooks — in other words, things that can alter the direction of the story, or even the campaign, and spin off entire new story lines.) Here are some suggested examples. Again, these are presented in table form, even though random selection isn't the best way to go.

AMI's Screaming Eagles—"We all come out alive or no one comes out alive!"



PLAYING
BOOSTS FROM
DIFFERENT
PROGRAMS

DECIDE HOW
YOUR CHARAC-
TER BECAME
BOOSTED

ALLOCATE
FUNDS

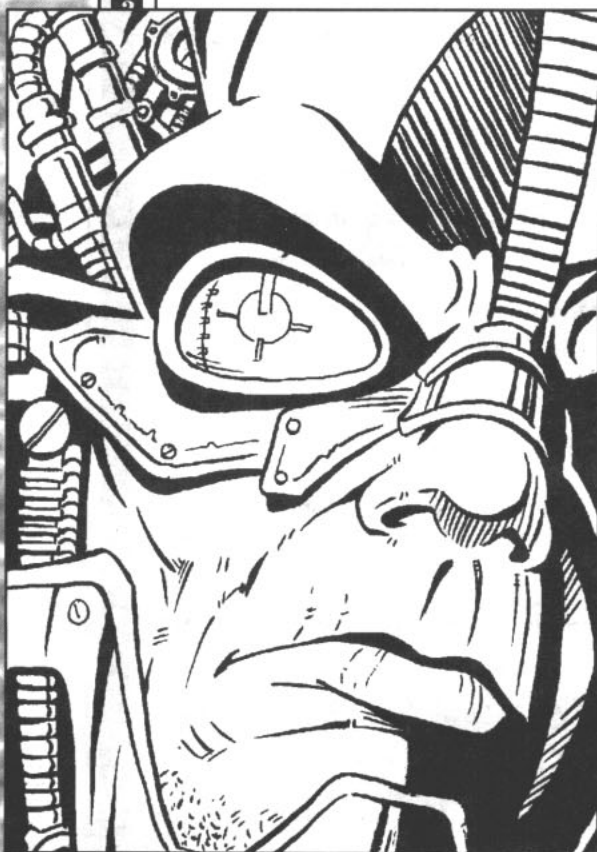
Something Catastrophic Happens (Roll 1D10)

Roll Result

- 1 Character loses a limb (arm: decrease DEX by 6; leg: decrease SPD by 6)
- 2 Character suffers a debilitating disease, decreasing RES by 4. This disease might recur; during these "acute" phases, RES is temporarily decreased by an *additional* 3.
- 3 Character is hideously deformed in an accident; decrease AURA by 3.
- 4 Character is court martialled and cashiered from the service. Her military career ends here, and she has a criminal record. The character might well be disqualified from *all* veterans' programs as a result. (Question: Was the character guilty as charged, or does this represent a miscarriage of justice... possibly one that should be avenged...?)
- 5 Character acquires an enemy — someone from his unit or his conflict firm, or someone from the world outside. While this enemy doesn't want to see the character dead, he certainly wants to see her embarrassed, humiliated or ruined... and has the resources to make this possible.
- 6 Character acquires an unknown nemesis. The character doesn't know who's out to get him or why (the gamemaster should come up with something entertaining). All he knows is that "accidents" seem to keep happening to him on a disturbingly regular basis, growing steadily more dangerous and potentially lethal...
- 7 Character suffers traumatic amnesia, completely forgetting her past... and, perhaps, some of her military training. Purely physical skills are unaffected, but all skills based on INT are decreased by 2 until the memory is regained (if regaining the memory is even possible). Any flashbacks gained before this memory loss are unusually stressful, inflicting *two* Stress Points per Turn rather than the normal one.

- 8 Character was the subject of a vid-net exposé on "war crimes". (Question: Did he actually commit the war crimes, or did a vid-net "trash news" show manufacture the "evidence"?) Everyone stateside knows the character's name, recognizes his face... and reviles him as a murdering scumbag. When the character returns stateside, he's going to have serious trouble finding a job... and maybe even finding a place to live.
- 9 Character has picked up a "groupie" — someone of the opposite sex (?) who absolutely idolizes the character and tags along with her everywhere. Unfortunately, the groupie is more or less a loser, constantly getting himself — and the character — into serious, perhaps deadly trouble. (The groupie also doesn't do much for the character's street rep...)
- 10 Character becomes totally addicted to some potent painkiller (possibly as a result of over-medication after an injury). Stateside, the drug she's addicted to is illegal (Availability E),

and very expensive (as much as \$1,000 a day). Shaking the habit should be exceedingly difficult, and harrowing in the extreme.



"Joe sent me."—A peep-hole's-eye-view of an impending paste bust.

CHOOSING
TRAITS AND
CODES

CHOOSING
YOUR CHARA
CTER'S ATTRIB
UTES

Creating Non-Veteran Boosts

If your gamemaster agrees, you might consider creating an enhanced character who's gone through one of the unusual PERPs listed on pages 34-37, rather than through the standard Slumberland program.

Before starting the process of actually creating a character, take some time to think about his background. Where does he or she come from? What organization enhanced her, and for what purpose? Why, other than for combat, would the great cost of enhancement be necessary at all? The sections described on pages 34-37 detail some possible rationales: a new experimental soldier designed to avoid the "four-color problem"; an intelligence operative or "super-spy"; or a simple experimental subject, enhanced for no reason beyond testing out the technology of a new PERP. The decisions you make here will significantly affect your character's personality, abilities and enhancements.

Now it's time to follow through the character creation process. This process is based on the standard procedure in the *Underground* rulebook, but has some differences. (Note: Non-veteran characters are more appropriate for experienced role-players and *Underground* gamers than they are for beginners.)

Step #1 — Character Concept

Obviously, this will be constrained by the decisions you've just made regarding who is enhancing your character and why. A character who believes he's been given "psionic" abilities to defend his country against Neo-Deutsch infiltrators and saboteurs will definitely have a different world-view — and thus will follow a different character concept — from a street person who was kidnapped and experimented on against her will.

standard rules... Traits and Codes: These rules can be found on pages 98-101 of the *Underground* rulebook.

Again, use the standard rules: These rules can be found on page 103 of the *Underground* rulebook.

Step #2 — Allocate Funds

Theoretically, there's no reason for a program to create experimental boosts to be limited to the standard \$20,000,000 budget. It's up to individual gamemasters to decide about the budget for non-veteran boosts. If play balance and a basic equality between player characters is important, then the budget is arbitrarily set at \$20,000,000. Alternatively, the gamemaster can decide that the budget is higher, perhaps *much* higher — as in the case of a super-spy being created by the NSA — or considerably lower — as in the case of a "prototype" experimental subject. As long as the players and gamemaster are all happy, basically anything goes.

Step #3 — Recruiting/Create Personality

Use the standard rules and guidelines for limiting and non-limiting Traits and Codes. Traits and Codes should be appropriate for the background you decided at the outset. (For example, it's unlikely that the NSA is going to pick a low-life gutterpunk vandal to become their premiere super-spy...)

Step #4 — Recruiting/Purchase Attributes

Again, use the standard rules. If the gamemaster agrees, you might want to "recruit" a character with starting attributes lower than zero. Normally this isn't allowed... presumably because anyone so obviously "sub-standard" isn't going to be accepted by a conflict firm recruiter. If it seems appropriate for the background you've picked, however — e.g., a kidnapped street person subjected to experimental enhancement — you could consider negative attributes.

Taking a negative attribute gives you *additional* Recruiting Points to spend on other attributes or skills. In the following table, these are shown as negative costs. It's not advisable to let a character start off with any attribute lower than -3.

ALLOCATING
YOUR
BUDGET

CHOOSE
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
TRAITS AND
CODES

DETERMINE
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
BASE ATTRIB-
UTES

CHOOSE YOUR
CHARACTER'S
SKILLS

CHOOSE YOUR
CHARACTER'S
ENHANCE-
MENTS

STARTING SCORE	COST
-3	-10
-2	-6
-1	-3
0	0
1	3
2	6
3	10
4	14
5	19
6	24

Step #5 — Recruiting/Purchase Skills

Use the standard rules, but keep in mind the background you chose when picking skills (and particularly specializations). Would the agency enhancing the character teach her certain skills? (For example, would the kidnapped experimental subject be taught how to fire heavy weapons if she's not going to be a soldier?) Gamemasters might decide to declare certain skills "off-limits" to particular non-vet characters.

Step #6 — Design Enhancement Program

Use the standard rules, but again keep in mind the background you chose initially. What enhancements would the agency involve both-
er installing, and why?

Note that, in the case of a pure experimental subject, basically *anything* goes... even enhancements that normally seem redundant, or even contra-
dictory. After all, the experimental program might be intended to examine
the psychological results of such abnormal boosts...

Step #7 — Conduct Enhancement Surgery

Again, use the standard rules.

Use the standard rules (Step #5): These rules can be found on pages 103-104 of the Underground rulebook.

Use the standard rules (Step #6): These rules can be found on pages 105-106 of the Underground rulebook.

Use the standard rules (Step #7): These rules can be found on pages 106-107 of the Underground rulebook.

Step #8 — Reconditioning and Readjustment

No matter what PERP is used — Slumberland, “The Champions”, or something entirely different — the process still has to achieve the same thing, and overcome the same problems (metagenic feedback trauma, etc.). The actual enhancement surgery is the same also. The upshot is that Stress, Tolerance and Psychosis are all determined normally according to the rules.



“Take that, Skycap!”—An aerial firefight over L.A.

DECIDE HOW
YOUR CHARA
TER WAS
RECONDI-
TIONED

DETERMINE
YOUR
CHARACTER'S
NON-MILI-
TARY CAREER

Step #8 1/2 — Determine Career

If you like, you can still spend some time to figure out what happened to your character between the time he came out of VR and when he enters the campaign. Unfortunately, the rules, tables, etc. in the *Underground* rulebook and in the next section of this book don't apply for a non-military character. You should sit down with your gamemaster and develop a "personal history" for your character that fits both with his enhancement and training program and with the background you came up with at the beginning.

The major question you should answer is, "What is my character doing out on the street?" Did he escape from the research facility? Was he kicked out when the program was shut down? Has he turned against his employers and gone freelance? Or is he still "in service" — perhaps on some kind of detached duty? The answers you come up with will strongly affect how your character will fit into the world.

CHOOSE A
CHARACTER
ARCHETYPE

Step #9 — Choose Character Archetype

If any of the archetypes fit your character concept, feel free to use them. You might well find that nothing is appropriate, however. If so, you should decide how your character views himself and his place in the world.

DETERMINE
YOUR
CHARACTER'S
BACKGROUND

Step #10 — Create Background and Finish the Character

Again, the choices you made earlier will have a big effect on this step. The rules for starting equipment and money are appropriate for boosted veterans, but they might not work at all for your character. Depending on your character concept, you could start off with considerably more money — perhaps some "contingency funds" you socked away while hunting spies for the NSA — or with nothing but the hospital smock you were wearing when you escaped from the

vast majority: There are probably fewer than 2 million Homo superiors in the United States, out of a population of well over 570 million.

significant disadvantages:

They're distrusted, often hated, by the populace at large, and that distrust is reflected in concrete terms: difficulty in finding jobs and accommodation, scarcity of truly effective government programs, etc. They often have no useful skills, apart from killing other people in efficient and innovative ways. And, worst of all, the multiple specters of meta-genetic feedback trauma, stress and psychosis lurk at their shoulders.

nowhere near... of vets: Depending on the nature of the Underground campaign, that can be okay. In a toe-to-toe fight, a boost will be able to reduce most norms to catfood without breaking a sweat. The upshot is that a non-boost simply has to avoid getting into that toe-to-toe scrap... In the environment of Underground, there are plenty of ways for a smart and competent norm to make her own way in the world... and make life plenty difficult for boosted characters as well, if that's her intention.

research lab. As with so much of this process, you should sit down with your gamemaster and devise something that you both agree with

Creating Non-Boosted Characters

Boosted characters — specifically, boosted veterans — are the central focus of the *Underground* game. In the fictional world in which *Underground* takes place, however, non-boosted characters are in the vast majority. Even though the H. superior community is quite closed and cliquish — largely because of the popular distrust of boosted vets — the majority of people a vet will encounter on a day to day basis are non-boosted.

Playing "Norms"

Let's face it. In the world of *Underground*, boosted vets enjoy some very real advantages. They're tougher, faster and more resilient than the norm, and they possess one or more genetic enhancements that give them powers not normally seen outside four-color comic books. On the other side of the scale, however, they suffer under some significant disadvantages. While the struggle against these disadvantages represents one of the central "themes" of *Underground*, sometimes players may want to "set aside their load" for awhile, and play characters who don't have to labor under those handicaps. For these reasons — and others — players might occasionally find it a lot of fun to play non-boosted characters: "norms."

In terms of absolute power, few norms are ever going to come anywhere close to even the wimpiest boosted vet. Certainly, there'll be the occasional "superstar" whose finely-honed skills make him or her as competent — or even as lethal — as H. superiors... but these will be few and far between. The following procedure for creating non-boosts can be used to design these superstars — if the Gamemaster agrees, of course — with some modifications. The way it's written, however, it will result in norms who are far above average for non-boosts, yet nowhere near as tough or powerful as the majority of vets. (Note that the Gamemaster can use this process — or a modi-

CREATING
NON-BOOSTED
CHARACTERS

PLAYING
NON-BOOSTED
CHARACTERS

fied version — to create non-boosted allies and foes for the boosted player characters.)

he process follows many of the same steps used for creating boosted characters (see the *Underground* rulebook, starting on page 93).

Step #1 — Character Concept

As with any character, the first — and arguably the most important — step is to decide just what sort of character you want to create. Who is he/she? What is his/her place in the world? What does the character want? What are his/her goals?

Remember that this process will develop characters who are extraordinarily well-skilled — truly above-average individuals, who will probably rise to the top of their profession... whatever that profession may be. You should certainly take this into account when deciding on your character concept. If the character you're designing *isn't* at the top of his profession... why not?

At this point, give some thought to your character's "backstory" — what happened to him during the years before he enters the campaign. What kinds of jobs has he held? What kind of training and experience has he received? This will be important later, when you're choosing skills for your character. Many of the skills listed in the *Underground* rulebook are specifically appropriate for veteran characters — individuals who've undergone military training — and singularly inappropriate for civilian characters. (For example, let's say you're designing a crusading journalist, a rival of Peter Argot. Where would your average journalist receive training in firing heavy military-grade weapons...? Your Gamemaster might not allow you to take the Heavy Weapon specialty of the Gun Combat skill... and, in fact, might declare whole categories of skills "off limits.")

Also keep in mind that your character might be a veteran... just not a *boosted* vet. Even with the growing popularity of boosted sol-

truly above-average individuals: The process will create (to use real-world examples) the Michael Jordans, the Emerson Fittipaldis, the Albert Einsteins, the Winston Churchills, and the George Pattons of the *Underground* world.

MOS: Military Operations
Specialty

Use the standard rules:
These rules can be found
on pages 98-101 of the
Underground rulebook.

diers, norms are still being recruited in great numbers as support troops and to serve in many non-combat positions. All military personnel, regardless of MOS, will undergo at least basic training, which gives them access to military skills.

Step #2 — Allocate Funds

Your non-boosted character hasn't undergone genetic enhancement; thus, this step isn't appropriate as written. Instead, start with a pool of Recruitment Points. The exact number of points in this pool is up to you and your Gamemaster. A pool of 50 to 75 points will let you create an exceptionally competent norm character. The Gamemaster can increase or decrease this pool to suit the requirements of his or her individual campaign.

To give you an idea of what kind of norm you can create with this pool of points, here are the "point costs" of three major characters from the *Underground Notebook*:

Charles Foster: 28 Recruitment Points

Dr. Rudolph Bushmiller: 81 Recruitment Points

Peter Argot: 64 Recruitment Points

As you can see, it doesn't necessarily take a huge passel of points to create a real "mover-and-shaker."

Step #3 Recruiting/Create Personality

Use the standard rules and guidelines for limiting and non-limiting Traits and Codes. Traits and Codes should be appropriate for the background you decided at the outset. Points you receive for Traits and Codes are added to your Recruitment Point pool.

DETERMINING
YOUR
RECRUITMENT
POINTS

CHOOSE YOUR
CHARACTER'S
PERSONALITY

DETERMINE
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
ATTRIBUTES

CHOOSE
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
SKILLS

CHOOSE A
MILITARY
CAREER

Step #4 Recruiting/Purchase Attributes

Again, use the standard rules. If the Gamemaster agrees, you might want to "recruit" a character with starting attributes lower than zero.

Step #5 Recruiting/Purchase Skills

Use the standard rules, but keep in mind the background you chose when picking skills (and particularly specializations). Where would your character have learned certain skills? (For example, where would an ivory-tower academic have learned how to fire heavy weapons?) Gamemasters might decide to declare certain skills "off-limits" to particular norm characters.

Step #6 — Design Enhancement Program

Skip this step.

Step #7 — Conduct Enhancement Surgery

Skip this step.

Step #8 — Reconditioning and Readjustment

Skip this step.

Step #8 1/2 — Generate Military Career

Even though the procedure described in the *Underground* rulebook, and elsewhere in this chapter, isn't particularly appropriate for non-booster, you should still take the time to figure out your character's personal history. What universities did he attend? What jobs did she hold?

use the standard rules (Step #4): These rules can be found on page 103 of the *Underground* rulebook.

attributes lower than zero: This possibility is discussed in more detail in the section **Creating Non-Veteran Boosts** on page 70.

use the standard rules (Step #5): These rules can be found on pages 103-105 of the *Underground* rulebook.

Use the standard rules:
These rules can be found on
page 108-110 of the
Underground rulebook.

Step #9 — Choose Character Archetype

Use the standard rules, but modify the archetypes to reflect the fact that your character isn't boosted. Obviously, certain archetypes are inappropriate — or totally impossible; the Cyber-Celeb, for example — for norms. Some of the archetypes presented in this book, such as the journalist, are appropriate for non-boosted characters.

Step #10 — Create Background and Finish the Character

Again, the choices you made earlier will have a big effect on this step. The rules for starting equipment and money are appropriate for boosted veterans, but they might not work at all for your character. Depending on your character concept, you could start off with considerably more money — perhaps what's left of a rich government

research grant — or with next to nothing (thanks to an ill-advised investment). As with so much of this process, you should sit down with your Gamemaster and devise something that you both agree with.

New Archetypes

On the following pages are eight new character archetypes similar to those found on pages 116-123 of the *Underground* rulebook. As noted on page 113 of *Underground*, these archetypes are optional. They are intended to help beginners get a handle on their characters.

CHOOSE AN
ARCHETYPE

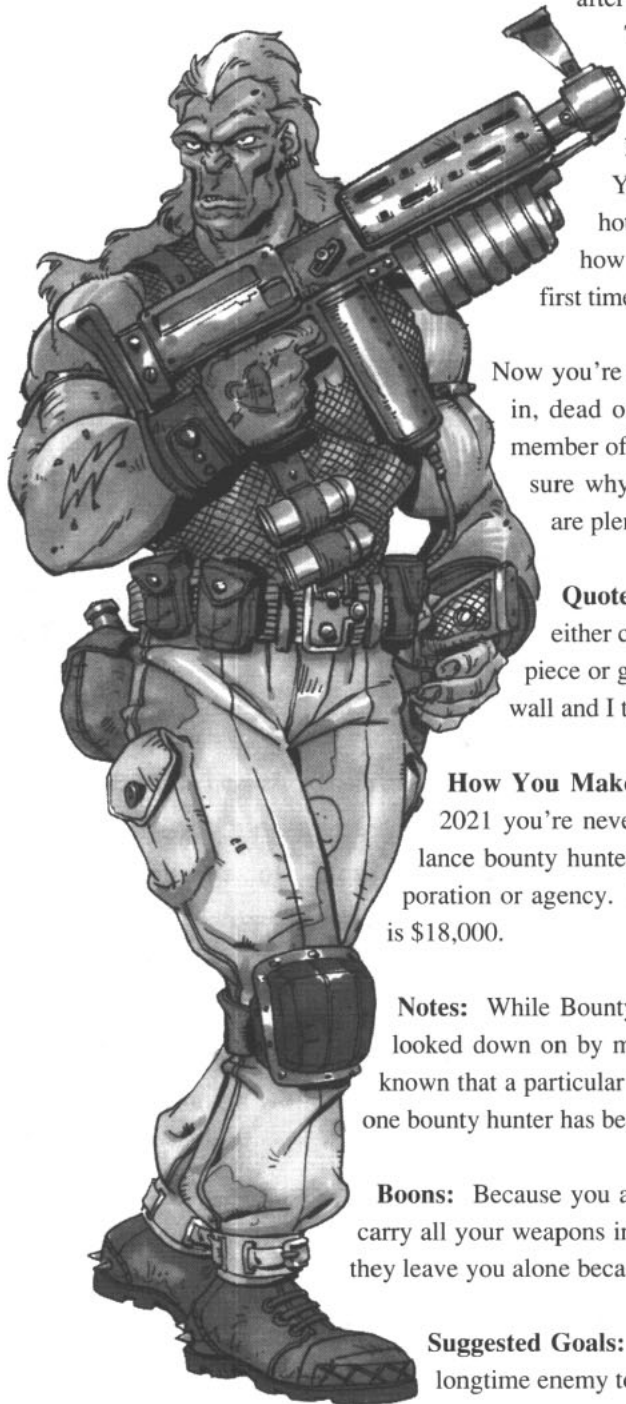
DETERMINE
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
BACK-
GROUND

8 NEW CHAR-
ACTER
ARCHETYPES



Project 666-Naziferatu gloats over his latest plan for world domination.

Bounty Hunter



You have no pity for all the chumps who freak out after gettin' boosted.

They don't realize what they got.

When you were a regular Joe you didn't have much going for you, so you joined up.

You got boosted and toured every Third World hotspot this side of Antarctica. You remember how you felt during your first firefight. For the first time you had power and you liked it.

Now you're a freelance bounty hunter. You bring scum in, dead or alive — mostly dead. You won't nail a member of the Underground, though. You're not really sure why, but it just don't feel right. Luckily there are plenty of other criminals to go around.

Quote: "This is the end of the line, pal. You can either come with me quietly and in one piece or get spattered all over that nice, freshly painted wall and I take you in in a pail. Which is it gonna be?"

How You Make a Living: You hunt down criminals. In 2021 you're never short of work. You can either be a freelance bounty hunter or you can be retained by a particular corporation or agency. In either case your starting monthly income is \$18,000.

Notes: While Bounty Hunters are common in 2021, they are still looked down on by most. Veterans can be very vindictive if it is known that a particular bounty hunter takes in other vets. More than one bounty hunter has been the victim of a fly-by by a vengeful vet.

Boons: Because you are a licensed bounty hunter, you can legally carry all your weapons in the open. The police may not like you, but they leave you alone because you make their job easier.

Suggested Goals: Find something worth fighting for; bring a longtime enemy to justice.

Bimbo

When the recruiter-man said "you wanna' be all that you can?" you said "sure." 'Cause man, there's no better way to get the chicks than getting your biceps genetically altered so they're as big as tree trunks.

You don't care about nothin' but lookin' cool. A lot of vets are sayin' the world is lookin' bad. Well, you got a shiny new gun, and all you gotta say is, you sure look **GOOD!**

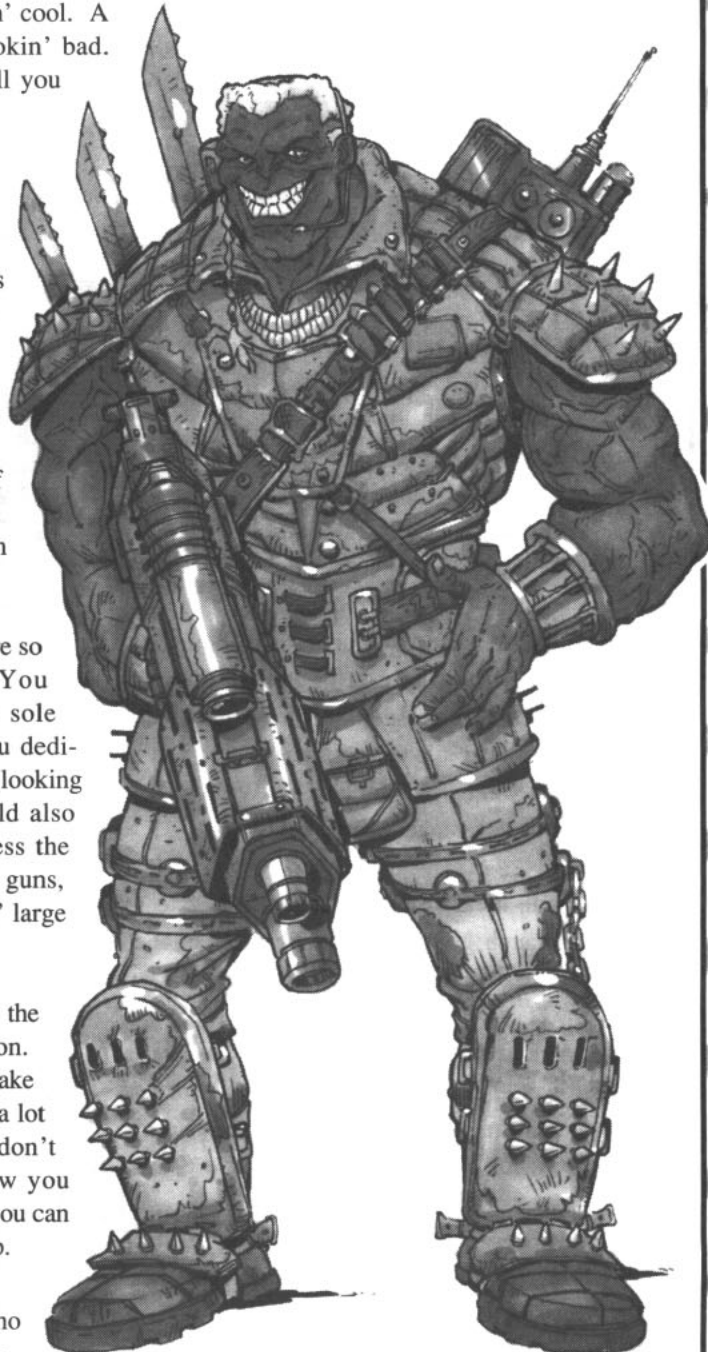
Quote: "Yeah, babe, that's a gun in my pocket...and I'm happy to see ya."

How You Make a Living: Most Bimbos work retail jobs where they meet hundreds of available folks a day. Often they work in clothing or weaponry stores where they can get employee discounts on their "accessories." As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$14,000, and you may choose to have a 20% discount one type of retail item (clothing, guns, coffee, etc.).

Notes: You must decide why it is you're so hell bent on impressing people. You became genetically enhanced for the sole purpose of looking good, and now you dedicate your life to the pursuit of badness (looking cool for the white bread). You should also decide what method you use to impress the babes. Some Bimbos carry enormous guns, while others just look like they're livin' large in their fine cut clothes.

Boons: You have gotten used to doing the coolest possible thing in every situation. Add two units to any Aura rolls you make based on looking good. You also have a lot of superficial friends — people who don't really care much about you, but know you nonetheless. If it's nothing too serious, you can ask your large network of friends for help.

Suggested Goals: Win back the girl who broke your heart; become a living legend; do the bedtime samba as often as possible.



Private Investigator

Sure, things got pretty hairy in Paraguay, but you made it out. Now folks rely on your knowledge and enhancements to take care of things that the cops just don't care about.

You've seen a little bit of everything, and it takes a whole lot more than some scrawny punk with a GCS 15Gsa to scare you off. When there's something that's gotta get found out, or something's gotta get done, you're the one who gets called. And if in the process of doing your job, a few punks have to lose their teeth, that's okay by you.

Quote: "Yeah, can any of you loser-boys with bad haircuts tell me where I might find the Golomite? I'm only asking nicely once."

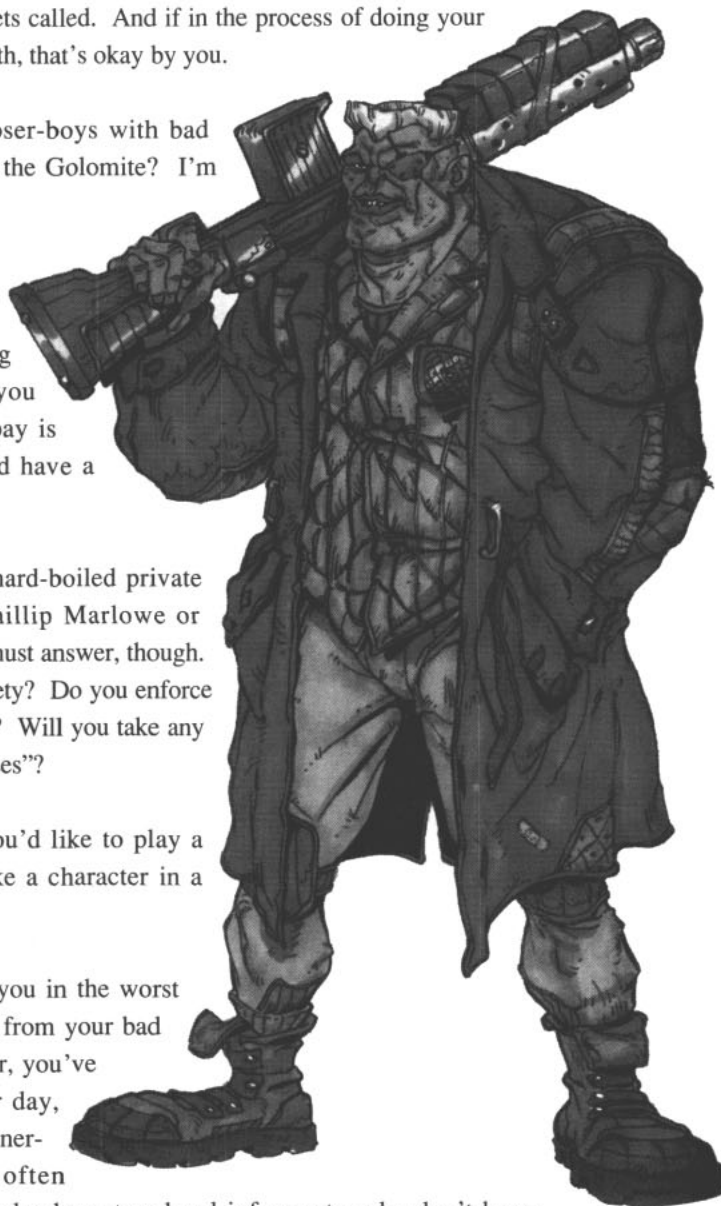
How You Make a Living: People pay you to find friends of theirs from the service, track down missing debtors, follow their spouses — you even work as a bodyguard if the pay is right. You charge a daily rate, and have a monthly income of \$18,000.

Notes: You are as tough as nails, hard-boiled private investigator in the tradition of Phillip Marlowe or McCloud. There are questions you must answer, though. Where do you stand in a lawless society? Do you enforce the law, or do you break it for a case? Will you take any case, or do you never take "charity cases"?

The P.I. is an ideal archetype if you'd like to play a ham-fisted tough guy who talks like a character in a 1930s movie (or thinks he does).

Boons: Almost everybody knows you in the worst parts of town. They recognize you from your bad haircut and cheap clothes. However, you've helped out a lot of people in your day, and those people have friends. In general, nobody gives you guff, and often they'll give you information. You also have two loyal informants, who don't know much, but what they do know is all yours.

Suggested Goals: Get the big case and make a fortune; clean up the neighborhood; make it through tomorrow.



Clergyman

You've been with the church nearly all your life. Most of that time, you have worked in desolate neighborhoods, trying to bring redemption to the hopeless.

When the church told you that they could make your mission more successful by giving you "boosted abilities," you thoughtfully accepted. Now you do the Lord's work in the country's worst neighborhoods. And yea, though you walk through the valley of shadow of death, you fear no evil, for the Lord has provided you with a really **BIG GUN**.

Quote: "The evil ways which lurk within your mind will be exposed for all to see... either by your own words or by my gun all over that wall!" CH—CHK!

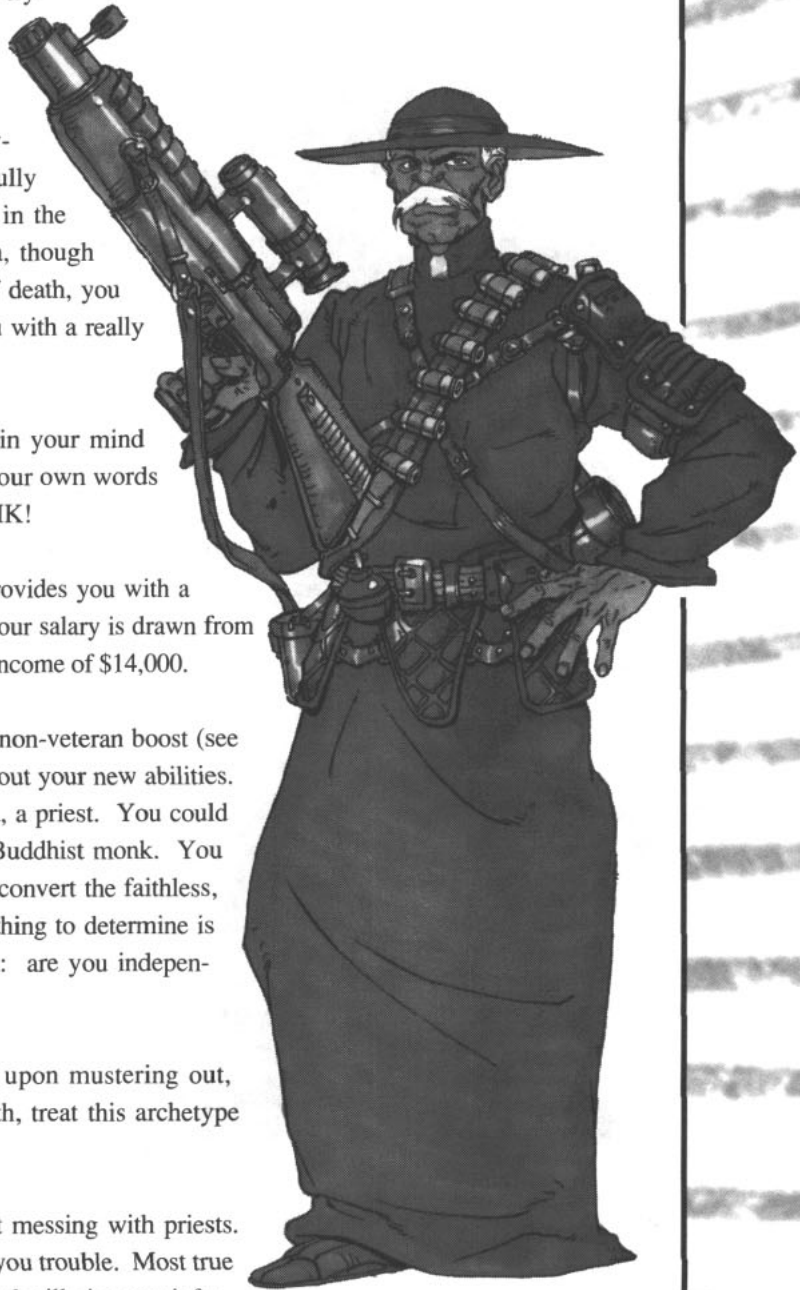
How You Make a Living: The church provides you with a parish (probably in the church itself), and your salary is drawn from donations. You begin play with a monthly income of \$14,000.

Notes: This is one possible example of a non-veteran boost (see p.70). You should decide how you feel about your new abilities. Also, you should decide if you are, indeed, a priest. You could be a rabbi, a Scientology instructor, or a Buddhist monk. You should also decide whether you are out to convert the faithless, or merely to protect your flock. The last thing to determine is your relationship with your parent church: are you independent, or a puppet of the Neo-Vatican?

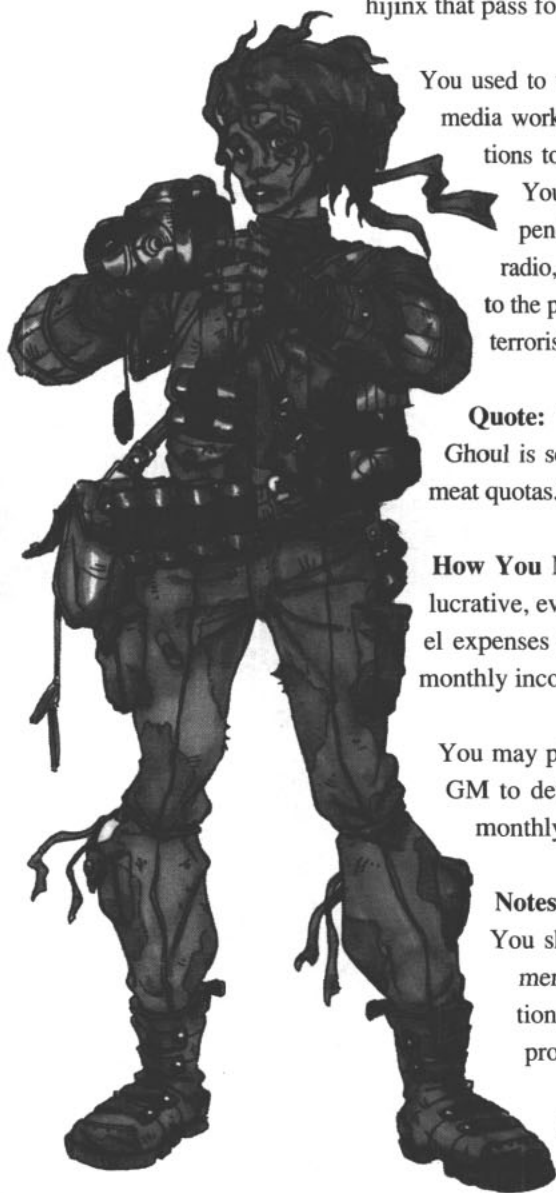
If you like, you may be a veteran who, upon mustering out, joined the church. If you choose this path, treat this archetype as normal.

Boons: In general, people feel bad about messing with priests. Only the seriously hardcore bad guys give you trouble. Most true folks in the 'hood appreciate your efforts and will give you information or a helping hand, should you ask. If things get really bad, your parent church may send in help.

Suggested Goals: Clean up the neighborhood; convert the faithless; help the needy.



Journalist



The system is corrupt to the core and it's your job to expose the corporate hijinx that pass for democracy in the USA.

You used to work for a major media corporation but learned that the media works hand in glove with the government and other corporations to further their own interests and maintain the status quo.

You decided to do something about it, and became an independent journalist. You use any format — pirate TV and radio, electronic zines, even newsprint — to get your message to the people. You've made many enemies, some even call you a terrorist, but you won't stop until the truth is heard.

Quote: "Stop the Laz-o-press(tm)! I just got a tip that Tastee Ghoul is sending Death Squads into the ghetto to meet their new meat quotas."

How You Make a Living: Fighting the system has never been lucrative, even in the media biz. You have to spend a lot on travel expenses and, of course, bribes. As play begins, you have a monthly income of \$18,000.

You may play a member of the corporate media. Work with the GM to determine what kinds of limitations this entails. Your monthly income would start at \$35,000.

Notes: This is an example of a non-boosted PC (see p.75). You should choose one issue that you are particularly vehement about, be it veteran's rights or environmental destruction. This issue should be the focus of your work and can provide easy tie-ins with other characters.

If you like, you may play a vet who, upon mustering out, became a journalist.

Boons: You have many contacts and if you need a piece of info, chances are you know someone who could help. However, most of your contacts operate underground, so you can't always find them. Also, you probably belong to a small organization that provides you with money and story leads. Work with the GM to determine the details of this organization.

Suggested Goals: Get the truth to the people; stop a particular corporation or political group.

Spy

They told your family and friends you died in battle far away from home. They gave you a new name, a new face, and a license to kill. Now you're a company man fixing leaks in the government's "plumbing."

You never expected you would end up as a part of the nation's intelligence network. Membership does have its privileges, though. You are respected, you look very sharp, and they're always giving you new gadgets to play with. Of course, many of the things the government asks you to do are unsavory, but look at the perks!

Quote: "I understand you may have sold a few files to the Neo-Deutsch. Tsk tsk tsk. We're not very happy about that."

How You Make a Living: You have been given a house and a car (it is up to the GM to decide what kind), but you have little time which is not the government's. You begin play with a monthly income of \$25,000.

You may play a corporate spy, who performs espionage missions. You receive no home or car, but you begin play with a monthly income of \$40,000.

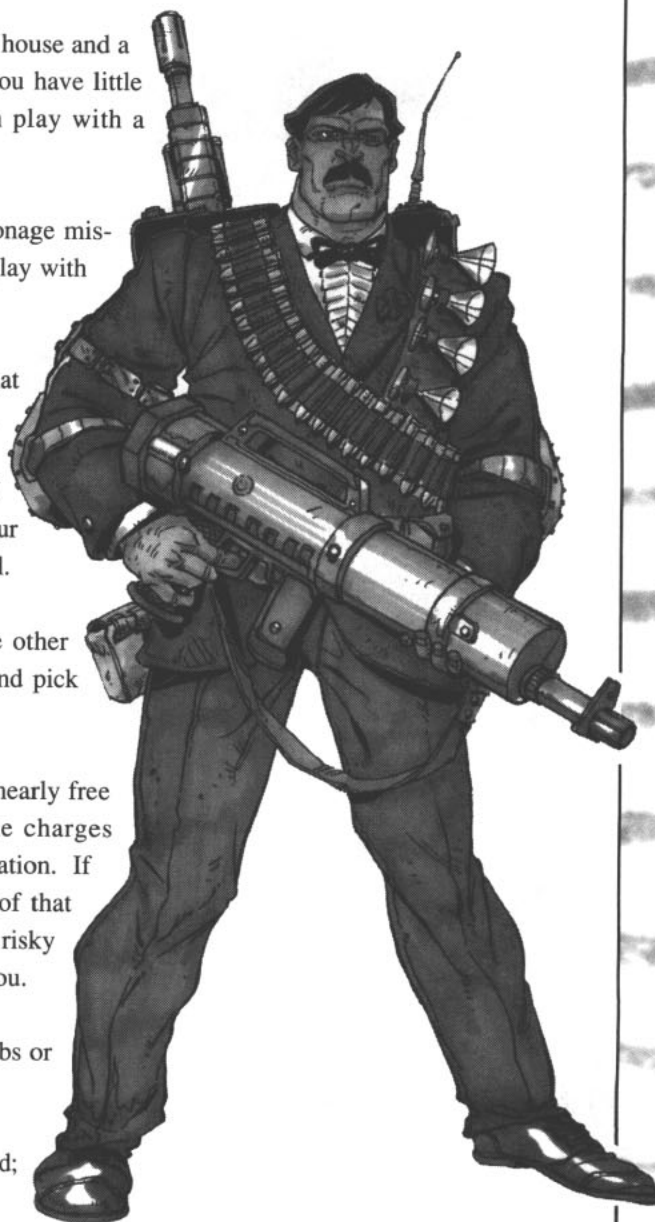
Notes: You are in a sensitive position, showing that your employer trusts you. You must decide why. You should also decide how you feel about your job, which involves a lot of killing. You and the GM should design your "cell," the people who give you your missions, gadgets, and who are your contacts in general.

Your character may be an infiltrator spying on the other PCs. If so, you should discuss this with the GM and pick another archetype which you pretend to be.

Boons: If you work for the government, you have nearly free reign. If you are arrested, your cell will get the charges dropped. You also have access to top secret information. If you work for a corporation, you have the muscle of that particular corporation behind you. It is possible in a risky situation, however, for either employer to abandon you.

You are occasionally given gadgets, like watch-bombs or pen-lasers.

Suggested Goals: Infiltrate and destroy the underground; expose your corrupt employers and live to tell the tale.



Entertainer

The revolution won't be televised, but you're gonna make damn sure it has a soundtrack.

You see yourself as the torch bearer of revolution in music. You have a proud pedigree: Zappa, the MC5, Crass, the Ex, Peter Tosh, and Systematic Overthrow to name a few. In 2021, people are so desensitized by media bombardment and cultural bankruptcy that music is one of the few ways left to really reach them. The type of music isn't important. The message is the thing, and you're gonna make sure people listen. As a boosted vet, you've got plenty to sing about. *Ballad of the Green Beret*? Try *Ballad of the Corporate Corpse*. It's time to kick out the jams!

Quote: "When the revolution comes/Which way's it gonna fall?/Will you stand up and fight?/Or stand against the wall?"

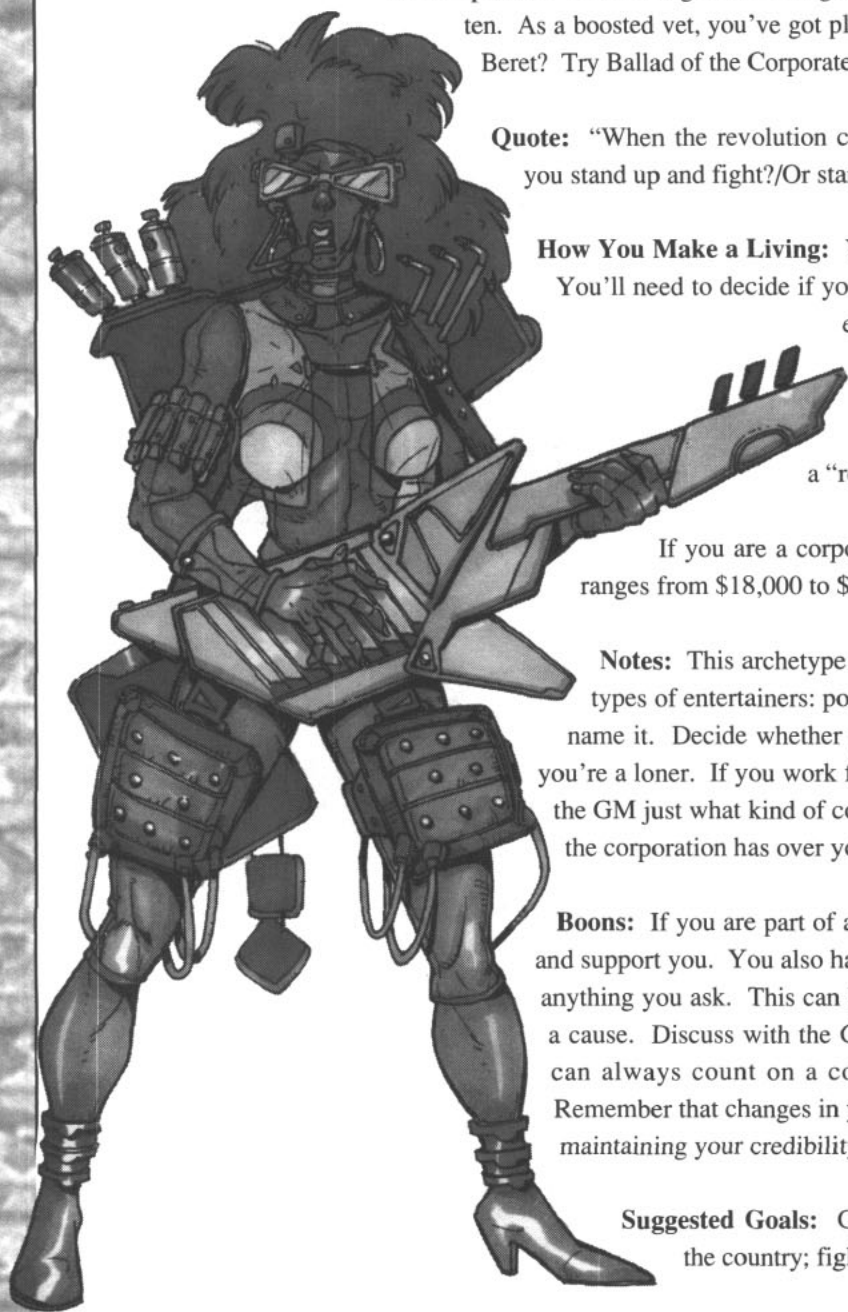
How You Make a Living: You make a living through your music. You'll need to decide if you're willing to work with the corporate entertainment firms. If not, you have a rocky road ahead. If you do it yourself, you begin play with a monthly income of \$14,000 and you may sport a "real" job.

If you are a corporate entertainer, your monthly income ranges from \$18,000 to \$35,000.

Notes: This archetype is not just for musicians, it includes all types of entertainers: poets, performance artists, porn stars, you name it. Decide whether you're part of a scene or movement or you're a loner. If you work for the corps, you should work out with the GM just what kind of contract you have and how much control the corporation has over you.

Boons: If you are part of a movement, you have friends that help and support you. You also have fans, some of whom will do almost anything you ask. This can be very useful in mustering support for a cause. Discuss with the GM how much clout you have, but you can always count on a core group (a fan club, for instance). Remember that changes in your image will affect your fan base, so maintaining your credibility is important.

Suggested Goals: Get out of your corporate contract; tour the country; fight the power; become wickedly famous.



Homeless Person

You're homeless and that gives you one advantage: you're underestimated. It's saved your life more than once.

You've been on the street since you were a kid and you know about survival. You joined the military looking for something better but you just got treated like dirt. You survived, though, and you did it by using what you learned on the streets. All those suckers who wanted to be heroes are now fertilizing Angola.

Most folks would have expected you to leave the streets behind when you mustered out, but you know where home is. You've got a lot of friends who need your help. There's always jerks looking to get their kicks at the expense of the homeless. You've taken it upon yourself to stop them.

Quote: "You think we're all stupid, don't you? You think you can get away with anything down here, don't you? Well I've got a 20mm that says you're wrong!"

How You Make a Living: You don't. You have no source of steady income. Every day is a new challenge, but you get by. Your most regular income comes from selling weapons you take from young punks. The brainjackers are best for this, so you keep a careful eye out for them. As play begins you have an average monthly income of \$2,000.

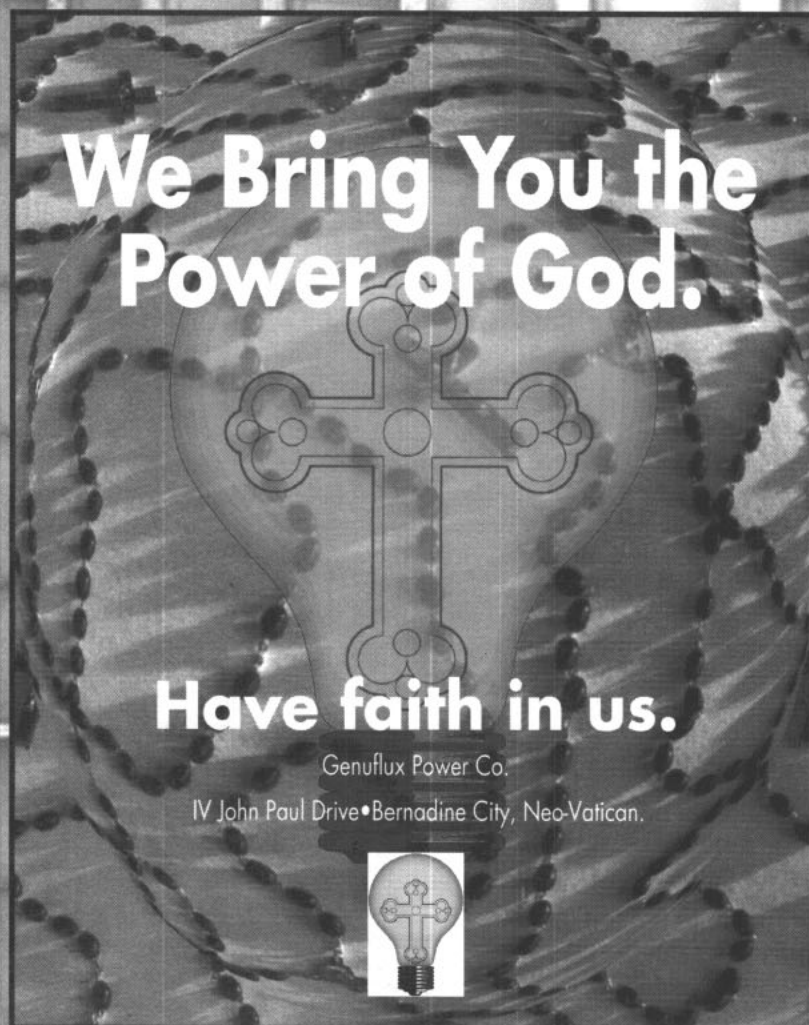
Notes: This archetype is more difficult to integrate into a campaign than most. You and your GM will have to work out where you live and how you got involved with the rest of the group. Unless of course all the characters are homeless.

Boons: You know most of the other homeless people in your neighborhood. If something goes down on the street, you'll hear about it. You also have an intimate knowledge of your area. You know all the back alleys, good places to hide, the best places to dumpster dive, and where the cops will and will not go.

Suggested Goals: Protect your friends; break the power of a particular gang or group of brainjackers.



chapter two • enhancements



**We Bring You the
Power of God.**

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recipients: This word is used throughout the chapter to refer to the individual receiving the Enhancement.

New Enhancements

CONFLICT
FIRMS CON-
STANTLY
DESIGN NEW
ENHANCE-
MENTS

Kill or be killed. The phrase is part and parcel of the conflict industry. It has a literal meaning for the boosted troops on the battlefield, but it also has a more figurative meaning for the companies which boosted them. If it sat idly back on its laurels, even the conflict firm giant Allied Mayhem would soon be wiped from the conflict business by the other firms. In this spirit, the research & development departments of the various conflict firms are constantly at work, 24 hours a day, to develop hot, new enhancements to give their recipients the edge they need in the field.

On the following pages are several of the latest enhancements which have been sufficiently field tested and have been approved for continued use in the enhancing of soldiers.

Capacitor

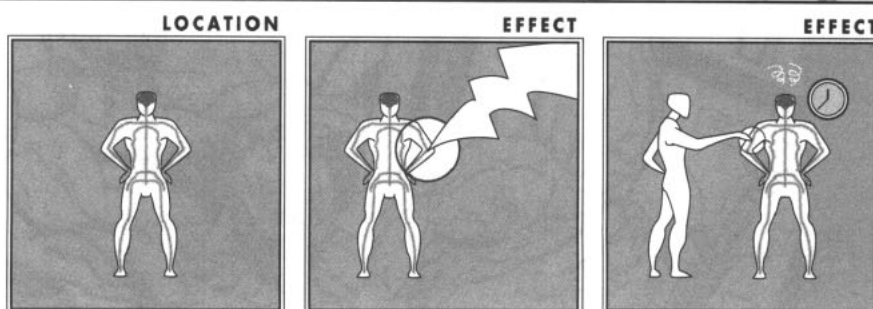
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 2

Max: 18

Stress: Unit Rating/4

Psych: Homicidal Mania



The recipient of this Enhancement is able to absorb and store large amounts of electricity. Any time a character with Capacitor comes in contact with high-voltage electricity (including the use of the Electrical Discharge Enhancement) he must immediately attempt to absorb the energy, rolling a P/F Challenge against the Penetration of the electricity. Failure indicates that the character suffers the damage from the electricity as normal, while success means that the character has absorbed the entire attack. Once absorbed into the recipient's system, the energy is gradually and harmlessly released from his body.

Bonus: The absorbed energy may be used as an attack functioning exactly like the Electrical Discharge Enhancement with its special Limitation. The Unit Rating of this attack equals the Penetration value of the absorbed electricity, minus the Units of time that have elapsed since it was absorbed.

Cling

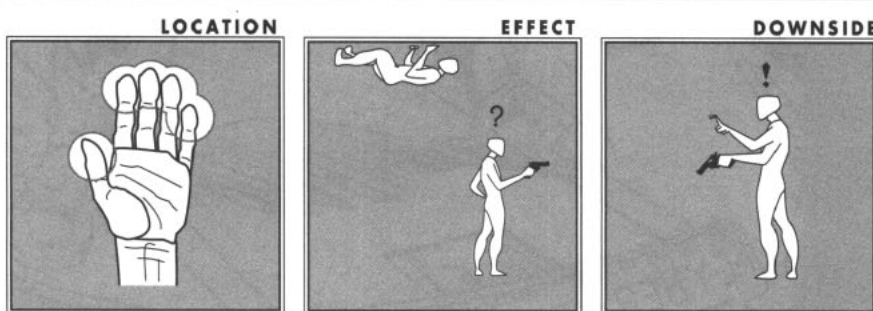
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

Psych: Panic Disorder



This Enhancement endows the recipient with adhesive fingerpads and toepads much like those found on certain tree-climbing amphibians. A character with this Enhancement can move along vertical surfaces and ceilings, reducing the Difficulty of all climbing Challenges by the Enhancement's Unit Rating. Also, since they have built-in climbing apparatus, characters with Cling never suffer the +4 Difficulty modifier for lack of proper equipment. In order to use this Enhancement, the recipient must not be wearing shoes or gloves. Sometimes, a character with Cling will run into difficulties when handling delicate instruments such as computers, remote controls, and firearms (+1 Penalty to the Difficulty of any Challenges that call for the use of such items).



Chicago CCS 2022—Cyber-Tech rolls out their latest gear for the Consumer Cybernetics Show.

Directional Hearing

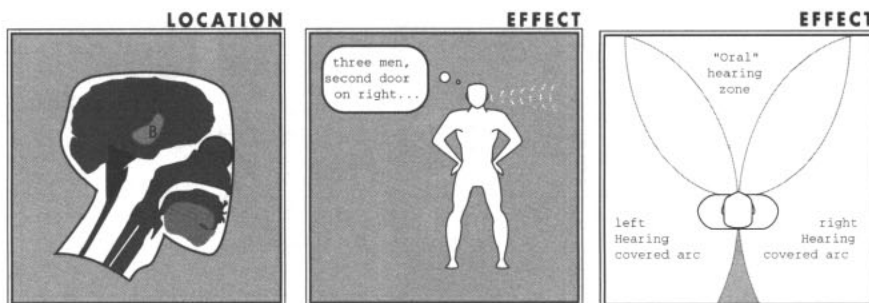
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 15

Stress: Unit Rating/8 (C)

Psych: Schizophrenia



This Enhancement gives the recipient the ability to pinpoint the exact location of the source of a sound at a range up to the Enhancement's Unit Rating in distance. This is an Automatic Action unless the source of the sound is a character with the Stealth Specialty of the Thief Skill or some other ability that allows silent movement. In such a case, the use of Directional Hearing is a P/F Challenge against the opponent's Skill or Enhancement. This Enhancement does not allow the recipient to hear sounds at an increased distance, as does Enhanced Hearing, it merely locates the exact location of a normally audible sound.

Dreamwalk

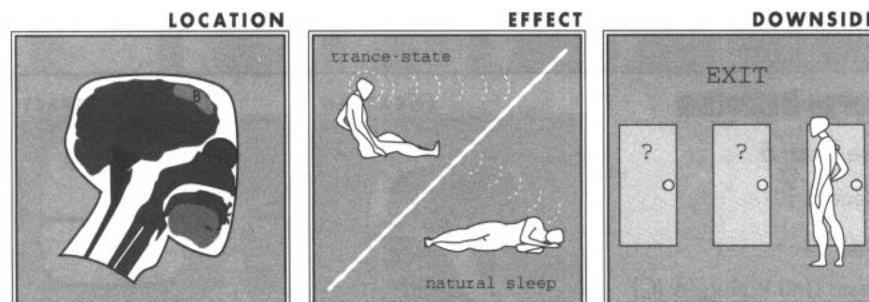
Base Cost: 10

Potency: 2

Max: 12

Stress: Unit Rating/5

Psych: Catatonia

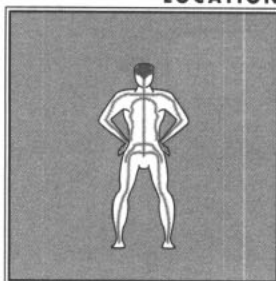


This Enhancement allows the recipient to precisely attune his alpha waves to those of a nearby sleeping target. To use this ability, the recipient must fall asleep within 0 Units distance of the target and roll a P/F Challenge using his Units of Dreamwalk against the target's WILL. Success indicates that he has actually entered the target's dreams. At this point, the Gamemaster can either run the character through a brief "mini-story" that takes place in the target's mind, or he can resolve the remainder of the action as if it were a Mind Probe attempt. In either case, the character is attempting to find out some information and then escape from the dream. Exiting the dream is a P/F Challenge against the Units of time the recipient spent in the dream. This should be estimated by the GM based on the obscurity of the information sought, ranging from 4 – 30 Units. Failure indicates that the recipient is trapped in the dream and immediately becomes Catatonic.

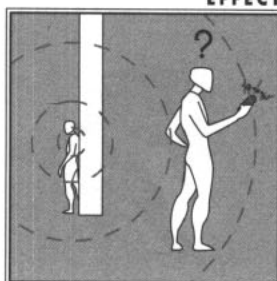
EM Pulse

Base Cost: 5
 Potency: 3
 Max: 15
 Stress: Unit Rating/3
 Psych: Schizophrenia

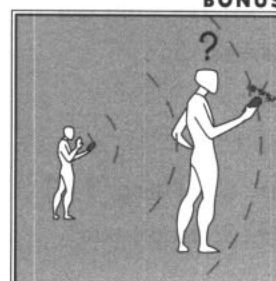
LOCATION



EFFECT



BONUS



This Enhancement increases the metallic content of the recipient's blood and creates a special electricity-generating organ that functions somewhat like an electric eel's. With concentration, the recipient can generate a small electromagnetic pulse from his body, disrupting electronic devices within a radius equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. The recipient rolls a Standard Challenge against all electronic gear within the affected radius (including any the recipient is carrying) using the Enhancement's Unit Rating against each item's RES. The Challenge Grade indicates how long the item is out of commission: D = 2 Turns, C = 10 minutes, B = 1 hour, and A indicates that the item is permanently inoperative.

Bonus: The recipient can choose to direct the pulse through his hands, affecting only a 90-degree arc but leaving his own equipment unharmed.

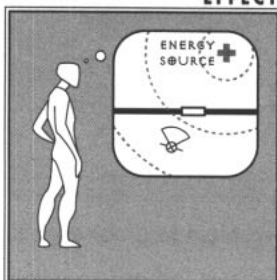
Energy Detection

Base Cost: 5
 Potency: 1
 Max: 15
 Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)
 Psych: Panic Disorder

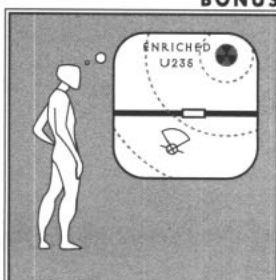
LOCATION



EFFECT



BONUS



Special organs in the brain of the recipient of this Enhancement can sense the location and intensity of energy sources, much like the skin can sense heat. This ability functions at a range equal to the Unit Rating +5, and although it can detect all types of energy, including heat, electricity, and radioactivity, it cannot distinguish between them. This sense is not acute enough to locate weak sources of energy such as humans and animals, but it will work through walls and other obstructions.

Bonus: In this form, the recipient can tell the exact type of energy detected in addition to its location and intensity.

Extra Head

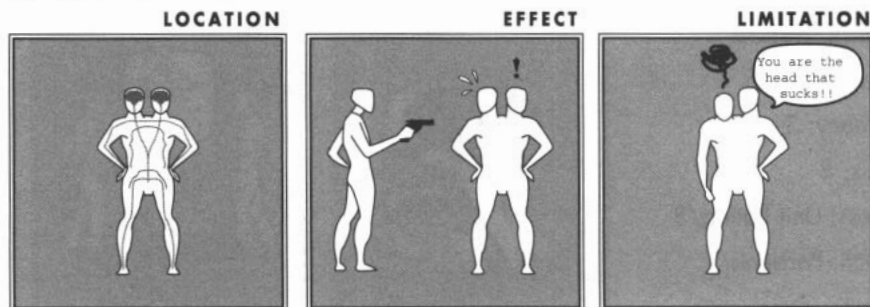
Base Cost: 15

Potency: 1

Max: 12

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

Psych: Multiple Pers.



Forced mitosis in the recipient of this Enhancement creates two identical heads where once there was one. Both heads operate in perfect unison, speaking at the same time and looking in the same direction. With concentration, the recipient can look different directions with each head, allowing him to aim at two targets with two weapons at no penalty. A character with two heads also gains a special +2 bonus to his INT when checking for Surprise. The Unit Rating of this Enhancement indicates the INT of the second head, and must equal the recipient's INT.

Limitation: In this case, the second head has a separate personality, and can have any INT Rating up to the INT of the original head. It will often disagree with the original head as to what their shared self should do. The GM should role play the part of the second head in these arguments, which are likely to occur at the worst possible moments.

Flex

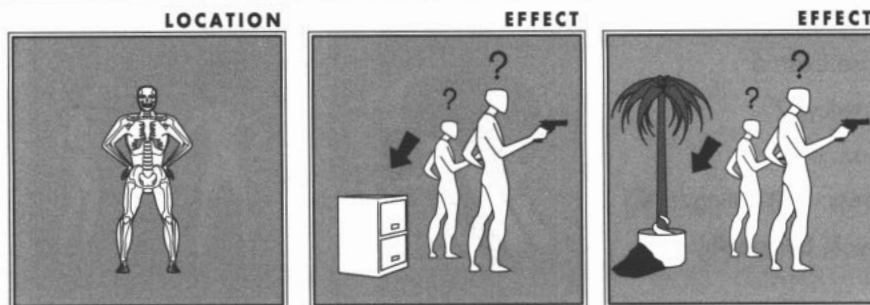
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 8

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

Psych: Melancholia



This Enhancement grants the recipient a flexible skeleton and double joints, allowing him to squeeze into tight spaces and easily escape many forms of binding. The recipient can add his Units of Flex to his Attribute when attempting to free himself from bonds of any sort. Note that a character with more than 6 Units of this Enhancement effectively has no skeleton at all, and can even squeeze under some door frames. A drawback to this Enhancement is that it reduces the recipient's resistance to most forms of attack. The recipient's RES is reduced by his Unit Rating against any attack that derives most of its damage capacity from impact, such as bludgeons and firearms.

Hallucination

Base Cost: 15

Potency: 3

Max: 8

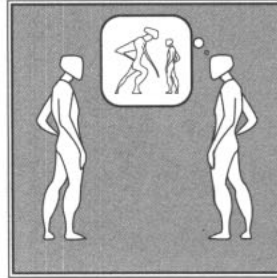
Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Paranoia

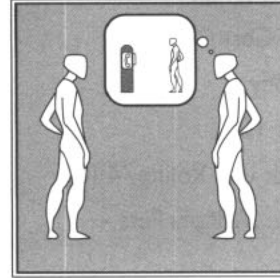
LOCATION



EFFECT



BONUS



Modification of the recipient's brain allows him to broadcast powerful alpha waves capable of distorting the perceptions of others. The target must be within a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. The recipient rolls a Standard Challenge against the target's WILL, with success indicating that the target is affected by disorienting hallucinations. Each Grade earned above F causes the victim to suffer a +2 to the Difficulty of all Challenges, so that a D Grade causes a +2, C +4, B +6, and A +8. The recipient can only use this Enhancement on one target at a time, and must continue to take Stress each Turn to maintain its effects.

Bonus: With total concentration, the recipient can create specific illusions within the mind of his target. The recipient could, for example, make a target think that a \$10 bill was actually a \$1000 bill, or that a friend was drawing a gun and trying to kill him. While using Hallucination in this way the recipient notices nothing and all shots against him automatically qualify for the blindside bonus.

Iron Will

Base Cost: 5

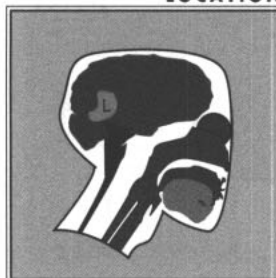
Potency: 2

Max: 8

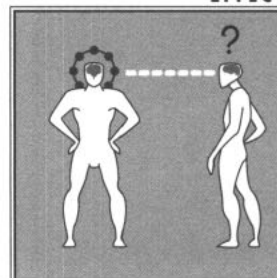
Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

Psych: Sociopathy

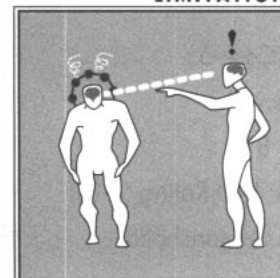
LOCATION



EFFECT

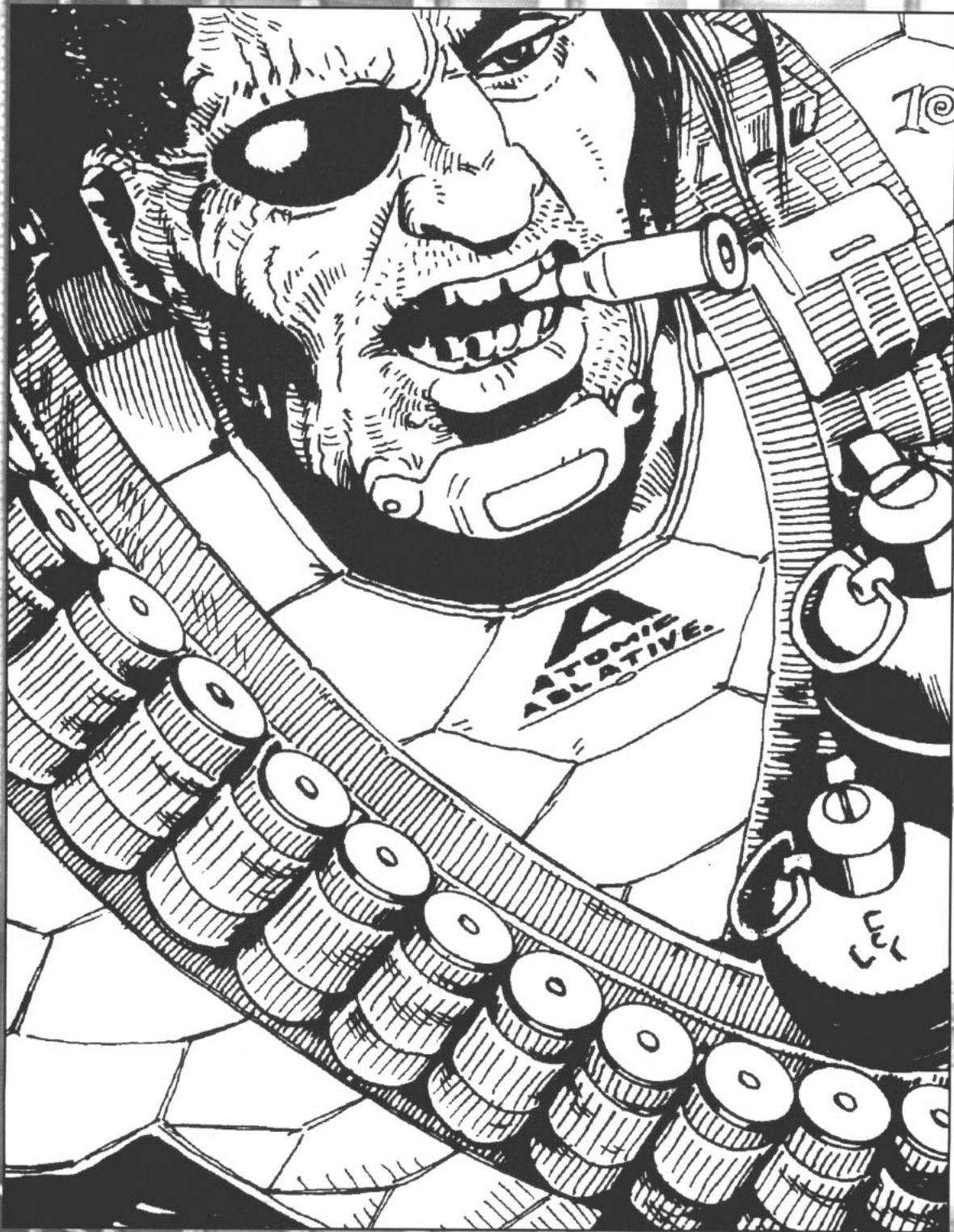


LIMITATION



Strengthening of the recipient's neurological pathways grants him increased resistance to mental domination and attack. This Enhancement adds its Unit Rating to the Difficulty of any attempts to use the following Enhancements on the recipient: Control, Hallucination, Sense Block, Sleep Induction, and Telepathic Blast.

Limitation: In this case, the strengthening is ineffective against the more intense mental attack forms: Sleep Induction and Telepathic Blast.



"Hexolink vest? Check. Biogrenades? Check. Chain Shot? Check."—Popeye Joe, ready for a night on the town.

Mind Blank

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 2

Max: 8

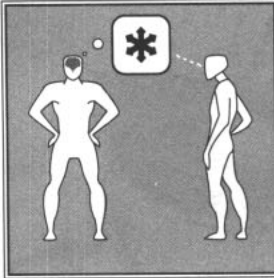
Stress: Unit Rating/6 (C)

Psych: Catatonia

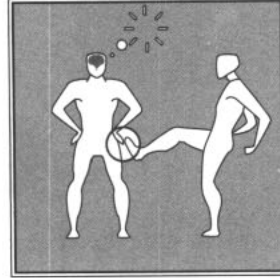
LOCATION



EFFECT



LIMITATION



The brain of the recipient of this Enhancement generates a mental "white noise," making it more difficult to locate and contact. This Enhancement adds its Unit Rating to the Difficulty of any attempts to use the following Enhancements on the recipient: Dreamwalk, Empathy, Life Sense, Mind Probe, and Telepathy.

Limitation: In this case, the recipient must concentrate deeply in order to blank his mind. This form of Mind Blank causes normal Stress rather than Continuous Stress, and while using this Enhancement the recipient notices nothing and all shots against him automatically qualify for the blindside bonus. Note also that in this case the recipient must be conscious in order to concentrate, making the Enhancement ineffective against Dreamwalk.

Musk

Base Cost: 10

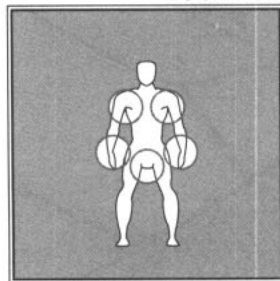
Potency: 1

Max: 6

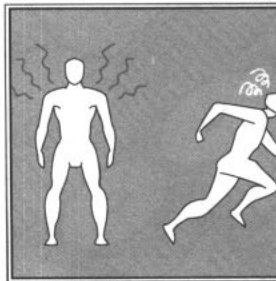
Stress: Unit Rating/4

Psych: Paranoia

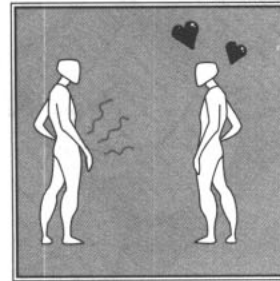
LOCATION



EFFECT



BONUS



At will, the recipient can emit an extremely noxious pheromone from special glands, similar in many ways to the spray of a skunk. All characters (other than the recipient) within a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating suffer a +1 to the Difficulty of all Challenges as they cough and choke from the awful stench.

Bonus: Although still noxious, the musk produced is attractive to members of the opposite sex. The recipient can add his Units of Musk to his AURA when attempting to Charm characters of the opposite sex.

Limitation: In this case, the Enhancement is always on, and causes Continuous Stress.

Night Vision

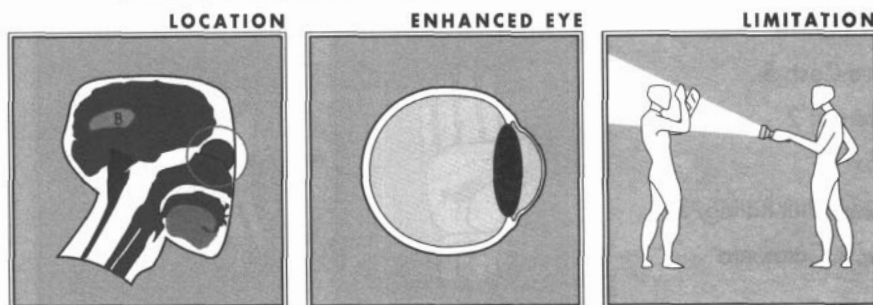
Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 25

Stress: Unit Rating/8 (C)

Psych: Melancholia



This Enhancement alters the structure of the recipient's eyes, greatly increasing the number of light-sensing rod cells in the retina. A character with Night Vision can see in darkness as well as in daylight, provided there is some source of light, no matter how dim. As such, this Enhancement does not function in a completely lightless environment, such as a sealed and windowless room. This ability extends over a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating.

Limitation: In this case, the recipient is extremely sensitive to bright light. Such characters suffer a +1 Difficulty to all Surprise and ranged combat Challenges in daylight and other brightly lit situations.

Pain Dampener

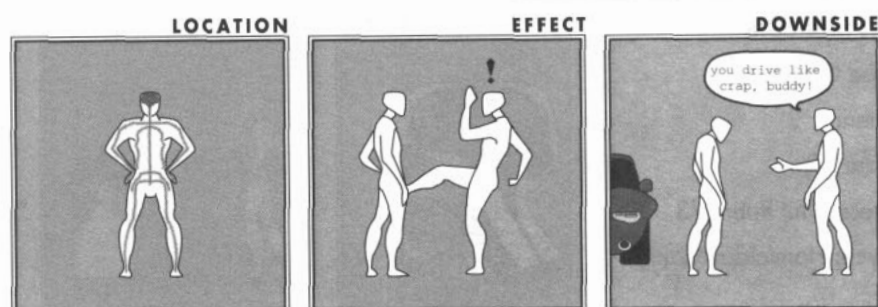
Base Cost: 20

Potency: 1

Max: 15

Stress: Unit Rating/4 (C)

Psych: Catatonia



This Enhancement creates a special nerve ganglia on the recipient's spinal cord that muffles pain signals passing through it. As a result, the recipient is highly resistant to pain, reducing the Difficulty penalties resulting from Wounds by one. The recipient can even remain conscious while suffering an Incapacitating Wound for a number of Turns equal to his Unit Rating in the Enhancement. While Incapacitated, the recipient must add +3 to the Difficulty of any Challenges he attempts. A side-effect of this Enhancement is that the recipient suffers from a reduced sense of touch. Any Challenges requiring a fine sense of touch have their Difficulty increased by +2. Such Challenges include (but are not limited to) the use of the following Skills and Specialties: Demolitions, Forgery, Invention/Repair, Medicine, Security, and Visual Arts.

Paralysis

Base Cost: 5

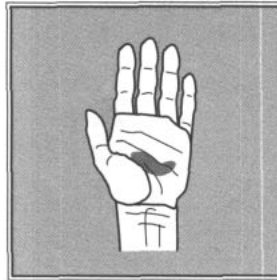
Potency: 2

Max: 8

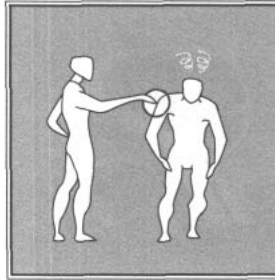
Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Catatonia

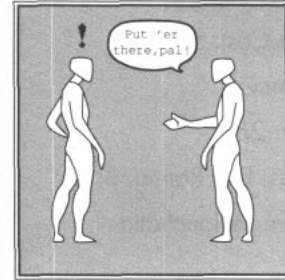
LOCATION



EFFECT



LIMITATION



The recipient of this Enhancement can excrete a paralytic toxin from the palms of his hands at will. Anytime the recipient touches a target or lands a successful blow in hand-to-hand combat, he 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 immediately fall into a Catatonic state. Note that subjects can only be contaminated if the recipient can touch their bare skin.

Limitation: In this case, the recipient constantly excretes the toxin from his entire body, contaminating anyone who touches him. This type of Paralysis causes Continuous Stress.

Pyrokinesis

Base Cost: 15

Potency: 2

Max: 10

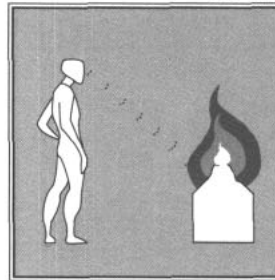
Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Homicidal Mania

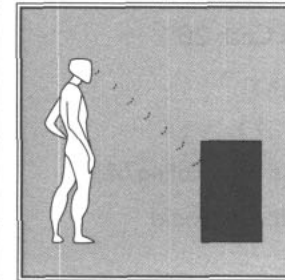
LOCATION



EFFECT



LIMITATION



This Enhancement allows the recipient to broadcast a narrow beam of alpha waves that agitate the molecules of an object within a range equal to the Units of the Enhancement, causing it to heat up and ignite. To resolve such an attempt, the recipient must roll a P/F Challenge against the target's RES. Success indicates that the target immediately bursts into flames, and will suffer a Penetration Challenge each Turn using the Units of the Enhancement against its RES and inflicting KO/LW/LW/MW damage until extinguished. Note that this Enhancement can ignite any item, even those that are normally non-flammable, but such objects are difficult to keep aflame. The recipient must concentrate on inflammable objects to keep them burning, taking Stress each Turn that he does so.

Limitation: In this case, the recipient can only use this Enhancement on readily flammable substances such as paper, cloth, and dry wood.

Sleep Induction

Base Cost: 15

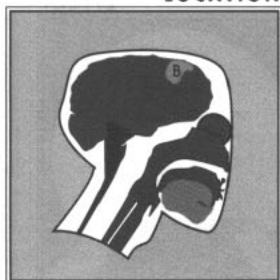
Potency: 3

Max: 12

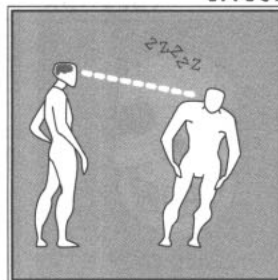
Stress: Unit Rating/3

Psych: Catatonia

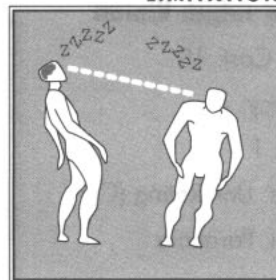
LOCATION



EFFECT



LIMITATION



Through use of this Enhancement the recipient can tamper with the alpha waves of another character, forcing that individual into a sleep-like unconscious state. The target must be within a range equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating to be affected, at which point the recipient rolls a P/F Challenge against the target's WILL. Success indicates that the target has fallen into a deep coma-like sleep for an amount of time equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating. After that time, the target will continue to sleep, but can be awakened as easily as a normally sleeping person.

Limitation: In this case, there is a small chance that the recipient will fall asleep in sympathy with his target each time he uses the Enhancement. Roll a Standard Challenge using the Enhancement's Unit Rating against the recipient's WILL, and if the Challenge Grade is B or greater, the recipient falls asleep.

Spines

Base Cost: 5

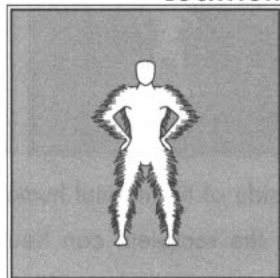
Potency: 1

Max: 6

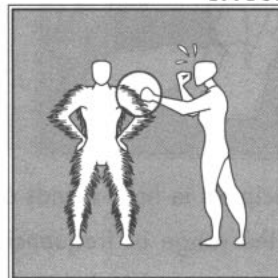
Stress: Unit Rating/3 (C)

Psych: Homicidal Mania

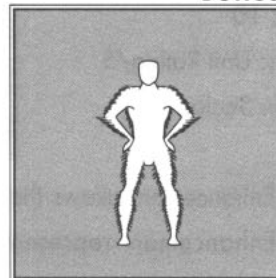
LOCATION



EFFECT



BONUS



This Enhancement causes the recipient's body to be covered with razor-sharp spines similar to those found on porcupines. Any character who touches or successfully lands a blow on the recipient in hand-to-hand combat immediately suffers a Penetration Challenge (no To Hit Challenge is necessary) using the Unit Rating as the Penetration and inflicting LW/LW/MW/HW damage. The recipient negates the effects of this Enhancement by wearing armor or any other heavy clothing, and will find it difficult to blend in with a crowd.

Bonus: In this case, the recipient has somewhat shorter spines that can be retracted into his body with concentration. Close examination of such a character will reveal his boosted nature, however.

Wide-Angle Vision

Base Cost: 10

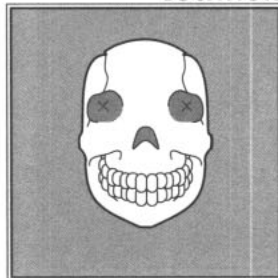
Potency: 1

Max: 1

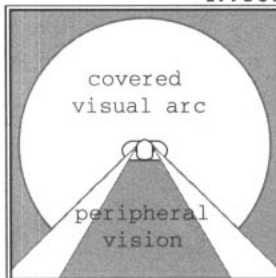
Stress: Unit Rating (C)

Psych: Paranoia

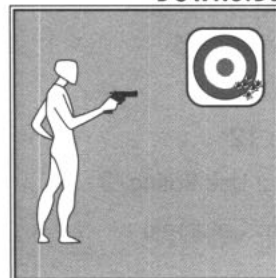
LOCATION



EFFECT



DOWNSIDE



The recipient of this Enhancement has large, widely-spaced eyes like those found on certain tree-dwelling lemurs. These rather unusual eyes give the recipient a nearly 360-degree field of vision, making it impossible for others to gain the blindsight bonus against him. As useful as this Enhancement is, the spacing of the recipient's eyes reduces his binocular vision, giving him poor depth perception. The recipient suffers a +1 to the Difficulty of all Challenges requiring depth perception, including driving vehicles and using firearms.

Wideband Hearing

Base Cost: 5

Potency: 1

Max: 10

Stress: Unit Rating/5

Psych: Sociopathy

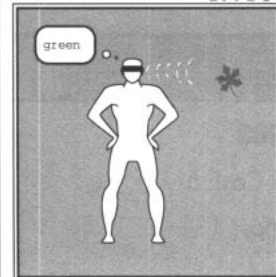
LOCATION



EFFECT



EFFECT



This Enhancement allows the recipient to hear sounds outside of the normal human range. The Unit Rating of this Enhancement represents the range of frequencies the recipient can hear: Any character with this Enhancement can hear extremely low and high frequency sounds such as dog whistles; With five or more Units, the recipient can actually hear radio broadcasts, although he has no way to unscramble coded transmissions; A character with 10 Units of this Enhancement can actually "hear" color, allowing him to operate while blinded at only a +1 to all Difficulty levels.



"Bang, zoom!"—The M92 particle accelerator in action.

MORE POWER
OPTIONS

ACID

ADRENAL
SURGE

ANALYTIC
SMELL

BOMB

Enhancements Expanded

The format used in the Enhancement descriptions is intended to be a summary guide for reference during play. This section provides greater details for some Enhancements, giving additional uses for some, and new Bonuses and Limitations for others. Also included are refinements of already existing rules, along with corrections of typographical errors.

Acid

Bonus: In this case, the acid generated is even more caustic, and inflicts LW/MW/HW/IN damage. However, the recipient suffers a LW every time he uses the Enhancement.

Adrenal Surge

Bonus: The recipient can trigger an adrenal surge at any time simply by concentrating for one Turn. Unless the recipient is in stressful circumstances, the Units gained will be lost the Turn after they reach their maximum values.

Analytic Smell

Limitation: The recipient's lungs and sinuses are extremely sensitive, forcing him to suffer a -3 to his RES against inhaled poisons and smoke.

Bomb

This Enhancement can only be used on inanimate objects with RES Ratings no greater than the Enhancement's Unit Rating +3. Instead of rolling a P/F Challenge to explode an object, the recipient should roll a Standard Challenge, with the Grade determining the Blast Radius of the explosion as follows: D = Blast 2, C = Blast 3, B = Blast 4, and A = Blast 5.

Bonus: This form of the Enhancement can be used against living targets. Treat this as an attack with a range and Penetration equal to the Unit

typographical errors: (The Cypherpunks are everywhere!)

inanimate objects: are unliving things such as weapons, trees, and vehicles.

Rating which inflicts ST/ST/ST/KL damage. An A Grade indicates that the target has exploded, spreading disgusting but harmless pieces of himself all over the blast area.

Chitin/Blubber

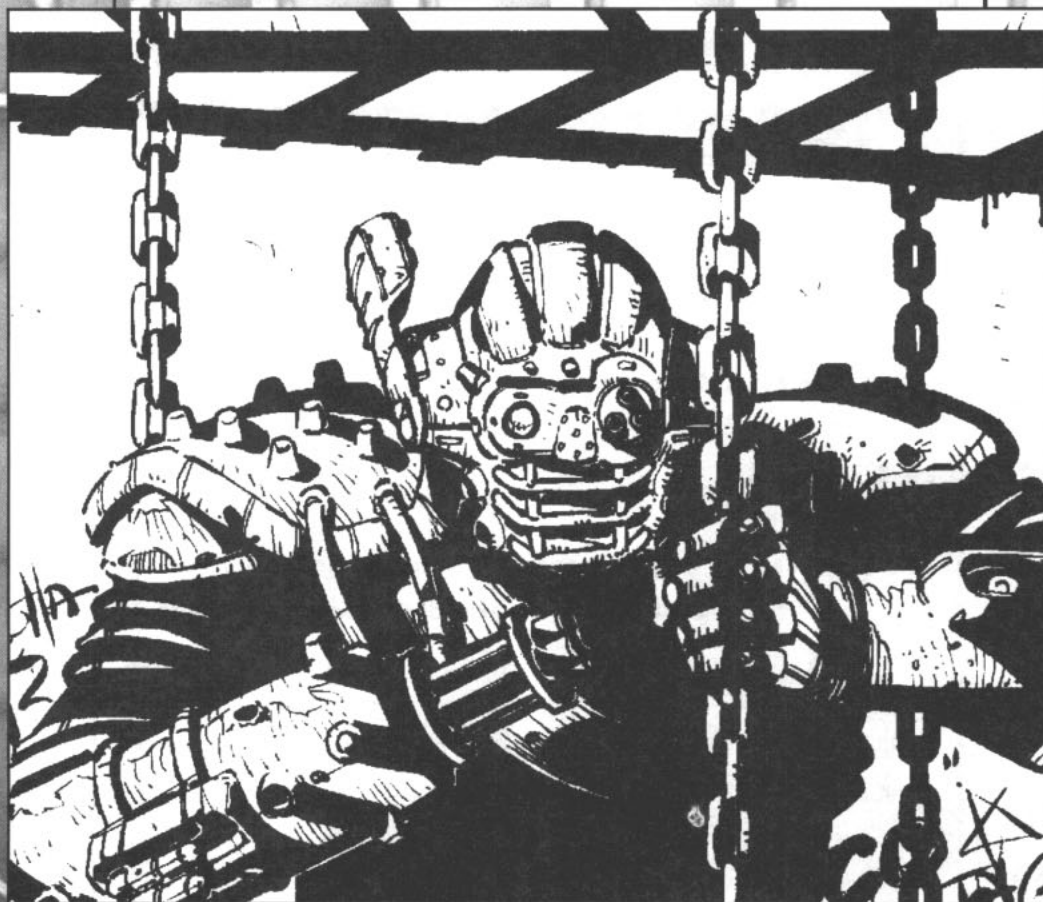
Limitation: The thickness of the recipient's Chitin or Blubber somewhat impedes his movement. As a result, he suffers a +2 to the Difficulty all Acrobatics Challenges.

Cold Immunity

The recipient of this Enhancement actually has a very high internal body temperature and well-insulated skin which protects him from extreme cold.

CHITIN/
BLUBBER

COLD
IMMUNITY



Traveling the highways and byways of East LA via the metropolitan sewer system.

CONTROL

Control

Bonus: The recipient can keep the Enhancement activated for an amount of time equal to his Unit Rating +3.

surreal world of the target's dreams: The Gamemaster is encouraged to run a brief "mini-story" in the target's dream. This is an excellent opportunity to give the players an insight into the enemy's subconscious, as well as an ideal place to plant obscure clues.

Wideband Hearing

Enhancement: See page 100 for details.

DREAMWALK

Dreamwalk

Since the recipient is literally travelling through the target's dream, the target may have a vague remembrance of his presence. This knowledge will quickly fade, however, but it does mean that this Enhancement should be used with care. Also, since the recipient can only search through the hazy and surreal world of the target's dreams, the information garnered from the use of this Enhancement will always be more cryptic than an equivalent use of Mind Probe.

Bonus: In this case, the recipient need not be asleep himself in order to use this Enhancement. However, he must concentrate deeply: while using this Enhancement the recipient notices nothing and all shots against him automatically qualify for the blindside bonus.

EMOTION CONTROL

Emotion Control

Bonus: The recipient can keep the Enhancement activated for an amount of time equal to his Unit Rating +3.

ENHANCED HEAR

Enhanced Hear

This Enhancement only improves the range of hearing since the Wideband Hearing Enhancement now extends the frequency response.

Limitation: In this case, the recipient is very sensitive to loud noises, and will suffer a -3 RES when defending against sound-based attacks (such as the Sonic Discharge Enhancement).

may only ... overall STR:
Any exertion greater than
this would result in extreme
harm to the recipient's
body.

slow speed, cruising speed,
or top speed: Slow speed
equals the harness' SPD
each Turn; Cruising speed
equals the harness' SPD+3
each Turn; Top speed
equals the harness' SPD+6
each Turn.

Extra Head

It is important to note that, unlike Extra Limb, this Enhancement can only be purchased once. A character can never have more than two heads.

Extra Limb

Limbs gained through this Enhancement may only exert a STR up to two Units higher than the recipient's overall STR for the purposes of lifting and throwing. Extra limbs may still use their full STR when throwing blows in hand-to-hand combat, however.

Characters with extra arms may use them for a variety of tasks. One such task of particular use in combat is reloading. A character may use a pair of extra arms to reload a weapon that is not being used while continuing to fight normally with his other arms. Note that this does not allow the recipient to launch additional attacks (see Bonus below).

Extra legs have limited usefulness compared to arms, but a character with two or more extra legs whose STRs are at least equal to his own STR moves at a trot speed of SPD+4 and a sprint speed of SPD+8.

Bonus: In this case, the recipient's coordination is such that for every extra pair of arms he can make one additional attack each Turn. This attack is made in addition to the recipient's normal allotment of actions in a Turn, but each attack after the first suffers a cumulative +1 to its Difficulty (so the second attack is at +1, the third at +2, etc.).

Flight Control

This Enhancement allows the recipient to operate a flying harness at a SPD equal to his Unit Rating or the SPD of the harness, whichever is lower. Note also that like any other vehicle, a harness can be operated at slow speed, cruising speed, or top speed.

EXTRA HEAD

EXTRA LIMB

FLIGHT
CONTROL

GILLS

Gills

Bonus: In this case, the recipient has smaller gills placed along the neck rather than the torso. As a result, he can make use of body armor as long as it is specially modified, doubling its cost.

HALLUCINATION

Hallucination

This Enhancement can be very powerful if purchased with its Bonus. The Gamemaster should take special care when this Enhancement is used to prevent its abuse. Remember that certain illusions will seem so implausible that the target will simply refuse to believe them. In such instances, the target is allowed to roll a P/F Challenge to disbelieve the illusion using his WILL against a Difficulty determined by the GM. The more unlikely the illusion, the lower the Difficulty. Smart players will avoid this problem by employing subtlety when making use of this potent Enhancement. In any case, the GM should keep in mind that the recipient must take Stress every Turn to maintain the illusion, and that it can only affect one target at a time.



The Bald Ego, doing what he knows he does best.

Heat Immunity

This Enhancement causes Continuous Stress.

Invisibility

Limitation: The field generated to make the recipient invisible will also disrupt any electronic gear he is carrying. While the Enhancement is activated, none of the recipient's electronics will function, including computer packs, combat goggles, and cellular phones.

Micro Vision

Limitation: The recipient suffers from severe nearsightedness as a side-effect of this Enhancement. Even after using optical aids such as prescription lenses, the recipient still suffers an additional Difficulty penalty of +1 to medium range shots and +2 to long range shots in combat.

Mind Probe

Limitation: In this case, any target affected by this Enhancement will immediately sense that he is being probed, along with the general direction and range to the recipient.

Pain Dampener

Just to clarify the effects of this Enhancement, the recipient suffers: no penalty from being Lightly Wounded, +1 Difficulty from a Medium Wound Level, +2 Difficulty from a Heavy Wound Level, and +3 Difficulty from an Incapacitating Wound for as long as he can stay conscious (a number of Turns equal to his Units of the Enhancement).

HEAT
IMMUNITY

INVISIBILITY

MICRO VISION

MIND PROBE

PAIN
DAMPENER

PARALYSIS

Paralysis

Bonus: The recipient has poison glands in his throat rather than his skin, allowing him to spit poison over a distance equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating minus 4. The poison must still touch the target's skin to be effective, often requiring a Called Shot to avoid hitting clothing or armor.

POISON

Poison

This Enhancement does not cause *immediate* death in contaminated targets, but it *will* kill them very quickly. Initially, the target simply becomes dizzy and disoriented, suffering a +1 to all Difficulties. Beginning the second Turn after he is contaminated, the target suffers a Light Wound at the end of every Turn until

will kill them very quickly: A universal antidote is widely available that is 99% effective against all forms of poison, including the use of this Enhancement. The antidote costs \$500 per dose, and one dose is included in every Medikit. It takes one Turn to administer the antidote, after which the contaminated character should roll 2D10. On a roll of double ones, the antidote fails and the character will die. Any other roll indicates that the character is cured of the poison's effects and stops taking additional Wounds.



Another day at the office for *Combat*, *Combat*, *Combat*'s Lola Montoya.

miniature equipment (page 110): items built for "tiny" boosts fall into one of three size categories, standardized by the major manufacturers: **CPatch** (2 ft tall), **GI Joseph** (12 in tall), or **Action Figure** (4.5 in tall). These standard sizes allow for a decent variety of equipment without the expense of custom-building every item. Following is a brief list of miniature equipment. Each item has a recommended size, although any character can use any item as long as he has sufficient STR and small enough fingers.

Pistols

2mm Silver Bullet SSF-AF (Cost: \$60,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: -4, Penetration: 6, Dmg: ST/ST/ST/LW, Rng: 1/3/7, Ammo: 6, Rate: 1, STR: -6, RES: 10

4mm Urban Nightmare

GI Special (Cost: \$25,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 7, Dmg: ST/ST/LW/MW, Rng: 0/7/9, Ammo: 6, Rate: 1, STR: 0, RES: 11

7mm Urban Nightmare

CP Special (Cost: \$13,000, Avail: D)

Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 7, Dmg: ST/LW/MW/HW, Rng: 3/9/11, Ammo: 6, Rate: 1, STR: 0, RES: 12

he becomes Incapacitated and falls unconscious. If an antidote is not administered within a number of minutes equal to the target's RES score, he dies.

Bonus: The recipient has poison glands in his throat rather than his skin, allowing him to spit poison over a distance equal to the Enhancement's Unit Rating minus 4. The poison must still touch the target's skin to be effective, often requiring a Called Shot to avoid hitting clothing or armor.

Radar Sense

A character with this Enhancement can still be blindsided by attacks that originate from a range greater than his Unit Rating.

Limitation: In this case, the radar is directional, functioning only in a 45-degree arc in front of the recipient. While still useful in many circumstances, this form of Radar Sense in no way protects the recipient from blindsiding.

Regeneration

Larger limbs or digits require longer periods to grow back. The base time for the regrowth of some commonly lost extremities are: arm in 64 Units; leg in 65 Units; hand or foot in 61 Units; finger or toe in 60 Units. A character with this enhancement and the Extra Head Enhancement can regrow one of his heads if it is lost in a base time of 66 Units.

Sense Block

Bonus: The recipient can keep the Enhancement activated for an amount of time equal to his Unit Rating +3.

Limitation: In this case, only one sense can be blocked. The recipient must choose the particular sense he can block when the Enhancement is purchased. Since only one sense is blocked, the +4 Difficulty modifier will only apply under certain circumstances, determined by the Gamemaster.

RADAR SENSE

REGENERATION

SENSE BLOCK

SIZE REDUCTION

Size Reduction

The Difficulty of spotting or striking a Size Reduced character is based on his final size, *not* his Unit Rating (note that Boosted STR and/or RES will impact on the size of a character *before* Size Reduction is applied). The Difficulty modifier is +1 for every Unit the recipient is smaller than normal (-2 Units). For example, a character who is 18 inches (-8 Units) tall is targeted with a +6 Difficulty.

The Difficulty modifier described above is also subtracted from the recipient's SPD when determining his movement rates. So, for example, a character with a SPD of 4 and a size of -8 Units would walk at -2 Units per Turn, trot at 1 Unit per Turn, and sprint at 4 Units per Turn.

Several major conflict firms have commissioned the development of miniature equipment for use by Size Reduced operatives. These items are always difficult to obtain, and are rarely as effective as their full-size counterparts.

SONIC DISCHARGE

Sonic Discharge

Bonus: The vibrations generated by the recipient are so intense that they can shatter inanimate objects. When used in this way, the Enhancement requires a To Hit Challenge using its Unit Rating against the target's size (see *Underground*, page 206). The damage inflicted by this attack is MW/HW/IN/KL. It is important to note that this Bonus does not affect the way this Enhancement works on living targets, only inanimate objects.

TELEKINESIS

Telekinesis

Bonus: The recipient can use this Enhancement to throw an invisible telekinetic "punch" at any target within a range equal to his Units of Enhancement. The To Hit Challenge uses the Units of Enhancement against the target's DEX or Dodge Skill. The Penetration of this attack is also equal to its Unit Rating, inflicting ST/LW/LW/MW damage.

Bonus: With concentration, the recipient can "lift" himself with telekinesis, achieving a limited form of levitation. The recipient can hover like a

Rifles and Shotguns

2mm ZAG AF (Cost: \$80,000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 7, Dmg: ST/ST/ST/LW, Rng: 7/13/19, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: -4, RES: 11

3mm GCS 15-GI (Cost: \$35,000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 7, Dmg: ST/ST/LW/MW, Rng: 10/16/20, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/3, STR: -2, RES: 12

4mm ZW 385i-CP (Cost: \$9000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: -1, Penetration: 10, Dmg: ST/LW/MW/HW, Rng: 11/17/20, Ammo: 20, Rate: 1/2, STR: -2, RES: 13

Melbourne Mini-GI (Cost: \$32,000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: +2, Penetration: 1, Dmg: ST/ST/LW/MW, Rng: 6/11/15, Ammo: 8, Rate: 1, STR: -7, RES: 12

Other Weapons

Mini Missile GI (Cost: \$40,000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: 16, Penetration: 13, Dmg: LW/LW/MW/HW, Rng: 22/27/30, Rate: 1, STR: -3, RES: 9

Mini Grenade GI (Cost: \$5000, Avail: D)
Accuracy: 0, Penetration: 8, Dmg: ST/LW/MW/HW, Blast: 1, Rng: 1/3/6, Rate: 1, STR: -6, RES: 9

Armor

Mini Mondo (Cost: \$50,000, Avail: B)
RES: +3

Minikev (Cost: \$25,000, Avail: B)
RES: +1

Mini Mondo and Minikev can be made to fit any size character for the cost listed above, so no STR requirement is listed.

Computers

Packs are already about as small as they can get. Tiny boosts often wear the radio-sized items as backpacks. Characters too small to carry such items (such as AF sized boosts) cannot use packs.

Other Gear

Most other forms of gear can be obtained in small sizes, such as Combat Goggles, Cellular Phones, and Gas Masks. The Availability of all such items is B, and their Cost is five times normal. The GM always has the last word on whether a certain item can be miniaturized or not.

helicopter and move at a top SPD equal to his Units of Enhancement minus his Units of weight. While levitating, the recipient cannot use any other non-Continuous Enhancements, and suffers a +2 to the Difficulty of any Challenges he attempts.

Telepathic Blast

Bonus: The recipient can choose to let fly with an omni-directional mental "scream" affecting all targets (friend or foe) within a radius equal to his Units of Enhancement. The strain of using this attack is such that the recipient suffers the effects of the Limitation listed in the Enhancement's description every time it is used. The recipient can still choose to make a normal attack against one target and suffer no ill effects.

Telepathy

Bonus: The recipient can broadcast mental images and sounds as well as spoken words.

Telescopic Vision

To simplify the application of this Enhancement in game play, treat it as reducing the apparent distance to an object by its Unit Rating. For instance, if a character with 6 Units of Telescopic Vision is looking at an aircar that is 300 yards (20 Units) away, it will be seen as though it were only 250 feet (14 Units) distant.

Limitation: The recipient suffers from severe farsightedness as a side-effect of this Enhancement. Even after using optical aids such as prescription lenses, the recipient still suffers an additional Difficulty penalty of +1 to medium range shots and +2 to short range shots in combat.

TELEPATHIC
BLAST

TELEPATHY

TELESCOPIC
VISION

Expanded Enhancement Table

Enhancement	Base Cost	Potency	Max	Stress	Psych	Location
Acid	10	2	16	U/4	Panic Disorder	UG 146
Adrenal Surge	5	2	8	U/3	Homicidal Mania	UG146
Analytic Smell	5	1	12	U/5	Sociopathy	UG147
Bomb	15	2	20	U/4	Homicidal Mania	UG147
Boosted DEX	5	1	11	U/4 (C)	Catatonia	UG 143
Boosted INT	10	1	20	U/4 (C)	Paranoia	UG 144
Boosted RES	5	1	24	U/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania	UG 144
Boosted SPD	5	1	11	U/4 (C)	Catatonia	UG 143
Boosted STR	5	1	35	U/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania	UG 144
Capacitor	5	2	18	U/4	Homicidal Mania	PH 101
Chameleon	10	1	7	U/5	Sociopathy	UG 149
Chitin/Blubber	10	3	6	U/3 (C)	Melancholia	UG 149
Claws	5	1	11	U/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania	UG 150
Cling	5	1	8	U/6 (C)	Panic Disorder	PH 101
Cold Immunity	5	1	8	U/5 (C)	Sociopathy	UG 150
Control	20	3	12	U/4	Multiple Pers.	UG 152
Danger Sense	5	2	11	U/5 (C)	Paranoia	UG 152
Directional Hearing	5	1	15	U/8 (C)	Schizophrenia	PH 103
Dreamwalk	10	2	12	U/5	Catatonia	PH 103
Electrical Discharge ¹⁰		2	18	U/4	Homicidal Mania	UG 153
EM Pulse	5	3	15	U/3	Schizophrenia	PH 104
Emotion Control	10	3	18	U/5	Multiple Pers.	UG 153
Empathy	10	1	9	U/4	Sociopathy	UG 155
Energy Detection	5	1	15	U/6 (C)	Panic Disorder	PH 104
Enhanced Hear	5	1	10	U/5 (C)	Schizophrenia	UG 155
Extra Head	15	1	12	U/4 (C)	Multiple Pers.	PH 105
Extra Limb	10	1	20	U/6 (C)	Multiple Pers.	UG 156
Flex	5	1	8	U/4 (C)	Melancholia	PH 105
Flight Control	20	1	25	U/12 (C)	Sociopathy	UG 156
Gills	10	12	4	U/12 (C)	Paranoia	UG 158

UG: *Underground* rulebook.

PH: *Underground Player's Handbook*.

Hallucination	15	3	8	U/3	Paranoia	PH 106
Heat Immunity	5	1	8	U/5 (C)	Sociopathy	UG 158
Hyper Touch	5	1	15	U/6 (C)	Melancholia	UG 159
Invisibility	10	3	10	U/3	Sociopathy	UG 159
Iron Will	5	2	8	U/6 (C)	Sociopathy	PH 106
Leaping	5	1	8	U/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania	UG 161
Life Sense	10	2	8	U/3 (C)	Multiple Per.	UG 161
Micro Vision	5	1	30	U/10 (C)	Catatonia	UG 162
Mind Blank	5	2	8	U/6 (C)	Catatonia	PH 108
Mind Probe	10	3	10	U/3	Schizophrenia	UG 162
Musk	10	1	6	U/4	Paranoia	PH 108
Night Vision	5	1	25	U/8 (C)	Melancholia	PH 109
Pain Dampener	20	1	15	U/4 (C)	Catatonia	PH 109
Paralysis	5	2	8	U/3	Catatonia	PH 110
Poison	10	2	8	U/2	Catatonia	UG 163
Pyrokinesis	15	2	10	U/3	Homicidal Mania	PH 110
Radar Sense	5	11	5	U/6 (C)	Panic Disorder	UG 163
Reduced Fatigue	5	16	U/4	(C)	Catatonia	UG 164
Regeneration	15	3	9	U/3 (C)	Sociopathy	UG 164
Sealed Systems	10	1	12	U/5 (C)	Schizophrenia	UG 167
Sense Block	15	2	11	U/4	Melancholia	UG 165
Size Reduction	10	2	15	U/5 (C)	Sociopathy	UG 165
Sleep Induction	15	3	12	U/3	Catatonia	PH 111
Sonic Discharge	10	3	10	U/3	Panic Disorder	UG 167
Spines	5	1	6	U/3 (C)	Homicidal Mania	PH 111
Swimming	5	1	12	U/8 (C)	Panic Disorder	UG 168
Telekinesis	10	3	8	U/3	Schizophrenia	UG 169
Telepathic Blast	15	3	7	U/2	Schizophrenia	UG 168
Telepathy	10	1	35	U/15	Schizophrenia	UG 170
Telescopic Vision	5	1	9	U/5 (C)	Catatonia	UG 169
Thermal Vision	5	1	25	U/8 (C)	Melancholia	UG 170
Wide-Angle Vision	10	1	1	U (C)	Paranoia	PH 112
Wideband Hearing	5	1	10	U/5	Sociopathy	PH 112

UG: *Underground* rulebook.

PH: *Underground Player's Handbook*.

chapter three • reward points

"I remember when I was just a youngster watching an episode of Star Trek. When Doctor McCoy said, 'Damn it Jim, I'm a doctor not a miracle-worker!' I remember thinking, God I wish I could be just like him."

—From Peter Argot's 1997 interview with former president Darryl F. Gates.

through their normal activities: See pages 245 and 251 of the Underground Rulebook for more information on Reward Points.

Traits or Codes: See pages 98-101 of the Underground Rulebook for more information on Traits and Codes.

New Uses for Reward Points

GAINING AND USING REWARD POINTS

Reward Points represent a character's experience, both mental and physical. They can be looked on as training and acquired knowledge, or in a more esoteric form they are also the minor contacts which open doors to opportunity and loopholes in the laws of probability (luck). Regardless, it is simply enough to say that characters acquire Reward Points through their normal activities and may put them to use.

REWARD POINTS AWARDED

Accepting that no Traits or Codes are broken during the course of play, a character can expect to receive two Reward Points just for being involved in the story and two more if the story is brought to a successful conclusion. Additional points may be awarded for exceptional play, as in, but not limited to, the following cases:

- The character stuck to his Code(s) against incredible pressure or in the face of personal loss. (There was a good chance the mission would fail, but character refused to violate a personal Code of will not kill.)

basic attributes: Note that it is almost always better to increase the enhancement, but if that option is not available then this is the next step.

- The character stood out during a particularly crucial time in the story. (Turned the tide of battle by charging the enemy position or succeeded at a legendary Challenge which furthered the story goal.)
- The character performed in a flamboyant style which helped make the story interesting and is sure to increase reputation. (Impressing the GM is normally a winner.)

Affecting your life

Just as people are changed by the life they experience and the decisions they make, so do characters. Use of Reward Points in this manner affects attributes, skills, special abilities, and other areas that help to make your character who he or she is. This use of Reward Points must come from the character's personal store and are effective immediately.

- Through exercise, study, or reaction to events, characters can increase their basic attributes. After the character is initially designed, it becomes more expensive to increase his attributes. Consult the following table for actual Reward Point cost per +1 increase to an attribute. Note that attributes may not be increased past a natural level of 6 in this way without genetic enhancement.

Score Raised To	Cost
1	5
2	10
3	17
4	23
5	32
6	40

USE REWARD
POINTS TO
REFLECT
YOUR CHAR-
ACTER'S
EXPERIENCE

INCREASING
BASIC
ATTRIBUTES

INCREASING SKILLS

- Training and everyday use can increase the unit rating of existing skills or enable a character to learn new ones. Spending ten Reward Points will increase any skill +1 unit and fifteen will acquire any new skill at a unit rating of 1.

INCREASING ENHANCE- MENT STRENGTH

- Since enhancements build on the original genetic material, it is not surprising that they can improve through casual use and deliberate strengthening. Spending ten Reward Points will increase the rating of any genetic enhancement by +1 unit. It is important to note that this increase of an enhancement's rating *does not* increase the Stress of that enhancement. The savvy player will pay close attention to the decimal points during character generation, getting the best enhancement for the least Stress and increasing the rating at a later time.

any genetic enhancement: Unlike skill advancement, this does not allow for the acquisition of new enhancements (see Environment below).



Eric and Ludwig, the Flying Gambonos, cornering their latest bounty.

the head of the list: Because of "improperly filed paperwork," anyone not paying the "expediting fee" of 10 Reward Points will have to file 1D10 times and will wait 1D10 months each time before either getting results or having to re-file.

- If a character/player is chaffing under a Trait or Code, a one-time expense of ten Reward Points can be paid to remove it. Reward Points must be spent at the time the Trait or Code is violated (or when the GM catches the indiscretion). No penalty is applied to a character who uses this procedure, but in remorse the character *will* adapt a new Trait or Code and it *must* be limiting.

- Karma, that strange and wonderful ability to turn fate on its ear, may be purchased at the cost of five Reward Points for one Karma Point. Since Karma is basically used to alter the reality of an event, Game Master's may, as an option, allow players to trade in the other direction. Unfortunately the trade isn't as equitable when reversed, and one Karma Point will bring only three Reward Points.

- There are two ways in which Reward Points can be used to reduce or eliminate Stress. The first deals with situations in which the character is accumulating Stress Points (such as with combat or an event triggering flashbacks). In situations such as these the character may deduct one Reward Point rather than take a point of Stress, using his experience to deal with the situation. This use is not necessary until the character is about to exceed his Tolerance level. Second, a character may opt for any of the experimental Stress Release Programs. Several conflict firms have recently begun to offer veterans a new Readjustment and Reconditioning program in efforts to reduce the Stress their enhancements have caused. These programs are very short (only five days) but extremely intense; so far producing mixed results. Interested characters apply to their original conflict firm. Ten Reward Points must be spent to maneuver the application to the head of the list, but as this is still experimental, the process is free. Also, due to the experimental nature of this process, the skill rating of the counselor is assumed to be 7. Characters make a Standard Challenge with a Difficulty of 9 (Impressive task) for each enhancement and compare their results to the following table. It is possible to end up with a worse Tolerance level than before, but characters also have the use of Karma to adjust the letter grade of the result.

BUYING OFF
TRAITS OR
CODES

BUYING
KARMA

REDUCING
AND ELIMI-
NATING
STRESS

CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

CONTACTS

PROMOTION

Challenge Grade

Stress Modifier

F	+1
D	0
C	0
B	-1
A	-2

Environment

At times a character may exert his will upon his immediate surroundings and attempt to change it. This could be bucking for that promotion at work or trying to convince someone to join your gang. At times there may be opposition by NPC's or even other characters, and Game Masters should remain aware of this. The following uses for Reward Points are effective almost immediately, and the Reward Points may be pooled together by several characters unless otherwise noted.

- For ten Reward Points, a character can make a P/F AURA challenge in order to make a permanent contact. The contact must be located through normal game play or with a successful Streetwise challenge. The exact nature of the contact should be determined through cooperation between Game Master and player. An AURA challenge made at a Difficulty of 4 (very difficult task) will cement the contact and allow future use as per the rules in the *Underground* Rulebook. The contact is made for only one person (most street members get nervous dealing with large groups) but if everyone will benefit, then Reward Points may be pooled.

- Any veteran who is part of an organization will be interested in promotion if for no other reason than the increase this usually brings in pay. Once the appropriate Reward Points are spent, the character makes a P/F AURA Challenge against a Difficulty dependent on the level of promotion. The table below will indicate how many Reward Points must be spent as well as the Difficulty of the attempt. Status

promotion: For more information on promotions for boosts who are *still* enlisted, see pages 52-59.

ranking system of the organization: For instance, if applied to the LAPF, Status Levels 1 would indicate OverOfficer, 2 would indicate Lieutenant, 3 would indicate OverLieutenant, and 4 would indicate Major. Above Level 4 would be political offices such as Chief of Police or some type of special task force.

Level indicates the ranking system of the organization. Attempts at promotion can only be made at the conclusion of a *successful* story, only one attempt may be made each time, and only for the next level of status. Since the attempt is a P/F Challenge, Karma may be spent to influence the decision. (GM note: it is likely here that an NPC may not want the character to gain the promotion and may use his own Karma Points to tip the decision against the character. Character's will have a feeling for this since the influence comes in the form of rumors or direct intervention.) If other characters wish to aid the person, they may pool their Reward Points.

Level of Promotion	Difficulty	Reward Points
Level 1	9	15
Level 2	10	20
Level 3	11	25
Level 4	12	30
Level 5 and above	15	40

- The ability to pool Reward Points places a high value on the attraction of followers to a character's cause, organization, or even just themselves. Suddenly the massive Reward Point totals needed for some of the changes the characters would like to make is not so daunting as they can draw upon the Reward Point store of others. Still, attracting followers is no easy task, nor is there a guarantee it will last. Followers can be as much a liability as an asset. To gain a follower, first he or she must be found. This is usually accomplished through the course of normal play, but the characters could also go in search of those they want. Once a potential follower is located, a Reward Point total is paid and a character makes a P/F AURA Challenge against a Difficulty of 9 (impressive task). Unless this is for a personal follower, any character may make the challenge (probably the one with the highest AURA) and any characters may contribute Karma Points as necessary.

FOLLOWERS AND POOLING REWARD POINTS

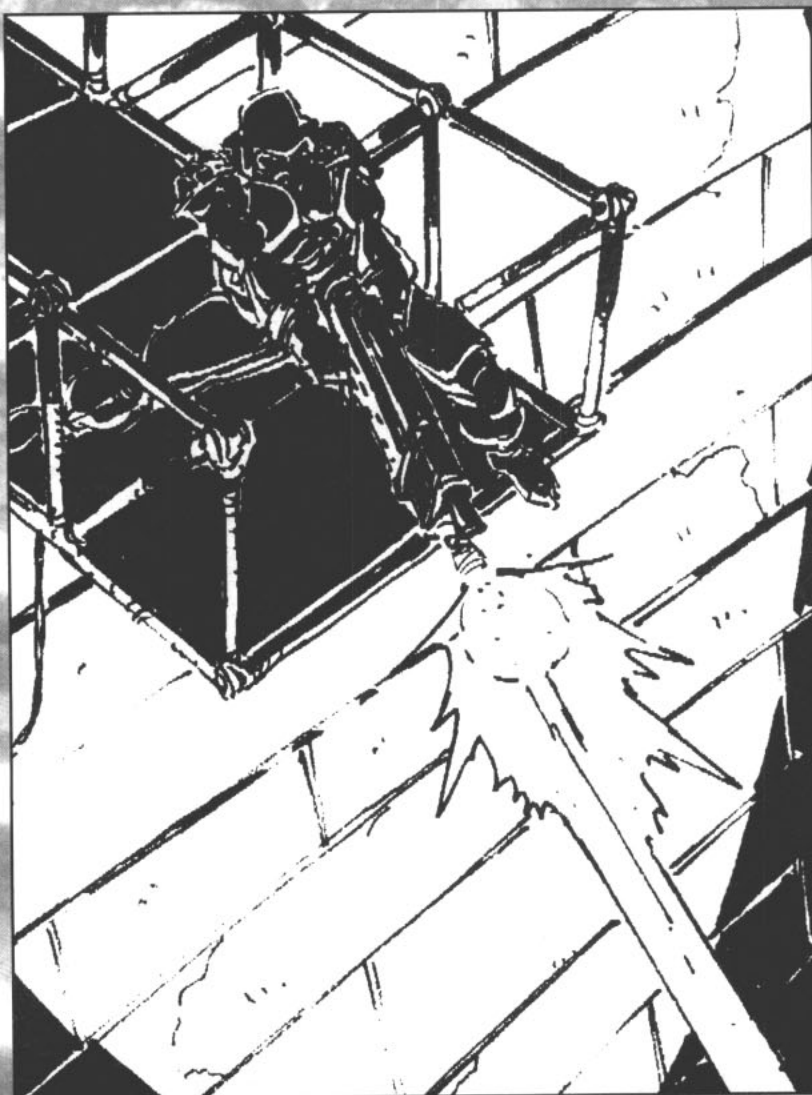
CAUSE
FOLLOWERS

Follower Type	Reward Points
---------------	---------------

Cause	10
Organization	20
Personal	25

Cause. The easiest follower to attract, this person is interested in a particular vision or outcome of events. This person will not contribute anything unless it directly supports that cause, and usually must be talked to

particular vision or outcome of events: An example would be someone who supports the character's efforts to expose the Chief of the LAPF as a corrupt bureaucrat.



"Ah, another 500K."—Mr. Concealment pounds a few nails in another coffin.

code or justification of the group: Gangs, terrorist organizations, military outfits, and certain businesses are all examples of organizations which can attract this kind of follower.

and convinced on each separate occasion. Any month in which the cause does not seem closer or in which a setback occurs, a new P/F AURA Challenge must be made at a Difficulty of 4 or the person loses interest and will never be persuaded to help again. In support of the cause, a follower will always contribute any or all of his Reward Points, his Karma Points, and will take acceptable risks as compared to the overall goal.

Organization. Similar to Cause Followers, attracting a follower of this type means that they see value in the code or justification of the group. The value here is that the organization has more latitude when directing the use of Reward Points. Causes and goals can change on a daily basis, all dependent on the needs and desires of the group. A follower of this type will contribute up to one half of his current Reward Point total on any one event. If he has only one point, he will give that up if the reason is good enough. Skills and Karma points are at the discretion of the Game Master depending on the element of risk and the return it will bring if successful. Setbacks do not necessarily drive people away from an organization (some even thrive on it) but in any month that the leader(s) of an organization lose face (infighting, humiliation, etc.) a new P/F AURA Challenge must be made at a Difficulty of 0 (even money) to retain that member.

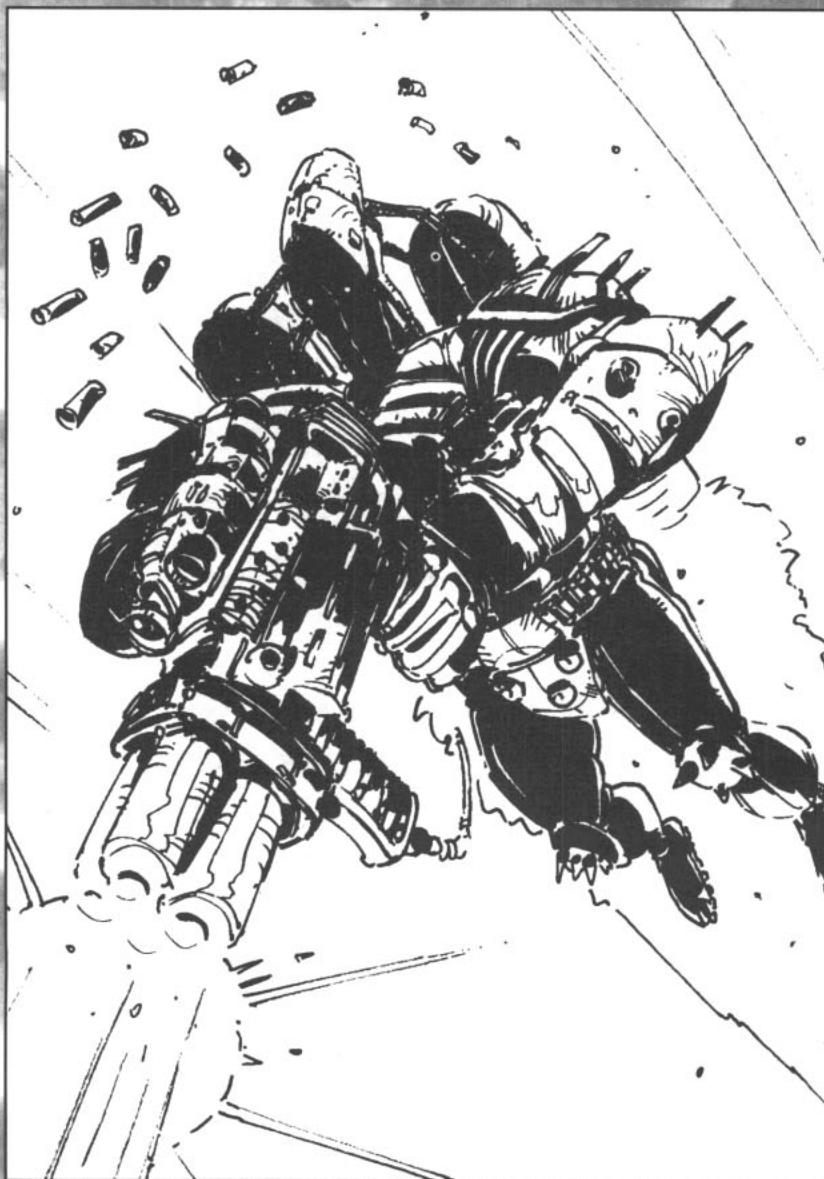
Personal. Hero worship, plain and simple. This follower is so enamored with the character that he will do anything the character asks just for the pleasure of helping or being nearby for awhile. Personal followers tend to be very plain and unassuming people, but they can amount to a large power base for any individual. Reward Points may be pooled in order to assist a character in acquiring a personal follower, but only that character may draw upon the Reward Points of that person. Care for this type of follower is the most demanding since the character must pay some attention to them and preferably include them in part of his life. Any form of abuse on the character's part will be cause for an immediate P/F AURA Challenge against a difficulty of 3 (Difficult) in order to retain that follower. The benefit is that the follower will always offer all Reward Points and will also be willing to assist in any other aspect of the story regardless of risk.

PERSONAL FOLLOWERS

PARAMETER
CHANGES

Big picture stuff

Within the framework of a campaign, there is usually some scope to the characters' activities. Normally this involves the changing of parameters. Full explanation of this use is covered in Chapter 12 of the *Underground Rulebook*. What is important to note here is that Reward Points may be pooled and the use of followers (especially those who follow a cause) will be invaluable.



Scattering the brass.—The Atomic MF throws down a withering hail of cover fire for the boys in the 'Duces 2nd cohort.



ENTERTAINMENT SECTION:

VID-NET UPDATE

Combat, Combat, Combat goes along with the Meat Substitute as he returns to that fateful rice paddy in Laos.

ALIVE'S Words on the Street

Hey, it isn't safe out there on the streets! Especially if you don't know the latest lingo. An out of date or mis-used word could get you so filled with lead that you could stroll through airport security with plutonium in

your stomach and not set off the detectors! So, in the interests of keeping you safe (and our readership from dropping), here's some of the latest terminology in use this week. Stay close to the walls out there!



Terms most commonly used across the country.



Terms used primarily by the government or by those close to the nation's capitol.



Terms used by the military and its personnel.

Note that since these terms are familiar to veterans, they are also often used on the street.



acceptable casualty rates • any number of deaths that is expected and expendable during any given conflict.



"Adios!" • "Time to die!" *"Adios, hotoplasm!"*



amber zone • a military operating arena where caution is advised.



baller • a dope dealer. "Chelsea's not answering her call. Time to pay the baller."



balls! • great!



base • crack cocaine.



basehead (also cluckhead) • a crack addict.



beats • moments or heartbeats. *"Slamdog just got coked. Let's take some beats and get our gats."*



Beau • any corporate spokesman.



black-and-whites • the "real world" or the U.S., where things are supposed to be less colorful, but a home for rational living.



blacktop • the street.



blasted • when bills are pronounced dead on legislative arrival because of little pull with the leadership.



blip • an enemy target; vet slang for the sound the gun computer makes when an enemy is spotted.



blockade • the withholding of food or power from a housing development.



bloop • a friendly soldier; vet slang for the sound the gun computer makes when a friendly is spotted.



BoBo • crazy and/or violent; *"Man, he's reachin' for his 20! That guy is BoBo!"*



bones • money. Alternately, a fun game.



boosted • genetically enhanced.



bork • to forcefully reject; *"So I ask her if I could buy her a drink, and she borks me right in front of Richardson!"*



bought the national debt • to die. *"Rico just bought the national debt. Let's go get his shoes."*



boyo • a person. *"Watch out for Aural Tex, boyo, he's BoBo!"*



brainjacking • to steal one's brain for the purpose of selling it as a bio-drive to an unscrupulous corporation.



brasso • money.



Break 'em off somethin' • hurt them.



buck down • to shoot someone, usually fatally.



bucket • head (or other targetted body part); *"I'll kick your bucket for ya!"*



Buddha • marijuana. (See also: the Chronic and Chelsea.)



bust out • to do something very noticeable or cause violence; *"I'm fixin' to bust out. You strapped?"* Alternately, a situation in which a criminal uses a rocket launcher to blow a hole in the victim's home and then, taking advantage of the ensuing confusion, he rushes inside and steals everything he can carry.



busting caps • to discharge a weapon, usually during the performance of a violent act.



buttons • money.



cack • to kill; a kill; *"Let's cack this chump! It's a deal!"*



CATS • Combat Air Transports. Any threat in the air.



Channel Zero • whatever channel the Underground is broadcasting from.



cheez • to pull off an admirable feat, usually near-suicidal. *"Holey Frajole! The Alibastard just cheezed n' snapped the buckets of those CATS!"*



Chelsea • the best marijuana. (See also: Buddha and the Chronic.)



chop shop • term for unlicensed doctor's offices specializing in the installation and repair of cybernetic equipment.



Chronic, the • very good marijuana. (See also: Buddha and Chelsea.)



chunky • cool; *"Your new ride is chunky!"*



civvy • civilians outside of a military organization; those who are innocent.



clams • money.



class • very!! *"I was over at Rico's pad, and it was class chunky!!"*



clock • to earn or acquire. *"I clocked these togs Saturday from Joe Norm."*



cluckhead (also basehead) • a crack addict.



cokers • a drug addict; one addicted to crack cocaine or cocaine.



cold • very; *"That 20mm is cold fresh!"*



colorful world • war zones comparable to the intensity of four-color comic books.



cork • head; *"Someone popped the Phinster's cork!"*



corked • killed.



covered • powerful. *"Sneed's covered."*



crazy • very!! *"That jacket is crazy chunky!"*



crimson zone • a military operating arena classified as highly dangerous.



cro-mag (or "cro") • a common derogatory epithet used to describe the pre-frontals.



death whores • all but the most highly-priced of prostitutes are called death whores because of the frequency of deadly sexually-transmitted diseases. To requisition a death whore for his or her services is considered a normal rite of passage for most gang members.



deepest • largest. *"That's the deepest gat I've ever seen!"*



demob • mustering out, retirement.



dex monster • Secret Service jargon for a boost who relies on dexterity and speed.



dink • a weak person or weakness in general.



dis • disrespect; insulting.



disappear • to murder; to be murdered.



disinfo • false information. *"Anything that lobbyist told you is disinfo, you understand?"*



down • loyal or friendly with. *"I'm down with the F-HOGs."*



ducats • money.



emerald zone • any operating arena that is designated safe.



Fat Mac • someone who is well respected on the street. *"Let me tell ya 'bout Tonto, the Fattest Mac of them all..."*



fifteen • a 15mm pistol.



finger • lieutenant.



fire-and-forget • a one-shot, disposable weapon, usually a weapon of mass destruction.



fly • sporty or expensive.



fly-by • a situation in which an air-capable boosted gang-crasher opens fire on a target from the skies and streaks away before the police can possibly arrive on the scene.



frag • to kill or destroy; *"Max-a-Million just fragged the whole freakin' juice factory! I'm jonesin'!"*



freak (or frick) • an intensifier used to add emphasis to something; *"What the freak are you doin' here?"*; to act stupidly or carelessly; *"Chuck's all freaked out. I'm gettin' my frickin' gat."*



fresh • new or sporty.



fully strapped • ready for anything; carrying full loads of cash/drugs/weapons. *"Yeah, I'm fully strapped for Foster's motorcade. Let's motorvate!"*



g • gangster or gangbanger; alternately, guy or girl.



gat • a gun, usually a pistol.



gat bait • anyone who is actively being stalked to be murdered.



gauge • a shotgun.



gear • clothes and possessions.



geeks • rookie cops; alternately, an innocent bystander.



gelts • money.



genhancement: genetic enhancement



get busy • do something; to cause violence.



giga- • a prefix preceding some slang term for money to imply a great deal of money. (giga-bones) giga- implies the largest amount, followed by mega- and kilo-.



greedhead • any elected official.



grip • "seed money" for a criminal operation.



hardcore • any target that needs hot load ammo in order to be incapacitated.



heads • opinion specialists who merely comment on stories rather than generating news themselves.



hoes • any kind of salesman.



Holey Frajole! • a common phrase of excitement, usually over a large-scale combat.



Hot and Heavy Lead • any altercation that involves an enormous amount of expended ammunition.



Hotoplasm (or sissyplasm) • homosuperior derogatory term for non-boosts. *"Hey, Hotoplasm, I think you're in the wrong part of town!"*



in the ballpark • those persons connected to the power structure with a vested interest in the survival of that power structure.



It's a deal! • a trigger phrase. Many gangsters program their weapons to fire when this phrase is said.



ivories • dice.



jack • to steal or rob. *"He's down! Let's jack his melon!"*



jam • all-purpose expletive, generally meaning "to mess up."



jittering speedclutches • a person racing on the effects of speed; alternately, someone who is going through withdrawal.



jones • a need for something, usually used in reference to drugs. *"Boyo, I'm jonesin' for some more moon candy!"*



juice • any powerful narcotic substance; respect.



katch • love



kilo- • a prefix preceding some slang term for money to imply a great deal of money. (kilo-clams) giga- implies the largest amount, followed by mega- and kilo-.



lampin' • relaxing.



loco • crazy or violent.



Luddite • a person who blames technology for society's woes.



luggage • A Significant Other, this term is applied to the politically less powerful member of a couple.



mack • any person that makes money.



mega- • a prefix preceding some slang term for money to imply a great deal of money. (mega-bucks) giga- implies the largest amount, followed by mega- and kilo-.



micro-stare • An odd, inappropriate gaze tagged to boosted vets. The vet's eyes focus on a point a few inches away, staring at nothing.



Mister Flexibones • A boost with the Flex enhancement.



mofo • an enemy, usually boosted, who can only be stopped through extreme measures.



mooks • a derogatory term. A chump or jerk; someone who is ugly. *"If you weren't so mookie lookin', I'd come out there an' help you."*



moon candy • the highest caliber of drugs.



moon dog • anyone who was sent to New Soledad for imprisonment.



motoring • to drive around, either aimlessly or with purpose.



nails • bullets; *"I'm gonna drive a nail through your cork!"*



neutralized • any target that has been rendered non-threatening, usually through extreme incapacitation or death.



New Jack • new gangbanger or set.



Nine • a 9mm pistol.



norms • term used by boosted vets to refer to non-boosted persons.



O.G. • original gangsters, old-time ganger bangers or sets.



O.P. • Original People (African-Americans). *"The Man better back down or the O.P.'s gonna bust out!"*



Odds Game • Popular urban mind game. Players enable themselves to leave the safety of their houses by trying to calculate the odds of being killed by random violence.



off the rack • a non-boosted human.



pacifier • any device or drug used to curb metagenic feedback trauma.



packed • armed.



pail • head. *"I'll knock yer sponge right outta yer pail! for ya"*



patang • used as an exclamation. *"Did you hear what happened to Lovely Kafka? Patang!"*



player • a moderate threat.



pointer finger • most trusted lieutenant.



popper • a killer.



programmed • someone who is intelligent; alternately, someone who is boosted.



psychoboosters • the first wave of genetically-altered human beings.



pull • respect. *"Little Girl Sitwell gets a lot of pull on the streets."*



racket • profession.



requisition • to acquire an item or fortification by any means necessary, usually through force and/or theft.



rock • crack cocaine.



rocks • bullets. *"It's a deal! Here's a few rocks for your pail!"*



ronnies • hired actors who portray campaigning candidates in media promotions.



rook • to rob or steal. *"Laughing Akbar just got rooked!"*



ruby • to assassinate an assassin one has hired.



scrag (or slag) • to kill or destroy.



shank (or shiv) • a knife; to stab.



shine • expensive; sporty. *"Yo! Rubin got a shine new car!"*



Sid • acid.



slap or, more properly, "put the slap on." • to have killed.



slide • to relax. *"Everyone was slidin' on the beach."*



smudge • a piece of political dirt or reputation-damaging information. *"I'd watch my back if I were you, Senator. Sneed's got an awful lot of smudge on you."*



snoggin' • extremely large, huge. *"Holey Frajole! That shell is snoggin'!"*



spin • power (be it monetary, political, sexual, etc.). As a verb, to target for assassination. In archaic terms, spin refers to the interpretation of an event by party spokesmen for the benefit of the news media.



spin control • a situation in which the person ordering a hit is sufficiently insulated from the assassin.



spin doctor • a hired killer. In archaic terms, a political spokesperson who interprets events for the media.



splash • money; to spend money. *"I'm gonna go splash around."*



squack • to hurt or kill.



squatters • homeless people.



squeezers • special interest groups.



steel deep • members of the same gang. *"Me and Julio, we're steel deep."*



stone cold • respected and/or feared.



strapped • carrying cash/drugs/weapons. *"Yeah, I'm strapped for that!"*



street-burps • low lifes, people who live and vanish without significance.



stub • to show disrespect for, to insult. *"Adios, punk. Shouldn't have stubbed King Klown."*



stubble • the homeless; those who are ignored by society.



stupid • very.



sub-sprawl • any old section of a city that was built on the ground.



taggers • vandals.



tagless • the upper echelons of power, so named because they are not required to wear security authorization badges.



tats • tatoos.



the Man • the police. The term is also used in Washington to refer to the President.



togs • clothes. *"Do I look chunky in these new togs or what?"*



tone! • a vocal warning of incoming radar-guided small arms.



tricks • anyone who buys something.



tripping • acting irrationally, often drug induced. *"Check out Black Remorse, he's tripping!"*



turkey shoot • a contemptibly easy operation.



twenty • a 20mm pistol.



Upper 101 • the network of freeways in the air, distinguished by the word "upper" with a number following. *"That car bomb messed everything up. Let's check out Upper 355."*



Upstairs • floating cities; offices and/or homes of the rich and powerful.



vid • to take a picture or video footage of. *"Hey Argot! Vid this!"*



voodoo phone • the Telepathy enhancement. *"SuperDome just rang me up on the voodoo phone. It's on for tonight."*



wangle • to be granted something by illegal means. *"If you can wangle a meeting with da Man, tell him I said frag 'im!"*



wet-up • to kill.



wet wire • to hook electrodes directly to the brain. *"If you wet-wire that Urban Nightmare, you'll get a lot more quality kills."*



wonks • an unintelligent person.



word • the absolute truth. *"I didn't kill that old lady, I only mugged her! Word!"*



wus • a physically weak person.



yay-o • crack cocaine.



zero • to kill someone.



IT'S LIKE THIS . . .

***What's that? You want to know who you can trust?
Fool, there ain't no love in 2021—just millimeters.
You know—9mm, 15mm, 25mm?***

*You're just another sorry sob who slaves for the man who slaves for the man
who slaves for the goddamn Man. When you gonna do something about it?*

The *Underground Player's Handbook* provides you with scores of new
rules that will prove useful to street soldiers and insurrectionists alike.

- Expanded character creation rules, including rules for creating non-boosted PCs and non-veteran boosts.
- New enhancements.
- Expanded rules, and new bonuses and limitations for existing enhancements.
- New rules and uses for reward points.
- A guide to the street slang of 2021.
- Eight new character archetypes.



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