
From the Publishers of Tunnels & Trolls™
MERCENARIES
SPIES &
PRIVATE EYES
™
A Contemporary Role-Playing Adventure Game for Solitaire or Group Play
FBI-3001
Designed by MICHAEL A. STACKPOLE



MERCENARIES SPIES & PRIVATE EYES™

COMBINED EDITION

MERCENARIES SPIES & PRIVATE EYES™

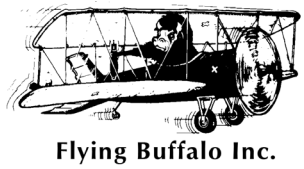
The Combined Edition

A Role-Playing Game of Pulp adventures for the Early Industrial, Victorian Modern and Near Future Eras

written by
Michael A. Stackpole

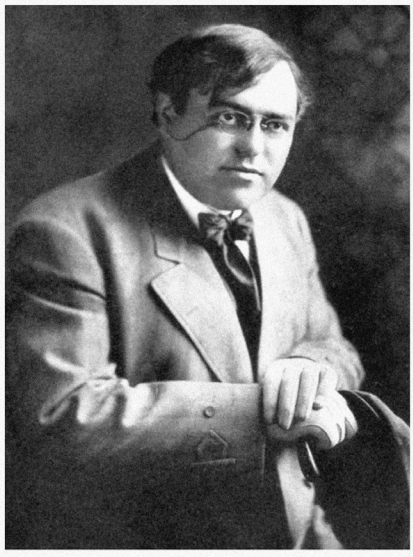
edited by
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Brian Hamilton
Michael Kucharski
Steven S. Crompton
Liz Danforth



Flying Buffalo Inc.

Dedication



To Jacques Futrelle:
Lost on April 15, 1912
but not forgotten.
Rest pleased with the happiness you have given others.

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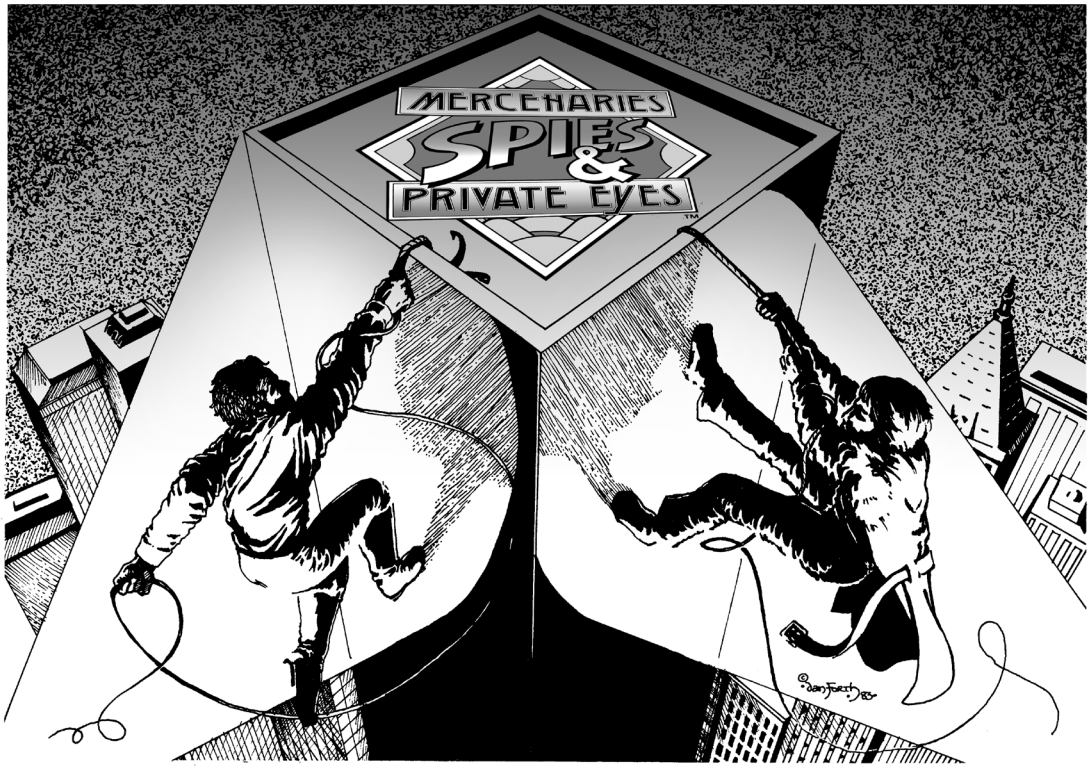
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A "lost" MSPE Illustration by Liz Danforth that was only used in Sorcerer's Apprentice magazine. It was part of an advertisement that announced the team-up between MSPE and Espionage RPGs. For a time, both games products had stats for each other's rpgs in their adventures.

Welcome to MSPE: the Combined Edition

by Steve Crompton, MSPE Reprint Editor/Art Director

I remember working on this book back in 1982-83. It was right after the huge success of the first Indiana Jones movie, and we were all excited about the idea of having RPG adventures in a Pulp adventure or Spy setting. *(At the time it was a brand new concept!)* Michael Stackpole was a huge fan of that genre, and he spent an enormous amount of time developing Flying Buffalo's next RPG, which ended up being called *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes.*

I designed the MSPE logos (which were inspired by the *Raiders of the Lost Ark film*) and was assigned the task of drawing the guns and any additional illustrations (illos) needed to fill in the gaps in the layout that Kucharski's art didn't. I also did some of the paste-up along with Niki Canotas. Liz Danforth was the art director and editor. When it came out, we were all very proud and felt like we had reached a new pinnacle of quality in gaming design and graphics with MSPE.

Eventually, there were two different editions of *Mercenaries Spies & Private Eyes.* The first edition was published in 1983 by Blade (then a division of Flying Buffalo.) The second edition was published by Sleuth Publications in 1986.

BLADE a division of Flying Buffalo Inc.

Sleuth Publications

Over the years MSPE grew a steady following of T&T and Pulp fiction fans who appreciated what MSPE was. They played and adapted it to suit their own gaming needs - which is exactly how *Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes* was meant to be. The release of *Deluxe Tunnels & Trolls* in 2015 brought more interest and demand for MSPE, so we have put together this reprinting of the classic RPG.

As I started compiling this 2019 reprinting of MSPE, I soon discovered that there were things in the Blade version that aren't in the Sleuth version and visa versa. (You can easily tell which book is which, by the cover; the Blade version has a beautiful full-color painting on it, while the Sleuth edition has just a black and white cover.

But inside are other differences: For example: The Blade edition had a section called *Tunnels & Thompsons*, which helps explain how to use MSPE with T&T. Since Sleuth Publications didn't sell T&T, they removed that from their edition and inserted other information. There were also a few places where illos from the first edition were replaced with more appropriate illustrations to better match the text.



One of Michael Kucharski's illos that was used in the Blade Edition, but not in the Sleuth edition.

The Sleuth edition had a section on aging rules, pre-rolled characters (illustrated by Liz Danforth), a special MSPE Character folder, and some character portraits you can cut out and use on the character folder. *(These did not appear in the Blade edition.)*

At first, I was in a quandary over which edition to scan. In the end, we decided that you fans would most enjoy having ALL those things in one book, so we added it all in and then I renumbered the pages.

I also fixed some typos and errors that fans had found over the years. *(No guarantee I got them all!)* Added an illo or two in blank places where there were no illos, and we added new short pieces about using MSPE in sci-fi or pulp settings, to expand upon playing in that genre. And of course the new articles and expansion rules from Mike Stackpole himself.

We want to extend a special thanks to you fans out there who helped make the Kickstarter for this reprint such a great success. Your support and suggestions have made this book far better than we had thought possible - so thanks from all of us!

So you are now holding in your hands not just a reprint, but a 3rd edition of MSPE. We call it the **Combined Edition.** And we hope you'll enjoy this new, enhanced version of our classic RPG. ◆



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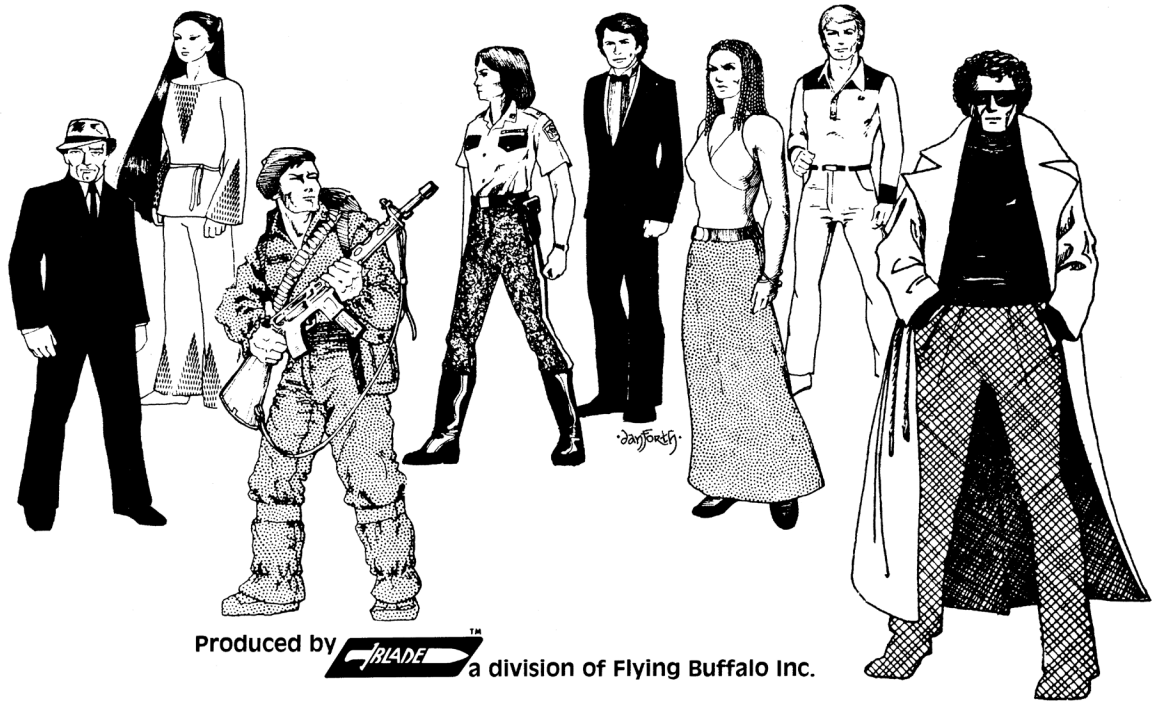
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**denotes new or expanded content from previous editions*
▽denotes content that was only in Sleuth edition.



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BOOK 1:

Introduction to the Game

This first book of Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes *will provide you with the basic systems you need to be able to play the game. Here you will get a "feel" for the game, and covered here are the rules to create and develop a character, and the complete listing of the skills and abilities your characters can have. Read what follows carefully, perhaps creating a character as you go. Once you have finished reading this first book you will be ready to start thinking about going on your first adventure.*

RAP SHEET

Introductions to written works are supposed to be like menus: they foreshadow what is to come, but they are incidental to the meal as a whole. I hope what follows will whet your appetite for the game, without spoiling the meal for you.

While working at Flying Buffalo Inc., I was one of the playtesters for the Lovecraft variant of T&T featured in *Sorcerer's Apprentice,* issue 7. Ken St. Andre ran two adventures where I played Damon Hunter, a martial artist who blew a path through Aztec warriors with a 1916 Mauser. I was inspired, out of that play, to write an article for SA detailing a variant of T&T for use with detective, spy and mercenary fiction. The article got out of hand; now it's a rulebook and in your hands.

It is not the purpose of MSPE to mirror reality. While hard data is used to ground the adventure in reality, the object of the game is to allow players to create and adventure with characters like Jacques Futrelle's The Thinking Machine, Ed Hoch's Nick Velvet, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, or Frederick Forsyth's Cat Shannon. MSPE is a game of two-fisted adventure: part pulp, part mystery, part John Wayne movie and 100% fun.

Players who want nothing more from their games than to mow down foes with a burst from an M-16 will find a complete listing of automatic weapons and other destructive devices to wreak havoc among their enemies. For those who like their violence cut with exotic settings and subtlety, we have skills that will make the creation of a super-spy simple. And for those whose greatest joy in life is figuring out if the butler actually did do it, there is an extensive section of the rules to teach players how to design mysteries, mysteries that would have Holmes smoking a dozen pipes before he discovers a solution.

I realize that this seems like a tall order to fill with only one booklet, but it is all here. The playability of the game is not compromised by the detail worked into the game. The rules are not choked with charts; everything you'll need can be kept on your character card, fully ready for use whenever needed. And yet the game is open-ended to allow for any possibility a Gamemaster might wish to try in a game.

MSPE will require work by Gamemasters designing missions or mysteries. It won't be as easy as some games to run off the cuff, because attention to detail is the key to a mystery. By the same token, the satisfaction from the game often comes in the Gamemaster's construction of the perfect crime, or the breaking of the same by characters.

This brings me to the final point about MSPE. The game is now yours. I've attempted to provide you with information that should enable you to expand the game as you will. If you disagree with the rules, or if they don't suit your style of play, change them. Try and keep your changes fair and playable, but tailor the game to suit yourself.

Above all, enjoy!

Michael A. Stackpole



◆

HOW THE GAMES ARE PLAYED

As the title of the game and the title of this section suggest, there are three games blended together under these covers. All three games are set in a world much like ours today. Politics breeds situations that require military attention, making the employment of mercenaries a reality. Governments also have need of spies, the covert soldiers who perform missions knowing that capture might mean death. Domestic mysteries and situations also call for private eyes, from the hard-boiled gumshoe who drinks rotgut whiskey, to the suave English lordling who pursues evil-doers as another man might pursue big game. Cutting across the lines of these three designations are the adventures of freelance explorers and soldiers of fortune who travel the world to find adventure and live for danger.

No matter what the focus of the adventure might be, the common element to all three games is the character. Each player will enter the game through the persona of a character created to handle the challenges of adventure. If the game is to be a mission best suited to mercenaries, creating characters with many military and weapons skills would be good. Spy adventures will call for a character with skills that will suit him or her in combat or social situations. A mystery will need characters with skills that will help them ferret out hidden clues and bring the criminals to justice or put the facts together in a solution.

The adventures will require a bit of specialization according to the focus of the game being played. A commando or mercenary adventure will require the Gamemaster to fully prepare a map of the area to be attacked. Once the GM has designed and staffed the target, say the Embassy in Verisamonte, the players will have to determine the best way to get in and get out, to complete their mission within the limitations of time and materials available. Success should be rewarded; in these adventures, failure often means death.

Spy adventures require more background than Mercenary adventures. They are best when one character must foil the evil plot of a rival organization. These adventures require the GM to design a super-secret base hidden in some unsuspected building nestled in the heart of a peaceful village. The characters will have to use wit, guile, and action to accomplish their mission.

Detective adventures require the GM to invent a mystery to be solved. The characters are provided with the means for discovering the clues and solving the mystery. Anything from the hard-boiled detective mysteries of Spillane to the deductive cases of Doyle will suffice for an interesting and challenging game.

The players, for their parts, need to seek out the clues the Gamemaster has carefully hidden. They need to try to out-think the enemy and plan their assaults on targets with caution and care. Just as the Gamemaster is obliged to create an interesting and challenging game, the players are obliged to accept the challenge and do their best to overcome the problems set before them.

The players, and the Gamemasters, are encouraged to play out the roles they have adopted. If a player is running a character born below the Mason-Dixon line, attempting to speak with a Southern accent when the character is saying something is part of the game. Thinking of what the character would do in that situation, and framing ideas in terms the character would recognize, understand, and use is the soul of role playing. Performing such actions enhances games incredibly, making them more fun and much more alive than games where characters become little more than gun-toting androids.

The ultimate goal for the game is the fun and enjoyment of each adventure by all the people involved in playing it. Suit the games to your style of play and use what you consider fun as your rule of thumb, and the purpose of the game should be well served. ◆

CHARACTER CREATION



To be able to play *Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes*, each player must create a character who will serve as his alter ego in the game. The physical traits of the character will be generated randomly, but players must flesh out the background details of their characters by themselves. Fleshing out characters can become very important, as will be seen below, and can give a character advantages that will be useful in the games to come.

Rolling up attributes is fairly simple: it merely requires the rolling of three six-sided dice. To facilitate things, it is suggested that a Character Record Sheet like the one in the back of the rules be used in character creation (see page 139; go ahead and photocopy it). Everything will be more easily organized if you have space for it.

Strength (ST), Luck (LK), Intelligence (IQ), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Charisma (CHR), and Speed (SP) are the seven attributes used to define a character's native abilities. The attributes will suggest what types of skills the character will be able to master and how much damage a character can take in combat. The attributes will also go a long way in suggesting what a character can do, and how well the task is likely to be performed. The attributes will be more fully explained below.

To determine the value of each attribute the player must roll three six-sided dice. If the three dice do not come up triples, (the same number on all three faces), the dice are totaled and entered as the value for that attribute. To reflect the possibility of exceptional characters (and fiction is full of them), when the dice rolled do come up triples, two more dice may be rolled and added to the total of the three dice. The highest possible attribute, then, for a beginning character is 30. (Three sixes yield eighteen, and two more sixes yield twelve. The two totals add up to thirty.)

Once the attributes for a character have been determined, it is important to begin the process of fleshing the character out. "Fleshing out" is best defined as adding details that help define a character in the mind of the player creating him. Simple details such as height and weight, or hair and eye color are things that can fix a character in the mind of his creator. More important features like background and race are mentioned below, and they are details that can have a great effect upon the life of a character and how he will be played. Fleshing out is where a player may shape his character towards being the type of person he wants to play.

The very first thing that must be done to flesh out a character is naming the character. At the same time a player can give some thought to the character's background. □For the purpose of illustration in these rules I will create a character named Orion Brayden (and each time you see this □, it means an example or illustration). The background I see for Orion will be revealed as we continue to shape him and I hope the importance of background will become clear to all. Names and background should mesh. A person named Pavlov Nareshakescu is not likely to be Mexican, nor is Raoul Garcia Lopez likely to be the head of the Rumanian secret police.

►**Sex** is the next subjective attribute to be filled in for a character. For the most part the sex of a character is obvious when the character is seen. Sex will determine if the character is allowed into the "Women's Only Spa" or if the character can enter the gentlemen's "Tiger Club." While there are very few female mercenaries, their roles as spies and detectives are not restricted at all. □Orion is a man.

►**Nationality** is the next attribute we can concern ourselves with. The nation of a character's birth will, in most cases, determine the chances of hereditary titles and the natural tongue of that character. □Orion is a U.S. citizen, born of an American father and a French Canadian mother in Newport, Vermont. Orion's native tongue is English, the official language of the U.S.; the bilingual culture of his home in Vermont will become important later as he is outfitted with skills.

►**Race** is an attribute that will become important in some adventures. There is no way that a blond, blue-eyed German mercenary is going to be able to pass for native in China. □Orion is Caucasian, with Irish and French blood in equal proportions from his father and mother. A character named Hiro Tanaka could be a U.S. citizen, but would still probably be Oriental as far as race was concerned. While adding race as an attribute is opening a Pandora's box of prejudice, MSPE is a contemporary game that functions in a contemporary world. And unfortunately prejudice is part of our world. It should not, however, be allowed in any way to dominate games.

►**Age** is an attribute that can be very important. If you decide that your character is 17, there is no legal way to have him enter a bar to pursue a suspect. In selecting an age for your character, you should also take into account the amount of training needed for the character to have mastered a certain skill. Guildelines to suggest the time needed to train in and master a skill are listed at each skill where time is a big consideration. No character with a full M.D. will be just 12 years old. □Orion is 22; the oldest character we've run to date has been a grandmother who began her detective career at 63!

►**Level** refers to Orion's experience and expertise, both as a person and in certain skill areas. All characters begin at Level 1 as a person. As they become more experienced, their levels increase, making them better, more capable characters. More will be said about experience increases later on.

At this point, having filled in some of the background information about Orion, let's go back and take a look at his prime attributes. The numbers will always influence what skills the character will be fitted with. In addition, the feel for a character you can get by looking at the numbers will help to determine his background. That, in turn, will help in the selection of the skills you feel the character should have.

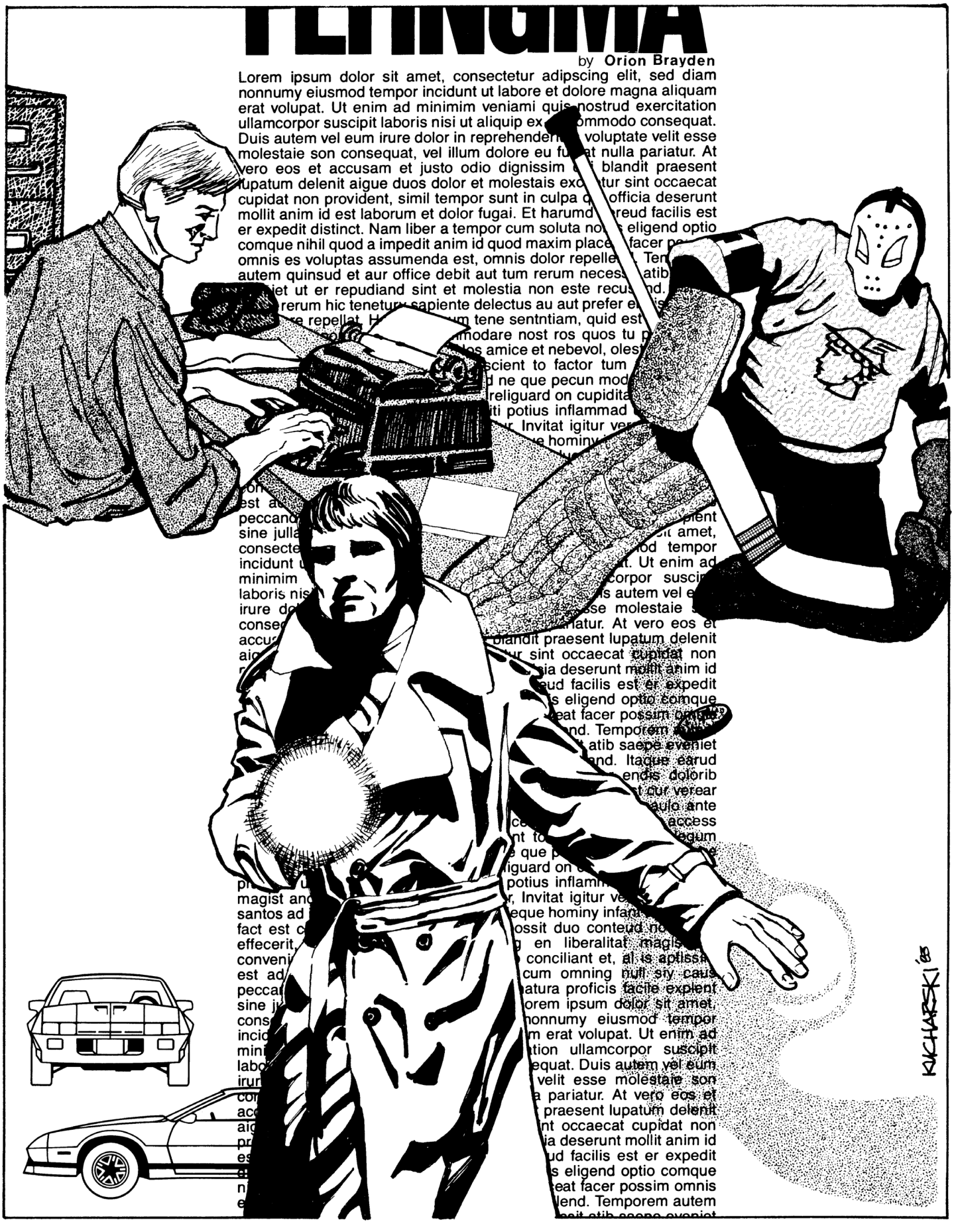
►**Strength (ST)** is an attribute that is used to indicate how strong a character is and how much force a character is able to exert when doing something. Multiplying the Strength attribute by ten will indicate how many pounds the character can lift. □Orion's Strength of eleven is fairly average, but if poison or other damage ever causes his Strength to fall to zero (and he doesn't get medical attention quickly), he will die.

►**Luck (LK)** is the attribute which influences whether or not a character is doing the right thing in the right place at the right time. It is used to determine the winner in various games of chance, how well a character will fare in an all-out brawl, or whether or not a character gets injured when his car is destroyed in a highway accident. This is the attribute that most "saving rolls" are made against, saving rolls being explained later on. □Orion's Luck of 10 is not bad.

►**Intelligence (IQ)** is the measure of a character's mental capacity. In MSPE it also indicates how many "Skill Points" a character has to use in obtaining skills. Characters have a total of Skill Points equal to their starting IQ, and they can gain more Skill Points if their IQ is raised during the course of their career. IQ will also be used when informational saving rolls are required, i.e. can this character find data on an enemy or clues in various research books, or can this character remember what the shells to his gun look like? □Orion's IQ of 11 is merely average, but was good enough to get him through college.

►**Dexterity (DEX)** refers to both manual dexterity and overall agility. It is used to determine whether or not a character hits a target with a gunshot, thrown knife, shot arrow, or other launched weapons. It is also used to determine if a character can keep his car on the road when driving too fast. □Orion is, if nothing else, quick. His DEX of 14 indicates that he is quite likely to hit a target he shoots at and capable of driving like a bat out of hell.

►**Constitution (CON)** is the attribute that determines the general health of a character. It also


by Orion Brayden
KUCHARSKI '85

measures the character's ability to take damage. Any damage taken as a result of combat or accident will be subtracted from the character's CON. As with Strength, if the CON goes to zero and the character does not get medical attention, the character will die. ☐ Orion's CON of 9 is on the low end of average. Chances are that he bleeds easily and bright red.

►**Charisma (CHR)** is an attribute that suggests how attractive a character is physically. This attribute can actually go to zero or be negative without causing problems for the character. Most bystanders would have a functional Charisma of zero. A famous enemy agent would have a Charisma in negative numbers to indicate his infamy. The skills of *Confidence* and *Seduction* use this attribute, and Orion's 17 shows him to be a handsome devil.

Player characters would not regard themselves as having a negative Charisma. Still, a player character's Charisma would seem negative to an "enemy agent" or if the character began a shift in behavior 180° different from his normal way of acting. ☐ An example of this is the horror the "nice little man" down the block is held in when it is revealed he murdered 47 women and buried them in his petunia garden.

►**Speed (SP)** is a measure of how fast a character can move. Like Dexterity, this attribute refers to two things: reflex speed and land speed. It becomes important in martial arts and foot races. ☐ Orion's 11 is dead average.

As far as this game is concerned, the difference between DEX and Speed is as follows: Dexterity measure the speed of consciously activated responses, i.e. dodging a thrown rock or a speeding car. Speed measures reflex or trained reflex action. The perfect example of reflex is the time it takes you to pull your hand from a hot stove burner: it is an action you don't think about but you perform quickly.

Please refer to Movement Rates Section on page 52.

►**Combat adds** should be discussed at this point because they are derived from the attributes already mentioned. Hand-to-hand combat adds are additional damage done by a character because of his above-average Dexterity, Strength or Luck. *For every point of DEX, ST, or LK above 12, the character gets 1 combat add. If a character is exceptionally poor in any of those three attributes, he would lose 1 combat add for each point below 9.* ☐ Only Orion's DEX of 14 gives him hand-to-hand combat adds (2 of them). His Strength and Luck, both average, are of no help at all.

►**Missile weapon combat adds** work a bit differently. Because of the nature of missile weapons (guns especially), Strength has little to do with their use. Dexterity is used to determine if they hit, so DEX already plays its part in missile weapons combat. Thus, only Luck will be considered for combat adds with missile weapon combat. *For every point of Luck above 12, a character will get 1 missile weapon combat adds; for each point below 9 he will lose 1 missile weapon combat add.* The use of these adds will be explained more fully in the combat section of the rules.

►**Money ($)** is the next thing to be determined. All monies will be considered to be "after taxes." Money is determined just like an attribute, but the total of the three dice is multiplied by 100 to indicate the number of dollars that character has at the beginning of the game. If the $ roll comes up triples, the character is independently wealthy. The total of the dice is multiplied by 1,000 and this figure is used to represent the character's monthly income from a trust fund. ☐ Orion's 13 means he starts the game with $1,300 dollars.

►**Adventure Points (AP)** begin at zero for all skills and the character. APs are given to the character as a result of saving rolls and actions taken during adventures. They will measure how well the character does in his life of adventure and they are the real indicators of success in MSPE. APs will cause skills and characters to change levels. Adventure Points are occasionally called "experience points" or "EPs." There is more about APs and level changes in the section of the rules devoted to Adventure Points a bit later on.

►**Armor** is used when in combat, and the style of armor your character is wearing should be noted here. All flak vests are rated in dice for the amount of damage they absorb in combat and they can save your character's life. It is important to note if your character is wearing any armor; a GM is fully within rights to deny you the benefits of armor if it is not recorded as being on your character.

►**Provisions** is the section where you record everything your character owns, steals, borrows, or uses in an adventure. Another sheet of paper might be suited to recording everything the character has on his person. Lockpicks, flashlights, flares, and similar things that don't qualify as armor or weapons should be noted here. As above, if it isn't written down, the GM is being fair to deny it.

►**Weapons** are recorded in the section marked "Weapons." All the weapons should be recorded here, as well as their caliber, clip or revolver capacity, and number of clips or rounds the character is carrying for the gun. Silencers, scopes, and other things that are added onto a gun are recorded here as well.

The caliber of the weapons being used by a character can be important. A smart character will carry a 9mm submachine gun with a 9mm clip pistol so that the ammo can be exchanged between the two weapons. The compatibility of weapons and ammo can become very important in a pinch.

The location of weapons on the body should also be noted if a character is trying to conceal the weapons. A knife hidden in a boot may not be found in a routine search, while a pistol in a shoulder holster is bound to be detected. This will be valuable if a character is ever captured, but searched poorly.

►**Height and Weight** for a character should be noted to round out the physical description of a character. Once you have a feel for your character, go ahead and decide his height and weight. Don't be afraid to give yourself a short or overweight character.

Watching a character try to resist fattening foods, or succumbing to the seduction of a gourmet meal can easily be as much fun as playing a svelte mercenary who eats only health food and runs forty-seven miles a day in full gear. As for a short character: well, being short is nice when the gun is aimed for a headshot on a six-footer dashing through the doorway after the fugitive. ☐ Orion is 5'6½" tall and weighs in at 160 pounds.

☐ So what can be assumed about Orion and his background from his attributes? He is small and quick, so we might imagine that in high school he was an athlete. Perhaps he played goalie for his school hockey team. If so, his Charisma clearly suggests that he always wore a mask. His IQ suggests that he was an average to good student, and the skills I have in mind for him include college. In the skills section, we'll tie Orion even more closely to his background.

At this point it is time to introduce another character to be used for examples in these rules. I decided to create a partner for Orion, but I also wanted a character who could have a title. This meant that my character could not be American, because America has no titles. I decided that the character's name would be Alex Romanov, his title coming from Russia and the strain of Tsarist blood in his veins.

In creating Alex, however, it became obvious that getting him to work with Orion was going to be difficult. His IQ was 12, which was not enough for him to master both English and Russian. Orion and he would be unable to communicate, his Luck of 7 a probable reflection of that situation. Then an idea about his origin came up that would play off his poor Luck and still allow him to speak English like a native, while allowing him to keep his title.

Alex's father was a Russian soldier stationed in East Berlin back in the early 1960's. He married Alex's mother and got her pregnant with Alex before he was shipped back to Mother Russia. His young wife and child were not allowed to accompany him. Alex's mother grew to hate the system that had taken her husband away from her. The Berlin Wall was being constructed at that time, so she decided to run for freedom.

Alex's poor Luck doomed his mother. With babe in arms, she ran for the West and got caught in barbed wire. She managed to toss the baby, complete with ID papers, to a horrified West Berliner before she was dragged off and placed in prison. Alex was placed in an orphanage where he was adopted by a U.S. army captain and his wife. Alex traveled with them all over the world. On Alex's 18th birthday, his heritage was revealed to him. Alex decided to tour the country to sort out his mind, and met Orion along the way.

The background for both characters will help justify the skills they pick. It also provides them with a personality base that can be expanded upon during play. A clever GM will someday confront Alex with the information that either his father or mother still live and need his help. Background development is really the soul of role playing and will help define a character within the mind of the person playing the character. It gives characters depth, and makes playing them fun.

MSPE CHARACTER

designed for use with Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes™

Name ORION BRAYDEN

Birthdate 3/20/65 Race Cauc. Nationality US

Sex Male $ Carried 1300 $ Stored _____

Level 1 APs _____ Skill Points Unused 11

Eye color hazel Hair brown Height 5'6½" Weight 160 lbs

ST 11 LK 10 DEX 14 IQ 11 CON 9 CHR 17 SP 11

Hand-to-Hand Adds +2 Missile Adds 0 Main weapon _____

Description, background, title, etc. Irish-American father, French-Canadian mother. Raised in Vermont. High school athlete, good student - pretty average. Studied journalism - currently employed as reporter for "Yellow Star Monitor." BA in history.

(Workspace) Languages: *American English, *Canadian French

Place Character Portrait Here

See pp. 121-122 for sample portraits.

Skill	Level	APs		Skill	Level	APs
Knife fighting	1	1		Psychic skill (Latent empath)	1	3
Clip pistol	1	1		French		Free
Combat shooting	1	1		English		Free

Weapons:

Name	Dice & Adds	Ammo	Capacity	Range	Missile Chart	Notes
VP70Z	2+3	9mm P	18	100+yds	I	$489

SAVING ROLLS



At various times during an adventure, players will be asked to make "saving rolls" for their characters. Saving rolls are used to simulate the ability of a character to perform a given task or to simulate the role of blind chance. Saving rolls are made on whatever attribute seems best suited to the situation, and the attributes may be modified by whatever skills are appropriate for that saving roll. The GM will often be expected to determine just what is appropriate; players are encouraged to remind their GM if they think of something which may have been overlooked.

Saving rolls will be made at certain "levels" or "against" certain numbers. The levels are charted below, and the methods for figuring the number to make your saving rolls against are listed at the skills where such saving rolls apply. Whatever the precise case you are dealing with, *the number you are attempting to roll on two six-sided dice is the difference between the number for the saving roll and the modified attribute needed for making the saving roll.*

The two six-sided dice are used to attempt to roll the difference between the modified attribute and the saving roll number. If the saving roll number is negative or below 5, a minimum of 5 must be rolled or the saving roll is missed. When rolling the two dice, *doubles are added and rerolled* until the player fails to roll a set of doubles.

The following formula provides the method of determining what the "to hit" number is for any saving roll. The saving roll "to hit" number goes up by 5 for each level it is raised, starting from 20. Use this formula:

(level number × 5) + 15

The chart that follows gives the "to hit" numbers for the first several levels of saving rolls.

Level of saving roll	*"to hit" number*
1	20
2	25
3	30
4	35
5	40
6	45
. . . and so on . . .	

Saving rolls come in several degrees of complexity. A few examples should help clear things up. ☐The first example is a reflection of blind luck. No skills come into play. Your player-character is one of a crowd coming out of a theatre late at night. Nearby, a mad sniper opens up with machinegun fire into the crowd – is your character the one who is hit? Pure luck will control the outcome, so the GM would ask the character to make a saving roll on Luck, probably just a 1st level saving roll. Your character's Luck is 12; the "to hit" number for a 1st level roll is 20. On two dice, you have to roll 8 or better – doubles add and re-roll. On the first cast of the dice, they turn up a 3 and 3 . . . only 6, but it is doubles. You roll the two dice again, getting a 1 and a 4 which equals 5. Added to the 6 from before, the total roll is 11 and your character is safe.

Skills may affect the attribute a saving roll is being made on. In the section describing skills there are suggestions for what attributes might be modified under different situations; as with other saving rolls, either GM or player may suggest that a particular skill might be relevant to modify a particular saving roll situation. In all cases, the saving roll is made on the

number yielded from the addition of the appropriate attribute plus any relevant skill(s). That total is subtracted from the "to hit" number to yield the number to be rolled on two six-sided dice. If the difference is less than or equal to 5, a minimum of 5 still must be rolled for the saving roll to be successful.

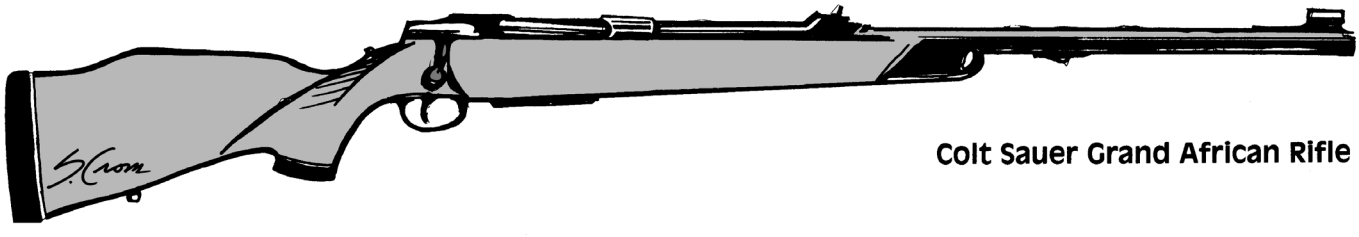
☐ This is an example of skills modifying an attribute for a saving roll. During an investigation, your character finds that several of the suspects have an intricate medallion shaped like a Chinese dragon. The character wants to find out more about this medallion, and tells the GM he's going into the library and looking up everything he can find that might give him more information. The GM assigns a 2nd level saving roll on the character's IQ (which is 15). The character notes that he has the skill *Research,* meaning he is familiar with all the services of a library, and he also wants to utilize the skills *Special Interest: Chinese Tongs,* his language skill in *Mandarin Chinese,* and *Special Interest: Mythology.* Four skills are to be used, and they are all Level 1 skills except language which does not have a level. The character subtracts from 19 his "to hit" number; 19 is the value of his IQ plus 4. However, the GM knows there will be no information to be found written in Mandarin in this library, and disallows that skill modifier. The saving roll must be made from the value of his IQ plus 3, or 18. A second-level saving roll is 25; therefore, the character must roll 7 or better on 2 dice. If he succeeds, the GM will give him some information about the medallion.

When dealing with many of the skills, the number used as a "to hit" number will be the total of another character's attributes and skills, not an arbitrarily-chosen level number. The particulars differ according to different skills, but the "to hit" number functions the same way as indicated above. ☐ The skill *Confidence* is one in which a saving roll will be made against another character's attribute. *Confidence* is the skill which allows one to con other people into doing something, perhaps against their better judgement. Your character is, for reasons best left unexplored, trying to sell the Brooklyn Bridge to Mr. Tetch. Your character has the skill *Confidence,* and your Charisma is 15. Mr. Tetch's IQ is 8. You can add +1 to your Charisma for each level of *Confidence,* and that is Mr. Tetch's "to hit" number. Mr. Tetch must roll the difference between his IQ and your modified Charisma; the value is 8 or better on 2 dice.

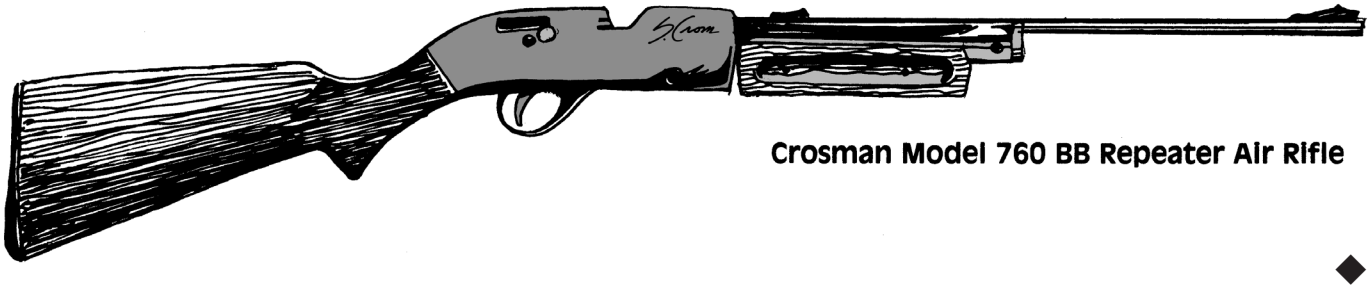
Note that even when the difference between the character's attribute and the "to hit" number is 0 or negative, the character must always make a minimum 5 on two dice. ☐ For example, your character with a Speed of 22 has to make a Speed saving roll to attack a character whose Speed is 14. The difference is all in your character's favor (the result is -8), but your character must not roll up the two dice as a 1 and 2, or a 1 and 3; if so, the saving roll is missed – and badly. (A roll of 1 and 1, or 2 and 2 are doubles, and can be picked up, added and re-rolled until you roll no more doubles). The probability of missing a minimum 5 saving roll is about 11%.

The section of the rules dealing with missile weapon combat has a chart for determining "to hit" numbers, and those also function as described above.

The last thing to be noted in this section is something called, perhaps inappropriately, a zero level saving roll. A zero level saving roll means that the "to hit" number is simply the minimum 5. It is used in very easy tasks, like unjamming a gun or crossing a shallow stream without falling in. If the saving roll is missed, it may mean that the tactic used just did not work, or that there may be a more serious problem, resulting in an increase in level for the next saving roll made dealing with the same problem. The zero level saving roll is quite useful to imitate blind chance and Murphy's laws messing up "sure things" and zero level rolls should be used for this in the game.

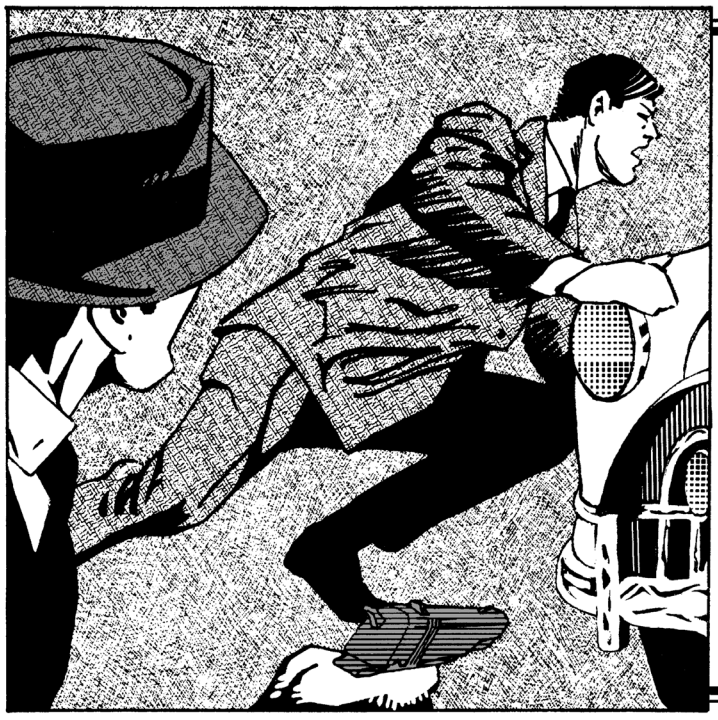


Colt Sauer Grand African Rifle



Crosman Model 760 BB Repeater Air Rifle

◆



SKILLS

Skills are used in MSPE to define characters with more specific details than the background of the character can offer. Skills indicate areas of expertise that are used during the game and are of great importance during an adventure. Skills, like attributes, quantify aspects of the character that will fit into the game mechanics.

The skills in MSPE break down into three broad categories. *Combat Skills* deal with weapons usage and military operations. These skills are very valuable to mercenary-type characters, especially if they harbor any dreams of survival. Almost every character will avail himself of at least one combat skill, be it martial arts or a weapons skill, for self-protection.

Information or Knowledge Skills provide the character with data, or a way to use data. A college degree, a training program, or a year spent at a job, is typical of the skills the category contains. There are more specific skills, like *Cryptology* and *Research,* which cover highly specialized areas. The category of information and knowledge skills is open-ended, to allow all of the things that a character might wish to be knowledgeable about.

Special Skills is a category that gets everything that could not fit into the first two categories. Career skills, like a *Law* or *Medical Degree,* are listed here, as well as *Psychic Skills* and *Titles.* The open skill called *Special Interest* can adapt itself to cover any area you want your character to have expertise in. Choosing a skill for this category will make your character unique and provide him with a magic bag full of oddball skills; it may save the day at a time when it needs saving.

☐Before jumping into an explanation of how the skills function, we'll take a look at the skills selected for Alex and Orion. With any luck, you'll see how their skills stay in character with their attributes and their background stories. You should also see what benefits a good background story can net a character.

From *Combat Skills* Orion got *Knife Fighting* and *Clip Pistol;* both are skills that are easily learned. Orion probably picked them up fooling around as a kid. As a refinement of his *Clip Pistol* skill he got *Combat Shooting.* He had to actively train for *Combat Shooting;* perhaps he picked it up from ROTC in college. With his high Dexterity, however, it is a good skill to have.

Orion has been to college. Aside from his BA in History he picked up *Occupational Skill: Journalism* from his year on the school paper, and *Research* from all the time spent working on stories or papers. His high Charisma suggests he would easily master the skill *Seduction* during college; his high Dexterity again allows him to master the skill *Fast Driving.*

The last skill Orion took, to use up the last of his Skill Points, was a *Psychic Skill.* Orion is a *Latent Empath.* This ability to occasionally pick up feelings from others has probably caused Orion to play hunches while working on news stories. That becomes another facet of the character – a willingness to play hunches.

You will recall Orion was from a bilingual household. This becomes important because it will allow Orion to speak, read and write both French and English even though his IQ is not high enough to allow him this ability and he has used up all of his skill points. If there are skills that would be logical for a character to have mastered because of his background story, and the player makes a good case to the GM for the character having the skills, it is permissible for a GM to allow that character those skills in spite of lack of skill points. As a rule of thumb it is best not to allow a character more than two of these *free* skills or two skill points worth of free skills. The exception



can be made for an exceptionally good story.

This point needs some discussion to make it clear. It is logical to assume that a character raised on an Arizona ranch would know how to ride a horse. It is not logical to assume that a character who grew up near Three Mile Island would have a doctorate in Nuclear Physics as a result of childhood experiences. While a childhood near Three Mile Island might explain why a character studied Nuclear Physics so diligently in school, it could not grant that skill to the character. The lower the IQ minimum on the skill, the more easily it should be given out, but only if a good case can be made for it.

In the event that one of the skills asked for is one that can increase in levels, and the character lacks either the IQ or other minimum attribute to master it, an adjustment for childhood experience can be made. This is the situation where the characters have practical knowledge of a subject, but have difficulty in working with it until they get more experience under their belts. In the case of such a skill, the skill does not change to second level until 2,000 Adventure Points are earned. From that point the skill should proceed normally.

☐ Alex Romanov, as it turns out, gets no freebies as a result of his background, unless you consider getting a Russian title on a native English speaker a freebie. His background does, however, offer an explanation for all of the diverse skills he has mastered. His father taught him to defend himself, hence *Pugilism.* The two years they spent in Alaska earned him *Environmental Survival: Arctic,* while the two years in Hawaii was where Alex picked up *Underwater, Clip Pistol* and *Photography.* In school he learned *Computer* and picked up a knowledge of *Electronics.* In his spare time he cultivated a *Special Interest* in the occult.

Alex also has a *Title.* His strain of Romanov blood technically makes him a Lord, but as is self-evident, the title really means nothing. However, that title lets Orion call Alex "Your Highness" whenever he is angry at Alex. With a *Title* comes the skill *Chic,* free to all titled individuals as well as a Charisma bonus. This is "A true reflection of breeding," as Alex is fond of needling Orion.

Alex's last skill, *Occupational Skill: Journalism,* is a result of meeting Orion on the road a year ago. Alex snapped some good pictures for a story Orion was working on and they've been fast friends and work partners since. They consider themselves a latter-day Holmes and Watson, though they differ on who is Holmes and who is Watson.

At this point it is time to detail how skills are "bought." Each character begins with a total of "Skill Points" equal to his IQ. In Orion's case this was 11. Each and every skill has a minimum IQ needed to master it as well as a *point cost* to obtain it. Some of the skills require a minimum

level to some other attributes before the skill can be mastered, and these must be strictly observed when buying skills. There are also suggested time requirements to obtain some skills which should be used as guidelines for aging your characters.

All of Orion's skills, with the exception of *Empathy,* cost 1 Skill Point to buy. *Empathy,* a *Psychic Skill,* costs 3 Skill Points to obtain. His 8 skills plus *Empathy* use up his 11 Skill Points; fluency in French came from his background. The following skills of Orion's are levelable: *Knife Fighting, Seduction, Clip Pistol, Combat Shooting, Fast Driving, Research* and *Occupational Skill: Journalism.* Like Orion, they all start at Level 1.

How Skills Work

Skills work in two ways, their function determined by the type of skill they are. Skills that are not able to change levels – skills that reflect information known to the character – work in a straightforward manner. *Language and Literacy* do not change level. Orion can speak French and is assumed to be able to understand French conversations if he can hear them. Orion also has a degree in History; it will be assumed that he knows something of history, like who won the American Civil War and the name of Hitler's dog. These skills are flexible in their application and GMs should be prepared to deal with reasonable requests for information based upon them.

Skills that can change level serve as modifiers for attributes when saving rolls are made. Such skills are referred to as *Levelable Skills.* While it is true that two characters who are *Revolver: Level 4* are equally experienced with their weapons, the character whose Dexterity is higher is bound to shoot better. For this reason, the function of *Levelable Skills* (skills which may increase in levels) are tightly bound to the attributes of the character. This is an important concept to remember.

☐ Orion has the skill *Clip Pistol* and is Level 1 in it *(Clip Pistol: 1).* Thus, for the purpose of making a DEX saving roll when attempting to shoot something, Orion will be allowed to add the level number of his skill (1) to his Dexterity (14) for the saving roll. This gives him a functional Dexterity of 15 every time he tries to shoot something with his clip pistol.

The applicability of the skill level does not end with Dexterity alone. Suppose the gun jams and Orion needs to make an IQ saving roll to unjam it. His skill and understanding of his gun will logically make it easier for him to unjam the gun, so he gets to add his skill level number to his IQ for the purpose of making that saving roll.

Ultimately, *the level number of any skill can be used to modify any attribute for any saving roll where it seems logical that the skill would apply.* Orion's skill level could be used to modify his Charisma if someone was looking to hire a gunman who uses a clip pistol. If a player can make a good case for a skill influencing a saving roll, the GM should allow it.

Skills may also have their level numbers combined with those of other skills for the purpose of making a saving roll. If Orion decided to go to a library in an attempt to identify a strange clip pistol he has seen, both his *Research* skill level and his *Clip Pistol* level should be added to his IQ for the purpose of making that saving roll. Again the GM must be convinced that the skills have a business being combined before it should be allowed. In the above example it might be argued that Orion's *Journalism* skill would allow him access to a newspaper's morgue, but that skill would have nothing to do with identifying the weapon in question and should not be added into the attribute for the saving roll.

At no time does a skill level addition to an attribute add anything to combat adds, either hand-to-hand or missile combat adds.



Buying skills

As noted above, each character has Skill Points equal to his IQ at the start of the character's career. During the course of the character's career, increases in IQ will allow the character more Skill Points (one per IQ point) with which to buy more skills. Only brain damage and a resultant loss of IQ points will strip a character of skills, beginning with any skills that the character no longer has the IQ to handle, and finally down to the point where the character has enough "Skill Points" to pay for the skills he keeps. When skills are lost because of brain damage, even skills granted by the background story can be lost. (Brain damage can do horrible things to you!) The skills lost are, within the limits outlined above, lost by the choice of the player.

There are two skills that can be purchased only when a character is created. *Psychic Skills* must be picked when the character is first rolled up; each *Psychic Skill* chosen costs 3 points. A hereditary *Title* must also be selected at creation and is only open to characters from nations that have titles, or have had them in the past. Titles cost 3 skill points. Both are available to any character who wishes to have one, but *Psychic Skills* will best serve those characters who are relatively intelligent.

To buy skills, look through the following list and pick the skills you want to equip your character with. Your character must meet the minimum requirements of IQ and other attributes (unless the skill is a freebie) to gain the skill. Note how many Skill Points the skill requires to master, and keep in mind the number of years it takes to master, when you choose it. You may buy up to your total of Skill Points. It is permitted for a character to save some Skill Points if the player desires, but *Psychic Skills* and a hereditary *Title* must be chosen immediately. If a character plays any adventure without already having any *Psychic Skill* or a hereditary *Title,* then that character can never have either skill. (However, a good Gamemaster might work a title into the distant past of a character and construct an adventure that reveals and recovers the title for the character).

Beginning characters may buy additional levels of levelable skills if they wish. Buying additional levels costs, in Skill Points, twice the skill point cost of the previous level. This means that a 1 point skill will cost 3 points on second level and 7 points for third level. (Level 1 costs 1, plus level 2 at 2, plus level 3 at 4 points). The ability to purchase additional skill levels is only allowed to beginning characters and players should reflect the amount of time it would take to gain that level of mastery in the age of their characters. As far as future increases for that skill, bought-up skills should be assumed to have the minimal amount of APs needed to be that level. Also no skill being purchased to raise the levels should be a skill the character is without the basic attribute requirements to be able to handle.

Disadvantages

While it is clearly not impossible for a person without a gun skill to fire a gun, the operation of that weapon will not be as efficient as with an experienced shooter. The lack of a skill should not prohibit a character from attempting a task, but the lack of a skill should make the attempt more difficult than having the skill. This concept should be reflected in higher-than-normal saving rolls for unskilled characters while attempting difficult tasks, and a total prohibition from attempting very difficult and highly technical tasks.

Some examples here would be useful in explaining this concept. A person without a gun skill certainly could aim and pull the trigger of a gun picked up at random, but field-stripping the same weapon would be beyond him. A person without *Medic* or *MD* will not be able to perform surgery, but with a high enough saving roll he or she ought to be able to perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation as first-aid to keep a character alive for a little while.

For the most part the skills, or lack thereof, should help guide the characters in attempting or avoiding tasks they try to accomplish. The lack of a skill is sufficient grounds for a GM to tell a character, "You simply do not have enough knowledge of the situation to be able to handle it." GMs should note, however, that simple tasks that "anyone could do" probably are just that, and appropriate saving rolls should be assigned to those simple tasks.



Beeman Tempest Air Pistol

Improving skills

Skills that can be increased in level proceed through level changes much as characters do. For each use of a skill there is a set reward of APs that is detailed in the Adventure Points section of the rules. As skills get better, their level number goes up, with the obvious game benefits. ◆

SKILL LIST

Some skills have prerequisites. Characters must have prerequisites before he or she can get the new skill. Monetary costs are dealt with within the text of the skills where they are relevant. The time factor is to be reflected in the age of your character or in the amount of time spent learning a skill later in a campaign. Skills are listed here according to the IQ minimum required to obtain and master the skill described. "IQ4 Skills" require the character to have a minimum IQ of 4 to be able to master the skill. After the name of the skill is the Skill Point cost. If another minimum attribute is necessary to master the skill, it will be noted as "/CHR 12+," which means the character must have a Charisma of 12 or more to be able to take that skill.

(Quick reference list on page 120.)



IQ4 skills

Archery 1 point

This is the skill needed for a character to use bow weapons. This skill acquaints the character with both drawn bows and crossbows. The skill level of the user may be used to modify DEX for hitting targets; if the character's skill level for *Archery* is Level 5 or better, he or she can shoot 2 arrows per missile combat round.

Bladed Weapons 1 point / subgroup

This skill group is broken up into three sub-groups, each to be mastered by itself. The subgroups are: *1) Knife Fighting; 2) Fencing; 3) Knife Throwing. Knife Throwing* is the easiest to deal with: the level number of the skill

is used as a DEX modifier when trying to hit a target.

Knife Fighting and *Fencing* acquaint characters with all of the weapons that would fall under the designation of "knife" or "sword" respectively. When using either skill against another fighter, the character with the skill need only make a saving roll on DEX against the level of skill of the other character to be able to deliver all damage to a foe or totally parry the attack of a foe. A lack of either skill by the foe means a Level 0 saving roll. A total parry will stop all damage from any one hand-held weapon used by the foe. *Knife Fighting* and *Fencing* may be combined into a dagger-and-rapier style of fighting (Florentine style). Fighting with both dagger and rapier allows two total attacks *or* one parry and one attack (total), *or* two total parries. In the case of one parry plus one attack, the dagger must parry. Each skill gets its own saving roll and earns APs independently of the other skill. If a character elects to do total damage to the foe and loses the combat round, he will only take the amount of damage that his combat roll was beaten by.

Brawling 1 point

This skill represents the uncanny ability of some characters to sail untouched through the very heart of an out-and-out brawl. The skill is most often used as a Luck modifier. If the character can make a saving roll with his skill level modifying his Luck, that character will not take any damage in that round and will be able to deliver full damage to another character in that round. If two brawling characters both make their saving rolls, then both take full damage. Damage delivery is done by any of the weapons systems; with thrown or missile weapons, a saving roll to hit the target must still be made.



Firearms — 1 point / subgroup

Each of the following subgroups must be mastered separately: *1) Machine Gun; 2) Assault Rifle; 3) Shotgun; 4) Anti-tank Weaponry; 5) Mortar; 6) Rifle; 7) Machine Pistol and SMG; 8) Revolver; 9) Muzzle Loader; 10) Clip Pistol (clip-fed automatic pistol).*

Having any of the above skills suggests a basic competence with that weapon. The level number of each skill can be used as a DEX modifier to hit a target, or an IQ modifier to figure out why it misfired or jammed.



GB80 Semi-Auto Pistol

Garrote — 1 point

This skill provides knowledge of the uses of the garrote. The level, used as a Luck modifier can determine if the attacker gets close enough to his target to use the weapon; an attack is successful if the attacker gets close enough. The skill level can also be used to check if the victim makes any sound as he dies. The level must be set by the GM; an unsuspecting, unprotected victim means a Level 0 saving roll. Unless the target is able to block the attack (hand, neck brace or armor), a successful garrote attack means death. A Speed saving roll by the intended victim will check for a successful block.

Horsemanship — 1 point

This skill is the knowledge of how to effectively deal with horses: the ability to saddle a horse correctly, or the ability to ride a walking horse without falling off. The skill level can be used as a DEX modifier if the rider wishes to put a horse through a difficult series of moves.

Pugilism — 1point

This skill is a modifier for hand-to-hand combat with a distinct Occidental flavor. The level number becomes the number of dice an individual gets in hand-to-hand combat. In addition, the level number indicates the number of hits a fighter can ignore *per round* to reflect his ability to roll with the punches and thereby lessen their effects. This benefit of "rolling with the punch" does not apply to injury done with firearms or bladed weapons.

Recreational Skills — ½ point / activity

This skill is a catch-all for every recreational activity that individuals enjoy, provided the activity is not already covered under another skill (i.e. skeet shooting would be covered by the skill *Shotgun).* All games, from Go and chess to complex war-games (or those strange role playing games!), are considered *Recreational Skills,* as are all physical sports. The level number of the skill is used to modify whatever attributes would be of value in that activity, and according to what the player was trying to accomplish. The level number of Go would be used to modify IQ to see how well a character would do in a particular game, while the Football skill level could be used to modify DEX, SP, or IQ, depending on whether the character was trying to dodge a tackle, race for the endzone, or deduce what the other team would attempt.

To determine the winner of a game or contest of a *Recreational Skill,* have each player make a first-level saving roll on the appropriate attribute as modified by that skill level. Whichever character makes the saving roll by the largest margin wins, if both make it. If both miss, the one who missed by the least wins. If both make it or miss it by the same margin, the game was a draw. The same system will work on a point by point basis for individual sports. The same system should work for team sports, though board games designed on those sports would probably work better for playing out such things.

A *Recreational Skill* at Level 5 indicates a proficiency in the recreational activity that would be considered semi-professional. Level 10 would indicate a highly-desired mastery of the sport and the possibility of a professional career in that sport. Employment is possible if a league exists, and age, sex or some other variable does not, in the GM's view, prevent the character from being employed in that sport. Note that a pro-football career would probably cut down adventure time and might be jeopardized by injuries sustained by adventuring.

Shuriken — 1 point

This skill allows the use of the almost useless weapons known as shuriken or throwing stars. Although they have a certain appeal in the West, shuriken were used by the Ninja as a throw-away weapon that would not be employed more than 25' from the target. Their main use was to slow pursuit. The skill level is a modifier for DEX to hit a target.

Street Fighting / Self Defense — 1 point

This skill represents the basic self defense advice/courses one can take these days. The skill level may be used as combat adds, *or* as an armorlike defense akin to the way *Pugilism* functions. The big difference is that the level number may be used *only once* in any one fight, distributed as the player chooses. In other words, a person with Level 5 *Street Fighting* could absorb without damage 5 hits in one round, *or* 2 hits in two rounds, *or* have 5 extra combat adds in one round, or any combination thereof. This skill cannot be combined with any other skill.

IQ 6 skills

Bola / Bullwhip / Lariat — 1 / weapon

This skill allows for knowledge and use of the weapon chosen. The level number of the skill acts as a Dexterity modifier for aiming at the target with the weapon. A DEX saving roll is made against the Dexterity of the target, or an innate DEX of 10 if the target (like a tree or post), has no DEX or if the target does not know it is being attacked. A hit (a successful saving roll) indicates entanglement of the lower or upper body. GMs may require a modification of the Dexterity saving roll if the person using the skill is trying to lasso or entangle a very small item or a certain portion of a body.

Only the bullwhip may be used to pull a weapon from the grasp of another character. The size of the weapon will indicate the multiplier for the "to hit" number of the DEX saving roll; determine the size from the Target Size Chart in the combat section of the rules (see pg. 41). If the roll is made and the whip-wielder has a Strength that is at least ¼ of the Strength of the person holding the weapon, the weapon can be drawn from that person's grasp. Note that saving rolls are required for the whip only when entanglement or disarming of another is desired. This skill is required to know how to use a whip in combat, but the whip will automatically hit any target within its range as per normal hand-to-hand combat.

Gliding / Hang Gliding — 1 point / skill

These two skills indicate an ability to pilot most non-powered gliding aircraft, including hang gliders. This skill is an absolute prerequisite to using such craft; a character without this skill cannot use such craft under any circumstances. The level number of the skill is to be used as a modifier for saving rolls as the GM sees fit. For the most part, however, a person with these skills should only need to make a saving roll if attempting some dangerous act, like night flying or flying in a storm.

Motorcycle — 1 point

This skill represents a basic familiarity with motorcycles as well as a license to operate one. The level will denote skill with the machine and will modify saving rolls for dangerous driving or repairing the machine. This skill's modifier may be combined with *Fast Driving* under appropriate circumstances.

Tracking / Tailing — 1 point / skill

Tracking represents the ability to track or detect the passage of animals or men through certain terrain features, generally in a non-urban environment, even after some time has passed. *Tailing* involves the ability to follow an individual through an urban environment; usually the one tailing must remain in visual distance of the one being tailed. The level number for either skill is an IQ modifier for determining what passed and in what direction it was traveling. Avoiding detection while following someone else is also an IQ modification. Nothing can be tracked, however, where no tracks or signs can be left (a city street many hours later, or across a lake, for example), no matter what type of saving roll is made. The level number may also serve as a Luck modifier for a saving roll to elude pursuit by covering one's tracks or by taking evasive actions (on a level deemed appropriate by the GM). This skill may be combined with *Environmental Survival* in order to track or evade others in a particular terrain type.

IQ8 skills

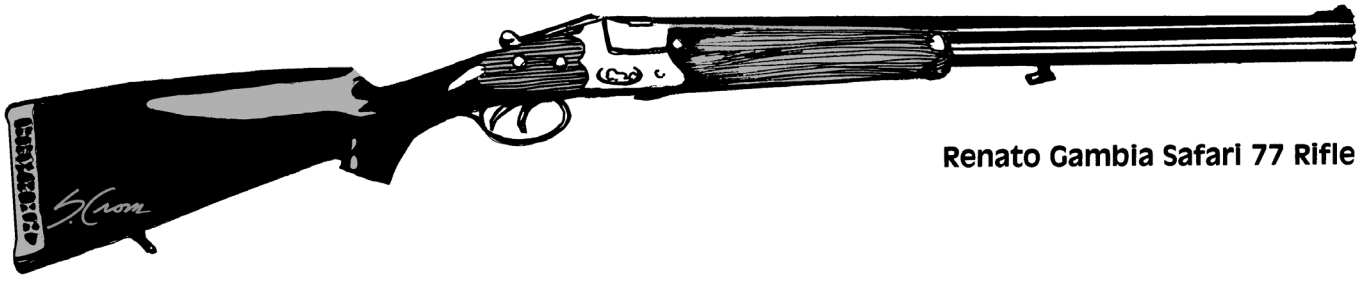
Chic — 1 point

This skill indicates a general knowledge of trends and etiquette. This skill can act as a modifier for IQ if a character is asked to recall what is playing at the National Theatre or which fork is the salad fork. It may also serve as a Charisma modifier for behaving properly in the presence of the powerful and wealthy, and gaining approval of rich aristocracy. This is a good skill for one who aspires to obtain a granted title or wishes to be a con-man working in rich circles.

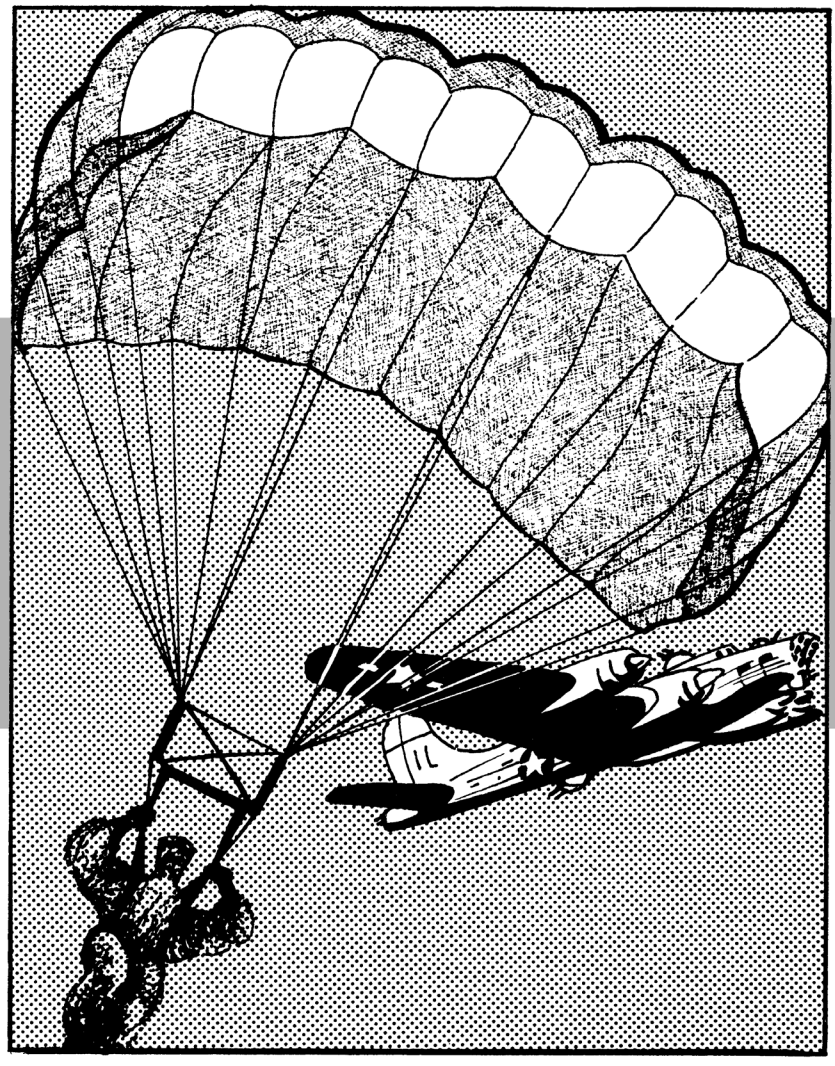
Fast Driving — 1 point

This is the ability to drive at faster than prudent speeds. Roads are generally rated for a certain speed limit, in the interests of safety. If a character wishes to exceed the speed limit by 10 miles per hour (mph), this is allowed with no saving roll at all. For every portion of 10 miles per hour over that, the character must make a DEX saving roll on the level equal to the number of 10 mph units you are over the initial 10. □ In other words, taking a corner rated at 25 mph at 35 mph would be a freebie – no saving roll required. Taking that same corner at 50 miles an hour (25 mph faster than the corner is rated, but only 15 mph faster than prudent) would result in a second level saving roll. The formula works out to be:

$$\frac{(\text{Speed} - \text{rated speed}) - 10}{10}$$



Renato Gambia Safari 77 Rifle



Sky Diving:
a required skill for any paratrooper.

Round up the answer to the nearest whole number.

If the saving roll is made, control of the vehicle is maintained and any added distance obtained by the extra speed may be granted to the vehicle. If the saving roll is missed, the vehicle crashes; the Crash Chart should be consulted (see the end of Book 2 for the chart).

A bootlegger's turn requires a minimum speed of 40 and a 4th level DEX saving roll if the turn is made on dry pavement. The level of the saving roll may be modified by road conditions or speed over and above 40 mph.

Mountaineering — 1 point

This skill is the knowledge of how to use pitons, ropes and all manner of climbing techniques and equipment to ascend and descend cliffs, mountains or buildings. The level number is used as a Dexterity or Strength modifier for any saving rolls deemed appropriate during the climb. IQ saving rolls may be required to choose a route; perhaps a Luck modifier is appropriate for falling, and a Charisma modifier for impressing people with the fame attendant to being a famous climber. A knowledge of what tools will be required for a climb, provided there is time to study the problem, comes naturally to those with this skill.

Sky Diving — 1 point

This skill suggests knowledge of parachuting, either military or recreational. The level number for this skill will be used as a DEX modifier for targetting, a Luck modifier to see if your chute opens or not (only in adverse weather conditions or such), or a CON modifier to determine damage when landing in adverse conditions. The level of the saving rolls must be set by the Gamemaster.

IQ 10 skills

Acrobatics — 1 point / DEX 12+

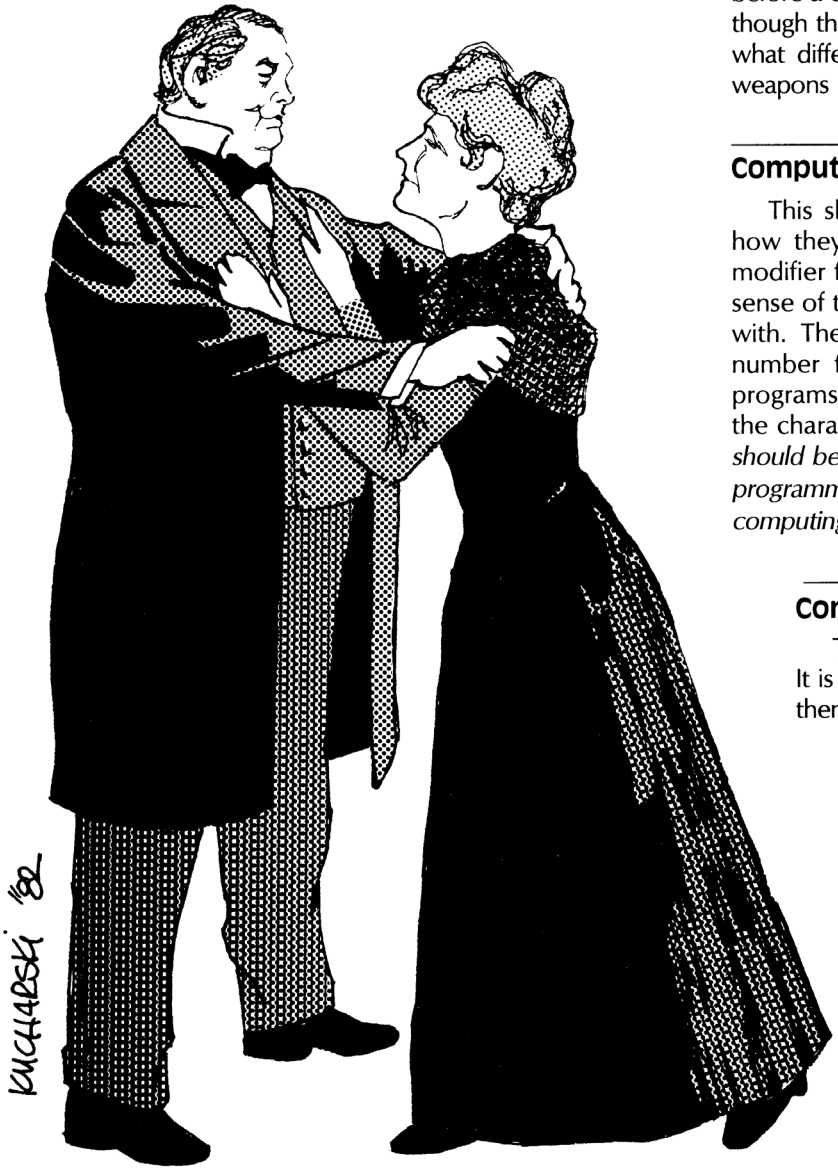
This skill suggests a mastery of balance, tumbling and general gymnastic skills appropriate to the sex of the character. The level number is used as a DEX modifier when performing acts of balance (i.e. walking a tightrope). It can be added to the "to hit" number of any person trying to hit this character, providing this character is employing the skill as a means of dodging the attack. This skill will also help a character absorb damage when falling from a height or doing anything else which would be affected by the ability to manipulate one's body in space.

Ambush and Silent Movement — 1 point

This skill enables a character to set and detect traps or ambushes. The level number would be used as an IQ or Luck modifier (whichever is higher or more applicable in a given situation) when attempting to detect an ambush. All mechanical traps should be assigned a level for a saving roll in order to detect it; the level of the person creating the trap might logically raise or lower the level of that saving roll.

The level of the person waiting in ambush is the level of the saving roll needed to detect that person. □ For example, if a person with *Ambush: 4* is waiting in ambush, a fourth level saving roll is needed to detect him. The level for detection of a person can be affected by camouflage or available cover in the ambush area.

This skill will also cover silent movement, as that is very valuable in ambushing other individuals. A saving roll based on IQ or DEX may be appropriate to determine where one will walk to avoid making noise. A Luck-modified saving roll may be used to see if a noise is dismissed as unimportant or if it is investigated.



Bureaucracy Mastery — 1 point

This skill represents the ability of a character to find his or her way around a bureaucracy. It suggests the ability to decide if looking like a lost child, offering a bribe, or threatening to call *The Senator* will work in any particular situation. The level number may be used as an IQ, Luck or Charisma modifier depending on the individual or forms that need to be dealt with.

Combat Shooting — 1 point / DEX 14+

This skill represents the ability to use one or two guns under combat circumstances. The level number of the skill is used as an IQ modifier for determining who in a crowd is a target and who seems to be the most dangerous target among them. The level number becomes a DEX modifier only when switching between targets in any single missile weapon round. □ For example: the skill can be used as a DEX modifier if you shoot at man A with the first shot, man A again with a second shot, and woman B with the third shot. Only one switch of target is required and the skill only modifies DEX for hitting that *new* target. This skill is required before a character can use two handguns at the same time, though the IQ and DEX modification takes place no matter what different guns are being used. Two fully automatic weapons cannot be used at the same time.

Computer — 1 point

This skill provides for knowledge of computers and how they work. The level number will act like an IQ modifier for trying to break security programs or making sense of the operating system of a computer being dealt with. The level number of the skill will set the level number for a saving roll to break security codes on programs created by the character. For each level of skill, the character can use another language. *(Note: this skill should be split into specialties like; hacking, cyber security, programming, social media, artificial intelligence, mobile computing, game design, systems analyst, etc.).*

Confidence — 1 point / CHR 12+

This is a skill combining charm with a glib tongue. It is the time-honored skill of conning people, selling them weather-beaten New York bridges and the like. It also represents the ability of a person to talk her way out of a nasty situation, or to talk her way into an organization or social circle she wishes to infiltrate.

The level number is used as an IQ or Charisma modifier. It is added to whichever attribute seems appropriate for the action being taken. The person being conned ("connee") must then make an IQ saving roll on the modified Charisma or IQ of the person conning him. If the conee misses the saving roll, he has been conned, or fooled. If the person being conned

makes the saving roll, the one doing the conning will suffer whatever consequences would result from the situation. However, a good con-person should always be able to think of something. . . .

Demolitions — 1 point

This skill you must actually receive training in; you don't pick it up on the streets. Training time to acquire it is 6 months learning from someone qualified to teach the skill. This skill represents the ability to know how much of what explosive is needed to do the desired amount of destruction to a particular object. The level number serves as an IQ modifier for saving rolls to determine how close the explosion came to doing what was desired. The GM should determine a level for the saving roll consistent with desired effect and construction of the object (building, car, plane . . .) being demolished. Missing the saving roll indicates that something other than the desired results occurred, with the amount it was missed by suggesting how far wrong the blast went. If a saving roll is missed by the failure to roll at least a 5 it indicates that the explosive did not go off (yet).

This skill is required to blow safes. If the character also has the skill *Underwater* it is assumed the character has mastered *Underwater Demolition.* Addition of *Underwater* after obtaining *Demolition* does not confer the sub-skill of *Underwater Demolition (UD).* A training course for ½ a skill point will supply *UD* if the above situation exists.

Diplomacy — 1 point

This skill represents the art of negotiation. The level of this skill can be used to modify IQ for making saving rolls to determine hidden meanings behind statements made by others. It will also function as a IQ modifier for saving rolls made when the character is trying to hide facts from a person he is dealing with. □ For an example of the first use, a negotiator could officially deny the ability to make a particular concession while implying the possibility of an under-the-table agreement under certain circumstances. If the character with the *Diplomacy* skill makes an IQ saving roll modified by his skill level, he will understand the nuances of the negotiator's offer, and the GM can spell it out in black-and-white if the player himself cannot figure it out. For an example of the second use, a political press secretary could use the *Diplomacy* skill to hide facts or find a better way to present those same facts without quite lying about them.

Education — varies (see below)

Bachelor's degree — 1 point

A BA or BS degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science) requires at least 3 years devoted to intense study; more is usual. The degree provides the character with background information in his chosen field of study. A particular specialty may be claimed, giving some degree of special and in-depth knowledge of that one area of the field (i.e. major in Zoology and specialized interest in reptiles and amphibians). The cost of a Bachelor's degree is assumed to already be absorbed by government grants, defaulted loans, hard work in a work/study program, or Daddy.

Master's Degree — 1 point / IQ 12+

To obtain a Master's degree (MS or MA), the character must devote 2 years to intense study and will have to manage a $3,000 loan to finance it. The Master's degree will provide very thorough information of the field of study in general and an exquisite knowledge of the specific material covered in the character's Master's thesis.

Doctorate (Ph. D) — 2 points / IQ 13+

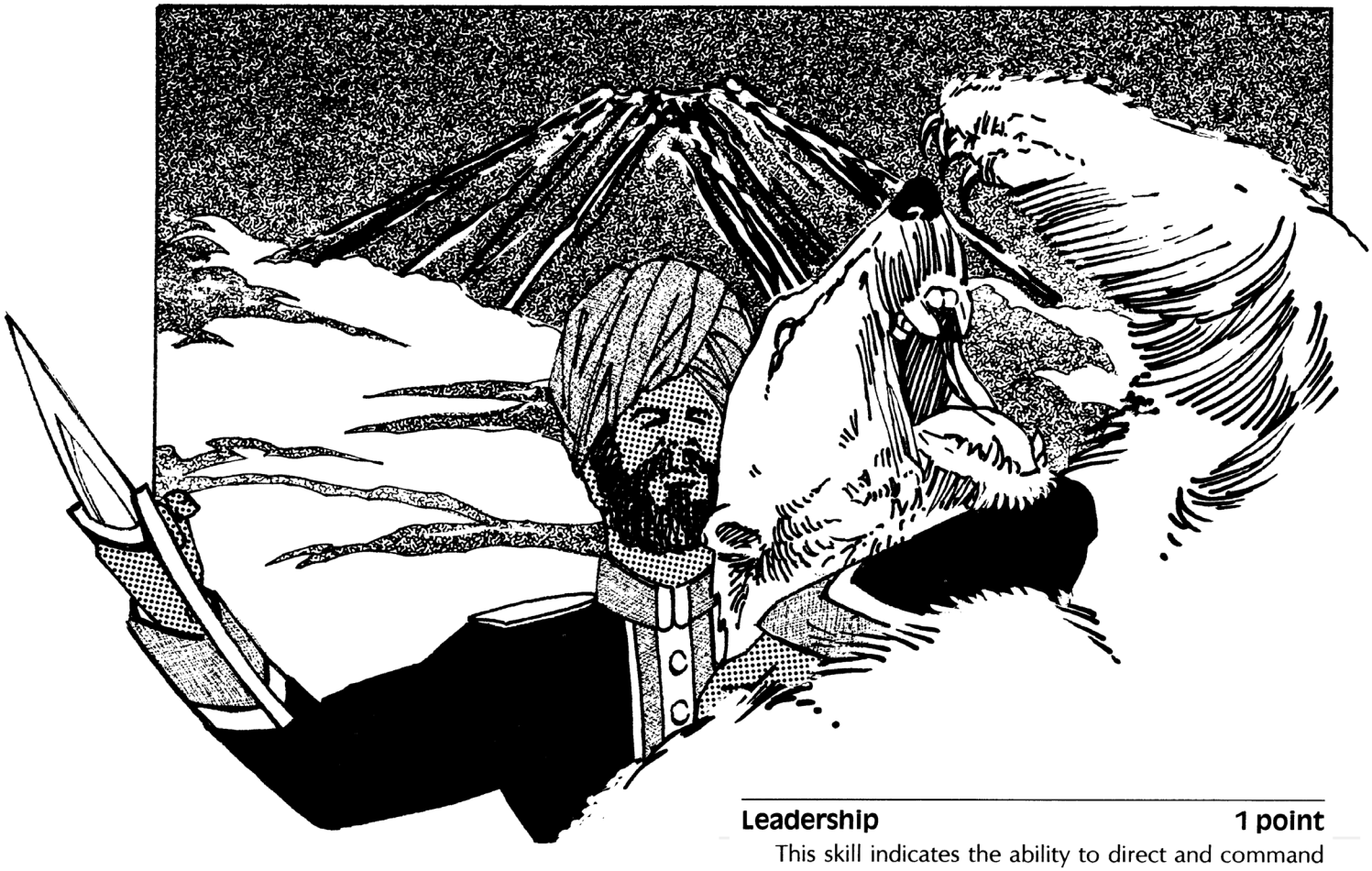
A doctorate requires the devotion of 2 years of intense study by the character, and shouldering a $4,000 loan. The results are a strong knowledge of the field of study in general, plus knowing personally one or two of the big names in the field and knowledge of current work being done in the field. Comprehensive and thorough knowledge of the area dealt with in the doctoral thesis is included.

The first Master's and Ph.D. degrees must be in the same field of study as the Bachelor's degree. Master's and Ph.D.s may be piled on after that for knowledge of any other related fields of study without a new BA or BS. A major must be chosen for a BA or BS (the 'Arts' or 'Science' designation is not mandatory for the game. However, the BS and MS degrees usually require more thorough grounding in the "hard" aspects of a field of study, while the BA and MA may have a little more variety). The titles of the mythical theses written for the higher degrees should be noted somewhere; it is possible that others might know of the character's paper and make something of it. Also be aware that the higher the degree, the more select the thesis topic.

Elocution — 1 point

This skill is the ability to sway people through speech. When using the skill, the level number of the skill will act as an IQ modifier. The GM should determine the level of saving roll according to the size of the group that the speaker is trying to influence. If the saving roll is made, the listeners will attempt to act upon the suggestions made by the speaker. The GM may want to encourage his players to actually make their speeches aloud, rewarding them with a reduction in the level of the saving roll if the speech is any good. Bear in mind the speaker must be speaking in a tongue which the audience can understand.

This skill may be combined with *Confidence, Lawyer,* and *Acting.* Any one character should only be allowed one chance to influence any one group of listeners on a subject per day. Repeated attempts and failures in speaking to a single group will result in the character being thought of and dealt with as a nuisance.



Environmental Survival — 1 point / type

The different types of environments covered by this skill are: *1) swamp, 2) forest, 3) desert, 4) arctic, 5) jungle, 6) urban, 7) suburban.* Survival skill level acts as a CON modifier for survival saving rolls under adverse conditions in that environment type. □ A desert dweller would be better able to survive a sandstorm only because of his or her experience with them. This skill level also serves as a Luck modifier when the character is attempting to evade pursuit in this type of environment. It will serve as an IQ modifier for identifying flora, fauna, and unique weather conditions for these types of environment. General knowledge of the hazards of any environment type comes with the survival skill for that environment.

Gambling — 1 point

This skill is the ability to know or calculate the odds at games of chance, and thereby improve the probable take. The level number functions as a Luck modifier for gambling, or as an IQ modifier when a character is attempting to find a game or spot a cheater. If a person is Level 10 or above and he is detected cheating, the character will be ejected from that casino or game.

Leadership — 1 point

This skill indicates the ability to direct and command others in jobs or military operations. The level number indicates the number of people, in addition to oneself, that the character can command competently. The level number also serves as a Charisma modifier to see if the orders given are carried out, especially if the orders are dangerous. The level number would be added to the commander's Charisma and the person who was given the order would have to make an IQ saving roll on the modified Charisma. Failure to make the saving roll indicates compliance with the orders; making it reveals some reservation on the part of the person given the order, and the leader/commander will have to decide how to deal with the person.

Lock Picking / Safecracking — 1 point

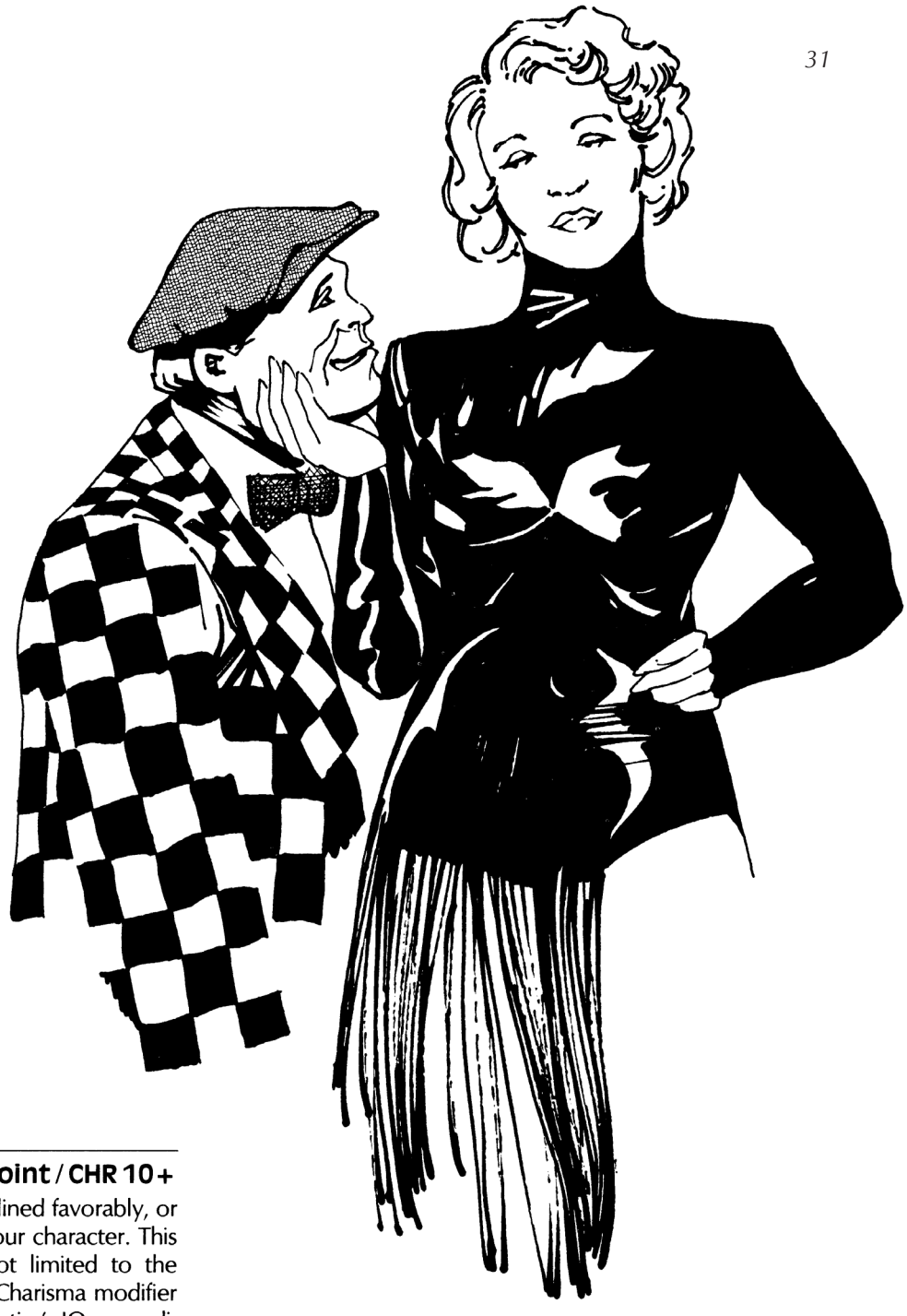
This skill represents knowledge of the arcane arts associated with the picking of locks and the cracking of safes. The level number of the skill will serve as a Dexterity modifier for picking a lock, with the GM choosing an appropriate level saving roll to be made based upon the complexity of the lock. It will also serve as an IQ modifier for cracking into a safe; a successful saving roll will indicate that the safe is open. Of course, the character must have the necessary tools available to do the safecracking job. This skill does not give a character the ability to *blow open* a safe; that ability only comes when this skill is combined with *Demolitions.*

Quick Draw 1 point / Dex 12+

This skill represents the ability of a character to draw a gun from a holster and immediately snap off a shot. The level number can be used as a Speed modifier when making saving rolls. When trying to outdraw another person, a Speed saving roll is made based on the foe's Speed as modified by his *Quick Draw* skill. If two characters have this skill and both make their saving rolls, the one who made the saving roll by the most wins the draw.

Winning a draw enables the character to snap off a shot before the actual missile weapon combat round begins. *Only by winning a draw may a character fire 4 shots from a handgun in one missile weapons combat round. This advantage only takes place in the round the weapon is drawn.* The second and any other shots fired in the round following a successful draw must suffer the consequences of second and third shots as outlined in the combat section of the rules.

Outdrawing an opponent does not insure a hit. The target must still be fired at and hit for any damage to be done. In this case, however, the quick-draw character may get one shot off before any simultaneous shooting begins.



Seduction 1 point / CHR 10+

This is the ability to charm anyone inclined favorably, or in some circumstances unfavorably, to your character. This skill only works with people, but is not limited to the opposite sex. The skill level is used as a Charisma modifier for making a saving roll based upon the victim's IQ as modified by his or her *Seduction* level. The GM may wish to add additional adjustments to any particular roll depending upon the power or money that a character has. (It will probably be easier for a rich man to seduce a poor woman than it will be to seduce a rich woman, *all other things being equal.)* It is up to the GM or the players of seduced characters to decide what (if any) remuneration or loyalty is offered to the seducer (i.e. information, presents, money, etc.).

Underwater 1 point

This is the general knowledge of how to use scuba equipment. This skill is a prerequisite for *Underwater Demolitions* or underwater fighting skills *(Underwater Combat).* This skill includes general knowledge of the natural hazards of open water, and thus acts to a limited degree as an *Environmental Survival: Underwater.* Included is knowledge of possible difficulties such as the bends and how to avoid or survive them, provided time and equipment are available.

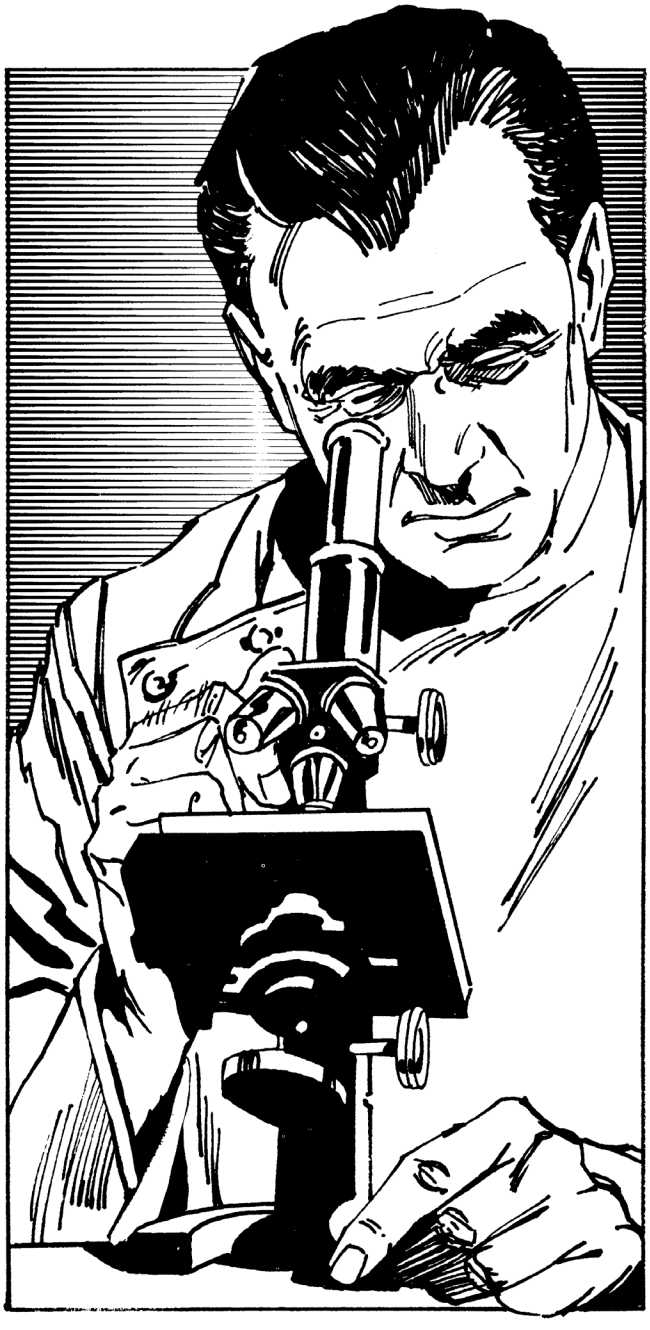
Underwater Combat 1 point

This skill aquaints the character with the weapons and tactics of underwater combat. The level number becomes a DEX modifier for any saving rolls concerning control of body and movement, or the ability to hit a target with a missile weapon while underwater. This also supplies information on the uses of the "boomstick" and spear gun.

IQ 11 skills

Research — 1 point

This skill reflects the ability of the character to obtain information by researching a subject. The sources might be as simple to reach as the local library or as complex as inside people willing to talk. The level serves as an IQ modifier for obtaining information. The character may further modify his IQ by 1 point for each foreign language he can read and write, obviously opening new sources in foreign language journals, etc. The language addition only holds for situations where it would be logically used. ☐For example, knowledge of Japanese would help doing research about kamikaze pilots provided Japanese articles on the subject were available and read.



Tactical — 1 point

This skill reflects a character's ability to outguess enemies in small arms or chase situations. The level number becomes an IQ modifier to be used in making saving rolls to figure out what the enemy is doing. The level is decided by the *Tactics* level of a character or by GM fiat, depending upon the situation. The level number also sets the level for an IQ saving roll of persons trying to figure out what a *Tactically*-skilled person is trying to do. ☐For example, if a character had *Tactics: 4,* a 4th level saving roll would be necessary to figure out what tactics that person is likely to adopt.

This skill may also serve to help figure out the method of operation of criminals, or patterns in criminal activities. A successful roll might even allow deduction of the next move of the criminal being investigated.

IQ 12 skills

Disguise — 1 point

This skill represents the ability to use make-up to change one's physical appearance. The level number of the skill is used as a Luck modifier whenever a saving roll is needed to avoid detection. The GM should decide the level of the saving roll based on how well the disguised person is known or if anyone would know the person underneath the disguise. This skill may be combined with *Acting/Mimic* for impersonations.

Electronics — 1 point

This skill represents the ability of a character to understand, wire, and repair electrical items. The level number would serve as an IQ or Luck modifier to make diagnostic or repair saving rolls. Materials needed to build or repair anything must be on hand for the work to be done. Note that, although the character skilled in *Electronics* may be able to wire up a computer, a car, or a complex jamming device, he or she may not be able to make the thing go through all its paces – those abilities would require separate skills, perhaps *Computer, Fast Driving,* and *Electronic Countermeasures* respectively.

Electronic Countermeasures — 1 point

This skill, also referred to as *ECM,* represents the ability to foul or unfoul electronic devices and communications by more sophisticated means than jamming a crowbar through a radio. Specifically, this is the use of devices and technologies which permit jamming or unjamming of radio, telephone, telegraph, television, and satellite signals, and other electronic communication devices. This skill involves the use of existing devices, *not the construction or repair of such.* (That is a skill reserved for *Electronics.*) This skill may be combined with *Electronics* for the modification of ECM devices. The level number of the skill may be used as an IQ or Luck modifier



for locating bugs or unjamming comunications provided such devices are available for use.

Forensics — 2 points

This skill requires 2 years of formal training, and represents the ability to use various techniques of forensic science. This character is able to take fingerprints, do ballistics tests, analyze chemicals and in general, do reasonable work within a forensics lab. Note that knowledge of forensic medicine is *not* part this skill; that is only included as a sub-section of the *MD* skill. The level number of the *Forensics* skill is used as an IQ modifier or as a modifier with the rating of a forensics lab. (See the section on Agencies for more information on forensics labs and what they can accomplish).

Forgery — 1 point

This skill represents the ability of a character to forge signatures and documents, or to detect forgery in handwriting or documents. The level number becomes an IQ modifier for either detection of forgery, or an attempt to forge something. In general, there must be on hand an original copy of a document or signature which the character is attempting to forge for the attempt to take place at all; likewise detection. You need to know what is genuine before a copy can be made or detected. This skill can be combined with *Special Interests* in order to enhance the chances of success. □For example, a character with *Special Interest: Lincoln* would be more capable than most of detecting a forged copy of Abraham Lincoln's signature, or of himself forging a passable copy, due to greater familiarity with the subject.

Master's Degree — 1 point

Requires IQ 12 or better; however, the full discussion can be found under the skill *Education,* IQ level 10.

Observation — 1 point

The skill *Observation* represents the ability to remember, to recall facts, and to notice when things seem odd or out of place. The level can be used as an IQ modifier when trying to spot anything out of the ordinary, or to recall an important fact noticed but passed over in a previous examination of an object, person or place. The level may be combined with *Special Interests* or other skills where familiarity and experience with a subject area would make noticing oddities easier.

Photography — 1 point

This skill represents the ability of a character to handle more sophisticated photographic equipment than a Kodak Instamatic camera. The level number serves as an IQ modifier for knowing what film to use when and where and what lens will get the best shot in a particular case. It may also serve as

a Luck modifier when trying to take a prize-winning shot, either as a blackmailer or as a reporter covering a story.

Secret Identity / Double Agent — 2 points

This is the ability to lead a double life. This skill insures that the character does not do something stupid *while the character is not in play.* ☐ In other words, you won't sleepwalk with a goosestep or accidentally lose your accent.

Only actions taken in the course of an adventure will have the potential to leave a character open to suspicion. Once your real identity is discovered, it will be totally blown unless the character can eliminate the character(s) who discovered the facts before the news gets out. If the news does get out, an additional 2 IQ points would be needed to establish a new identity. A clever GM will occasionally throw old acquaintances at a character in his or her new identity.

IQ points do not have to be spent if a character is going undercover and just needs a cover identity. Going undercover for one adventure, or even a series of adventures, does not establish a separate, independent identity. Only when IQ points are paid does the second identity live and refuse to blow it when not in play.

Sleight of Hand — 1 point / DEX 12+

This skill is the ability to do sleight-of-hand "magic" tricks. The level serves as a DEX modifier when accomplishing the tricks; it can also work as an IQ modifier when trying to figure out how someone else makes a trick happen, or even detecting that a trick is being done. Anyone at Level 10 or higher in this skill is good enough to go professionally with it.

IQ 13 skills

Languages & Literacy — variable

This is the ability to understand and/or read modern or ancient languages. Each character is assumed to be literate in his native tongue, but additional languages have an additional cost. To be able to speak a second modern language costs 1 point and includes literacy in that language. Ancient languages cost 2 points for literacy – just the reading/writing side of the language. Speaking an ancient language will cost 1 more point, and there must be someone who can teach the character, i.e. someone who can speak the ancient language.

Medic — 2 points

A character with this skill can help others with trauma care or first aid. If a companion's CON drops to zero or below, he or she is not automatically, irretrievably dead. The *Medic* character can attempt to save that person's life. The "overkill" damage (i.e. damage past a CON of 0) done to the person's CON is divided by 5 and rounded up to the nearest number. ☐ The character Ray West has a CON of 13; he is shot and should take 20 hits. The "overkill" is 7 points. Seven divided by 5 is 1.4, which rounded up is 2. If the wounded character's CON was dropped exactly to zero, treat the resulting number as zero. The *Medic* character must try to make an IQ saving roll modified by his skill level against the level set by the resulting number obtained above. If the saving roll is successful, the character is saved from death. ☐ As above, Ray is badly wounded. The number obtained was 2; therefore, a *Medic* trying to help him must make a 2nd level saving roll. If he makes the roll, Ray is brought back from the brink of death, and is in critical condition with a CON stabilized temporarily at 0. Full medical attention is needed; if the GM finds that more complete attention cannot be obtained, or will be a long time coming, Ray could slip back towards death.

If the saving roll is successfully made, the wounded character is considered to be in a coma and should be given complete medical care as fast as possible. The GM may choose to modify the level of the saving roll up or down, according to conditions and medical supplies available. If a character in a coma catches more damage, another saving roll by the *Medic* can be made to stabilize him again.

Doctorate (Ph. D) — 2 points

This skill needs an IQ of 13 or better; a full discussion is found under *Education* in the IQ Level 10 section.

IQ 14 skills

Alarm Neutralization — 2 points

This skill represents the character's ability to circumvent alarm systems. The skill level would be used as an IQ modifier for a saving roll to knock out an alarm system. This skill should not be confused with *Lockpicking and Safe Cracking.* Also, knowing how to circumvent an alarm system doesn't imply knowledge of how to set up one.

Bomb Disarm — 1 point

This skill represents a knowledge of bombs and how to take them apart. (Putting them together is covered under *Demolitions.)* The level number is an IQ modifier for a saving roll to see if an attempt to disarm a bomb succeeds. The GM should decide the level of the saving roll for each bomb, and should give the character fair warning about the difficulty of any bomb with clues like, "You've never seen anything like this" or "You realize you'd only be guessing in a case like this."

Because bomb disarming is a dangerous business, if the IQ saving roll fails and the GM determines that the bomb is going to explode, a Luck saving roll against the damage caused by the bomb is suggested. If the saving roll is made, the character had enough time to run and escape the blast. If the saving roll is missed, the character should still subtract the value of his dice roll from the damage of the bomb.

Gunsmithing — 2 points

This skill represents the character's ability to modify guns and load special ammunition for weapons. If a player wants to consult a loading manual and design ammo that will do more damage in dice and adds than the ammo listed, this is permitted provided the damage given to the new ammo agrees with the math suggested for determining this, as discussed in Part 3 of the rules. The GM must agree as well.

The gunsmith will also be able to modify weapons, including the know-how to convert a semi-auto version of an automatic rifle into the automatic version. Gun repair will also be allowed, given that the needed materials are available. Bear in mind that the modification of guns and certain types of ammo are illegal, and the gunsmith might face a jail sentence if caught.

Lawyer — 2 points

This skill represents the satisfactory culmunation of a long education: 3 years of training *after* acquiring a BA in pre-law.(A Bachelor's degree is a pre-requisite to the skill *Lawyer.)* The level number will function as an IQ modifier for saving rolls when searching for the small points of law that may make or break a case. It will also serve as a Luck modifier when running for public office or as a Charisma modifier for swaying the jury with a final argument.

MD — 2 points

Time spent in study and training is needed to acquire an MD: a pre-med BS is a pre-requisite for this skill, and must be followed by 4 more years of school plus 3 years of intern training. Any character wishing to become a medical doctor must choose one of the three areas of specialization listed below. The first category is rather broad and can encompass most medical careers not covered by the other two.

General Practitioner (GP), Surgeon/Dr.

In this category, the level of the doctor is used as an IQ modifier for diagnosis and treatment, including performing operations. If an IQ saving roll is missed during an operation, and the doctor cannot make a Level zero saving roll immediately, the patient will die. If the saving roll is made, the patient heals at the Critical rate.

Psychiatrist

In this category, the level number of the doctor is used as an IQ modifier for diagnosis of patients' emotional and mental problems. It is also used as an IQ modifier for making up valid psychological profiles of criminals involved in a crime spree, or in a cell awaiting trial. In making up the profile of a criminal, it should be easy to detect inconsistencies in how the criminal acts that might suggest that the criminal is only behaving as if he were insane instead of actually being unbalanced.

Coroner / Medical Examiner

This category describes the abilities of a doctor of forensic medicine, and confers the skill *Forensics* at no additional cost to the character. In addition to being able to handle lab work, a coroner or ME has the knowledge and ability to perform autopsies, determine the cause and time of death, and write out death certificates. However, the player choosing this skill will have to work out terms of employment through the GM, or obtain access to a lab and equipment, even if it is as simple as shelf space at the local undertaker's shop. The first two categories allow a doctor to set up practice for himself or herself, but this is not the case for a coroner or ME.

Because all doctors must complete a full range of medical training, they are all allowed to treat emergency cases. A fully trained doctor is more capable than a medic, although the system to reflect this emergency care is similar to that described for the skill *Medic.* When treating the victim of an accident or wound, if a victim's CON is reduced to zero or below, the total "overkill" damage is divided by 10 and rounded up to the nearest integer. "Overkill" is the amount of damage done over and above the character's current CON. □For example, if a character with CON of 10 takes a bad fall and receives





14 hits, the overkill is 4. The excess damage is 4/10, which rounds up to 1. A CON of exactly zero means you should use 0 for the number. The integer indicates the level of the IQ saving roll which the doctor must make in order to save the victim. The level of the saving roll may be adjusted up or down according to the lack or the availability of proper facilities for the treatment of the patient. □ A full example: A character with CON of 9 receives a gunshot wound which does 20 points of damage. This is 11 points of overkill damage. 11/10 rounds up to 2; therefore, the doctor must make a 2nd level saving roll on IQ to save the victim from death.

Pilot — 1 point / subgroup

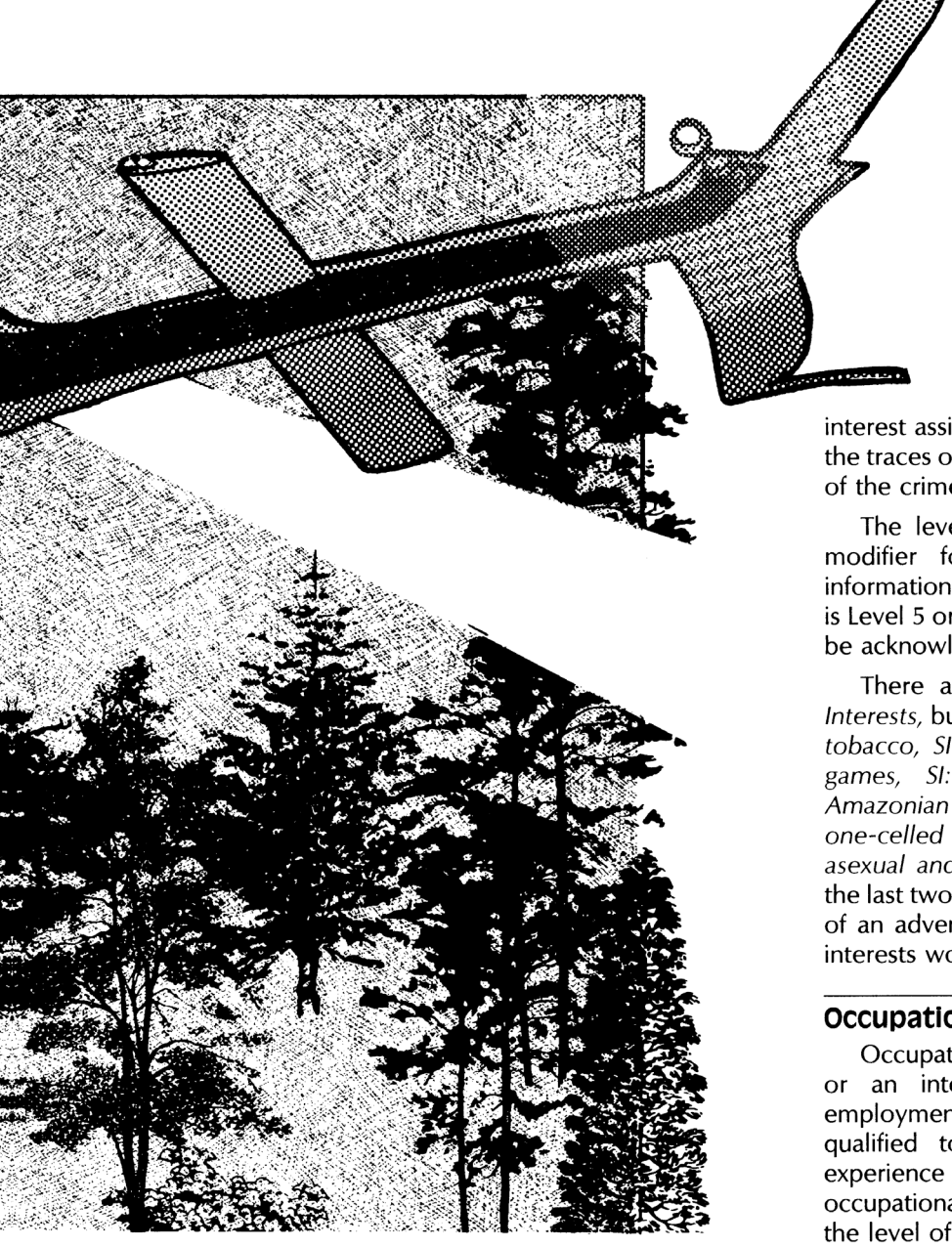
This skill represents the ability to pilot any of the type of vehicles that fall into the particular skill category chosen from those listed. *1) Commercial jet; 2) Small jet; 3) Combat jet; 4) Commercial prop plane; 5) Private prop plane or jet; 6) VTOL jet; 7) Autogyro; 8) Helicopter; 9) Ship; 10) Yacht; 11) Hovercraft; 12) Commercial train.*

The skill level will function as an IQ modifier for diagnosis of and repair of small problems with the craft. It will also serve as a DEX modifier or a Luck modifier when trying to deal with difficult situations faced while piloting the craft. Major repairs to such craft will take proper equipment and replacement parts to effect, as well as trained personnel (someone with *Occupational Skill: Yacht Mechanic* or *Special Interest: Prop Plane Mechanic,* for example).

IQ 16 skills

Cryptology — 2 points

This is the ability to decode and encode messages. The level is the IQ modifier to be used when attempting to decode a message. The level is also used as the level of the IQ saving roll needed to decode a message encoded by the character, if a key has not been supplied or obtained. The use of a computer to encode or decode a



message may raise or lower the saving roll required, and may in fact be a requirement to even attempt it, as deemed appropriate by the GM.

Poison — 2 points

This skill represents knowledge of and ability to work with poisons. The level number can be used as an IQ saving roll to determine any of the following: symptom recognition, knowledge of a poison in its natural form and how to distill it, knowledge of a delivery system for each poison, natural or artificial poisons and their sources, and antidotes for poisons. The skill may be used to poison another, or to prevent oneself or another individual from being poisoned.

Open skills

Special Interests — 1 point / interest

Special Interest is the skill area used to identify almost anything that might be learned by a character doing personal study. The only areas that cannot be covered under *Special Interest* are areas specifically covered under another skill. ☐Example: there is no *SI: Poison* because it is covered under the skill *Poison.*☐ A perfect example from fiction of a *Special Interest* was Sherlock Holmes' interest in tobacco and his famed paper on the subject. This interest assisted his efforts to track down malefactors by the traces of distinctive ash left by the culprit at the scene of the crime.

The level number of an interest is used as an IQ modifier for saving rolls concerning the gain of information on the subject in question. A character who is Level 5 or greater in one area of *Special Interest* would be acknowledged as an expert in that field.

There are countless possible examples of *Special Interests,* but to offer a few: *SI: baseball, SI: the occult, SI: tobacco, SI: romance novels, SI: french wines, SI: FRP games, SI: motocross racing, SI: fertility rites of Amazonian Indians,* and *SI: the life cycle of microscopic one-celled creatures including a full detailing of their asexual and bisexual reproductive cycles.* Granted that the last two samples may not be very useful in the course of an adventure, but imagine the personality that such interests would supply a character. . . !

Occupational Skills — 1 point / skill

Occupational skills represent one year employment, or an intensive training course in one form of employment. A character with an *Occupational Skill* is qualified to find employment in that field. Work experience will only get an individual to Level 1 of an occupational skill. Only by gaining further experience will the level of an occupational skill be raised up.

Once a character reaches Level 5, he or she will be known locally as good in that job. Higher levels will denote more widespread recognition. *No Occupational Skill will replace a skill already listed.* ☐No one can begin working in a clinic expecting to pick up *MD* as an *Occupational Skill.*

As with *Special Interests,* the list of *Occupational Skills* possible goes on indefinitely. Some possible *Occupational Skills* are: *OS: auto mechanic, OS: typist, OS: telegraph operator, OS: teacher, OS: librarian, OS: journalist, OS: farmer, OS: pickpocket, OS: fence, OS: smuggler* and *OS: bodyguard.* The training needed for each occupation has the potential to manifest itself in different and weird ways within the limits of the game; such use is encouraged in both the player and the GM.

Acting / Mimic — 1 point

This is a single skill with 2 names. It represents the rudimentary training in acting, accents and such that a beginning actor would receive. It may be combined with

Disguise to impersonate others. The level that a character has with this skill serves an a Charisma modifier for getting a job as an actor or mime. If a character is Level 5, he or she should be roughly good enough to be in summer stock productions. If a character achieves Level 10 (and the work has been in the public eye), the person may be considered a star; this gives the skill *Chic* as a bonus. The GM should decide how many APs to award for participation in plays, TV or movies.

Martial Arts

Trying to research the broad field of martial arts to decide how to handle them in a game is an exercise in futility. Books written by experts insist that most martial arts were designed as physical disciplines to promote philosophical well-being. Those who have been trained in the quickie Kung-fu courses learn that all martial arts are ways of training anyone to become a black-belted killer. The more money you pay, the quicker you become one. Last, when speaking to those who have trained in martial arts for a long time, you learn that karate and the like are not necessarily all they are advertised to be, and many legitimate black belts would like to have a gun to protect themselves, if push came to shove.

Because of this sort of troublesome disagreement, the martial arts as used in this game have been abstracted to a certain extent. If the treatment of the martial arts offends anyone, they are invited to modify the system until it suits them. While this system may not be overly realistic, it has proven fun and efficient in play.

Martial arts have a certain allure: the concept of a fighting discipline, armed or unarmed, is an interesting one, and one which characters may find useful in the games. However, they are not necessarily for everyone: characters must be physically capable of meeting the Strength and Speed requirements, and willing to devote the time and money needed for the training.

Martial Arts functions like a levelable skill, but it is not; actual fighting experience does not increase *Martial Arts* skill – only disciplined training holds the key to success. A character gets no APs for his *Martial Arts* skill because he has used the skill in a fight. *Martial Arts* is the only skill where a character can literally purchase training to raise his levels. This is to reflect the thousands of buy-it-here black belt schools. However, these schools are limited; thus, a character can only purchase up to Level 10 in *Martial Arts*. It is possible to rise to higher levels, but it is only through personal dedication and continued discipline; this is discussed further on. For the average character, even Level 10 will make one a formidable opponent.

Each character who wishes to choose *Martial Arts* as one of his skills should choose a particular discipline that he wishes to be trained in. For the most part the name will mean little, and the requirements for the arts are considered the same. Note, however, that if a martial art is chosen where a weapon is required, like bo-jitsu, the character must have the weapon required to be effective in a fight.

The Speed requirement for each level of expertise is the level number plus 9. This requirement is constant and cannot be modified. ☐ In other words, for a character to reach level 3 in *Martial Arts,* his Speed must be at least 12.

The Strength requirement is the level number plus 7. The Strength of a character may be modified in this area by *chi,* or inner strength.

Chi is determined in the following manner: double the level of the *Martial Art* that is being trained for, and subtract that number from the character's IQ. If the result is a positive number, it can be added to the character's Strength for the purpose of reaching the Strength minimum of the level the character is trying to train for. ☐ Example: Fred has a Strength of 8 and an IQ of 14. He is trying to gain level 4 in Karate. The Strength requirement is 7 + 4, or 11. The level number Fred is trying to train to is 4; doubled, that number is 8. Subtracted from his IQ of 14 you get 6. This 6 is the number that can be added to his Strength because of *chi.* The *chi* Strength added to the character's natural Strength can count in his combat adds. However, at no time will *chi* grant a character more combat adds for Strength additions than the level number of the *Martial Arts* level the character is at. ☐ For



example, a character has a natural Strength of 11. With the modifications for *chi* his ST is 19. Ordinarily a Strength of 19 would allow 7 combat adds. However, since the character is only Level 1 in *Martial Arts,* he can only take 1 more combat add. The extra Strength derived from *chi* may only modify a character's natural Strength at other times if the GM of a particular scenario allows it on a case by case basis.

The first five levels of any martial art cost 1 skill point total. Each level after that costs one additional skill point. ☐Thus, Level 6 costs 2 skill points and Level 10 costs 6 points (total).

The money cost for each level of training is equal to a $100 multiplied times the level number. ☐Thus, 3rd level costs $300, which must be paid on top of the $200 spent for 2nd level. The money must be paid in advance.

The time cost for each level is the level number times 2 months. It is up to the GM to decide if a character has missed classes as a result of being away on an adventure, thereby delaying the game time when he can become the new level in his art. Characters starting out (newly rolled up) may buy as many levels of martial arts as they can afford, providing they can meet the money, Strength, Speed and skill point requirements for each level. It is assumed they have devoted the time necessary to train before they began their adventuring career.

In an effort to reflect what the martial arts originally set out to become – a philosophical approach to the world that opens up many physical and psychological vistas within human beings – it is permitted for a character to pass beyond the 10th level of *Martial Arts* skill. This level of advancement cannot be purchased as were lower levels. To go beyond 10th level, the character must dedicate his life to the chosen art. He or she must have the Strength and Speed requirements of any higher level aspired to, determined the same way as the requirements for the lower levels. It is up to the GM to decide, probably on the basis of a little research into the particular art, what this devotion and dedication will demand of the character by way of philosophy and lifestyle. Both GM and player should work this out, and the player should attempt to role play the character with this philosophical attitude and life style in mind. If the character falls out of training, the GM should reduce the benefits given the character from his relationship with the art until such time as he resumes his training and returns to his art, until he regains his lost "edge." That he or she may lose benefits if the role-playing is not maintained in depth should be understood by any player going beyond the normal level restrictions of martial arts.

Titles and Honourable Awards

Every nation has medals and honors to be handed out to citizens and, to a lesser degree, to aliens who have performed a great service to the government. A GM who wishes to award a medal to a character should first check and make certain that the award is not a military one going to a civilian, or vice versa. It would not be out of line for one who received a prestigious award to have his or her Charisma increased by a point as well.

The ability to own or be granted a title is reserved for characters who were born citizens of a nation that has royalty and/or a hereditary peerage. Medals and awards may be granted to anyone by a grateful nation or state or city, and are covered above merely to be in a logical location in the rulebook. Acquiring titles is somewhat more restrictive. The titles used for example here are taken from the system of British peerage; substitution of titles from other systems is suggested for characters from other cultural backgrounds.

Granted titles — varies (see below)

Granted titles are those which an individual personally earns; they are *granted,* not hereditary, although they may become hereditary for the next generation. If a character hopes or expects to be granted a title during his or her lifetime, the player has to devote the necessary skill points towards earning a title at some time. If the points are available, they can be set aside at any time, *but once they have been assigned to that purpose, they may not be withdrawn to be used for something else.*

To gain a title, the character must currently be a citizen of his home country, and he should have done something that can be construed to be in the service of his nation. A pristine past is vital, at least in theory (and to some degree in practice). Such an honor is granted in order to set up that person as an example of a good citizen; it is not something one would grant to Burke and Hare or other such infamous luminaries. If a character is considering setting aside the points for a title, the GM should advise that character when, in the GM's opinion, the character has done something that would blow the character's chances of getting a title; this is mainly so a character won't waste skill points on an empty chance at something. If, on the other hand, the character has set the skill points aside and *then* does something stupid . . . well, that's life. The points do not come available again.

Knighthood — 1 point

A character will not be eligible for this title until he or she has become Third Level. The character must make a Charisma saving roll *on his own level.* If he succeeds, he is allowed to add the title "Sir" before his name (Sir Lawrence, or Sir Lawrence Olivier), and add two points to his Charisma. Women receiving this honor can have their names preceeded by "Dame" (Dame Edith, or Dame Edith Evans); they also receive the Charisma bonus.

Lordship — 2 points

This title is only available to a character who has already been knighted. The character must be at least 30 years old and have reached 6th level. The saving roll to be attempted is at the level of the character, on the attribute determined by the average of the character's IQ and Charisma (fractions round up). If the saving roll is made, the character will be able to take the title "Lord" or

"Lady," as in "Lord Olivier." This is the highest rank attainable to one born a commoner.

If the initial saving roll is missed when trying for either title, the character may again attempt it once another 1,000 APs have been gained. The level of the saving roll *will* rise as the level of the character rises.

Hereditary Titles — 3 points

Hereditary titles, or titles by blood, may be taken by a character if, when being created, the player will devote 3 skill points towards inheriting a title. The character must have the bloodline, but may not actually be a citizen of the nation it derives from. If such is the case, however, the title is completely meaningless, as in the example of Alex Romanoff. Even if the character is presently a citizen in good standing, the title may not bestow any additional solid benefits if the family has no lands or fortune left. The GM should work with the player to determine the actual circumstances. The character may not actually own the title; there may be older siblings in line for the title before your character. Once the skill points are devoted towards getting a title they cannot be used for anything else, whether you like the title or not. Being stripped of a title will not make the skill points available.

To determine the title a character has claim to, roll three dice. The number in the first column should be matched with value of your roll and will indicate what the character is in line to inherit. Once that has been determined, three dice should be rolled again; if they come up triples, the character owns the title. If anything else comes up, there is a parent with the title or there are other children in line for it.

►3 or 18: Prince – either the ruler of a principality like Monaco or in line to inherit the throne of a monarchy.

►4 or 17: Duke – The highest rank in British peerage. Possibly the ruler of a duchy on the continent.

►5 or 16: Marquis – Next highest rank of British peerage. This also appears as a title in Japan and Europe.

►6 or 15: Earl – Middle rank of British peerage. This rank was given to many colonial governors.

►7 or 14: Viscount – In British peerage , the heir or eldest son of an Earl. A separate title in other countries. If you are dealing with British peerage, and roll that you do not own the title, then an older sibling does; your title becomes Lord.

►8 or 13: Baron – Next lowest rank; on the continent may be ruler of a barony.

►9 thru 12: Lord – Lowest title in British peerage. Often not much more than a title.

Any title will get a character an addition of two points to his or her Charisma. The titles are listed here in the male gender, but it should not be difficult to convert the names to the female equivalents. Also, a blooded title grants the character the skill *Chic* free of charge. This system of hereditary titles is deliberately kept simple; if you wish to research for more titles and greater detail, feel free. In general, however, this system is functional.

Having a character who owns a title can limit the adventures that the character will be available for. It is absolutely impossible to find the Prince of Wales on a commando adventure in Bhutan, for example; the immediate heirs to the higher ranks are not sent into dangerous situations, and in fact could be carefully guarded and protected. The farther away from owning the title, the less outside control the individual will experience. If your character does not own the title in his family, he will be addressed as Lord (or Lady for female characters). It is up to the player and the GM to decide how many individuals there are between the character and the title. It is possible for a character to pass a title on to a younger sibling if he does not want it. Adventures involving the heir to a title and a threat to that heir's family are an obvious start for a GM looking for something interesting.

Psychic Skills

Psychic skills have no IQ minimum requirements; in this game, they are divided into six different groups. *A character may only attempt to get a psychic skill when the character is created; once that chance has gone, the character may never attempt to get such a skill again.* When a psychic skill is desired for a character, the skill is rolled for randomly from one of these six groups below to determine what group the character's talent falls into. A character may try for more than one psychic skill, and if a second or third roll comes up in a group already owned by the character, you may decide to roll again, or the GM may decide to redefine the character's specific ability in that talent group. □For example, a telekinetic character may be redefined to include pyrokinesis, or a clairvoyant character may also develop clairaudience. Psychic skills may be either controllable or latent; as a general rule, the smarter a character is, the more likely it is that the character will be able to control his skills.

Each psychic skill costs 3 skill points. A roll of one six-sided die determines the group that the character's skill falls into. Once the skill has been determined, the character should check whether he has control of the skill or whether the ability is a latent one.

To check for control or latency, the player must roll two six-sided dice; doubles add and reroll. To the total of the dice a character is allowed to add or subtract numbers, according to how smart the character is. For each point of IQ above 16, the character may add 1 to the die roll. For each point of IQ below 16 the character must subtract 1. When all is said and done, the total of the dice roll and its modifiers must be 8 or more for the character to have full control over his skill.

□Example: Orion rolled for a psychic skill and got



empathy. When checking for latency he rolled a 5. His 11 IQ gave him a dice modifier of −5, so his roll totaled exactly 0. He is now a latent empath.

If a character is latent with a psychic skill, it means the ability functions erratically and is not within the character's conscious control; the character may not even realize he or she has the skill. It is up to the GM to determine situations where the character's skill might be active enough to make themselves felt. If the character's skill might get him out of a tight situation, an IQ saving roll to see if his subconscious mind causes his skill to function would be appropriate. If the GM wishes someone to have certain information, giving a clairvoyant character a vision is an effective way to do the trick.

Psychic Skill Groups — 3 points

1) *Psychometry*

This is the ability to gain impressions about people from items they have worn or handled. The impressions will extend to the current condition of the individual, with clues to location and state of health included. The impressions do tend to be vague, but the strength of the impression will depend upon how closely related the object was to the individual i.e. if it was a personal treasure from childhood or whether it was an item casually picked up and quickly forgotten. The impressions extend beyond the grave, and an object directly involved in a crime may give very strong impressions about the crime and the people involved. The object being used must be being touched by the psychometric character to be of any value.

2) *Telekinesis*

This is the ability to move things by force of mind. Telekinesis will require a certain amount of energy; it will take 1 Strength point to move one pound one foot. One Strength point can be regained for every 10 minutes spent resting (not exerting yourself). The range of effect for an object is the character's IQ in feet; in other words, you can only move objects within a radius of (your IQ) feet from you.

Pulling a trigger is too difficult to manage with telekinesis, while moving the gun itself is not. It will take equal amounts of Strength to move an object through the air or along the ground. Objects may be launched through the air at a target; the amount of Strength used in the attack serves as the Dexterity for that missile weapon attack. An object must be visible to the telekinetic for him to be able to have any effect upon it.

It is possible for a telekinetic to kill himself by driving his Strength below zero if the amount of Strength needed to move an object is miscalculated. If the telekinetic can immediately release the item the moment the over-commitment is recognized, and he can successfully make an IQ saving roll (level at the GM's discretion), he will not die. His remaining Strength will be the amount he made the saving roll by (up to his usual Strength).

3) *Clairvoyance*

This is the ability to get an impression of things that are happening at the same time, but in a place different from where the character is currently. A clairvoyant who can control his ability may picture a place in his mind and attempt to get a picture of what is happening in that spot. As well, pictures of places where things are happening that would release a large amount of psychic energy (like a place where a person is being tortured or murdered) might force themselves into a clairvoyant's mind. Especially in the latter case, the visions will be presented symbolically and or in dreams.

4) *Precognition*

This is the ability to see future events. A precognitive character will be able to see future happenings, but they should be presented in a symbolic fashion. A character with control over this skill would concentrate on a person, place or thing, and then get a vision about the thing they were concentrating upon. Clues should be given, however subtle, that will allow the character to intervene in the action seen, if the character chooses to do so. These visions are also useful for giving a character a sense of *deja vu* later in the game.

5) *Telepathy*

This is the ability to read minds and broadcast thoughts. The character attempting to read another's mind must have visual contact with the person being read, and must have a language in common with that person. The only exception to this rule is if the telepathic character sends thoughts in symbols, and the character receiving begins to organize thoughts in symbols to be read back. ☐ For example, the picture of a dog will mean *dog* in any tongue; broadcasting a mental image of guard dogs to someone who can see outside might cause them to look for guard dogs and indicate if there are any.

6) *Empathy*

This is the ability to detect, share, and broadcast feelings and emotions. An empath may pick up feeling from any individual or creature capable of emotion within his or her field of vision. Trying to read the emotions of a person far distant, however, will cause problems with "emotional static" from anyone between the empath and the target.

The empath may also broadcast feelings such that feelings can be shared between several individuals. No actual thoughts pass through this empathic sharing. The talent has a "field effect" – in other words, the effect spreads out equally in all directions. It is very hard to direct at just one person or creature. The use of emotions, and information gained from them, can be used to direct others, though control of others is not part of the basic empathic skill.

Do keep in mind that an empath can only pick up and broadcast *emotions,* not basic biological feelings. Emotions are feelings such as love and hate; hunger is a biological feeling.

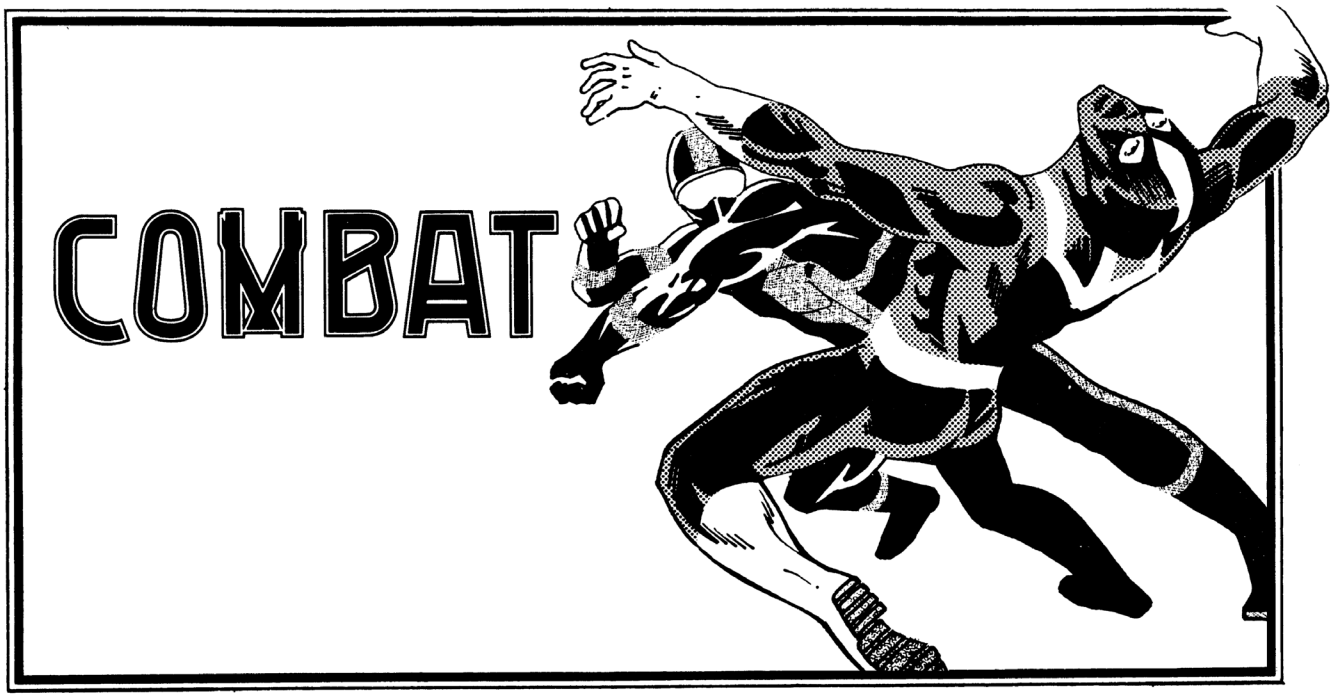


Charter Arms Bulldog 38 Special

Skill Afterword

As should be obvious from a look through the skills, there are skills that seem well-suited to particular types of characters, whether they are mercenary, spy or private eye characters. For this reason, when building a character it is important to pay attention to the type of adventure the character will be involved in.

It is painfully clear that Orion and Alex are highly unsuited to a mission where they would be called upon to save all of the hostages held by a revolutionary group on some foreign island. Their abilities, mirrored by their skills, are not appropriate. The hostage rescue scenario would be a job for a spy or mercenary group, not two fledgeling journalists. By the same token, a crew of mercenaries would be poorly equipped (at best!) to handle a series of cow mutilations in Iowa. The probable outcome of such an adventure is a great number of dead cows, farmers, and mutilators, as well as a collection of mercs in the local jail awaiting trial. Mismatching characters and adventures will either cause the game to degenerate into a bloodbath or lead to frustration when characters find they do not have the skills needed to complete the adventure. It is the GM's job to be careful when designing scenarios. ◆



Combat in MSPE is a simple system that is very easy to master. Combat is discussed in two parts that reflect game use: Hand-to-Hand Combat and Missile—Weapon Combat. Hand-to-Hand Combat takes place in 30-second long Hand-to-Hand Rounds. Missile-Weapon Combat takes place in 15-second long Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds. There are two Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds to every Hand-to-Hand Round.

Hand-to-Hand Combat

Hand-to-Hand Combat is defined as any combat taking place using Hand-held Weapons or parts of the body. *Martial Arts Combat* is part of Hand-to-Hand Combat, but is treated in greater depth later in this section. Weapons such as clubs may be used in Hand-to-Hand Combat. However, if the weapons are used to shoot anything, the Weapon's Combat must be resolved in the *Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds.*

In Hand-to-Hand Combat, every weapon being used is rated in dice for the amount of damage the weapon can do. These ratings can be found in the *Provisions Listing,* page 90 in Book 3 of these rules. When an attack is made with a weapon, the number of dice indicated are rolled, totaled, and finally added to the Hand-to-Hand Combat adds of that character. This total is known as a character's *Combat Total.* The opponent's Combat Total is determined in the same way. Then the two are compared. The character with the larger Combat Total is the winner of that round. The loser must take the difference between the two combat totals in damage to his CON.

Groups as well as individuals can fight in this manner, and there can be fights where one individual must battle several foes at the same time. The Combat Totals for all the individuals in the Group are added together, and the Combined Total is then used as if the group was a single fighter. The Combined Combat Total is compared to the Combined Combat Total of everyone fighting on the other side. If there is more than one person on the losing side, the Damage should be split up evenly among all the losers. If there is a remaining fraction, it can be divided among the losing characters with the lowest *Luck Ratings.* Although massive gang fights are possible using this system, it is more effective to break down larger battles into smaller fights between individuals. In Single Combat, the very good fighters are less able to dominate a group fight.

One very important point must be remembered about damage inflicted in a Hand-to-Hand fight that uses No Weapons, i.e. when only parts of the body are used. If a character's CON drops to zero or below because of damage inflicted on him in a fistfight, the character will not die unless the person beating him tells the GM (Game Master) that the winner is beating his defeated foe to death. The downed person will remain Unconscious for a number of Regular (10-minute) turns equal to the damages by which the defeated party's CON is exceeded in *Damage Points.* Upon waking, the defeated party will regain half of his CON. Again all fractions are rounded up.

EXAMPLE: If David (with a CON of 10) gets into a fistfight with Tom, and Tom is the better fighter, Tom might hit David for 12 *Hit Points* of damage. This is 2

points more than David's CON. David falls Unconscious for 2 Regular Turns. If in that time Tom decides to beat David to death, David is vulnerable to the attack and can die.

More details about how characters recover from beatings is covered in the section on Unconsciousness on page 47.

A detailed Combat example is in order here.

Taking up the exploits of Orion and Alex . . . the intrepid pair is on the trail of a good story about gang violence. The story leads them to a bar where they meet the leader of a youth gang. Once in the bar, the gang leader orders one of his biggest men to take Alex's camera because he wants no pictures taken of himself. Alex hands the camera to Orion and cocks his fists.

EXAMPLE: Alex's foe is a young Thug with no Martial Skills. The Thug has two Combat Adds and a CON of 10. Alex has the skill of *Pugilism: 1*, three Combat Adds, and a CON of 9.

FIRST ROUND: Alex gets 1 die for his hands and rolls a 4. He adds his 3 Combat Adds for a Combat Total of 7. The Thug Alex is fighting also gets 1 die for his fists. The Thug rolls a 3, and adds 2 Combat Adds for a Combat Total of 5.

RESULT: Alex has the Higher Combat Total, and wins the round. The difference between Alex's Combat Total and that of the Thug is 2; Alex does 2 points of damage to the Thug, whose CON drops to 8.

SECOND ROUND: Alex excels, doing the most damage possible, and presses his foe by rolling a 6. Adding Alex's 3 Combat Adds gives him a Combat Total of 9. The Thug rallies, but only rolls a 5; he adds his 2 Combat Adds but still loses to Alex, who has a Combat Total of 7.

RESULT: Alex's jab spreads the Thug's nose all over his face. The Thug takes 2 more hits off of his CON. The Thug's CON is now down to 6.

THIRD ROUND: Alex rolls 2, but with his Combat Adds this gives him a Combat Total of 5. The Thug, still hurt from the earlier rounds, rolls a 4. The Thug's 2 Combat Adds give him a total of 6. The Thug finally wins a round!

RESULT: Alex loses the round, 5 to 6, and he would normally have to take 1 point (the difference between his Combat Total and that of the Thug) to his CON. However, Alex's skill *Pugilism: 1* allows him to shake off and ignore 1 hit of damage from the Thug. Alex blocks the Thug's punch, taking no direct damage to his CON, and gets set for the next round.

At this point Alex and the Thug have been fighting for a minute and a half (each turn, remember, is 30 seconds). The gang leader decides this fight is too long, especially since his man is losing. The gang leader signals to one of his aides, who grabs a bottle from the bar, smashes it, and begins to close in on the combatants. . . .

Missile-Weapon Combat

Missile-Weapon Combat takes place any time a character is shooting or throwing a projectile at a target. Because there are 2 Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds to every Hand-to-Hand Combat Round, there is a strict time schedule to follow called the *Order of a Turn*. Usually a character using a gun will get both of his Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds before an attack with Hand-to-Hand weapons may take place. The exception occurs when a character faces a *Martial Artist*. The particulars of Martial Artists vs. gunmen are covered under the Martial Arts Combat Section, page 45, below.

Order of a Combat Turn

1) Martial Arts attacks by Martial Artists who make their Speed Saving Roll *and* are within 6 feet of their Target.
2) 1st Missile-Weapon Round.
3) Martial Arts attacks by Martial Artists who are between 6' and 20' of their Target.
4) Movement.
5) 2nd Missile-Weapon Round.
6) Hand-to-Hand Combat resolved.
7) Movement.

The difficult aspect of using a Missile-Weapon is hitting the Target. Whether or not a shot hits a target is determined by a *Targeting Saving Roll*. The number that the Saving Roll is made against depends upon four factors: distance between Shooter and Target (*Range*), *Shooter's Action, Target's Action,* and *Size* of Target. The three charts on the facing page are used to determine the *To Hit* number for a target. Missile-Weapons Chart I is the Targeting Chart for all Missile-Weapons designated with a "I" (Class I) in the Provisions Listing in Book 3. This includes most shorter range weapons that use pistol-sized cartridges. Use Missile-Weapon Chart II for longer range weapons, those designated by a "II" in the Provisions Section. Chart III, the Target Size Chart, indicates the multipliers for the *To Hit* number according to the size of the target being shot at with a missile weapon.

Here is an explanation of the Missile-Weapon Charts. At the beginning of a firefight, the first thing to do is to select the appropriate chart for the weapon being used. Then the Player or the GM must determine the Range between the character shooting and the Target, the Shooter's Action, and the Target's Action. Within the appropriate Range section find the row corresponding to the Shooter's Action. Where this row intersects with the column corresponding to the Target's Action will be found the *To Hit* number for the Shooter. This *To Hit* number may be further modified, depending on the Size of the Target. Chart III provides the number which is to be multiplied times the *To Hit* number.

Missile Weapon Chart I

SHOOTER	TARGET Range	Standing/Aiming	Moving	Dodging/Broken Cover
Standing/Aiming	5 yds or less	10	15	20
Moving		15	20	25
Dodging/Broken Cover		20	25	30
Standing/Aiming	6-50 yards	20	25	30
Moving		25	30	35
Dodging/Broken Cover		30	35	40
Standing/Aiming	51-100 yards	30	35	40
Moving		35	40	45
Dodging/Broken Cover		40	45	50
Standing/Aiming	101 yards plus	40	45	50
Moving		45	50	55
Dodging/Broken Cover		50	55	60

Missile Weapon Chart II

SHOOTER	TARGET Range	Standing/Aiming	Moving	Dodging/Broken Cover
Standing/Aiming	5 yds or less	20	25	30
Moving		25	30	40
Dodging/Broken Cover		30	35	40
Standing/Aiming	6-50 yards	10	15	20
Moving		15	20	25
Dodging/Broken Cover		20	25	30
Standing/Aiming	51-100 yards	30	35	40
Moving		35	40	45
Dodging/Broken Cover		40	45	50
Standing/Aiming	101 yards plus	40	45	50
Moving		45	50	55
Dodging/Broken Cover		50	55	60

Chart III: Target Size Chart

Target size	*To Hit multiplier*	*Example*
Tiny (4" diameter or less)	x4	Eyes, coins
Small (5" to 2 feet in diameter)	x3	Head
Medium (2 feet to 5 feet)	x2	Children, tires
Large (5 feet to 12 feet)	x1	Men, cars
Huge (12 feet or more)	x¾	Trucks, horses

Night shooting adds 10 to the *To Hit* number of any target.

Scopes subtract 10 from the *To Hit* number of any target at 51 yards or more. Nightscopes subtract 20 but can only be used at night.

All bow-type weapons add 10 to the *To Hit* number determined above. All hand propelled missile-weapons will add 15 to the *To Hit* number determined above. Neither type of weapon may be used to hit a target out of their range, even if a Saving Roll to hit is made successfully.

If the gun is touching the target, the *To Hit* number is a 5. Using a laser targeting beam subtracts 10 from the *To Hit* number; using both a laser targeting beam and a scope on a target 51 yards or more, stack to a total of -20.

EXAMPLE: If the *To Hit* number for an exchange of gunfire is 25, shooting at a man-sized target the multiplier is x1, so the straight *To Hit* number of 25 is used.

If the Target is Small, the multiplier is x3, making the *To Hit* number 75.

The explanation of the actions on the charts preceeding are simple. The phrases describe characters whether they are Targets or Shooters. *Standing/Aiming* means the character is Motionless: he is either unaware and just standing there, or is shooting back from a set aiming position. *Moving* means that the character is in motion. Movement by a Target or Shooters will lessen the chance of hitting a Target or of being hit by a Shooter. *Dodging/Broken Cover* is a tricky designation. It means the character is:

1) Actually trying to evade the shots, or;
2) The character is moving in a confusing manner, or;
3) The character is only occasionally seen because he is partly hidden by cover such as parked cars, brush, or even a picket fence.

The range between the Target and the Shooter will always be the same as the range between the Shooter and the Target. In almost every situation, the action chosen by the Shooter will be the action for him if he is, in turn, a Target. There can be exceptions, such as when the Shooter is standing and aiming at another Target, and a third Shooter sees the first character who is shooting, through Broken Cover. By the same token, one Shooter may have to try to hit the target character on the *Broken Cover Action Column* while another Shooter will only shoot at him on the *Moving Column* because the Target has no cover between him and the Shooter.



Heckler & Koch VP70Z

Any time a *Targeting Saving Roll* is missed by rolling less than a 5, something has gone wrong with the cartridge or ammunition in the gun. If the gun is a revolver, just the Shell/Bullet is bad, a dud perhaps, and the Shooter may continue to fire the remaining rounds in the gun's cylinder. If the weapon is clip-fed, a shell has jammed in the mechanism and will have to be extracted before the character can resume firing.

The example below will clear up any remaining confusion about the charts, targeting, and order of a turn in a Firefight. We now return to the bar and the gangfight in which Orion and Alex are engaged . . .

EXAMPLE: Orion sees Alex in danger and quickly drops the camera while drawing his gun, a VP70Z. Orion's *Combat Shooting Skill* suggests to the GM that there should be no problem with Orion's action. Orion is less than 5 yards from his target. He is *Standing and Aiming* while his Target is *Moving*. Because the VP70Z is a pistol, the *To Hit* number will come from Chart I. Once we have determined the Range—in this case, less than 5 yards—we are interested only in the portion of the chart corresponding to this Range. Orion, the Shooter, is *Standing and Aiming*. We locate the line corresponding to this action within the "5 yards or less" Range section. Following this line to the right we find the *To Hit* number, 15, at the intersection with the column corresponding to the Target's Action—in this case, *Moving*. Because Orion is aiming at a man-sized Target, the *To Hit* multiplier is x1, and there is no change in the *To Hit* number. Orion's *To Hit* number is 15, a low number to be sure, but the probability of making such a shot is good.

Orion must now attempt to make a *Targeting Saving Roll*, based on his DEX(TERITY), against the *To Hit* number which is 15.

Note: The Saving Roll is not made at an arbitrarily assigned level—this is important to recognize about *Targeting Saving Rolls*.

Orion has a DEX number of 14 and Orion's skill *Clip Pistol: 1* means that he can add 1 to his DEX when trying to make this roll. On two dice, therefore, Orion must roll the difference or better between his *To Hit* number and his modified DEX number. Even though the difference is zero, Orion must roll at least a 5, as is usual for any Saving Roll. Doubles will be added together and Orion must re-roll the two dice. Orion's failure to roll the minimum 5 Saving Roll would indicate that his gun has jammed, or that the gun's safety is still on.

Orion rolls a 6 and hits the target. In order to determine the bullet's *Damage Effect*, Orion rolls two dice and adds 3 to their total as indicated for the weapon used, a VP70Z, in the Provisions Section of Book 3, page 94. The two dice total 8. With the 3 adds Orion determines the Damage Effect to total 11. Orion has no *Missile-Weapon Combat Adds*. The Thug Orion shot has a CON of only 14 and has now been badly wounded. The Thug falls to the ground and the bar grows suddenly quiet. . . .

Orion could have tried to shoot the broken bottle out of the Thug's hand. The shot would have raised Orion's *To Hit* number from 15 to 60! But that's not an easy shot even for the best gunfighters. Orion will be

fortunate if the other gang members let him and Alex escape with their lives. If they do get away, the gang might pursue them for revenge. . . .

Now that you understand the basic part of *Missile-Weapon Combat,* it is time to add a few details that will take care of Multiple Shots and Automatic Weapons.

Multiple Shots & Multiple Targets

Everyone knows that it does not take much intelligence to pull a trigger, and that it takes even less intelligence to pull a trigger repeatedly. Recoil from the weapon firing these shots, however, makes hitting a target on subsequent shots more difficult. It is also generally true that the more powerful the gun, the more powerful the recoil.

In any one Missile-Weapon Round, three shots or three bursts of shots may be triggered. The *To Hit* number obtained for targeting the first shot is modified on subsequent shots; subsequent shots have progressively higher *To Hit* numbers. The new *To Hit* number is found by taking the old *To Hit* number and adding to it the number of dice (with no adds considered) indicated in the Provisions Section for the type of weapon being used.

EXAMPLE: In other words, a *To Hit* number of 10 on shot number 1, becomes a *To Hit* number of 12 for shot number 2, and a *To Hit* number of 14 for shot number 3. This assumes that the bullets get two dice for the type of weapon being used, with or without adds.

When firing a burst (this being defined as a group of three bullets), the dice for just one of the bullets is added to the *To Hit* number for the purpose of *Multiple Shots.* This addition is needed regardless of the accuracy of the first shot. The recoil must be taken into account because the shot was trigger-fired, not because it did or did not damage the target.

The Player whose character is shooting may choose a new target during a missile round, but this calls for additional modifications. The Action being taken by the new target will have to be accounted for, and those new conditions may raise or lower the *To Hit* total. The new target will obviously be receiving the 2nd and 3rd shots fired by the character. So the recoil additions from the previous shots must be added to the *To Hit* number. In addition, there is another 5 points which must be added to the *To Hit* number simply because the character is re-aiming and choosing a new target. Trying to shoot three targets in one missile round will add 10 points to the *To Hit* number for that 3rd new target—this is the addition of 5 points two times, once for each new target that is being shot at.

EXAMPLE: Orion has the option of shooting a different gang member after his first shot. If Orion does, his *To Hit* number for the second shot will be different—a 17 (assuming that the new target had only stood and watched the fight). The value of 17 for Orion's shot is found by: a 15 for the Basic Targeting of Orion's first shot with a 2 for the recoil of a gun firing 2-dice bullets and a 5 for trying to shoot at a new target, and a -5 because the target is standing still instead of moving like Orion's first target. Orion's modified DEX is 15 points, and his *To Hit* number is 17. The Saving Throw is based on the difference between these two values, except here the difference is less than 5. As with all Saving Rolls, this one must always be at least a 5—but remember, rolling doubles means you must add the two numbers and re-roll both dice.

Automatic Weapons

Automatic Weapons are weapons capable of putting a large number of projectiles into the air in a short amount of time. Automatic Weapons often have two settings: Semi-Auto allows the gun to fire Single Shots, while Full-Auto allows the Shooter to blow fire off a full clip in one Missile-Weapon Round. Those characters who use Automatic Weapons are trained to shoot in short bursts, or in groups of three shots, in order to save ammunition.



Colt 1911A Automatic Pistol

When allowing for recoil from the weapon, bursts of three bullets will be treated as one bullet: the dice for just one bullet will be added to the *To Hit* number for subsequent bursts. If a burst hits the target, it is necessary to know how many bullets actually struck the target. Roll one six-sided die and divide the resulting number by 2 rounding all fractions *up,* to determine the number of bullets which hit the target.

If a full clip of ammo is fired during one missile round, the chances of at least some of the bullets hitting the target increase dramatically. Therefore, when firing a

full clip, the basic *To Hit* number is modified by subtracting the number of fired bullets from the *To Hit* number. If a hit is scored (i.e. if the Saving Roll is made successfully), divide the number of fired shots by 6, rounding all fractions *down,* and roll that number of dice to determine the number of bullets to actually hit the Target.

EXAMPLE: A given clip has 20 bullets. All these bullets are fired at once during one missile round at one target and the Saving Roll indicates a hit. Now 20 divided by 6 is 3, the remaining .33 fraction being rounded off and lost. The firing player now rolls 3 six-sided dice. The resulting total might be an 11. Therefore 11 of the 20 bullets that were fired struck the target. If the target was a truck full of men, the number of bullets hitting the truck should be divided among the men in the truck. If the GM thinks it appropriate, *Luck Saving Rolls* could be called for, especially if the men riding in the truck are in the cab or behind cover, say, crates in the truck bed.

If the firing party wishes to aim at a general area, this may be accounted for by modifying the *To Hit* number by a multiplier for a Huge Target.

Reloading and Jamming

Reloading a gun to full capacity will take the player one full *Missile-Weapon Round.* Single shot pistols, air rifles and air pistols may be reloaded and shot one shot per Missile-Weapon Round, the same as simple bow-type weapons. However, reloading a crossbow takes one complete Missile-Weapon Round.

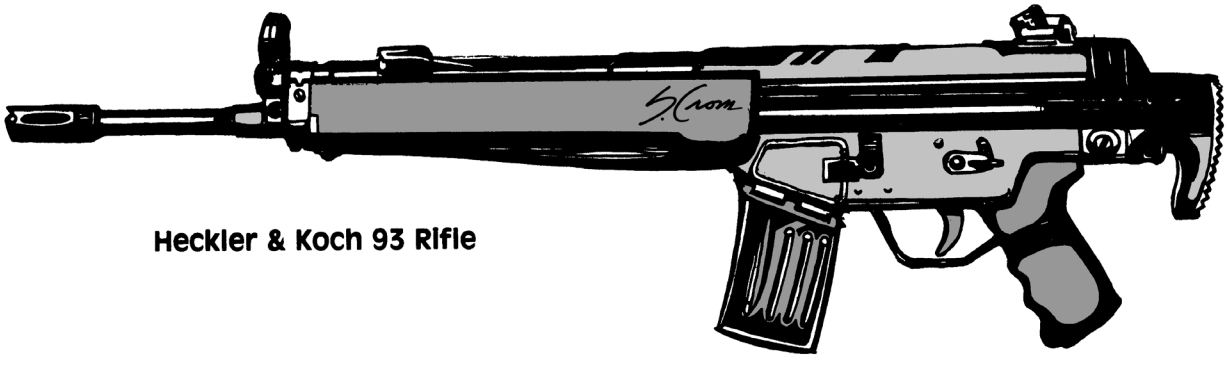
When a clip-fed weapon jams—i.e. when the *Targeting Saving Roll* is missed by rolling less than the needed 5—the weapon must be unjammed before it can be shot again.

Unjamming a gun takes one full *Missile-Weapon Combat Round.*

Unjamming a weapon requires an *IQ Saving Roll,* modified by the character's gun skill, to determine what is wrong with the weapon and how to fix the fault. The first Saving Roll is a level zero Saving Roll: the player will make the Saving Roll by throwing a 5 or better. If the Saving Roll is made and the chamber of the weapon has been cleared of the bad shell, the gun is ready to be used. If that Saving Roll is missed, a more difficult problem with the gun is indicated, which cannot be fixed in one Missile-Weapon Round. The character can try again to clear the gun's chamber by making a *1st Level Saving Roll.* If the 1st Level Saving Roll is missed, the next Saving Roll is increased by one level. Each subsequent failure of a Saving Roll to clear the weapon will increase the required Saving Roll by one more level. Each Saving Roll check will take a full Missile-Weapon Round. If the character gets to a *5th Level Saving Roll* and that Saving Roll is also missed, the player's gun is so badly damaged that a gunsmith and a shop are needed to repair it.

If an automatic weapon jams when the user is shooting a full clip (not just a short burst or a single shot), divide the number of bullets in the clip by 6 and roll that many dice. The total is the number of bullets that were fired before the weapon jammed. When this happens, re-figure the *To Hit* number from the number of bullets actually fired, as that many bullets still might hit the Target. The usual division will be needed to find out how many of the bullets actually hit the Target.

EXAMPLE: If an entire clip of 30 bullets is fired and the weapon jams (indicated by the player missing the minimum 5 Saving Roll), some of the bullets will have been fired before the gun jammed. The number of bullets (30) is divided by 6 and the resulting number is exactly 5. The player will then roll 5 dice. The resulting value, which is say, 17, indicates that the gun jammed at the 18th bullet fired. The *To Hit* number must be modified. Whereas the *To Hit* number was originally modified by subtracting 30, It must now be re-figured by subtracting 17 instead of 30. If the *New Targeting Saving Roll* is also made at this stage, the player must again divide the number of bullets actually fired (17) by 6 to determine



Heckler & Koch 93 Rifle

how many dice he must roll to discover how many bullets hit the Target. In this case, 2 dice are rolled. The value rolled is, say, 6, which is how many bullets actually hit the intended Target. Should the character be so unfortunate that he misses his second chance for the Targeting Saving Roll (indicating a jam), it should be assumed that the gun jammed at the start of the Missile Fire Round and is so badly damaged that the gun will need a gunsmith and shop to repair it. In this case the player may make no more Saving Rolls to clear the weapon.

Megadeath and Dying

It is a very simple observation that the weapons in these rules are very deadly. Because of this, there may come a point when a GM wishes to modify the damage received by a character. The GM may allow a character a chance to sprint unscratched through a hail of gunfire, something that happens, however improbably, in countless novels and movies. If the GM wishes to allow the characters this chance, it is (rather jokingly) called the *Megadeath Luck Saving Roll*. The GM may ask characters to make an appropriately high Luck Saving Roll to avoid any damage, regardless of the hits which theoretically have been scored by those shooting at the characters. The GM should be cautioned, however, not to grant this pardon one-sidedly. If the players' characters have this chance, it is only fair to give the same chance to Non-Player Characters in a similar situation. Also, don't let the roll be used by the players as an excuse for consistent carelessness or sheer stupidity. Just because the roll is a possibility, the characters should not be allowed to count on it saving them from the consequences of a completely outrageous tactic they know their characters could not possibly live through.

In a more realistic vein, if a character's CON has dropped below zero by damage other than Hand-to-Hand Fighting (be it in combat or by accident), the character is Dead. The character has six minutes (12 Hand-to-Hand Combat Rounds) to get medical assistance before he is Irrevocably Dead. If a character with the skill *Medic* or *MD* successfully makes a Saving Roll, the injured character is not dead and should begin healing as outlined on page 75. Each character making such a "medical" Saving Roll gets only one chance per injured character.

Martial Arts Combat

The mechanics of *Martial Arts Fighting* are more complex than ordinary Hand-to-Hand Combat, hence this separate section. When fighting, Martial Artists get dice equal to their *Martial Arts Skill Level* number in Hand-to-Hand Combat. Martial Arts are a Hand-to-Hand Combat system, and are therefore resolved in the Hand-to-Hand Combat Round.

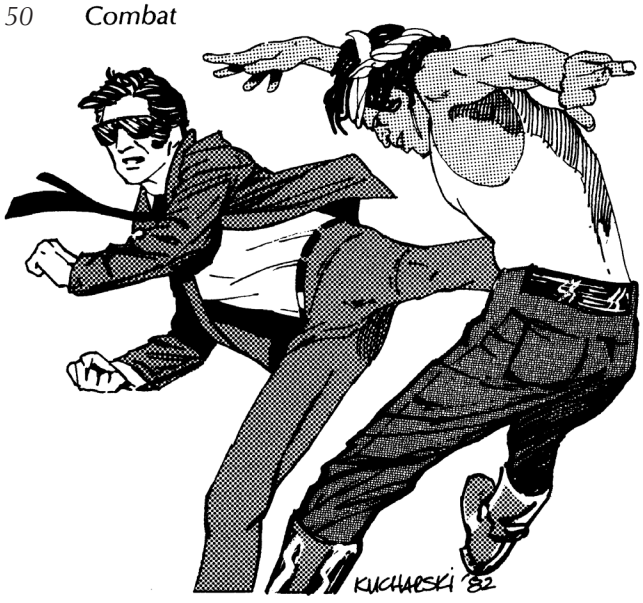
The level number of the Martial Arts Skill acts as a *Speed Modifier*. When a Martial Artist engages another individual in Hand-to-Hand Combat, the Martial Artist is allowed to attempt a *Speed Saving Roll*, modified by Skill Level, upon his opponent's Speed as modified by the opponent's Martial Arts Skill Level. If the Martial Artist makes the saving throw, and his opponent does not have Martial Arts, or does have the skill and failed his roll, the Martial Arts character has a choice of three different types of attack enumerated below. If the character's opponent does have Martial Arts and makes his saving throw, the character whose total of Speed, Martial Arts Level and Dice Roll is higher goes first and has the choice among the three types of attack.

A character skilled in Martial Arts can attack more than one individual at the same time. The level of a character's Martial Arts Skill, when divided by 3 and rounded up, indicates the number of individuals he or she may attack in one round. A Martial Artist fighting more than one foe will have to make the Speed Saving Throws against each individual member of the group being fought. A separate attack of the three kinds available can be chosen for each individual. But for obvious reasons, the *Take Down* attack cannot be followed by any other kind of attack.

The first attack is a *Disarm*. For obvious reasons, this may only be attempted against an Armed Foe. The Martial Artist states the intent to disarm his or her foe. When the atttack is completed, and the damage done is more than half the attacked character's STRENGTH (ST), the attacked character's weapon is knocked, punched or kicked out of his hands. If the damage done is not more than half the STRENGTH of the character being attacked, the foe is not disarmed.

The second type of attack is called a *Direct Attack*. All the damage done is directed against the foe's CONSTITUTION (CON). If enough damage is done to max that character's CONSTITUTION (i.e., if the damage is equal to or exceeds the character's original CONSTITUTION), he is rendered Unconscious. As with other Hand-to-Hand combats, it is only by stating the intent to Kill a beaten character, or by continuing to attack after the defeated character is unconscious, that a person can be killed in Hand-to-Hand combat. If the intent is only to knock out the foe, the amount of Overkill (damage done over and above the other person's CON), indicates the number of regular 10-minute turns during which the character is rendered unconscious.

The third type of attack is referred to as a *Take Down Attack*. Here, the Martial Artist is attempting to restrain his foe and hold him in a position in which the foe will do no damage to the Martial Artist or others. The opponent is not rendered Unconscious, but is kept awake, for questioning or the like. When the attack is



completed, if the damage done is greater than the original STRENGTH of the character being attacked, the character is restrained, at least temporarily, under the control of the Martial Artist. The restrained character may only attempt to escape during the next Hand-to-Hand combat round. If the restrained character is trying to get free, the Martial Artist must make a *Strength Saving Roll* modified by adding the character's CHI and Martial Arts Level against the DEXTERITY of the restrained character in order to continue to hold him. If the Saving Roll is missed, the restrained character twists free and a new round of fighting may begin. As noted above, if a Martial Artist fights more than one other person, he cannot hit the first opponent with a *Disarm* the second opponent with a *Take Down*, and the third opponent with a *Direct Attack*, because he will himself be limited in action while restraining the opponent he attacked with a Take Down. If a Take Down is to be included in a group attack, there can be only one Take Down attack and it must be directed against the last person targeted for attack.

Even a talented Martial Artist cannot hold on to more than one character at the same time.

Any damage a Martial Artist does will have to be divided equally among all of his foes. He will be able to apply that designated portion of damage directly to the characters against whom he made the saving throw. Against anyone he must fight on equal footing (because he missed the saving roll), the designated portion is considered his *Combat Total* against that individual.

A Martial Artist may also find himself facing *Gunmen*. As always, there are two Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds to every Hand-to-Hand round. If the Martial Artist makes his Speed Saving Roll and is within 6 feet of a person trying to shoot him, the Martial Artist will automatically be allowed to attack before any shots are fired. If he is outside that 6-foot range and makes the Saving Roll, the Martial Artist's attack comes between the First and Second Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds. If the Saving Roll is unsuccessful, no matter what his range, his attack will come during the first normal Hand-to-Hand Round after all shots have been fired during the 2 Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds.

EXAMPLE: Fred Wu is a Martial Artist. He is faced by Vinny the Hood who is armed with a 9mm pistol. Fred launches his attack from 10 feet away, and Vinny lets off 3 shots during the 1st Missile-Weapon Combat Round. Fortunately for Fred, Vinny's gun jams with the first bullet, and Fred is not shot while flying through the air. Fred makes his Speed Saving Roll and hits Vinny for damage before Vinny can begin to unjam his gun—this action would be part of the 2nd Missile-Weapon Combat Round. If Fred had missed his Speed Saving Roll, he would be attacking Vinny while Vinny attempted to unjam his gun.

If a Martial Artist misses his Saving Roll, he still fights with his Martial Arts Skill Level during the normal Hand-to-Hand combat round. The damage done in the martial arts attack which is the result of a successful Speed Saving Roll is also used as the Martial Artist's Combat Total in the first Hand-to-Hand Round. However, he will not do any extra damage, i.e. it will not count twice.

EXAMPLE: Returning to the example above, let's say Fred did 12 points of damage to Vinny when he finished his leap. Vinny, starting the hand-to-hand round, slugged back for 13 points. Fred still uses his 12 points of damage for the purpose of comparing Combat Totals. Fred loses the round by 1 point, and takes only 1 point of damage, not 13 points. If Fred had rolled a 14, he'd still only get 14 hit points on Vinny, not the 14 delivered during his leap plus the 1 additional hit determined by the comparison of their combat totals. The one hit over Vinny's combat total would not count aganst him a second time.

Characters trained in a Martial Arts discipline who use a weapon will get dice for both the weapon and their Skill Level in Martial Arts. However, they may fight using their Martial Art only if they have possession of their weapon or a reasonable facsimile. The Martial Artist gets no extra dice if he or she is involved in a fight without the specific Martial Arts Weapon.

EXAMPLE: One last example of Martial Arts Combat is in order. Some time after escaping from the bar, Orion has to drive to the airport to pick up an old friend from Montreal, a man named Brett Bruce. As Orion hauls Brett's luggage out to his car, three of the gang members appear suddenly out of the dark. One clicks open a switchblade and approaches the preoccupied Orion.

Brett, however, is more alert and, unbeknownst to the gang members, Brett is a Martial Arts instructor. Brett's Speed is 26 (exceptional) and he is a level 8 in his Martial Arts discipline, Okinawan Karate. Bruce has 3 Combat Adds. The knife-wielder's Speed is 14, and the Speed of the other two gang members is 10 each.

Brett is sufficiently trained to be able to take on all three gang members during the same Hand-to-Hand Combat Round. When his skill level of 8 is divided by 3 and rounded up, we see that he can handle three foes at once. Brett attacks before Orion can even react to the gang members' presence. Brett chooses to launch a Direct Attack for each one of the opposing gang's Thugs. To strike before the knife-wielding gang member can, Brett must make a Speed Saving Roll against the knife-wielding thug's Speed. Brett's Speed is 26, modified by the addition of his Martial Arts Level of 8 which gives him a 34 with which to make his Saving Throw. The difference between Brett's modified Speed and the knife-wielder's Speed of 14 is in Brett's favor, so Brett must only roll the minimum of 5 with his modified Speed Saving Throw, which he does. Before the damage from Brett's attack is figured, Brett must make his Speed Saving Roll against each of the other gang members. Again Brett's Speed is so far in excess of the gang members' that Brett must roll only a minimum of 5. For the first Thug Brett does so, but against the second Thug Brett rolls a 3, evidently missing his attack because of jet lag. Before anyone else can react, Brett has hit two of the thugs, including the one wielding the switchblade. At the beginning of the Hand-to-Hand Combat Round, Brett is in direct normal combat with the third thug, the one against whom he missed his Speed Saving Throw.

At this point, the players must know how much damage Brett has done. In the attack Brett rolls 8 dice for a total of 36. Brett's 3 Combat Adds generate a Combat Total of 39 points. Since Brett faces 3 opponents, the damage Brett can apply to each opponent must be divided equally by that 39 points, meaning there are 13 hits delivered to each individual gang member. Since the three gang members have CONs of 10, and since Brett wasn't trying to kill the gang members, the two Thugs Brett first hit are knocked out for half an hour. Brett is still facing the third gang member who, not recognizing prudence, attacks. The 3rd Thug rolls 1 die for his attack (for his fists), and gets a 3. He has no combat adds. Brett's Combat Total against the Thug remains 13. Thus he does 13-3=10 points of damage which is enough to knock out the third gang member.

Unconsciousness

Unconsciousness may occur as the result of one of four factors:

1) HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT damage to a character's STRENGTH or CONSTITUTION points.
2) SERIOUS WOUNDING damage to a character's STRENGTH or CONSTITUTION points.
3) THE EFFECTS OF POISON OR DRUGS, damage to a character's STRENGTH or CONSTITUTION points.
4) THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHIC damage to a character's STRENGTH or CONSTITUTION points.

In Hand-to-Hand Combat, as with other combat damage, the damage done is subtracted from the CON of the character. However, when the CON drops to zero or below the character's CON number, Unconsciousness results instead of death. The number of Hits over and above the CONSTITUTION of the character indicates how many 10-minute regular turns the character will be out cold. Once that time has passed the character will awaken with half of his CON points regained. One additional CON point will be regained for every three hours (18 10-minute turns) that the character avoids taking any further damage. While a beating seriously hurts a character, the damage received from a beating will heal more quickly than damage from an Accident or wound caused by a Weapon.

Unconsciousness from *Serious Wounding* (i.e. weapons or accident damage) results when the CON of the character reaches zero or below. This Unconsciousness is serious in that the character will die if Medical Attention is not quickly received by him, either from a Physician or a character with *Medic Skill.* The skill *MD* (page 31) details the process for saving a grievously wounded character, and the Healing Section, page 74 in Book 2 of these rules governs the healing rate for seriously wounded characters.

Poisons and *Drugs* can sap a character's STRENGTH. If, as a result of Drugs or Poisons, the STRENGTH of a character drops to zero, the character will fall Unconscious. When the prescribed time of Unconsciousness has passed (as determined by each Drug or Poison the character has been subjected to), the character will regain Consciousness with half of his STRENGTH points. Again, all fractions are rounded up. Thereafter, the character will regain the remainder of his STRENGTH points at the rate of 2 points per hour. Some Poisons affect ST and some affect CON—see the Poison Section, page 101 of the rules in Book 3, for further guidelines on the use and effect of Poisons and Drugs.

Similarly, the use of *Psychic Skills* can drain a character of STRENGTH. If the STRENGTH of a character drops to zero, Unconsciousness will result. The psychically-depleted character will recover at the same rate as a Poisoned or Drugged character, at the rate of 2 points per hour.

If, by result of Poison or Psychic Overuse, the character's STRENGTH falls below zero, the character may die unless Medical Help is given. A *Medic* or *MD* is required. Some Drugs, like Knockout Drops, will only kill a character if an overdose is given. Most Poisons will only kill a character if left untreated. Medical Aid is required when an overdose causes the STRENGTH of a character to drop as far below zero as the character's healthy CON is above zero.

EXAMPLE: A character whose STRENGTH is 18 points when healthy must have Medical Assistance to survive a Poisoning or Psychic Overuse which drives his STRENGTH points down 36 points, to -18 points. If no Medical Aid is available, the character will die. ◆

ADVENTURE POINTS

The object of this game is to enjoy yourself while you are playing it. To "win" this game your character needs to survive long enough to grow as a personality. This is accomplished, and to a certain extent measured, by Adventure Points.

Adventure Points (also called APs or EPs for Experience Points), are awarded to characters because of risks taken, extraordinary efforts made, or successfully completed adventures. Adventure Points improve characters by allowing them to increase the levels of their skills, or to increase the attributes of the characters themselves. *Adventure Points must be recorded separately for both characters and their skills.* The categories below are general classes of action a GM might give points for, along with suggested methods and guidelines for awarding Adventure Points to characters and skills.

►Risk and Daring

The amount of risk or daring shown by the adventurer must be considered when awarding APs. Most adventures have some risk attached to them. From a crusading reporter attempting to expose a local crime syndicate, to a CIA agent tracking down a foreign spy ring, to a mercenary on a seek-and-destroy mission, the risks to life and limb in adventuring are ever-present. Aside from the constant danger of discovery, capture, or death in the above examples, there may be times when the character must take actions that place him in even greater danger than the adventure itself. Sprinting across a minefield to save an orphan or breaking into the local "Godfather's" home to gather evidence are both good examples of daring actions.

If there is relatively little danger for a character on an adventure, I usually award the character 100 APs for successfully completing the adventure. An excellent example of characters who are faced with such little risk are Isaac Asimov's Black Widowers. At the other end of the scale, the soldiers who attacked Entebbe to free the hostages would be awarded about 500 APs just on the danger aspect of their adventure.

Daring comes into play when a character deliberately takes an action he knows is dangerous to help resolve the adventure he is engaged in. A mercenary who charges a machinegun nest to save the rest of his comrades would be a candidate for 250 APs, a medal, and probably a straitjacket. By the same token, a detective who is called up by a murder suspect, agrees to meet him in a lonely out-of-the-way place, and thereby plans to get the killer to expose his guilt, is looking for 150 or more APs. Other factors relevant to the AP award might be how he is armed, how carefully he plans in the time available, and generally what sort of danger he is placing himself in. Included under "daring" actions are those that can be described as *insightful brilliance*. A split-second decision to shoot out the lights instead of spraying the bad guys to avoid hitting a hostage is an example of insightful brilliance.

Any time an action is taken that stands between a character's death and that character getting a step closer to the resolution of the adventure, an award of APs should be made. These awards need not be much, but should reinforce actions that the GM would like to see taking place during the game. However, if the character repeats the same move until it becomes his predictably favorite tactic, it should gain less and less APs as time goes on, forcing the character to stay fresh and keep coming up with good ideas.

►Combat

Any character who participates in combat where

enemies are slain, wounded, driven off or forced to surrender should get APs for that combat. The APs awarded for a kill should be dependant upon the difficulty of the kill; pressing a gun to the head of a captive and killing him should be worth nothing, while killing a sniper who has other characters pinned down should be worth at least the sniper's CON in adventure points. (The sniper would probably be worth more, depending on how dangerous the sniper was and how hard the fatal shot was to make.) Any time two or more people combine in a kill of something, both should be awarded the full amount of APs though a GM may award a smaller number than normal if the kill was easy, particularly if it was easy just because there were more people. This also goes for killing damage done to the same target by two people at the same time.

Captured enemies are worth twice as many EPs alive as they would have been dead. The points awarded may be increased if the capture was difficult or if the captivity of the Non-player Character (NPC) is deemed especially valuable. If wounded, NPCs are worth the number of hits they have taken in damage in APs, in addition to any capture awards. Escaped characters should be worth ¼ of their CON or the APs for their wounds, whichever is greater. If the assignment is to keep something or someone safe, then enemies who are driven off the target should be treated for APs as if they were killed; this total to be modified by the difficulty of driving them off.

A character *rendered unconscious* in hand-to-hand fighting should be treated as if he were *dead* for AP award. Characters *killed* in hand-to-hand combat are treated the same way: as "dead" for AP awards.

►Adventure Resolution

The successful resolution of an adventure is worth APs, whether the job is solving a mystery or preventing the bad guys from getting away with the money, or freeing the prisoners from the death camp in Azania. The GM should decide before the adventure a base AP reward the adventure will generate if the job is successfully completed, regardless of the manner. This AP award should be adjusted up or down depending on the difficulty or ease with which the problem was handled. If the characters were really outclassed by the mission but managed to solve it anyway, the award should be increased. If they run rough-shod over the adventure, destroying evidence needed for conviction of the criminals, bungling the arrests, or choosing ridiculous tactics like hunting Mrs. O'Reilly's rabid dog with a howitzer, the award should be decreased.

A GM need not tell, and is encouraged to avoid telling the characters how many APs they are playing for. Aside from rending the fabric of fantasy, it can cause problems between the GM and players if the GM has to adjust the AP total because of how the adventure is handled.

►Saving Rolls

Because a saving roll so often stands between a character and a horrible death, adventure points are awarded in conjunction with saving rolls. Whenever a saving roll is called for, the character immediately gets APs equal to the number thrown on the dice times the level of the saving roll.

☐Example: Orion has to make a second level saving roll on Luck; his Luck is 10. He rolls a 5 and misses, but gets 10 APs anyway. For all Level zero saving rolls and saving rolls where the "to hit" number is not figured out using the saving roll formula or is figured against the attribute and skill level of another character (as can happen with *Seduction, Confidence,* and a few other skills), the AP award is simply the number thrown on the dice.

In this game no APs are awarded for saving rolls made while practicing a skill. Going to the shooting range will not garner any points for a character, because practice

Adventure Points Awards Guidelines

RISK AND DARING — BASE=100 pts

- x0 If no risk is taken (i.e. no chance of injury).
- x½ If only slight risk or danger faced (i.e. no chance of death).
- x1 If some risk is taken (i.e. up to 20% chance of death).
- x2 If mild risk is taken (i.e. 20% to 34% chance of death).
- x3 If medium risk and/or unusual locale is involved (i.e. 35%-60% of death).
- x5+ If extreme risk/hostile environment or death is probable outcome of failure (i.e. 61%-100% chance of death).

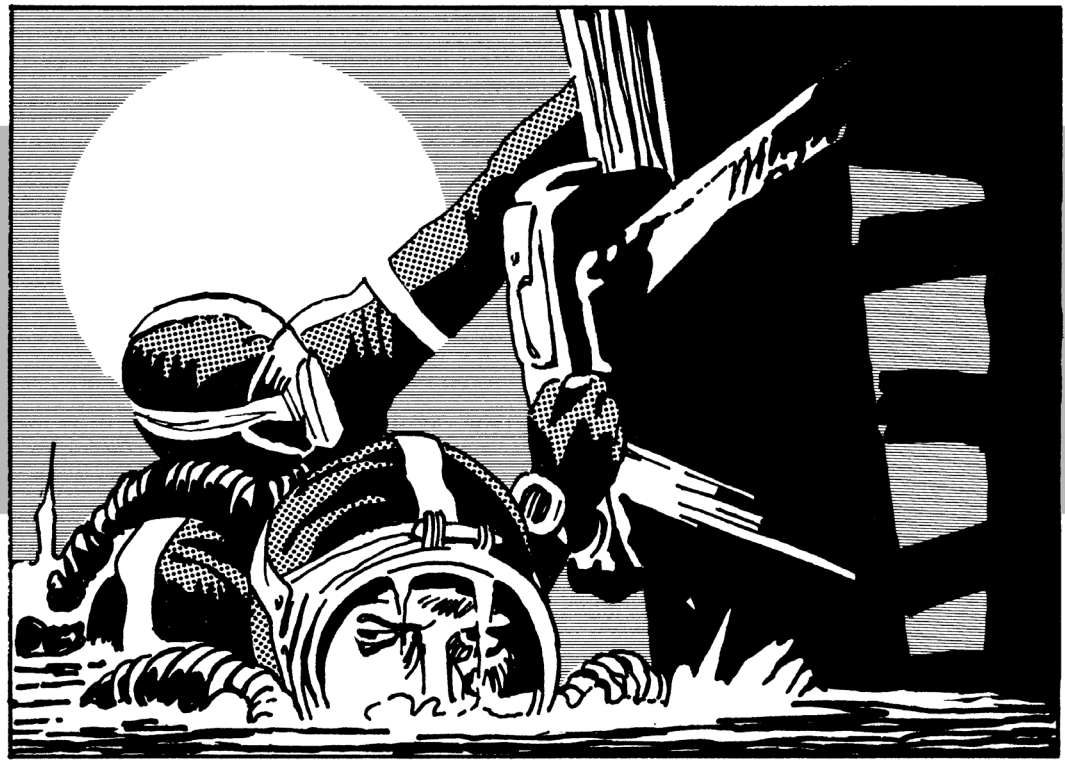
Note: The chance of death percentages are meant as guidelines only.

COMBAT — BASE=CON of foe

- x½ If foe is slain in ambush or is weaker than character.
- x1 If equal character is slain.
- x2 If equal character is captured.
- x3+ If superior foe or superior numbers are defeated in a difficult fight.

ADVENTURE RESOLUTION — BASE=50 points per hour of play

- x½ If GM has to lead characters to the solution or characters grossly bungle the operation.
- x1 If players accomplish mission efficiently within bounds of acceptable behavior for the era/locale.
- x2+ If characters, through teamwork/role playing or brilliant play complete the mission handily.



does not bear with it the importance of the use of skills during an adventure. Every old western novel notes at one point or another, "It's easy to shoot at a target; it gets tough when the target shoots back." It is this experience under fire that is measured by awards of EPs in this game. This also prevents characters from practicing and driving their skill ratings right through the roof; that is not an aspect of the game and would hardly be fair.

If there is ever a question as to whether or not a saving roll is being made that might not be worthy of an AP award, just ask if the roll is advancing the adventure in any way, if the roll is really going to make a difference to the character in the long run. If it is, then the award is appropriate. If it is not, then no award is in order.

►Skill Adventure Points

Skills aquire APs in a slightly different manner than characters do. A skill can be used when it is relevant to a saving roll, or if it is a levelable skill, it is simply accessed by the character. To award APs to skill, the systems change slightly. characters are awarded APs when saving rolls are made as outlined above. Skills also get an AP award when they are utilized, relevant to a saving roll, but skills are not dependant upon the number rolled on the dice. *For each saving roll attempted where a skill or skills are used, each skill is given an award of* 50 APs *per saving roll.* These APs are awarded regardless of success or failure of the saving roll. If two or more skills are combined as a modifier for a roll, each skill gets 50 APs.

Skills like *Pugilism* are levelable but require no saving rolls for their use; these skills get 50 APs *per use.* Usually each "use" will mean each combat round the skill is employed. A maximum of 50 APs is the total APs allowed for such a skill to gain per combat round. □ This means that if a character fights 3 rounds using his skill *Pugilism,* the player can add 150 APs to the character's skill.

There should be no other way for skills to pick up APs. A combat skill may only get a total of 50 points per combat round it is used, regardless of the number of shots fired or times it is used within a combat round. □ In other words, if a character using *Street Fighting* during a combat round faces one opponent or ten, he or she will get 50 EPs, not 50 for each opponent. These limitations are suggested for game balance and it is hoped they will be used in that spirit.

►Discretionary Adventure Points

Discretionary APs are Adventure Points awarded by the Gamemaster because he or she sees a player doing something clever and unusual, and something that improves the game for all. Discretionary APs are usually given for good role playing by the player and to reward novel thinking. A person playing a German diplomat who uses a German accent every time his character speaks might get APs for role playing. Mercs who exchange uniforms with guards to facilitate their passing through an enemy camp may be awarded APs for that action. Any action performed by a character that is especially clever, novel, or involves a new use of a skill is an action that should be rewarded with APs.

Discretionary APs should be parceled out like a rare commodity. It is better to hand them out in small quantities, perhaps adding some more at the end of the adventure, than it is to hand out gobs of them for every semi-clever turn of phrase. This can destroy the game by making small actions more valuable than the point of the adventure itself. As noted above, discretionary APs should not be applied to skills, only to characters.

What To Do With Adventure Points

Watching characters grow by adventuring is one of the exciting sides to this game. The previous section suggests how APs are gained; this section will detail what the APs can mean to your character.

Every character and many skills are defined by a level number. Below is a chart listing the level numbers and the total APs needed to gain those levels. As a general rule, the higher level a character is, the more mature and refined that character will become. The only time this does not hold true is when a GM hands out APs by the bucketload and characters jump in levels too quickly. An even-handed approach to rewarding characters is best; a miserly attitude has a lot to recommend it.

When a *skill* changes level, the new level number is used for making saving rolls. This, and any "career" benefits of changing levels in skills, are the only benefits to be had when a skill changes level.

When a *character* changes level, however, there are more benefits. Each time a character shifts to a higher level, the character is allowed to add 2 attribute points to his attributes. The 2 points may both be placed on one attribute, or may be split up so that one point each may go on two attributes. Adding points to IQ will allow the character more skill points with which to master new skills; adding the points to other attributes will increase physical abilities useful in the game.

Characters are allowed to change level right in the middle of an adventure, if their AP total indicates that they should; this change is allowed both for skills and for the individual. New skills, however, can be disallowed by the GM until after the adventure unless the skill is something that the character could logically pick up during the adventure. □ An agent may wish to learn the language of the country where he is operating; provided there is an opportunity for him to do so, he may. A character on a mission in Antartica, though, is not likely to master jungle survival, even though *Environmental Survival: Jungle* is the next skill he wants to obtain.

When a character reaches a new level, the adventure points that have gotten him there are not burned off or "spent." The number of points needed to reach a level is a total of the points the character or skill has accumulated. Each level builds on what was "experienced" at previous levels. The reward for attaining one level is not so great that you would be asked to earn so much more than that amount to attain the next level.

For every level after 20, double the previous level's AP total to determine the number of APs needed for that new level. In other words, Level 21 requires 32 million points, Level 22 requires 64 million points, etc.

Adventure Points / Levels

Level	Adventure Points
1	0
2	1,000
3	3,000
4	7,000
5	15,000
6	25,000
7	45,000
8	70,000
9	100,000
10	140,000
11	200,000
12	280,000
13	400,000
14	550,000
15	750,000
16	1,000,000
17	2,000,000
18	4,000,000
19	8,000,000
20	16,000,000



MOVEMENT RATES

SPEED attributes and distance covered in a move are related in MSPE. Movement takes place in 15-second increments (the same as Missile-Weapon Combat Rounds) and is counted in 5-yard wide SQUARES. A character with a SPEED of 18 is assumed to run a 100-yard dash in 10 seconds flat! For each SPEED point above 18 one tenth (.1) of a second is SUBTRACTED from that time, and for each point below 18 one second is added to that time. (Example: Fred has a speed of 19 which means he does the 100-yard dash in 9.9 seconds while Bob, with a speed of 14, does the 100-yard dash in 14 seconds.)

Characters may move at four different rates of speed. SPRINT is the fastest, and any character sprinting is considered "Dodging/Broken Cover" if being shot at. A DOGTROT is really a light jog, and a character trotting is considered "Moving" as far as combat is concerned. WALKING is just what it sounds like, and a walking character is treated as "Standing/Aiming" in combat. Last we have CRAWLING. A crawling character is "Standing/Aiming" in combat, but is also treated as a Medium Target to make him more difficult to hit.

The chart below indicates the movement allowed at each of these four rates according to the character's SPEED (SP). Thus a character with a SPEED of 17 can move 27 squares if he is Sprinting, 11 at a Dogtrot, 5 Walking, and only 3 if he is Crawling.

Movement comes after the Missile-Weapon Rounds and/or Hand-to-Hand Combat resolution. All characters are at their starting range for the duration of a missile round and only adjust their range after they have actually moved.

Movement Allowance

Speed	*Sprint*	*Dogtrot*	*Walk*	*Crawl*
32	35	14	7	4
31	34	14	7	3
30	34	14	7	3
29	33	13	7	3
28	33	13	6	3
27	33	13	6	3
26	32	13	6	3
25	32	13	6	3
24	32	13	6	3
23	31	13	6	3
22	31	12	6	3
21	31	12	6	3
20	30	12	6	3
19	30	12	6	3
18	30	12	6	3
17	27	11	5	3
16	25	10	5	3
15	23	10	5	2
14	21	9	4	2
13	20	8	4	2
12	19	8	4	2
11	17	7	3	2
10	16	7	3	2
9	16	6	3	2
8	15	6	3	2
7	14	6	3	1
6	13	6	3	1
5	13	5	2	1
4	12	5	2	1

◆



Introduction to Scenario Design

This second book of Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes *is written to help you learn how to design and run adventures for your friends. Some parts of adventure design you will find very easy; other parts may be difficult. If you read closely what follows, you should find clear guidelines that will help you towards good game design, whether the adventure is to be a mercenary mission, a spy's assignment, or a detective's murder mystery. A carefully-designed adventure scenario is the key to everyone's enjoyment of the game.*

BAD GUYS & BEASTIES



As the title of the game suggests, adventures can be broken down into three major categories: mercenary missions, spy assignments, and detective mysteries. While the first two types of scenarios differ mostly according to the amount of overt or covert action, each type of adventure will be completely discussed further along.

One element that will unite all the different types of adventures is the need for Non-Player Characters. NPCs, as they are known, are characters who are most often controlled by the Gamemaster and who interact with the characters in the adventure. □ An example of an NPC could be the editor who constantly gets on Orion's or Alex's case about how they go after their stories, or the quality of the photographs they bring back. Another example is a stool pigeon cultivated by the two reporters, or the gang members from the combat examples. Any character not run by a player in the game (as opposed to the GM) is an NPC.

Non-Player Characters come in two styles for MSPE. The first is a *Personality.* Personalities are like player characters in all respects. They need full character development, a range of available skills, and a background appropriate to their personality. They will tend to be the major suspects in a crime or the leaders of the enemy spy ring. They will be the person that the characters are trying to nail or defeat, and often they will continue to bother characters from adventure to adventure. □ Fu Manchu and Professor Moriarty are good examples of this type of character; both were the continual nemesis of their law-abiding opposition.

The second type of NPCs are called *Thugs,* or gunsels. They are the cardboard characters who stand watch or rob banks. They don't need personalities and are simple to create. Each Thug must have a CON and a DEX if he will use a gun. If the Thug is a martial artist, he

or she will need a Speed. Combat adds and the weapons skills for the character will have to be noted. □ In shorthand, they should turn out something like this: Fred the Thug – CON: 10 DEX: 12 Speed: 12 Karate: 2 Clip Pistol: 2 HTHA/MWA 2/0. That last string of letters and numbers refers to "hand-to-hand (combat) adds" (HTHA) of which Fred has 2, and "missile weapon (combat) adds" (MWA) of which Fred hasn't any. Gunsels will not usually require more detailed descriptions that this. If old Fred survives a few capers, the GM running him might decide to fill him out into a Personality. It can be fun for characters to recognize an old foe, and it adds a sense of life to what might otherwise become just a series of stale and disjointed encounters.

Attack animals can be handled even more easily than Thugs. They require two things: a CON and a number of dice to roll in combat. A doberman or a German shepherd might be good for about 2 dice in combat; a tiger should be worth 7 dice at least. It will be the job of the GM to determine ratings for many animals not describe here; to decide how dangerous an animal is, imagine how much damage the animal ought to be capable of inflicting on an average human – can it consistently kill with one blow, or does it just inconvenience a healthy adult? Can it give a group of 5 or 10 people a run for their money? Compare the expected die-roll result against the average CON of a human to decide. Combat adds for animals are optional and should be restricted to animals trained or accustomed to kill, i.e. a guard dog or a wild animal, as opposed to a pampered tame poodle. Under no circumstances will any animal get adds for missile weapons.

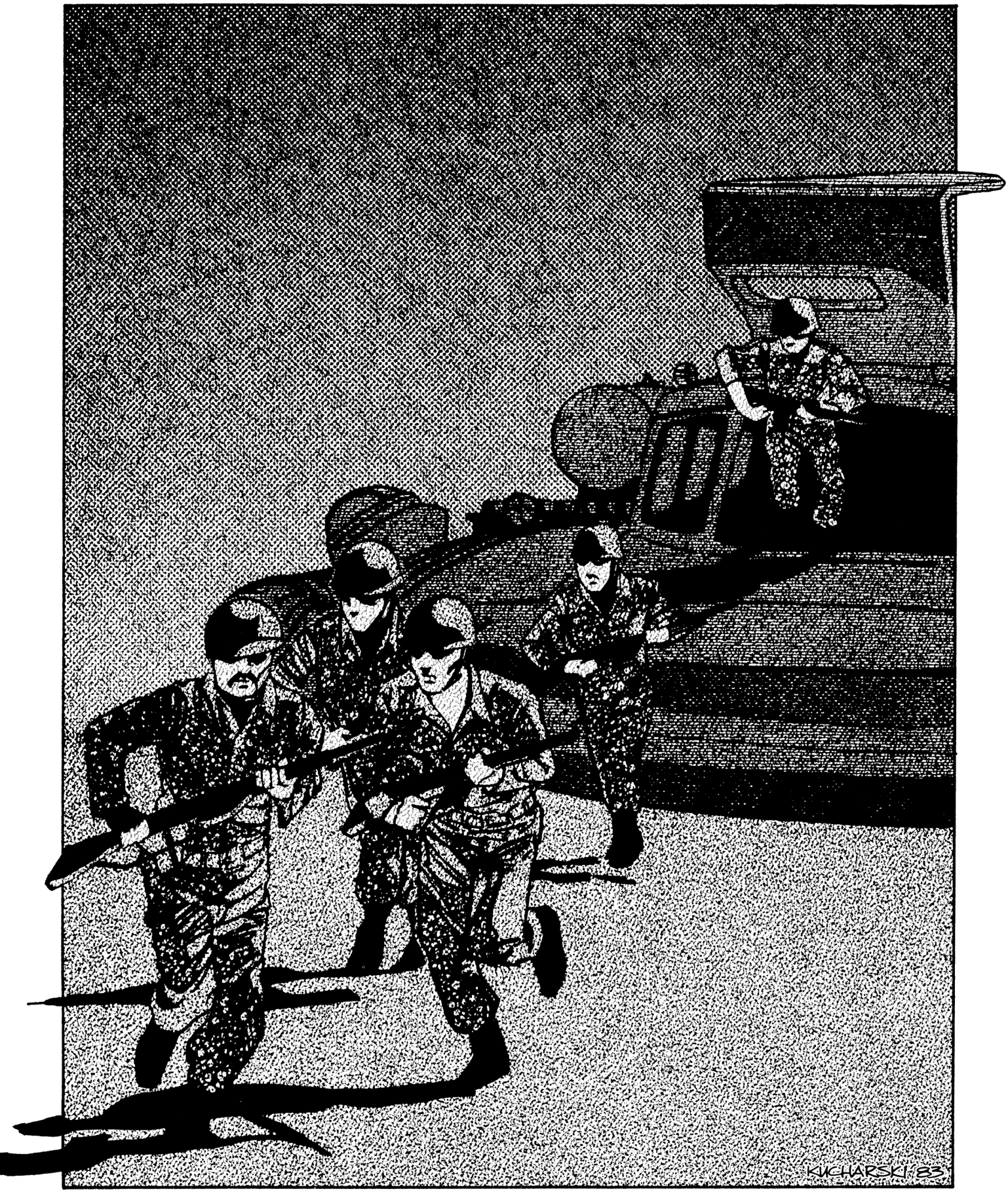
Below is a chart giving sample ratings for various animals. *These ratings should be taken as guidelines only.* A black bear marked on this chart as 5 + 4 would range from at least five dice and no adds to 5 + 5 or even more. 5 + 4 is just an *average* black bear. There obviously can be exceptional animals of each type, akin to "the one that got away"; these might dwarf the ones represented here. Note that the Speed rating for these animals is to be used in judging their speed and agility when dodging and their Speed (as an attribute) for combat with a martial artist. While Leopards are quick enough to rate a Speed of 20 for this purpose, they are not long distance runners. The column marked "Venom" notes what specific kind of poison the creature has: N for Neurotoxin, or H for Hemotoxin. See the section on Poisons in Part 3 of the rules for more about such poisons. The tarantula's poison is marked *; it does have a poisonous bite, but it is about as powerful as a beesting and should be treated as such.

Attack Animals

Animal	*Dice and Adds*	*Con*	*Venom*	*Speed*
Tarantula	½ + 0	2	*	7
Black Widow	½ + 0	1	H	3
Scorpion	½ + 0	2	N	4
Cobra	1 + 2	9	N	14
Rattlesnake	1 + 2	10	H	14
W. Moccassin	1 + 2	9	H	14
Ger. Shepherd	2 + 3	12	-	13
Timber Wolf	3 + 3	20	-	14
Cheetah	5 + 2	20	-	30
Leopard/Jaguar	5 + 3	25	-	20
Lion	6 + 4	28	-	20
Tiger	7 + 4	32	-	22
Black Bear	5 + 4	35	-	15
Grizzly Bear	8 + 5	50	-	16
Polar Bear	10 + 5	70	-	16
Horse	2 + 1	20	-	20
Baboon	3 + 1	9	-	14
Deer	2 (if horned) / 1	10	-	16



Charter Arms Explorer 9220 Rifle


KUCHARSKI '83

MERCENARY MISSIONS

Mercenary missions are jobs that require a lot of firepower delivered into or onto a target by highly combat-skilled individuals. Those individuals must, upon the completion of their mission, attempt to leave the area they have been attacking or suffer dire consequences. Missions may be anything from the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion to the more subtle effort of "Mad Mike" Hoare and his rugby team's attempt to take over the Seychelle Islands late in 1981. Another common mercenary mission type, most inspired by campy movies, is the specially chosen group of martial artists designated to go into a secret base with instructions to take a life or destroy the base.

The Dogs of War is a book recommended to anyone who really wants to get the feel for a mercenary mission. Forsyth based the book on an unsuccessful raid he led as a mercenary, and it is quite rich and exacting in detail. (It is also a very good read.)

Mercenaries should be paid "by the mission" or "by the month." Mission pay should have two scales: one price to be paid if the mission is a success, another to be paid if the mission fails. Most mercs will also require some sort of insurance policy as part of their contract, either to pay for medical treatment as a result of injuries, or to be paid to their survivors. The more dangerous the mission, the higher the cost.

Monthly pay puts the merc at the beck and call of his employer. A common foot soldier is often offered between $1500 – $2000 a month, plus the bonus of any booty he can carry off. The mercs are housed at the expense of the employer and may be discharged at any time. Officers get better pay and better facilities.

The merc's employer, be it a corporation or a government, is expected to supply all ammunition, provisions, and weaponry desired for the mission. In game terms, the GM should have the mercs estimate what they need, and allow them to take as much as you feel they actually will need from their list. Too often, in the interest of fairness, a GM will overload the mercs with goodies that will totally outclass the opposition and make it a boring shootout. Be careful not to over-equip the players – they might find themselves running a bit low on ammo at a tight point, but that will heighten the feeling of adventure and impending doom, and may inspire them to think, and therefore role-play more intensely. Even in mercenary missions, the most "hack and slash" of all the possible adventures, role playing can make for a more enjoyable game.

The mercs will need a briefing on the mission before they agree to it; there they can select their weaponry. The GM should supply them all of the information that he believes the employer has access to and desires to share. That "desires to share" phrase is worth a second thought: an employer might plan to shamelessly use the mercs to cause an international incident. Therefore he might understate the strength of the opposition or impose strange restrictions on the mercs. Allow the employers to be devious; mercs should know better than to trust anyone.

The nature of the mission a GM runs will often determine what sort of preparation will be needed for the adventure. If the GM wants the mercs to rush into a prison camp, kill the commander, and get out, then only the camp needs to be designed. If the mercs are going to be patrolling a sector of South Africa before they come upon the hidden rebel base, the sector they are patrolling must be designed. In addition to the real estate being mapped out, a table or means for determining if they run into anything on their patrol should be created. If the mercs are supposed to take over a whole nation, a historical, political and geographical background for the whole nation may have to be thought up.

The hard work of designing a scenario will require graph or hex paper, a pencil, some note paper, and perhaps some dice. The first step is to map out the adventure locale. If you are designing a rebel camp, you will need to decide if it has fences, watchtowers, and standing huts, or if it is just a collection of tents. All of the features that can be seen or located in the base should be noted on the map. This includes any secret tunnels or hidden stores of valued booty that might have been hidden away by people who live in the camp.

On a sheet of paper list all the things that the camp will need. If it has electricity, it will need powerlines or a generator. If it has vehicles, it will need a fuel dump. If a prisoner, say the object of the mission, is being held in the camp, there will have to be a cell or a prisoners' tent. And always there must be an ammo dump, officers' quarters, and a latrine.

The next step is to populate the rebel base. The easiest way to create a force of men is to create one prototype Thug for each rank and then just note how many of what are stationed where – so many privates assigned here, so many there, this many captains to keep an eye on them and give orders. The commanding officers and any important NPCs that the characters may encounter should be created as Personalities. The arms that each NPC is likely to have will probably be suggested by the weapons skills allowed him, though the places where heavy weapons are kept should be clearly noted on the map. No one carries a .50 caliber machine gun around with him, but there is a very good chance that such a gun should be located in a watchtower or at a gate, and everyone living in the camp may know it.



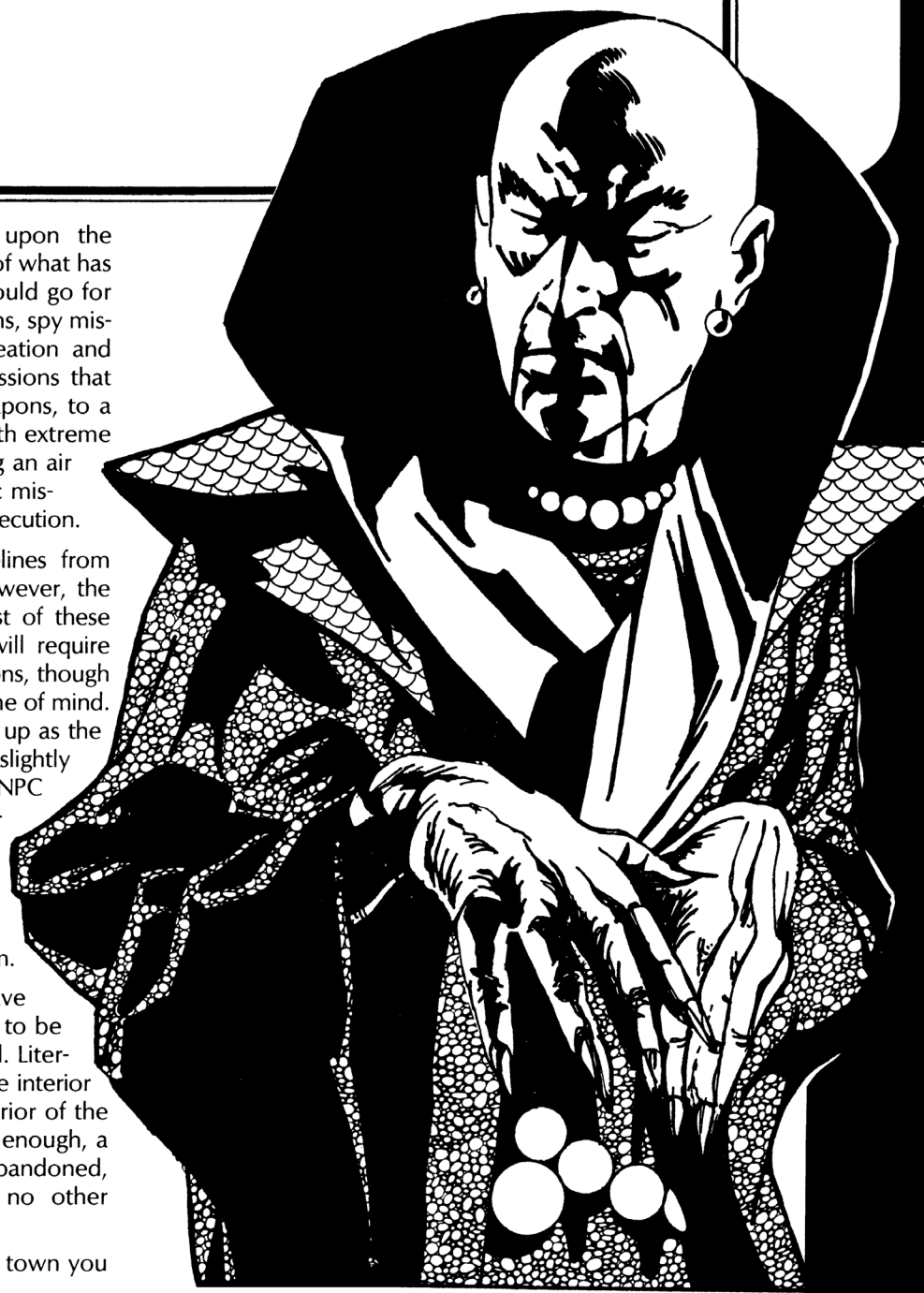
A certain amount of booty should be distributed around the camp. Surely the Commander has some money set aside in the event he needs to ransom himself. Most of the guards should have pocket money, and the payroll should be somewhere. Weaponry itself can be considered booty, especially if the mercs on the mission are running low on bullets or grenades.

A "random encounter chart" is easy to construct and will help a GM populate the countryside around a base or installation. Make the rows with values for dice cross-referenced on the columns with the types of terrain that surround the area. At the intersection, make a note of what kind of people or animals may be met there, and a range of how many. □ For example, there is a very good chance that major roads near the base will be patrolled by the rebels, while a farmer's field will only have a farmer in it. Don't forget that the characters may also encounter other things, like randomly scattered mines or a helicopter on patrol.

There is one thing that all mercs should remember – their mortality rate will be higher than other characters because they work in combat zones. Such is the risk when running characters in merc adventures, and the players should be fully aware of it. But merc scenarios are likely to be the only adventures where characters are going to get heavy weapons and free rein to use them.

One last note for the GM. The reason the word "mission" is and will be used when speaking about mercs or spies is because the GM should have a solid purpose in mind when running a game for either type of character. Having a specific goal is vital for maintaining direction, excitement, and life in the game, as well as supplying a way to measure the success of the players. If the players are supposed to destroy a rebel base, or are supposed to break in and steal some plans, and they succeed, you reward them. If they fail, you don't reward them. Any group of characters can run around and shoot up a backwater hamlet; a good GM will create a *mission* to give the characters purpose and the players will run in an adventure they will enjoy and remember. ◆

SPY SCENARIOS



Every section of these rules builds upon the sections that have gone before. Much of what has already been said about merc missions should go for spy missions. However, unlike merc missions, spy missions require a degree of subtlety in creation and execution. Spy missions can vary from sessions that are nearly merc missions with special weapons, to a courier mission that must be conducted with extreme diplomacy. Spy missions need as seasoning an air of glamor that will never be found in merc missions because of the latter's simplicity of execution.

The suggestions that follow are guidelines from which the GM can pick and choose – however, the basic spy scenarios will probably use most of these aspects. Without a doubt, spy scenarios will require more work to create than most merc missions, though a string of cliches will set up the proper frame of mind. A powerful secret organization must be set up as the enemy. As cliche as the organization is the slightly demented megalomaniac who runs it. This NPC Personality must be a fully fleshed-out character with idiosyncracies that make him or her memorable. Such individuals always seem to have legions of doubles who can die at times convenient for their leader, usually to satisfy the spies fighting him.

Once the organization and its leader have been set up, the headquarters or buildings to be used in the scenario should be constructed. Literally any building anywhere can be used. The interior of the building needs to resemble the exterior of the building in dimensions only. If it is not big enough, a secret entrance to the building next door (abandoned, no doubt) can expand it. If there are no other buildings, just develop secret basements.

If you stop to consider whatever city or town you

live in, you can see what is being suggested. Without meaning to make anyone paranoid, how much do you know about all of the buildings in your city? Sure, everyone says that the Finster Company warehouse is empty, but how do you know? When have you seen inside of it? How do you know that the local car theft ring isn't using it as a hideout? How do you know that the KGB has not placed a spy base in it? How many times have you seen people go into doorways marked "employees only" and never see them leave? Have you ever wondered who is authorized to go through all of the "authorized personnel only" doors?

Anything could be behind those doors, and in a spy game *anything* is quite likely to be there – often looking very mean or trap-like. For best effect, the transformation from "public" areas and "secret" areas should be very striking. The spy base should have sophisticated devices for detecting intruders: photoelectric cells, air movement detectors, TV cameras, and perhaps even pressure-sensitive floor tiles. The decor should probably be in keeping with that favored by the leader: ☐Fu Manchu would have an Oriental flavor to the furnishings in his hideout while a mad scientist might have everything made from glass and stainless steel.

The interior of any building should be mapped. The things noted should be surveillance devices, the communications and security nerve centers, the prisoners' cells, the secret labs, the secret escape vehicle, the boss's secret office, the troop barracks, the kitchen, the generator room, the secret trapdoors and deathtraps, all of the entrances, and even the privies. These details will need to be noted because at the crucial moment someone is bound to cock a submachine gun and ask where the fuse box is. And you always want to know where the trapdoors are when the adventurers are standing directly on top of one.

The development of Thugs for a spy adventure will be as simple as the development of Thugs for a merc adventure. These NPCs only need to be barely sketched in. In most top-flight organizations and all military ones, the Thugs are all likely to be wearing the same uniform.

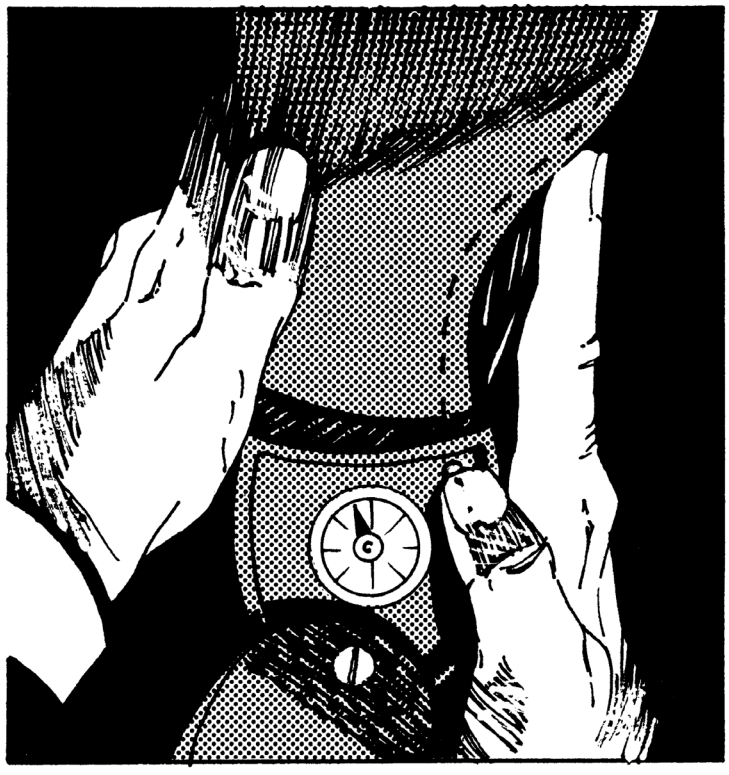
Most spy adventures will also call for the development of two specialized NPCs who would do well developed as Personalities. One is the person often referred to as the boss's *enforcer*. The enforcer is usually some very skilled killer who answers his master's every whim like a trained attack dog. The enforcer will be capable of commanding underlings and will often act as his master's spokesman when leading raids.



The other specialized NPC will tend to be the leader's best friend or closest relative. This individual, often a female, will often help the spies, or act as if she is helping the spies, because she is sympathetic to the head Personality – she may feel that "Dr. X is mad and will hurt someone . . ." Fiction is full of such characters, usually a women who falls in love with the leader of the spies and who sacrifices herself for him in the end. Don't forget her; she can be great fun, especially when the leader finds her out and plans some horrible fate for her.

Getting characters into a spy adventure can be as simple as giving them a mission. A more subtle, and often more enjoyable start, is to have the spies at an event when the opposition does something heinous and overt. If the Ambassador from Verisamonte is abducted while at the opera, and the spies are his guests (or just in the audience), you can bet they will make it their personal business to rescue him. And don't forget that after being thwarted a few times, the big evil leader of the enemy spies will eventually try to get rid of the spies who have continually been such a thorn in his side.

Adding a degree of mystery and detective work to a spy mission can really add a lot to a spy mission. Through movies and television, everyone should be familiar with the scene of a spy's contact nervously drinking gin in some seedy bar. The spy walks in, oblivious to the smoke swirling about him, and greets the contact. A shot rings out as the contact pitches forward, bleeding badly. The contact whispers one word or dies clutching a matchbook from a restaurant half a world away. Figuring out who shot him, who's behind it all, and visiting that restaurant may require detective work and will undoubtably require some brainwork from the players. Spy scenarios can be as varied as you like – read the section on Mysteries which follows, and you will have even more ideas to adapt.



You may have noticed nothing has been said so far about money or equipment for spies. Spies, for all their glamor, are really just a special class of civil servant. They get paid on a scale roughly equivalent to that used to pay a postal carrier, with certain bonuses for hazardous work. It would be fair to start spies at a salary of $10,000 a year (before expenses) if they are first level. For each level above that, add $2000 a year. Bonuses and larger raises depend upon how well they handle the missions given to them; their financial rewards are totally at the discretion of the GM.

There are going to be some special spies who work for hire. These spies should negotiate a fee based on the mission with the agency that wishes to hire them. For all practical definitions, they are highly skilled, specialized, and refined mercs, yet they disdain battlefields. These spies are quite likely to be former agency members who have retired or left the agency to go freelance, and they can be a lot of fun to run on an adventure. The higher the level of such a character, the more money he can expect to receive for a mission.

Spies also receive their weapons and other supplies from the agency that employs them. The agency will pay for air fare, other transportation, food, lodging, and all hospitalization. If a spy is captured and not slain outright, chances are that the agency will be able to engineer a spy trade with the capturing forces (a great way to get back an enemy spy who has been captured before).

Spies also get all of those nifty secret weapons. It is up to the GM to decide whether the agency will lend the spies any of these secret devices, and what they will be. The operative word here should be *lend;* no spy should be allowed to keep (own) secret weapons. By keeping a firm hand on what devices the spies are issued, a GM can keep out anything detrimental to the game.

If a GM feels moved to design a super device for the spies to steal from the enemy or to be used in assaulting the enemy, he should give the device a great deal of thought. Construct it, and then sit down and think of all the ways you can misuse the device. A small laser cutting ring seems harmless, especially when the GM thinks it will be used to cut the hinges off a steel door. Imagine how much easier it will be to cut through people with it! Once the GM feels that a device has been foolproofed, he should add one more fail-safe to it. Limit it by having it need a battery that will allow it to work only five times. Have the device give off harmful radiation when it works. Give the device a good chance of failing or exploding when working. If a GM does not include a failsafe of this sort, some of his devices may come back to haunt him.

Any secret weapons captured by the spies could be used on the enemy in their escape, but ultimately the device would belong to the agency that employs the spies. An agency would take a dim view of a spy that decided to retain a captured device. The agency might turn against such a spy, or do something else to protect the innocents who might be hurt by a mad spy with a strange device.

Lastly, every spy should be given a poison tablet if secrecy is vital. A poison capsule hidden in a hollow tooth is as cliche as they come, but such a pill could always come in useful for poisoning the enemy. . . .

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THE ART OF DETECTION

Designing mysteries may be the most difficult type of scenario a GM can attempt to design with these rules. The next pages will explain how it can be done and offer a multitude of suggestions to help. If some of what is said seems redundant, or belabors a point, bear with it. For every one of you who knows how to do what is explained here, there may be three people who will not.

The reason that mystery design is so difficult is because the GM must know exactly what has happened, where the clues are, what is currently happening in places where the characters are not located, and he should be able to make a fair guess as to what will happen in the future. As with a good mystery story, all of the details are connected to each other. The clues build one upon the other like a house of cards. If one vital clue is missing, a scenario will collapse totally and be no fun for anyone.

Before anyone gets scared off from trying a mystery, it should be noted that mysteries can be the most rewarding type of adventure for both GM and players. A GM feels a certain amount of joy as the players ignore a clue or stumble onto a key to the mystery. There is something nice about having your killer or jewel thief finally meet justice. The characters feel justifiable pride in ferreting out clues and putting together the last piece of the puzzle.

Mysteries also allow for more *role playing* by taking the focus of the game away from combat. In most mysteries the only killing done is one that made the murdered person dead – and that assumes the mystery is a murder mystery; there are many other kinds. When quick death is less a factor, there will be less worry about a favored character dying; this allows the players to search for clues, question suspects, or just sit back and think while comfortably in the persona of their characters. Role playing is almost always more fun than endless fighting.

You may end up reading this section of the rules more than once before it all makes sense. I hope this is not necessary, but it may help unravel the mystery of mystery contruction and thereby give you the tools to make up truly outstanding scenarios. The game's afoot, so let us proceed.

Setting

Building a mystery scenario, give some thought first to the setting or location of the mystery. Detective stories take place in locations as exotic as China, the foggy moors of Scotland, and the streets of San Francisco, or as mundane as a local high school. Locked rooms, with no possible ingress or exit, have housed more dead bodies than have some cemeteries; murders have spanned international borders by being committed on a moving train. In many stories, a crime takes place in a location that seems too innocent for such a thing to happen.

Most fictional detectives have an area that they consider their home turf, their domain. Professor Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen's adventures took place in his home city of Boston. Sherlock Holmes' adventures took place, for the most part, in London or the surrounding countryside. Mike Shane used to hang out in New Orleans; all of them worked in places they knew very well. More to the point, *their authors* usually knew the areas very well, and the GM could do worse than to follow this lead, especially to begin with.

Setting mysteries in your home town or state is suggested for beginning GMs. Your local Chamber of

Commerce can supply you with a map of your city if you don't already have one, and it may point up places of special interest. You can fill in the additional buildings that you will need, like making up the hideout for a gang of local robbers. Most towns have got one place of mixed reputation – perhaps this neighborhood is where bootleggers hid their booze during Prohibition, or up that hill is where the wealthy recluse has his estate that is opened to the public once a year. These local situations can be turned into mysteries that can spice up your settings and your games.

Using a local well-known setting has other advantages. Think how much easier it is to say, "You know that 7-11 on the corner of Main and Church Street? Well, it's being robbed by two masked men," than it is to explain, "You see a convenience store on the northwest corner of Main and Church Street. It is one story tall, does not have gas pumps in front of it, and is being robbed by two masked men. The only parking is on the street because the lot is filled." In the first case, visualization of the store is very easy; note that the second description didn't even begin to describe the interior design of the store which the players will be able to visualize immediately if there is a reference to a familiar locale. Being able to remember a place is much better than trying to see it through a description.

Non-Player Characters also become easier to deal with, because they can be local personalities. The mayor or town manager will be the person threatened in a scandal plot. A local TV personality, or some other people important locally can be available to interact with the characters. Current events in the city will also supply ideas for adventures. The characters will be able to make an attempt to stop that crime wave currently ripping through the city, or prevent an invented plot from destroying the town.

As a Gamemaster becomes more confident of his grasp of mysteries, he can branch out and start more adventures in other settings. Getting things pinned down as firmly as possible is always suggested. Without doing so, some important detail will be left out and a mystery might become unsolvable.



Creating Mysteries

The first step in running a mystery is creating one. For the purpose of this game, a mystery will be defined as a situation where the characters involved do not know all of the details of what they are dealing with. Mysteries can stand alone, like the answer to a simple math problem like 2 + 2. Mysteries can also resemble a series of boxes, like doing the work within the parentheses of a math equation before being able to solve the whole equation. In this case, the solution to one mystery just leads to a deeper mystery.

If you cannot figure out how a magician has made a coin disappear from directly in front of your eyes, you have found a mystery. If you discover how the coin was made to vanish, you have solved the mystery. Knowing "he did a trick" is one kind of solution, but not a very satisfactory one. Presented with a mystery, the players will want to find a satisfying answer. A mystery, then, need not have anything to do with a crime, evil intentions, or even an intention to deceive. Any time you cannot really explain something, you have a mystery.

An excellent place to learn how to design a mystery is in a library. There you should be able to find a full set of books by authors like Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, and, with luck, Jacques Futrelle. Any and all of these authors plot fantastic mysteries with stunning solutions. Reading works by them will show you how to lay clues out in plain sight, and how to twist the cord of a mystery to put your players into contortions. I highly recommend all three authors and suggest that you take your formal lessons in mystery design from them. Take a look through the Suggested Readings at the end of Book 3 for more recommendations.

However, for a primer, consider the following. The first thing that the mystery designer must realize is that the occurrence of anything can be fully described by answering the following six questions: *who?, what?, where?, when?, why?,* and *how?* A mystery may be created by removing just one of those elements from the knowledge of the players.

☐ Example: Mr. Finster owns a walking stick that has a gun specially built into it. The gun has one shot and is designed to shoot out of the barrel of the cane. Finster loads the cane and goes walking to the house of a man named Major Jones.

Major Jones had once been engaged to Finster's daughter. They broke up, but Major Jones retained some very damning notes written to him by Miss Finster that outlined some of the things they had done together. Miss Finster went on to marry a politically active man who has no idea of her background, and who is now running for mayor. The Major, scum that he is, is blackmailing her.

The Major invites Mr. Finster into the house. Finster shoots and kills him. Finster then leaves, goes home, changes into dark clothing, slips a pistol into his pocket, and returns to the Major's house after dark. He breaks in, discovers the body (which has cooled considerably) and calls the police. He confesses that he came to kill the Major, showing the cops the .357 magnum he was packing, but discovered the body already dead.

The mystery here is: Who shot the Major and how was it done? Finster's motive is known, though the police would probably not assume that the person who killed the Major did so for the same reason that Finster was going to. "Where" the murder occurred and "when" could be established fairly accurately by a forensics expert; "what" is the murder itself.

Now *we* know that Finster killed the Major and then returned to throw suspicion off himself. Imagine, however, how things would change if Finster was telling the truth, and in fact he had not killed the Major. Or go one step further and imagine that when Finster saw the body he fired a shot into the wound because he wanted to take the blame instead of letting it fall upon his daughter, who he believes shot the Major.

As you can see, by changing minor elements in a fairly straight-forward situation, you can create endless variations. If you know (and as the GM you must know) the answers to all six questions above, you can mix and match pieces of mystery until you have a trail as twisted as you like. And that makes the characters following it have all the more fun.

Motives

Motives, or "why" the mystery is what it is, can often be a deceptive part of a mystery. At times a mystery will hinge upon motive; at other times the *why* of a crime or mystery will make no difference at all, or be trivial at best. A short digression in the form of an example will explain how important – or unimportant – a motive can be, and how much a difference the real motive can make in solving a mystery.

☐ Imagine that from your bedroom window you can see your neighbor's house. You've never really been friendly with Mr. Chelle, the man of the house; he is always busy and tends to yell at his wife and kids often. You notice that the light is on in his basement, and you hear sounds like someone is building something.

The sounds continue for a few nights, and your curiosity suddenly gets the better of you. You peek into the basement window and see Mr. Chelle working with power tools, putting a new wooden floor on the basement. You also notice dried blood on his overalls.

You start thinking that you've not seen his wife or children around since just before he started the work on the floor. You contrive a reason to speak to him the next day as he comes home from work, asking after his wife and kids, and about the basement. He stammers back an answer: "They're at her parents' place for a visit"; about the basement he bristles and keeps quiet.

If this were a hackneyed mystery story, we all know

he would have Skil-sawed his family into parts and hidden them in shallow graves beneath his new floor. That is the motive for his working on the floor late at night, and probably explains the blood on his overalls. You would probably call the police and have the fiend arrested.

Equally consistant with the facts *as you know them* is the explanation that his wife and kids are away. He's reflooring the basement as a surprise for them, to apologize for yelling when work gets him keyed up. The blood is from a cut he got working, or is old paint that just looks like blood. His hostility towards you is because he doesn't know you well, and he is afraid you might spoil the surprise he is creating in the basement for his family. If you called the cops and this was the actual case, you'd be very embarrassed.

Either way, you have a mystery: Why is he working on the floor late at night and where is his family? The first solution suggests a crime. The second solution solves the mystery, but has no crime attached to it. Only the motive spells the difference between legal and illegal explanations for the situation in the case. This is not uncommon and should be watched for. As a rule, it is much more fun to deal with a crime than a straight mystery, because when a crime is solved, justice should be served and everyone feels satisfied.

There are all sorts of possible motives for mysteries and crimes. A basic list of some common motives to help you when creating your mysteries is presented, including definitions and variations.

►**Revenge / avenge** are complimentary motives, differing only in detail. *Revenge* is striking back at someone for something done to you or your loved ones. *Vengence* or *avenging* occurs when you take action against someone on behalf of another person who has been hurt, and cannot or will not act in their own behalf. In addition to straight-forward revenge/avenging, imagine the variations that occur if the avenger is mistaken about the identity of the person he or she intends to strike at.

►**Love / hate** are both powerful emotions that can be used to fuel a mystery. People in love often do strange things *(cf. Romeo and Juliet).* This can be simple or complicated: ☐A might kill B because B hates C, or B could kill A to hurt C (who loves A). And so on . . .

►**Jealousy and Envy:** *Jealousy* is the intolerance of rivalry; *envy* is begrudging another's advantage and a desire to have that advantage. Either of these unpleasant emotions can start a mystery chain reaction. ☐A wife forces her husband to fire his pretty secretary because the wife is jealous of her husband's wandering attention. She was probably notified of her husband's strange actions by a clerk who was envious of the secretary's position and pay. Nasty stuff, those two, because the victim often doesn't know what he or she has done to inspire the emotion.

►**Passion and Calculation** are two reasons for a crime that try to break out of the designation "motive." Crimes of passion, as everyone is aware, are crimes committed in a momentary flash of emotion. The classic example of this is the cuckolded husband who discovers his wife and her lover together and kills them both. Calculated crimes are far more sinister, because they require an individual to reason out and plan the crime, or do it for hire, suggesting a totally amoral attitude. ☐The hitman who kills for money is an example of a person who commits a crime of calculation. In this case, the mystery extends to figuring out who hired the killer and why.

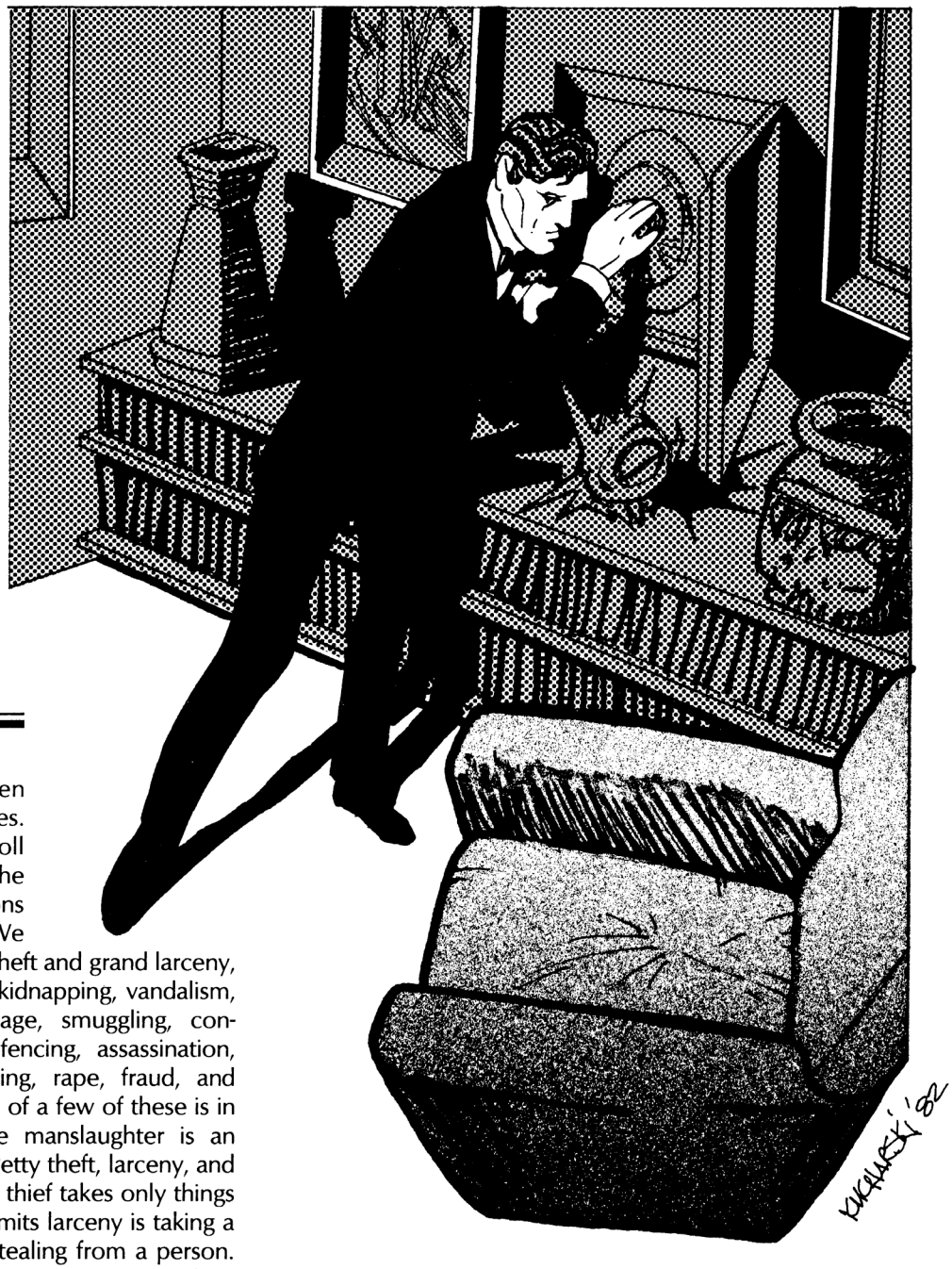
►**Greed** is always a viable motive for a crime. If you steal something of value, you get money – and everyone, it seems, needs money. The more ruthless individual may kill a relative who is likely to bequeath a great deal of money to him. Almost any crime can be motivated by money, provided the payoff is big enough.

►**Insanity** is another motive or cause for someone to be committing crimes. One who is thoroughly unbalanced can kill for reasons that seem quite irrelevant to someone else . . . because the victims remind him of his mother, or because she doesn't like the perfume they are wearing. Kleptomania is the diagnosable imbalance that makes the victim an uncontrollable thief. In recent years there have been lurid news stories about people with multiple personalities committing crimes, and then there can be those who are just mildly paranoid or depressed. If the only thread running through a series of crimes is a very strange and weak one, a mad person may be your culprit.

►**Misdirection** is an unusual motive, and one that can be used in combination with others. A criminal does one thing that actually accomplishes something else. ☐When Mr. Finster was taken in concerning the possible murder of Major Jones, the police should have considered misdirection as the reason he was on the premises with a .357 magnum. A clever criminal could begin a crime spree that would hide whatever the criminal's true intentions were. ☐Suppose there is a clue to a hidden treasure located in the base of a bronze horse sculpture dating from the Ming Dynasty. A treasure hunter wishes to obtain the clue without letting anyone else know about the significance of the clue. He begins to steal horse statues, adding the Ming sculpture to his thefts somewhere in the middle of his crime wave. While the Ming is itself valuable, it is unlikely that the true value of the statue will be understood by anyone except the thief; a good thing, especially if he has competition in the treasure hunt.

►**Protection of self** is a final, and interesting, motive behind a crime. The crime is committed in order to achieve some other end than the crime itself. ☐One example of this is the old detective dodge: driving fast when being pursued by enemies, one hopes that the police will pull you over and so force your enemies to leave. The perception that someone is out to hurt you or your family, whether a paranoid delusion or real fact, can spur someone to do something that is illegal or highly dangerous. Pre-emptive killings, or a fake theft of a valuable item to prevent its real theft, are two good examples of *protection of self* that might lead to interesting mystery scenarios.

In summary, any reason for an ordinary and perfectly legal action *could* be a reason for an illegal, criminal act. A person might want to prove herself to someone else; something bothers someone who does something about the bother. A dare or gamble could hinge upon a person doing something trivial that goes wrong. No crime might be committed, but the participants might believe one had been, and commit a crime trying to hide it. In other words, watch people where you live, work or go to school – then think about *why* they did something, and you have another motive. Turn that motive to illegal ends, and you have a new scenario.



Crimes

There will be times when characters are investigating crimes. What follows in this section is a roll call of crimes, and definitions for the odd ones. These will supply actions for your criminal organizations. We have murder, manslaughter, petty theft and grand larceny, robbery, assault, blackmail, arson, kidnapping, vandalism, international or industrial espionage, smuggling, conspiracy, piracy, treason, battery, fencing, assassination, libel, slander, harassment, swindling, rape, fraud, and embezzlement. A brief explanation of a few of these is in order. Murder is deliberate while manslaughter is an accidental or unintentional killing. Petty theft, larceny, and robbery are all stealing, but a petty thief takes only things of small value while one who commits larceny is taking a lot more. A robber is specifically stealing from a person. Assault is simply threatening to harm someone, enough to cause them fear for their well-being; battery is when someone is actually struck. Fencing is the buying and selling of stolen goods. Libel is when material is written or published which defames someone else; slander is when defamatory statements are made to injure the reputation of another. Other crimes are, of course, possible; this should get you started.

Working with a crime as the central point of a mystery is a shortcut to developing a working scenario. The choice of crime will often suggest the nature of the elements involved. ☐For example, a case of blackmail requires that the person being blackmailed have something the blackmailer wants – money, power, property. In addition, one can presume that the blackmailer has no other way to obtain this, or at least no way so convenient. Murder demands a death, though the method of death might be the mystery of the piece. A mysterious disapppearance would be a mystery, but would not necessarily be a murder. Theft and robbery both demand there is something to be stolen.

Often details of a crime and mystery will work themselves out once you start thinking through the parts: playing with the crime, the characters involved, and the motive. The pieces can be moved here and there until the puzzle looks like what you want to run as a scenario. Here is another example to illustrate this point.

☐The crime is to be a murder. It has not happened yet, and in a game I would hope the characters playing would prevent it. The reason for the attempted murder is a bit complicated and rooted in the relationship between the murderer and the potential victim.

Roger and John are two very close friends. They grew

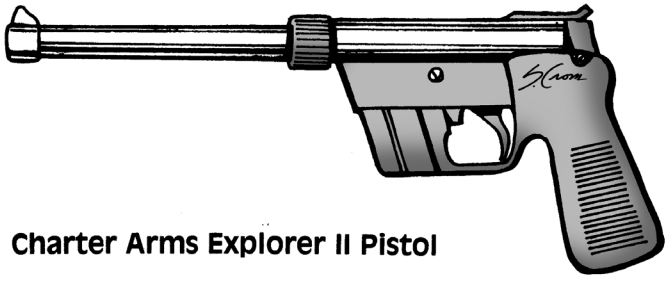
up next door to each other in a small town in the 1920's. They were the best of friends and shared many interests. They even courted the same girl, Susan. World War II began, and in 1939 they both enlisted in the Navy; they ended up in the same unit in the Philippines. During the Japanese conquest of the Philippines in early 1942, John was captured by the Japanese. His last sight of his buddy was of Roger's back as he raced off, running away. For the next 4 years, John was a POW. His overwhelming drive was to find out why his buddy ran away, and to deal with him if the answer is not acceptable.

To Roger's credit, he was out of ammo and believed John dead. After the war was over, Roger returned to the little town and refused to date Susan; his guilt at not being able to help John was gnawing away at him. After a year of this, Susan went to John's father and got him to speak to Roger on her behalf. Within 6 months, Roger and Susan were married. Roger got into real estate, and by 1948 his business was taking off.

John was quite unstable when he returned to the U.S. He refused to allow anyone to notify his parents that he was still alive. After he spent the next 2 years in VA hospitals, he found why Roger left him behind: to marry his girl. He began to plot his revenge. In 1948 he convinced the doctors that he was rational, and he was released.

Now the current scenario begins. Strange things begin to happen at Roger's house. On a monthly basis, as if some magazine subscription had gotten sidetracked in time, magazines from 1942 begin to show up at the house. Flowers are delivered to Susan, in her maiden name. There are inquiries about the sale price on a plot of land where Roger and John used to have a secret tree fort. Roger asks the lawyer making the inquiries who he represents, and the lawyer reports the name as "Mr. Scarecrow" – Roger's old nickname for John. A ghostly voice on the phone tells Roger that John wants to reach him, at the place he'll know best.

On the night of the day he was captured six years before, John waits with a .45 caliber automatic at the site of the tree fort. He is waiting to kill the man who betrayed him to the enemy so he could steal John's woman. Unsuspecting, and actively hoping that his friend is alive and well or trying to reach him from beyond the veil of death, Roger goes to the tree fort . . . .



Charter Arms Explorer II Pistol

Smart characters hired by Roger or his wife to get to the bottom of this situation might figure out what is going on and prevent the killing. If the killing is not prevented, John will simply make it look like a suicide – the date and location would lead investigators to the conclusion that Roger's long-suppressed grief drove him to it. Susan could hire someone to disprove this ruling of the coroner. An insurance corporation that paid money to John's family upon the report of his death could hire someone to prove John was still alive. However the characters get involved, they've got one tangled web to unweave. . . .

Summing Up Mystery Creation

Mysteries are, as we have seen, stories with unknown elements. Their solutions should be reached by the use of logical thinking after the careful collection of facts. Just because a mystery requires unknown elements, this does not mean that the GM should be in the dark as to what has happened in his own mystery. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that a GM *must* have a firm grasp on what is happening. More than one detective has groaned out loud when the GM notes, "Oh, yeah, I forgot to mention . . ."; usually this is some fact that totally blows the theory the detective has been working on for the last three hours.

Because mysteries are like puzzles and always have a correct answer, the GM must understand everything going on and must present the clues in the case fairly. While it is acceptable to gloss over a clue, to mention it only in passing while describing a scene, it is not fair to purposefully withhold information and then dismiss inquiries as being unimportant. Ultimately, the GM must also know the correct solution to the mystery; he cannot expect the characters to find a solution when he doesn't have one in mind. That's akin to asking someone to think of a number between 1 and 10 to match the number you have in mind when the number you are thinking of is 312.

A GM should always build the six elements of a mystery – who, where, when, why, what, and how – into every one of his designs. If the GM does not have these pieces of the mystery firmly in hand, contradictions are likely to build up and cause trouble later. Certain elements of one mystery might be used in a later adventure, i.e. this time we discover that Mr. Jones was the one to hire the man who killed the mayor, while in the next adventure we discover why he hired the man to kill the mayor. This is all well and good, even to be encouraged, but the *why* must be known to the GM in the first place so contradictions won't arise between the two adventures.

It is quite fair to set up an adventure specifically to use the skills of a known group of characters. Adventures where each character fits like a piece of a puzzle are fun because everyone has something to do. The reverse is not so enjoyable. Still, every GM should be prepared to modify the adventure if a character with a particular skill is lost along the way. □ It simply would not do if Peter dies suddenly but he was the only one who could get into the vault that the rest of the group has fought their way through a fortress to get to. A good GM will quickly allow the demolitions expert to jury-rig something that

has a reasonable chance to work. This aspect of running an adventure is what the GM must be able to do "off the cuff," by thinking quickly and clearly on his feet.



One very great cautionary note should be added here about the intensity of the situation in an adventure. Everyone would like their first-level detective to succeed, *but they should succeed at tasks suitable for their level.* While Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin are quite capable of taking on madmen bent on the conquest of the Earth, that sort of thing is way out of the league that characters like Orion and Alex can play in. Legendary characters are the best of the best, and though that quality is something to work towards, it should be difficult to acquire – and may not be reached at all by some. After all, if ace reporters Orion and Alex were to swiftly succeed where the combined might of the CIA, NSA, KGB, MI-6, and John Birch Society failed, what would there be for them to do with the rest of their lives? And wouldn't you wonder about the villain who fell to two young reporters?

What that really says is that GMs and players alike should keep adventures suited to the characters. Outclass the characters and they will fail, often fatally. Outclass the adventure and your characters become living legends before their time. That's no fun either. Start small and give yourself – and the characters – plenty of room to grow.

How To Run Mysteries

When running a mystery adventure, the GM must delicately balance all the things that go into a mystery. There must be a middle ground between making the clues so incredibly obscure as to frustrate Sherlock Holmes and dumping the clues out instantly as soon as the adventure begins. Despite the seemingly wide chasm yawning between those two extremes, a poorly run adventure will manage to do both, as well as totally confuse and frustrate everyone involved. And if that isn't enough to worry about, the GM has got to instill in his players the feeling that their characters make a difference in the adventure and its outcome.

To begin, a GM should keep one fact in mind: clues are the building blocks of a solution. He does not need to dryly list the clues for the characters at the beginning of the adventure – to get the characters started, he needs only to supply them with the facts that will interest them in the case. These facts can come from a client hiring them, an editor giving them an assignment, or something as simple as a radio news bulletin.

Characters should be encouraged to use their *skills* to help them discover clues in an investigation. Skills act as IQ modifiers when looking for clues, and they can be combined in cases where that combination would seem logical. □ A character with *Research: 2* and *Clip Pistol: 4* would have an IQ modifier of +6 when looking for research materials on a clip pistol he has seen or believes was used in a case. This combining of skills is allowed to encourage skill use and because that overlapping is logical.

On a more technical front, one rule is recommended to every GM running an adventure: the "You say it, you do it" rule. This means that, for a player to act or to indicate what their character is doing, she must make a statement describing what her character is doing. This is a double-edged weapon; one side is readily apparent while the other is more hidden.

The obvious side of that rule is that every character must live with the consequences of things said. There is no chance to fall back upon the excuse "I didn't mean that . . ." when something begins to go wrong. It forces players to think before they act, something which is all too often forgotten in role playing. This is an element that cannot be left out of detective games.

The second reason for stressing "you say it, you do it" is because mysteries have right and wrong answers. Players will think aloud, offer solutions as idle musings and attempt other things in hope of getting some reaction out of the GM. It is recommended to GMs that they remember the school situation in which the teacher asks a question and it is answered with a question;

teachers always answer that with *"Are you asking me or telling me?"* GMs must be scrupulously careful to resist confirming or denying theories offered by characters fishing for an easy answer. It is up to the players to act upon their conclusions; no detective has a toll-free line to God to check theories . . .

☐ I must now delve into the tale of an adventure run for Liz Danforth and Steve McAllister that illustrates this last point as well as the next point to be dealt with.

The adventure opened with a couple of thugs buying mountaineering equipment in a mountaineering store. They were working from a list, and the clerk found them ready and willing to spend a seemingly endless supply of cash on their goods. The clerk was Steve's player character. He thought the thugs' behavior was unusual and began to ask friends in other stores if they had experienced anything similar recently. They had, and also thought it quite unusual. The clerk mentioned these goings-on to a reporter friend and his grandmother. Now all the characters have been made aware of something going on which is mysterious. End Act One.

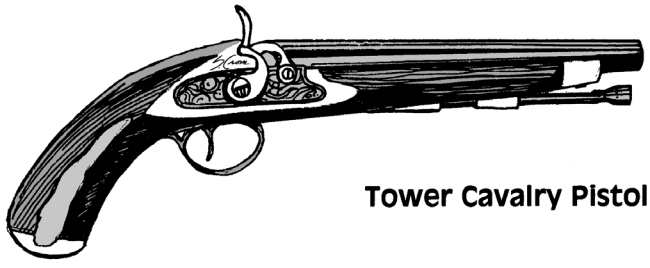
The second scene in the mystery involved the opening reception for 15 prominent Arizona artists. They were having a private showing of their work on the 23rd floor of a downtown Phoenix bank building. Two player characters, the newspaper reporter and his art aficionado grandmother, were present at the reception. Much to the surprise of everyone there, black-clad thieves rappelled down the building and through the window.

The thieves held everyone at bay with guns. They only took work by three or four of the artists. The paintings were raised to the roof and transported away by a helicopter described as being "styled like a military one." Now the characters have something that is not only interesting, but badly needs investigation. End Act Two.

For the next three days the reporter, his grandmother, and the clerk ran around collecting clues. On that third day, the pieces of art began to show up in dumpsters around the city. All of the art by three of the artists was recovered, none of the pieces by the fourth artist were found. The plot thickened incredibly when that artist went off the road near Flagstaff and died in an early morning accident.

Through a goodly amount of digging and detective work, the characters involved came to the conclusion that the art show, robbery, and death of the artist had been engineered by the U.S. Government. This conclusion was reached while they were discussing things between the two of them; I had to bite my tongue and refrain from congratulating them. Well that I did, because this was a "say it, do it" – they were throwing theories around, *not* telling me that they had the answer. They rejected that solution, the correct one, and pursued another. Eventually they returned to the correct solution, but now we had a new problem.

They had solved the mystery by finding out the facts. They knew that the U.S. Government had arranged the show because the Feds had a tip that an Arizona artist was passing top secret information, obtained by a confederate, by working it into paintings. Four artists were suspected, and the show was organized to get work from the artists without arousing their suspicion. The characters knew that the Feds had engineered the robbery and, quite probably, the death of the spy artist. Having solved the mystery, *their actions did nothing to influence the outcome of the adventure.* They had been made into spectators, not participants, and they ended the game dissatisfied.



Tower Cavalry Pistol

Needless to point out, this is not a good situation. Players should always be made to feel that their characters made a difference. Were I to run that adventure again, I'd have the artist kidnapped to an interrogation hideout. I'd have the characters enter the hideout by some manner that would require the use of their skills, and I'd have a government official explain to them what was happening. If they decided to interfere by disrupting something, or by writing a news story about it, or if they simply let it go, they would affect the final situation in some way. This would put the characters on the spot, into a position where they made a difference: a desirable situation to be gamed for.

What this boils down to is giving value to a mystery in things other than APs and money. All of the characters in the above example got full APs because they figured out the mystery. This meant nothing to them, because in terms of their characters' development, the adventure meant little. ☐ The secret message that the characters decode should lead to the hidden money, giving the message more value than the 12 APs you think decoding is worth. The mistake of a kidnapper should lead to the recovery of the kidnapped person, as well as the capture of the criminals. Figuring out the pattern in a series of thefts or murders should allow the characters to prevent the next one, not just allow them to get a medal while the cops do all the dirty work.

For variety, attempt to engineer some continuing adventures; some have been suggested already. ☐ Let's say the good guys close on the bad guy, but the bad guy gets the drop on them; suddenly he is killed or distracted by another person the good guys see only as a silhouette. Using serial adventures of this type allows for longer games and a greater feel for the characters being played. This is not recommended as a steady diet – constantly opening a box and finding another smaller one inside can get frustrating – but don't leave it out of your gaming entirely. It can be a lot of fun. ◆

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

During the course of an investigation, there is some likelihood that a character will interact with a law enforcement agency, whether it is the police at the site of the crime or the CIA coming to ask the character about information gathered during the adventure. Police forces and other organizations will be defined by attributes, similar to characters' attributes. Agency attributes are used by characters in the same way that levelable skills are used – to modify a character's saving rolls when appropriate.

To determine the attributes for an agency, you roll 2 six-sided dice and total the results. Doubles do not change the roll because there are no outstandingly exceptional agencies; it makes no difference if you roll doubles or not, you merely get the total. When attempting to design the local police department or a specific agency, a GM can assign values for the attributes, although it is recommended that the assigned values stay less than or equal to 12.

The attributes and their definitions are:

►**Records:** This is an indication of how well the records are kept and the amount of up-to-date detail contained in them. □ An agency with *Records* rating of 2 would have poor records that are very difficult to find. A 12 would most likely indicate computerized records that anyone could get very specific information out of very quickly and easily.

►**Corruption / Politics:** This attribute serves as a barometer of the bureaucracy in the agency. The lower the attribute, the greater the corruption and more easily a decision will be altered by the politics of the situation. This attribute indicates whether or not an investigation into city corruption will get "lost" because of political pressure, or if the department polices itself. The attribute is best used to modify a Charisma saving roll by a character to determine the reaction of higher-ups to whatever the character is doing. If the character misses the saving roll, he is apt to be pulled off the case or discouraged from continuing it. If this happens, an IQ saving roll modified by this *Corruption/Politics* attribute could be used to try to find out who was putting on the pressure for the investigation to be dropped. The level for a saving roll will depend upon the circumstances and how high up a GM determines the corruption reaches. If it is just a desk sergeant failing to file forms correctly, the level of the roll should be low. If the Commissioner wants the investigation stopped, the roll for discovery would, obviously, be high.

►**Judicial:** This attribute serves as an indicator of how well the agency works with the legal system. A high value would indicate that the police department could call a judge in the middle of the night and get him to issue a search warrant. The attribute would be used as an IQ or CHR modifier for a saving roll to see if the judge issues the warrant or allows a piece of evidence in a case. A series of missed saving rolls might result in the judge throwing the case out of court.

►**Forensics:** This attribute details the competency of the lab used by the agency. If the agency does not have a lab, the rating may be zero. It will be low if the lab is poorly equipped or staffed with half-trained personnel. This attribute may be combined with a character's *Forensics* skill when being used for a saving roll.

►**Acceptance:** This attributes refers to the agency's willingness to accept outside help. This is the only attribute that might vary depending upon who the outsider is and how badly the cops need help. The attribute will be used as a Charisma modifier for saving rolls; if the roll is made, the help is accepted, or at least the outsider is not actively hindered.



Walther P38K
Automatic Pistol



Charter Arms Undercover 38
(Snubnose Revolver)

As with all saving rolls in connection with agencies, the level of the *Acceptance* saving roll will have to be set by the GM. In this case the level may vary according to the reputation of the outsider, small town xenophobia, the seriousness of the case, the desperation of the police force, whether or not the person is offering weird (read *psychic*) skills, and the general reaction to such.

This *Acceptance* attribute may also be used for a saving roll to determine if a character can obtain an inside source in a department and what sort of information the source will leak. For the most part, once established, the help available from these sources will not be withdrawn. The working relationships should be established on an individual basis, but the detective and the agent should work together by exchanging information and keeping their situation secret. A GM should look at any situation from the point of view of the inside source to determine the level of the saving roll.

►**SWAT:** This attribute is a measure of the ability of a police force to handle emergency situations that might require paramilitary tactics. The attribute will measure the level of training of the team, its response time, and effectiveness. The attribute may be combined with the *Leadership* rating of the character trying to head up a team, and a modifier for all saving rolls that involve *Tactics* skill as well. On a very basic level, the attribute's value can represent the number of people on the SWAT team for that agency. With large agencies, like the CIA or FBI, it reflects the average level of the individuals, not the number of them. GMs who expect a lot of work for their SWAT teams should take the time to personalize the members of the team.

The level of saving rolls for these agency attributes depend upon a number of factors which must often be decided by simple rule of thumb. The level for a *Records* saving roll would skyrocket if the crime involved sabotage of the agency's computer system. The level for an *Acceptance* saving roll would climb the more unreliable an individual seemed. If an eight-year-old came into a police station and told the cops he knew who had kidnapped the Mayor's daughter, they would listen to him, but probably be very reluctant to have the child lead the chase, no matter how liberal their acceptance! The success of a SWAT raid will depend upon the weaponry and location of the people being attacked. Tons of good solid evidence will drop the level of a *Judicial* saving roll while the same evidence might jack up the level of a *Corruption* saving roll. Try to fit the level of a saving roll realistically into the situation being dealt with by considering as many variables as you can.

There is one last observation for GMs to keep in mind. Despite what fiction would have us believe, the police rarely are beaten to a mystery solution by civilians. There is a story told about a civilian who was very helpful in a most baffling crime. To the police department's chagrin, he quickly and easily figured out the mystery. He had committed the crime, you see, and the police eventually figured that out. Case closed. The games of MSPE are likely to follow fiction more often than fact – the characters are apt to play the Sherlock Holmes consulting detective types, able to follow clues missed by well-meaning but incompetent officers. Such games are usually going to be more enjoyable and satisfying for everyone who is involved. However, players and GM alike should be aware there is a gap between most traditionally-plotted mystery stories and the gritty reality of law enforcement today.

The example and the chart on the next page present values for some of the better-known agencies in the world, with some explanation for the values chosen. This should supply GMs with a feel for attributing agencies so they can construct their own with these as a point of reference.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI)

Records: 12. They have records on everyone, and they're organized and accessible.

Corruption: 10. They sometimes use illegal means, and politics will affect their reactions to certain situations.

Judicial: 11. What other agency has got judges in their hip pocket? The FBI has also been gathering evidence for a long time, so they are good at it, meaning that what they collect will be judicially sound and acceptable.

Forensics: 12. The FBI has the reputation for having one of the best labs in the world.

Acceptance: 2. They are very much a "closed shop."

SWAT: 11. In this case, SWAT refers to their overall manpower quality. They always do well, and they've got agents everywhere. Their enforcement arm is good.

For further reference, the table below has a few other agencies and their attributes. There are only a few notes to add about the values that follow. The CIA's *Judicial* is down because they are supposed to operate in foreign countries (like Wyoming) and have a serious disregard for the local law system. The KGB rates well in *Judicial* and *SWAT* because they never lose a case or fail to get their man. Interpol is low in *SWAT* because they do not really have an enforcement branch; they gather and pass information. The RCMP gets a 12 in *SWAT* because they "always get their man."

Governmental Agency Stats

Agency	*Records*	*Corruption*	*Judicial*	*Forensics*	*Acceptance*	*SWAT*
CIA	12	9	4	11	5	9
KGB	12	5	12	8	2	12
Interpol	12	9	12	10	8	2
RCMP	12	8	10	10	5	12



So You Want to Be a Cop When You Grow Up

The desire of a character to join a law enforcement agency is quite logical. For a spy, it means a sponsor who can trade for his release in the event of capture, or who can supply him with weapons and support in missions. For a detective character, this means a steady income and a place right on the crime front.

Joining an agency or police force is not as easy as walking into a station and putting on a uniform. All agencies have certain requirements that applicants must fulfill. Prospective members of the CIA or FBI must pass physical tests and a battery of intellectual, civil service, and security tests before they are considered for training. Likewise, entrance exams are required before enrollment in a police academy is allowed.

Screening applicants is fairly simple in game terms, and is not meant to be any reflection on the real-world rigors of becoming an agent or cop. The entrance exam for a police academy is a 1st level IQ saving roll; each applicant has 3 chances to make the saving roll. If the applicant fails all three, he may not attempt to join that force again. The CIA or FBI has the same IQ saving roll requirement as a police academy, but they also require the character to pass a civil service exam. This is represented by a 1st level Charisma saving roll with a modifier of +1 allowed for any character with military experience in the U.S. armed forces. A character may take a civil service exam once every 3 months and will not be accepted for training until he passes.

A security check may be necessary, if only rudimentary. This will ultimately depend upon the character and the GM. If the character is as pure as driven snow, there will certainly be no problem. If the character has had a history of subversive activity or has fought as a merc with forces not backed by the United States, his chances of being accepted are slim. Note that the skill *Secret Identity* will confound a security check.

Training for a police officer will supply the character with the minimal skills needed to be a police officer. *These skills are not free;* each will cost the normal number of skill points and will have the usual prerequisites. For this reason, it is best that a beginning character be made a police officer, although any character who can pass the test and has the skills can be a police officer. The skills needed/supplied are: *Martial Arts* or *Pugilism, Clip Pistol* or *Revolver, Special Interest: Police Procedure/Agency Regulations* (including things like rights, laws, and rules of conduct), and *Special Interest: Crisis Management* (or how to keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, crowd control, and how to deal with domestic squabbles). These are the skills that all policemen/agents must have for employment under normal circumstances.

If a character is going to be a cop from the beginning of his career, there are other skills suggested. These are: *Shotgun/Tear Gas Gun, Leadership, Combat Shooting, Fast Driving, Helicopter Pilot, Forensics, Assault Rifle,* and *Tactics.* Many of these can be chosen as a character goes up in levels, to aid in promotion or because they are prerequisites towards being promoted. Something like *Assault Rifle* would be vital to a cop wanting to be on the SWAT team; *Forensics* would be needed by any character who wanted to work in the crime lab.

Agencies like the FBI and CIA will require many of the same basic skills as a police force. The FBI might also like a college degree or computer programming skill. *Electronics* and *ECM* would probably do a great deal to forward the career of an agent in either organization. The CIA would like a character who can speak several languages or who has a facility for *Cryptology.* All of these skills are available as part of the training, provided the skill points and prerequisites can be met.

Promotion should be governed by two things: the fame a character has gained within his organization, and the skills he has obtained to meet future challenges. To a certain extent this must be mediated by the GM; if a character has violated every regulation in an agency but no one knows about it, he won't get demoted. In much the same way, if no one knows how great you are, you won't get promoted. A GM may wish to establish skill requirements and saving rolls for promotion in any specific agency he deals with. This will allow for promotion by merit as well as notoriety.

Pay for various law enforcement agencies are a matter of public record. For local agencies, check newspapers, a local library, or city hall if you want the information. Gear pay schedules to every individual campaign to keep the players on par with the place they're adventuring in. Rookie patrolmen might start in one city at $13,000 a year while in another, smaller city the beginning wages might be only $8,500.

Retirement and pensions are to be dealt with at the discretion of the GM. Pensions seldom amount to anything unless the character has been with the organization for 20 years; even in the best case, they supply little more than a living wage. The recommended way to deal with pensions is to assume they cover basic living expenses but nothing more. This forces the characters to adventure for their extra money. Keep them hungry and they'll keep adventuring.

On occasion, a character employed by an agency will turn traitor or succumb to temptation and take a bribe. This can be an interesting addition to the game and should be expected. No GM should actively punish the character; he set up the situation where it could happen, and vindictiveness is nasty and likely to destroy the game. The GM should consider, though, how the organization the character is affiliated with will react. In police organizations the officer is likely to be drummed out of the corps; a secret agent who turns traitor may get a bullet from a sniper. Do not assume, however, that these things will happen automatically. The character will have to be caught somehow, and the character's old associates assigned to do the catching may have an interesting adventure themselves! ◆

TIME, HEALING & INCOME

Time scale in this game can be broken down into two parts: Tactical and Strategic. The tactical time scale will be most used, and is easy: missile-fire rounds are 15 seconds long, hand-to-hand combat rounds are 30 seconds long. The game also works well if the GM organizes small amounts of time into 10 minute groups which are referred to as "turns" or "regular turns" throughout these rules. These turns are used to regulate Strength, Speed, and CON recovery from combat, poison, magic, or psychic activities.

The strategic time scale depends upon the GM's preferences. Because of the list of weapons provided, the "historical" time of the game can be anything from the dawn of gunpowder to the near future. Any GM who chooses to run a historical scenario should take care to avoid contradicting historical fact. It would be difficult to run a scenario of an assassination attempt on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt taking place in 1948 – he was already dead.

Strategic timing of adventures should be flexible. The time between adventures can easily be handled by saying, "About 6 weeks after your last adventure . . ." if nothing exciting or demanding of the character's attention occurs during that time. Likewise, during an adventure the time spent researching or traveling while nothing eventful happens can be handled by, "The next 3 weeks you spend on a train to Moosejaw."

The time passages during an adventure need only be detailed and presented in game turns when something happens. It is boring to get a second by second description of waking up in the morning and watching coffee perk when nothing is going to happen until the character gets to his office. If there is anything of significance that demands attention before this character gets to the office, it can be handled with, "You open the newspaper and read 'Mrs. Brown was attacked' . . ." or something similar. Thus you avoid boring players to death with needless description.

By the same token, no GM should use this method of swiftly passing time to avoid telling a character some detail that the character should have gotten. In the above example, it is not fair to start the character out at the office and deny him the information about Mrs. Brown because you didn't play out breakfast. A character should be informed of all he could know regarding an adventure. It is up to the player to sort out the important parts of the information given him.

Keep in mind that time can be used as a suspense factor. If a character is scheduled to be executed at noon and he suspects that he will be rescued, you can play out his last minutes and keep him on edge for a while. □"11:56 and you see no one. The captain of the firing squad offers you a cigarette. 11:57 and there still is no rescue attempt. You think you can see a black dot in the sky to the west, but the sweat from your brow drips painfully into your eyes. 11:58:30, you hear the chopper. The black dot has grown into a helicopter, and you can see Raoul's garish red beret where a pilot's helmet should be. The orders barked by the captain of the guard almost drown out the sound of the copter. *Ready, Aim . . .*" The same dramatic trick works when a character is hiding and cannot afford to be caught. Try to feel comfortable with this kind of play-acting; it can add a lot to the excitement of a game session.

Healing

In a slam-bam adventure game like MSPE, characters are going to get hurt. This section details how they get better. The healing rate for characters is

dependent upon the type of wound they received. Described below are the classifications of wounds and the system of recovery from each. Note that *unconsciousness* resulting from hand-to-hand combat is not covered here; it is fully described in the section entitled Combat in Book 1.



►**Critical wounds** are wounds that have exceeded the CON of the character. By rights, the character should be dead, but he or she survived because of prompt medical attention. These wounds take 1 month plus 3 days per damage point done to heal. The amount of damage received will always at least equal the character's CON, *and it can be much more.* ☐Example: Assume a month has 30 days. Our wounded character is a police officer named Tia Barrows; she got into a firefight, was shot, and had to take 18 points of damage, even though her CON was only 14. She would spend 30 + (18 × 3) days recovering from the wounds – 84 days.

The character will be totally out of action for half the time which must be spent recovering. At the halfway point, the character will have healed half his or her CON. The character gains 1 point per proportion of days left to heal which he has actually spent after that time healing. ☐Example: In the above case, Officer Barrows originally had a CON of 14. She is scheduled to spend 84 days total before recovering. She would have 7 points of CON back on the 42nd day, and on that day she could resume action, and go back to work. She has 7 more points to heal, and another 42 days to spend doing so. This means she will get back 1 point of CON for each 6 days that pass. She will get back to her old CON of 14 almost seven weeks after her return to action, and more than 3 months after being wounded.

►**Serious wounds** are wounds that have done 50% or more damage to a character's CON without exceeding his CON. To recover from these wounds, the character will have to spend 2 weeks plus the number of hits done times 2 in days healing. Divide the days needed for healing by the number of hits taken. Once the character is back to half normal CON, he or she can return to active duty. ☐Assume that Tia only had to take 10 hits in the above example. She would be suffering from Serious Wounds, and could be fully healed in 2 weeks +20 days – a little over a month. Before that, on the 11th day, she could return to duty.

►**Slight wounds** do less than 50% damage to a character. These wounds heal at 1 point every two days. ☐If Tia received a grazing shot that did only 5 points of damage, it would take her 10 days to fully recover.

All damage may be healed by a character if the character is kept out of play for the amount of time needed to heal. This can be either real time or game time, at the GM's discretion. In any given campaign, one or the other system should be chosen and used consistently. The idea of proportional recovery rate is offered in case a character wishes to continue adventuring without having totally healed up first – be it out of bull-headedness or a need to complete a mission within a time limit. These recovery rates assume sanitary conditions and the desire of the wounded person to follow all of the dictates of the doctors. It is also assumed that the person's general condition is not bad to begin with. If the GM feels that the conditions during recovery are not quite as ideal as that, he may wish to adjust the healing rate accordingly.

Whenever a character has been hospitalized by an injury, but has resumed adventuring before total recovery, divide the number of days left until full recovery by the number of CON points left to be healed. At the completion of a set of days equal to the result of the above division, the character receives one more CON point. *This is the same as the normal recovery rates noted above.* If the character takes additional damage while healing, the rate of healing for the new wounds will be figured at the slowest of the classes of the wounds he is recovering from. In other words, if you take *Slight* damage while recovering from a *Critical* wound, the *Slight* damage is recovered at the *Critical* rate for healing. *Critical* damage after even a *Slight* wound will also recover at the *Critical* rate – you always recover as slowly as imaginable. Damage which drops a character

under half of his normal CON will return the character to the hospital with the same healing rate restrictions.

Medical costs vary according to the amount of damage and seriousness of the wounds being treated. For *Critical* wounds, multiply the damage done by $1000 to determine the hospital bill. Assume the character leaves when half his CON is regained. *Serious* wounds will cost $250 times every point of damage done, while *Slight* wounds cost only $10 per point of damage to be healed. No one really needs to go to the hospital for 1 or 2 points of wounds. Treatment of them can probably be done at home, although they might leave scars or become infected (depending on the nature of the wound and the circumstances under which it was incurred).

While insurance is recommended for hospital costs, the characters will still need money to pay for the insurance – and everything else in life! This brings us to . . .

Income
or Bringing Home the Bacon

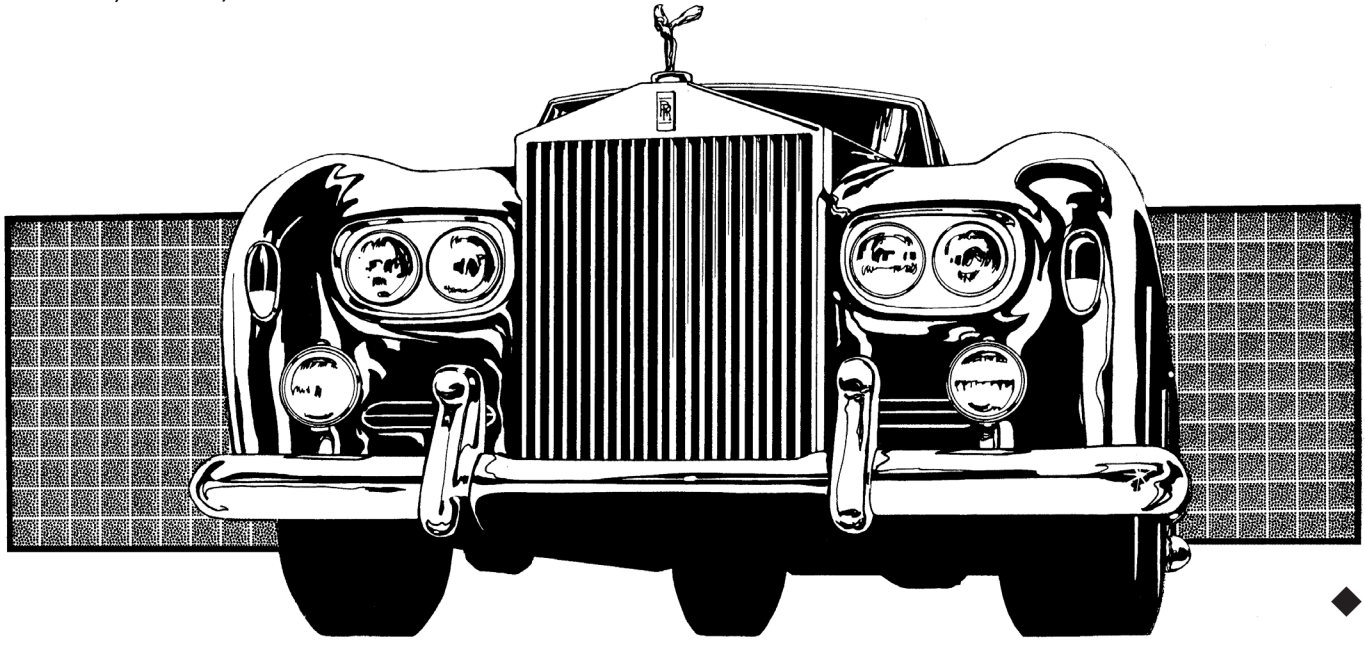
The subject of money has generally been glossed over except where the prices of items have been listed. There are two reasons for this. First of all, money means a great deal of bookkeeping that should not be forced on anyone. Second, with adventures able to be taking place any time from the advent of gunpowder to the future, wages for jobs and prices of items vary a great deal.

The easiest way to handle money is to assume that a character's wages cover his basic living expenses with a little bit left over at the end of each month. Players and GMs can settle on how much money would be left over from costs and use this as the character's cash available to finance adventuring. This money would be complemented by the rewards, if any, earned as a result of adventuring. All money in this system is considered "after taxes".

Functionally, characters would treat all of their spare cash like a checking account. Deductions are made for large purchases, like guns and ammo. Small things like cans of soda and a night at the movie theater can be deducted as well, though these should probably be ignored for simplicity's sake. This system is best for people who are not going to play an organized campaign, but who are going to use their characters whenever the mood for cracking a mystery strikes them.

A second, somewhat more detailed system for financing can be adopted for those games being played using a campaign format. Expenses and income would be adjusted when money is spent or when the character is paid. In addition, a detailed accounting of costs, like office rent and phone rental, would be kept. This is the system where a detective says "My fees are $150 a day plus expenses." Woe be to the detective using this system who gets stiffed by a client.

Prices charged by private eyes should be whatever the market will bear. If a detective can get away with asking $1000 a day, plus expenses, fine; his or her employer will probably expect spectacular results! Each GM should gear the "market" to what he feels will suit his game best. To get a rule of thumb, however, there are a few given situations that are generally accepted as a norm. For example, rewards offered by insurance companies are often 10% of the total insurance settlement. If you can save the company money by finding someone, or proving they didn't die within the provisions of the insurance policy, the insurance company will pay you well for that information. Rich individuals will also offer rewards for information leading to the recovery of items or such, the amount they offer being dependent upon their situation, personality, and the importance of the item. Silent witness programs all over the country offer money for clues to mysteries. The payments seldom get higher than $5,000 (and that in only extreme cases), but the money is there to be had, nonetheless.



NIGHTSTALKERS

MSPE is designed to be a real world simulation, but one of the great appeals of role playing is that we are not bound to an immutable reality. We can be a soldier of fortune in China in the 1890s, a private eye in fog-covered San Francisco in the 1930s or the head of an elite group of mercenaries in the Belgian Congo in 1960. All of these worlds are possible and easy to understand, but what if you want to push the edges of reality a bit. You may want to recreate the great B-movies and serials of the thirties and forties or pull a world from your favorite novel. Mad scientists destroyed by their creations, mummies brought back to life and arch-villans with endless plots to conquer the world, all these scenarios are good material for MSPE campaigns.

It is up to you as the GM to create the type of world in which you want your adventure to take place. No matter what the setting make sure that your logic is consistent and well thought out.

Contradictions and inconsistencies can destroy a campaign. To help you organize your campaigns we have devised five categories into which most scenarios will fit. Each of these categories plugs into the real world from its own unique perspective and each requires its own special approach.

We have included some suggestions on source material for each category. One of the great pleasures for the GM is the research he puts into his created worlds, and the quality of the adventure will reflect the quality of the research and thought.

The Real World

This is the primary world of MSPE and its appeal—like the appeal of the worlds depicted by Hammett, Chandler and Le Carre—is realism. This can be the realism of the *film noir*, dark and shadowy and with a moral ambiguity. Or it can be the morally self-assured world of the Victorians where you can be Sherlock Holmes pursuing Professor Moriarty.

No matter in which period you choose to place your adventure, realism will be the main criterion on which your adventures will be judged. No pulling of clues out of thin air, no twists of plots without foundation in the logic of the scenarios.

The main rule system should cover all needs and situations encountered in Real World scenarios.

Lost Worlds

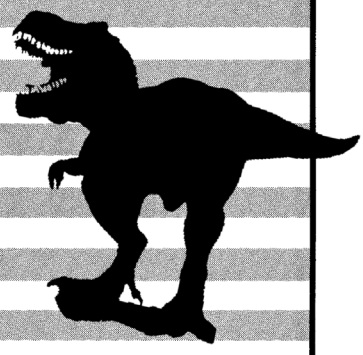
The Lost World scenarios presume to take place in a section of the real world which has been left back in time. This world may be a high and remote Amazonian plateau populated by dinosaurs. Imagine characters wandering through the mountains of China to discover a valley peopled by a lost Mongol army guarding a treasure hoard! The isolation of almost any type of people from the past, especially if they are viewed with a certain amount of romanticism will create a setting that can be easily researched and entertainingly played out.

There should be little need to make any changes in the basic rules. In most Lost World scenarios you will probably be dealing with more primitive weapons and training, but with research and thought, most MSPE skills and stats can be adapted for use. A dinosaur chart has been included to give an example of how to approach unknown and fantastic subjects.

The Professor Challenger stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are classics of the Lost World genre.

Dinosaurs

Dinosaur	Dice and Adds	Con	Hide	Speed
Tyrannosaurus Rex	12+3	62	-1d6	11
Allosaurus	12+2	52	-1d6	13
Dimetrodon	12+3	11	—	11
Pelorosaurus	13+2	70	—	16
Triceratops*	13+3**	56	-1d6	8
Brontosaurus	13+0	105	-1d6	5
Pterodactyl	11+0	3	—	1/16††
Pteranodon	11+2	14	—	1/15††
Stegosaurus	13+2	60	-3d6†	5
'Herd' Dinosaur	7+2	24	—	12
Boa-Saurus	10-1	25	—	5/16‡



* Shield: -3d6
** Ramming only
† One out of 6 hits at full value with no modifier (head and underbelly).
‡ Movement of 16 is for one round only! When wrapped around a victim it will inflict 1d6 damage per turn.
†† First value if walking. Second value if flying.

The novels and stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs are a gold mine of ideas as are those of Jules Verne.

Science Fiction

Science Fiction takes a delicate hand in MSPE but can fit in nicely. Our definition of science fiction is speculation on what science and technology will be like in the future based on our knowledge of science today—science fiction in the spirit of Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Hugo Gernsback. Scenarios can be taken from movies like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), in which a huge flying saucer lands in Washington D.C. and an extraterrestial visitor attempts to stop the world from using atomic weapons, demonstrating his power by halting all electrical power in the world. His advanced technology is also shown by his companion Gort, a large robot that is more than a match for the U.S. Army.

Earth as the target of extraterrestial conquest can give many interesting and varying plot lines that will work well with MSPE and challenge the players' characters. Movie classics such as *Not of This Earth* (1956), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1955), *The Mole People* (1956), *Devil Girl from Mars* (1954), *Invaders from Mars* (1953), and *This Island Earth* (1954) have some good ideas and can be fun.

The main danger in science fiction scenarios is creating a science in opposition to the players that is so great that they will not be able to overcome it on their own, for example, the *War of the Worlds* (1953) scenario. Man could not defeat the invaders himself but needed the intervention of the cold virus, the *deus ex machina* of classical drama. *(See Sci-Fi Environments on page 85).*

Time travel can be fun, especially if you let the players get caught up in the paradoxes. Robert Heinlein's *Door into Summer* would make a challenging campaign, but sending a character too far into the future will take you out of the realm of MSPE. Your characters' skills and knowledge will not be able to serve him well.

The range of science fiction is so great in both print and films you will have no problem finding ideas that will be fun and interesting.

Horror

Horror scenarios begin to break the fabric of the real world. At one end of the horror spectrum are the mad scientist stories—stories that could be called science fiction except that their purpose is not to speculate about science but to conjure up images of horror. Dr. Frankenstein's main interest may have been a breakthrough in understanding the fundamentals of life, but ours is the horror the monster generates.

In horror scenarios we are still in the real world, but we are trying to find the hidden keys that will unlock its secrets and give us power over it. What we discover, however, is that in attempting to unlock these secrets we invariably open a Pandora's Box of powers over which we have little control. It may be the knowledge that nine Tana leaves burned with an ancient Egyptian incantation will bring a Mummy back to life. The worlds of the undead—Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and the ghost stories of M.R. James and Ambrose Bierce—can provide many scenarios for the creative GM. Suzy McKee Charnas' *The Vampire Tapestry* and Anne Rice's *Interview with a Vampire* provide excellent source material for ways of handling modern vampires.

Monster	ST	IQ	LK	CON	DEX	CHR	SP
Vampire	5/2	3/2	3/2	1	1	1	11/16*
Werewolf	5/2	1/2	2/3	3	3/2	10/3	14
Mummy	2	1	1	3	1	2	6
Zombie	2	1/3	1	3	1	1	5
Ghost	0	1	2	1	0	4	1
Skeleton	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
Yeti	4	1	1	5	1	2	14
Shambling Horror *(Lovecraft mythos)*	7	2	3	6	2	1	10

* Walking (human form): 11; flying (bat form): 16.

As we enter the world of H.P. Lovecraft, A. Merritt and Robert E. Howard we enter the world of the supernatural, where the laws of the universe are unknown to us. We may be able to discover them by looking into man's long forgotten and primitive past, as with Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. However, the exploration of these worlds is beyond the scope of MSPE.

If you decide to try a horror scenario, you might create a Personality who is afflicted with vampirism or lycanthropy. The vampire or werewolf would probably leave a trail of dead bodies, the victims chosen at random or by some strange pattern—perhaps the vampire or lycanthrope believes that killing people in a certain ritual manner will dispel the curse they are under. The police or the player may be astounded when their gunshots hurt, but do not kill, the madman running from the scene of a murder.

Playing a vampire or a person afflicted with lycanthropy as a player character could be difficult. A vampire, depending upon his age, would be expected to choose a number of skills that would link him with his long life, e.g., *Special Interest: Wallachian Royalty*. A lycanthope could appear totally normal except when his particular brand of lunacy takes over. Before any player chooses a vampire or lycanthrope character, he should work on defining his powers and abilities with his local GMs—they are going to have to deal with the monster.

The attributes for a vampire or a lycanthrope are not going to be normal human attributes. The chart above lists the multipliers that are in effect for the creatures. To use them, roll the attributes normally, then multiply the values by the given multiplier for that attribute, i.e. a vampire character gets a 10 rolled for Strength on the dice; this is multiplied times 5/2 to equal 25. The multipliers are only to be used after the attributes are determined.

Vampires can change into mists, bats, or wolves. They may also command canines, in numbers equal to the IQ of the vampire, and rodents, up to 100 times the vampire's IQ. The banes of vampires are strong, direct sunlight and wooden stakes. Religious items will work on those of the same religion—showing a Muslim vampire a cross will only infuriate him—and vampires do not have any reflection in a mirror.

Lycanthropes are shape-changers; there are other types besides the werewolf listed in the *Tunnels and Trolls* rules. They become their animal selves under the light of the full moon; they are vulnerable to silver; and a silver-tipped arrow or silver bullet in the heart is the accepted method for killing them. Fire is rumored to work well in destroying both werewolves and vampires.

The Dexterity listed for the werewolf is only if the werewolf is the furred man (Lon Chaney) type. The full wolf form would have a functional *manual* Dexterity of 3, and his physical agility is at the 3/2 value. The loss of IQ will remove skills from his mind, starting with the highest IQ minimum skills he has. It will categorically remove any skills that need an IQ minimum higher than his IQ while he is in the werewolf form. If he has more skills than his skill points can cover in wolf form, he loses whichever skills the player chooses to eliminate.

A mixture of fantasy and monsters can prove to be an interesting variation on the normal gaming themes. Horror movie settings are complete with atmosphere and cliches that make adapting them to gaming easy. The exploration of the local haunted house, especially during a hunt for an escaped madman from the local asylum is an excellent excuse for using strange and semi-magical devices in a game. In such a setting a secret door leading to a dark passage becomes far more scary and dangerous than it might be normally. The sounds an old house would make at any time become the proof that the maniac is stalking the characters. Best of all is their reaction when they have managed to escape the haunted house, especially if they have killed the madman, only to discover that the real madman was captured hours before in the next town. Before long, they'll thoroughly believe in ghosts!

Fantasy

When we enter the world of Fantasy, we leave the real world and its natural laws behind. In the world of

Fantasy anything goes. J.R.R. Tolkien created the legend of Middle Earth in epic proportions—an Earth where dragons roamed and wizards controlled the forces of the universe. Tolkien's epic has spawned many imitators and a whole new world of gaming, Fantasy Role Playing (FRP). These games differ from MSPE in that they make no effort to simulate the world in which we live. Quite the contrary, the appeal of FRP is to create a world that differs from the mundane commonplace world in which all but our imaginations are trapped.

When we mix the Real World and the world of Fantasy we create some glaring contradictions, contradictions that are hard to handle for the beginning player. If you would like to place your MSPE character into a fantasy world we would recommend the game *Tunnels and Trolls* (T&T), as it most closely resembles the MSPE game system.

Still there is a way to bring fantasy, magic and occult mystery to modern games without destroying a campaign in the process. The idea is to bring a monster into a modern setting.

First of all, reduce all combat to the MSPE timescale. Archers will be allowed to loose one arrow per Missile Weapon Round; a 5th level warrior gets two shots in that time provided he's using a bow rather than a crossbow. Crossbows take 2 Missile Combat Rounds to cock. Magic is treated like a missile; magic spells will take 1 Missle Round to cast and may only be cast on every other Missile Weapon Combat Round. The one-turn spacing of spells is to allow the wizard to "clear his mind" in preparation for casting the next spell. This also prevents wizards from casting too many spells relative to the other combatants, and allows them to choose the right spell at the right time.

Hand-to-Hand or Melee Combat Rounds all become 30 seconds long. There needs to be no adjustment of damage—just assume the warriors get down to business without any of the posturing usual in T&T combat. Flak vests should work like leather armor with no MSPE character getting a warrior's doubling bonus. Rifles used as clubs should be considered as clubs for dice and adds; rifles with bayonets should be treated as crude spears, with no chance to throw them.

Save those who are psychometric, MSPE characters will not have any ability to detect magic, and a GM need not give them clues about magic. Because they will not have magic to aid or warn them, a GM who still wants an interesting game might lessen the consequences of some harmful magic, an effect perhaps caused by their disbelief in magic. . . . Illnesses that usually require magic to treat should be treatable with modern drugs or normal first aid. Monsters immune to physical attack might find themselves disturbed by more *elemental* dooms, i.e. the flames from a flamethrower or the cold from a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher.

MSPE characters are not going to have the colossal attributes common in T&T. This must be kept in mind for two reasons. The first is that many tasks that would not even raise a sweat on a T&T character will be beyond even the most exceptional MSPE character. MSPE characters are well in tune with their technology and less reliant upon their bodies for sheer power than their T&T kin. The GM should modify Saving Rolls or the consequences of missing Saving Rolls to keep the game interesting and playable.

The second reason to keep the limited attribute growth of MSPE in mind is because of magical items. Often there are magical goodies that will increase the attribute of a character in T&T, something that will help insure the survival of a T&T character. This is not so with MSPE characters, and any MSPE character who returns to his own time and space after having his Strength of 12 raised to 36 by magic is quite likely to find himself considered a freak.

There are three solutions to the problem of attribute inflation of T&T as applied to visiting MSPE characters. The first is my preferred solution. No MSPE character will have attributes raised or lowered as a result of a magical item. The possible exception is magic that hurts or heals a character and affects his CON alone. Assume that there is an extra gene needed to handle magical energy and few, if any, MSPE characters have it. Any explanation will do so long as no MSPE character gets attribute hikes that will unbalance play back on Earth.

The second solution is to make such hikes just a temporary effect. Make a change take place only after a character drinks a potion, and make the effect last for a limited amount of time. Make the magical change effective only under the dual full moons of your fantasy world, a situation that cannot occur on Earth. Build the effect into a special weapon or talisman loaned to the character for the duration of the adventure. None of these effects should work on Earth.

The third solution is to keep the characters from MSPE who have ventured into a fantasy world in that fantasy world. Alllow then to use their skills to improve their lot in life, and go ahead and invent new skills for them to pick up as they go up in levels. Still restrict them to two attribute points per level change and do not be afraid to make medieval skills more expensive in skill points than modern skills. This solution, while the most drastic, is the basis for a large number of SF and Fantasy stories; it can be a lot of fun.

These suggestions are flexible, and each GM should play with them until he feels comfortable with them. The bottom line is game balance, both in physical and game terms. It really is not a good idea to turn a werewolf loose on a bunch of armchair detectives who would have no chance of defending themselves. Try to gear these adventures to those who should be able to handle them. ◆

Pulp Adventures:

The Two-Fisted Hero & the Strange Menace

by Thessaly Chance Tracy



Editors Note: Since MSPE was released, players have expanded the use of our RPG to include Steampunk, Science-Fiction and other genres. This combined edition of the rules is not meant to cover all the unusual circumstances of those genres. However, Some long-time MSPE GMs have sent us some advice and information on how to run some other genres. We hope these additions will help those of you who plan to run such adventures.

Running Pulp adventures

Yet another adventure genre is the pulp style game, modeled on the popular fiction of the 1920's-1940's pulp magazines, full of bold, two-fisted heroes like Doc Savage and the Shadow, and made popular for modern audiences with films like *Indiana Jones series* and *The Rocketeer*.

The goal of a pulp game is to keep the action level high while still providing immersion into a time period when exotic locales around the globe were just opening themselves up to being explored, and if the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb was any indication, these faraway places held almost inconceivable wonders, and possible dangers as well (like ancient curses). The possibility of magic and the supernatural still held some sway on the mind of many in the 1930's despite scientific advances.

But the decade was unique in other ways, Fascism was on the rise around the globe, not just in Germany, and World War 1 had proven to everyone in the civilized world that science could be used to create terrible horrors, and ghastly weapons in addition to sparing humanity from the horrors of disease.

The pulp magazines took the zeitgeist of the time and turned it up to eleven. Whether transcribing the exploits of brave sailors encountering islands of bloodthirsty Amazons, or crime fighters trying to stop some mad scientist who wants to control the world pulp fiction focused on bold, bigger than life characters who lived in a mysterious and dangerous world, that was both gritty and wildly speculative at the same time.

These are the kind of elements a GM will want to bring into a pulp style game. Creating pulp adventures is probably a bit more difficult than a straight-up mercenary style game, because plots can be a bit more involved, but a pulp game will require less intrigue than a spy or mystery game. Pulp fiction tended to move the action forward at a fairly breakneck pace, and while there is plenty of room in a pulp game for roleplaying, action will inevitably be what drives the plot forward; car chases, gun battles, kidnapped dames, insane cults, death rays, and living mummies.

As with games with spy-type plots, the adversary or villain personality will take a central role in a pulp game. The main villain may take center stage early on, or may take several game sessions to finally be revealed as the mastermind behind earlier adventures, but should always prove elusive and difficult to capture or kill, an equal to the characters in every way.

What pulp villains do not need necessarily, is complex motivations or backstories, (though it would be perfectly acceptable to have such a thing, so long as discovering these motivations continues to move the action forward).

Pulp villains were often utterly and completely evil, simply for the sake of being evil. Many of them are mad scientific geniuses, and they are occasionally known to make alliances with aliens from Mars or Venus, in order to command even greater technological power. Heroes may have to fight their way through these aliens, or even gigantic robots to bring the villain to justice.

In addition to bigger than life villains, pulp heroes will inevitably run afoul of terrible and insidious cults. Domestic cults operating inside the U.S. are often affiliated with the growing Nazi menace, and will be seeking to assassinate honest politicians who pose a threat to the Reich, or kidnap scientists to help them build or detonate the ultimate weapon. Cults in more exotic locales are likely to be encountered by characters exploring the exotic and "savage" locales that plane travel and colonialism have opened up to Western exploration (and exploitation) for the first time, at least on a large scale level.

Such foreign cults might worship anything from fierce ancient gods, to sorcerers, to serpents, but they will always be fanatical in pursuit of their religious and political goals. They will generally have a recognizable look about them, an identifying tattoo, or ceremonial robes. Once the PC's have discovered the cult and established themselves as a threat to it, the cult will be relentless in its attempts to prevent further interference. Many of the cults in pulp fiction were foreign fanatics of strange, vile, religions, playing to the xenophobia of the times, but

domestic cults were also a constant threat and many of these have sympathies with the growing Nazi menace.

The Third Reich had a particular fascination with the occult as well, and the fascist cult groups operating within the borders of the United States are often, like the villain personalities that frequently sit at the helm of these organizations, seeking scientific as well as magical power. The villains and the cults both tend to walk a fine line between genius and pathological insanity. There plans are big, and they will stop at nothing to execute them. They will eliminate anyone who gets in their way. That's where the heroes come in.

You may also wish to create a government agency, (the good guys) to help counter the strange menaces that are sprouting up, similar to a law enforcement agency, but even more secretive. The purpose of this agency would be to deal with strange or unusual threats to the United States, or to the Earth itself. This agency will specialize in stopping the myriad of mad scientists, cryptids, and even aliens that could plague the heroes of a pulp campaign. Such an agency would likely have a strange name, like Dept.X-13, and might well be a trusted ally of the player characters, possibly even sponsoring missions.

In a pulp game, money will not be as big an issue as it is in other MSPE game genres. Pulp heroes tended to be independently wealthy. On a practical level, this enabled them to adventure freely, travelling the world to the exotic locations that frequently feature in pulp tales. This is not an indicator that the GM should let the players have limitless resources in any given situation, so much as to say the characters in this style game will worry less about money than most of us ever will.

One of the most dramatic ways that pulp style games will be different from those in the spy, mystery or modern mercenary genre is the prominence of the supernatural. Vampires and werewolves are as present in the pulp genre as they are in the horror genre, and the only thing that would separate a pulp game from a horror game in many cases is that the characters in a horror game seldom ever win. Building a sense of dread is central to a horror game, but a pulp will take that same fearsome monster and punch it in the nose.

Monsters like werewolves and vampires and mummies will have some degree of intelligence and might make for a good long term adversary, these villains should be rolled up as personalities. Other types of monsters, like cryptids and strange animals mutated by magic or scientific means, are better treated with a single score, similar to the Monster Rating stat in tunnels and trolls. Pulp characters often find themselves in the midst of dense unexplored jungle, so rampaging elephants or gorillas, should also be given just a single stat. Jungles and caves full of treasure are also likely to be the dwelling place of huge spiders, winged scorpions or serpents with strange, hypnotic powers.

Another similarity with the fantasy genre is magic. Magic doesn't exist in pulp adventure the same way it does in fantasy though. There are no (or very few) actual wizards in the pulp world, and probably no schools of wizardry, not in the sense that such would exist in a fantasy setting anyway. Magic in a pulp game will not come from a set of spells. More likely it is sourced by same ancient mysterious artifact, like the Spear of Destiny, or the Holy Grail, or the Ark of the Covenant. Certain adversaries might have powers akin to spells found in Tunnels and Trolls. (giving someone like Fu-Manchu the power to cast a *"Take That You Fiend"* T&T spell for instance). In such cases you could add a wizardry stat to the villain personality's stat block. But perhaps it is better to come up with an adversary's magical abilities on your own, and have them operate whenever you feel like they should operate. The villain might be able to control a swarm of bat-scorpions for instance, or he may be able to raise the dead from their graves. (ala "*Dem Bones"* T&T spell).

Magic should be present in the pulp world, but hidden. The common westerner is not likely to believe it exists, but when adventuring in more "primitive" and "savage" locales, it is likely that most of the locals will believe in it, and with good reason. Strange things happen on the peripheries of human experience.

Finally, pulp heroes from Doc Savage, to the Shadow were generally a cut above the common lot of men. They occasionally evidenced almost superhuman abilities, though these tended to be "street level" enhancements. These heroes were not super-powered, and would likely not be a match for any of the members of the Justice Society. To give a slight boost to character stats during the initial roll up phase, I personally allow 4d6 to be rolled during generation. The lowest die number is dropped, but if three dice come up with the same number, you can discard the 4th die, and add and roll again. This gives pulp heroes a bit more punch, and possibly a few more points to put into skills straight out of the gate.

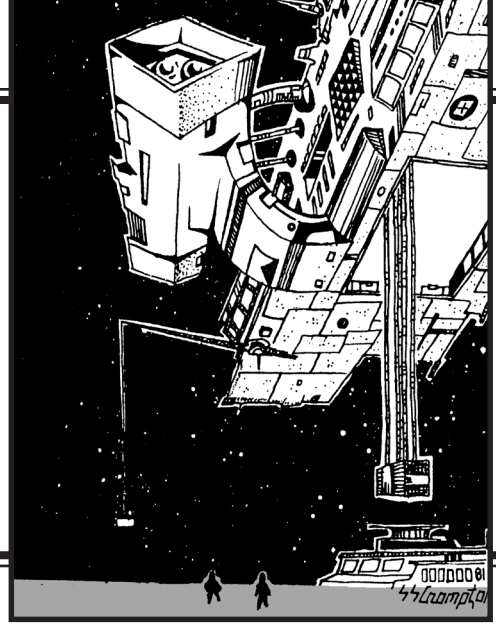
Another option we used was to modify damage caused by missiles and guns depending on where the hit location chart says the character was struck. So, for example, getting struck in the heart or the head would receive full damage from the bullet, but being stuck in the hand or shoulder reduces that damage by ¼. Damage from firearms will still be deadly, and characters will still be sweating when the bullets start flying, but they have a little more of a chance to make off with nothing but a flesh wound. We also decided that Luck points could be spend by a character to "heal damage", (the Bible was in your pocket!) or perhaps used to get a second chance at rolling on the hit table. Pulp characters won't have access to Kevlar armor of helmets, so if you are running an episodic game, this would be one way of alleviating that disadvantage in a world that has the Thompson submachine gun.

As with other genres, the GM will still create maps and keys for the locations the characters will be seeing action in. A GM may end up designing locations that are not that far off from fantasy dungeons, whether that is the tomb of a mummy in Egypt, or the location of King Solomon's Mines in darkest Africa. Such places are likely filled with traps, and perhaps even strange forgotten life forms (perhaps even from outer space).

Pulp adventures are a lot of fun, and MSPE is a great engine for running them. The characters are larger than life with big personalities and because of the fantasy and science fiction elements, the sky is the limit on what the GM can create for players to interact with. ◆

Science Fiction Environments

Sci-Fi enhancements by Thomas Rafalski



Tom Rafalski has created a series of sci-fi adventures that use with MSPE and he has sent in some notes on how to handle some common sci-fi situations. While not official, we hope this will help those of you who plan to run such adventures.

Non-Terrestrial Environments

Jumping

MSPE lacks jumping rules, but STR gives a very good baseline.
Horizontal Vertical = STR in inches
Running Horizontal Jump = STR in feet
Horizontal Standing = STR / 2 in feet
Environmental suits decrease these to ½ for a hazmat-like suit to ¼ for a full space suit.

Higher Gravity

Add *Environmental Survival: High G*
Increase the SR of appropriate tasks by 1 per G past 1.
G forces past 6 automatically knock out a character as long as they persist. Pressurized flight suit in a flight chair/ rig increases to 10G, but characters can only operate controls.

Each G double weight (it is a unit of force.) Each G halves jumping distance, throw/projectile distances, and most movement. Lasers are not affected.

Every hour/G spent active in an environment past 1G requires a CON + *High G Survival* vs SR G-1. Failing means the character reduces all Attributes but LK by G. Recovery time per point = 15 minutes x G and the character must completely rest.

If CON is reduced to less than 0, the character is unconscious and starts recovering. Extended exposure to G 17+ is lethal.

Lower Gravity

Add *Environmental Survival: Low G (Gravity).*
Low G is considerably more fun than high G but can be tricky.

Increase the SR by 3 of any appropriate action requiring DEX in environments below 0.5G.
Movement rates increase by 1 SPD and jumping distances triple per 0.1 drop from 1G.
Only bother converting base weights by multiplying the G when you need. You still can't rip open a steel door with your bare hands.

Micro/Zero Gravity

Add *Environmental Survival: 0 G.*
A character can train to a maximum of 2 without actually being in 0 G.
Effective movement rate is now acceleration rate.

Increase the SR of any appropriate STR or DEX by 4 *unless:*

- Characters with *Underwater* or *Underwater Combat* suffer +3 SR
- Characters with *Environmental Survival:* 0 G at Level 1-3 suffer +1 SR
- Characters with *Environmental Survival:* 0 G at Level 4+ suffer no penalty

Atmosphere

A character can hold his breath for up to CON + *Underwater/ Special Interest: Escape Artist / Special Interest: Yoga* turns.
In a non-breathable atmosphere, the character looses 1 point of CON per turn in LETHAL damage. This doesn't include any damage from toxins.

Very Low or No Atmospheric Pressure

Vacuum is a great insulator; the current best guess is it would take 24+ hours to freeze in space.

The immediate problem is that the blood in the capillaries in your lungs would boil and explode.

Characters have CON + *Underwater / Special Interest: Escape Artist / Special Interest: Yoga* turns to get somewhere safe.

Those in sunlight at Earth Distance take 1d6 of CON heat/ radiation damage per turn unless in a reflective outfit.

Psychic Skills
Who Gets Them and How: Drugs, genetic engineering or natural mutations, cybernetic implants, or alien species can negate the need to roll for Psychic Skills. Drugs may provide temporary abilities or may permanently alter brain structure and chemistry.

Stronger Telekinesis
Telekinesis (TK) is often much stronger than written in core MSPE.
Regular Sci-Fi: One pound per point of TK skill x STR
Powerful: Ten pounds per point of TK skill x STR
Laser Sword Monks: 10 ^ TK skill pounds x STR

Telepathic Control
Only NPCs can be targeted. Players always choose what their characters do. It is one of the most inherent rights of a player.
It's just *Psychic Skill: Telepathy*. This contest takes 10 minutes in game or even better yet, roleplay it inside the mind of the target.

IQ + CHR + Telepathy + Confidence *or* Seduction *or* Leadership *or* Elocution + Psychiatrist + 2d6 DARO

versus

IQ + CHR + Diplomacy + Confidence + Leadership + Acting + 11

Cyberkinesis
This is the ability to control electronics and computers using Psychic Powers. Distance is Telepathy.

IQ + Cyberkinesis Skill +2d6 DARO

Sample SRs
- SR 0 – Flip a switch or relay
- SR 1 Simple electronic device (digital watch)
- SR 2 Open computer
- SR 3 Locked computer
- SR 4 Encrypted system or running in a foreign language
- SR 5+ System specifically shielded against Cyberkinesis

Pyro/Cryokinesis
Altering thermal energy using psychic powers.
Use the TK rules, but 1 Strength point for 10 degree shift of 1 kg of material. Proportional shift for increase or decrease in material (0.5 kg = 20 degrees).
To up the power, make the base shift 100 degrees instead.

Humanoid Aliens
"Alien Cultures" are often extreme individual examples extrapolated to an entire species or even just a non-western human culture past or present. Examples are most "aliens" in *Star Trek, Star Wars*, and *Babylon Five*.
Most playable aliens and ongoing NPC Aliens are of this category.
Use a Species Modifier on one to three attributes *after* regular rolls (For example, The Crytunians are from a heavy G planet, so their ST is + 8, their CON is +6, and their DEX is -2).

Non-Humanoid Aliens
War of the Worlds, Solaris, 2001, Arrival, and *Contact* are examples of characters with non-human frames of reference and/or thought process. Anything goes.
For game purposes, use these as the basis of exploration scenarios or non-playable recurring characters.

Aliens Somewhere In-Between
Some really great characters are a mesh of both. Much of their behavior make sense to humans, however, their actual thought processes, motivations and some behaviors are very, very different. Examples are *Alien Nation* and *District 9*.
For PC or NPC game stats just use Species Modifiers and roleplay the rest.

Technologies
Baseline 1980 as TL 0 and present-day 2018 as 1. 0.5 is an intermediate.

Computer Skills
Split out Computer (IQ 10) in any tech level over 0:
- Computer Use (Everyone by default) – Using computers
- Computer Hacking, Scripted (IQ 11) – Scripted techniques and code to a non-military/banking-grade system. Cleanly hacking a system is Advanced.
- Computer Programming (IQ 11) – Non-AI programming using standard techniques and libraries.
- Computer Programming and Hacking, Advanced (IQ 16) – New logic/algorithms, AI/polymorphic coding, novel hacking methods, hacking a bank/military system, hacking without leaving a trail

◆

The Tech Table, (2019 in Bold)

TL	Comm	A.I.	Interfaces	Storage	Weapons	Armor	Travel	Power
0.5	Cell Phones, Internet	Expert Systems	LCD	**GByte**	**Stealth**	**Advanced Polymers**	**Hybrids**	**Hydro**
1	**Smart Phones, Streaming**	**Experimental**	**Stereo VR**	**TByte**	**Effective Non-Lethal**	Graphine	**Ion, Solar Sails**	**Solar, Wind**
2	100MB+ Wireless	Human-Memory	Freestanding 3D	TByte+	Lasers	Reflective, Kinetic F.	Space Elevator	Fusion
3	Implants	Superhuman	Direct Neural Interface	PByte	Plasma	Electromagnetic & Ionized F.	Antigravity, Warp Drive	Micro Fusion
4		Incomprehensible		Exabyte	Antimatter	Energy Field	Inertial Drive	Antimatter
5				Zettabyte	Exotic Matter	Singularity F.	Wormhole	Point
6				Yottabyte	Unified Field Disruption	Quantam F.	Matter-Energy "Beaming"	Small-Scale Point

Tunnels & Thompsons



The first testing of the MSPE firearms system that ever took place was a game session referred to jokingly as "Tunnels and Thompsons" because it took place inside a dungeon. This expedition was a group of second level Tunnels & Trolls™ characters armed with automatic weapons and thrust into a 5th to 10th level dungeon. The saying that "God made man, but Col. Colt made him equal" never seemed so true as on that adventure – the only casualty was a demon with a low DEX and a grenade launcher. After that a great archaeological expedition of mercs, preppies, and the elite of spydom was launched into the Sumatran jungle to track down a lost Japanese regiment from WWII. In the ruins they discovered that, while a full clip from an AK-47 will not kill a vampire, it can sure slow one down.

It is not unexpected that some players will want to inflict high tech doom upon the monsters that have eaten their ancestors. Not only can such a game-setting amuse those with a manic sense of humor, but perfectly serious adventure writers such as Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert Howard, Arthur Conan Doyle, and other authors have written about "lost worlds" and thus have presented us with plenty of examples of modern technologies versus monsters from the dawn of time. Running such a scenario is not as easy as it might seem at first glance. The following suggestions will help ease the transition from MSPE to T&T or other fantasy games.

First of all, reduce all combat to the MSPE timescale. Archers will be allowed to loose one arrow per missile weapon round; a 5th level warrior gets two shots in that time provided he's using a bow rather than a crossbow. Crossbows take 2 missile combat rounds to cock. Magic is treated like a missile; magic spells will take 1 missile round to cast and may only be cast on every other missile weapon combat round. The one-turn spacing of spells is to allow the wizard to "clear his mind" in preparation for casting the next spell. This also prevents wizards from casting too many spells relative to the other combatants, and allows them to choose the right spell at the right time.

Hand-to-hand or melee combat rounds all become 30 seconds long. There needs to be no adjustment of damage – just assume the warriors get down to business without any of the posturing usual in T&T combat. Flak vests should work like leather armor with no MSPE character getting a warrior's doubling bonus. Rifles used as clubs should be considered as clubs for dice and adds; rifles with bayonets should be treated at crude spears, with no chance to throw them.

Save those who are psychometric, MSPE characters will not have any ability to detect magic, and a GM need not give them clues about magic. Because they will not have magic to aid or warn them, a GM who still wants an interesting game might lessen the consequences of some harmful magic, an effect perhaps caused by their disbelief in magic. . . . Illnesses that usually require magic to treat should be treatable with modern drugs or normal first aid. Monsters immune to physical attack might find themselves disturbed by more *elemental* dooms, i.e. the flames from a flamethrower or the cold from a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher.

MSPE characters are not going to have the colossal attributes common in T&T. This must be kept in mind for two reasons. The first is that many tasks that would not even raise a sweat on a T&T character will be beyond even the most exceptional MSPE character. MSPE characters are well in tune with their technology and less reliant upon their bodies for sheer power than their T&T kin. GM should modify saving rolls or the

consequences of missing saving rolls to keep the game interesting and playable.

The second reason to keep the limited attribute growth of MSPE in mind is because of magical items. Often there are magical goodies that will increase the attribute of a character in T&T, something that will help insure the survival of a T&T character. This is not so with MSPE characters, and any MSPE character who returns to his own time and space after having his Strength of 12 raised to 36 by magic is quite likely to find himself considered a freak.

There are three solutions to the problem of attribute inflation of T&T as applied to visiting MSPE characters. The first is my preferred solution. No MSPE character will have attributes raised or lowered as a result of a magical item. The possible exception is magic that hurts or heals a character and affects his CON alone. Assume that there is an extra gene needed to handle magical energy and few, if any, MSPE characters have it. Any explanation will do so long as no MSPE character gets attribute hikes that will unbalance play back on Earth.

The second solution is to make such hikes just a temporary effect. Make a change take place only after a character drinks a potion, and make the effect last for a limited amount of time. Make the magical change effective only under the dual full moons of your fantasy world, a situation that cannot occur on Earth. Build the effect into a special weapon or talisman loaned to the character for the duration of the adventure. None of these effects should work on Earth.

The third solution is to keep the characters from MSPE who have ventured into a fantasy world in that fantasy world. Allow them to keep their weapons and their ammo until it runs out. Allow them to use their skills to improve their lot in life, and go ahead and invent new skills for them to pick up as they go up in levels. Still restrict them to two attribute points per level change and do not be afraid to make medieval skills more expensive in skill points than modern skills. This solution, while the most drastic, is the basis for a large number of SF and fantasy stories; it can be a lot of fun.

An often-overlooked variation of the Tunnels and Thompsons idea is running adventures that feature a monster in modern times. *Dracula* by Bram Stoker obviously shows how it can be done in Victorian England. Fred Saberhagen's tales of Dracula in a modern setting are a superior source of inspiration for working mythical monsters into the settings of today. Suzy McKee Charnas' *The Vampire Tapestry* is another book about a vampire living today that will work as a beautiful source for ways of handling a modern vampire.

If you decide to try a scenario like this, create a Personality who is afflicted with vampirism or lycanthropy. The vampire or werewolf would probably leave a trail of dead bodies, the victims chosen at random or by some strange pattern – perhaps the vampire or lycanthrope believes that killing people in a certain ritual manner will dispell the curse they are under. The police



or the players may be astounded when their gunshots hurt, but do not kill, the madman running from the scene of a murder.

Playing a vampire or a person afflicted with lycanthropy as a player character could be difficult. A vampire, depending upon his age, would be expected to choose a number of skills that would link him with his long life, i.e. *Special Interest: Wallachian Royalty.* A lycanthrope could appear totally normal except when his particular brand of lunacy takes over. Before any player chooses a vampire or lycanthrope character, he should work on defining his powers and abilities with his local GMs – they are going to have to deal with the monster.

The attributes for a vampire or a lycanthrope are not



going to be normal human attributes. Below are listed the multipliers that are in effect for the creatures. To use them, roll the attributes normally, then multiply the values by the given multiplier for that attribute, i.e. a vampire character gets a 10 rolled for Strength on the dice; this is multiplied times 5/2 to equal 25. The multipliers are only to be used after the attributes are determined.

VAMPIRE: ST: 5/2 IQ: 3/2 LK: 3/2 All others: 1

LYCANTHROPE: ST: 5/2 IQ: ½ LK: 2/3 CON: 3 DEX: 3/2 CHR: 2

Vampires can change into mists, bats, or wolves. They may also command canines, in numbers equal to the IQ of the vampire, and rodents, up to 100 times the vampire's IQ. The banes of vampires are strong, direct sunlight and wooden stakes. Religious items will work on those of the same religion – showing a Muslim vampire a cross will only infuriate him – and vampires do not have any reflection in a mirror.

Lycanthropes are shape-changers; there are other types besides the werewolf listed in the *Tunnels and Trolls* rules. They become their animal selves under the light of the full moon. They are vulnerable to silver, and a silver-tipped arrow or silver bullet in the heart is the accepted method for killing them. Fire is rumored to work well in destroying both werewolves and vampires.

The Dexterity listed for the werewolf is only if the werewolf is the furred man (Lon Chaney) type. The full wolf form would have a functional *manual* Dexterity of 3, and his physical agility is at the 3/2 value. The loss of IQ will remove skills from his mind, starting with the highest IQ minimum skills he has. It will categorically remove any skills that need an IQ minimum higher than his IQ while he is in the werewolf form. If he has more skills than his skill points can cover in wolf form, he loses whichever skills the player choses to eliminate.

A mixture of fantasy and monsters can prove to be an interesting variation on the normal gaming themes. Horror movie settings are complete with atmosphere and cliches that make adapting them to gaming easy. The exploration of the local haunted house, especially during a hunt for an escaped madman from the local asylum is an excellent excuse for using strange and semi-magical devices in a game. In such a setting a secret door leading to a dark passage becomes far more scary and dangerous than it might be normally. The sounds an old house would make at any time become the proof that the maniac is stalking the characters. Best of all is their reaction when they have managed to escape the haunted house, especially if they have killed the madman, to discover that the real madman was captured hours before in the next town. Before long, they'll thoroughly believe in ghosts!

Shifting the time frame of an adventure can make it interesting. Everyone has enjoyed Three Musketeer movies and there is no reason the MSPE rules cannot be used to play out those adventures. Slipping magic, superstition or supernatural creatures into that type of setting would be easy and interesting.

These suggestions are flexible, and each GM should play with them until he feels comfortable with them. The bottom line is game balance, both in physical and game terms. It really is not a good idea to turn a werewolf loose on a bunch of armchair detectives who would have no chance of defending themselves. Try to gear these adventures to those who should be able to handle them.

Optional Rules for Magic

Magic is a big part of fantasy games as they exist now, and it creates a great deal of color in the games. Magic, when employed in mystery stories, also adds color and an element of excitement that spices up an otherwise unremarkable detective tale. However, magic can be more powerful than the weapons already described for use in MSPE; magic has the potential of unbalancing the game. While all characters can have guns, very few are going to be able to wield *magic*.

The magic system I expect to be used with MSPE is the *Tunnels and Trolls* magic system. To learn it, you will have to obtain a copy of the T&T rules. The reasons for the use of that magic system are legion; suffice it to say that the system works with a simplicity, logic and ease that makes it readily adaptable to MSPE.

Magic should be treated akin to any other skill, except it is one that no character can master without the express permission of the GMs he is playing with. Once a character has gained *Magic,* each other GM the character is to adventure under must allow the magic or refuse to let the character participate in that particular adventure.

As a skill, *Magic* has an IQ minimum of 19 and costs 10 skill points to master. This is to reflect the amount of cultural bias a character needs to break through to find an instructor and to master the magic arts. This skill will allow the characters to use T&T magic with the following two modifications. The level of your *Magic* skill indicates the level of the spells you may use provided you have the IQ and DEX minimums to master the spells. The second modification is that no spell will modify a personal attribute with the exception of spells that affect CON for an attack or healing.

Spells will take their Strength cost in weeks to learn and each one will cost in dollars what they would cost in T&T gold pieces. First level spells cost $250 each. This cost reflects the money which must be spent obtaining and translating old magical texts as well as obtaining some of the arcane materials needed for experiments in magic. A MSPE magicker may build makeshift staves, but will never find, in this world, a deluxe staff. The MSPE magicker must purchase all of his spells, including the first level spells. GMs might also require some ritual preparation or additional costs for some of the most powerful spells, such as *Banishing.*

The difficulty of handling magic will be compounded, no doubt, by the fact that very few people believe in it, and those who do believe it will tend to be evil. Moreover, every magic-using character should remember that there are still places where they burn witches . . . .





HIT LOCATION

Most of the gunshot wounds in this game will be fatal. There will probably be a desire on the part of players to find out where the target was hit, whether it is in the hope of avoiding certain death, or simply to add realism in order to judge whether a particular wound would or would not incapacitate a character. Furthermore, a character wearing body armor needs to know whether he or she was to be hit in an area covered by the armor. This section offers optional rules that determine where a target is struck, for those who want to know this information.

When a bullet hits a body area covered by armor, GMs should allow the armor to stop as much damage *per bullet* as the armor is rated for. When a bullet hits an unarmored part of the body it should do full damage.

To determine the location of any hit, two six-sided dice must be rolled, one after the other. (You can also roll 2 different-color dice after deciding which one is "first" and which is "second.") Their values are not added, but read like a two digit number. ☐ For example, the roll of a 1 and 4 are read as a 14. Cross-reference this number with the list below to tell where the shots hit. The chart is written assuming a shot at a man-sized target is most likely to hit the man between the throat and knees.

This chart begs the obvious question which must be answered by writing the most grisly part of these rules. The question is something like, "What happens when a character gets hit in the head with a bullet from a .44 Automag?" The answer to this question is generally unpleasant, and depends on several factors that will be dealt with below. For purposes of definition, note that any hit that generates enough damage to drive a character's CON to zero or below is referred to hereafter as "maxing the CON" – "max" for "maximum damage."

Hits to the head or heart that generate more damage than the character's CON are instant kills. Direct hits to those areas will cause such massive damage that even the most skilled doctor could only keep the patient alive for a short time. *A hit to the spine that maxes the character's CON* will kill the character unless he gets medical attention. If the character can make an unmodified Luck saving roll against the amount of damage done, he will not be paralyzed by the wound and will recover. If he misses that Luck saving roll (and he only gets one chance), he will be paralyzed from the waist down.

Hits that damage a limb and max the CON of the character with that shot are likely to remove that limb. ☐ A forearm hit that maxes the character's CON will rip off the forearm and the hand below it. A GM may use the same saving roll on Luck against the damage done, as suggested above, to see if the limb can be saved with medical attention.

If a bullet does not max the CON of a character the damage done is handled a bit differently. If a head shot does more than 10% of the character's original CON in damage, the character will be knocked out. He will stay out for a number of hours equal to the number of hits done to him. Hits to legs will slow a character down when walking or running; the percentage of damage done on CON can be used to reduce Speed as well. An arm wound might cause a percentage reduction in Dexterity for the purpose of aiming a gun. A hit to the heart, spine or chest will render a character *hors de combat* (unable to fight or move) if it does more than 30% damage to the character's CON. GMs may wish to modify this inability to fight if a character is going to sacrifice himself and stay behind to delay pursuit, or some equally noble, heroic action, as often happens in novels. Dramatic license on the GM's part is both permitted and encouraged.

If a shot does one or two points of damage (because of the adds of the shooter or the caliber of the gun or because of armor), it will have no material effect on the character. Damage results of 1 and 2 indicate flesh wounds and creases: a chest shot bounces off a rib, a stomach shot is stopped by a belt buckle or a head shot just grazes the temple. A GM might even wish to consider a shot to the shoulder as doing no damage at all, as TV detectives are constantly being shot in the shoulder with no evident reduction in their abilities.

The last point to be discussed about gunshots and hits is "knockdown". Knockdown refers to the ability of a bullet to physically knock a character down, preventing him from doing anything for a round or two. If a character misses a Strength saving roll against the amount of damage done by the bullet, he is knocked flat if he wasn't already on the ground. If he was already prone, he must still attempt the saving roll. If he misses the roll, he still suffers the detriments of being knocked down. He can do nothing in whatever remains of this missile weapon round and is instantly considered to be "dodging" for the purpose of other targetting rolls. If a character is knocked down with the final shot of a missile weapon round, he is classed as "dodging" for the next full round, and may then resume full action on the following round. The knockdown roll may be ignored for all characters who have been killed by a shot, and the knockdown roll must be made against the damage of the bullet, regardless of how much damage the character himself takes. A hit on a flak vest will still knock a character down, even though he takes no damage.

Hit Location Chart

# rolled	*Location hit*	*# rolled*	*Location hit*
11	Head	41	Right shin
12	Rt. hand/paw/tentacle	42	Groin
13	Right shoulder	43	Chest
14	Right shin	44	Left thigh
15	Stomach	45	Left thigh
16	Spine	46	Left shoulder
21	Left hand/paw/tentacle	51	Heart
22	Left forearm	52	Chest
23	Right thigh	53	Stomach
24	Stomach	54	Left kneecap
25	Chest	55	Right forearm
26	Spine	56	Right foot
31	Right shoulder	61	Heart
32	Right kneecap	62	Stomach
33	Right thigh	63	Left shin
34	Chest	64	Left shoulder
35	Groin	65	Left foot
36	Left shin	66	Head



Colt Diamondback

CAR CRASHES

During the course of the game there will probably come a time when a vehicle of some sort will collide with something or go off the road. This is most likely to happen when a *Fast Driving* roll is missed, and is almost certain to happen when an enemy shoots the tires out. Below are the suggested ways to handle accidents, not-so-accidental accidents, and what happens to the people inside when a vehicle goes out of control. Referring to the Crash Chart that follows will draw this information together. Vehicles and other likely targets are classed as to the amount of damage they can take in an accident, and how much they are likely to inflict on the vehicle striking them. If a target that is hit is not listed, GMs are encouraged to extrapolate from this chart.

Single Car Accidents

To determine the damage done to a *vehicle* when it strikes a car or person, or when it goes off the road, divide its speed by 5 to determine the number of dice it takes in damage, rounding down. ☐ For example, Henry's Ford Mustang goes off the road and crashes at 55 mph. Fifty-five divided by 5 is 11; the GM will roll 11 six-sided dice to determine how much damage is done to the car. The Mustang is considered a compact car, so according to the Crash Chart, it can take 35 hits before it is totaled.

Multi-car Accidents

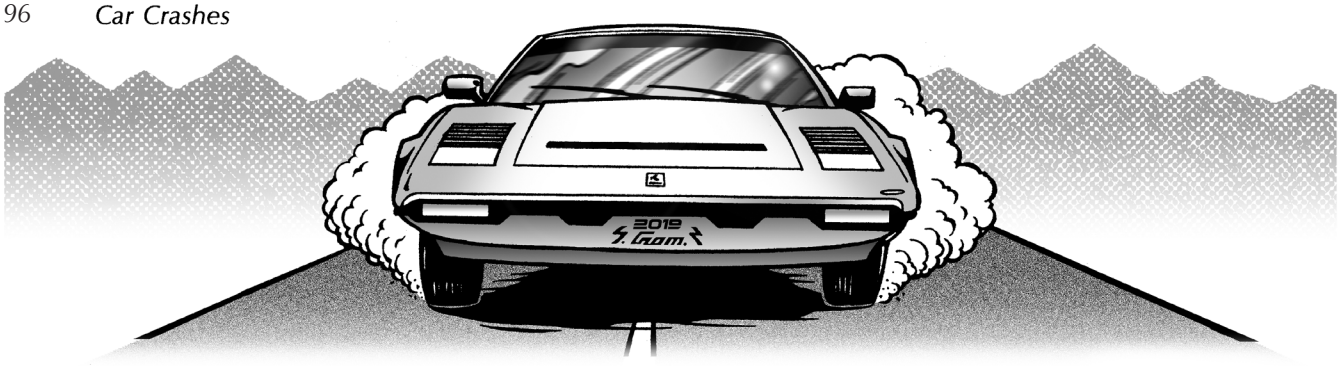
When a car collides with another vehicle, total their speeds, divide by 5, and use that number of dice to apply damage to both cars. ☐ If Henry accidently crashed into a little old lady in a station wagon going 25 mph, the damage would be different than that above. Add Henry's speed of 55 to the lady's speed of 25 for a result of 80. Dividing by 5, the result is 16. The GM should roll 16 dice, and divide the resulting damage evenly between the Ford and the station wagon.

People in Accidents

When figuring out the amount of damage done to a *person* involved in an accident, it is first important to determine how much damage is being done in the accident itself. If the car is in a single car accident, such as one vehicle going off the road, the damage is determined by rolling the dice for the speed the vehicle is going when it leaves the road. The total possible damage that a given accident might inflict on the passengers in that accident will be referred to as the *Passenger Damage Potential* or PDP. This is a *potential,* not automatic damage.

Each character in the car being damaged must make a Luck saving roll against the PDP of the accident. If the character makes the roll, the character has been lucky enough to be thrown clear – miraculously unhurt. If the saving roll is missed, the character takes damage equal to the number he missed the saving roll by. If the character fails to make the minimum 5 for the saving roll, he must take the amount he missed the saving roll by or half the PDP, whichever is greater. Fractions round up.

☐ Example: Orion and Alex are rushing to the scene of a robbery when Orion's car blows a tire at 40 mph. The car rockets off the road and down an embankment. Rolling 8 dice, the GM finds the damage to the car – and thus the PDP – was 24, a very lucky roll for our two reporters. Orion must make a saving



roll against that 24 with his Luck of 10. He must roll a 14 on two six-sided dice. He rolls two sets of doubles (fives and threes), then rolls a 5. That totals to 21 and indicates that Orion is unhurt in the accident.

Alex, who doesn't believe in seatbelts, has a Luck of 7. He needs to roll a 17. He rolls only a 6, meaning he has to take 11 points of damage. Alex only has a CON of 9, and in this accident he is critically wounded.

Orion's Honda Civic, a subcompact car, took 24 points of damage and is all but totaled. The 1 point of damage left over shall be assumed to be the CB radio that enables Orion to call an ambulance for Alex (who survives, by the way).

Ramming

One vehicle can also force another off the road by ramming; one car can ram a second car which is stationary as well. Both will cause damage to all the cars in the accident, but the car doing the ramming will usually take less damage. The method of determining the amount of damage is different, depending on whether the target vehicle is stationary or moving.

When ramming a stationary car, apply all the normal damage appropriate to the ramming car's speed against the target car. ☐ In other words, if a jeep (treat like a family car) going 25 mph rams a parked motocycle, the jeep will do 5 dice damage to the motorcycle. The motocycle will do a little damage to the jeep as well – the "damage returned", or the amount of damage fed back to the car initiating the problem. In the case of the jeep and the motorcycle, the bike will do only 1d6 damage to the jeep – and the damage will probably be largely cosmetic.

The damage done to a car by the target it rams can be used as the PDP for any passengers in the ramming car. ☐ If the 1d6 above rolled as a 4, then the driver of the jeep in the above example is facing a PDP of 4, though he must still make a Luck saving roll against the minimum 5.

A pedestrian being rammed is in a bit of a different situation: he must make a Dexterity saving roll against the PDP of the vehicle ramming him. If he makes it, he gets clear; if he misses, he must take the difference in damage. But if he fails to roll a minimum 5, he should take the full PDP. A martial artist might make a case for attempting to make that saving roll on Speed.

To force a car off the road, the ramming car is trying to "bump" another car which is also moving, presumably in the same general direction. Less damage will accrue since both cars will be moving at similar speeds (whatever that speed may be). The "Damage Returned" column is used here, under slightly different circumstances than above. The ramming car rolls its "Damage Returned" dice and applies that total against the car being rammed. If the damage exceeds 50% of the "Damage Taken" rating for the rammed vehicle, it has been forced off the road. The driver of any car forced off the road will have to check for control of the car as if he were making a *Fast Driving* saving roll, whether or not he has the skill. As with *Fast Driving*, the difference between the legal speed limit and the speed of the car is what is important. If he fails the roll, the above procedure for crashing a single car should be initiated. The driver of the ramming car will have to check for damage taken in the ram – the target vehicle's Damage Returned is the amount of damage the ramming car takes. If this damage should also exceed 50% of the ramming car's Damage Taken, then that driver must also check whether he can control the car with a *Fast Driving* saving roll. Should the ramming car's driver miss that saving roll, his car will *also* have a crash, to be figured as a regular single-car accident above.

Other Considerations

Damage done to a car is assumed to be structural damage. If 60% or more damage is done to a car, it cannot be driven. Repairs will cost $100 per point of damage done to the car. In many cases, it will be cheaper to buy a used car than to repair a damaged one. Car insurance may be a wise investment.

The movement rate for a car on a map can be determined by the following simple formula. The speed of the car should be multiplied by the amount of time it is driven at that speed. This will yield the total distance traveled in that time. The time it will take to travel from one point to another may be determined by dividing the distance by the rate of speed being traveled. The same

formula will describe the movements of humans on foot or mounted on riding animals. Note that the damage shown on the Crash Chart is the amount of damage a vehicle will take *in a crash*. The amount of damage a vehicle will take as the result of a *weapons attack* may be determined by multiplying the crash damage by 10. □ In other words, it will take 250 hits worth of damage from weaponry to totally destroy a subcompact car.

Car Crash Damage Chart

Class	*Damage Taken*	*Damage Returned*	*Target Type*
0	CON	CON ÷ 10 round up	man/animal
1	10	1d6	motorcycle/sapling
2	25	2d6	subcompact
3	35	3d6	compact
4	40	4d6	family car/sedan
5	50	5d6	van/pick-up truck
6	65	6d6	APC/heavy truck
7	75	7d6	tank



How Speed Affects Braking Distance

This information might be helpful if you want to calculate how long it would take a driver to be able to stop. In most genres it seems to often be the case that the drivers have almost instant reactions to any given driving situation.

In the real world, a lot of different factors can affect braking distance. Braking distance is a measurement of how far a vehicle travels during the time it takes to come to a complete stop once a driver hits the brakes.

Thinking Distance: is the amount of time it takes for a driver to decide to hit the brakes, and then actually hit them. Drivers need a second or two to move their foot to the brake pedal. Reaction time can be slowed down if the driver is sleepy, sick, impaired, or distracted. A *saving roll* on **IQ** and/or **SP,** can determine a characters Thinking Distance in a given driving situation.

Braking Distance: is the time it takes for the car to come to a complete stop after the driver has hit the brakes. When a driver **doubles** the speed of their car, the braking distance **quadruples.**

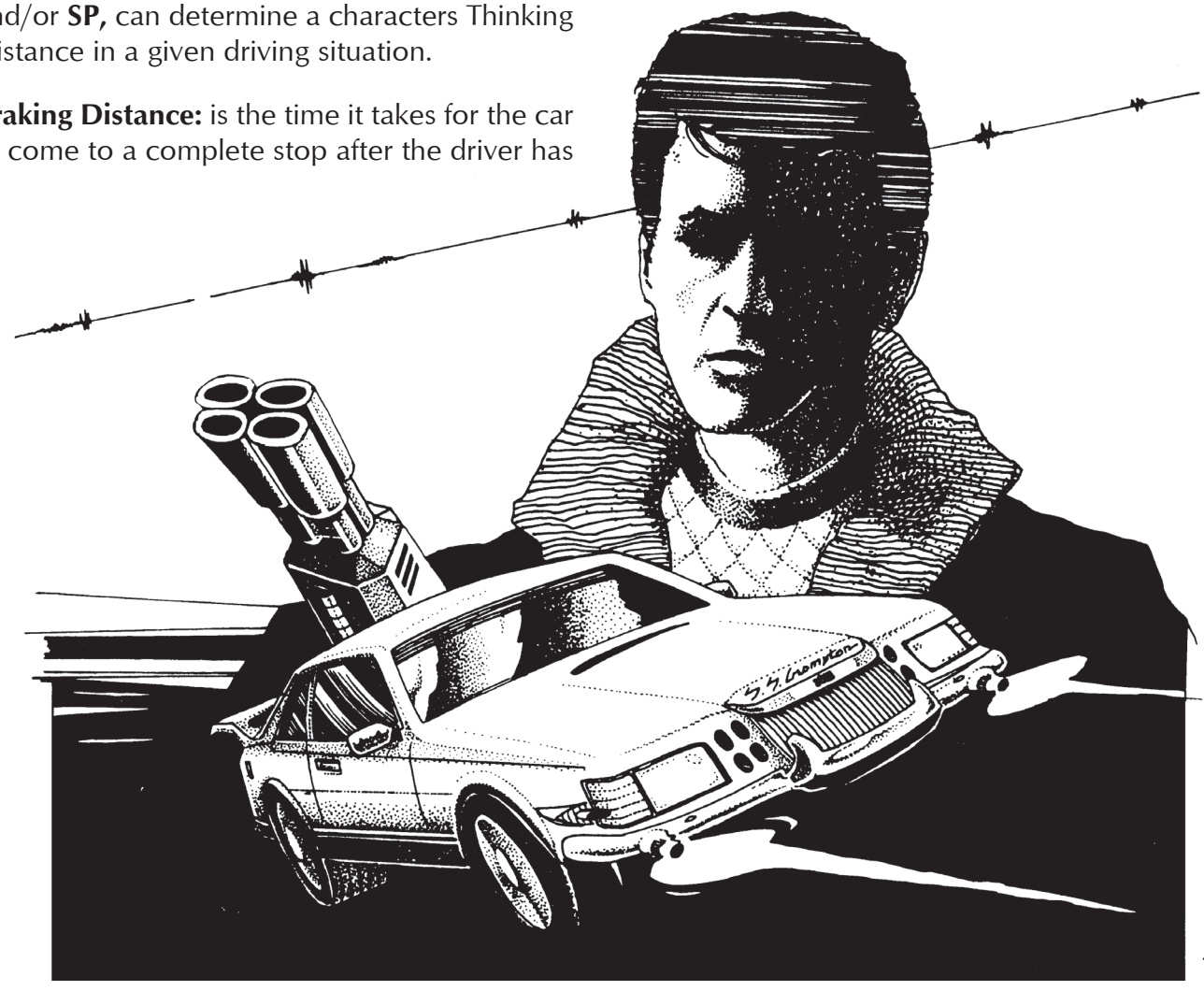
Total Stopping Distance: is the equation for figuring out how far a car will go from the moment a driver sees a hazard to the moment they're completely stopped is: [thinking distance] + [braking distance] = [total stopping distance]

See the total stopping distance equations below for vehicles driving at various speeds.

60 mph: Thinking Distance of 60 feet + Braking Distance of 180 feet = Total Distance of 240 feet.

40 mph: Thinking Distance of 40 feet + Braking Distance of 80 feet = Total Distance of 120 feet.

20 mph: Thinking Distance of 20 feet + Braking Distance of 20 feet = Total Distance of 40 feet.

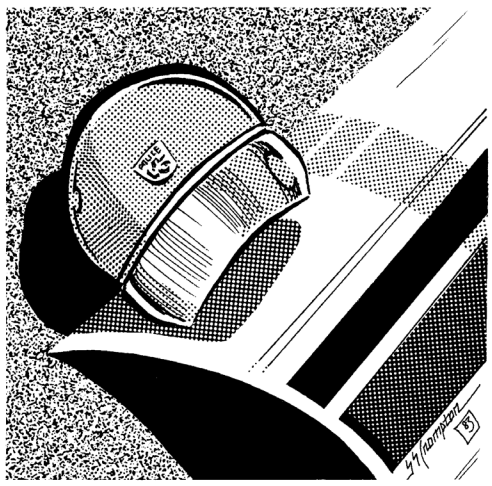


BOOK 3:

Provisions and More

This third section of the rulebook contains all the weapons and equipment charts, and descriptions of many of the more obscure or complicated items. There are some optional rules and suggestions which you may want to incorporate into your games; we offer them in the hope that you will find them interesting and useful. At the end you will find a list of suggested material worth reading for ideas and reference, and also an index intended to help you find a particular reference inside the rulebook.

PROVISIONS



This section of the rules details how you can find everything that your character will need to survive. Printed here is a large selection of weapons, both military and domestic (private), as well as a few of the more esoteric things available. General provisions are also listed. Provisions can be useful; a character whose main skill is in *Photography* may be useless without a camera in hand.

You may find the list of general equipment relatively short. The reason is quite simple; it is impractical to print a Sears catalog here. However, there is no reason why you could not use a Sears catalog to supplement the lists of provisions already here. After all, since the game is played in a contemporary world, there is nothing for sale in a catalog, on TV, or in a newspaper that your character could not buy, provided he had the money.

The firearms will be presented in roughly chronological order. Those who wish to adventure in the 1930s will be able to find the weapons available in that time listed and dated. If a weapon or item was designed and built later than the timeframe of the game, it should not be available to the players.

The prices on weapons and other provisions are listed in dollars (U.S.) or by the letter code "V". The price code "V" stands for Variable and means "I have no idea what it cost new, or what value it has now as a collectors item." It can also mean that the item in question has an exceptionally wide variation in price (which may or may not directly reflect quality). Prices for such items should be adjusted to suit the economy of your campaign and the time period.

Weapons of all sorts are listed for damage done in the column "Dice and Adds." When a character uses the weapon, "Dice" is the number of dice rolled to determine damage; "Adds" are added to that dice total to bring the grand total to a figure appropriate to that weapon. Adds for a weapon *can* be negative. For firearms, this Dice and Adds damage is *per bullet.*

All of the guns used in MSPE are real, and their dice and adds have been determined by use of a simple arithmetic formula. The values for the weapons were checked against reports of their effectiveness to check the accuracy. On the whole, guns are very deadly and will usually cause serious injury if not death. All of the other details of the guns are figured from data supplied in books concerning price, caliber, size of the magazine (how many bullets the gun can hold), and so on. Many guns were not included in the listings because they are so much like other guns available. The following formula, however, allows you to create and use any of the guns you fancy personally. The formula for creating gun statistics is:

(Muzzle Velocity × Grain Weight of the bullet)/45,000

Muzzle velocity must be in feet per second. The divisor 45,000 was chosen to get rid of all the zeroes produced in the multiplication and so each bullet would have dice and adds somewhat approaching their correct damage. The number to the left of the decimal place is the number of dice each bullet gets. The decimal remainder is used to figure the adds for the gun by the following protocol:

.01 or less to .1 = no adds
.11 to .25 = one add
.251 to .5 = two adds
.51 to .75 = three adds
.751 or greater = another die

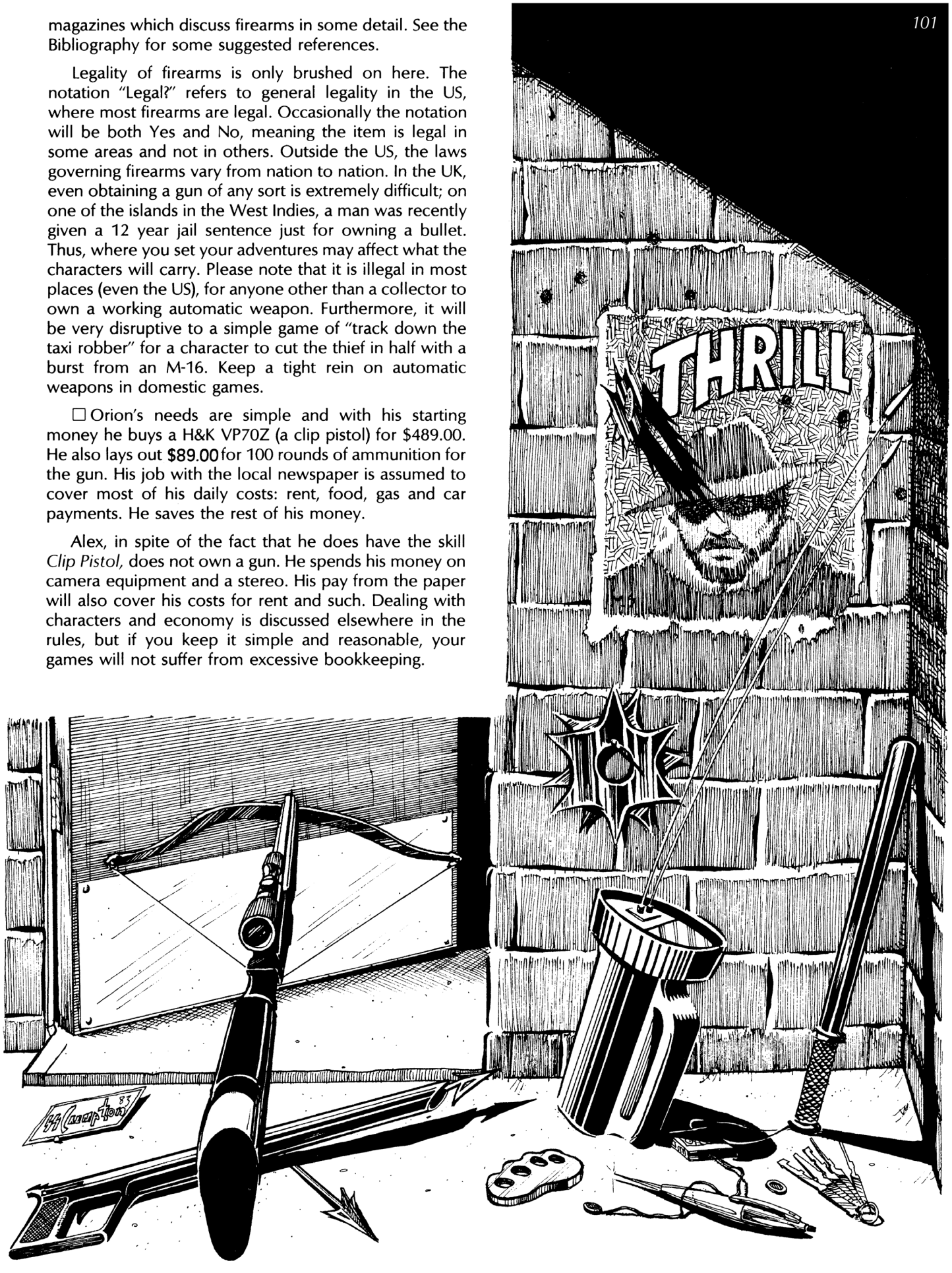
The necessary data on muzzle velocities and bullet weights are generally available from books and

magazines which discuss firearms in some detail. See the Bibliography for some suggested references.

Legality of firearms is only brushed on here. The notation "Legal?" refers to general legality in the US, where most firearms are legal. Occasionally the notation will be both Yes and No, meaning the item is legal in some areas and not in others. Outside the US, the laws governing firearms vary from nation to nation. In the UK, even obtaining a gun of any sort is extremely difficult; on one of the islands in the West Indies, a man was recently given a 12 year jail sentence just for owning a bullet. Thus, where you set your adventures may affect what the characters will carry. Please note that it is illegal in most places (even the US), for anyone other than a collector to own a working automatic weapon. Furthermore, it will be very disruptive to a simple game of "track down the taxi robber" for a character to cut the thief in half with a burst from an M-16. Keep a tight rein on automatic weapons in domestic games.

☐ Orion's needs are simple and with his starting money he buys a H&K VP70Z (a clip pistol) for $489.00. He also lays out **$89.00** for 100 rounds of ammunition for the gun. His job with the local newspaper is assumed to cover most of his daily costs: rent, food, gas and car payments. He saves the rest of his money.

Alex, in spite of the fact that he does have the skill *Clip Pistol,* does not own a gun. He spends his money on camera equipment and a stereo. His pay from the paper will also cover his costs for rent and such. Dealing with characters and economy is discussed elsewhere in the rules, but if you keep it simple and reasonable, your games will not suffer from excessive bookkeeping.



Hand Weapons and Other Items

Note: the prices listed here have risen since they were first published in the 1980's.

Name	Dice and Adds	Cost	Missile Weapon Table	Legal?
Switch Blade*	2	$25	–	No
Lock Blade*	2 + 1	$30	–	Yes
Hunting Knife*	2 + 2	$35	–	Yes
Throwing Knife*	2 – 1	$15	I (max 25 feet)	Yes
Machete*	3	$25	–	Yes
Dagger Pen§	1 + 2	$30	–	Y/N
Hatchet	2 + 5	$35	I (max 25 yards)	Yes
Axe	3 + 2	$45	I (max 15 yards)	Yes
Tomahawk	2 + 4	$35	I (max 25 yards)	Yes
Sword Cane*	3	$90	–	No
Rapier*	3 + 4	V	–	Yes
Katana*	4 + 1	V	–	Yes
Bullwhip	1 – 1	$25	–	No
Bola	–	$25	I (max 30 yards)	Yes
Crossbow	4 + 3	$125	I (max 200 yards)	Y/N
Recurve Bow	4	$150	I (max 200 yards)	Yes
Pulley Bow	6	$250	I (max 200 yards)	Yes
Arrows (each)	–	75¢-$5	–	Yes
Spear	4	V	II (max 100 yards)	Yes
Brass Knuckles	2 – 3	$20	–	No
Chain (3-5 feet)	3 + 1	$15	–	No
Broken Bottle	1 + 3	0 cost	–	No
Petrol Bomb§	‡	50¢	I (range ‡)	No
Blow Gun	½	$20	I (max 50 yards)	Yes
Darts (48)	–	$2.50	–	Yes
Billy Club	3	V	–	Yes
Shuriken	1	$3	I (max 25 feet)	No
Wrist Rocket	2	$25	I (max 45 yards)	Yes
Air Rifle	1	$25/V	II (max 100 yards)	Yes
Air Pistol	1	$25/V	I (max 50 yards)	Yes
Hypodart (1)	–	$2	–	Yes
Tear Gas Gun§	‡	$10	–	Y/N
Gas Pellets (10)§	–	$2	–	Y/N
Tear Gas Spray§	‡	$6	–	Yes
Tazer§	4	$250	II (max 25 feet)	Yes
Electrodes§	–	$1	–	Yes
Shock Rod§	2	$20	–	Yes
Flamethrower§	‡	I/C	–	No
Spear Gun	4	$75	I (max 25 yards)	Yes
Boomstick§	8	$25	–	Yes
Lock Picks	–	$100	–	No
Bugging kit	–	$150/V	–	No
Counterbug Kit	–	$250/V	–	Yes
Black Box§	–	$30	–	Y/N
Holster§	–	V	–	Yes
Silencer§	–	V	–	No
Scope§	–	V	–	Yes

"Legal? Y/N" means legality varies widely. § means there is more complete information following. ‡ means that the dice and adds, or the range of the weapon, are changeable, and players should consult the longer description following. "I/C" means item must be issued or captured.

About the items marked with a *: when used in a "total parry," knives and swords may block up to the maximum damage they do in hits. If the character does not have the skill with that weapon, no parry can be attempted. □ Example: The maximum damage done by a rapier is (3 × 6) + 4 = 22. A rapier may absorb up to 22 hits before damage begins to get through to the person using it. If the weapon's maximum is exceeded by 50%, the weapon will snap and be worth half its dice and adds. □ In the above example, the rapier would break if it tried to parry 33 points of damage. A katana of traditional Japanese manufacture will break only if its maximum is exceeded by 100% of the hits it can parry. When dividing, always round down.

Pistols can be used like clubs, in which case they get 2 dice in combat or the number of dice they normally get in combat, *whichever is less.* Rifles used as clubs get 4 dice. Fixed with a bayonet and used as a spear, a rifle gets 3 dice in combat but cannot be thrown. A rifle cannot be used as a club and as a bayonet in the same combat round unless the character has the skill *Rifle: 5+.*

►**Tazer:** A tazer is a flashlight-like weapon which fires two electrodes at its target. The wielder of the weapon then presses a button which causes a nasty shock to be delivered to the target. When a target is hit, the shooter must make a zero-level saving roll (roll a minimum of 5 on two dice) to make sure both electrodes are in. A tazer will work even if the electrodes are in clothing; they don't need to hit flesh. If they are in, the tazer then may be triggered to give a 4 dice shock to the target. The damage should be handled similar to damage caused in hand-to-hand fighting; in other words, a tazer will not kill, it will only knock someone out. The tazer must be charged with an electrode; these can only be used once, though once shot, they can continue to deliver shocks if still attached to the target.

►**Shock Rod:** The shock rod is a 22-inch long tool constructed for animal control. Each rod is battery powered and will function like a tazer except that the target must be touched.The shock rod is designed for, and is most often used for, keeping animals or people in line.

►**Boomstick:** A boomstick is a weapon frequently used by underwater divers to ward off sharks and other undersea nasties. It consists of a stick anywhere from 4 to 6 feet long with a shotgun shell attached on the business end of it. To discharge the shell, the shark is poked with the shell end of the stick. The shell is driven back onto a firing pin and discharges. There is no range for this weapon, as it must actually touch the creature or person it is to be used against. A zero-level DEX saving roll is required to fire it. A missed saving roll indicates a botched attempt at poking the subject, not a bad shell. Another touch may be attempted with the same shell, and a second miss indicates a bad shell.

►**Flamethrower:** A flamethrower is a device that shoots a stream of flammable liquid at a target and causes the liquid to ignite. A flamethrower must be *issued* or *captured.* It works on Missile Weapon Chart II, and the damage done may be spread out among several targets within one area. Any target failing a first-level Luck saving roll will remain burning. Inanimate objects or unconscious bodies do not get a chance to make the saving roll. The initial burst from a flamethrower will do 6 dice damage to a target. The target will take 3 dice damage for each hand-to-hand round it is still burning. A flamethrower may only fire once per round, and a full tank will last for 60 shots. If a person using a flamethrower is shot and killed, there is a 50% chance that the bullets also hit and ignited the tank. If the Hit Location Chart is being used, and the person using the flamethrower is hit in the chest/heart/spine, the tank will explode doing 20 dice damage at ground zero (the point of explosion), and losing one die for each foot away from ground zero. The person with the flamethrower may not care, but his buddies should.

►**Petrol Bombs:** These are home-made explosive devices more commonly known as "molotov cocktails." A molotov cocktail is a glass bottle full of gasoline with a flaming rag tied to its neck. Its range is the thrower's Strength times 3 yards in distance. Use Missile Weapon Chart I to figure the "to hit" number for a throw. Any miss caused by the person missing the minimum 5 means the cocktail blew up before it was thrown. Ground zero of a cocktail attack will take 4 dice. As with the flamethrower, a saving roll should be made to see if the target catches fire. If it does, it will take 2 dice damage for each hand-to-hand round it is still on fire.

►**Holsters:** Holsters are used to hold and conceal guns. A dashboard holster will sell for $25 and will hold a gun out of sight below the dashboard of most cars. A shoulder holster designed for concealment will cost $40. An ankle holster designed to hold a small gun sells for $30 while a shoulder holster for a Mac 10 SMG goes for $60. A holster designed to conceal a gun in the small of the back goes for $27 while the good old belt holster hanging at your hip costs $35.

►**Dagger Pen:** The dagger pen is a commercially available weapon that is used much like an ice pick. It cannot be thrown. It looks like an ordinary pen until you press its clip. A four-inch long spike then shoots out of the tip and provides a nasty weapon.

►**Tear Gas Gun:** These are guns that look much like .22 caliber revolvers; they are available for shooting tear gas pellets at enemies. They don't actually shoot a projectile; instead they explode pellets and create a cloud of gas. They have no range because a person must be very near his target. If a gassed assailant misses a first-level saving roll on Luck, he will be rendered unable to do anything for 1 die worth of hand-to-hand combat rounds. The gun sells for $10 and cannot be brought onto an airplane. The guns fire during the missile weapon combat rounds of combat.

Police tear gas canisters are delivered by rifle. They will produce 100 square feet of gas per missile weapon round and will last for 6 rounds. Anyone in a cloud will have to make one level of saving roll per canister present. A missed saving roll will leave a person incapable of anything but surrender for turns equal to the

total of 1 die per canister. ☐ For example, 3 canisters within 100′ of a character (even if the canisters are not within 100′ of each other) means a third-level saving roll and 3 dice worth of turns of reduced activity if the roll is missed. Police tear gas rifles and canisters must be *issued* or *captured.*

►**Tear Gas Spray:** This is a small spray canister filled with a tear gas like CS gas or Mace. The sprayers work as the guns above: there is no range and the victim must attempt a Level 1 Luck saving roll to escape being taken out. A person taken out with tear gas is unable to do anything for 1 die worth of combat turns. A canister contains about 10 uses, and a character can use a sprayer once per hand-to-hand round. These also cannot be brought onto airplanes.

►**The Black Box:** In this context, a Black Box is a device to be hooked into a telephone line that will automatically turn on a tape recorder attached to it. The item sells for $30 and is quite illegal to use in "covert taping" of calls.

►**Scopes:** Telescopic sights for rifles and pistols vary in price from $9 to well over $500. The better scopes seem to run between $60 to $150, and any scopes bought in the game should fall into this price range. Night scopes are available and should be figured at costing $850. Night scopes cannot be used during the daytime.

►**Silencers:** A silencer is a device which attaches to the barrel of a gun or rifle to deaden the gunfire report. Within 10 yards radius of the gunshot, the sound is a short muffled "cough." Beyond 10 yards, the shots generally cannot be heard. The basic cost is $100; for $200 a silencer can be had which will also hide the muzzle flash. All modern (20th Century) guns can generally take a silencer; no black-powder weapons can be silenced.

Old and Odd Guns

All these guns use Missile Weapon Chart I except for the Smith & Wesson Revolving Rifle which uses Chart II. All prices for these guns are variable.

Muzzle Loaders

Name	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Date created*	*Dice and Adds*
Italian Wheelock	.437	1	1520	1 + 2
German Snaphaunce	.675	1	1575	3 + 3
Flintlock	.625	1	1575	4
Irish Blunderbuss	.62	1	1600	4

Percussion Cap Pistols

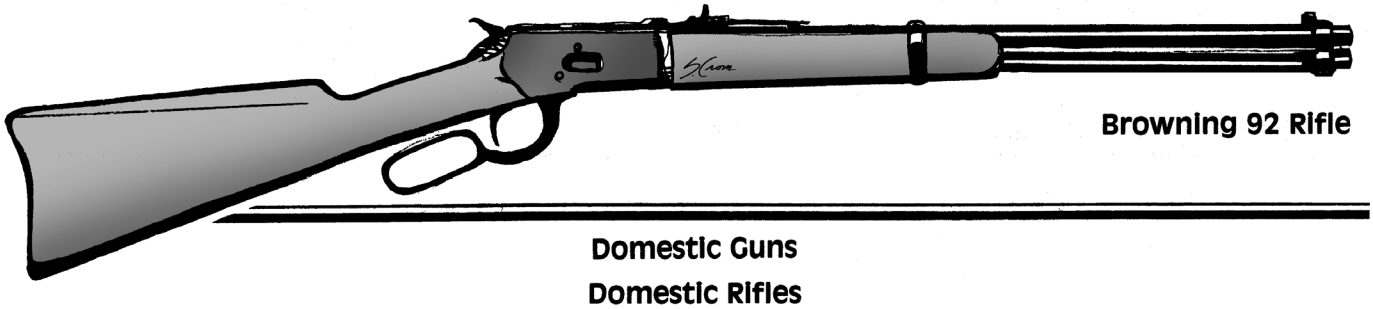
Name	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Date created*	*Dice and Adds*
Tower Cavalry Pistol	.75	1	1842	7 + 2
Mariette Pepperbox	.38	6	1837	1
Tape Primer Pistol	.32	6	1851	1
Colt Dragoon 1849	.44	6	1849	2 + 2
Remington Army 1863	.44	6	1863	2 + 1



Remington Army 1863 .44 Caliber Pistol

Cartridge Pistols

Name	Caliber	Capacity	Date created	Dice and Adds
Colt Army 45	.45	6	1873	3 + 3
Colt Peacemaker	.44	6	1873	3
Remington Revolver	.44	6	1875	3 + 1
Smith & Wesson #3	.32	6	1871	1 + 1
Smith & Wesson Rev Rifle	.32	6	1879	1 + 2
Remington Deringer	.41	1	1866	2 + 1
Colt Deringer #3	.41	1	1830	2 + 1
Turbiaux Palm Squeeze	6mm	10	1882	1



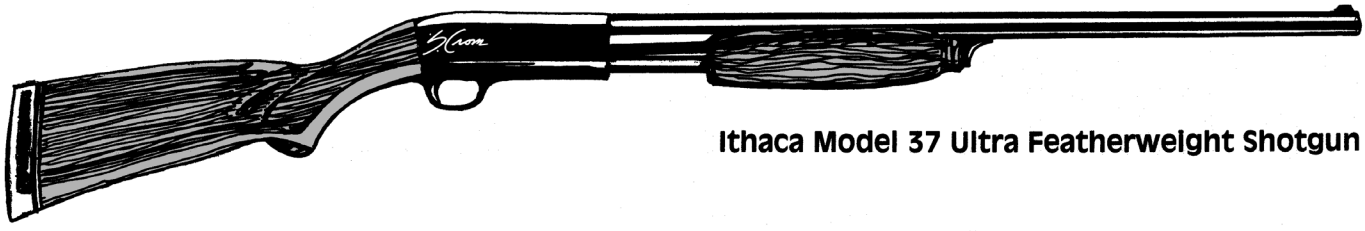
Browning 92 Rifle

Domestic Guns

Domestic Rifles

All rifles on this chart target with Missile Weapon Chart II. In this context, "Domestic" means "non-military."

Maker	Name	Caliber	Capacity	Cost	Dice and Adds
Browning	BL22	.22LR	15	$ 219.95	2 + 2
Browning	BLR	.308	4 clip	$ 364.95	10 + 2
Browning	BB Bolt action	.30-06	5 clip	$ 429.95	12
Browning	92	.44 Rem. Magnum	11	$ 299.95	9 + 1
Charter Arms	Explorer 9220	.22LR	8 clip	$ 98.00	2 + 2
Colt	Sauer Grand African	.458 Win. Magnum	3 clip	$1108.95	23
Colt	AR-15	.223	5 clip	$ 475.95	4
Fabrique Nat.	FNLAR Paratrooper	.223	30 clip	$1798.00	4
Renato Gambia	Safari 77	.375 H&H Magnum	2	$9134.60	17
H&R	155	.45-70 Gov't	1	$ 110.00	12
Heckler & Koch	93	.223	25 clip	$ 638.00	4
Iver Johnson	PP30	.30	30 clip	$ 271.04	5



Ithaca Model 37 Ultra Featherweight Shotgun

Shotguns

Use Missile Weapon Chart II for the first two shotguns listed. Sawed-off shotguns (homemade) fire like pistols on Missile Weapon Chart I. Dice vary depending on range; their Dice and Adds column shows the dice for each of the first three ranges. Shotguns do not reach the longer ranges.

Maker	Name	Caliber	Capacity	Cost	Dice and Adds
Ithaca	37 M&P	12 gauge	8 pump	$350.00	8/4/2
Remington	1100	12 gauge	5 auto	$395.00	8/4/2
Homemade	Sawed-off	12 gauge	2	V	10/1/0

Domestic Clip Pistols

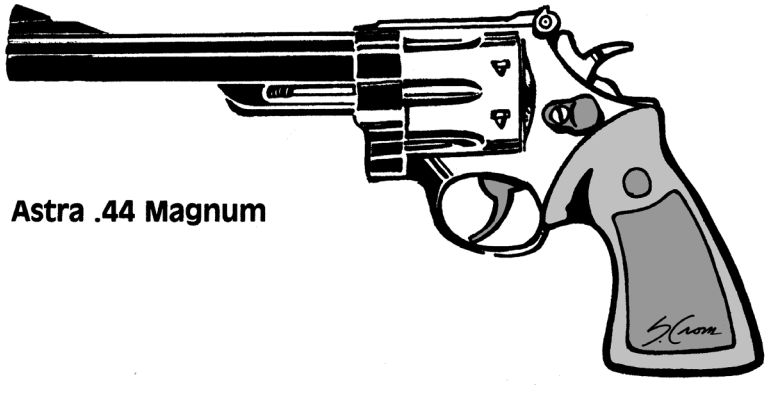
All handguns fire on Missile Weapon Chart I.

Maker	*Name*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Cost*	*Dice and Adds*
Beretta	M92S	9mm Parabellum	15	$543.00	3
Browning	9mm	9mm Parabellum	14	$474.00	3
Charter Arms	Explorer II	.22LR	8	$ 99.00	1 + 1
Heckler & Koch	VP70Z	9mm Parabellum	18	$489.00	2 + 3
Smith & Wesson	9mm Auto	9mm Parabellum	8	$284.00	3
Sterling	22 Auto	.22LR	6	$104.95	1 + 1
Walther	P38K	9mm Parabellum	8	$750.00	3
Walther	PP22LR	.22LR	8	$625.00	1 + 1
Walther	PP32Auto	.32 APC	7	$600.00	2
Walther	PP380Auto	.380 APC	7	$600.00	3
Walther	PPK/8	.380 APC	7	$290.00	3
Automag	44 Automag	.44 Automag	8	V	8

Revolvers and Single Shot Pistols

The homemade zipgun cannot be fired accurately at farther than short range. All these handguns fire on Missile Weapon Chart I.

Maker	*Name*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Cost*	*Dice and Adds*
Astra	357 Magnum	.357 Magnum	6	$300.00	4 + 1
Astra	44 Magnum	.44 Magnum	6	$395.00	7
Astra	41 Magnum	.41 Magnum	6	$395.00	6
Astra	45 Colt	.45 Colt	6	$395.00	4 + 3
Charter Arms	Bulldog 38 Special	.38 Special	6	$184.00	3
Charter Arms	Bulldog 357 Mag.	.357 Magnum	5	$215.00	4 + 1
Charter Arms	Bulldog 44 Special	.44 Special	5	$216.00	4
Charter Arms	Undercover 32	.32	6	$173.00	2 + 1
Charter Arms	Undercover 38	.38 Special	5	$173.00	3
Colt	Python	.357 Magnum	6	$519.00	4 + 1
Colt	Diamondback	.38 Special	6	$361.95	3
Colt	Detective Special	.38 Special	6	$300.00	3
Colt	Lawman MKIII	.357 Magnum	6	$292.00	4 + 1
High Standard	Derringer	.22 Magnum	2	$130.00	2
Smith & Wesson	44 Magnum	.44 Magnum	6	$433.07	7
Homemade	"Zipgun"	.22LR	1	V	1



Astra .44 Magnum

Military Guns

Military Hand Guns

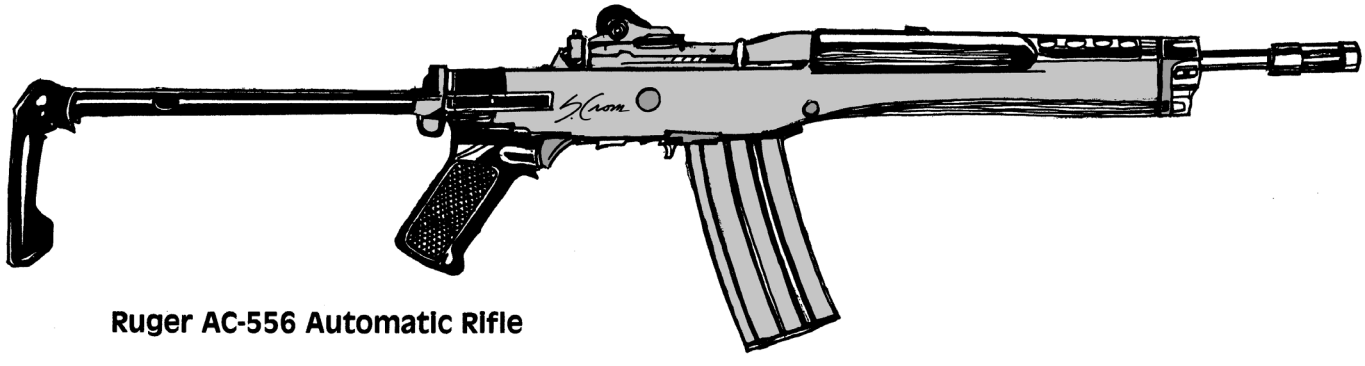
All of these guns use Missile Weapon Chart I for targeting. No costs are given because all guns are assumed to be issued or obtained by capture.

Nation	*Designation*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Type of gun*	*Era*	*Dice and Adds*
Great Britain	Webley MK IV	.455	6	Revolver	Pre-1947	3 + 3
Great Britain	Enfield MK I	.38 S&W	6	Revolver	1926	2 + 2
Great Britain	Welrod Silent	.32	1	Single shot	WWII	1 + 1
USSR	TT 1933	7.62mm	8	Clip pistol	1933	4 + 3
USSR	Makarov	9mm	8	Clip pistol	WWII	2 + 4
USSR	Stechkin	9mm	20	Clip pistol	WWII	2 + 4
Germany	Luger Artillery 1917	9mm	8 or 32	Clip pistol	1917	2 + 2
Germany	Luger P08	9mm	8	Clip pistol	1908	3
Germany	Walther P38	9mm	8	Clip pistol	1938	3
Germany	Walther PPK	7.65mm	7	Clip pistol	1929	2
Japan	Taisho 14 (Nambu)	8mm	8	Clip pistol	1925	2
United States	Colt 1911A	.45 auto	7	Clip pistol	1911	4 + 1

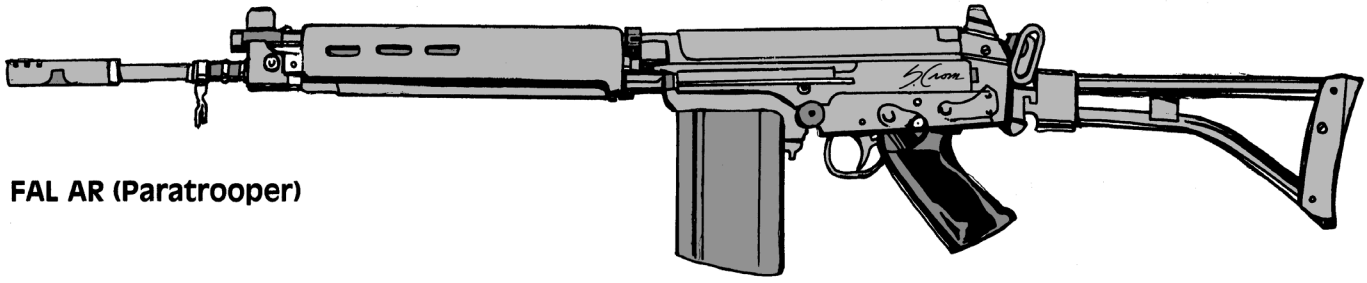
Assault Rifles

All of these rifles use Missile Weapon Chart II for targetting. As above, all these weapons are assumed to be issued or obtained by capture.

Nation	*Designation*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Type of gun*	*Era*	*Dice and Adds*
Belgium	FAL AR	7.62 N	20 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	9 + 1
Belgium	FAL CAR	.223	20 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	4
Czechoslovakia	M58 AR	7.62mm	30 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	4 + 2
West Germany	Heckler & Koch 33	.223	20 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	4
USSR	AK-47	7.62mm	30 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	6 + 2
USSR	SKS Carbine	7.62mm	10 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	6 + 2
United States	Stoner Carbine	.223	30 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	3 + 3
United States	M16	.223	20 clip	Assault rifle	Modern	4
United States	Browning Auto rifle	.30-06	20 clip	Auto Rifle	1918	9 + 2



Ruger AC-556 Automatic Rifle



FAL AR (Paratrooper)

Military Submachine Guns

Submachine guns generally use Missile Weapon Chart I. Any submachine guns with an optional stock will use Missile Weapon Chart II when the stock is attached and Missile Weapon Chart I when stock is not attached. The caliber listed 9mm P means 9mm Parabellum.

Nation	*Designation*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Type of gun*	*Era*	*Dice and Adds*
Austria	Steyr	9mm P	25 or 32	SMG	Modern	3 + 2
Belgium	Vigneron M2	9mm P	32 clip	SMG	Modern	3 + 1
Great Britain	Sten MK 1	9mm P	32 clip	SMG	WWII	3 + 2
Great Britain	Sten MK 4	9mm P	32 clip	SMG	WWII	3
Great Britain	L2A3	9mm P	34 clip	SMG	1960	3 + 2
Czechoslovakia	M24	7.62mm	32 clip	SMG	Modern	6
Czechoslovakia	M61	32 APC	10 or 20	SMG	Modern	2
Denmark	Hovea M49	9mm P	35 clip	SMG	1949	3 + 1
Denmark	Masden M1950	9mm P	32 clip	SMG	1950	3
France	MAT 49	9mm P	32 clip	SMG	1949	3 + 1
Germany	1898 Mauser	7.63mm	8 or 32	SMG	1898	2 + 3
West Germany	Walther MPL	9mm	32 clip	SMG	1963	4 + 3
West Germany	Walther MPK	9mm	32 clip	SMG	1963	3 + 1
West Germany	H&K 54	9mm	30 clip	SMG	Modern	3 + 2
Nazi Germany	MP 40	9mm	32 clip	SMG	WWII	3 + 2
Israel	UZI	9mm P	25/32/40	SMG	1952	3 + 2
Japan	T100	8mm	30 clip	SMG	WWII	2 + 2
USSR	PPdM40	7.62mm	71 drum	SMG	WWII	5 + 2
United States	Thompson 1928A1	.45 auto	20/30/50	SMG	1928	4 + 3
United States	Ingram Mac 10	9mm P	36 clip	SMG	Modern	3 + 2
United States	M3 Grease Gun	.45 auto	30 clip	SMG	1942	4 + 3



Iver Johnson PP 30 Super Enforcer

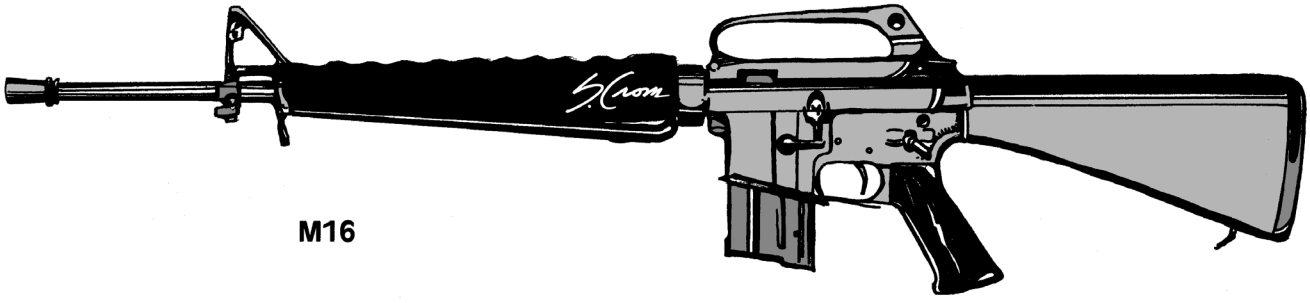
Weapon Add-on 2019

XM-25: This is (in 2019) still classed as an experimental weapon, so is not commercially available. Same for the ammunition. The XM-25 launches a grenade at an obstacle, like a wall; the distance to which is computed using a laser. When the grenade reaches the wall, it rises about five feet to pass over the wall, then explodes just beyond it. This renders cover useless. For game purposes, add 10 to the shooter's skill level for targeting purposes. Max range for using this weapon is 250 yards. Damage as per grenades.

Military Rifles

All of these rifles use Missile Weapon Chart II for targetting. As above, all guns are assumed to be issued or captured.

Nation	*Designation*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Type of gun*	*Era*	*Dice and Adds*
Austria	M1988	8 × 50m	5	Rifle	1888	11 + 2
Austria	SSG	7.62 N	5 clip	Rifle	Modern	9 + 1
Great Britain	Enfield Lee MK4	.303	10	Rifle	1895	8
Great Britain	L1A1	7.62 N	20 clip	Rifle	Modern	9 + 1
Czechoslovakia	M29	7.92mm	5	Rifle	1920+	12
Czechoslovakia	ZH29	7.92mm	10 or 25	Rifle	1920	11 + 2
Czechoslovakia	M52	7.62mm	10 clip	Rifle	1952	8
Czechoslovakia	M61	7.65mm	10 or 20	Rifle	1961	2
France	M1907	8mm	20	Rifle	1907	10 + 2
West Germany	63	7.62 N	20	Rifle	Modern	8 + 3
Germany	M1888	7.92mm	5	Rifle	1888	9
Germany	M1898A	7.92mm	5	Rifle	1898	12 + 2
Japan	T38	6.5mm	5	Rifle	WWII	7 + 1
Japan	T99LR	7.7mm	5	Rifle	WWII	9 + 2
USSR	M1891	7.62mm	5	Rifle	1891	8 + 1
USSR	M1936	7.62mm	15	Rifle	1936	8 + 1
USSR	M1944	7.62mm	5	Rifle	1944	8 + 1
United States	M1903A1	.30-06	5	Rifle	1903	9 + 2
United States	M1	.30-06	8	Rifle	1930	9 + 2
United States	M14	7.62 N	20 clip	Rifle	Modern	9 + 2



M16

Military Machine Guns

All of these guns use Missile Weapon Chart II for targetting. As with other military guns, these guns are assumed to be issued or obtained by capture. The Dice and Adds for these military machineguns are followed by the number of bullets (in parentheses) which can be released in one missile weapon combat round.

Nation	*Designation*	*Caliber*	*Capacity*	*Type of gun*	*Era*	*Dice and Adds*
Great Britain	Hotchkiss	.303BRI	9 or 50	Machinegun	WWI	9 + 3 (30)
Great Britain	Lewis M1	.303BRI	47/99	Machinegun	WWI	9 + 3 (30)
Great Britain	Vickers	.303BRI	250 Belt	Machinegun	WWI	9 + 3 (50)
Great Britain	Bren	.303	30/100	Machinegun	1937	9 + 2 (30)
Czechoslovakia	ZB26	7.92mm	20	Machinegun	1924	11 (20)
Czechoslovakia	M52	7.62mm	25/100	Machinegun	Modern	8 (25)
Germany	Maxim 7.92	7.92 sb	50/250	Machinegun	1908	12 + 1 (30)
Nazi Germany	M642	7.92mm	50/250	Machinegun	1939	5 + 2 (50)
Japan	Type 99	7.7mm	30 clip	Machinegun	WWII	9 + 3 (30)
United States	Stoner LMG	.223	30 clip	Light MG	Modern	4 (30)
United States	M1921A1	.50	250 belt	Heavy MG	1921	44 + 3 (50)

Ammunition and Cost

Ammunition for military weapons will generally be supplied by the government* or employer. If the weapon is privately owned, ammunition can be purchased as noted below. Some types of ammo are not listed, either because the bullets are no longer manufactured or because it is a military issue only. To buy archaic types of ammo when playing games when it was still available, find something similar from this list and buy it for an equivalent price, adjusted for the time period.

Note that guns cannot exchange ammo unless the designations match exactly. A .38 Special is not the same round as a .38 S&W. They have some similarities (if one was archaic, you could use it for reference, as above), but actually trying to load one kind of bullet into a gun designed to use the other could be disastrous.

These abbreviations for the sake of brevity are used: P for *Parabellum;* M or Mag for *Magnum;* AutoM for *Automag.* Rem., Win., S&W, and H&H are abbreviations of manufacturers' names. Shotgun shells are 12 gauge.

Caliber	*Cost/Box*	*Quantity in box*
.22 LR	$19.90	50
.22 Mag	$21.00	50
.223	$10.00	20
.30	$20.25	50
.30-06	$12.60	20
.303	$12.95	20
.303 BRI	$12.95	20
.303 MK4	$12.95	20
.308	$12.60	20
.32	$11.75	50
.32 APC	$14.00	50
.32 S&W	$11.85	50
.357 Mag	$15.60	50
.375 H&H M	$19.55	20
.38 S&W	$13.50	50
.38 Special	$14.50	50
.380 APC	$14.35	50
.41 Mag	$20.70	50
.44 AutoM	$33.00	20
.44 S&W	$18.55	50
.44 Mag	$23.50	20
.44 Rem. M	$9.60	20
.45 Auto	$19.20	50
.45-70 Gov't	$14.35	20
.458 Win. M	$40.05	20
6mm	$11.60	20
6.5mm	$18.85	20
7mm	$12.60	20
7mm 08	$12.60	20
7mm Maus	$12.85	20
7.62mm	$22.35	20
7.65mm	$21.95	20
7.7mm	$22.50	20
8mm	$18.45	20
8x50mm	$13.00	20
9mm P	$17.40	20
Shotgun	$10	20



* *If you were in the FBI, for example, your ammo is paid for by the FBI.*

Anti-Tank Weaponry and Explosives

There may come a time when a character or a party of characters have a reason to knock out something rather large, like a tank or part of a building. Presented below are some of the weapons and equipment that will help accomplish such a task.

Anti-Tank Weapons

The weapons described below must be issued by some responsible authority. They are not easily purchased at the local gun haven. Reading the dice damage of the weapons, you will see they are listed as "5 dice × 5" damage, for example. This means roll 5 dice and multiply the result times 5. Although you could roll many more dice and get similar results, rolling just 5 dice means the weapons will have a greater range of possible effects, which reflects how the weapons function in the real world. Also, you will not wear out your eyes counting the pips on dozens and dozens of dice. Finally, note that for each of these weapons, the damage area continues for an additional 10' beyond where the rocket strikes. This additional area of damage is a narrow fan-shape in the direction the missile was traveling.

►**Bazooka:** This weapon is simply a rocket-launching tube with a sight. It was used quite a bit and with good effect in conflicts since WWII. A bazooka is fired on Missile Weapon Chart II. If it hits its target, the rocket does (5 dice × 5) points of damage. If it misses, trace a likely path beyond its target and explode it there. Use the amount the targetting saving roll was missed by to suggest how close the miss was.

►**LAW Rocket:** The LAW rocket is a more recent development in short range anti-tank weaponry (treat as a "modern" weapon). It comes in its own tube and is disposable after it has been fired. LAW Rockets use Missile Weapon Chart I for targetting and do (5 dice × 10) points of damage when they hit. If the saving roll is missed, follow a trajectory path beyond the intended target and the missile can explode there. As above, the amount the saving roll is missed by can suggest how close to the intended target the missile actually hits.

►**Dragon:** The Dragon rocket is wire-guided, long range, and takes 2 missile weapon combat rounds to arrive. (It is fired on one round and arrives during the next round). It will require a Level 0 saving roll to hit the target, unless the character using it has been hit in either of the two rounds when the rocket is traveling. The targetting saving roll should be made when the rocket is due to *arrive*. Since a character could be shot before the rocket hits, the wire-guidance would be thrown off, causing the rocket to plow into the earth in a place determined virtually at random! (GM's determination). If the character is hit, the targetting Dexterity saving roll must be made at one level for each 5 hits taken. If CON is reduced to zero, no saving roll is allowed. If the saving roll is made, the rocket hits and does (5 dice × 15) points of damage. If the saving roll is missed, the rocket misses. GMs may vary the saving roll, especially if the tank or vehicle is difficult to spot or moving through broken terrain.

Explosives

To be most effective, explosives should be used by characters with *Demolition* skills. If a character who has no experience with *Demolitions* plays with dynamite, the results are likely to be . . . explosive.

►**TNT:** One stick of dynamite will do 1 die in damage and has a blast radius of 1 foot. More dynamite does more damage in direct proportion: 5 sticks of dynamite do 5 dice damage and have a blast radius of 5 feet. While this might seem rather simple, remember that most of the damage done by TNT is caused by the destruction of the supports to something, thus causing it to collapse.

►**Plastic Explosive:** Each ounce of plastique (plastic explosive) is equal to five sticks of TNT. Plastic explosive may be shaped by a character with *Demolition* skill to cause a specific desired effect.

►**Grenades:** Grenades (balls of metal wrapped around an explosive charge) may be thrown or they may be shot with a rifle. If grenades are thrown, their maximum range is the character's Strength times 3 yards, and they should be treated like thrown weapons for targetting. If they are shot, they use Missile Weapon Chart II for targetting.

A grenade does 25 dice damage at ground zero, the place where it hits. For each foot outside ground zero, there is 1 die of damage less to be figured against any characters. □ Example: A grenade explodes 12 feet from Ted and 24 feet from Jim. Ted takes 13 dice worth of damage and Jim takes one die worth.

The number a targetting saving roll is missed by indicates the number of feet the grenade has missed its target by. The GM should determine logically what happens, or the GM can allow characters to make Luck saving rolls to determine where the grenade bounces to.

►**Concussion Grenades**: These grenades create a 5 dice blast for 100 cubic feet around ground zero. The blast should be treated in all ways like damage delivered by hand for the purpose of unconsciousness. Concussion grenades will not kill. Treat them like normal grenades for range and targetting.

►**Mortar**: Mortars are small bombs propelled from a launching tube. Use Missile Weapon Chart II for targetting. They are treated exactly as grenades, though they get 35 dice and lose one die for each foot from ground zero.

General Armor

Armor and cover can protect a character from damage, whether it is damage sustained in hand-to-hand combat or whether the damage is caused by a bullet. Like weapons, armor is rated in dice and adds. When it has been determined that a character (in armor) has been hit, roll the specified number of dice and subtract that value from the amount of damage the character was originally going to take. □A character wearing a MK2 flak vest (essentially a kind of bulletproof vest) is supposed to take 17 points of damage from a gunshot. The character rolls 2 dice and adds 3, for a total of 11. Subtracted from the original 17 points of possible damage, that character now has to take only 6 points of damage personally. The other 11 points have been "bled off" by the vest.

►**Leather Jacket:** The leather jackets worn by many police officers do offer a minimal amount of protection from knife and fist wounds. A jacket will absorb 1 die worth of damage in a fight. Jackets cost $100 or more (higher prices reflect greater style.)

►**Riot Shield**: A riot shield is a large rectangle of clear plexiglass or lexan curved to make it similar to a Roman shield. The shields will absorb 3 dice of damage in hand-to-hand combat and will take 1 die damage from missile fire. If more than 18 points of damage are done to a shield by a bullet, the shield will shatter and be useless. A riot shield can only be obtained by issue or capture.

►**Crash / Riot Helmet**: Helmets will take ½ die worth of damage from hand-to-hand, missile weapon, or accident damage. Approximately equivalent to a good motorcycle helmet, one costs $50.

Flak Vests

Flak vests are made of ballistic cloth and act as armor protection against bullets. Flak vests stop a certain amount of damage per bullet that hits. While ballistic cloth is very good at stopping bullets, it will stop no damage from cutting or stabbing weapons, including shrapnel from grenades or mortars. Neither is it any good at stopping blows from blunt instruments or blows taken in a hand-to-hand fight.

►**MK1 Vest:** This type of armor really does not qualify as a vest – it is merely a ballistic cloth insert in designer clothing. It only protects a person hit in the chest. It absorbs 1 die + 2 per bullet and costs $300.00 per shirt or blouse.

►**MK2 Vest:** This vest is sleeveless and covers the wearer from groin to shoulders, front and back. It will absorb 2 dice + 3 per bullet and costs $100.

►**MK3 Vest:** This is a paramilitary type of vest. It covers the wearer from the wrists to the knees. It will take 4 dice + 1 per bullet and costs $200.

►**MK4 Vest:** This is a heavy combat suit. It runs from wrists to knees and includes a helmet. It will stop 5 dice + 3 per bullet and costs $300, though it is not regularly sold to civilians.

The vests will only take damage if the character is hit in the area protected by the armor. If the hit location chart is not being used, a saving roll at a level determined by the GM might be appropriate to determine if the vest was hit or not.

►**MK5 Vest** This heavy combat suit covers ankles to wrists, with a helmet, face shield and ceramic trauma plates for the chest, stomach and back. Hits to areas covered by the trauma plates will absorb 8d +3, otherwise 6d+1. These are available only through issue or capture.

►**Synthetic Compound Armor (SCA)** This armor is lightweight and consists of laminated layers of monomolecular sheets of graphene or borophene. They fully cover the body and will absorb 12d in damage. This armor is experimental and all but impossible to obtain (unless, perhaps, you are an eccentric and egotistical industrialist and genius whose hobby is making this stuff.

►**Powered Synthetic Compound Armor (PSCA).** Like SCA, this powered armor will absorb 12d damage. It is also modified to enhance one of the physical attributes: Strength, Dexterity or Speed to a maximum equal the character's normal attribute. (Beyond that and the person will hurt herself because power armor is powerful, whereas bones, ligaments, tendons and muscle fibers tend to tear and snap when overstressed.) Note: enhancements are limited to ONE of the physical attributes.

NOTE: The last three items on this list are borderline superhero stuff and should only be GM issued. This armor is also powered, and the batteries should be able to run out at the most inopportune moment, for the sake of story.

Cover

There are times that characters will be partially or fully hidden behind cover, and another person will attempt to shoot them through the cover. Below is the listing of what types of material will stop damage, and how much damage it will stop. GMs are encouraged to extrapolate if unusual situations arise.

►One die worth of damage will be stopped by 1 inch of wood, a windshield on a car, or 1/8th inch of steel.

►Two dice worth of damage will be stopped by 3 inches of wood, a car door, or ¼ inch of steel.

►Three dice worth of damage will be stopped by 6 inches of wood, 1 inch of plasterboard, one layer of red brick construction, or a ½ inch of steel.

►Four dice will be stopped by bulletproof glass, one layer of cinderblock, or 1 inch of steel.

Poison

Poisons break down into three classes for play in MSPE. The three classes are: 1) *Knockout Drops,* 2) *Neurotoxins,* and 3) *Hemotoxins.* Not included are heavy metal poisons and some more exotic chemical poisons that would require a crash course in toxicology to understand. Such poisons have not been included in the interest of easy playability, but any GM who wishes to translate their effects into game terms is welcome to introduce them to the game.

►**Knockout Drops:** These drops must be ingested or injected into the victim. Each drop does 1 die damage to the Speed, Dexterity, and Strength (not CON) of the victim. The focus of the effect is on the character's Strength. This damage is no more permanent than damage from hand-to-hand fighting, but it can be quite debilitating. If the dose given to the character is enough to drive his ST to exactly 0, he will go unconscious for one hour. If the damage rolled is more than the character's basic ST, he will remain unconscious for an additional hour for each point of damage over the character's normal healthy ST. If the dose is not enough to drive the character's ST to 0, then the character may become apparently "drunk and disorderly" (due to his lowered DEX, primarily), but he will not fall unconscious. His ST and DEX will be depleted, both of which will result in a loss of hand-to-hand combat adds if the character is then forced into a fight.

☐ On an assignment in a seedy section of town, Alex is hoping to take some photos of a local kingpin of the underworld. He goes into a bar near where he expects the man to appear, and (doubtlessly because of his low Luck) Alex is spotted by one of the kingpin's employees. The man doesn't want to draw official attention to the locale, so surreptitiously he spikes Alex's drink with knockout drops. The thug figures Alex is a pretty healthy sort, so he gives him 5 drops. This means the GM rolls 5 dice – gets a total of 18. Alex's ST of 17 is higher than the thug counted on, but the drops still had the desired effect. Alex tries to stagger out to reach a telephone booth to call Orion. Because his DEX is dropped effectively to 0, he doesn't get nearly that far and, apparently drunk, he falls unconscious for two hours. By the time he awakens, he'll have regained half his normal ST (round down – his ST is 8), half his normal DEX and SP, and the kingpin has come and gone. Victims heal from knockout drops at the rate of 2 attribute points each hour, whether the attributes are ST, DEX, or SP. All the attributes can heal simultaneously. ☐ In Alex's case, he'll be a bit groggy and under the weather for about 4½ hours. If the damage done is double the ST of the character, medical attention will be needed to prevent the character from dying. In this case it would mean a Level 0 saving roll for a *Medic* or *MD.*

►**Neurotoxin:** Neurotoxins attack the nervous system. The effect of a neurotoxin is to paralyze the victim, death resulting from suffocation or cardiac arrest. This family of poisons must be injected into the patient, or drawn in through a wound of some type. One dose will cause 2 dice damage to a character's ST in the first hour, and 1 die damage every hour from that point to death unless something is done to counteract the effects of the poison. If Strength drops to zero, medical attention will save a character, but only if anti-venom has been administered. Anti-venom will stop more damage from taking place but will not heal damage already taken. Healing takes place at the rate appropriate to the level of damage done by the wound; in other words, depending on whether the wound was slight, serious, or critical, as per the section *Time, Healing, and Income.*

►**Hemotoxin:** The poisons classed as hemotoxic attack the blood system and the body tissues. Nausea, cell breakdown and unconsciousness result from being poisoned with a hemotoxin. This family of poisons may be ingested or injected, and the poison functions much as do the neurotoxins, although the symptoms are different. Thus, for game purposes, hemotoxins take their effect on CON instead of ST. The effects are 2 dice immediate damage off CON, and an additional 1 die damage every turn thereafter. Without medical treatment, a poisoning will cause death. Anti-venoms are generally available at complete medical facilities. For healing, make the class of the wound *one class higher* than it should normally be. If a character has already reached critical condition (the slowest healing rate), then heal the character at critical without changes – he or she will be in the hospital quite long enough without adding to the problem. ◆



USING LIVE CLUES

One of the difficulties of running a mystery game involves clues. The Gamemaster may fail to describe an important facet of a clue or may be too obvious in an attempt to hide an important fact. I do not have a poker face, and I begin to crack a big smile any time I try to describe my way around a clue. Others may have similar difficulties, and players may not mention them because it makes their job easier. To work around this situation, and to provide some more color for your games, we offer the following solution: basically, use real solid objects to give clues to players – these stand-in clues represent the "real" clues being handled by the players' characters. It makes the players think harder, look more closely, and solve the mystery themselves, instead of letting a Gamemaster's slip give it all away.

In every mystery there are crucial clues that should be fairly easy to create. The victim's "suicide note" can be mocked up. Writing it with your off-hand (the hand you normally do not write with) will give it a nice shaky quality. Getting letterheads from various hotels and businesses can provide you with a number of places to have letters and notes arrive from during a case.

Matchbooks from different restaurants or businesses, local or otherwise, are very easy to obtain and a classic kind of clue to be left at the scene of a crime. Having a secret message written on the underside of the flaps would be interesting. More difficult to decipher is some sort of code involving matches torn from the first row but not the second, and so on. □For example, the matches on the first row might represent days of the week, the second match gone meaning Monday for the second day of the week (unless you are in France where the second day of the week is Tuesday). The second row would represent the month and the third the hour. Hence, a spy could know his contact was going to be in that cafe every Monday of December at 2.... The information was communicated by the matchbook.

Old magazines can provide plenty of material for constructing clues. Cut-out letters to make the words in a ransom note is a fairly common dodge in fiction and movies. It could backfire: on the day we were coming to take photos for the back of the rules, I had a mocked-up ransom note in my briefcase and a pistol in my lap. Thank goodness no policeman stopped me on the way to work!

More fun and useful than creating ransom notes from old magazines is to use pictures for "mug shots." *Time* magazine provides a large number of photos perfect for mounting on pieces of paper for reports on criminals, victims, or suspects. It is much more satisfying to be able to give a player a criminal's record and have the player ferret out whatever clues you have written there than it is to read the report aloud. (It is also less tedious.) A local group of gamers even goes so far as to publish their own weekly newsletter, *The Tempe Daily Bugler,* to augment their campaign; *The Bugler* is complete with important facts and misinformation for everyone involved. If anyone out there does this for MSPE, we'd love to hear about it and see copies!

For those of you who want to be really inventive, there are things you can do that are somewhat more difficult, and will require some time and preparation. They can add a lot of fun to a game. If possible, set up a spare room den as the "scene of a crime." A taped outline on the floor could indicate where the victim fell when murdered, for instance. Clues like notes or matchbooks could be scattered around the room. Don't forget simple things like lipstick on the cigarette butts in the ashtray or cigarettes of a brand other than those the victim smoked being found.



Buying guns and other props for setting up mysteries like this could be expensive and potentially dangerous. Still, water pistols are frequently made up to look like .44 Magnums and .45 Automatics, and certainly could be used as "murder weapons." Plastic knives can do their part, too. Even when using these fakes, still use common safety sense.

If you do not have the room to set up a mystery scene, or if you don't want to leave something like that set up because the mystery will take several playing sessions to complete, you can always mock up the scene and take pictures of it. Most households have at least one camera, which need not be a fancy one, and black and white photographs are not very expensive to process. If you can do darkroom work yourself, you can get all sorts of special effects and interesting combination pictures. If you are lucky, or can make arrangements with local landmark keepers, you might be able to take pictures of staged crimes in unusual locations.

Everyone should understand that the use of dangerous materials in making up a mystery is downright stupid. A shoebox with a note attached which reads "Bomb" is enough if the characters are searching for a bomb. Actually creating a bomb is stupid, and someone will probably get hurt. The same goes for real guns, knives, and other items that might be fun to flash around, but could potentially hurt someone. Don't put yourself into a position of having to end a game session by telling a *real* police officer, "I didn't know it was loaded."

Although matchbooks from strange places, hastily scrawled notes, and lipstick-stained cigarette butts have the proper classic mystery associations, as clues they're getting a little hoary. Try and be subtle with the clues you construct. If a note is produced written in a sloppy script, yet the person who supposedly wrote it was known to be very neat, chances are that a few characters will notice. Even subtler is having the note written on violet paper when it is known that the character hates the color violet. If you want to get very obscure, you could paint an abstract picture with a message in it, yet conceal the message in the way symbols are concealed in color-blindness tests (this one would be difficult, especially for a character or player who is not color-blind; of course, colored glasses might help figure it out, but all the chemical analyses in the world will be useless).

A last note about subtlety of clues: it can be overdone. If things as so obscure or difficult to find that the players can't get a fair place to start, they'll be frustrated and the entire scenario can break down. A little frustration is okay; just don't expect them to bring to bear the combined forensic ability of the FBI, the NSA, and the local police as well!

GMs will have to function as "labs" to analyze items. In response to analysis, you should offer general information. If the players want more specific information, let them ask you for it.

I've had more than one player ask a NPC lab technician if there is "anything unusual." The question is vague. If, for example, the lab tech doesn't think orchids are unusual because he grew up in the tropics, he won't mention that the dead plant is a particular breed of orchid common to a specific area and used in weird religious practices of the local natives . . . even though the case is taking place in Alaska. The characters can miss a great clue just by the way their questions are phrased.

Try using real clues in your mysteries. You'll have a great deal of fun making them up, and your games will become much more lively as each player attempts to deal with your clues. This becomes especially true if they try to deal with the clues the way their characters would have to. The red herrings you include, and the work the players can do on the clues, will make gaming much more entertaining for all involved. ◆



AGING

As a character grows older, he will have the opportunity to acquire many new skills. At the same time, some of the character's abilities may be REDUCED as a result of aging.

Aging Your Character

STARTING AGE: In the basic game, this figure will generally range from 16 to 35 years of age. The actual age can be determined by rolling 3 dice and consulting the table.

Natural Death

Though the majority of players who develop a great character don't like to admit it, there are such things as Old Age and Natural Death. For the basic game the GM may roll for each player's death chance according to the table below. If the GM rolls equal to or less than the number listed for the character, then that character has a chance of Natural Death. Players are allowed a Saving Roll against their CON rating. If the roll is equal to or less than that rating, the player will have 1 to 6 weeks of illness but will survive. At this point a single six-sided die is thrown to determine the number of weeks of the character's illness.

If the roll is greater than the CON rating, the player receives a "warning" from a doctor to "retire" or risk dying of natural causes. The GM rolls once per year for natural death on the character's birthday or the first day of the campaign year.

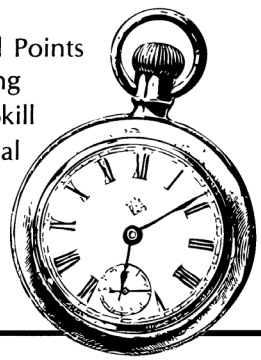
Alternatively, the GM may set up an adventure, in conjunction with the player, where the player's character's adventure will begin, end or include an "heroic" death. This will provide an interesting PLOT for the other players in the game to enjoy. Upon the death of his PREVIOUS character the player should probably introduce his NEW character into the campaign.

Starting Age Table

Roll	Age	SP Effect
1 to 8	16 to 25	No Adds
9 to 10	26 to 31	1 SP
11 to 12	32 to 38	2 SP
13 to 14	39 to 44	3 SP
15	45 to 50	4 SP
16	51 to 60	6 SP
17	61 to 70	8 SP
18	71 to 80 +	10 SP

Explanation of Chart:

SP —The number of Skill Points added to the character's starting Skill Points. If age is 35, then 5 Skill Points are added to the normal starting Skill Points for that character's IQ.



Natural Death Table

Age	Chance of death (3 d6)	Loss of abilities (3 d6)
0 to 1	3 to 5	none
2 to 10	3 or 4	none
11 to 16	'3'	none
17 to 25	none	none
26 to 35	none	none
36 to 45	'3'	none
*46 to 50	3 or 4	3 or 4
*51 to 55	3 to 5	3 to 5
*56 to 60	3 to 6	3 to 6
*61 +	3 to 7	3 to 7

* At these ages Old Age commences to take its toll. To simulate this, when the player reaches these ages he will have a Chance that points will be lost from the character's CONSTITUTION, DEXTERITY, STRENGTH, and SPEED characteristics.

Aging is NOT Required

Many heroic characters do not seem to age. Perhaps some ancient magic or unique scientific advancement prevents them from aging. The GM can make this determination based on input from the player(s). Make an adventure out of it!

Change of Characteristics Due to Age

Starting after age 45 certain effects of Maturing may be experienced by characters. It is not necessary for the players to risk the effects of Senility, etc. and so LUCK, CHARISMA, and IQ are considered immutable by age. However, it is possible for characters to lose points from CONSTITUTION, STRENGTH, SPEED, and DEXTERITY as they age. At the same time, as players grow older they do have the chance to gain Skill Points and enhance certain other skills (such as Hand-to-Hand Combat Skills..)

Rolls are made on the character's birthday or the first day of the campaign year. Roll 3 d6. This first roll is against the basic chance of losing abilities. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the number listed for the character's chance of loss of abilities (see chart above), then a second roll of 3 d6 is made. This time compare the number against the character's CON. If the number rolled is higher than the number for the character's CON, then one (1) point is deducted from that characteristic. If this occurs the player must roll for possible losses of STRENGTH and SPEED (age 46 and over) and DEXTERITY (age 61 and over) at this new CON level. However, if the player rolls a number less than his character's CON, then there is NO chance of losing any abilities that year.

EXAMPLE: Christina Argos celebrates her birthday on April 6. This year she turns 49. On her birthday the GM rolls 3 d6 for Christina's chance of natural death. He rolls 10. Christina remains healthy.

Now Christina, who has a CON of 11, must roll the 3 d6 to determine whether her encroaching middle-age, which she insists she does not feel, is beginning to take its physical toll. Christina, apparently feeling the effects of the wild party thrown for her last night, rolls a 4. She must now roll the 3 d6 again to determine if she has actually begun to lose some of her constitutional strength. She rolls 11, equal to her CON, and determines to take better care of herself in the future.



If Christina had rolled 12 or higher, her CON would have dropped to 10, and she would then have had to make additional rolls to determine whether she had also lost abilities in the areas of STRENGTH and SPEED. These succeeding rolls would all be made against the new CON of 10. She would not have to roll for DEXTERITY loss because she is under 61.

On the plus side, a roll is made each year starting at age 46, against the character's INTELLIGENCE (IQ). If the 3 d6 rolled total LESS than the character's IQ, then a second roll is made to determine if the character will acquire 1 additional Skill Point. The character has a 1 in 6 chance of acquiring a Skill Point which may either be "saved" or "spent." If saved, the player must indicate which course of study his character is pursuing. ◆

NEW OPTIONAL RULES

And Playing Advice

by Michael Stackpole

And Now For Something New...

I find it somewhat scary that I wrote MSPE over thirty-six years ago. During that time the world has changed a lot—cosmetically, at least. I'm really pleased that we had the foresight, way back then, to publish the formula for calculating damage for guns. The needed stats are easily available online, and a spreadsheet can help you do the math really easily.

Note: The Internet and Spreadsheets really weren't things back then. What I wanted to add here was material that I've learned over the years that, I hope, will make the game work better and be more fun.

Let's dive in.

Scenario Design

In the decades since I wrote MSPE, I've learned a thing or two about story design that have helped me both as a novelist and in designing scenarios. I'll do my best here not to repeat what was written before about scenario stuff, but supply some supplemental ideas you can use to carry things further.

Nemesis Creation

A staple of adventure fiction is the nemesis—the character that daunts/frustrates the hero time and again. Might be a villain, might be a henchman, might just be a rival or even a friend. The nemesis is a contrast to the main character and can be quite interesting in her own right. The nemesis helps flesh out the world around the player characters and can be crucial in helping the characters attain their roleplaying goals.
Each nemesis gets designed, primarily, along one of the following four themes:

►**Paragon:** This nemesis is just bigger, stronger, faster, richer, more suave, or smarter than the main character. The key is that this nemesis can overwhelm the character's best in any aspect. This doesn't have to be all negative—the nemesis could just be nicer and kinder and more considerate, too. This sort of nemesis just makes it tough for the character to get ahead of the game and might even function as a mentor or conscience for a character.

►**Clone:** This nemesis matches the character perfectly. They'll have different backgrounds, motivations and ethics, but in terms of skills and resources they will be evenly matched. This is the sort of nemesis where a character could look at them and wonder, "Is this how I would have turned out if...?" Because they are so perfectly matched, the nemesis spurs the character to do some introspection and learn about themselves. Similarly, the character will have to put forth an outstanding effort to defeat this nemesis.

►**Antithesis:** Of the nemeses, this is the toughest concept to capture. This is someone whose abilities neutralize those of the character, and whose strengths put the character at a disadvantage without overwhelming them as the Paragon might. At its most basic, a ghost would qualify because even the strongest or most combat-skilled character would find his skills useless

against it. These sorts of nemeses are just largely immune to the the best/go-to tactics and skills of the character, which means they can be incredibly frustrating. To defeat them, the character will have to rely on new strategies and perhaps employ new allies.

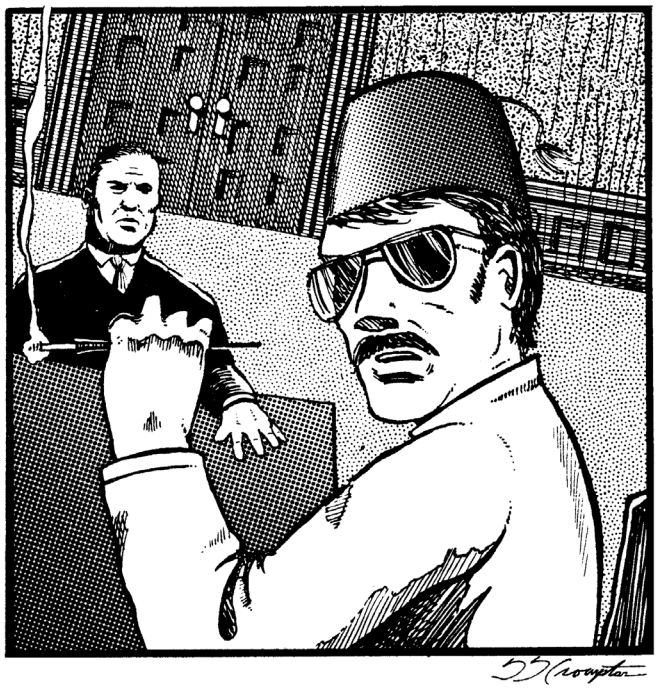
►**Opposite:** These nemeses are superior where the character is weakest. This is the source of their threat. A grade school bully who is a head taller and a whole lot stronger than a small, smart kid is an easy example of this kind of nemesis. Likewise, the opposition could show in personality areas—extrovert versus introvert—or in life choices. A nemesis could be a neat freak who keeps his lawn perfect, whereas the main character might like lawn gnomes lurking in and around the weeds in his front yard.

Nemeses don't all have to be supervillains or operate on an existentially threatening level. A petty bureaucrat can be just as vexing and challenging as a mutant ape with super strength. Nemeses occur in all facets of life and minor ones are great for tossing added pressure on a character while they're doing something else. For example: the dowager aunt, neat-freak who putters around cleaning things up and putting things away could move vital evidence—albeit innocently, but still annoyingly.

As a gamemaster crafting adventures which allow for character growth, having these sorts of characters around does multiple things for you. First, minor nemeses are great for comic relief. This is the bureaucrat who, in the midst of an invasion, won't let the hero grab a weapon until forms are filled out in triplicate. They provide a chance to insert absurdity into any situation.

Second, because one of their aspects is to create frustration, they trigger an emotional response in the player and the character. The only way the character can get past them is to grow emotionally. They have to accommodate the nemesis, learn about them, find ways to appease them or neutralize them. Generally speaking these methods will require more than the rolling of dice and will encourage actual roleplaying.

Third, many gamemasters running a true roleplaying game, will invite players to give them a complete background on their player character, including secrets, desires, goals and things the player thinks would be fun to explore. Toward that end, the gamemaster can use that background information to create nemesis. For example, if the player character was something of a loner at school, it's not hard to posit the existence of a bully who teased them. Growing that bully up into someone the player character has to deal with now becomes a really good way to link to the past, and provide the player character with some goals and possible catharsis.



Fourth, a nemesis always allows for future follow-up adventures. Even if the nemesis falls into the supervillain category and is killed as an adventure wraps up, they'll always have a disciple or friend or kinsman who plots revenge. Or they can simply leave behind clues to longer term plans that have been set into motion and that the characters have to deal with. And there always could be a copy-cat out to build on the previous nemesis' successes and legend to his own benefit. Or the nemesis could have had another hated enemy who now turns on the character because he has been robbed of having defeated his nemesis.

Where do I get my ideas?

Finding source material for scenarios can be challenging because it seems as if everything has been done or covered, so it's really hard to make something seem new. All the motives mentioned in the previous section on scenario design still apply, with Greed, Love and Insanity still being popular.

It's important to point out that Greed covers more than just a desire for money. Power is the core, with money being a way to achieve power. Fame is also something people hunger for, and will do anything to achieve because they believe it will give them power.

The keys to power are the answers to these questions:

- **Why do you want it?**
- **How will you get it?**
- **How will you exercise it?**

If you can answer these questions for a villain, you can built whole plots out of their quests, and how they will continue to garner more and more power until they achieve their goals. Along the way they may uncover more goals, and you get to toss that into the mix. (Periodically repeating the questions and adjusting the answers will refresh motivations as you go.)

A simple scenario build can generate lots of conflict and plenty of suspects for a murder. Tom always loved fast cars and wanted to own his dream car, a 1967 Corvette. He couldn't possibly afford it, but to become involved in the the fast-driving culture he became a mechanic. He got known for really being able to get the last ounce of speed out of any car. He charged a lot, but couldn't be beat when it came to his job.

Pretty soon some unsavory characters started coming to him. Drug dealers, bank robbers, all looking for something special. And they were willing to pay, especially if the cars could outrun the cops in certain situations. He did the work, banked the money. He said he didn't want to know details, but he got them anyway.

Tom hung out at car shows and had his eye on his dream car. Problem was the owner wouldn't sell, but he was willing to race Tom for ownership of cars. Whoever won would own both. Tom agreed.

At the same time one of the drug dealers that Tom had done work for needed him to work on a car. Tom agreed, and agreed to make a house call to do the work because he'd taken a shine to the dealer's sister. The dealer had warned him off her, wanting better for his sister, so Tom did the work, but engineered it to break at a crucial point in things. Drug dealer makes his run, car busts, cops grab him and slap him into jail, leaving the coast clear for Tom to date the sister.

When Tom returns to his shop, he sees his dream car waiting to be worked on. The owner, not knowing who Tom was, dropped it off there to be tuned up "for a big race." Tom's partner had taken it in, but Tom did the work and, again, made sure the car would run fast, but just not fast enough.

They race, Tom wins and has his dream car, which his new girlfriend absolutely loves. So Tom, in his quest for his dream car, discovers another quest—the girlfriend—and some obstacles. Raising money means he compromises his morals. To get the car, he cheats. To get the girl, he sends her brother off to prison.

When Tom ends up face down in a pool of blood, having been shot twice in the back of the head, we have tons of suspects. Bank robbers and other drug dealers afraid that he'll provide information against them. The drug dealer in prison hears his sister is dating Tom and might react. The 'Vette's owner got cheated and might take revenge.

Describing this sordid life and death of Tom doesn't take much space up here, but ferreting out all the information and being able to pin the murder on the guilty party is at least one gaming session. Not only that, but just creating the web of associates around him will provide your gaming group with new contacts, new enemies and new opportunities for adventure.

One side note: as a gamemaster you don't have to know, for certain, who killed Tom when you start playing the scenario. A really good GM will listen to the players as they gather and weigh evidence. If you'd planned on the 'Vette's owner being the bad guy, but they're really leaning heavily toward the leader of that Croatian bank robbery crew, you can adjust things on the fly. If the new ending would be more satisfying for your players, go with it. Having them win is much more fun for all involved than the gamemaster having to say, "No, that's not it," all the time.

Still, let's suppose that Tom's murder, as related to the 'Vette owner, is the first in what you see as a series of adventures in the world of collectible cars. How do you move the players off what they've decided and back on the right track? You offer up another tidbit of evidence to sway them.

It works very simply: the GM says to a character, "There's something in the back of your mind that's bugging you about all this. Make an IQ saving roll, level 2, and add in any skills about cars or high end finance." If they make it, the character remembers some little article about the 'Vette owner, like a profile in Forbes or something. They look it up online, and the pull quote is something like "If anything ever happened to my car, I'd probably shoot myself. Or the bastard who did it."

What if they miss the saving throw? Reality of the situation is this: the players will all have heard the instruction, so they'll all be dying to uncover that evidence. They may continue to look at the Croatians, but when an alibi checks out, or things slow down in that direction, they'll come back to the 'Vette owner. More important than all that is this: why did I pick on collectible cars? Because I live in the Phoenix area where we have two internationally famous collectible car auctions each year, and a lot of the folks I see at Starbucks in this area drive very expensive and often collectible cars. I see them, I hear about them, and anyone in a gaming group I was running a scenario for would be in the same boat.

Looking back at science fiction and mysteries/thrillers back around the turn of the previous century,

there are themes that appear in popular literature over and over again. Jacques Futrelle, for example, wrote *The Diamond Master*, which was a book about a man who had a process for making artificial diamonds; and what that would do to the deBeers cartel and the international diamond market. Futrelle was not alone in that—it wasn't at all uncommon as a theme then. Similarly anarchists and anarchy were threats to society which popular authors addressed. Those things were, if you will, the Free Energy and Terrorism of their time.

You can build stories based on any headline with an incredible amount of ease. The Internet makes cursory research of anything rather easy (but an incredible time sink, so be careful). Political scandals, drug scandals (illegal and legal), celebrity murders and scandals; all of these things are ready fodder for stories. All you have to do is to change the names to protect the innocent, and scramble the guilty parties around so if someone recognizes the scenario from today's headlines they'll have to work at a solution. TV shows do this all the time; and True Crime TV shows, like *Forensic Files,* provide some rather thorough breakdowns of crimes which can be easily adapted.

Near Future

In writing the sorts of stories I write on the science fiction side of the house, I've done stories that use off-the-shelf tech in an unusual setting, or have written stories 10 or 20 or 200 years in the future. A key aspect of all of those is to change the technology in a believable way that leaves it recognizable, but also makes it new and novel and thrilling. In doing that sort of work, I've come up with the following dictum.

All technology, as it moves into the future, will undergo one, some or all of the following changes: it will become faster, cheaper, smaller, last longer, *and* have a wider impact *than it currently does.*

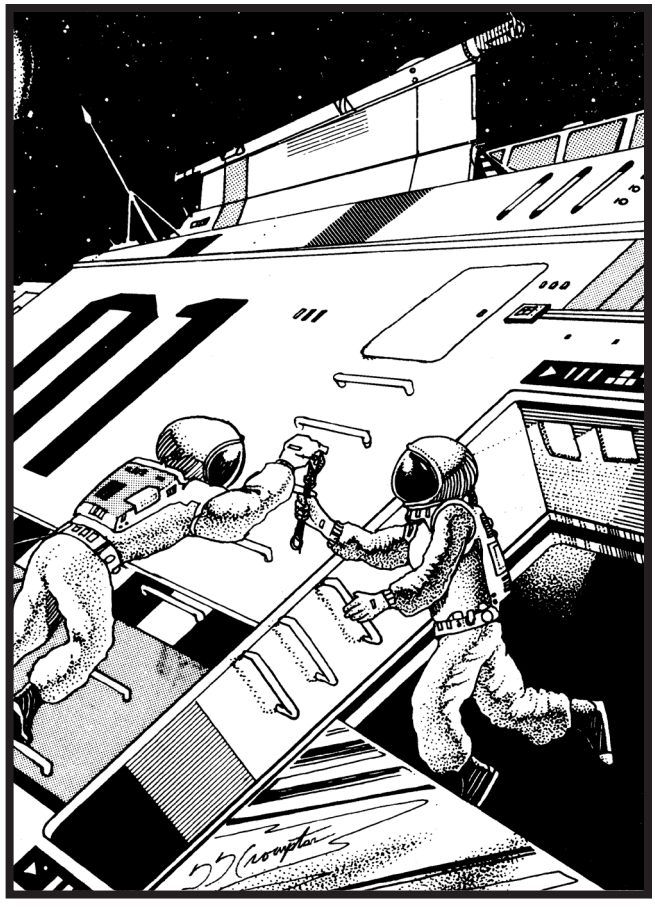
Take a moment, reread that, then think about the phone. Going from the original, wall-mounted phone to the latest cell phone, all of the above is true. Same with computers. (MSPE was originally written on an Osborne computer. I now have credit cards with more storage in their chip than that whole 24 lbs of computer.)

The most dangerous of all those attributes mentioned above is *have a wider impact.* For example, robotics might not have placed a robot maid in our homes (Roombas don't count), but a lot of people have lost their jobs because robots have replaced them. So what happens in a future where robots have *all* the jobs? How does that change society? How will people make a living? How will people react to being made redundant and worthless? And in that world, what are the things that will have lasting value?

Those are the big-issue questions that you can use to build a near-future society in which to adventure. Take any tech, push it toward an extreme and ask "What happens to the status quo then?" Focus on the emotional reaction people will have to it, both positively and negatively, then work from there.

There's another trend that you get to look at and apply to any institution in society. Take a look at it on a scale that has Liberation on one end, and Reformation on the other. Liberation is the notion that there should be no restrictions on anything, beyond the basic dictum that what you're doing shouldn't hurt others. Anarchist groups, Wikileaks, Anonymous and other free information movements are examples of this philosophy, and provide plenty of opportunities for stories.

Reformation, especially as applied to religion, is stripping away everything that is not a core value, and demanding strict adherence to this newly reformed way of doing things. Core values need not be things that were sanctified in scripture or in some corporation's mission statement. A new company CEO could have a core value of Greed, and implement policies that maximize the return on investment. (Corporate raiders often manifest this way: they sell



off everything of dubious value, liquidate all losing bits of the company, and stockpile a lot of cash, which then flows to them because of the ownership position they have in the company.)
Once you establish an extrapolated position for a company or church or person, realize there will be forces that oppose them. Some folks won't think they've gone far enough. Some folks will reject them because they resist change. Some folks will hate them simply because of jealousy, and some folks will feel used and abused by the person as they got to where they are now. Those groups will all act and react to protect their own interests, which is where stories start.

Power and Politics

Returning to the idea of power for a moment, there are a couple of truths about power that really underpin any story or adventure you create. The first principle is that power is not created, it is stolen. Power is a zero-sum game. If you give power to someone else, you have less. This means that people surrender power very reluctantly and try to get it back once it's been taken from them.

Second, people who have no power want power. They have to find methods for achieving power. Money, fame, weapons, political favors, murder, extortion and an appearance of already having power are tools for getting and increasing power. The "appearance of already having power" is what every grifter uses to entice those with real power into their web so they can steal from them.

Third, power fractures at and leaks from points of weakness. A dictator relies on his military and the leaders of banks and corporations to maintain power. For all of them it's a beneficial relationship. The dictator promotes stability and condones a certain amount of lawlessness with the corporations in return for money. The military supports him because they want stability and increases in their military budget. The corporators support him because the banking laws and low taxes allow them to profit and hide those profits. It all works very well.

But there are pressure points which can cause problems. Say, for example, pesky clerics from a particular church lead demonstrations against the violations of civil rights allowed by the government. Were the wife of a key general to be very devout in her beliefs, she might influence him and help weaken the dictator's support. Or if the parent corporation of one of the branches in this country was to be purchased and the new CEO wants new deals and concessions or he pulls support, suddenly the dictator's power base weakens.
And, obviously, if someone were to assassinate the dictator, or someone else were to pay the military to stage a coup, things would suddenly become very unstable. Power would leak, and folks would scramble to gather it up.

While this scenario uses a nation-state as an example, those same power politics apply on lower levels, even down to a PTA's bake sale committee. Politics is about power. Build a scenario around it, make sure power shifts, and you have a very dynamic and dramatic story for your players to unravel.

James Sallis is a brilliant writer of crime fiction, a dynamite teacher of writing and a friend. In one seminar at a writing conference he said, "Crime fiction is about the past erupting into the present." It's so true. And that concept coincides with another comment I read in a meme somewhere, "You are what you hide." You can use those ideas simply to create a scenario by asking yourself, "What did this NPC do in the past that he wants to remain in the past, and what happens when the secret looks like it will get loose?" How far is that person willing to go to keep it quiet? What impact will the truth have on his life and that of others? How far will any of them go to maintain the status quo?

Hot Spots and Hot Topics



Back when I first wrote MSPE the world was something of an easier place to figure out politically. The Cold War made labeling enemies pretty obvious. It also suppressed a whole bunch of other issues which only now have showed up as sources of conflict.

Scarce resources used to just be oil. Now we can add helium and rare-earth metals to the mix. Whoever controls those has a lot of power, and the discovery of, say, a huge supply of lithium in a small (fictional) nation in South America could suddenly make it a hotbed of industrial intrigue. And note that non-scarce resources, like trash and plastic and radioactive waste, as well as jailed criminals, have all created vast industries for the containment and disposal of same.

Controlled substances garner power, and not just in the trade in illegal drugs. The United States has long had a list of high tech items which cannot be exported to certain nations. Trade in critical parts and equipment for creating nuclear fuel is a place for adventure. Human trafficking is another. Freeports,

tax-free enclaves around the world where the rich store art and wine and other valuables, are prime targets for adventures.

Even trade in legal substances, whether legalized marijuana, or the latest, must-have kids toy for the holidays, can be the sources of story ideas. A limited supply facing an unlimited demand creates shortages, which means money goes hunting them, and hilarity ensues.

Another terrifying avenue for possible adventure is the growth of home biological labs, where people do their own experimentation on DNA. Whether it's someone wanting to create a Jurassic Park, or genetic treatments to make a child a superman, or just to doctor a DNA sample to frame someone for a murder, the means for doing all that is readily available and at much lower costs than most folks imagine. By extension, any home inventor could create a device that does something desirable, which then sends a lot of different people after it.

Locations for adventure can be almost anywhere. For overt tension, pick a spot where the characters won't fit it. It could be that the society is hostile to them, or the conditions are just horrid—Antarctica, or Mardi Gras for an agoraphobic are two examples. It doesn't have to that extreme, of course, but the whole "fish out of water" situation is great for forcing players to think instead of just react. Having a bunch of mercenaries guarding a convent where the nuns are harboring orphans could make for a heck of a scenario.
One really key thing about the locations: be sure



to use things which are exotic and unusual—out of the norm for the characters. It doesn't have to be outrageous, just fun. A new restaurant, a club they never knew existed before, or any other location that expands their world. A great chunk of the enjoyment we gets from games and stories is exploring and discovery. Tourist guidebooks and websites are full of this stuff.

A lot of fiction revolves around introducing the reader/characters into a new society or sub-culture. The recipe for these stories usually involves someone who had gotten out of that lifestyle, or was secretly involved in it, gets drawn back in or exposed. The solution to their problem requires characters to delve deeply into this unsuspected world until they understand it enough to unravel and solve the problem. (Often the "problem" is that the victim is dead, and the killer is part of the sub-culture.) Watch any mystery series of TV long enough, and there's going to be a mystery involving some sort of fandom (SF/Gaming included) and usually two sex cults, and an odd religion. Its a staple of the genre, open to satire, and a lot of fun.

Capers

One popular set of stories involves capers. *Ocean's Eleven, The Italian Job* and, I would argue, *The Avengers: Endgame;* are all capers. Capers pit an unlikely group of thieves against a very powerful foe, with the intention of stealing something of incredible value and humiliating the enemy at the same time. The kink that shows up in all capers is that after the heroes have planned their theft in exquisite detail, something goes wrong (often the enemy is tipped), the enemy increases the protection of the thing that is to be stolen, and the heroes have to improvise to win—thus proving why they are heroes in the first place.

To set these up for your players you create the MacGuffin (the item to be taken), and set the parameters for its protection. You let the players plan how they will get it, and then have them set about getting the materials they will need. You'll toss up roadblocks built around things being rare, or expensive, or impossible to move and, at some point, you'll reveal that somehow the villain knows something is up. He's doubled the guards or has kidnapped someone and is holding them as a hostage against the item remaining safe. The players then have to think on their feet and improvise so they win the day.

One Trick for easy campaign building

If you are going to build a campaign out of a bunch of shorter adventures—in much the way mystery series are built out of a series of adventures—there's a neat trick you can pull that ramps up anticipation. You start by planning out, in broad strokes, a series

of adventures. Just label them "Murder 1," "Murder 2" and then some ideas. Say that you remember the "past erupting into the present" idea and decide that "Murder 4" is of an old classmate one of the characters knew in high school. You don't have to decide yet the how and why and where of the murder; but in "Murder 1" you tell the player, "You're going through your mail and it's mostly junk, but there is a letter from your old high school." If they open it, it's asking for money, or asking for cards for an old teacher who is in poor health or anything. You're just reminding them that they went to high school.

And if you listen to how they respond, you'll likely pick up a detail you can use in the next step.

So,in "Murder 2" the connection with the school strengthens. The teacher who got the card calls to say thank you. Brief conversation, along with a "do you remember that young man who sat behind you in Math? He's doing very well for himself now. Created an app or something." Doesn't need to be anything more than that.

If the player decides to follow up, great. If not, you layer another clue into "Murder 3," and if what you'd planned for "Murder 4" has to be pushed back to allow for another scenario, no problem. You just build on the ground work and pull them into "Murder 4" when the time is right.

And, rather clearly, you can do this sort of clue layering with little tidbits for all sorts of adventures focused on each of the characters in your gaming group.The best part is that players will ignore the details, and just think they're little bits of role playing fluff, until you use it to get them into trouble, then they will love it. (And they'll be paranoid in the future about any little comment or aside, but that's the life of players anyway.)

This layering technique works for spy and mercenary campaigns as well. You can bury the clues in intelligence reports that contain fragments of details. As things move on and more information comes in, the players can construct a better picture of what's going on out there. You can have them get to the point where they lobby to be able to go off on a mission to deal with an enemy agent who has been vexing them, or to thwart what is clearly an enemy counter attack on their position.

Update on Mercenaries

Back when MSPE was first written, mercenaries were a vaguely romantic notion, the *Soldier of Fortune,* plying his trade in the world's hotspots. This was the way it worked back in the 1950s-1990s. It was never a pretty business, but lower tech warfare really created a niche for highly trained soldiers working for small groups.

Since then the role of the mercenary has been professionalized and industrialized. Many corporations have their own "security forces" and companies throughout the world provide bodyguard services for celebrities and government officials. Some mercenaries even hire out as "instructors" to train the armies of local warlords, turning a rabble into a half-decent army. Add in operators who can use high tech weapon systems including drones, and suddenly a few well-trained people have got the ability to project power that was previously limited to nation-states.

Clearly there are numerous storylines which can be played out both foreign and domestic, where "security forces" thwart terrorists. Do be aware, however, that such tales set in the "now" are going to invariably involve nation-state politics. A scenario may put a player character in a position to do something which runs counter to the player's personal political beliefs. It can also run into scenarios where players confront disturbing consequences of their actions, disturbing reactions by NPCs and material that brings too much of the real world to a gaming table, where the goal is to have fun and perhaps escape the realities of the world for a little bit. Be careful so that reality doesn't ruin the fantasy and upset folks who really just want to relax and enjoy themselves.

In conclusion

There's really so much more that I know folks would like to see—like superheroes perhaps, or some space opera—which would work with these rules. That's perhaps material for another project. Your support of this MSPE reissue has been heartwarming and has reminded me of why I love gaming and gamers so much. If there are other things you'd like to see, you can find me on Twitter at *@MikeStackpole*.

A long time ago we'd planned a supplement called *Lawyers, Guns and Money*. Maybe it's time to dust that idea off again... ◆



CUSTOMIZATION & SPECAILZATION

New Optional Rules

by Michael Stackpole

Customized Items

Any mechanical item can be modified to increase its effectiveness. Cars, guns, ovens, robotic equipment—basically anything for which there is a market/profession for creating/repairing those items—can be customized. Knives, horseshoes, leather work and such non-mechanical items cannot be customized. (Customization of such things would not increase their effectiveness, just impart a cosmetic aspect which does not go to function.)

Customization works in conjunction with the skills system. When a relevant skill can rise to a new level, the player has a choice. They can have the skill rise in level as normal, or they can award three (3) points of customization to a specific item.

Example: Orion is *Clip Pistol* level 2, and has gotten enough APs to go up to level 3. Instead of adding 1 point to that skill, he customizes his Glock 26 for 3 points. So, when using that specific pistol, he will have an effective *Clip Pistol* skill level of 5. (Two for his skill level, three for his customization.)

Caveats for Customization:

1) Spending the points on customizing an item returns the skill AP total to the entry amount for that level. In our example, Orion would have gotten 3000 APs to make the level jump. After he customizes his weapon, his AP total will fall to 1000, which is the starting total for Level 2.

2) The dollar cost for customizing the item is $3000 per level. In our example, Orion would spend $6000 to customize his gun.

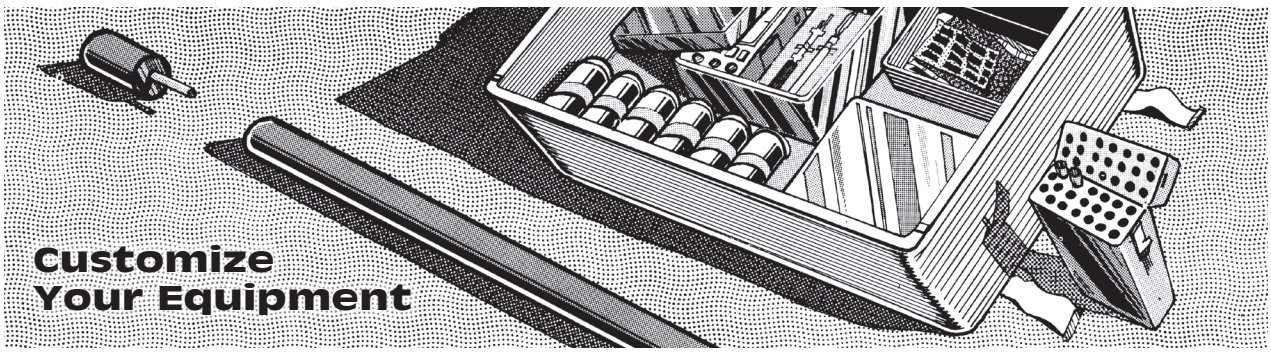
3) Customization points may not be split between items.

4) The maximum customization points allowed is 5 x Level. Orion can modify his pistol for a maximum of 10 points at Level 2 *Clip Pistol,* 15 at Level 3 and so forth.

5) If the item is lost, stolen or destroyed, the customization advantage is gone. If the item is recovered intact, it will function as normal.

6) If the item is replaced and the full cost of customizing it is paid again, the new item functions with half the customization level as before. (It just isn't quite the same.)

7) Players may not retroactively burn a skill level to boost the performance of an item. The choice



to modify an item must be made at the time the new skill level is available (even if the customization work cannot be done until later).

Customization has diminishing returns built into it. This is to make sure no one is running around with a souped-up car that can hit light speed, or a pistol that can drop a god at 200 yards. Customization, as per a skill, works on any saving throw where it would make sense for the customization to provide an advantage. Having a customized car or gun could be a Charisma advantage in certain circles, for example.

Customization of intangibles (software)
Items like software, biological weapons and similar can be customized, following the rules above. However, they are required to be split by function of offense and defense.

Hacking software would be the easiest example. The Hacker would create a suite of software tools: one to crack foreign systems, the other to defend against being hacked. (Hammer and Armor for lack of better terms.) A hacker could, conceivably have customized software running in a customized machine, which would create a really nice package, when combined with skill specialization.

If the software were running in a customized computer, the bonuses would stack.

Skill Specialization

The game's original system for accommodating new skills works to create contemporary skills like *Occupational Skill: Cybersecurity*. Many occupational/professional skills can include *specialization*. These will be treated similarly to Customized Items.
When a skill is available to shift levels, the player may choose, instead, to develop a specialization. Instead of adding 1 to their skill level, they would add three (3) points to the specialization. That specialization would function as an additional skill modifier for the purpose of saving throws.
Example: Paul has *OS:Cybersecurity* at Level 2. Instead of going to level 3, he creates a specialization of *Hacking* and awards it 3 points. Now, any time he goes out to hack a system, he would be working with his IQ + Level number (2) + *Hacking* (3).

Caveats for Skill specialization:
1) Spending the points on skill specialization returns the parent skill AP total to the entry amount for that level. In our example, Paul would have gotten 3000 APs to make the level jump. After he specializes in *Hacking,* his AP total will fall to 1000, which is the starting total for Level 2.
2) The dollar cost for learning the specialization is $3000 per level. In our example, Paul would spend $6000 to take a course in *Hacking*.
3) Specialization points may not be split between specializations.
4) Where a specialization could be seen to have an offensive or defensive capability, i.e. *Hacking*, the players should let the GM know the focus of the specialization. In this case, *Hacking* would be offensive, the skill *Defense against Hacking* would be defensive.
5) The maximum specialization points allowed is 5 x Level. Paul can study *Hacking* for maximum of 10 points at Level 2 *Cybersecurity,* and 15 at Level 3.
6) Players may not retroactively burn a skill level to acquire/boost a specialization. The choice to modify a specialization must be made at the time the new skill level is available (even if the class work cannot be done until later.)

Resolution of Skills-based conflict

Skill-based conflict functions with the basic Saving Roll system, with a slight modification. The system you use will depend on the circumstances of the conflict and what will be more dramatic in the mind of the GM.

Passive Opponent: This is the basic SR system, except that the "to hit" number for the saving roll has a value assigned other than by the formula noted previously in the rules. This value is given by the GM. Example: A character has a nasty wound and is, for all intents and purposes, dead. (His Con is -27 because of the injury.) The GM decides that to bring him back from the brink of death, the "to hit" number is 27—the amount of damage past 0 the character has taken.

The passive opponent "to hit" number can be used to reflect the influence of an item being upgraded from the standard version, or having been degraded by wear, damage and other factors.

Active Opponent: In an adversarial situation, a character may be pitted against another player or NPC. For example, Paul may be trying to hack his way into a computer system that has its own security experts (or an AI) fighting back. In this case Paul would be using his IQ (14) + *Cybersecurity* (2) + *Hacking* (3) + *Customized Computer (Hammer)* (6) + *Hammer suite of hacking software* (3). Paul's modified skill level would be 28 when all is said and done.

Paul's opposition would have a similar pile of factors to add up. Let's say his foe, Svetlana, comes up to 26. This number includes Svetlana's totals for any defensive modifications for computer and software, as well as her defensive cybersecurity skills and specializations.

Using two dice, Paul rolls a pair of 5s, so we add them in and reroll. He adds a 3 for his next roll, giving him a total of 28 + 13, or 41. Svetlana rolls a 6,

so her total is 32. Paul has beaten her by 9 points. This conflict can be finalized in one of two ways.

First Blood: Paul has defeated Svetlana and is able to get whatever he wants out of the computer. The GM may decide just how extensive the information is that he gets based on the margin of victory. With this method the conflict lasts one round.

Deathmatch... Paul has won the first round. Svetlana's software and computer would take damage equal to Paul's margin of victory. After damage is applied, totals would be recalculated and another round of rolls would commence.

Applying damage for this sort of thing should hit *Intangibles* first, then *Tangibles* and then *Willpower*—the combatant's ability to get past frustration, panic and the like. In our case above, the 9 points of damage would be applied to destroy 9 points of Svetlana's custom software package. Any extra would start destroying customized equipment, though a kind GM might want to let the software die and have no carryover to the hardware until the next round. In a contemporary game, destroying the opposition's hardware would end the conflict; in a cyberpunk game where characters interface directly with the computers, the damage might then carryover into a character's mental capacity to continue. (In cyberpunk scenarios, the damage might get split among all three areas equally.)

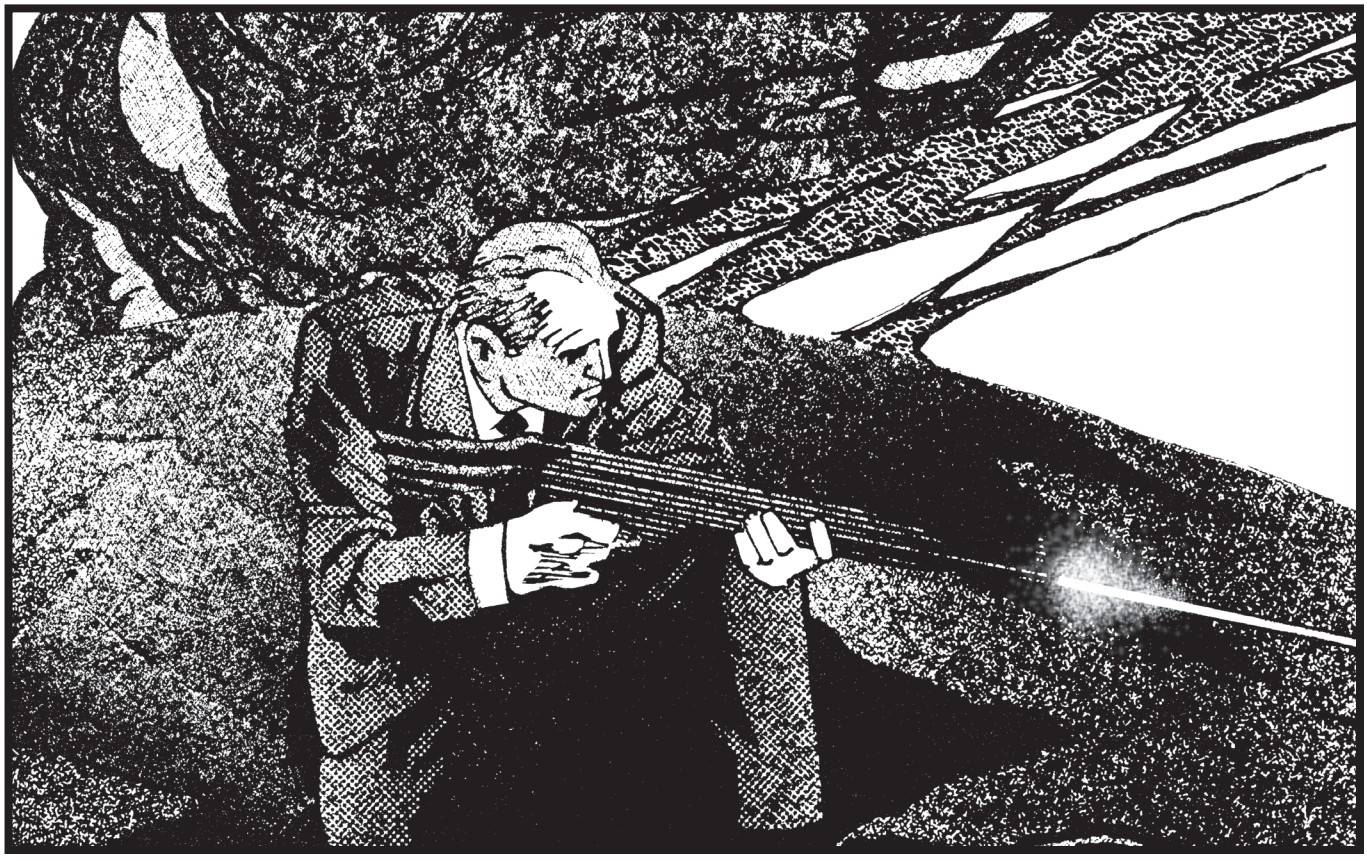
This same system could be used to adjudicate a chess match between two players, or trying to disarm a bomb within X number of rounds before it detonates.

It would also be possible, in this cyber duel, for Svetlana to attack back against Paul at the same time. The totals for her offensive capabilities would be pitted against his defensive capabilities. The combat would be simultaneous, damage applied at the end of the rounds, and new totals calculated for the next round.

Hits As You Miss: One concept present above which is really useful is taking damage equal to what you missed a saving roll by. In most cases this is going to be a tiny amount, but it can make apparent the possible results of failing a highly risky saving roll. It's a quick, shorthand system for handing rolls that don't really require a big production to handle.

And as always if you prefer the original MSPE system or have adapted your own methods, use those. You are the Game Master now. Do what works best for style of play.

Editor's Note: Mike has also added a new weapon and three advanced armor types to the rulebook. Those are located with the other armor and weapons in the earlier pages to make them easier to use. We've also added the car braking info, sci-fi environments and advice for running Pulp adventures at the most logical locations in the rulebook. ◆



At a Glance Skills List

IQ 4

Archery (1)
Bladed Weapons:
- Knife Fighting (1)
- Knife Throwing (1)
- Fencing (1)
- Brawling (1)

Firearms:
- Machinegun (1)
- Assault Rifle (1)
- Shotgun (1)
- Anti-Tank Weaponry (1)
- Mortar (1)
- Rifle (1)
- SMG/Machine Pistol (1)
- Revolver/Single-Shot Pistol (1)
- Muzzle Loader (1)
- Clip Pistol (1)

Garrote (1)
Horsemanship (1)
Pugilism (1)
Recreational Skills (½)
Shuriken (1)
Street-Fighting/Self Defense (1)

IQ 6

Bola (1)
Bullwhip (1)
Lariat (1)
Gliding (1)
Hang Gliding (1)
Motorcycle (1)
Tracking/Tailing (1)

IQ 8

Chic (1)
Fast Driving (1)
Mountaineering (1)
Sky Diving (1)

IQ 10

Acrobatics (1, DEX 12)
Ambush/Silent Movement (1)
Bachelor's Degree (1)
Bureaucracy Mastery (1)
Combat Shooting (1, DEX 14)
Computer (1)
Confidence (1, CHR 12)
Demolitions (1)
Diplomacy (1)
Education – Bachelor's Degree (1)
Elocution (1)
Environmental Survival:
- Swamp (1)
- Forest (1)
- Desert (1)
- Arctic (1)
- Jungle (1)
- Urban (1)
- Suburban (1)

Gambling (1)
Leadership (1)
Lockpick (1)
Safecracking (1)
Quick Draw (1, DEX 12)
Seduction (1, CHR 10)
Underwater (1)
Underwater Combat (1)

IQ 11

Research (1)
Tactical (1)

IQ 12

Disguise (1)
Electronics (1)
Electronic Countermeasures (1)
Forensics (1)
Forgery (1)
Masters Degree (1)
Observation (1)
Photography (1)
Secret ID/Double Agent (2)
Sleight of Hand (1, DEX 12)

IQ 13

Language & Lit (1,2)
Medic (2)
Doctorate (Ph.D) (2)

IQ 14

Alarm Neutralization (2)
Bomb Disarm (1)
Gunsmithing (2)
Lawyer (2)
Medical Doctor (MD) (2)
Pilot:
- Commercial Jet (1)
- Commercial Prop (1)
- Combat Jet (1)
- Private Prop/Jet (1)
- VTOL Jets (1)
- Autogyro (1)
- Helicopter (1)
- Ships (1)
- Yacht (1)
- Hovercraft (1)
- Train (1)

IQ 16

Cryptology (2)
Poison (2)

Open

Special Interest (1)
Occupation Skill (1)
Acting/Mimic (1)
Psychic Abilities (3)
Martial Arts (1+)
Title (1, 2, 3)

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE: Three skills that are so common as to be taken for granted (by the author) are *Driving*, *Cooking* and *Swimming*. Every character will be assumed to have minimal skill in these areas. *Driving* will be defined as the ability to start a car, get it into one gear or more and make it head in a desired direction. *Driving* will also include a knowledge of the need for gas and oil in cars. *Cooking* will consist of being able to boil a hotdog, or the cultural equivalent for a character. *Swimming* shall be defined as the ability to avoid drowning under most normal circumstances. Characters with this skill should be able to lounge in and around a pool with no trouble.

All of these skills are free and are levelable. If a character decides to do without one of these skills, no skill points are freed up for use: either you take these or you go without. Bumping *Driving* up in levels will allow a character to drive trucks, buses or other wheeled vehicles not covered in other skills. Increasing *Cooking* will make a character the most welcome of people at pot luck suppers and buffets. Level 5 in this skill will give the character fame locally as a very good cook. *Swimming* increases would give the character different strokes to use, though any competitive swimming should probably come under a *Recreational Skill*. ◆

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Use these MSPE characters as NPCs, or assign them to other players for an adventure.

MODERN CHARACTERS

Kevin Allard



Born October 1st, 1960 Level 3
ST: 14 IQ: 16 LK: 12 CON: 15
DEX: 15 CHR: 16 SP: 12
Hand-to Hand Adds: 5 Missile Adds: none

Physical Description: Male, 5'11"/175 lbs. Brown hair and eyes.

Occupation: Businessman.

Languages: English, French.

Education: University BA, MBA.

Occupational Skills: None.

Special Interest Skills: Biogenetic Engineering 2.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: Jungle 2.

Other Skills: Clip Pistol 2, Helicopter Pilot 2, Martial Arts (Karate) 2, Chic 2, Mountaineering 2, Seduction 2, Electronics 2, Computer 2, Diplomacy 2, Leadership 2, Bureaucracy Mastery 1, Research 2.

Details: Kevin is the only son of Kenneth Allard, the man behind Allard Technologies and Stormhaven. Kevin grew up in the lap of luxury and aside from the premature death of his mother from an illness, he had a very happy childhood. Still, like the rest of the Allard males, once he reached his majority he set off on a series of world spanning adventures. For two years he was seldom in touch with his family, which worried his father but made him proud that Kevin could fend for himself. Then he returned to the United States and completed an undergraduate and MBA program from Harvard in four years. Since then he's been in the thick of things; running many of the daily operations of Allard Technologies and freeing his father for more of the research and development work he so enjoys.

Kevin has never said much about the two years he spent off by himself, but he often brings insights from that experience to problems faced by the company. There are some stories, probably apocryphal, about his working with the DEA as an agent in Colombia and work with the terrorist hunter known as Raptor.

Peter Johnson

Born July 15th, 1951 Level 5
ST: 13 IQ: 14 LK: 16 CON: 14
DEX: 18 CHR: 10 SP: 11
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 11 Missile Adds: 4



Physical Description: Male, 5'9"/150 lbs. Black hair and brown eyes.

Occupation: Musician.

Languages: English, French, Russian, Arabic.

Education: High School.

Occupational Skills: None.

Special Interest Skills: Jazz Music 3, Saxophone 3.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: Urban 4.

Other Skills: Assault Rifle 4, Rifle 4, Pugilism 3, SMG/Machine Pistol 4, Garrote 3, Acting/Mimic 5, Research 4, Ambush/Silent Movement 4, Quick-Draw 3, Clip Pistol 3.

Details: Peter Johnson is the suspected true name of the international assassin known as the Ghul. He is a master of disguise and has a very peculiar method of operation. He only accepts jobs with political implications and impersonates or hires operatives to impersonate the target of the hit *after* the victim is dead!

Despite his refusal of any job that does not have a political bent, he's just as likely to kill a Communist revolutionary as he is a right-wing military dictator. Though his real age is unknown the rumors that he was the second assassin in Dallas in 1963 have been widely discounted because he appears to be in his mid-thirties.

The Ghul is a very dangerous individual. No one has better than a sketchy description of him, and only a few people have heard his voice. Other than that the only thing known about him is that he has an absolute passion for Jazz music and especially likes saxophone.

Damon Crowley

Born October 31st, 1956 Level 6
ST: 16 IQ: 18 LK: 17 CON: 15
DEX: 18 CHR: 13 SP: 14
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 15 Missile Adds: 5

Description: Male, 5'11"/200 symetrically distributed lbs. Black hair and goatee, green eyes.

Occupation: Writer.

Languages: English, Japanese, High Latin, Welsh, Gaelic and other Celtic languages.

Education: University.

Occupational Skills: Writer 3.

Special Interest Skills: Occult 3, Psychic Swindles 4.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: None.



Other Skills: Pugilism 4, Martial Arts (Bojitsu) 5, Clip Pistol 3, Hang Gliding 3, Chic 4, Mountaineering 3, Fast Driving 3, Acrobatics 2, Electronics 3, Sleight of Hand 4, Computer 3, Confidence 3, Acting/Mimic 3, Disguise 3, Lockpicking 3, Forgery 2, Safecracking 3.

Details: Has a secret ID. Crowley is a shadowy figure in the occult underworld. His claim of being Aleister Crowley's grandson is doubted in some circles, and devoutly believed in others. He's an extremely knowledgeable occultist who enjoys exposing fakes as much as investigating truly mysterious and sorcerous phenomena. His most recent book, *The Dark Dimension: A Personal Journal,* is an occult best-seller, easily outstripping the sales of Seth books and *Zodiac Sex 1986.*

Crowley is very much a man of mystery. At fashionable receptions or banquets he always wears pearl gray gloves and the one smudged set of prints lifted by a detective sent to investigate him came back with inconclusive results. He is always well mannered, and is a celebrity in Europe despite his seeming disregard for proper immigration procedures. Said an Interpol inspector, "He treats borders as if they were nothing more than lines on a map. Thank God he doesn't smuggle drugs."

Damon Crowley frequently lends his expertise to those experiencing difficulty of a magical or pseudo-magical bent. He has exposed more than his share of confidence games, and it has been rumored that a price has been offered for his head.

Tiffany Morgan

Born July 4th, 1958 Level 5
ST: 9 IQ: 13 LK: 13 CON: 13
DEX: 14 CHR: 17 SP: 10
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 3 Missile Adds: 1

Physical Description: Female, 5'3"/108 lbs. Long black hair and blue eyes. Definitely "petite," beautiful and a killer Tootsie.



Occupation: Professional Model.

Languages: English, French, Japanese.

Education: BS in Business, MBA.

Occupational Skills: Modeling 5.

Special Interest Skills: None.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: None.

Other Skills: Martial Arts (Dim Mak) 4, Chic 6, Acrobatics 3, Bureaucracy Mastery 4, Seduction 7, Photography 4, Confidence 3, Research 3.

Details: Tiffany Morgan is the sole owner and CEO of Morgan International, a worldwide modeling agency and PR firm. Though small and always poised and charming, she's a powerhouse. She gets anything she wants, at the price she's willing to accept. She is so manipulative, and so good at it, that it's been said that at preconception she chose her own genes.

Tiffany knows information is power. She has an extremely effective network of agents throughout the world, working for her as models and public relations consultants. They learn a great deal and all of it is kept track of in Morgan International's San Francisco headquarters. Because of this vast database there is very little Tiffany cannot purchase with money or information.

If Tiffany has a flaw it is her vanity. More than once she's become intrigued with people who have no need of her. She's tried to crush such men and women, but just by virtue of the fact that they don't need her, the efforts are not wholly successful. Her temper is explosive—bad enough to make the Big Bang look like a dud firecracker—and she has no conception of what it might be like to apologize to someone.

1930s CHARACTERS

Philip Marlowe

Born November 18th, 1898 Level 4
ST: 14 IQ: 16 LK: 14 CON: 15
DEX: 15 CHR: 13 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 7 Missile Adds: 2

Physical Description: Male, 5' 11", 170 lbs. Brown hair and green eyes.

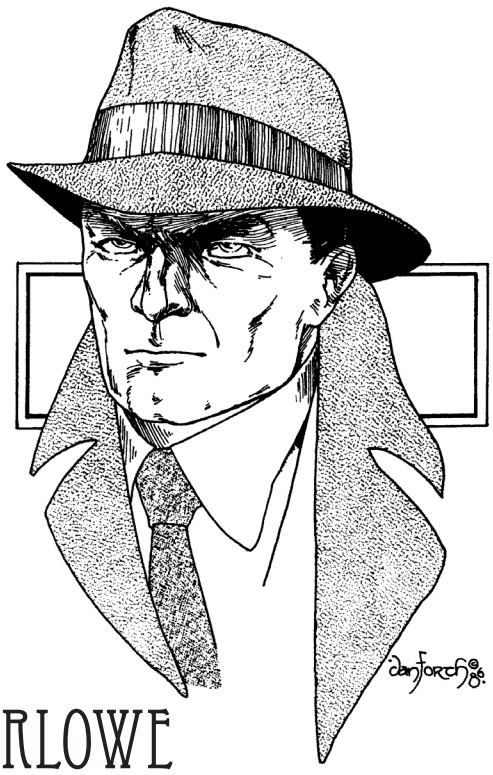
Occupation: Private Investigator.

Languages: English, French, Latin.

Education: BA English.

Occupational Skills: Detective 3, Teacher, 2.

Special Interest Skills: Underworld 3.



MARLOWE

Recreational Skills: Chess 3.

Environmental Skills: Urban 3.

Other Skills: Revolver 3, Cryptology 3, Research 2, Fast Driving 3, Seduction 3, Pugilism 3, Rifle 2, Observation 3, Confidence 2, Chic 2.

Details: Teacher and Private Eye.

Merlin Bloodstone

Born April 1st, 1901 Level 5
ST: 8 IQ: 20 LK: 13 CON: 13
DEX: 17 CHR: 14 SP: 13
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 5 Missile Adds: 1

Physical Description: Male, 5'6"/130 lbs. Black hair and argent blue eyes.

Occupation: Professional Magician.

Languages: English, Celtic, Latin and Tibetan.

Occupational Skills: None.

Special Interest Skills: Seances 4, Western Occult Tradition 3, Occult Magic 4, Stage Magic 3, Voodoo 2, Divination Systems 3.

Recreational Skills: None.

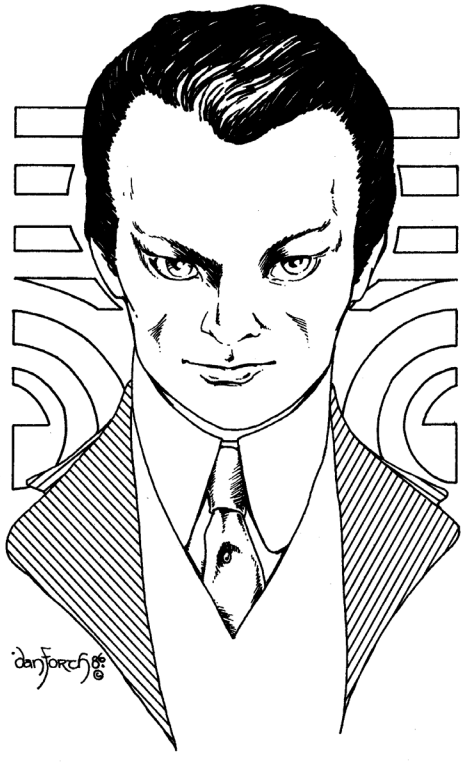
Environmental Skills: Jungle 2.

Other Skills: Psychometric *Controlled*, Precognitive *Controlled*, Sleight of Hand 3, Research 4, Fencing 2, Mountaineering 2, Confidence 2, Revolver 2, Poison 2.

Education: BA English.

Details: Five years ago a collector of manuscripts came upon a number of "stories" about Merlin Bloodstone in a packet of papers. He had the handwriting verified as that of Arthur Conan Doyle and assumed he'd found unpublished manuscripts by Doyle that featured Merlin Bloodstone, Harry Houdini and Doyle himself. He started negotiating with a publisher and the newly discovered works were scheduled for publication until a lawyer representing the Bloodstone family blocked the books.

Merlin Bloodstone helped Doyle and Houdini in debunking and exposing a whole host of psychic frauds. Doyle's manuscripts are uncertain about Bloodstone's motivations for his actions, but Doyle clearly believed that Bloodstone's "powers" were legitimate and special. The manuscripts suggest Bloodstone was precognitive and psychometric at the very least, and hint at other more sinister abilities.



The only other confirmation of Bloodstone's existence is in a letter from Aleister Crowley to a disciple in which he curses the diminutive psychic investigator. "The Small One has meddled once again! It is time for the House of Bloodstone to finally fall!" Crowley may well have carried out his threat for the letter is the last mention extant of Merlin Bloodstone.



Anna Stark

Born July 21st, 1904 Level 3
ST: 12 IQ: 14 LK: 12 CON: 10
DEX: 16 CHR: 14 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 4 Missile Adds: none

Physical Description: Female, 5'8"/125 lbs. Blonde hair and eyes. Has Heidelberg scar on her left cheek.

Occupation: Airplane Mechanic.

Languages: English, French, German.

Education: High School.

Occupational Skills: Airplane Mechanic 3.

Special Interest Skills: Biplane Combat History and Tactics 2.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: None.

Other Skills: Clip Pistol 1, Chic 2, Pilot Prop Plane 4, Motorcycle 2, Fast Driving 2, Observation 2, Tactical 2, Diplomacy 2.

Details: Anna Stark's father was one of the first US airmen in the Great War. In a strange dogfight her father and a German ace managed to chew each other's planes to bits. They both crashed and suffered crippling spinal injuries. Both men grew very bitter over their injuries and claimed victory over the other.

The German pilot's son, Victor von Hecht, challenged any Stark to take to the air against him in a bloodless duel where the object was to use the prop to chop a 10-foot long strip of cloth from the tail of the enemy plane. For several years his challenge went unanswered. Then, in June 1925, he got a telegram setting up a dogfight in France.

The two pilots met in the air. Observers on the ground, coincidentally two British aces on holiday, were amazed at the mastery both pilots showed. Finally the American pilot, in a Sopwith Snipe, managed to trim the Fokker's tail and the pilots landed. Victor von Hecht almost swallowed his tongue when the Snipe's pilot took off her helmet and long blonde hair cascaded down about her shoulders!

The dogfight quickly became legend and the pair were enjoined to repeat their performance at airshows all across Europe and America. They pop up almost anywhere and when they are not flying their curiosity gets them involved in all sorts of adventures.

Both are proud of their abilities and have strong sense of honor. Anna reacts very poorly to people who think she should be home bearing children. Victor is a charmer and leaves broken hearts in every town he visits. Though they tend to spar verbally all the time, they are staunch defenders of each other and value their partnership above all else.

Victor von Hecht

Born March 15th, 1902 Level 4
ST: 14 IQ: 14 LK: 12 CON: 12
DEX: 15 CHR: 14 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 5 Missile Adds: none

Physical Description: Male, tall, dark hair and eyes, boyish features.

Occupation: Airplane Pilot.

Languages: German, French, English.

Education: BA Military Studies.

Occupational Skills: Pilot Prop Plane 4.

Special Interest Skills: Aerodynamic design 3.

Recreational Skills: None.

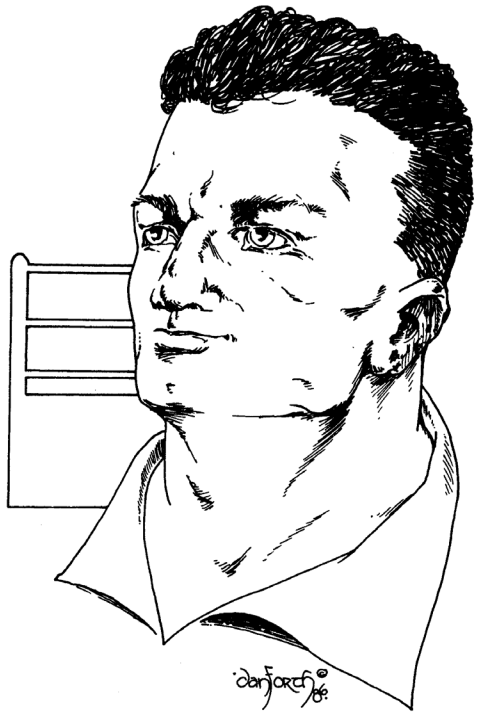
Environmental Skills: None.

Other Skills: Clip Pistol 2, Rifle 2, Chic 3, Fencing 4, Pugilism 2, Pilot Prop Plane 4, Horsemanship 2.

Details: See *Details* under Anna Stark.

Robin "Bobbin' Robin" Hartwick

Born April 17th, 1898 Level 1
ST: 20 IQ: 7 LK: 13 CON: 20
DEX: 10 CHR: 11 SP: 3
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 9 Missile Adds: 1



Physical Description: Male, 6'2"/280 lbs (all muscular). Closely cropped black hair and green eyes. His nose has been broken at least once but is not ugly.

Occupation: Wrestler.

Languages: English.

Education: Elementary School (Grade 4).

Occupational Skills: Pro Wresting 1.

Special Interest Skills: Children's Stories 1, Small Time hoods 1.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: None.

Other Skills: Pugilism 2, Tracking/Tailing 1.

Details: Robin Hartwick was big for his age and in 1910 started boxing though he was only 12. His career, which consisted mostly of standing there and wearing foes out by taking all they could hit him with, had a break when he served during the Great War. Though he never rose above the rank of Sergeant he was highly decorated by the US, British and French governments. When he returned to the States he boxed for a couple more years then shifted over to wrestling.

Robin suffers from the beatings he withstood in the ring. He's a very gentle soul who loves children and he realizes, after a fashion, that he's a lot slower in the think tank than he used to be. He's not stupid, but he often has trouble communicating the true importance of an event to others. And he often lets his fists speak for him because he's found they are excellent communicators.

Because the wrestling circuit goes all over Robin can be found almost anywhere. He's always willing to help people with problems, though a detective he's not, and he has been known to search days on end for a lost child. He's a very modest man, drinks only occasionally and very much enjoys creating trouble for small-time hoods who have over-inflated ideas of their self-worth.

1880s CHARACTERS

Michael Hayden

Born September 29th, 1865 Level 5
ST: 16 IQ: 15 LK: 13 CON: 15
DEX: 14 CHR: 13 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 7 Missile Adds: 1

Physical Description: Male, 6'3"/220 lbs. Brown hair and eyes. Wide shoulders and narrow waist/hips. Long legs and handsome face.

Occupation: Pinkerton Agent.

Languages: English, Latin, French.

Education: No Formal Education.

Occupational Skills: Cowboy 4.

Special Interest Skills: Criminology 3, Artwork.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: Plains.

Other Skills: Knife Fighting 3, Brawling 2, Rifle 3, Revolver 4, Horsemanship 4, Lariat 3, Tracking/Tailing 3, Quick Draw 4, Observation 3, Gunsmithing 3, Pugilism 3.

Michael Hayden *(continued)*



Details: Michael was born and raised in Arizona Territory. He learned to handle a gun at a very early age, but he scorned the tales of gunfighters and outlaws. He knew, from first hand experience, that outlaws were just savage killers stealing from others and he wasted no dreams on them. He was raised on a ranch by the Salt River, east of Phoenix, and learned to ride, rope and do all the other things vital to a rancher's life. In addition he learned, at the behest of his mother, a Frenchwoman, Latin, French and everything possible about true culture.

His family, rather prominent in the territory, had enough sons and cousins to handle the ranch so Michael became a Pinkerton agent. His dream was to help rid the West of some of the outlaws that were being so glorified in the penny dreadfuls back east, but the agency found in him a charismatic, capable man who they put to work on the east coast and in Europe. Official Pinkerton records reveal that he was quite close to capturing a European crime Czar who disappeared mysteriously in Switzerland before Hayden could bring him to justice.

Michael has been accurately described as a tiger. He's powerfully built and very handsome. In addition he's terrifying in combat. A story is told, undoubtedly false, about his escape from a white slave caravan in which he slew a dozen Berbers. Miss Lydia White-Smyth, the client he was sent to rescue, recalled a nocturnal sword duel with the Berber chieftain—she vividly describes both men silhouetted against a huge full moon—but she suffered from sunstroke on the trip out so the tale has been dismissed as an hallucination.

Sherlock Holmes

Born 1854 Level 7
ST: 12 IQ: 30 LK: 10 CON: 11
DEX: 14 CHR: 12 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 2 Missile Adds: none

Physical Description: Lean and tall, with black hair, dark and heavy brows, thin hawk-like nose, thin but firm lips in a narrow face, large forehead, gray piercing eyes, and quick high, somewhat strident voice.

Occupation: Consulting Detective.

Languages: English, French, German, Latin, Cantonese Chinese (spoken only), Lushai.

Education: University and self-taught.

Occupational Skills: None.

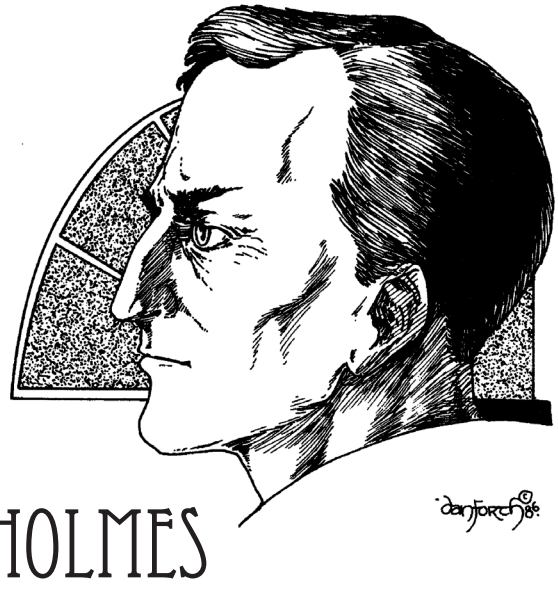
Special Interest Skills: Anatomy 2, Chemistry 5, Geology 4, Tobacco and Ash 4, Coal Oil Derivatives 2, Prof. James Moriarty 4, Typewriters 3, Penny Dreadfuls 3.

Recreational Skills: Violin 4.

Enviromental Skills: Urban 4.

Other Skills: Pugilism 5, Poison 4, Elocution 3, Leadership 4, Sleight of hand 3, Cryptology 5, Lockpicking 4, Safecracking 4, Photography 3, Revolver 2, Shotgun 3, Fencing 5, Disguise 6, Tailing/Tracking 3, Ambush/Silent Movement 4, Research 5, Martial Arts (Baritsu) 3, Bureaucracy Mastery 3, Confidence 4, Acting/Mimic 3, Forgery 3, Forensics 5, Observation 8.

Details: "The world's first and only Consulting Detective!"



John Watson, MD.

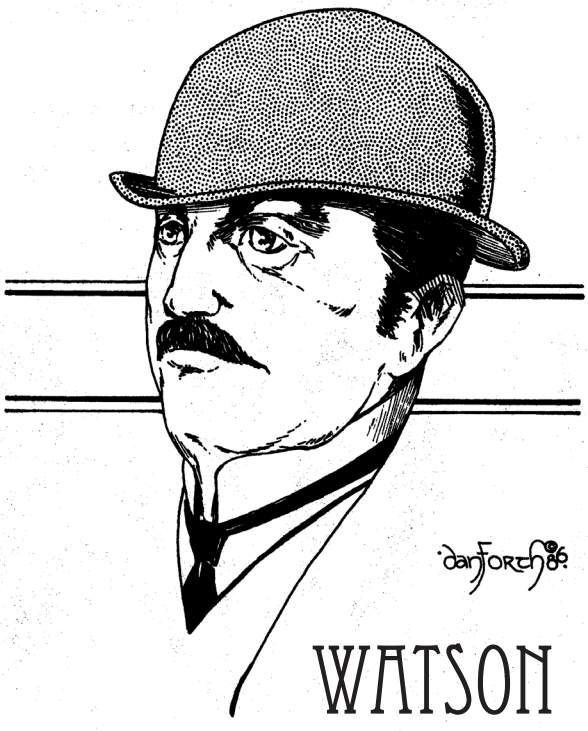
Born 1855 Level 4
ST: 14 IQ: 14 LK: 10 CON: 13
DEX: 14 CHR: 14 SP: 14
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 4 Missile Adds: none

Physical Description: Medium-sized, strongly built man possessing a square jaw and a thick neck along with a modest moustache.

Occupation: Physician at St. Batholomews, Private Practice.

Languages: English, Latin, Urdu and Hindi.

Education: MD University of London.



Occupational Skills: Physician 4, Writer 4.

Special Interest Skills: Nervous Lesions 2, India 2, Afghan Wars 3, Race Horses 1.

Recreational Skills: Billiards 2, Rugby 2, Gambling 3.

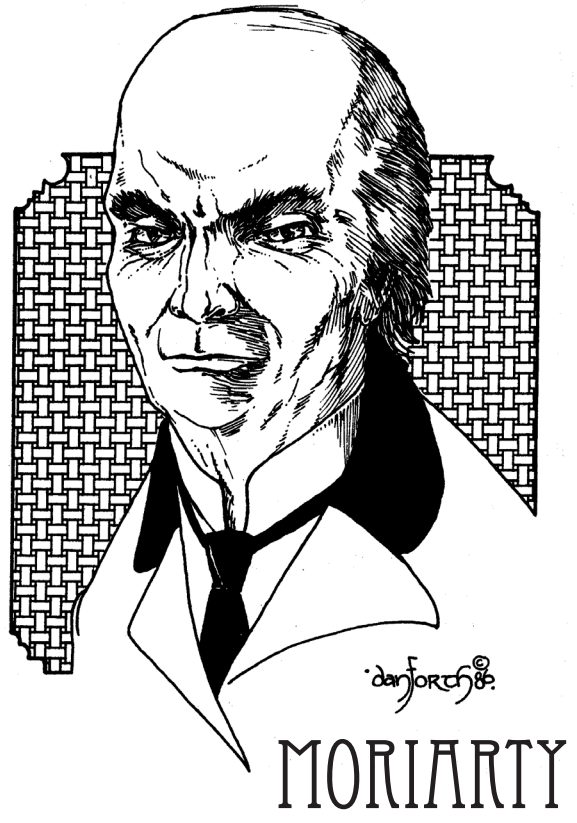
Environmental Skills: Urban 3.

Other Skills: Seduction 3, Revolver 3, Rifle 3.

Details: Companion and Boswell to Sherlock Holmes in many of the latter's most famous cases.

Professor James Moriarty

Born 1849 Level 7
ST: 12 IQ: 30 LK: 10 CON: 11
DEX: 14 CHR: 12 SP: 12
Hand-to-Hand Adds: 2 Missile Adds: none



Physical Description: A small, stoop-shouldered man apparently quite frail, with a hawk-like visage.

Occupation: Army Coach.

Languages: English, French, Latin.

Education: PhD Math.

Occupational Skills: PhD. Mathematics Professor, Army Coach.

Special Interest Skills: Binomial Theorem 4, Artwork 4, Astronomy 4.

Recreational Skills: None.

Environmental Skills: Urban 4.

Other Skills: Forgery 4, Research 6, Poison 3, Lockpicking 4, Safe cracking 4, Fencing 2, Pugilism 4, Confidence 4, Gunsmithing 5, Chic 3, Rifle 3, Revolver 4, Leadership 5.

Details: "The Napoleon of Crime!"

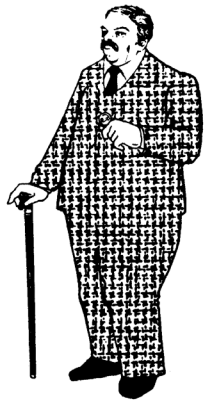
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Character Portraits for your MSPE Character Sheet

Permission is granted to photocopy these character portraits for personal use only. Character portraits created by Liz Danforth.











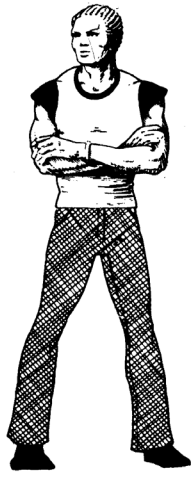










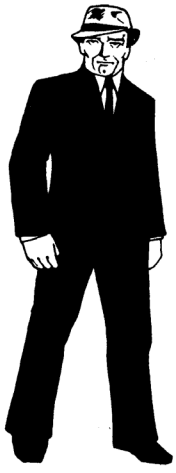




Character Portraits for your MSPE Character Sheet

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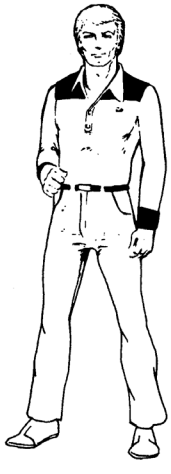
















Weapons:

Name	Dice & Adds	Ammo	Capacity	Range	Missile Chart	Notes

Armor:

	Dice & Adds	

Provisions: _____

MSPE CHARACTER FOLDER

designed for use with Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes™

Permission is granted to photocopy for personal use



Name _____

Birthdate _____ Race _____ Nationality _____

Sex _____ $ Carried _____ $ Stored _____

Level _____ APs _____ Skill Points Unused _____

Eye color _____ Hair _____ Height _____ Weight _____

ST _____ LK _____ DEX _____ IQ _____ CON _____ CHR _____ SP _____

Hand-to-Hand Adds _____ Missile Adds _____ Main weapon _____

Description, background, title, etc. _____

(Workspace) _____

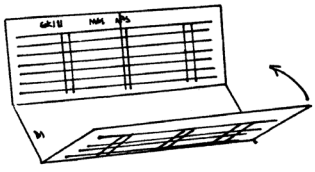
Place Character Portrait Here

Skill	Level	APs		Skill	Level	APs

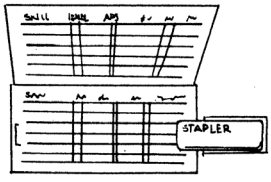
B1 B2

THE MSPE CHARACTER FOLDER
is designed to make it easy for you to keep your player character's statistics all together in an easy-to-use folder which can also hold clues, notes, pictures, and additional material. Photocopy the drawings on the inside cover, then choose the one that looks most like your character. Cut it out along the indicated lines and paste it in place on the front of the MSPE Character Folder. (If you use photocopies instead of the original booklet, you can re-use the cover as long as you play the game). If none of these drawings quite match, look in newspapers or magazines until you find a picture that is closer, or draw your own!

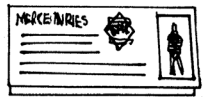
Line A.....Line A



1



2



3

TO USE THIS FOLDER:

1) Fold up along Line A. The vertical lines from the upper section should align with the vertical lines on the lower section when it's in the right place.

2) Staple (or tape) at B1 and B2.

3) Fold the top panel down and match edges.

4) Have fun!

Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes™

Character Record Sheet *(non-folding version)*



Name: _____

Title: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____ Nationality: _____

Employment: _____ Psychic Skill: _____ Skill Points Unused: _____

ST: _____ IQ: _____ LK: _____ CON: _____ DEX: _____ CHR: _____ SP: _____

HtoH Adds: _____ Missile Weapon Adds: _____ Level: _____

$ on Person: _____ $ Saved: _____ Wages or Dividends: _____

Physical Description and Background: _____

_____

_____

_____

Languages (* native tongue): _____

_____

Skills (Skill name/Level/Adventure Points):

			SWIMMING	1	
			DRIVING	1	
			COOKING	1	

Education: _____

Weapons: _____

_____

Armor: _____

Provisions (continue on back): _____

_____

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SUGGESTED READING AND REFERENCES

Creating a suggested reading list for this game is not an easy task. After all, I am now supposed to inflict upon you a list of the works I think you would enjoy. I would never assume to have the same reading tastes as anyone else, and a casual study of my library would confirm my claim. For that reason, I will recommend authors where works of fiction are concerned, and titles for reference books. I will also include comments, in italics, where they might be of interest.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *All of Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes should be well known to anyone buying this game. Of equal import to this game should be the tales of Prof. Challenger. You can expect to see more on Holmes from us in the future.*

Poe, Edgar Allen. *It would not be fair to forget the man for whom the Mystery Writers of America have named their award. Poe's grasp of the macabre and atmosphere make his work a good example of how to describe adventures to players.*

Stoker, Bram. *The classic* Dracula *is easily available and again provides both atmosphere and suspense that any GM can learn from. The use of the supernatural is superb and a GM could do worse than follow Stoker's example in creating an adventure.*

Futrelle, Jacques. *The Thinking Machine is my favorite detective. The stories, available from Dover books, are masterpieces of deduction.*

Rohmer, Sax. *The Fu Manchu mysteries are perfect for offering a power-mad villain to emulate.*

Christie, Agatha. *Of all of the mystery writers I have read, she is the only one who has stumped me all of the times I have tried to figure out one of her mysteries. Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot are brilliantly painted characters.*

Sayers, Dorothy. *Lord Peter Whimsey is the sole reason for titles in this game. Miss Sayers is a brilliant writer, and her work is more than worth the time to find and read.*

Hammett, Dashiell. *Sam Spade and Nick and Nora Charles are two fine examples of characters who would be interesting to imitate in gaming. Hammett writes good stories and several excellent films have been produced from his tales.*

Gardner, Erle Stanley. *His practical experience in law makes the Perry Mason stories highly exact and realistic.*

Stout, Rex. *Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin are two brilliant characters who would fit well in gaming. The mysteries are very good and can teach many how to build good gaming scenarios.*

Tey, Josephine. Daughter of Time *is considered one of the best mysteries ever written, and with good cause. If anyone is limited to reading only one more book for the rest of his life, he could do much worse than choose this one.*

Mcdonald, Gregory. Fletch *and* Confess, Fletch *were back-to-back Edgar winners for their author. I highly recommend both the Fletch series and the Flynn series. They are entertaining reading as well as good mysteries.*

King, Stephen. *Danse Macabre is an absolute must for anyone who wants to run adventures that have a feel of terrifying reality to them. King's fiction is brilliant, and should not be missed.*

Hoch, Edward. *Hoch contributes to Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine every month. Nick Velvet, the thief who steals nothing of value, is very entertaining. His work is highly recommended.*

Asimov, Isaac. *The Black Widowers are brilliant and should be read by anyone and everyone who wants to know what good character work combined with fascinating mysteries can be.*

Wellman, Manly Wade. Who Fears the Devil? *is an excellent collection of short stories that combine local supernatural legends with modern times. Aside from being excellent reading, the stories have an ease and sense about them that could be good to emulate by any Gamemaster.*

Saberhagen, Fred. *All of the new Dracula tales by Saberhagen combine the supernatural with today, and yesterday, brilliantly. The tales are fun to read and very adaptable to games.*

Charnas, Suzy McKee. *Charnas' portrayal of a modern vampire differs from authors who have preceded her, and brings the possibility of a vampire closer to home. Her book,* Vampire Tapestry, *is very good and is recommended highly.*

Pentecost, Hugh. *Another regular contributor to EQMM, Pentecost authors excellent deductive mysteries while masterfully creating characters to act within them. Like Edward Hoch above, he is one of the authors I always look for in EQMM.*

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. *This magazine is a brilliant source of stories, reviews, news, and entertainment for anyone interested in mysteries. I cannot recommend more highly any publication, and the six years of back issues on my shelves will attest to my love for this magazine.*

Forsyth, Frederick. *All of Forsyth's books are very well-written and can easily be considered primers for characters and GMs on how to obtain false identities, illegal arms, and how to run a mercenary mission.*

Cave, Hugh B. *Hugh Cave has written many books and is quite an accomplished storyteller. His recent works,* The Evil *and its sequel* Shades of Evil, *are excellent for combining the supernatural with today. Cave is also very good in his use of characters and exotic settings; many GMs could learn well from him how to describe setting for clarity and mood.*

Garrett, Randall. *The Lord Darcy series of stories are entertaining and a very good example for combining magic with detective work.*

Peters, Ellis. *The Brother Cadfael mystery stories are very good. The use of a medieval setting for mystery tales is unique and well worth trying.*

Chandler, Raymond. *Philip Marlow is the quintessential hard-boiled detective. For mysteries that combine excellent use of setting, characters, and entertaining story-telling technique, Chandler cannot be beat (gouged, knifed, or shot down . . :).*

Hillerman, Tony. *Jim Chee and Joe Leaphorn are two Indian cops on the Navajo reservation in the Southwest. Hillerman's use of setting and mythology earned him an Edgar. These books are excellent and I recommend them highly.*

Fleming, Ian. *The James Bond books, in their original versions, are superior and can provide players with a strong feel for the elegance of Europe. Try to find the books in the editions written before the movies.*

Clavell, James. *While Clavell would not qualify as a mystery writer, his stories are high adventure and can provide many interesting settings for games. We already have one character who claims relation to Noble House in Hong Kong. The idea of running a Shogun or Tai-pan adventure is really too good to pass up.*

Gibson, Walter or Maxwell Grant. *Gibson penned the Shadow stories back during the pulp days. Both the stories and Grant's* The Shadow Scrapbook *will provide ideas and setting for some entertaining play.*

Robeson, Kenneth. *Lester Dent is the real author of most of the Doc Savage series. These books can provide enough settings and ideas to keep any adventurers occupied virtually forever.*

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *His adventure tales, from Tarzan to The Mucker (my favorite), are excellent tutors for adventure designers.*

Howard, Robert E. *Well known as the creator of Conan, players and GMs should not overlook his Skull-face and Black Terrance Vulmea stories as ideas for games.*

Reference Works

Murder Ink *and* **Murderess Ink** *are both perpetrated by Dilys Winn. Both are excellent collections of trivia, commentary, and facts to fascinate and astound mystery fans. Many of the articles are of practical use to designers of mystery scenarios. Both of these books are highly recommended.*

Shooter's Bible. *This book lists the price and specs on many of the guns available for sale today. They also list ballistics information for bullets which is quite useful for stating guns.*

The Complete Machine Gun. *This book is by Ian V. Hogg and provides many statistics needed for creating guns in MSPE. He also provides a historical framework for the guns that can help determine what weapons would be available for use in a given time period.*

Pistols and Revolvers. *Major Frederick Myatt M. C. has written an excellent work on handguns which provides information and pictures on almost every type of handgun made. The statistics for the guns are provided so you can mock up any gun you need.*

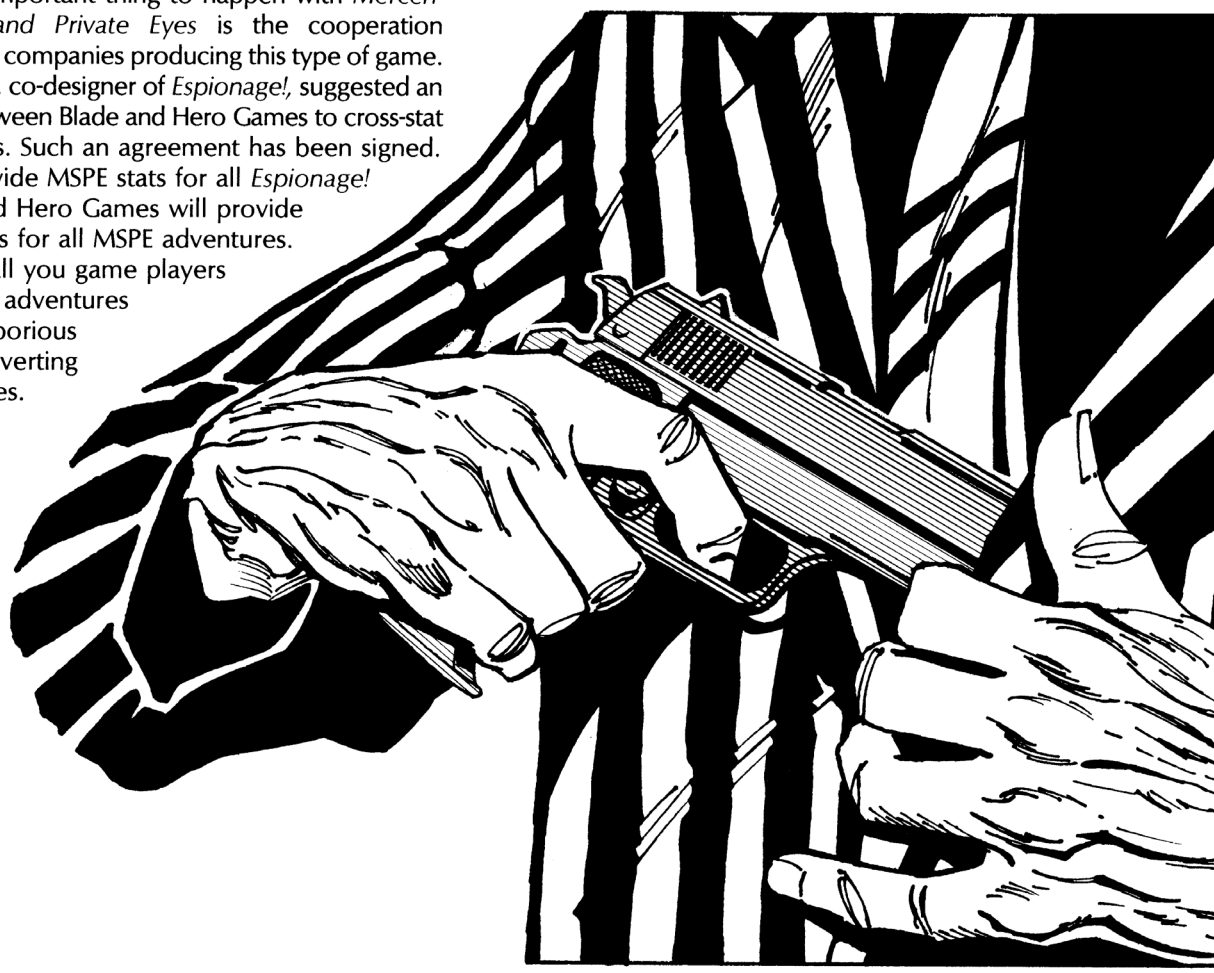
Small Arms of the World *is a comprehensive work detailing all of the weapons used by modern armies. It is expensive, but invaluable as a research tool.* ◆

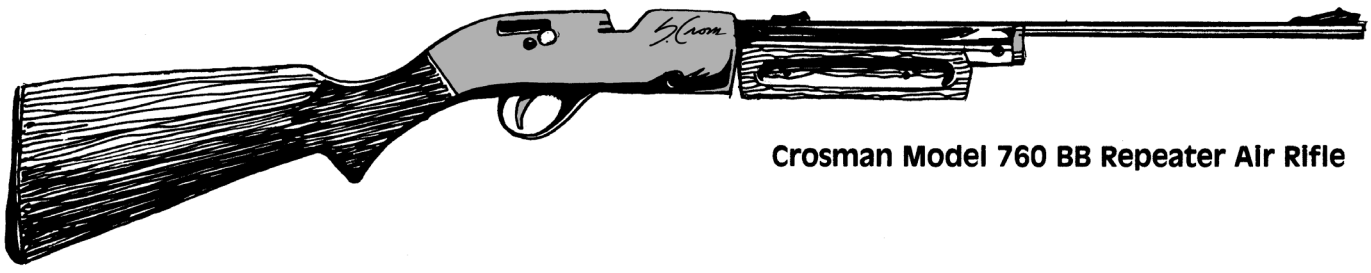
PARTING SHOTS

If a Foreword is supposed to be a menu of sorts, I guess that makes the Afterword dessert. With that in mind, I will try and keep this light and airy.

The most important thing to happen with *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes* is the cooperation between game companies producing this type of game. Steve Peterson, co-designer of *Espionage!,* suggested an agreement between Blade and Hero Games to cross-stat our adventures. Such an agreement has been signed. Blade will provide MSPE stats for all *Espionage!* adventures and Hero Games will provide *Espionage!* stats for all MSPE adventures. This will give all you game players twice as many adventures without the laborious process of converting them yourselves.

Victory Games is bringing out a James Bond 007 role-playing game. In speaking with its designers, I have found the systems being used are similar to MSPE, and





Crosman Model 760 BB Repeater Air Rifle

conversion should be very easy between the two games. I am certain they will do an excellent job with their game, and I look forward to seeing it.

The basic inter-company cooperation is good in several different ways. None of us really want to compete with each other. We are all intelligent, inventive people who have ideas we hope you will like. By each of us taking our own area to develop, we can offer much more in the way of adventures. With these two games companies producing aids and adventures for the spy-type of gaming, Blade can be free to develop other areas, like mercenary missions or detective adventures. Instead of having to try to be all things to all people, we can now concentrate on the areas of gaming that interest us. In the long run this will mean higher quality adventures because we will be doing what we want to do, instead of what we *have* to do.

* * *

Thanks are due to a whole bunch of people who have given their input into the game and have helped shape it into what it is today. *Bob Barger* was there and helped form the very earliest ideas I had about the game. *Liz Danforth, Steve McAllister,* and *Bear Peters* stepped in at that point and offered advice and research materials. *Ken St. Andre* offered me the benefit of his experience, and *Rocky Russo* provided lists of material and support when it was needed.

Initial playtesting thanks must go to *Paul O'Connor.* Paul ran gorgeous adventures that put our characters and the rules to the test. *Larry DiTillio* also put the rules through contortions in those early tests, while beautifully role playing well thought-out characters. Special thanks to *Jim Cooper* who proofread and valiantly playtested the gun combat and healing rules for realism.

Secondary playtesting was in the hands of scads of gamers in Phoenix, Baltimore, and Kenosha, Wisconsin. The people, though, who really ran over the rules and offered concrete suggestions in blind-testing were *Roy Cram, Cliff Baird, Tom Quaid, Bill Barton, Mark O'Green, James Walker,* and *E. L. Frederick.* To them goes my undying gratitude. Without them, this game would be the hopeless mass of confused prose I sent in their direction.

In addition to the legion of people I have already mentioned, the following have helped in ways that have made the project a great deal easier. *Chuck Gaydos* provided computer assistance, *Steve Crompton* made sure we had everything we needed and showed what a grenade can do at close range, and *Jason Sato* produced typeset copy on demand while cleaning up my use of the English language. Special thanks go to *Joe Lewandowski* who directed us to the venerable artistic talents of *Frank Hamilton* whose artwork has pleased generations, and thus to his son, *Brian Hamilton,* who did the fabulous cover of this rulebook, and whose artwork will doubtlessly please generations to come. Additional thanks to *Michael Kucharski* whose capable and professional artwork graces the interior of this book. *Chris Harvey,* Mr. Flying Buffalo UK, checked our titles for us while *Niki Canotas* pushed me to get material finished on time. *Liz Danforth* did the final editing on the project, removing my errors of syntax and catching the redundancies in the text. Last, but certainly not least, *Rick Loomis* provided a home for this monster. Like a stray dog, it wandered into Blade and Rick decided we could keep it.

I hope all of you have fun with this game. If you don't play it, I hope you find much of the information presented here useful in other games. If you have any questions, please phrase them for a Yes or No answer and include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we will try to help you.

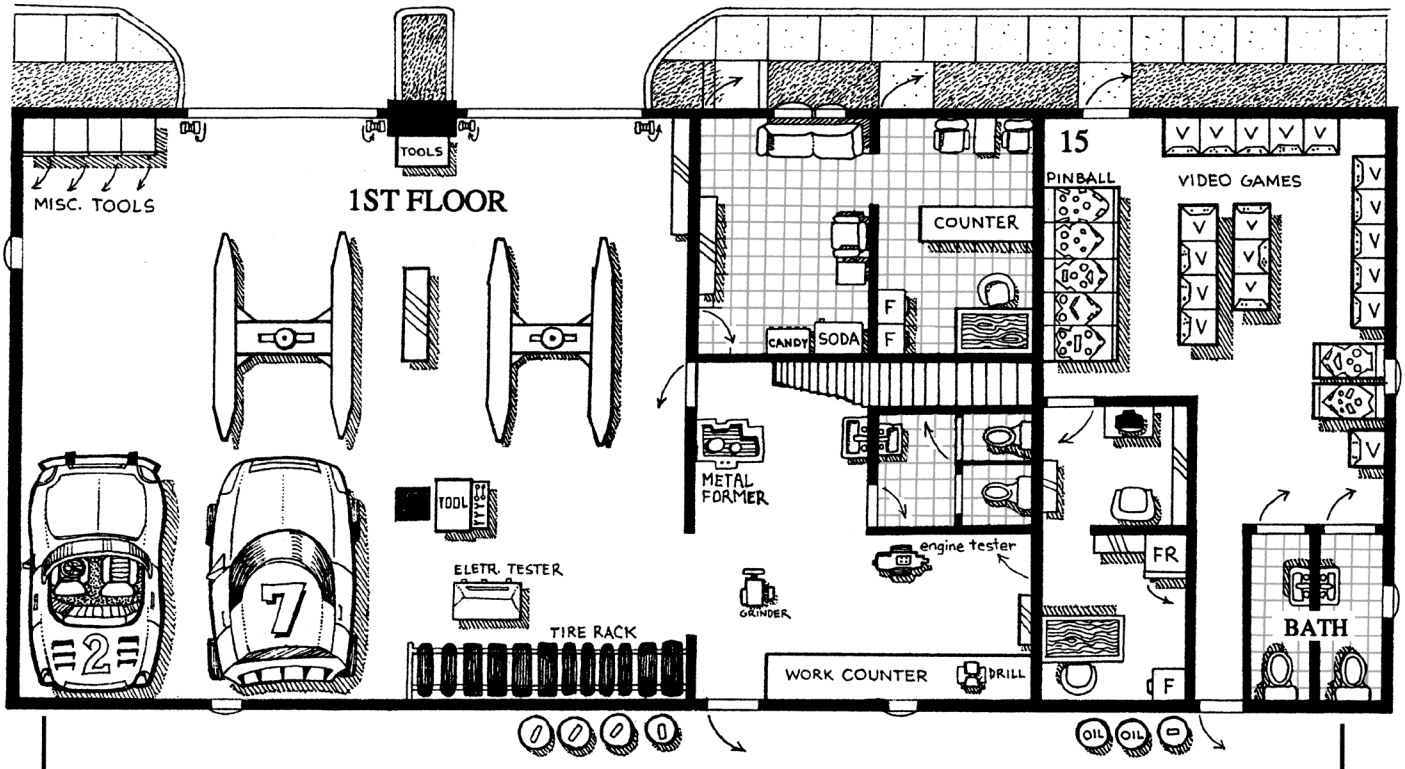
Enjoy!

Michael A. Stackpole

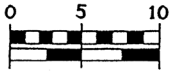
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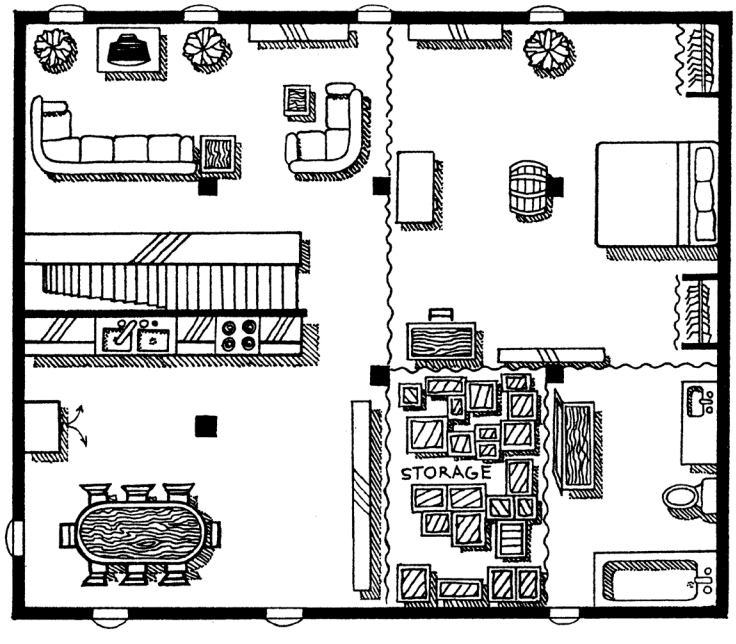
CONLAN RACING & THE WIZARD'S DEN

Mercenaries, Spies & Private Eyes often use vehicles in their line of work. Use this map as a meeting place to start an adventure or as a place to end one. *(Permission granted to photocopy).*



2ND FLOOR



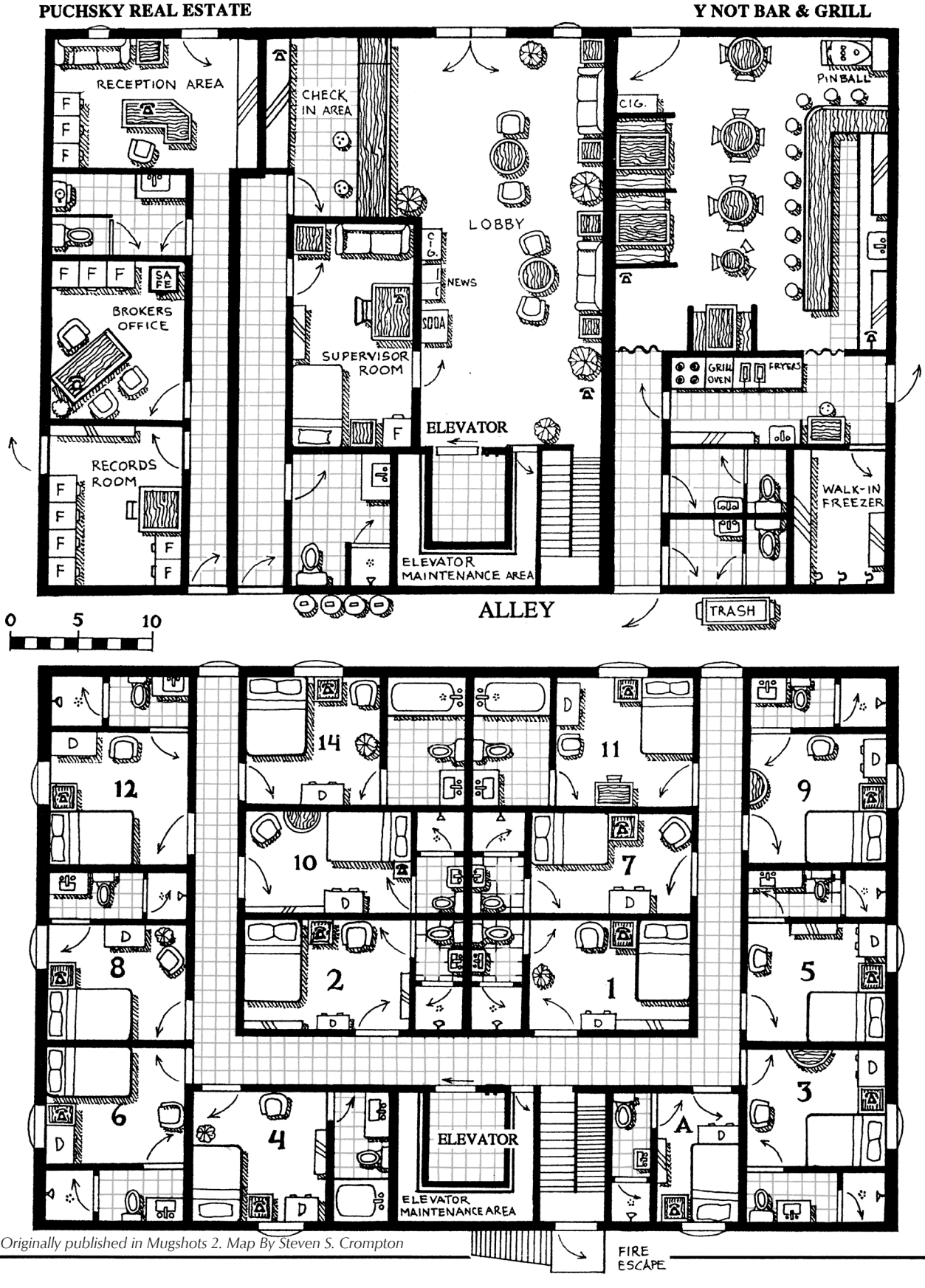


Located on the north side of Country Club Blvd. on the east side of town, Conlan Racing & Engineering is the best place in Peterboro for custom auto design and repairs. The Wizard's Den is a standard pinball/video game parlor, located next door to Conlan Racing.

Originally published in Mugshots 2. Map By Steven S. Crompton

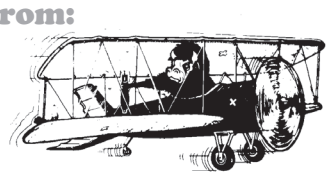
UPTIN ARMS HOTEL

Any travel often involves a Hotel. Use this map for that purpose. *(Permission granted to photocopy).*



Originally published in Mugshots 2. Map By Steven S. Crompton

KICKSTARTER BACKERS: THANKS! From:



Thanks to all of the many Old School RPG fans who were a part of the MSPE Kickstarter. You helped bring not only this game back, but all the out of print MSPE adventures and the new GM screen. This page lists the "**FBI Agents of Honor**" KS backers who went beyond the call of duty. Thanks to all of them and you!

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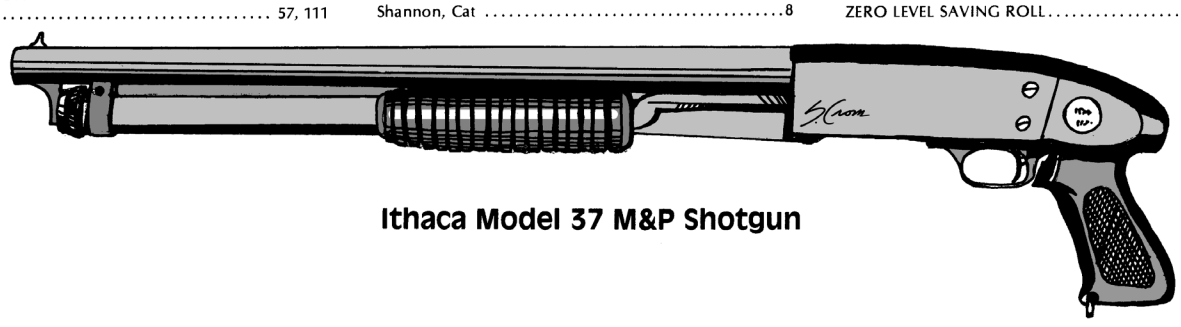
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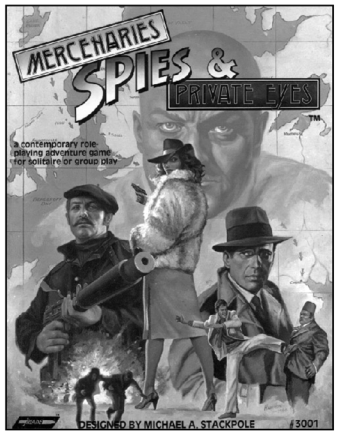
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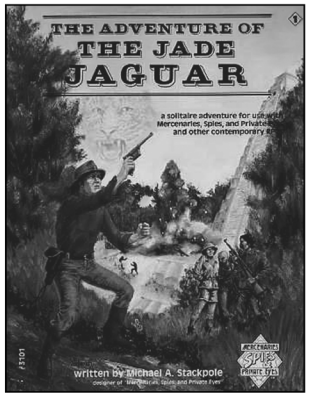
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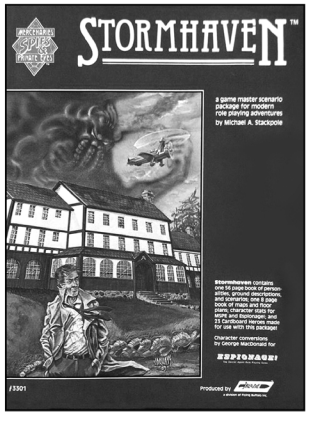
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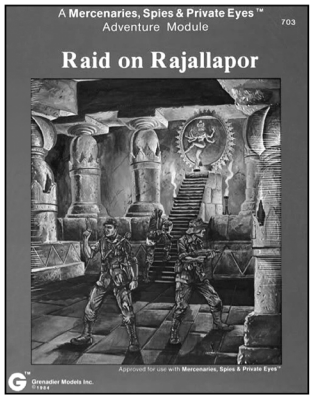
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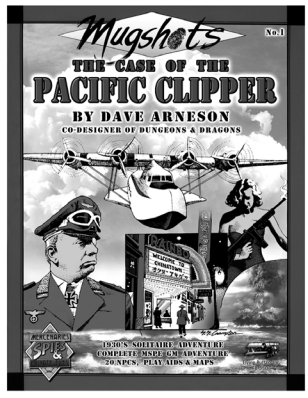
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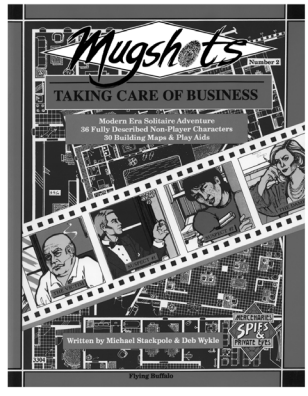
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Tunnels & Trolls RPG!

The items listed here were specifically made or updated for Deluxe Tunnels and Trolls. Most of these were made as part of the highly successful Kickstarter, which also means that the supplies of many of these items are very limited.

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Four metal coins are from famous cities of Trollworld. Khazan, Khosht, Knor & Gull. Each is a different size and finish. The diameter of the largest coin is 2.25 inches - the smallest is 1.5 inches. Each coin comes in a plastic pouch and a black felt finish bag. Any one coin is $40.00, the set of all four is $100.00

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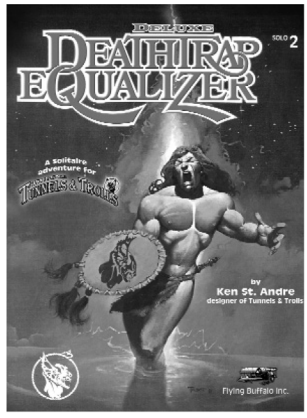
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Other solos for dT&T

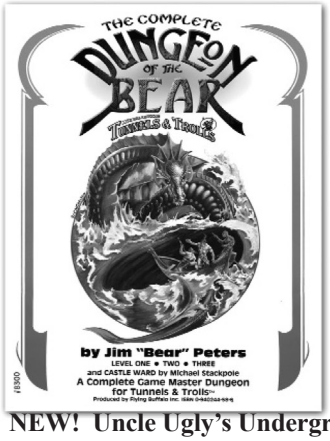
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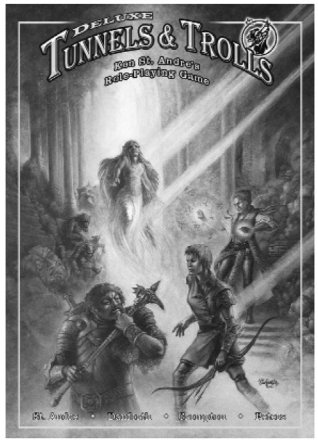
GM Adventure

The three-level GM adventure is available once again and has been updated by Jim "Bear" Peters for Deluxe T&T, and also includes some new maps of the entrance to the Dungeon, a nearby village and surrounding lands. 48+ pages of GM adventure, traps and maps! $8.95.

NEW! Uncle Ugly's Underground Doom GM adv.- $6.95

Deluxe T&T Hardcover Rulebook

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7-12 6-sided die *(not pictured)*

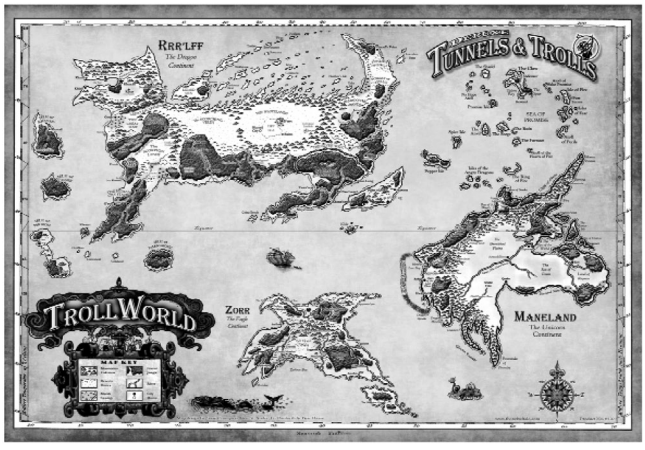
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Large Color Map of Trollworld



Full-color 17 x 22 map of the T&T Continent as done by Ken, Bear Liz and Steve: the color map from the dT&T $10. (First 700 are signed by cartographer Steven S. Crompton.)

dT&T GM Screen



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4 different magnets - $8.00

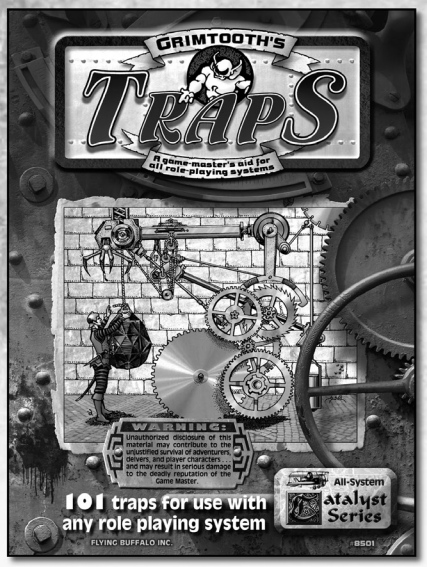


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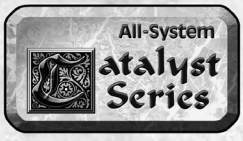
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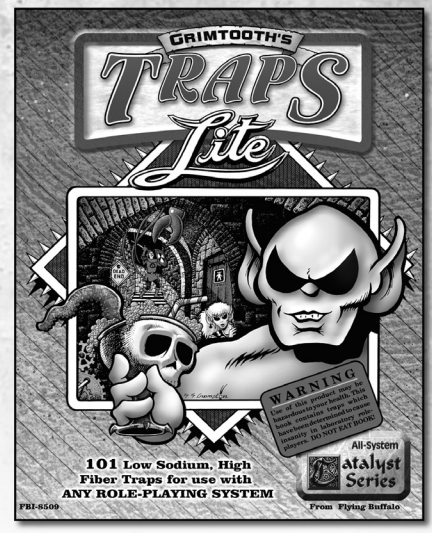


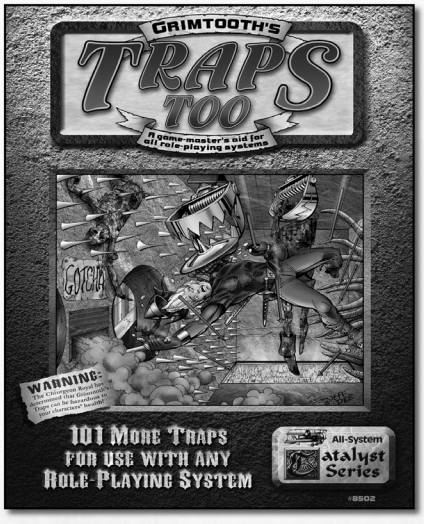
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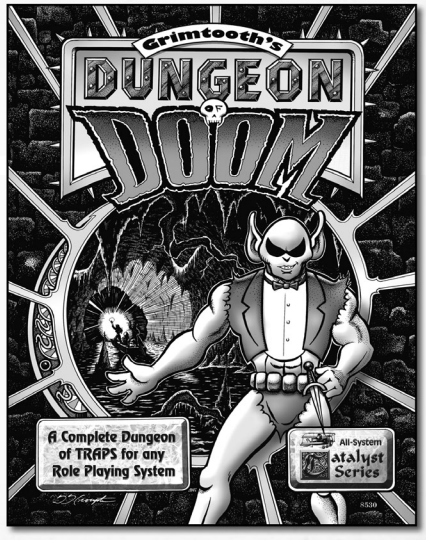
Available at fine game stores, **www.flyingbuffalo.com** and at **Amazon.com.**

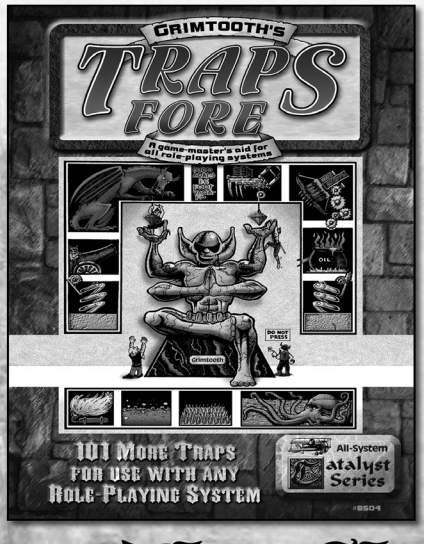
You can also download them as pdfs at **www.drivethrurpg.com**

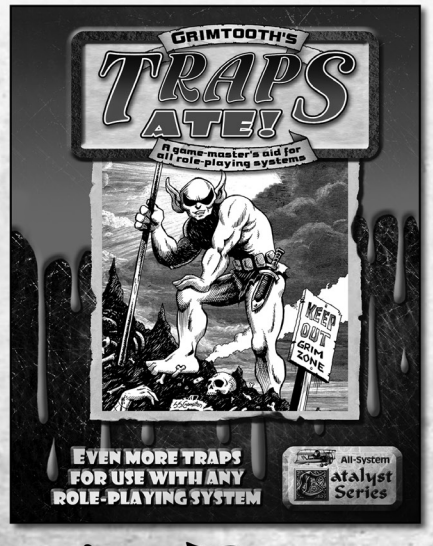
Get one or collect 'em all to scare the hell out of your players!

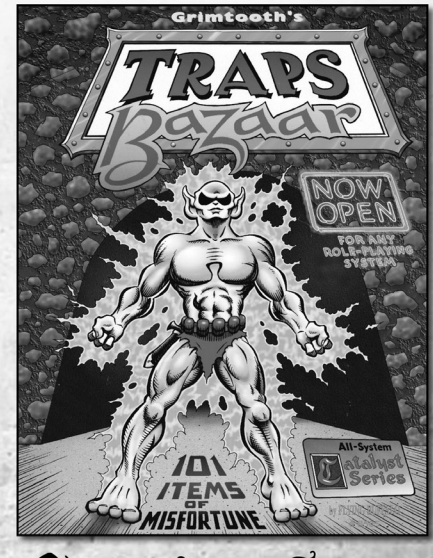




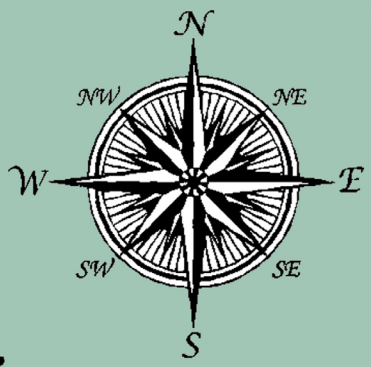






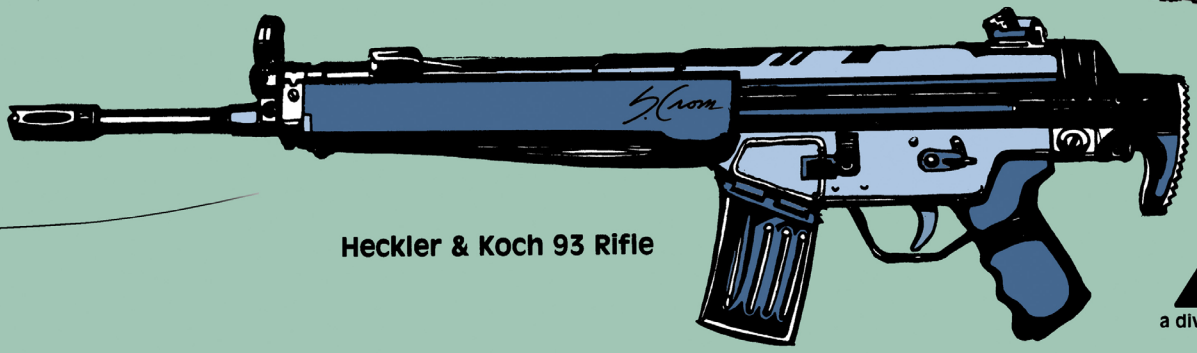


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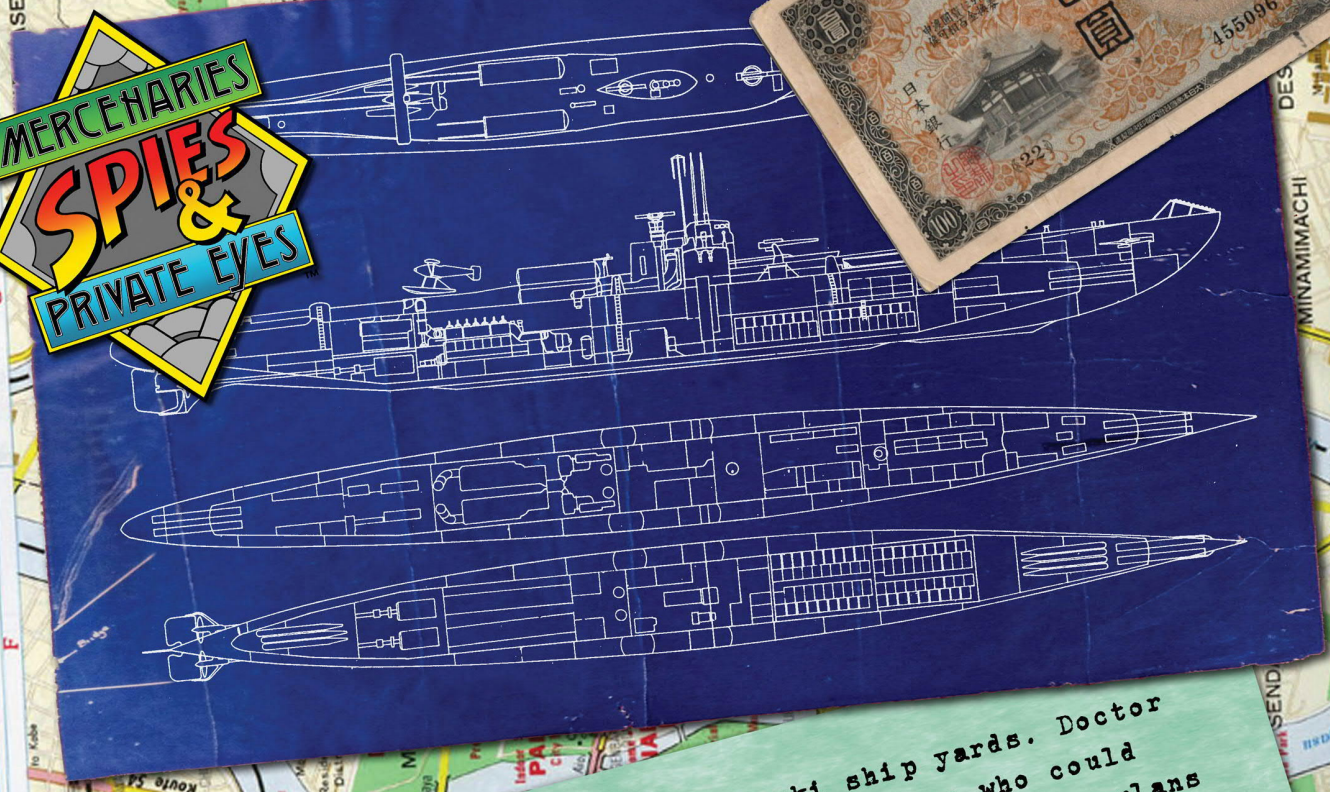
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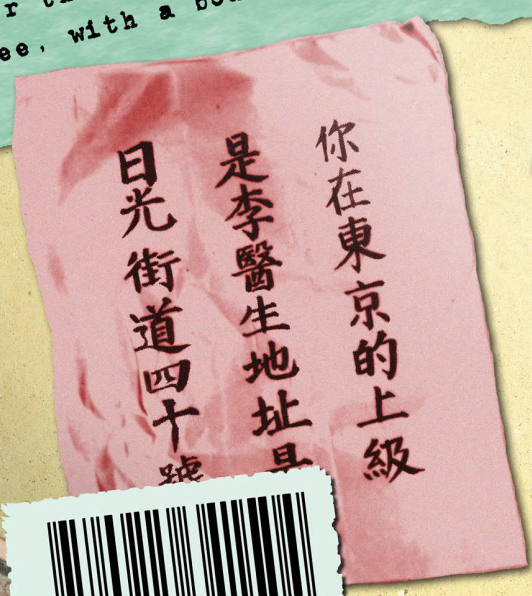
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