Damian Siech (order #1290732)

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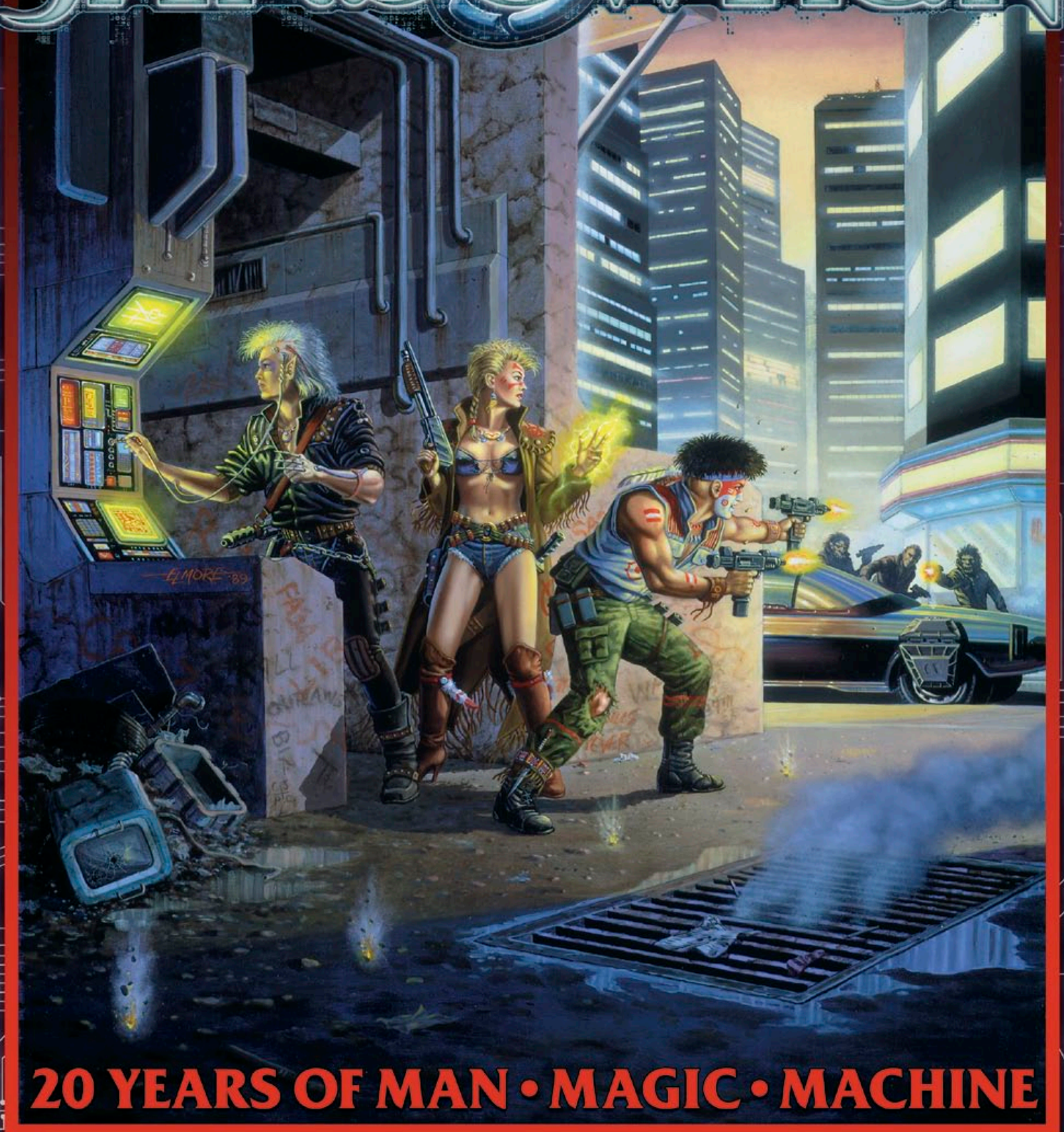
SHADOWRUN



20 YEARS OF MAN • MAGIC • MACHINE

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PROPS
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—Peter Taylor

Just over two years ago, Shadowrun and BattleTech were in a dark place. Since then, we have fought, clawed, and scraped to not just continue but continuously better these great games. For all of you that have helped: family, friends, lovers, business partners, and most importantly, fans, thank you.—Adam Jury

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WHAT IS INSIDE YOUR HEART

by Steven Mohan, Jr.

Mark Atherton was never more alert than when he was surrounded by luxury. The clink of fine porcelain, the subtle taste of maguro, the smell of a woman's skin accented with cherry blossom, any of these things could mean death as surely as the brutal rattle of an AK-97.

Comfort was not the same thing as safety.

This is what Atherton thought as he stood in the cool darkness of the exclusive restaurant called Irori, a small lacquer cup of chilled koshu sake warming in his hands, looking out a giant picture window that admitted city and sky. The full moon was shrouded in clouds. It shadowed the black sky with silver and splashed cold light across Seattle's skyline, limning the Space Needle, accenting the dark waves of Elliott Bay, transforming the seaport's container cranes into Jurassic monsters.

Behind him was a score of tables draped in white linen and lit by the soft golden glow of blue tapers. The bar was a long run of gleaming mahogany off the dining room. Spirits lined the wall at the bartender's back, bottles fashioned from translucent glass of amber, green, and pale rose.

There were three exits: main entrance, kitchen, and the woman's bathroom, which offered a small window that led to a ledge fifteen stories above Seattle's rain-slicked streets.

Always paid to have options.

Atherton heard nothing louder than the gentle hum of conversation, and the soft notes of a kugo harp. It was quiet in another way, too. His PAN's sensors detected no trace of the Matrix, as if the electronic world had been extinguished. The customers of Irori were paying dearly for privacy and peace.

An irori was a Japanese cooking hearth. The name was meant to convey warmth and hospitality—but it meant something else as well, something more subtle.

Tradition.

That one word had forced him to come here alone. This was the kind of place that wouldn't serve orks or trolls or even dwarves, and the rest of his team wasn't human.

He studied his reflection in the dark window: tall, handsome, pale blue eyes that looked gray in the half-light, long ash-blond hair combed straight back except for his bangs, which hung past his chin, jaw line clothed in a neatly-trimmed beard that matched his slim moustache.

Then he saw the reflection of someone behind him.

A woman.

He turned and his breath caught. She stood at the bar, half-hidden by the press of bodies. Even so, he realized she was like no woman he'd ever seen before, slim with raven hair cascading down her back, a shapely figure in a silk dress of pale green, an Ares Predator IV worn high in a shoulder holster, graceful pointed ears that marked her as an elf, beautiful enough to make the club overlook its "humans only" policy. And there was something else, too, something—

Her eyes widened as they met his.

Atherton felt a jolt of electricity.

She turned and rushed away through the bar. Atherton took a step to follow her, but right then someone called his name. He turned to see a forty-something Asian man in a stylish dark suit, black hair cut corp-short.

Mr. Johnson.

Atherton licked his lips. He wanted to go after the woman, he burned to go after the woman, but this Mr. Johnson was from Mitsuhama, a megacorp noted for its complete and total lack of a sense of humor. And the meet was set up by PikePlace, the best fixer in the city. If he bailed on the meeting, it would be a deadly insult to both the corp (which he could live with) and the fixer (which he couldn't.)

But that woman—

And then the salaryman placed a hand on Atherton's shoulder and he turned away with a sigh.

They sat at a discreet table by the big window. The Mr. Johnson (who called himself Ishida) glanced at the honey-colored liquid in Atherton's cup and raised an eyebrow. "Koshu?"

"I like the complexity of aged sake," said Atherton easily. "The notes of rice and straw, mushrooms and pine."

"It is unusual for a—" Ishida bobbed his head. "Forgive me. For a gaijin to enjoy koshu."

Atherton shrugged. "Once upon a time I spent a few years in Chiyoda," he said, naming Neo-Tokyo's most important ward.

"So ka?" The salaryman nodded his approval. "I see the fixer was right about you." He pulled out a folder and set it on the table. "Because of sensitivity, I only brought hardcopy. I will take it with me when I leave. We propose a simple operation." He flipped open the folder.

Atherton leaned forward and read about a warehouse in the port district: security measures, patrol schedules, customs areas. All standard.

His eyes flickered up. "What's the target?"

The Mr. Johnson turned the page, revealing an eight by ten glossy of a medallion on a slim chain. "It's currently delayed in customs. We are paying to make it so." The device was gold, a little bigger than a large button, and inscribed with arcane markings in a language Atherton didn't recognize.

"Magic," he guessed.

The Mr. Johnson nodded. "It will require a mage of some skill to handle. This is why you were recommended."

"Fee?"

The salaryman didn't blink. "Twenty-five thousand nuyen."

Atherton sat back in his chair.

The Johnson smiled tightly. "Perhaps Atherton-san is wondering if, for a fee that large, there is something I neglected to tell him."

"Is there?"

"Many things," admitted Ishida, "but none pertinent to your decision to take the job. The task is simple, but the item is most valuable."

How did he say this delicately? "It has been my experience, Ishida-sama, when an item is valuable, it is also well protected."

"Hai—when the owners recognize the value of what they have."

Atherton peered at his potential employer for a long moment. Mitsuhama was lethally intolerant of failure. But the money was incredible for a simple snatch and grab.

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And Atherton thought he understood Japanese culture well enough to work with the megacorp.

He bowed his head graciously, accepting the deal. All the while thinking of the clink of fine porcelain, the subtle taste of maguro, the smell of a woman's skin accented with cherry blossom.

Any of which could mean death.

They stood on the gently rocking boat of a little fishing skiff. The water off the coast was a deep, bright cobalt, so blue you almost didn't believe it was real. The sun had burned through the clouds, which was rare for Seattle in February. Bone white seagulls swirled around the boat, screeching.

Martin Temple amused himself by luring the birds in with thrown pieces of bread and then drawing on them with his Ceska Black Scorpion, firing blanks and letting his targeting system estimate hits. The troll wasn't normally so reckless.

He just hated gulls.

Atherton put the binoculars to his face and looked across the bay. They'd chartered the boat to go fishing, and they were fishing—just not for fish.

The target was an unassuming building named T104, aluminum sheet walls ringed by barbed wire and sodium lights. This particular warehouse was in South Harbor, across the West Seattle Freeway from Terminal 25. Most of what passed through T104 was commercial shipments not important enough to go by plane.

In short, crap.

So low security.

Bob the Big Hammer was laid out on the boat's deck, hands behind his head, a UCAS-flag bandanna covering his skull, silvered sunglasses hiding his eyes, his face swallowed by a thick, black beard, dressed in the same jeans and leather jacket he'd been wearing when he'd pulled up to the pier on his Hog. The only sign the dwarf wasn't asleep was the occasional smart-ass remark.

The only one actually studying the warehouse was the Devil, and he didn't have anything good to say: "I don't like the way it smells."

Atherton said nothing. He was the team's combat mage and its leader. When it came to tactical he was in charge, end of story. But when it came to planning, everyone had a say.

He glanced over at the technomancer who looked like, well, like the Devil. It didn't hurt that Devil had started life as an ork, with the ears and the canines and the muscular build. But the pale red skin and the carefully trimmed Van Dyke, those were affectations. He'd once told Atherton that people chose to see him as the devil just because he was different. He'd flashed a mischievous half-smile, unusual for the usually sober ork. "If that's how they're going to play me, why shouldn't I play them back?"

"Oh, don't so be such a baby," said Bob, the team's rigger and whose first question about any job was always: How big is the fee? "If anything goes hinky, I'll get you out."

"My skip through the Matrix confirms everything your Johnson said about the warehouse," said Devil softly.

"So ..." prompted Atherton.

"It's too easy. You know it's too easy."

The dwarf snorted. "Hell, Dev, you don't like it when it's easy and you don't like it when it's hard. What exactly do you want, man?"

Martin dropped his machine pistol and turned around. He had green skin and horns that arced back from his forehead. He was a weapons specialist—and a Makah Indian who'd emigrated to Seattle. He had a native tattoo of a sea monster etched into the metal of his left shoulder. The arm was good work. Even up close it looked like flesh. "We've never had any dealings with them before. Why would Mitsuhama set us up?"

Devil shrugged. "Why would they send us on a milk run?"

"Maybe they're trying us out for bigger and better things," suggested Bob.

"Maybe Santa Claus is real," suggested Devil.

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WHAT IS INSIDE YOUR HEART

"There's something you need to know," said Atherton slowly. "I, uh, already took the job."

Devil turned around and Bob sat up.

"You did what?" they both said at the same time.

"Look," said Atherton, "if I had asked for more time, I would have lost face."

"Man, I don't know if you noticed," said Bob, "but this is the UCAS—not Imperial Japan."

"There was no maybe," said Atherton. "Just yes or no. And if I said no, we'd make an enemy of Mitsuhama. I made a judgment call."

An uncomfortable silence settled over the boat.

"Besides," pressed Atherton, "It was PikePlace who put us in touch with Ishida. He wouldn't have brokered the deal if it were a set-up."

Martin nodded. The troll had been in favor of the job from the beginning.

Devil folded his muscular red arms across his chest, then sighed. "PikePlace is honorable."

Bob snorted. "Hey! Who died and gave Atherton final say? We decide jobs as a team, or we don't decide them at all."

Martin stalked over to the dwarf and in one swift motion snatched him by the ankle, hauling him up in the air so Bob hung upside down, his head roughly level with Martin's. The troll's voice was a dangerous rumble. "First you berate Devil for raising questions about the job. Then you oppose Atherton when he tells us he took the job. I think you just want to cause trouble. Is this what you want, Bob? Trouble?"

Bob's arms were still folded across his chest, as if he were trying to maintain his dignity even while hanging upside down a meter above the gentle roll of the boat's nonskid deck. "Hell, no, Martin. I was just trying to be whatchamacallit. A devil's advocate."

Devil frowned. "You are most certainly not my advocate."

On that note of fragile truce, Atherton's team, his friends, ratified his decision to take the Mitsuhama job.

The boat made a small scraping sound as it grounded on the shore. It was a crappy, secondhand aluminum hull with an outboard that they hadn't used yet. Martin had rowed in, making no more sound than the dip of his oar and the soft lap of the waves against the hull.

They made shore in a dark patch of land southeast of T104, away from the freeway and the freighters unloading containers at T25. The distant sound of cars and industrial cranes were barely audible over the gentle wash of the Duwamish Waterway.

Atherton wore gray coveralls with an ID tag clipped to his collar and rubber-soled work boots. His blond hair was tucked under a white hard hat. He would've felt better in black—but if anyone saw them, they would try to bluster their way through. It was better if the port believed the medallion's loss was due to bureaucratic inefficiency—rather than theft.

As Atherton's PAN picked up the arrows from various RFID tags, the night air glowed with AR notices and warnings: a scrolling list of safety rules, a red-letter warning that intruders would be prosecuted, an announcement offering overtime on the Sunday mid-shift.

Atherton ignored all of them.

The team moved quickly to the chain-link fence. Martin pulled out a set of bolt-cutters and started cutting links. Devil crouched down and closed his eyes, concentrating on hacking the warehouse's system. There was no sound but the soft snick of Martin working one link at a time.

For once, Bob was mercifully silent.

"I'm in," Devil whispered. "Bob, I opened all the vans." He nodded at a long line of white vans with the blue-and-green Port of Seattle logo painted on their sides. They were taking the boat out, but Atherton wanted the vans unlocked, too.

Because you just never knew.

Martin laid a large section of fence on the ground. The team ducked through the hole.

Bob moved quickly to the line of white vans, where he hid himself between two vehicles. Outside lookout.

Martin and Devil moved quickly to Door Six on the southeast corner of the building. After casting a quick Illusion spell to hide the damage to the fence, Atherton joined them.

Martin was already through the door.

He popped it open and the three men stepped into darkness.

The plan was simple. Take the medallion. Devil would change records to make it look like it was delivered to a wrong address. On the way out Atherton would cast a few Fix spells on the locks and the fence so no one would know they'd been there.

Easy.

Security lights painted the warehouse in dim, silent shadows. They crept toward the customs cage, floor-to-ceiling chain-link separating cleared items from quarantine. Martin popped another lock and silently swung a man-sized door open.

Atherton stole inside.

It took him only a minute to find the package and cut it open. He pulled the medallion out and held it in his hand.

Something was wrong.

He sensed nothing.

Atherton turned it over in his hand, trying to understand. It was unquestionably the same as the device pictured in Ishida's photo. Same arcane markings. But—

He sensed no magic. Nothing. Ishida had told him the device was powerful, so powerful that it required a mage of some skill to handle. It should be practically humming in his hand. But there was nothing.

"What's wrong?" Devil whispered.

Atherton shook his head. "It doesn't seem to be magical."

Martin shrugged. "That's Ishida's problem. It's the medallion, right?"

"Ye-es," said Atherton slowly. "How much do you want to bet that Ishida won't see it that way. I don't want to be in Mitsuhama's gun sites. Let me just try—"

He held the medallion in his left hand, moving his right over it, casting Analyze Magic.

Nothing.

"This just isn't—"

He was cut off by the heavy throp-throp-throp of helo rotors.

Atherton looked up and flashed on a pair of rotary drones working their way down the aisle. "Freeze," he subvocalized.

Devil was suddenly a statue. Not Martin. The troll silently pulled his machine pistol from its leg holster with his right hand and raised his left arm.

Atherton's eyes flickered toward the drones. They looked like flying pigs, the rotor set below a mushroom-capped control suite, the long barrel of a machine gun jutting from their round, fat bodies.

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Atherton held his breath. Keep going, he prayed. Just keep going.

This warehouse doesn't have drones, messaged Devil over the team's dedicated network.

Sure, tell them they don't exist. Answered Martin. That ought to help.

What's going on? said Bob.

Stand by, ordered Atherton.

The drones worked their way steadily down the aisle.

I've got the lead bastard, said Martin. You take follow.

It looked like they might just pass by.

Agreed, said Atherton, but don't fire unless—

The drones suddenly stopped, pivoted, and opened up. Yellow flame flashed from the barrels of their weapons and the rattle of automatic gunfire echoed in the warehouse.

All three men dove for the deck, Martin firing his Scorpion and the cybergun in his left arm as he went down.

Atherton hit the ground just as a stream of hot metal slashed past him, missing him by centimeters. He rolled and came up, hands extended. Lightning crackled from his fingertips, coruscating shards of white light wreathing the following drone. The machine shuddered and then plummeted, hitting the cement floor with a clank, its electrical systems fried.

He pivoted, but true to his word, Martin was dealing with the first drone. Yellow sparks flashed on the drone's metallic surface in time with the tink-tink-tink of ricochets. The machine was sinking as the troll's fire tore away rotor blades. In a moment it lay on the deck, firing into the cement, its bladeless-rotor spinning madly.

"Time to go," said Atherton.

"You think?" said Devil.

We're coming out hot, said Martin. Get ready, Bob.

I'm on it, messaged the rigger.

They sprinted down the aisle, no longer concerned about silence, followed by the echo of the downed drone's sporadic weapons fire. AR notices flashed in Atherton's peripheral vision: *You may not operate cranes without first conducting a hoist inspection* and *All grievances must be filed with your shop steward within three days of the incident.*

Martin put his big shoulder into a door and punched through, stumbling into the parking lot.

And right into a street samurai.

Atherton flashed on a human (Japanese!) in creepy black bioware that looked like muscle-tissue with the skin stripped away. A triangle of yellow lights implanted in his helmet blinded Martin. For a second, just a second, the troll froze.

The street samurai held two blades, the long, curved katana in his right hand extended straight out from his body and the shorter wakizashi held close in like a dagger. He stepped forward, swinging the katana up in and over in a powerful blow that would surely separate Martin's head from his shoulders. Atherton opened his mouth as the blade descended—

And a white van smashed into the street sam.

Bob threw the door open and bounded out the cab. "C'mon, we have to—"

A blade thrust through his middle stopped his words. The dwarf's eyes bulged, his mouth a surprised "oh." Then he cried out, his body jerking, as the second samurai put another blade through him.

Martin roared. The Black Scorpion shook in his hand, the ugly sound of the weapon filling the night. The sam who'd—

(killed)

—attacked Bob dropped, his face a mass of crimson gore.

"Boat," Atherton shouted.

More black-clad figures were appearing. Five, six. Seven. Running from the north side of the warehouse. Atherton took the nearest one down with a fireball, forcing the rest to scatter for cover behind the vans. Devil had his Uzi IV out and sprayed suppression fire across the compound. Martin thundered forward and scooped up Bob.

They raced for the boat, firing all the way. Martin laid Bob gently in the boat and pushed it into the water. Devil splashed into the boat and hit the outboard's quick-start. The little motor roared to life.

Atherton dove into the boat, just as Devil whipped it around in a tight arc that paralleled the shore. Though exhausted, Atherton crawled forward and placed his hand on Bob's chest. The dwarf had been stabbed twice, once in the gut and once in the chest.

Atherton tried to conjure a healing spell. He closed his eyes. His hand shook with the effort, but … he just couldn't do it. Just couldn't bring Bob back. Whether it was due to the severity of the dwarf's injuries or because of his own exhaustion, he didn't know. It didn't really matter.

Either way, it was his fault.

A good shadowrunner always has a bolthole ready in case things go bad. Atherton's team went to ground in a condemned apartment building in west Seattle. The linoleum was cracked, the light a jaundiced yellow, and black fungus was crawling up one wall—but at least it was private.

Bob's body lay in the center of the dining area. The katana had snapped in two and the blade had worked its way out during the desperate run to the boat, but the other sword, the wakizashi, still stuck out of his back.

"What the hell happened?" Martin demanded. "How did security twig to us so fast?"

Atherton remembered the nondescript AR notices as they were fleeing the scene. Cranes and shop stewards. "They didn't," he said softly. "Port security never initiated an alert. The drones, the street sams." He shook his head. "That was someone else."

"Set-up," breathed Devil.

Atherton nodded reluctantly. He held up the medallion. "This." He shook his head. "Is garbage." He dropped it to the linoleum floor and smashed it beneath his boot. "Someone has a grudge."

"But we haven't made any enemies," said Martin. "Anyway, not enemies powerful enough to use damn Mitsuhama as a cut-out. Unless—" He shook his head. "Unless PikePlace was lying about Ishida being from Mitsuhama."

"I don't think he was lying," said Devil. "I just checked the Matrix. Jacked a police report. They're saying PikePlace was wiped."

"Wiped?" Martin whispered. "Who would have the juice to murder a major league fixer?"

"I don't know," said Atherton. He knelt by Bob's body, thinking of Mitsuhama, Irori, the street sam's Asian features. He took hold of the wakizashi's hilt and drew it gently from his friend's corpse, held it up to the light. "But all signs point to Japan."

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WHAT IS INSIDE YOUR HEART

Atherton strolled down a lane laid out beneath a canopy of cherry trees. He smelled the sweet fragrance of the pink blossoms, but beyond the beauty of the trees he glimpsed the markers of Aoyama Cemetery, elegant columns of stone inscribed with kanji characters.

Beauty intertwined with death.

An echo of his thoughts at this thing's beginning.

"I do not know that this is wise," said Devil. "We are outsiders here."

"I know Japan," said Atherton softly. "And you know the Matrix. Between the two of us, we will find the information we need."

"What about me?" rumbled Martin. In Neo-Tokyo, firearms were all but forbidden. The troll had left his beloved Black Scorpion back in Seattle. He still had the cybergun hidden in his left arm and he wore a pair of swords crossed on his back.

"Do not worry, my friend. I'm sure we'll need your skills before this is over."

"It feels like we're giving up home court advantage," said Devil.

"Someone's hunting us," said Atherton. "If we don't find out who, they'll take us when we least expect it. Neo-Tokyo is where the answers are."

"But where will we start?" asked Martin.

"Here," said Atherton. He gestured at a man waiting among the graves. The man wore a blue suit, his skull shaved clean, a silver dragon coiled around his right wrist, a tiger crouched on his left. "A Yak from Mita-gumi," said Atherton softly, "a family that has ties with Evo."

They crossed from the path to the grave where the Yakuza stood.

Atherton bowed deeply and the Yak bowed in return.

Martin frowned. "But I thought Ishida worked for Mitsuhama, not Evo."

The Yak grinned, his broad smile a bright flash of white against his sepia skin. "I believe Atherton-san understands that Evo and Mitsuhama do not like each other."

"So, if you wish information on Mitsuhama, ask Evo," said Devil.

The Yak nodded. "In Japan, the indirect route is often the quickest way forward."

Kazutoshi Omata (who, until recently, had been Kazutoshi Ishida) hurried from his silver Mercedes. His boss had sent him a last-minute instruction to attend a meeting in Toshima, and Omata wasn't quite sure where it was. He did not often come to Toshima. It was the ward where the ants lived, all the little workers who toiled in the factories and the sewers and the stores. Still, Omata had a reputation for problem-solving. If the old man wanted him to start solving problems in Toshima, that is what he would do.

He just hoped the job was better than the last one. Killing shadowrunners was like shoveling shit: sometimes it had to be done, but there was little glory in it.

He turned down an alley and stepped into darkness. Somewhere he heard the plink-plink of dripping water, smelled

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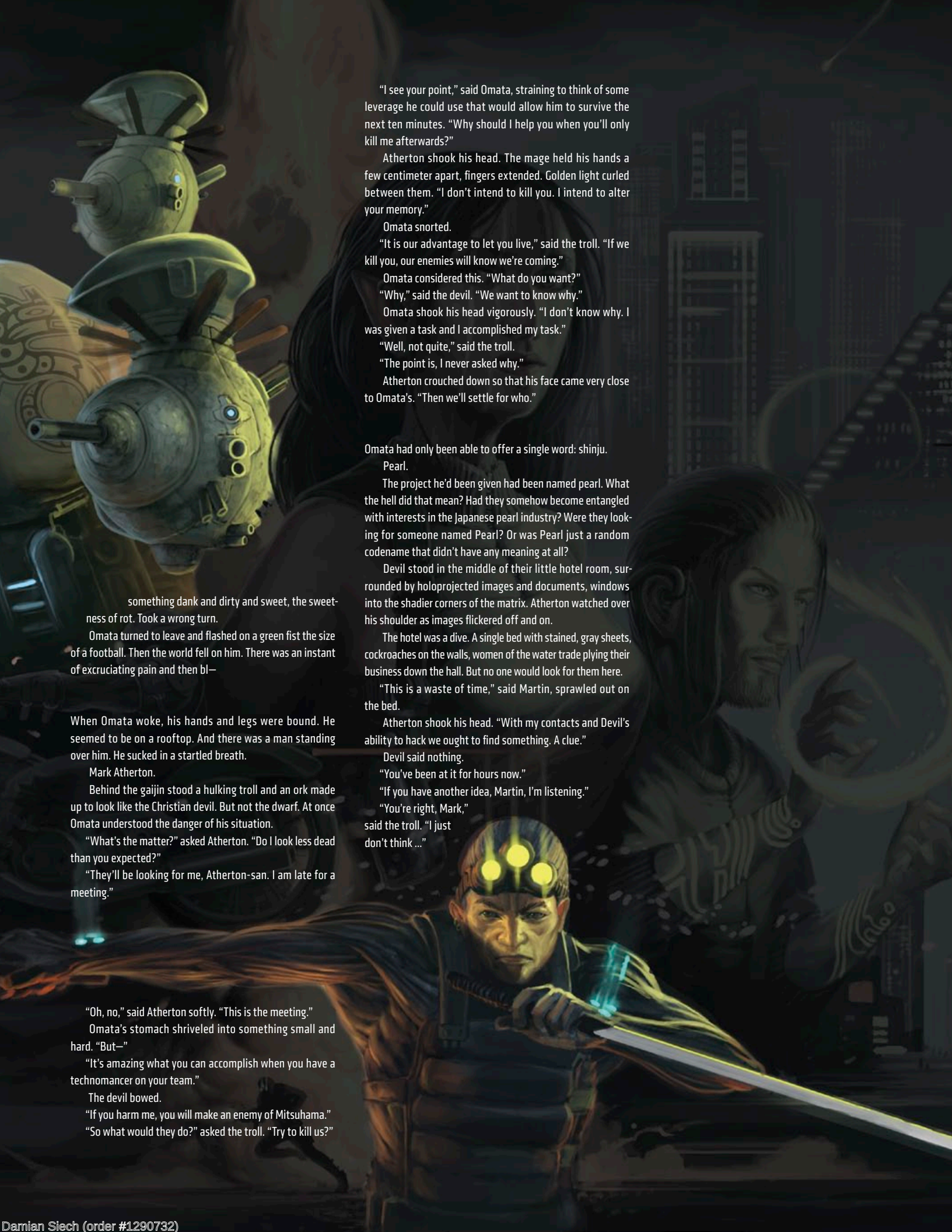

something dank and dirty and sweet, the sweetness of rot. Took a wrong turn.

Omata turned to leave and flashed on a green fist the size of a football. Then the world fell on him. There was an instant of excruciating pain and then bl—

When Omata woke, his hands and legs were bound. He seemed to be on a rooftop. And there was a man standing over him. He sucked in a startled breath.

Mark Atherton.

Behind the gaijin stood a hulking troll and an ork made up to look like the Christian devil. But not the dwarf. At once Omata understood the danger of his situation.

"What's the matter?" asked Atherton. "Do I look less dead than you expected?"

"They'll be looking for me, Atherton-san. I am late for a meeting."

"Oh, no," said Atherton softly. "This is the meeting."

Omata's stomach shriveled into something small and hard. "But—"

"It's amazing what you can accomplish when you have a technomancer on your team."

The devil bowed.

"If you harm me, you will make an enemy of Mitsuhama."

"So what would they do?" asked the troll. "Try to kill us?"

"I see your point," said Omata, straining to think of some leverage he could use that would allow him to survive the next ten minutes. "Why should I help you when you'll only kill me afterwards?"

Atherton shook his head. The mage held his hands a few centimeter apart, fingers extended. Golden light curled between them. "I don't intend to kill you. I intend to alter your memory."

Omata snorted.

"It is our advantage to let you live," said the troll. "If we kill you, our enemies will know we're coming."

Omata considered this. "What do you want?"

"Why," said the devil. "We want to know why."

Omata shook his head vigorously. "I don't know why. I was given a task and I accomplished my task."

"Well, not quite," said the troll.

"The point is, I never asked why."

Atherton crouched down so that his face came very close to Omata's. "Then we'll settle for who."

Omata had only been able to offer a single word: shinju.

Pearl.

The project he'd been given had been named pearl. What the hell did that mean? Had they somehow become entangled with interests in the Japanese pearl industry? Were they looking for someone named Pearl? Or was Pearl just a random codename that didn't have any meaning at all?

Devil stood in the middle of their little hotel room, surrounded by holoprojected images and documents, windows into the shadier corners of the matrix. Atherton watched over his shoulder as images flickered off and on.

The hotel was a dive. A single bed with stained, gray sheets, cockroaches on the walls, women of the water trade plying their business down the hall. But no one would look for them here.

"This is a waste of time," said Martin, sprawled out on the bed.

Atherton shook his head. "With my contacts and Devil's ability to hack we ought to find something. A clue."

Devil said nothing.

"You've been at it for hours now."

"If you have another idea, Martin, I'm listening."

"You're right, Mark,"
said the troll. "I just
don't think ..."

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WHAT IS INSIDE YOUR HEART

Martin's words faded out as Atherton noticed one of the projected images. The subject was a woman's face, obviously cropped from a surveillance pic. The image was blurry, but clear enough for Atherton to make out a few key details: long, raven hair, amber eyes, multiple earrings in her pointed ear. Beautiful.

The woman from the bar.

"Who is this?" Atherton said sharply, pointing.

Devil frowned. "Some kind of underworld celebrity. No one seems to know much about her. I found this image on one of the Yak sites. Her name is Pearl."

"I know this woman," whispered Atherton. "I mean, I've seen her. She was watching me before the meet with Omata."

Devil closed his eyes. "Running a deep search. Not much on her. Some inquiries from ..." A frown crossed Devil's face. "Slippery. This system is lousy with black ice. But—"

Devil's face contorted in concentration, giving Atherton a moment to think.

Shinju, pronounced with a different inflection had a darker meaning. Literally, "Revealing what is inside your heart," shinju was a form of ritual suicide in which two lovers who couldn't be together killed each other at the exact same moment so their spirits would live together forever.

The most famous stories of shinju were told through kabuki and jorori theatre, and involved tales of noblemen who fell in love with courtesans.

Could the beautiful elf be a prostitute? Did a past run somehow bring Atherton's team between her and her lover?

But how was that possible? And how could they do it without knowing?

"Location," Devil whispered, tension tightening his voice. "Almost—"

Martin stood up.

"There."

A set of directions popped up in one of the windows, a district near Fuji-san.

Devil smiled—and then his eyes rolled back in his head as he slumped to the floor.

It was a clear day, and Mount Fuji, known to the Japanese as Fuji-san, was visible from Neo-Tokyo. Atherton stood next to Martin Temple, his one remaining friend and ally, and stared at the mystical mountain. Contemplation of Fuji-san drowned out everything around Atherton—the smooth hum of maglevs, the push of bodies, the hard concrete beneath his feet.

The terrible grief that threatened to pull him deep within himself.

Fuji was an active volcano well known for its symmetry. The mountain was slate gray except for its bright white peak. As befitted such an important symbol of Japan, it showed different faces to different people. Some thought the name Fuji meant "without equal." Others thought it came from the Ainu word for "fire." Still others thought it meant "immortal."

Immortal.

The word was a knife in Atherton's gut.

Devil's body had survived the encounter with black ice.

His mind had not.

"Someone owes us answers." Martin's voice was a low growl.

Atherton nodded numbly. They would find those answers in a mansion that lay between the small city of Fujiyoshida and Lake Kawaguchiko on the great mountain's northern flank. Devil had died to find that location.

Atherton would make his death count.

A swirl of wind and the shudder of mass announced the coming of the train. It was sleek, silver, and pretty. Atherton barely felt it.

Something else caught his attention.

A tiny flame, no bigger than the flare of a match, sparkled golden-bright on the bare concrete of the platform. Atherton blinked.

It was growing.

"Martin," he said.

Now the size of a human fist.

"Martin."

"What?" asked the troll irritably.

The little fire erupted into a massive column of flame, shot fifteen meters into the sky.

Commuters bolted, panicking like stampeding cattle, running for the concrete stairs that led off the platform, fighting like animals to get out, some throwing themselves on the train, some throwing themselves on the tracks.

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Atherton conjured a water elemental effect and directed the blast at the fire elemental. The spirit howled as the stream hit, water flashing to steam, the fire's voice taking on a high-pitched keen. Atherton couldn't kill it.

But he could hurt it.

Martin couldn't even do that.

"Martin," Atherton shouted, "run."

And Martin did, sprinting toward the north end of the platform's overhang, using it as cover. Then he turned.

Turned and fired his cybergun into the long vertical line of inferno. Doing absolutely no damage.

But drawing the spirit's attention.

In a flash, Atherton could see what was happening. He knelt, closed his eyes, focusing his center, driving out the panicked screams of the cattle, the freight-train roar of the monster, the desperate rattle of his friend's weapon.

He felt the mana field flowing through him. Felt it bend around the bond between magician and spirit, like a magnets field bending around a piece of iron. He reached deep within himself, to the very bottom of his skill and power.

And broke that bond.

For an instant he could hear the monster's roar, feel its heat roasting his flesh. And then there was a sound like all the air being drawn out of the room.

And the spirit was gone.

Other sounds were important in the sudden silence: the sound of sobbing, the distant wail of sirens, the intonation of prayer.

Exhausted, spent down nearly to the bottom of himself, Atherton somehow managed to stand, turn.

At the corner of the overhang he saw Martin, his body spread out on the cold, hard concrete, his green skin blackened by the fire elemental's rage.

Atherton let out a low sob deep in his throat, staggered to the edge of the platform, and toppled bonelessly into a gutter just big enough to conceal a man's body.

It took Atherton nearly three weeks of dedicated observation to gather the information needed to force his way into the mansion. The estate's lord had invested heavily in security. Breaching its walls should have been impossible.

But it was amazing how far you could penetrate when you didn't care about getting back out again.

Atherton didn't expect to survive his incursion and he didn't care. All his friends were dead. All he wanted now was to understand.

So he found himself standing at a pair of immense double doors fashioned from polished cherrywood, listening to the hoot of alarms. This was the lord's redoubt. Beyond those doors was the man who had tormented and murdered Atherton's crew. The noble who'd found a forbidden love with a courtesan.

He pushed the doors open.

The room was sumptuous. Golden damask draperies framed French windows that looked out over a perfectly manicured lawn. A dark cherrywood sofa cushioned in shimmer turquoise silk sat beside a matching desk. A chandelier brightened the room with shards of silver light.

But the creature that inhabited that room was not a man.

Mark Atherton, said the being in the study, you have proven to be most resourceful. This is unfortunate—for both of us.

The creature was an eastern dracoform, its scales blood red. A fringe of long black and red whiskers adorned its lower jaw, the back of its skull, and its powerful legs. Its eyes were a beautiful amber. It should be too large for the room, yet it wasn't. Magic.

Like the woman standing next to it. The elf. From Irori.

Pearl.

Security guards appeared behind Atherton.

The dragon raised a giant paw. Leave us.

The guards departed, closing the double doors behind them.

My name is Watatsumi, said the dragon.

"The sea god," said Atherton recalling the legend. "The ruler of seas and oceans."

The dragon nodded. Do you know the rest of it?

Atherton paused, searching his memory. "Watatsumi had a daughter. Toyotama. The Luminous Pearl Princess." He looked at the elf standing beside the dragon and suddenly all the pieces fell into place.

"This isn't shinju," he whispered, "the love between a powerful man and a courtesan. You're his daughter."

My daughter … said the dragon. She has dishonored her name.

Atherton shook his head. "My people never involved themselves in the business of dragons. Why did you kill them?"

It wasn't ever about your people, Atherton, said Watatsumi. It was about you. All this was to keep you from my daughter.

Pearl stepped toward him, her beautiful eyes shining with tears. She reached out and softly touched his cheek. "*Iie,* Mark," she whispered. "You were right the first time. This was about a forbidden love. Yours—" Her voice cracked. "—and mine."

And suddenly he remembered: the taste of her, the feel of her body under his hands, the smell of her skin accented by cherry blossoms. His breath caught. "I, I led my people into danger." His voice was full of anguish. "I got them killed."

Watatsumi reared back and raised a paw the size of a dinner plate. Golden light swirled around his talons. Now you will forget, human. This time forever.

"Father don't," Pearl pleaded. "Don't alter his memory."

He has killed his friends, said the dragon, and he has lost his love. This is the greatest kindness I can offer him.

Mark Atherton found himself sitting on a bench under a canopy of cherry blossoms. Pink petals floated down like a soft, fragrant rain. Aoyama. He was in Aoyama. How had he come to the cemetery?

He remembered nothing, had nothing, except—

He was holding something. His hand was curled into a tight fist, curled around something. He slowly opened his right hand.

And looked down at a single perfect, lustrous pearl.

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Watch your back.
Shoot straight.
Conserve ammo.
And never, ever, cut a deal with a dragon.
—Street proverb

WELCOME TO THE SHADOWS

2072. Handbasket still in motion.

Since the turn of the century, the world has changed in unimaginable ways. The mystical energies of the universe have been steadily rising in power and concentration, bringing magic back to the world—the Awakening. Elves, dwarfs, orks, and trolls have assumed their true forms, throwing off their human guises. Creatures of the wild have changed as well, transforming into beasts of myth and legend. The many traditions of magic have returned—magicians from all walks of life have carved out a place for themselves in the new world. Though many aspects of the Awakening remain mysterious, modern society has learned much about the workings of magic and how to harness it as a force just as important as technology.

The decades that followed the Awakening were years of panic and turmoil, as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse seemed to race across the Earth. Cultures that had never lost touch with their mystic heritage used magic in uprisings against the nations that had suppressed them for centuries. The vast global telecommunications network collapsed under an assault by a mysterious computer virus. Dragons soared into the skies. Epidemics and famines ravaged the world's population. Clashes between newly Awakened races and the rest of humanity became common. All central authority crumbled, and the world began to spiral downward into the abyss.

But man and his kin are hardy animals. Out of the devastation and chaos, a fragile new social order slowly emerged. Advanced simulated sensorium (simsense) technology helped eradicate the last vestiges of the computer virus. Amerindians, elves, orks, trolls, and dwarfs formed new nations. Where environmental degradation and pollution have made many areas uninhabitable, eco-groups wage war on polluters, and Awakened powers use incredible magic to heal the earth. Central governments have balkanized into smaller nations and city-states, as fear of the world's changes drives wedges between people of different backgrounds. Vast metropolitan sprawls known as metroplexes cover the landscape; these urban jungles swallow whole regions. Police departments, unable to contain crime waves and civil unrest, have been privatized or had their work contracted out to corporations.

Megacorporations are the new world superpowers, a law unto themselves. The entire planet speaks their language; the nuyen is the global monetary standard; and the highest court in the world is the Corporate Court, made up of members of the top ten megacorporations. The megacorps play a deadly game, paying pawns in the shadows to help them get an edge on the competition. Meanwhile, corporate executives and wage slaves hole up in their own enclaves, safe behind layers of security and indoctrination. Outside the walls

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of these arcologies and gated communities, whole stretches of the sprawls have become ungovernable. Gangs rule the streets; the forgotten masses grow, lacking even a System Identification Number (SIN) to give them any rights. These outcasts, dissidents, and rebels live as the dregs of society, squatting in long-abandoned buildings, surviving through crime and predatory instincts. Many of them attempt to escape their miserable existences by slotting addictive Better-Than-Life (BTL) chips, living vicariously through someone else's senses. Others band together, some for survival and some to gain their own twisted forms of power.

Technology, too, has changed people. No longer content with the limitations of flesh, many have turned to the artificial enhancements of cyberware to make themselves more than human—stronger, faster, smarter. Others prefer more natural enhancements, augmented organs grown in clinic vats: bioware. Still others deck themselves out in powerful and wearable computing equipment, and manipulate the Matrix or vehicles as if the optical chips and run-flat tires were parts of their own body.

In the harsh reality of 2070 where profit is the most important mistress, the bigger the metroplex, the deeper the shadows. In the cracks between the giant corporate structures, criminals of all shades find their homes. When the megacorps want a job done but don't want to dirty their hands, they turn to the only people who can pull it off: shadowrunners, deniable assets. Though only the blackest of governmental or corporate databases will even register a shadowrunner's involvement with a corporation, the demand for his or her services is high. Hackers slide like whispers through the databases of giant corporations, spiriting away the only thing of real value—information. Street samurai are enforcers for hire whose combat skills and reflexes make them the ultimate urban predators. Riggers manipulate vehicles and drones for a variety of purposes. Magicians, those rare folk who possess the gift of wielding and shaping the magical energies that now permeate the Earth, are sought after to spy on competitors, sling spells against an enemy, commit magical sabotage, and for any other service that their employers can dream up. All these individuals sell their skills to survive, taking on tasks too dangerous for others; many of them illegal, all of them unsavory.

Welcome to the dark side of the future, pal. It's going to be a hell of a ride.

THE BASICS

Shadowrun is a roleplaying game set in the dystopian near-future of 2070, a world where cyberpunk meets magic, where criminal subcultures rub shoulders with corporate elites, and where advanced technology competes with the power of spells and spirits. It is an age of high-tech lowlifes; shrouded in danger and mystery, driven by intrigue and adrenaline. Those who play in the shadows stand on the edge, always on the cusp of adventure.

Shadowrun is designed for two to eight players. Like many other roleplaying games, it has an open-ended style of play. That means the game has no definitive ending—no preset time limit, number of turns to play, or single goal to reach that marks the game's end. Unlike most other games, Shadowrun has no winners or losers. The object is to have fun with the exercise of imagination. When this happens, everybody wins.

Those with roleplaying-game experience will find some of the following familiar. Such readers may want to skip ahead to *Game Concepts* (p. 60), or turn to *A History Lesson for the Reality Impaired* (p. 24) or *Life on the Edge* (p. 40) and delve into the history and background of the Shadowrun universe. For those new to roleplaying, the following introduction may not answer all of your questions, because a roleplaying game is more easily learned from experienced players than from a book. This brief overview will give you the general concept behind roleplaying. To learn more, find others who already play Shadowrun, and learn from them.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game is part improvisational theater, part storytelling, and part game. It is played by a gamemaster who runs the game and a group of players who pretend to be characters. These characters are created by the players, given a history and personality, and then further defined by a set of statistics that represent the character's skills and attributes—as developed in the character creation process (see *Creating a Shadowrunner*, p. 80). The gamemaster presents the setting and situation; through their characters, the players interact with the storyline and other characters.

Think of it this way: everyone has read a book or seen a movie in which the lead character does something that the reader or viewer finds so utterly wrong that he or she wants to shout out a warning. But no matter what we say, the character will do what the plot demands; we're just along for the ride. Even throwing popcorn won't help.

In a roleplaying game, the players control their characters' actions and respond to the events of the plot. If the player does not want his or her character to go through the door, the character will not. If the player thinks the character can talk him- or herself out of a tight situation rather than resorting to that trusty pistol, he or she can talk away. The script, or plot, of a roleplaying game is flexible, always changing based on the decisions the players make as characters.

The gamemaster controls the story. He or she keeps track of what is supposed to happen when, describes events as they occur so that the players (as characters) can react to them, keeps track of other characters in the game (referred to as non-player characters), and resolves attempts to take action using the game system. The game system comes into play when characters seek to use their skills or otherwise do something that requires a test to see whether or not they succeed. Specific rules are presented for situations that involve rolling dice to determine the outcome (see *Game Concepts*, p. 60).

The gamemaster describes the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears, and other senses. Gamemastering is not easy, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the other players' imaginations, testing their gaming skills and their characters' skills in the game world, makes it worthwhile. Catalyst Game Labs publishes game supplements and adventures to help this process along, but experienced gamemasters always adapt the game universe to suit their own styles.

In roleplaying, stories (the adventures) evolve much like a movie or book, but within the flexible storyline created by the gamemaster. The story is the overall plot; a general outline for what might happen at certain times or in reaction to other events. It is no more concrete than that until the players become involved. At that point, the adventure becomes as involving and dramatic as that great movie you saw last week, or that great book you stayed up all night to finish. In some ways it's even better, because you helped create it.

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to play a roleplaying game—some may involve much more storytelling and improvised dialogue than others, while other games may revolve more around combat situations and tactical battles. The important part is keeping a balance of these activities that keeps all the players in the game happy!

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CORE SUPPLEMENTS

All that's required to play *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, is the core rulebook. However, **Catalyst Game Labs** offers a number of advanced rule books and setting supplements that expand the options available to characters and further detail the setting.

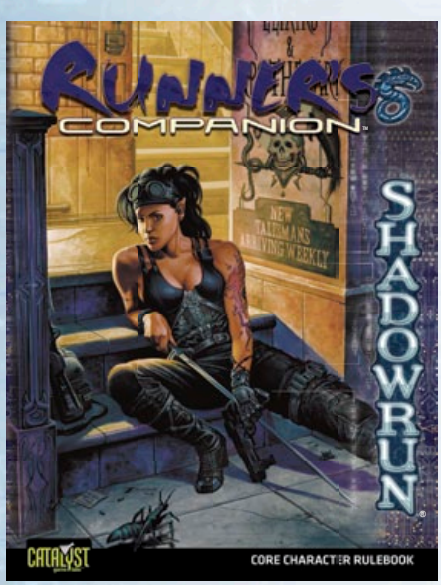
Street Magic: The advanced magic rulebook adds more bang to your spellslingers and adepts alike. *Street Magic* contains new magical traditions, more spirits, more spells, detailed enchanting rules, advanced initiation options, new metamagics, and even a look at magical threats in the Sixth World.

Augmentation: The advanced medtech rulebook is much more than a budding street samurai's upgrade catalog; it introduces more cyberware and bioware augmentations than you can wiggle a prehensile tail at, as well as a selection of genetech and nanotech enhancements useful to all character types. If that isn't enough, *Augmentation* introduces biodrones, cyborgs, and cyberzombies.

Arsenal: The advanced gear book is chock full of useful gear the enterprising shadowrunner can't live without. *Arsenal*'s pages are crammed with guns, armor, spy toys, manatech, survival gear, vehicles, and drones that will have everybody on the team saving up to buy the good stuff. All that plus advanced martial arts, and vehicle and weapon customization rules.

Unwired: The advanced Matrix resource is a guide to the wireless Matrix for both beginners and experts. Hackers and technomancers are treated to all the new tricks, new toys, new echoes, advanced submersion, and new sprites you might expect. *Unwired* opens the world of ubiquitous computing to all character types and showcases how any shadowrunner can use the Matrix to keep her edge.

Runner's Companion: This character-oriented rulebook features advanced options to provide additional depth to character creation and play. *Runner's Companion* not only introduces optional metavariants, sentient races, and unique character types, but also dozens of new qualities, advanced contact and lifestyle rules, and rounds everything out with some basic survival tips for budding runners.



ROLEPLAYING SHADOWRUN

In Shadowrun, players characters are typically shadowrunners or other members of the criminal underground. Many varieties of runners exist, of all races, genders, and sizes, each with their own area(s) of expertise.

WHAT RUNNERS DO

Shadowrunners commit crimes, usually for money. When a corporation or other sponsor needs someone to do dirty work, they look to the shadows. As "deniable assets," runners make advantageous—and expendable—tools.

Runners usually operate in teams. A team can be any combination of character types, depending on what the players want to do. The team should have a plausible reason for working together, such as being old friends or cellmates, having the same interests, or being forced together by circumstance. Different teams will have different capabilities, and the gamemaster should plan accordingly. For example, one team may excel at breaking and entering, while another might be a squad of bruisers who work best as hired muscle. While runner teams will want to work within their strengths, a staple of drama is the protagonists being pulled out of their element and over their heads.

Runners have contacts, who represent other potentially useful people they know. Some of these will be other underworld types, such as gang members or hit men. Others may be ordinary people, useful for information or for "special arrangements"—for example, the corporate secretary who lets you know when the wiz research scientist you're supposed to kidnap will be leaving the building. The more you rely on any particular contact's skills, information, and resources, the more you'll owe them in the end—even between long-standing contacts, money and favors are usually necessary to grease the wheels. A player character's relationship with a contact need not be friendly. Sometimes, the people who can help you out the most are those you like the least.

The most important contact for shadowrunners is the fixer. A fixer acts as a middleman and can usually help the runners find gear, other contacts, or work—all for a fee, of course. A corporation or other employer that needs shadowrunners sends someone to a fixer to ask for recommendations. If a team of runners has a good reputation and meets the job requirements, a meeting is arranged to discuss details and haggle over payment. Because such matters are highly sensitive, anonymity is par for the course, and employers of this type are known simply as Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson may not always be a corporate representative. The world of Shadowrun is rich and complex, with many people and groups who may need to hire runners to accomplish certain goals. A criminal syndicate may hire runners to strike at rivals, a mage may hire them to acquire certain rare materials for magic use, or Joe Neighbor may need to find the terrorists who kidnapped his wife. Regardless of the sponsor, if a job involves doing something dangerous and potentially illegal, it's a shadowrun. Just like Mr. Johnson is anonymous, so may be the sponsor—if the price is right, most running teams don't care who's paying. Misdirection is common, and Johnsons will often try to drop false clues, leading runners to think that they're actually employed by someone else entirely.

Shadowrunner teams may even take the initiative, doing jobs of their own accord. For example, a player character may hold a grudge against a certain megacorp, or dislike how a certain gang treats people in his neighborhood. Maybe he decides it's time to get his criminal record erased. Other jobs may be politically or socially motivated; the character or runner team may be members of or regularly work with far left or far right political groups. In the Sixth World, everyone has dirty work that needs doing.

Runners accomplish their tasks by working the streets for information, calling in favors and markers from friends and contacts in the shadows. They take whatever action their job requires: surveillance, theft, breaking and entering, violence, even murder.

Runners do these things because they are survivors. Many of them grew up committing crimes to get by, or perhaps they obtained special training somewhere and want to put it to use. Some may have extended families to feed and no other source of income. Many of them prefer the freedom of the shadowlife, controlling their own destinies as opposed to being a wage slave in some drab business park kissing corporate ass all day. Others enjoy the thrill of running, thriving on its risks. Finally, some are inspired to run by a sense of social justice; they want to damage the powers-that-be however they can while providing for the underclass. These runners are known as 'hooders for their Robin Hood outlook.

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BASIC RUNNER TYPES

The following terms refer to runners who specialize in various fields.

Faces are charismatic individuals—they may be good looking, smooth talking, quick-witted, or just have a great force of personality. The face usually acts as the front-man at any meet, handles situations where legwork and networking are necessary, and negotiates with Mr. Johnsons, dealers, and infobrokers. A face may be all natural, but more often than not they're augmented by bioware such as tailored pheromones.

Magicians use their force of will and the power of their beliefs to manipulate magic and control spirits. Magicians who have similar beliefs often gravitate to one another, adopting schools of thought known as traditions. Magicians of all traditions are able to cast spells and summon and bind spirits. Most can also perceive and project into the parallel mystic realm of astral space. Two magical traditions are common: hermetic mages and shamans. Mages (hermetic magicians) are known for using thaumaturgical abilities in a scientific manner. To mages, magic is about knowledge and structure. Shamans are magicians to whom magic is attunement with the forces of nature.

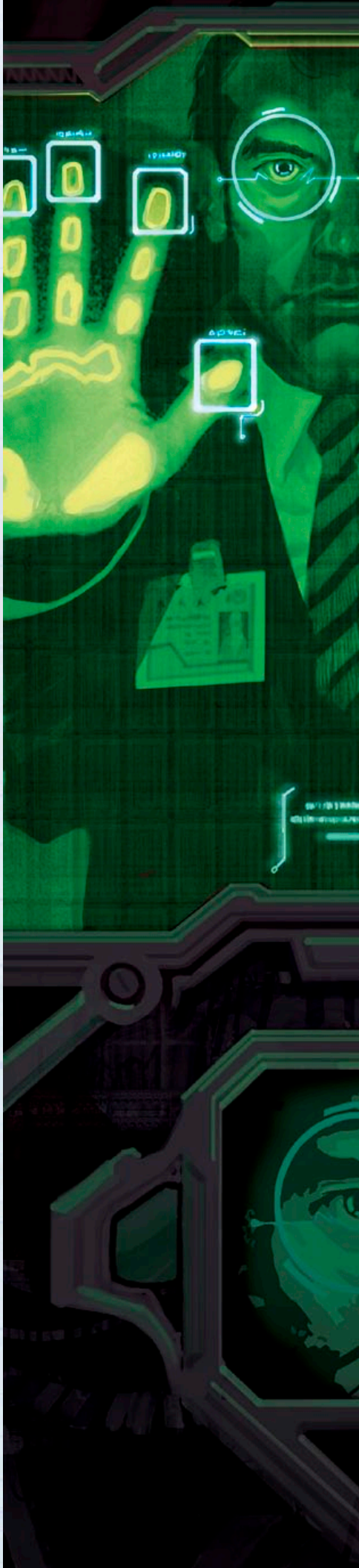
Adepts are the modern-day ninjas and berserkers, using magic to enhance their bodies' abilities. Adepts tend to be athletically oriented, with good stealth and combat skills.

Hackers are characters who specialize in computers, and accessing and manipulating data via the Matrix—either using augmented reality or going full-bore and using virtual reality to do their dirty work. Most hackers use customized computers called commlinks, often with personally written programs that manipulate the Matrix in ways beyond any sysop's intention. While illegally logged into the Matrix, hackers can search and sift through information of all kinds, tap phone calls, and disable and enable other systems at will. Most hackers are experts in cybercombat—a battle of skills and programs against other hackers or intrusion countermeasures (IC).

Riggers are a subset of hackers who focus on using and manipulating modern vehicles and drones. Many riggers are adept at controlling multiple drones at once and using them as "eyes and ears." Others excel at "jumping into" vehicles through full virtual reality, effectively operating as if the machines were extensions of their own bodies. Similarly, security riggers—typically known as spiders—interface with the sim-enhanced security systems built into buildings and facilities. From this "web," the spider's reach spans the entire building, allowing him to see through sensors and mentally control security features like locks and hidden weaponry. For riggers looking for work on the sly, good smugglers are always in short supply, and piloting a t-bird across hostile borders or running BTL chips up and down the coast can be profitable shadow-ops. For getting down and dirty with a ride's mechanical and electronic guts, riggers can take tech-wiz jobs to modify vehicles according to a client's (probably illegal) desires—a lucrative biz that also requires less travel.

Street samurai are physically enhanced combat monsters. With implanted cyberware, bioware, and combat skills, they strive to be the quickest, meanest, and strongest killing machines on the streets. Many of them cybernetically boost their reflexes to increase their action and reaction speeds, or boost their strength so that they can inflict more damage. Many are also lethal with firearms, and almost all have a smartlink system installed for increased precision in shooting. Some fight for honor, some because they get paid for it, and others because they are insane enough to go up against anything. Street samurai is a catch-all term—some characters may identify themselves as bodyguards, mercenaries, assassins, or some similar label, but in general a character based around physical skills and non-magical augmentation can be called a street samurai—even if some of them don't like the implication.

These basic runner types are just the tip of the iceberg and are not meant to define a set of character classes. Players can create a dizzying variety of characters using the character creation rules (p. 80)—for example, a detective character who relies on charisma and skill as opposed to cyberware, or a covert operations specialist who has all the gear and cyberware necessary to penetrate electronic defenses. The only limit is your imagination. For more examples of the types of characters you can play, see the *Sample Characters* beginning on p. 98.



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SETTINGS

Shadowrun is set only sixty-three years in the future, but the world has gone through tremendous changes. Two of the most significant are the Matrix and the astral plane—two "settings" that will come into play no matter where your shadowrunner is on the globe.

THE MATRIX

The Matrix is the sweeping term generally used to refer to the worldwide computer network and telecommunications grid—or, more accurately, the millions of wireless computer networks and devices that, together, compose the Matrix—a mesh network with no central body. The Matrix is used for all types of communications—voice and vidphone calls are routed through the Matrix, as are text messages and emails.

Almost everyone in developed nations uses the Matrix on a daily basis for work, education, and recreation. In fact, most people are online all of the time, constantly interacting with the Matrix via their commlinks and augmented reality (AR) overlays. Almost everyone has their own personal area network (PAN), a micro-network linking together all of their personal devices with their commlink as the central router and Matrix hub. This wireless connectivity gives users a great amount of freedom, as they can access their files and resources from virtually everywhere, and interact with nearby devices and networks using AR visual sight cues and other sensory data to bring them information on the fly. This technology is described in detail in *The Wireless World*, p. 216.

Of central interest to most casual users are geo-tags that broadcast AR Matrix data that is linked to a specific location. For example, a geo-tag at a shopping mall may broadcast a mall map, information about new stores, and current sale specials. A geo-tag at the Seattle Department of Motor Vehicles would direct you to the proper line, desk, or terminal, inform you of the necessary ID requirements, and offer driving safety tips to everyone entering and leaving.

Matrix users can access multiple systems at once—they may be downloading their email in one augmented reality "window," referencing research documents in another, and watching the security cameras mounted in their child's daycare in a third.

Many Matrix services are public and accessible, such as some databases, social clubs, game rooms, or PR offices. Others are semi-private—dating services and stock market trading sites, for example—available to the public in exchange for a one-time or subscription fee. Others are private, layered with IC and security measures and patrolled by corporate hackers. These hosts contain the deepest, darkest secrets of corporations and other entities.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The astral plane is another reality entirely. Some magicians can perceive its depths or project their consciousness therein. Those who take astral form can move through the astral plane at the speed of thought, but few magicians can stay within this realm for longer than a few hours. The astral plane is the home of spirits, beings of quicksilver and shadow, and is a realm of mystery and danger. It parallels our own physical plane, and auras of living creatures and magic are reflected upon it, where those skilled in the Art can analyze them. The theory goes that the astral is actually sustained by the life force of the Earth and its creatures. From the astral plane, a magician can read the emotional imprints that linger on various items. Sufficiently strong feelings may even pollute the astral atmosphere. Sterile corporate offices, murder scenes, and toxic dumping grounds, to give just a few examples, all have their own distinct (and unpleasant) astral "flavor."

Beyond the astral plane are the metaplanes, realms of magic accessible only by initiated magicians. Little is known about the metaplanes—of which there may be an unlimited number, or only one, depending on whose theories you believe. Initiated magicians can travel to any metaplane they choose, though some have strict entrance requirements.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Shadowrun contains many more interesting settings, too numerous to describe in detail here. Players may find themselves in corporate arcologies, self-contained and self-sustainable mini-cities that house thousands of corporate citizens; Awakened lands, where metahumans and dragons work together to purify the often polluted Earth; or the cold edge of space, where humanity is slowly populating numerous orbital habitats as it expands into the void. Most metahumans make their homes in vast urban sprawls, from the glittering skyscraper penthouses of the corporate elite, to the winding homogenous masses of corporate housing enclaves, to the crumbling and blighted ghettos long ago abandoned by civil authorities to gangs and worse. Even corporate thugs and cops fear to tread in many of the sprawl's shadow regions.

SHADOW ACTIVITY

In Shadowrun, the megacorporations make the laws, and they tend toward laws that favor themselves. Any shadowrunner knows that the corps will bend or break the law whenever they need to. When the corps choose to break the law, shadowrunners get involved as deniable assets. Therefore, when runners hit the streets, they also tend to break the law—a lot. Depending on their current objectives, random chance, or the actions of opponents, lawbreaking can occur in a variety of ways. Most runs involve several specific criminal operations, many of which are described below.

B&E stands for breaking and entering. Most runs involve B&E in some way, whether to steal research, commit sabotage, plant false evidence, or otherwise further the nefarious plot of this week's Mr. Johnson. Security in 2070 has become an art form, ranging from mundane retinal-scan maglocks to concertina wire electrified fences to patrolling spirits to full-blown security hackers and riggers mixing metahuman sensibilities with the unblinking eye of technology. Any runner team worth its name is going to need the know-how, the creativity, or the brute force to bypass these defenses.

Courier runs are glorified delivery jobs. Most often, the object to be delivered is of strategic or monetary importance or is otherwise valuable and so needs protection from others who want it. Runners hired for these jobs must make sure the object reaches its destination safely and intact.

Datasteals are jobs where a hacker works his way into a computer system and steals information. While this can often be done from a remote location, hackers often prefer to work on site, working their technical magic in concert with the other members of the team—disabling and obstructing security systems, allowing the team to penetrate to the core of even the blackest facilities. This infiltration is often necessary, as many government and corporate computer hosts remain disconnected from the Matrix for security reasons.

Extractions are frequently arranged by corporations who wish to steal valuable personnel from other corporations. Top research scientists, skilled financial agents, and other suits with valuable

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knowledge are hot commodities and are suitably protected. The "victims" in many extractions are willing targets—employees who have decided to defect to another corp. Some corporations consider certain personnel so valuable that they would rather see them dead than working for a rival; attempts to extract these people may fall afoul of deadly contingency plans.

Hooding is robbing from the rich to give to the poor, a definition that has gradually expanded to include any run spurred more by a commitment to social justice than anything else. Examples include destroying a pollution-producing factory, mugging the Yakuza protection-racket enforcers and returning the money they stole to the neighborhood, or defending a metahuman community from attacks by human supremacists. Corporations and authorities typically view such acts as "terrorism," while more cynical people may view such social concern as a weakness to be exploited.

Smuggling is similar to courier work, though smugglers usually have their own specially equipped vehicles for sneaking goods across borders and outrunning (or outgunning) the law. Smuggling can be quite lucrative if the runner knows the markets. Such work usually goes hand in hand with piracy, as pirates are often the cheapest source of illicit goods. Smuggling is done through various means and with many different vehicles, but the smuggler's choice is undoubtedly the Scout-class, vectored-thrust, low-altitude vehicle (LAV) known as the thunderbird, or t-bird.

Structure hits are sabotage runs intended to do structural damage to the target that will cost time, nuyen, work, and perhaps more to repair or recover from. Runs of this nature often involve large explosions, making demolitions a useful skill. Structure hits can be accomplished via other methods, however, from smart corrosives to rampaging elementals to pushing the right button at the wrong time.

An additional twist is the **tailchaser**, or **distraction run**, where a team of runners may be hired to pull off a flashy run like wetwork or a structure hit ... but really, they're just around to distract corp security and confuse everyone while another runner team takes on a more understated job such as an extraction or B&E. While security is busy dealing with the fallout from the first runner team's actions, the second team sneaks in and takes what they want—whether it be a metahuman, a piece of hot tech, or some paydata. This second job may not be fully discovered for hours or even days.

Wetwork is assassination, pure and simple. The world of 2070 contains many factions, each with multitudes of enemies whom they may find most convenient and cost effective to simply remove. Corporations or underworld figures sometimes place bounties on certain individuals; collecting on these can be profitable, if risky. Many runners refuse to take these jobs and view dirtying their hands for money in this way as vile, though equally many have no such moral qualms.

These types of criminal operations are just the beginning of a long list of shadowrunning possibilities. Some runs may be simple investigations or may involve low-level criminal activity such as BTL-dealing, Matrix bank fraud, or holdups. Breaking the law can easily become an everyday occurrence for runners. In fact, some runners break the law simply by existing, because they possess illegal cyberware, practice magic without a license, or are not allowed within certain countries. While some runners have legitimate jobs, many do not have SINs, so they work and travel with false identities. Much of the weaponry and gear associated with shadowrunning is also restricted, and so runners must take care to cache their gear and maintain safehouses. This gets even more complex if the runners have to cross borders, a common occurrence for established shadowrunner teams. Some jobs will take runners across borders or overseas because the sponsor backing the job wants to use operatives that are unlikely to be recognized, or maybe because the sponsor has simply burned too many bridges in that country. Other jobs may lead runners across the globe in unexpected ways—they could be chasing a sim star gone missing, or a piece of art that "walked away" from its museum home.

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HAPPY TRAILS

by Robert Derie

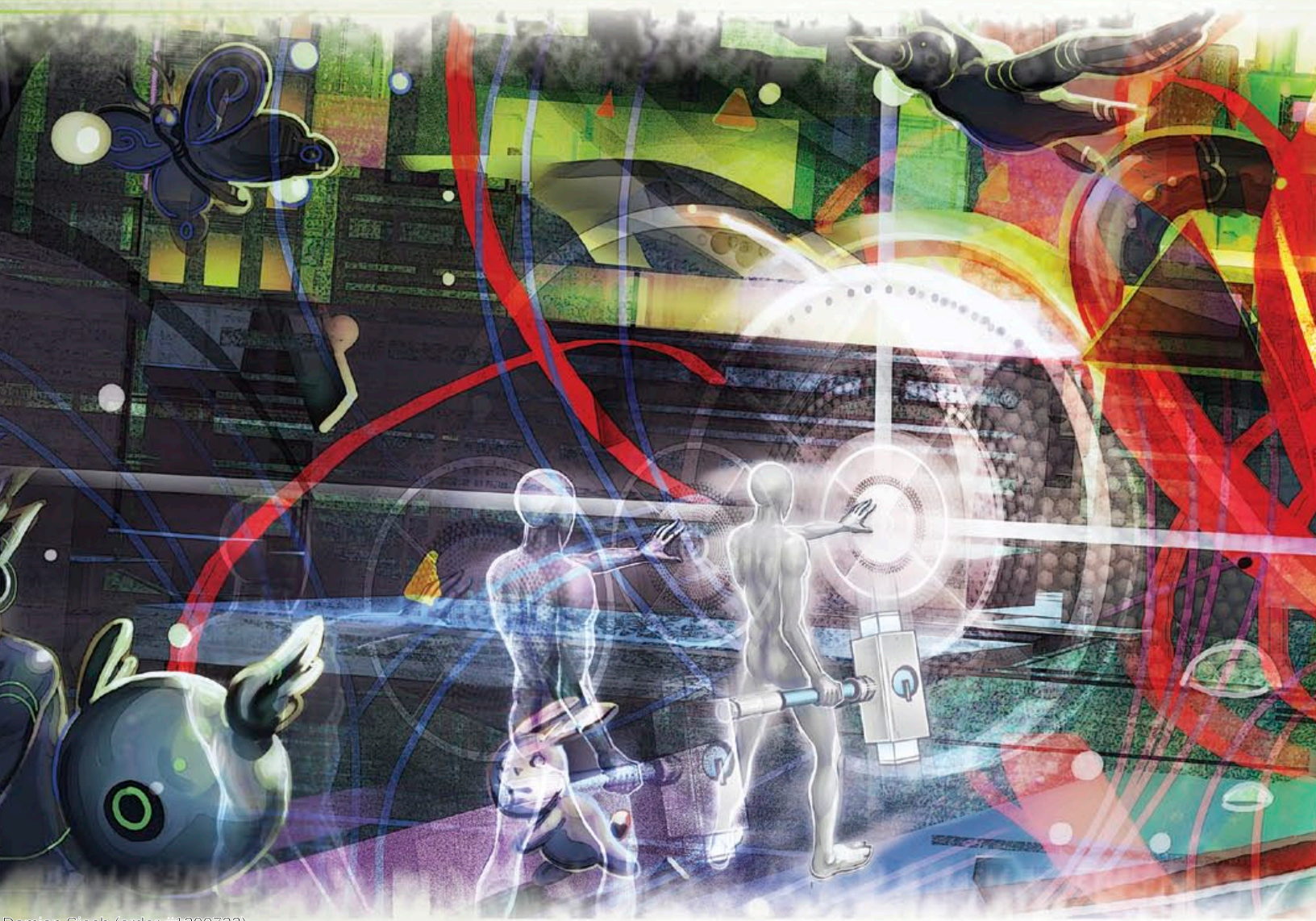
2065

FastJack felt old. He told himself it was just the UV host, dragging on his sore, non-existent muscles in a bare and twilit non-space. About a mile away, the serpent writhed and grew as he watched. It was about to make another pass. Joints complaining all the way, FastJack stood and shook strands of red-and-grey hair from his face.

Seven whole seconds left before the next cascade. At least he could still access the math sub-processor stapled to the inside of his skull. With a grunt, he lifted the hammer level with his shoulders. Damn host must have converted memory size to perceived mass.

Three seconds. It wasn't really the parched and leathery skin, matted beard, long dirty nails or blue-green eyes he minded. FastJack wasn't that vain about his icon, Hell he'd gone through enough of them. No, it was the crow's feet, the bulging veins on his hands, the graying hair along his arms, the web of faded scars.

One second. That and the wrinkles. He wasn't that old.



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The impact damn near rattled the teeth out of his receding gums, swinging the hammer in a terrific arc to contact with the beast's incoming skull. Perfect timing, and the massive snout ground itself into the dirt. FastJack moved with unnatural vitality, wielding the hammer to counter every assault of the wyrm's massive talons. He indulged in a mad cackle. They could shackle him in whatever damn icon they wanted, it didn't matter. The serpent withdrew, licking its wounds, preparing to attack again. He stared it in the eye and spit on the ground.

"I don't care what Norse fairytale I've fallen into. I'm FastJack, the best decker in the Matrix, and I'll be damned if I go down without a fight."

Even his scars felt old. Arthritic knuckles grasped the hammer tighter. Six seconds.

FastJack felt cold. Damn winter reached him even here. It's too damn weird to wake up and parts of your body are colder than the rest. Probably weirder when you get used to it. Dammit, even his cyberware felt old. Tired eyes fell on a glossy rectangular ad. One of these days he should go up

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to that Transys facility in Scotland; hibernate through the winter in one of those newfangled cryogenic tanks. "No cellular decay or your money back!" the ad promised.

To Hell with that. Bad enough how the cold crept into your bones without inviting it in. Oh well. Work to do. Strap on the bio-monitors, hook up the drip and the catheter, set the massage liners to focus on the joints and lower back cycle today, insert plug and—

Click. Ahh. Nothing like jacking in. A quick, clean transition. Cut out the meat and put on your mask. No more tired old man. Just FastJack. Hell, in the old days you had time to go to the bathroom before you logged on.

Frames busied themselves about him, industrious on their tasks. A thought summoned an itemized report: the imminent stock offering by Novatech was definitely stirring things up. Six hours until the opening. He checked his mail, but nothing too important, just a few job offers. No priority messages. Nothing from his daughter.

He had an appointment. Time to go.

The next assault was harder and faster. It was more difficult to block the serpent's blows, and the stench was tearing at him now, a miasma of filth and decay that burned his mouth and lungs. It made it harder to concentrate as he struck, and a couple bounced off scales like iron without doing any damage. FastJack spared a glance at the girl hanging on the tree, and the wyrm took advantage of the momentary lapse. Suddenly its jaws clamped around his hammer, the great black snout only inches from him. It was a game of tug, the serpent arching itself back, trying to tear the weapon from his grip. FastJack held on with all he had, his feet digging furrows in the gritty, black earth as the wyrm dragged him away. Its breath was even worse up close. FastJack saw the oily, chrome venom dripping from its teeth, practically felt his body breaking apart under the corruption.

With a final, vicious tug he wrenched the hammer to the right, then threw his weight with it to the left, breaking it free from the beast's maw. Spitting blood and venom and broken teeth, the beast roared and retreated, only to grow even larger once more. It was cascading. Drek! With a wordless yell, he leapt after it, JackHammer raised high. Five seconds.

Finishing his log-on to the Berlin grid, FastJack saw it was the usual mess. Even in the Matrix, the Free City was divided between the clean, imposing icons of corporate IC and the motley shantytown of local systems from the anarchist part of town. It wasn't good to dawdle in either section; corporate deckers patrolled their half regularly, and the other side of town was open to any madman with a deck. With impossible ease, FastJack slid into the fractal monolith of the University, skipping through classrooms and crowded hallways to the dorms. Just to be polite, he knocked and waited a few seconds before entering the node. He was greeted with the sight of his appointment hanging from a tree under an open sky.

Analysis showed the tree was some sort of construct, type unknown, and it wasn't attacking or actively acting on her icon. Probably doing an otaku thing with her daemon, then. Nothing to worry about.

"Hello Perri. How's it hanging?" Her pink eyes flashed at him in annoyance. Very nice work on the icon, if you like the albino-fur-covered maiden look. He could even see the blue of the veins showing in the skin.

"Jack. I told you last time, I'm the Skald now." She was removing herself from the noose even while she was talking. Bloody kids. Six months ago, she'd been Michelangelo. Six month's before that, it was Ba'al. It had been eight years and a lifetime of innocence since she'd called herself Perri. He should have remembered.

"Sorry. Skald. I'll remember next time," he apologized. She snorted, then sat down. He sat across from her. Time for business. She straightened up in a perfect lotus-position, a Nordic bodhisattva staring into the middle distance.

"You do not come to me for answers." Her face was blank. FastJack didn't know if that was on purpose, or if she was concentrating too hard to adjust the icon. "You wish to know the question."

FastJack nodded. This is what he came here for, after all. Even in the beginning, when he'd first found her, FastJack had known that Perri could do things he couldn't. She was otaku.

Her icon froze for a second, then shifted. That was unusual. What was happening?

"Skald?" Her icon froze, shifted, and froze again. Suddenly, she was normal.

"I cannot tell you the future this time, Jack. I have to show it to you."

The tail came out of nowhere and slammed him away in mid-leap. He heard, more than felt, the rib break. FastJack performed a perfect kip-up, with the hammer in both hands. He ran in close, evading sudden snaps of mouth and tail alike, and leaped upon the broad expanse of its back, ridged with jutting spires of bone. The hammer came down like a pile driver, and the ominous crack of the serpent's spine was loud enough to hear through its roar. FastJack drew back for another blow when the body shifted beneath him, that sickening mouth coming down, grabbing his hammer and wrenching it from his grasp, letting it fall to earth a hundred yards away. The decker felt his heart sink as the wyrm shook him off, and the broken vertebrae of its spine mended in a new spurt of growth.

"Frag me." Four seconds.

They skipped through the stars in the sky, bouncing from satellite to satellite. Skald led while FastJack followed. She talked. He listened.

"The future is coming, Jack. We're running out of present. Something is going to change, or end. It's the Novatech thing. All those people ... drek, I'm glitching this all up by talking too fast. Letting my mouth wander while I play my channels. Some of the otaku, we can see the future. Except it's not really the future, but we can intuitively construct very accurate models of what is happening and will happen, right? Or something like that. But we've hit a wall. There's a date, a time, an event beyond which our Sight won't reach. You could do economic models past it and all the rest, sure, but if you try to see past it by sorting the data, you just can't. Nobody knows why, either. It's really freaking us out."

He hated to interrupt, but he had to ask. "This event. What is it?"

She stopped cold and stared at him. "The IPO. Critical mass. Ground zero. The Gunningagap." Skald turned back and said, "We're almost there. This is our host." She opened the connection and they stepped through.

It was high time for FastJack to pull a trick. He had to buy some time, get his hammer back. It's hard to concentrate on the code behind the world when all of your senses are being told they're not in the Matrix, but he wasn't called the best decker in the Matrix for nothing. And Perri was counting on him.

All across the plain, skeletal warriors rose from the ground, grasping rusty swords and battered shields. Yes! These were the defense systems of

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the host system, which had been deactivated so that they wouldn't interfere with this little battle. FastJack didn't allow himself a grin as he raced for his hammer, smashing any skeleton that got in his way. The system wouldn't be particular. It would go for Perri and FastJack as well as the beast. Time was of the essence. Three seconds.

They were on an open plain of gritty, black earth. The sky above was twilight, and contained eight massive planets. FastJack felt the weight of years, all the ache of the meat brought back upon him. Or maybe that was just the big damn two-handed hammer hanging on his back. He felt the massive head dig into his shoulder. A UV host. They'd just stepped into a UV host, on some private host somewhere in the North Sea. Skald was gone. He wasn't alone.

Half her face was perfect, pristine and beautiful. It was a face he knew. The other, the left, was twisted, deformed and rotting. She wore a grey linen shroud with black raven-wings poking out the back like a morbid angel.

"Pax." The dark otaku smiled, half her face becoming a rictus grin.

"FastJack. Welcome to the future. Welcome to the end of the world as you know it. Welcome to Valaskjalf."

"Slag the drek, fader. Where the Hell is she?"

That did it. Pax exploded into a hundred and two crows—thank you, math SPU— and flew off into the sky. A Graceful Log-Off. He'd heard otaku were sensitive to the Fading, but damn. Time to find Skald and get out of here.

"I'm over here, Jack." He spun around. She was hanging from a tree again, but this time her discomfort was obvious. A spear rested beside the tree. Immediately he reached for it to cut her down.

"Jack, don't! Listen to me!" Skald sounded frantic. FastJack stopped. A roar sounded behind him, and he looked over his shoulder to see something coming toward them. It roared again.

"It's called Jormungand, Jack. They want to destroy the Matrix, make it over. They've planted the eggs everywhere! They needed me, to get to you—they were afraid, they thought you could stop it. I'm special, Jack, I can hear them both. The Dissonance and the Resonance are in my head. Pax wanted me to join her, I did it to save you ... bring you here so you could kill it. You've got to kill it, Jack! It'll eat the world!"

Tears ran down her eyes, Ghost, what had Pax done to her head?

"The only way for you to log off is to kill me, Jack. Pax thinks it's the only way to keep you here. You have to stab me in the side with the spear, you have to—oh. It's coming. We're going to die."

FastJack drew his hammer. It looked massive and ancient and deadly, with a simple twin-swirl of a rune engraved on the black iron head.

"Not if I have anything to say about it."

"FastJack ..." Perri was speaking, but the decker was a little busy keeping the skeletons from gutting them both. The hammer swung in a dead figure-of-eight pattern, crushing the systems IC. Jormungand was simply consuming them, and large chunks of the landscape as well. The whole system felt brittle, and the stink of it was everywhere. He hoped his repair program could handle the damage to his icon.

"The Egg ... you have to kill the Code Egg ..." Even as she said it, FastJack watched the wyrm consume the rest of the skeletons. It had grown huge. Jormungand encircled the dark plain, it's coils crushing the distant mountains and its massive head overshadowing the planets moving in the sky.

Jormungand came towards him. This would be it. The final battle. Either he destroyed the thing, or it would consume them both. FastJack squared himself up. The scratches from the skeleton had been taken care of, but whatever Jormungand was inflicted damage on the meat level. Even if he walked away from this one, there was no telling what he'd be walking away to. Two seconds.

He saw it then. Impossibly far away, a great black egg. Even if he made it there, Jormungand would consume Perri before he could destroy it. There was only one thing to do. One second.

Hurling the hammer felt like ripping every tendon in his body at the same time. With the math SPU, he calculated the angle to perfection, all he needed was the strength to hurl it fast and hard enough. It flew straight and true, like a bolt of lighting, up into the sky ... then back down at a killing speed to crush the code egg where it lay. Zero seconds.

FastJack stared up into Jormungand's maw. It couldn't cascade anymore, but that wasn't stopping it. One last effort, for both of them. They lunged for each other. FastJack dodged under the serpent and grabbed it. It rolled and twisted under him, but he gripped two of its venom-weeping spines and heaved upward. It might have seemed impossible to anyone who saw it, but this was the Matrix. Even in a UV host, the rules could be bent or broken by a skilled decker. FastJack was better than skilled. He was the best damn decker that ever lived.

Holding it above his head, FastJack slammed the serpent hard into the ground. He did it again, trying to whip its head against the earth harder, but it coiled away from him. It recovered and came down, that great mouth extended to swallow him whole. He didn't move as the serpent clamped its jaws around him, though the venom ate at his flesh. He planted his feet against the floor of its mouth and pushed. Slowly, the deathly jaws were pushed open. Jormungand writhed and tried harder to close its cavernous maw as the lanky, scarred frame of FastJack's icon brought it to full extension ... and beyond.

The jawbone dislocated with a wet crunch and a burst of static. FastJack fell to the ground in a pool of venom and his icon's blood as Jormungand roared, its mouth hanging open obscenely to reveal a whirlpool of pixels.

FastJack grinned evilly. He stretched out one grizzled arm, the folds of flesh spattered with oily bile. The hammer flew back to its master's hand, and his swollen finger joints closed over its haft. He realized he was talking to himself. "We're still in the Matrix. JackHammer is still in my Active Memory."

Hammer clutched in one hand, FastJack grabbed Jormungand with the other and hauled himself astride its back. Half-running and half-climbing as the beast bucked, he worked his way up to its skull. It tried to wipe him off, grinding him against the earth with its crushing weight, but eventually he came to the crown of its skull, and sat astride its neck.

There was nothing to say, right then. He drew a mental 'X' from the spines that served as its ears to its eyes, and he took the hammer and brought it down right where the imaginary lines crossed. There was a single, monstrous crack as its skull split, then the rush of air as FastJack fell off and the crash as Jormungand collapsed. Then blessed silence.

FastJack felt broken inside. The chill was creeping into his bones, or maybe it was the venom. He thought he saw Perri come down off the tree, heard her yelling at him. The one thing she never called him.

"Daddy."

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I remember when I was a kid, my mom would sometimes drag me to the museum. I spent so much time playing with computers, you see, that she was worried that I wasn't keeping a firm grip on reality or seeing enough of the world outside my room. The museum had some pretty good displays, but my favorite was always the giant dinosaur skeletons. It was a morbid fascination—they were dead, and yet eternal at the same time. I made a game out of finding new ways to sneak up and touch the bones without alerting security.

These days you can still go to the museum, but most folks don't bother. They can have it brought to them and experience it virtually. The people who do bother usually get to see the augmented reality display because the bones are so fragile now they might crumble to dust. I'm still trying to decide whether that's good or bad. You can't touch the bones, but they won't disappear, either.

So what is a legend supposed to do when the world changes around him? Most of my colleagues are dead—hell, Captain Chaos should've been writing this, but he went down with his ship during the second Crash. Someone's got to look out for the next generation, and it might as well be me because I'm the last dinosaur of my kind, and I'm better than some AR display.

The following is a history lesson for the reality impaired, because as I've learned over the years, my mom was right: there's more to life and the world than what you filter through your computer or commlink. Call this a last shout-out to Cap, the neo-@'s, and everyone else who's willing to learn something for the sake of knowledge, not just survival.

—FastJack

A HISTORY LESSON FOR THE REALITY IMPAIRED

THE RISE OF THE MEGACORPS

So how did we get in this mess, anyway? While many people experience life as an augmented-reality-enhanced shopping spree or as a neverending stream of hypnotizing entertainment experiences, the rest of us see things quite a bit differently—and they're not a cheery shade of rose. When your daily concern is scoring enough nuyen to eat and watching your back against your fellow shadow denizens, you know there's significant room for improvement with the world.

SERETECH & SHIAWASE

Imagine this: it's the late 1990s, and corporate entities are growing more powerful with each passing year. Increasingly unwilling to entrust the safety and security of their assets and personnel to public law-enforcement organizations, these entities gradually begin supplementing them with their own private security forces—forces that, far from stereotypical doughnut-eating "rent-a-cops," grow more and more to resemble paramilitary groups armed with the best equipment available.

1999 was the worst year ever. (It was also the year I was born. Mom joked for a few years that I was the herald of the End of Days. After that, better candidates came along.) Thanks to a three-month-long truckers' strike, no fresh food was coming into New York City. Food riots broke out, and the whole city was engulfed in violence. Unfortunately for us, it also engulfed a Seretech Med-Research truck hauling infectious waste. A running battle erupted between Seretech security personnel and the mobs—who were convinced the truck was carrying food—and ended up at one of the firm's medical research facilities. To make a long story short, it resulted in a bloodbath and kicked off city, state, and federal charges of criminal negligence aimed at Seretech.

Thank the Supreme Court for their decision. Seretech claimed that defending the truck from the mob ensured that its cargo didn't get out and create worse scenarios, and the Supreme Court agreed. They upheld the corp's right to maintain an armed force for protection of its personnel and property. Corps 1, World 0.

In late '00, things heated up when the radical eco-group TerraFirst! allegedly attacked a Shiawase Inc. nuclear power plant. Shiawase security forces repelled the attack, but used the incident as an excuse to advance their position that public law enforcement was insufficient to provide the kinds of protection it and other large corporations required. In the end, the Supreme Court in its supreme wisdom granted multinational corporations the same rights and privileges as foreign governments, establishing corporate extraterritoriality in what came to be known as "The Shiawase Decision." Later on, TerraFirst! got its hands on evidence proving that Shiawase and a few other corps had conspired to stage the attack, but this evidence was destroyed when a bomb wrecked the group's California office and killed several key members. Suspicions are strong that the bomb was planted by a shadowrunner—welcome to the Sixth World.

What does this mean for you? It means that you now know why getting caught stealing Ares R&D while on Ares property is one of the worst career moves you could ever make, but being able to skip off onto another corp's property while hanging onto Ares goods may mean living to steal another day.

RESOURCE RUSH

Meanwhile, the corps suddenly realized what sort of power lay in their hands and acted quickly to exploit the hell out of it. Not even a year after the Shiawase Decision, the United States government invoked "eminent domain" to bring property under its control, and then licensed its exploitation to corporate sponsors. Corporations were snapping up these opportunities left and right, and they didn't care whose toes they stepped on in the bargain. This usually meant looting Native American reservation lands of resources—a practice that the Amerindians, understandably, were less than pleased about.

LONE EAGLE INCIDENT

The more radical among the Native Americans formed the Sovereign American Indian Movement (SAIM) to fight the corporate takeovers. They didn't do much but talk until 2009, when United Oil Industries acquired the rights to the petrochemical resources in one-tenth of the remaining reservations. Having had enough, SAIM responded by capturing a missile silo at the U.S. Air Force's Shiloh Launch Facility in northwest Montana, then threatened to launch the missiles unless the U.S. government and the corps returned all the land taken from them.

Predictably, the government pretended to initiate talks, and then sent in the Delta Team anti-terrorist squad. The Deltas recaptured the silo, but not before someone "accidentally" launched a Lone Eagle ICBM toward the Russian Republic. Everyone thought for sure this was the beginning of the end, but amazingly the warheads never hit. To this day no one knows how that happened, though a million and one theories have been advanced and everyone (including me) has tried in vain to find out.

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When the public got wind of what happened, the "Lone Eagle incident" (as it was being called) became a propaganda tool against SAIM and all Native Americans. Adding insult to injury, the U.S. Congress passed the Re-Education and Relocation Act just months after it was introduced in late 2009. The act called for the confinement of anyone connected in any way to SAIM. At the same time, Canada's Parliament passed the Nepean Act, which legitimized internment camps for Native Americans. Both acts were thoroughly abused, with thousands of innocent Native Americans sent to "re-education centers" throughout 2010. Many of them never returned. It would be over a year before the survivors were freed.

UNITED OIL

Meanwhile, the original culprits were facing troubles in Texas. It seems that a gang of homeless, unemployed workers stormed the United Oil Industries headquarters, demanding that the "fascist corporations" be held accountable for the city of Dallas's financial and criminal problems. To meet this obviously formidable threat, the governor of Texas called in the Texas Ranger Assault Teams. After the smoke cleared, the state legislature passed laws giving corporate security forces carte blanche in dealing with armed intruders.

But Texas was not alone; other places around the world were passing similar laws. They created urban militia units armed with military weaponry and gave residents the right to contract private security firms to protect their communities with lethal force. Sound familiar? That's because this was the basis upon which Lone Star, the rent-a-cops we all love to hate, was formed. You can thank the Texans for that.

JAPANESE IMPERIAL STATE

But let's go back to 2005 and 2006 for a moment. Japan had just emerged from a recession as a major power. In 2005, South Korea (backed by Japanese corporate interests) declared war on North Korea. So what did North Korea do? In 2006, they launched missiles at Japan in a fruitless effort to get the Japanese to abandon their support. The missiles didn't detonate (funny how that happens), and North Korea was overrun by the end of the year. Feeling rather buff at this point, Japan renamed itself the Japanese Imperial State—clearly evoking pre-WWII glory days.

That's not all. The JIS followed this by deploying the first of a fleet of solar-powered collection satellites to beam microwave energy to receptors on the Earth's surface. This relatively cheap method of distributing power to isolated regions allowed Japan to instigate a virtual economic takeover of the Third World. After that, Japan re-emerged as a military power, and it would exercise that power later on the people of the Philippines and San Francisco. Hold that thought.

DEATH AND CHAOS

Things really got cooking in 2010–2018. We had a virtual alphabet soup going on: VITAS, UGE, NAN, and so forth. Between the epidemics and the resurgence of magic in the world, there were many who thought that the Apocalypse was on its way and that we ought to be kissing our collective backsides goodbye. It wasn't the end, but it sure was a whole lot of change—and it wasn't quiet.

VITAS

Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome (VITAS) first appeared in New Delhi, India, in 2010. It spread terrifyingly fast, striking down approximately 25 percent of the world's population. Among the areas worst hit were China, India, many African nations, some Third World cities, and outlying areas due to inadequate or nonexistent medical care and vaccines.

Still, no one was safe, and a lot of fear and paranoia followed in the epidemic's wake. In Mexico City, for example, the locals called it "Terror Time," and as the dead piled up in the streets, Citizens' Action Committees (otherwise known as organized mobs) burned whole sections of the city. It should come as no surprise, then, that in January 2011 the Mexican government dissolved, sending thousands of refugees across the border into Texas. This would have significant repercussions later on.

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THE AWAKENING

As a prelude of things to come, all around the world a percentage of children were suddenly born "deformed." Many people called these babies mutants; others called them elves and dwarfs, for that was exactly what they resembled. The scientists, however, called the phenomenon Unexplained Genetic Expression (UGE). Though we have better ideas these days about what may have triggered it (magic, of course), we're not much closer to an in-depth explanation than we were before. Now all you elves and dwarfs out there know where you came from. We're just as mystified as you are.

The real kicker happened December 24, 2011. What was previously known as the Year of Chaos became the Awakening as simultaneous events spectacularly ushered in the Mayans' Sixth World: the appearance of the great dragon Ryumyo over Mount Fuji, witnessed by hundreds of Japanese passengers on a bullet train, and the Native American prophet Daniel Howling Coyote leading his followers out of the Abilene Re-Education Center. Camp guards swore that no shot fired at Howling Coyote touched him; some sort of "glow" stopped them. Ignoring their captors, the Native Americans walked through the gates and out into the storm surrounding the camp, with no trace found the next morning to mark their passage.

Elsewhere, weather patterns were changing, as were geographic features—some to catastrophic effect. Australia experienced the first of many violent "mana storms," which swept through the Outback, killing hundreds. Western forests in Ireland began growing rapidly, and the long-forgotten slighe roads returned along with peat bogs and cairn lines. Stone circles and standing stones erupted along known ley lines in Britain. The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Denmark experienced a flood that left toxic sludge in its wake when the poisoned North Sea pushed into the mouth of the Elbe River, destroying many dikes and dams. Floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and more (un)natural disasters followed all over the world.

DUNKELZAHN EXPLAINS IT ALL

While many were preparing for a religious Apocalypse and others were simply learning how to deal with the enormous chaos and uncertainty, a certain dragon decided to take matters into his own talons. On January 27, 2012, the great dragon Dunkelzahn made his first appearance at Cherry Creek Lake in Denver. It was a media frenzy. Reporters fought for exclusives while the military tried to seal the area off. In the end, however, Dunkelzahn granted one Holly Brighton the exclusive interview that made history: twelve hours and sixteen minutes of questions about Dunkelzahn and the turmoil happening to us that was dubbed the Awakening. For whatever reason (some say to help us out), the great dragon explained it all in that marathon interview.

OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS AND ECOCATASTROPHES

2004 Dungeness meltdown :: *UK*
2005 New York leveled by quake :: *US/UCAS*
2009 Cattenom meltdown :: *France*
2011 Auvergne volcano erupts :: *France*
2011 Black Tide swamps most of Holland, Norway, Britain and parts of Germany :: *North Sea*
2017 Quake hits Tai-Hei mountains destroying Chinese nuclear stockpile :: *China*
2028 First of so-called Big One quakes hits Los Angeles :: *UCAS*
2039 Teeside chemical spill in London :: *UK*
2042 Zeta-ImpChem Polydopa neurotoxin scandal :: *Africa*
2051 Massive earthquake hits San Francisco :: *CalFree*
2053 Massive United Oil tanker spill in Boston Harbor :: *UCAS*
2061 Ring of Fire erupts devastating PacRim :: *Asia and North America*

In simple terms, magic had returned to the world with a vengeance. You can imagine how simultaneously scary, exhilarating, and disappointing that was for many people; it certainly blew my twelve-year-old mind. Scientists had a really difficult time coming to grips with magic, not knowing how to classify it (if they were even to accept its existence at all). Out of the blue, some people were now able to incinerate others with a thought (even if it knocked them on their keisters afterward). That could be scary for someone who didn't want the ability, scary for those who couldn't and didn't want to understand how it could happen, exhilarating for those who did want the ability, and disappointing for every loon who'd pretended to be a great magician and who was now revealed as a complete fraud.

NATION BUILDING

The death of the USA, and the birth of the North American crazy quilt we all know and love, began in 2014.

The Native American Nations formed in 2018 with the Treaty of Denver—a conciliatory gesture by the United States and Canadian governments following a protracted guerrilla war with Native American forces led by Daniel Howling Coyote (remember him?). The U.S.-Canadian forces tried to carry out the Resolution Act that would have exterminated all the Amerindian tribes for good, but needless to say the Natives were having none of that. The war culminated in the Great Ghost Dance, a massive magical ritual that Howling Coyote and his followers used to shake up the North American landscape by blowing the tops off several volcanoes (Redondo Peak in New Mexico, along with Mount Adams, Mount Hood, Mount Rainier, and Mount St. Helens in the Pacific Northwest), not to mention causing freaky weather and other disturbances at military bases and supply dumps connected with the Resolution Act.

The Treaty of Denver, among other things, recognized the sovereignty of the Native American Nations and ceded most of the western portion of North America to them, while allowing the United States to retain most of California and maintain Seattle as an extraterritorial extension. (Now you know why the Seattle metroplex is more or less a screwed-up frontier town.) The NAN, governed by a Sovereign Tribal Council, included: the Salish-Shidhe Council, the Sioux Nation, the Pueblo Corporate Council, the Ute Nation, the Algonkian-Manitou Council, the Athabaskan Council, the Trans-Polar Aleut Nation, and the Tsimshian Nation.

The Treaty of Denver also divided up that city between its original signatory members: Aztlan (more on them later), neighbor members of the new NAN (Sioux, Pueblo, and Ute), and the United States. Since no militaries were allowed for fear of annulling the treaty and bringing about a repeat of the Great Ghost Dance, Denver became a smuggler's dream.

Remember that part about the dissolution of the Mexican government? 2015 saw the birth of Aztlan, after Mexico's new president (and the lackey of ORO, the company that grew out of the South American drug cartels and that later reinvented itself as Aztechnology) renamed his country. He also exhorted all Hispanic peoples to "join in reclaiming our glorious cultural heritage." I think if anyone had told them that this reclamation would include a forceful return to the bloodiest days of Aztec history, many people would've laughed ... but they wouldn't be laughing now.

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METAMORPHOSES

Yet more changes came down the pike between 2018 and 2029: simsense, Goblinization, cyberlimbs, Lone Star, and the first cyberterminals, to name a few. We had an explosion of tech, more metahumanity to contend with, and a policlub that couldn't (contend, that is). It sure was a bumpy ride, but for me it literally opened up new worlds.

TECHSPLOSION

While others were hashing out the Treaty of Denver, Dr. Hosato Hikita was working for ESP Systems, Inc., in Chicago. And what was the good doctor doing? Why, creating the first generation of Artificial Sensory Induction System Technology (ASIST)—otherwise known as simsense—of course. This is the stuff that later got everyone's minds hooked in to the consensual reality of the Matrix and addicted to Neil the Ork Barbarian simflicks. (Worse stuff like BTLs are out there, I know. But those simflicks are some of the most cheeseball things to ever hit the Sixth World, especially now that they've incorporated Or'zet curses. Don't get me started.) Simsense units, which could play rudimentary sense impressions, would first hit the market in the twenties.

Then in 2019, British braintrust corporation Transys Neuronet successfully attached the first completely cybernetic replacement limb to a human being. The human in question happened to be the virtuosa violinist Leonora Bartoli, who'd lost her left hand in a freak accident while disembarking from a bullet train. Coincidentally, Transys was experimenting with a prosthetic that could link directly into the user's nervous system, allowing for far greater sensitivity and control. This was a win-win situation for both parties, and a cybernetic revolution for us.

GOBLINIZATION

For a while, we thought we'd have a breather from all the turmoil we'd witnessed. Turns out it was the calm before yet another storm. April 30, 2021, saw one in ten adults metamorphose into huge and terrifying shapes that we now call orks and trolls. You can imagine what that was like: if UGE was scary, only producing those cute dwarf and elf babies, then Goblinization was like something out of everyone's nightmares. Many governments overreacted, either thinking that it was a contagion or simply acting from fear and hate: metahumans and their families were sometimes rounded up into the camps that had once held Native Americans, or (in the case of the Japanese) sent off to a hellish island in the Philippines called Yomi. As you might expect based on similar imprisonments in the past, humane treatment of inmates was not a priority.

This brouhaha didn't really calm down until the next wave of VITAS struck in 2022. When it hit human and metahuman alike, most authorities finally realized that this Goblinization was likely not a real contagion but something more akin to UGE. Still, VITAS killed another 10 percent of the world's population before it was all over—no one was safe. In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court granted metahumans equal protection under the law. Not that it made a difference to the scum who founded the Humanis Policlub—an organization that's still going strong—the same year ...

LONE STAR

Remember that mess in Texas with United Oil, and its ties to the founding of Lone Star? In the late teens, Lone Star Security Services appeared in Corpus Christi as a private law enforcement agency. Corpus Christi, Texas, became the first city to contract full-service, citywide law enforcement to a private agency. That same year, the Seattle Metroplex was officially founded; the governor was then-Mayor Charles C. Lindstrom.

Where this comes together for you Seattleites is: the Seattle Police Department went on strike in 2025. Bad move for them, because the governor declared the strike illegal, fired them all, and then hired Lone Star to do the policing. They've spread like cockroaches across North America ever since.

TECH, REDUX

The remote-vote system went into effect for the 2024 Presidential election. Though then-President Jarman won a landslide re-election, his opponents called "fraud." No one paid attention; everybody just wanted a bit of peace and quiet, thank you—yours truly counted among them.

The biggest technological leap, however, came between 2026 and 2029. Sony Cybersystems, Fuchi Industrial Electronics, and RCA-Unisys all came up with prototype cyberterminals, meant to interface with the worldwide data network via the central nervous system. That's right, kiddies—first generation neuron hook-up to the information grids. These things were huge, needing isolation tanks, multi-contact-point jacks, multiple hook-ups for the operator, and so on. Only the military and corporate intelligence super-hackers got to play with these, and the first ones to use them went crazy; their brains couldn't handle it. But millions of dollars, lots of training, and a few years of refinement eventually made it safe enough that the CIA, NSA, and IRS decided to pool their resources and create a "cybercommando" hacker team codenamed Echo Mirage. Anyone with brains could see what sort of uses this team would be put to. Thankfully, they never got a chance ... but the trade-off wasn't a bargain by any means.

THE CRASH OF '29

On February 8, 2029, the nastiest computer virus ever hit computer systems around the world. They toppled and crashed, the virus wiping out data and sometimes even burning out the hardware. Since many governments, services, and corporations depended heavily on the worldwide network grids for data access, storage, connectivity, and more, the vast majority of them were on the verge of collapse—a veritable infopocalypse.

ECHO MIRAGE

Given a presidential order to combat the Crash Virus, Echo Mirage swung into action. Unfortunately, most of the team members were unsuited to combat the virus, being too linear-thinking and inflexible to fight back effectively, and it showed in psychological casualties. The powers that be had to recruit new blood.

The new team, spearheaded by Major David Gavilan (USAF), was composed of thirty-two men and women from various backgrounds who shared at least one trait in common: an ability to think outside of the box. Mavericks, data-miners, hackers, they were each brilliant in one way or another, and they were some of the best we had to offer. In August of 2029, they waded in, ready to carve up some code. Still, eighteen minutes after they engaged the virus in cybercombat, four of them were dead from lethal biofeedback. Though Echo Mirage easily handled everything else they encountered, the virus proved difficult to eradicate, continuing to kill many team members.

On the other side of the virtual wall, the logs were continually analyzed to see how to improve the programs and hardware used in the fight. In the course of this study, we all got to see how the virus generat-

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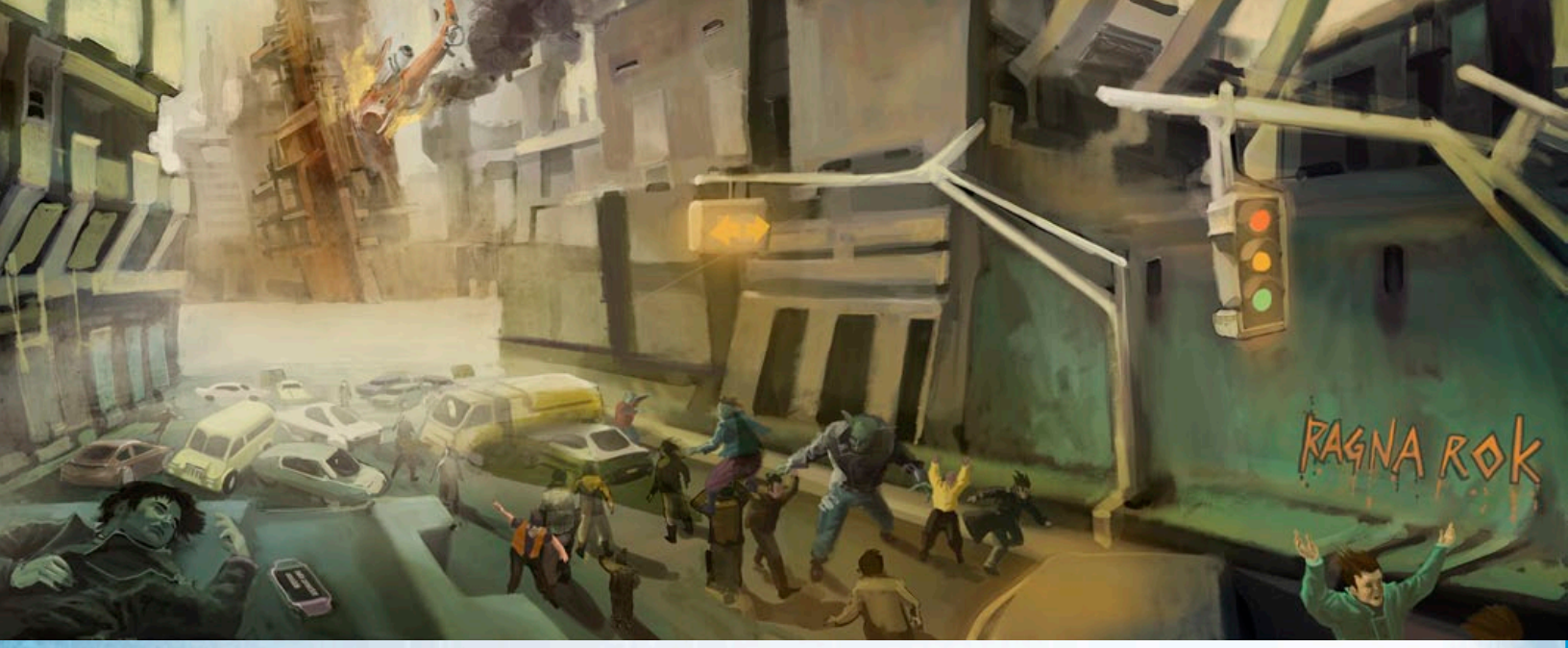

ed the deadly biofeedback as well as how the members of Echo Mirage were able to slip in and out of any targeted system (which alarmed many who'd previously thought their systems safe from intrusion). I can't tell you how much of that knowledge was used after the Crash Virus was wiped out—you've seen some of it yourselves in the form of Black IC. But I can tell you that, thanks to that knowledge, much of the hardware was reduced to desk size and no longer required sensory deprivation tanks. By late 2031, Echo Mirage managed to wipe out the last of the known vestiges of the virus.

Most of the surviving members of Echo Mirage disappeared afterward into the private sector, taking their knowledge and experience with them. Only a few known team members ever resurfaced; nobody knows where the rest are today. I know that some think I might have been a part of all that—I only wish I had been, because they were among the finest people I have ever known.

OTHER GEOPOLITICAL EVENTS

2004–05 Israeli-Libyan conflict.
2005 Second Korean War and Unification.
2018 China falls to civil war.
2018 Sovereign Tribal Council formed following Denver Treaty.
2021 Central African nations disintegrate in tribal warfare.
2022 Caribbean League forms.
2027 Final fragmentation of the People's Republic of China. :: *China*
2030 Indian/Pakistani nuclear exchange devastates Kashmir. :: *India*
2030 Yakut declares independence from Russia. :: *Russia*
2033 Alliance for Allah forms following failed Damascus Conference.
2034 Aztlan resigns from Sovereign Tribal Council. :: *North America*
2036 System Identification Number standard established. :: *UCAS*
2037 Sixth Republic declared in France following military coup d'état.
2030 Yucatan insurgency against Aztlan begins.
2040 Southern Africa unites into Azanian Alliance.
2045 German Alliance founded.
2062 New European Economic Community formed by states and megacorporations.
2055 Arabian Peninsula unified under new Caliphate of Arabia. :: *Middle East*
2062 Child Emperor Yasuhito crowned. :: *Japan*
2064 Yucatan truce signed, Yucatan becomes autonomous. :: *Aztlan*

DIVIDED WE STAND, UNITED WE FALL

Many governments had destabilized thanks to the Crash, and they put themselves to rights in its wake with varying degrees of complexity and violence. Among those most affected were the Americas, Russia, and Europe.

NORTH AMERICA

Already divided by the Treaty of Denver, North America wasn't through balkanizing yet.

UCAS

On October 15, 2030, the remnants of the United States and Canada decided to merge into one country: the United Canadian and American States. Both countries had been kicked around hard enough economically that the notion simply made sense; we could each bolster the other while cutting down on the usual red tape and diplomacy snafus.

CALIFORNIA

California, one of a few opponents of this measure, was the only place that held hearing after hearing on the matter, going so far as to hold a referendum on seceding from the UCAS. Check that: many referenda. As it turned out, the new UCAS government was getting a bit tired of the whole mess and didn't want to have to deal with those crazy Californians anyway, so it simply gave the state the boot in 2036.

CAS

California's secession fever caught on in the South, particularly with those who, even after all these years, were still smarting from the Civil War. In 2033, while the UCAS merger was still young and ongoing, legislators from the southern states staged a walkout. They met later to discuss secession among themselves, a discussion that ended up as a no-go. It evidently remained an option to them, because that's exactly what happened the following year when they broke away as a protest against what they saw as preferential treatment for northern sprawls. Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia seceded from the UCAS, forming the Confederation of American States (CAS). Though Florida had been part of the original secession talks, the state instead decided to join the new Caribbean League.

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EURO WARS

Russia experienced more than a few disruptions, beginning in 2030. In the Siberian wilderness, Awakened forces rose up and seized control, dominating the Western Siberian Lowland and several other areas west. Seemingly inspired by this turn of events, Belarus and the Ukraine attempted to secede the next year, taking advantage of Russia's lack of communications and surveillance capabilities due to the Crash.

By this time, Russia was desperate for resources. They needed to retain control somewhere, and so they rolled in the troops to take care of the rebellious Belarusians and Ukrainians. Unfortunately, this mired them deep into a war that lasted for twelve years.

NIGHTWRAITH INCIDENT

Something happened January 23, 2033, that nipped the worst of the Euro Wars in the bud. That night, Swedish airspace monitors picked up several flights of what appeared to be British Aerospace Nightwraith fighter-bombers moving rapidly across northern Europe. Before anyone could move, they took out key communications and command centers on all sides of the conflict. In addition, unknown assassins killed over a dozen key commanders.

The next day, all combatants announced a cease-fire. Despite the circumstances, the Brits denied any responsibility for the attack. Additionally, every government that plausibly could have done it has publicly denied it. We have theories a-plenty, but no proof, so the real perps remain a mystery still.

THE SECOND OTTOMAN JIHAD

The fighting of the first Euro War had yet to die down when Europe was set upon by a new threat. A call for Jihad against the "Western oppressors" galvanized several Islamic nations under the banner of the fundamentalist Alliance for Allah. They marched on those they blamed for fomenting instability and sucking the oil-rich region dry during the Resource Rush.

Turned back by Israeli nuclear and magical defenses, the Alliance's Jihad set its sights on Russia and Europe. After three years of brutal fighting where the Jihad's vast numbers almost overran Europe and Russia's technological advantage, the war peaked with the assassination of the Alliance's leader during a visit to Istanbul. The internal bickering that followed gave the Euro forces the upper hand and led to the liberation of Jihad-occupied territories. The bitter bloodshed, ethnic and religious culling, and the vengeful retaliations that followed would scar Eastern Europe and Central Asia for decades to come.

AWAKENED NATIONS

While many nations were falling apart, a few new ones were coming together. The nation of Yakut that formed in Siberia (helping to kick off the Euro Wars) was just the beginning.

AMAZONIA

The Awakened had their day yet again in 2034, when three great dragons led other Awakened beings and metahumans into the Amazon basin. There they clashed with Brazilian forces in a short and brutal conflict. Brazil ceded most of the basin to the Awakened forces, which then proclaimed the new land Amazonia. Two days later, Amazonia turned around and claimed most of Brazil. They've been relatively quiet for self-proclaimed eco-saviors, but apparently there've been some policy changes in recent years.

ELVEN NATIONS

Back in 2029, a bunch of elves from the Salish-Shidhe territory decided to move to the Mount Rainier area, where they then declared themselves a separate tribe called the Sinsearach. Most people just shrugged at this; no one really cared except for a few who perhaps gratefully washed their hands of the elf tribe.

On the other side of the world, on Christmas Day in 2034, Seamus O'Kennedy proudly announced the transformation of Ireland into Tír na nÓg with all the gosh and blarney he could muster.

With such a wondrous example to follow, in 2035 the Sinsearach elves seceded from the NAN and announced the formation of the Land of Promise: Tír Tairngire. The Salish-Shidhe did not like this, and expressed their displeasure with troops sent to invade.

After Tír Tairngire forces sent the Salish-Shidhe packing, the leaders sat down to create their quasi-feudalistic society. They started with a Council of Princes, naming Lugh Surehand as High Prince and reluctantly including the great dragon Lofwyr (whom we'll talk about further a little later in this file). Once all was to their liking, they all but closed their borders (being highly biased toward elves and against the rest of us dirty metahumans) and called it good.

THE LAST WAVE

With so many defections and secessions happening, it's a wonder that the North American region didn't become a collection of house-sized kingdoms. Among the last to secede were the Tsimshian nation and California.

Tsimshian's defection from the NAN was the last straw for Howling Coyote. After spending years attempting to guide the NAN through the Sovereign Tribal Council, he resigned in disgust at what it had become and hasn't been heard from since.

California levied the last of its secession threats in 2036, because then-President McAlister forced them to make good on them by kicking California out of the UCAS. As soon as all UCAS forces left, Tír Tairngire rolled in. They mounted a surprise attack in Northern California with infantry and air support supplemented with paranimals, combat mages, and allegedly two dragons, advancing as far as south of Redding. There they stopped, set up camp, and demanded that all non-elves leave the area in thirty days.

The response was, predictably, "To hell with you." Guerilla resisters banded together and managed to push the Tir forces back to Yreka. The area between Yreka and Redding became a DMZ. But at the same time as the Tir's assault, Aztlan rose up and took another bite out of the newly independent state, striking north and capturing San Diego. Foreseeing a future that included more of this, California's governor made the worst possible move and appealed to Japan for help.

Help arrived in the form of Imperial Japanese Marines, who took the kind invitation and grabbed up San Francisco in the name of "protecting Japanese lives and corporate assets." This would have worse repercussions later. Meanwhile, California was now CalFree, baby, and a little bewildered at its state.

HATE AND BROTHERHOOD

Humanity being the readily accepting race it is, it should come as no surprise that it would eventually clash with metahumanity in its backward way of welcoming elves, orks, dwarfs, and trolls to this corner of the universe. Meanwhile, anyone caught in the middle, having an existential crisis, or just looking for somewhere to belong found a creepy helping hand from an organization calling itself the Universal

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Brotherhood. I say "creepy" because really, do you expect a warm embrace from bug spirits? Possession, sure, but no one knew exactly what was going on with the UB until it was nearly too late, and Chicago paid the price.

META-HATE

While not every member of the Humanis Policlub is a raving lunatic, in the larger scheme of hatred against other members of metahumanity they are still near the top of the charts. However, the biggest boys on the hate block are still Alamos 20,000. They made their debut in 2036, napalm-firebombing a town in Ohio and killing twenty people in the process.

The same year saw the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the UCAS Constitution, which established the System Identification Number (SIN) and required the registration of every UCAS citizen. Anyone without a SIN was designated a "probationary citizen" and given very limited rights—yep, that means every SINless runner falls into this category. It also sometimes meant that intelligent beings fell through the cracks of society, as species other than homo sapiens were eligible for probationary citizenship, but could only get full citizenship through an act of Congress. Thank goodness for Dunkelzahn, who got the nod when he ran for UCAS President. Who says no to a dragon? That opened the floodgates for others.

ACTS OF RAGE

Not surprisingly, hate crimes against metahumans escalated for several years. It all came to a head on February 7, 2039, otherwise known as the Night of Rage. As if there had been some worldwide conspiracy (and there may have been), riots sprang up around the world and targeted metahumans, along with their friends, families, and wannabes. Hundreds to thousands died; many were rounded up for their own "safety" and detained under armed guard.

In Seattle, Hand of Five terrorists attacked the warehouses and docks to which the metahumans had been led. Many places were set on fire, people panicked, and the Metroplex Guard did nothing. From the tragedy of that night the Ork Underground was born. Those who clearly remember that night at best harbor a bitter resentment against anyone displaying an ounce of bigotry, and at worst simply hate all humans.

OTHER ECONOMIC EVENTS

2005 East Coast Stock Exchange moves to Boston.
2012 Inter-Corporate Council formed.
2020 The World Bank is replaced by Global Financial Services.
2033 Global Financial Services becomes the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank.
2036 Fuchi Industrial Electronics markets the CDT-1000 desktop cyberdeck.
2037 Lofwyr acquires majority stake in Saeder-Krupp.
2042 Corporate Court expands to 8 members with the inclusion of Yamatetsu.
2042 CC introduces Business Recognition Accords.
2058–59 Corporate War.
2060 Fuchi Industrial Electronics implodes.
2060 Corporate Court expands to 10 members with Wuxing and CatCo.
2065 Collapse of Cross Applied Technologies.
2065 Horizon Group joins the Corporate Court
2070 AI Pulsar announces his existence to the world with the aid of Horizon.

Three days later, Alamos 20,000 reared its ugly head again, this time blowing the supports of the Sears Tower in Chicago. The resulting destruction took out or significantly damaged many buildings around several city blocks. No one wanted to rebuild there, so it became known as Shattergraves, an underground haven plagued by ghosts and hungry ghouls.

Boston had Bloody Thursday during the St. Patrick's Day March. Knights of the Red Branch, bigots disgruntled at being ousted from their former homes in Tír na nÓg, set off a bomb in a well-populated elven restaurant along the parade route. It killed twenty-four people, injured dozens more, and set off race riots all over Boston that killed and injured hundreds more. There's still a lot of anger and resentment there about it.

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

What appeared to be a humanitarian organization that preached acceptance and love first opened up shop in California in 2042, followed by a branch in Seattle in 2045. Other branches opened elsewhere, such as Denver and Chicago, though mysteriously (at the time) they were barred from Awakened nations like Tír na nÓg. Most of these branches offered counseling, and some included soup kitchens and free medical clinics, which were seemingly godsends for those who couldn't afford proper care.

Nearly a decade later, however, we all found out just what the UB was harboring: insect spirits. In 2055, the UCAS FBI found out that the bugs were using the Seattle UB as a front to recruit hosts and summon more bug spirits. Quicker than you could say "Queen Euphoria," they started shutting down every UB branch across North America. Other organizations may have been alerted, because it was closed down worldwide by 2056. All cited financial corruption, unmotivated terrorist violence, and other related offenses to conceal the truth from the public. Sad to say that we found out regardless, thanks to the debacle in Chicago.

CERMAK BLAST

Ares investigative teams had discovered that Chicago held one of the largest hives in North America. A small army of Knight Errant Security personnel was sent in to deal with it, but they botched it up badly, sending bug spirits flooding throughout the city. Adding insult to injury, the city was walled off, trapping citizens inside. An Ares force also trapped inside put the final nail in Chicago's coffin: whether deliberately or accidentally, they set off a subtactical nuke, which, by luck or providence, was mysteriously contained. While the Cermak Blast may have killed some of the insect spirits, others still swarmed the city and terrorized everyone—self-proclaimed warlords and civilians alike—remaining within the doomed metroplex. Even though Ares and the UCAS government later cleaned the city out (well, mostly ...), the astral space there is still contaminated.

THE CORPORATE SHUFFLE

While the corporate landscape always has been and likely always will be in some state of flux, the megacorporations as we know them in 2070 have all been fairly recognizable since at least the forties. It was during this time that they began solidifying their respective corporate identities into some of the monolithic giants under whose shadows we've lived since 2033. Each of these following "AAA-rated" corps is part of the corporate cabal that runs the whole show, otherwise known as the Corporate Court.

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ARES

It starts with Damien Knight. No one had heard of him before, but they sure did after the Nanosecond Buyout in 2033. With this programming feat masterminded from Stockholm, Sweden, he managed to buy 22 percent of Ares Industries and make himself CEO Leonard Aurelius's rival for control of the corp. Some say that he did it with the great dragon Dunkelzahn's help, and some say that Knight used to be Echo Mirage's ex-team leader David Gavilan, gone underground and reborn. Whatever the truth of the matter, no one can say that Damien Knight is not a savvy corporate shark, because he's been swimming ever since.

FUCHI

The next year, Matrix Systems of Boston came out with the first gray-market cyberterminal (Portal). The founders, Ken Roper and Michael Eld, were among the Echo Mirage survivors who had put their knowledge to use developing a portable version of the equipment they'd used to fight the Crash Virus. They didn't live long enough to enjoy the rewards of their labors, however; both died in mysterious accidents. This left a corporate raider named Richard Villiers, who had bought 49 percent of their company, with total ownership. He brought all relevant information on the Portals as well as several models to a company named Fuchi Industrial Electronics and demanded one-third ownership in exchange for this new technology. Korin Yamana and Shikei Nakatomi, the other owners, reluctantly acquiesced and thus began Fuchi's meteoric rise in the cyberdeck market. Thing is, it also kicked off years of infighting within the corp, so the seeds of its own destruction were also sown.

SAEDER-KRUPP

Once upon a time, there was a company named BMW that was the backbone of the Saeder-Krupp empire. A very smart lady named Wilhelmina Graff-Beloit owned it, having wrested it from the man who created it: her own husband. In 2037, in a move that may have coined the phrase "Never deal with a dragon," the great dragon Lofwyr announced that, through various avenues, he owned a 63-percent share of the company's stock and was thus taking over as president. He gave Mina the boot (after which she went up the well to the Zurich-Orbital Habitat in 2050 and spent her time stewing over it until she died), got rid of the current board, and completely overhauled the management. Through some very astute maneuvering, Lofwyr made Saeder-Krupp an even larger corporate empire, shooting it straight up into the AAA league. The dragon has lived quite happily ever after.

YAMATETSU

Ever the upstart and revolutionary (probably another reason they eventually renamed themselves "Evo"), Yamatetsu Corporation sprang on the scene in 2041 to everyone's dismay. These punks were determined to get themselves a seat on the Corporate Court and weren't taking any negative answers—how dare they? At least that's what other corps kept saying until Yamatetsu managed it in 2042, hauling themselves up to AAA status and thumbing their noses at the naysayers. They've continually had to oust the deadwood, those who would hold the company back, but otherwise have consistently attempted to remain at the forefront of technology, recently delving into many transhumanist endeavors as Evo.

RENRAKU

Originally Keruba International, Renraku changed its name after the Crash of '29 when a corporate hotshot named Inazo Aneki bought it and completely restructured it. The company became a key player in rebuilding the information network after the Crash, and made wagonloads of money. But it overreached when it began dabbling in the creation of semi-autonomous knowbots (SKs) in 2049. Although this research launched Renraku further ahead of the tech curve and increased its market share, it also laid the groundwork for the insane AI, Deus, and its part in the second Crash.

AZTECHNOLOGY

Aztechnology made an extremely poor judgement call when it ordered Aztlan to nationalize all foreign-owned businesses in 2044. This act of economic war prompted the Corporate Court to mandate the very first "Omega Order"—essentially a green light for every other corp to go after the offender with extreme prejudice. It took a few years for the megacorps to respond to this, but they did so in style: in 2048, backed by the Corporate Court, the joint Operation Reciprocity struck Aztechnology's Ensenada facilities. AZT couldn't run to the bargaining table fast enough, and the resulting Veracruz Settlement forced the megacorp to pay direct compensation to all affected companies. Somehow in the negotiation process, the megacorp managed to arrange things so that other megas could only establish local subsidiaries in Aztlan, and the major shareholders of those subsidiaries had to be Aztlan citizens or majority-owned Aztlan corps. Devious, no? It simply goes to show just how bloodthirsty they really are ... pun intended.

WILL TO POWER

The period between 2050 and 2060 shook up the status quo for everyone, and that can all be laid at the very large talons of the great dragon Dunkelzahn. In life and in death, the dragon constantly questioned, instigated, and proved to be a very talkative lizard; maybe too much so, because he certainly made very powerful people pretty nervous. He was the primary motivating force behind many political, economic, and social movements for at least a decade, and maybe beyond.

PRESIDENT DUNKELZAHN

Before 2057, if you'd asked your typical SINless sprawl resident what he thought of dragons, much less Dunkelzahn, you'd have been greeted with blank stares or shrugs. No one really cared because the wizworms didn't touch their lives in any way, shape, or form. But then it came to light that the 2056 UCAS election had been rigged, and President Steele and Vice President Booth were impeached. President pro tem Betty Jo Pritchard (incidentally our first female President) called for a new election, and Dunkelzahn announced his intention to run. All of a sudden, the question of eligibility came to light, meaning that he'd need a SIN in order to run—and the act of granting the dragon his SIN injected a bit more light and hope into some people's lives.

Eight months later, the great dragon Dunkelzahn became the first non-human President of the UCAS. Before he could do anything more than celebrate, however, the wyrm was assassinated outside his inaugural ball at the Watergate Hotel, leaving a large and visible astral rift. Though there were many with plenty of motives to eliminate him, even the Scott Commission could not find a satisfying scapegoat on whom to pin the blame. The dragon's running mate, Kyle Haeffner, became President; his interpreter, Nadja Daviar, was nominated and became Vice President.

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OTHER MYSTICAL EVENTS

2011 Power sites and mana lines Awaken. :: *global*
2011 Maya Cloud seals off Tibet. :: *China/Tibet*
2011 Mana storms begin to wrack Australia. :: *Australia*
2015 Haparanda Anomaly Zone forms. :: *Scandinavian Union*
2020 Great dragon Aden demolishes Tehran. :: *Iran*
2023 Brittany shrouded by mystic phenomenon known as the Mist. :: *France*
2042 Dunkelzahn begins semi-annual "Wyrm Talk." :: *UCAS*
2058 The Chicago quarantine is officially lifted. :: *UCAS*
2061 Sudden Unexplained Recessive Genetic Expression heralds appearance of changelings. :: *global*
2061 First Shedim sightings. :: *UCAS*
2061 Lyoness emerges. :: *UK*
2063 Ganges manaline flares leading to new SURGE incidents. :: *Indian Union*
2069 The Deep Laguna manifests under LA. :: *Pueblo Corporate Council*

DUNKELZAHN'S WILL

The biggest shocker, however, came when the new Vice President not only also became the Chairman of the new Draco Foundation, but also had a will from President Dunkelzahn to read. This will seemingly contained the vast majority of the dragon's hoard, which ranged from money paid out to lowly accountants, orichalcum in sock drawers, and stocks in various (mega)corps, to advice, warnings, and calls for help to various and sundry persons known and unknown. It created organizations, asked for rescues, and put monetary support behind a myriad of projects and ventures for which we have yet to understand the reasons. Artifacts and other objects were also given, both to metahuman acquaintances and fellow dragons. In other words, this will created a largesse of business opportunities for shadowrunner and law-abiding citizen alike.

MEGA SHUFFLE

No one except perhaps Dunkelzahn and a few others realized the repercussions this would have in the corporate world over the next four years or so. In between all of the bequests of music or money were entries entitling people such as Miles Lanier (the right-hand man of Fuchi co-owner Richard Villiers) or Nadja Daviar (the dragon's spokesperson) to all or a portion of the dragon's stock in this or that company.

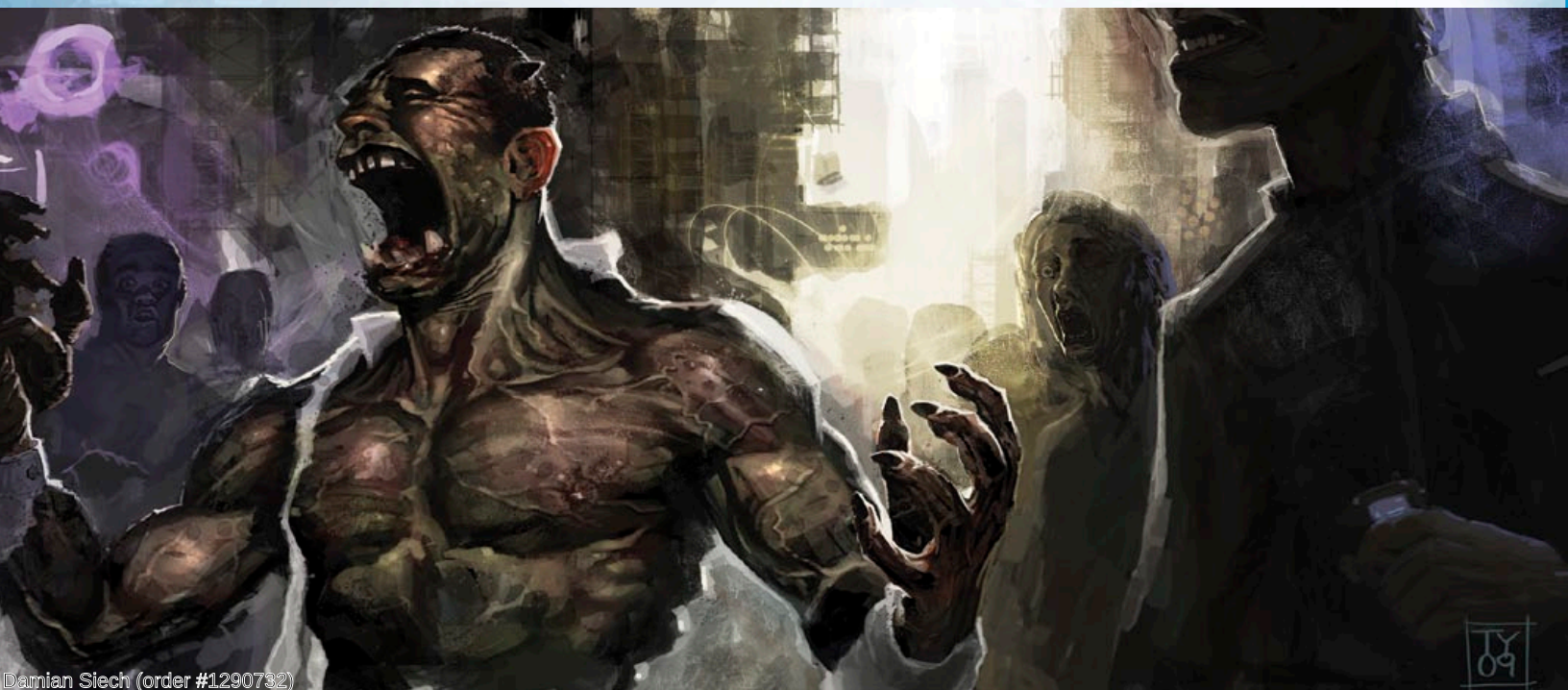
This sparked quite a bit of corporate maneuvering, which in the end led to the end of Fuchi and the creation of Novatech. Renraku took a severe hit when their pet creative genius (an eccentric elf who claimed to be Leonardo Da Vinci) vanished mysteriously along with all of his work—the untimely disappearance made it difficult for Renraku to justify their recent market advantage when Fuchi accused their former chief of security, Miles Lanier, of sharing proprietary data after Dunkelzahn bequeathed him a seat on Renraku's board of directors. Damien Knight got taken down a peg or two when Nadja Daviar was given Gavilan Ventures, which controlled a large enough percentage of Ares stocks to ensure that he needed her help to maintain his level of power. Damien Knight's long-time rival Leonard Aurelius sold his shares of Ares stock to prominent eco-lawyer Arthur Vogel—an attempt to implant a corporate conscience into Ares that has largely failed. Aurelius moved on to join forces with Lucien Cross—another of Knight's bitter enemies, reportedly also involved in the Nanosecond Buyout—joining Cross Applied Technologies' board of directors and thereby continuing to polarize the conflict between Ares and CATco (which had become a AAA megacorp in 2053). Newcomer AAA Wuxing received several bequests of artifacts—including a statue and a coin—that pointed to quite an investment of magical power which has steadily manifested and grown from then on.

YEAR OF THE COMET

Though Halley's Comet was only around for approximately a year, it too brought forth a raft of changes to our world. Some called it a second Awakening due to the mainly magical upheavals that followed in its wake. Between SURGE, comet cults, natural orichalcum, and other strangeness, it certainly seems to be ... but none of it really stuck around. What did, however, were the political and economic changes, as well as a new great dragon to contend with. Even the probe race, designed to see who could land an effective probe on the comet and bring back samples and other data, eventually got swallowed up in the fever.

STORMS

Beginning in August of 2061, places all over the world experienced natural and magical storms of varying strength. First, typhoons battered the Philippines, the first storms in a long string of disasters that



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helped prepare the way for the island nation's eventual liberation from Imperial Japan. Mana storms swept a few nations around the world. Then, in October of the same year, the Ring of Fire erupted, afflicting Japan with volcanic eruptions and tidal waves. The Bay Area suffered earthquakes, the Philippines were hit with volcanic eruptions and an earthquake, and many other locations around the Pacific Rim were beset by smaller disasters that nevertheless disturbed or destroyed lives. In December, another earthquake hit—this time in Los Angeles, demolishing the carefully built walls that kept the rabble out and setting people free to riot and loot in the previously shielded city.

SHAKEUP IN JAPAN

Once the Ring of Fire's fury was spent in Imperial Japan, its people began the task of cleaning up. One problem: the Emperor and all of his family had been killed, except for one young man. This meant a new Emperor and a new era for Japan.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Diet ordered the withdrawal of troops from foreign soil in order to help rebuild Japan. One general refused to comply—with San Francisco and the Central Valley under his control, General Saito quickly became not only a worrisome irritant to the Diet and the Emperor, but a royal pain to the people of CalFree. No one expected this; especially not the metahumans, whom Saito wasted no time in oppressing.Ares Macrotechnology, feeling Silicon Valley was threatened, moved in troops to defend it and ended up being instrumental (along with Mothers of Metahumans and various pirates and shadowrunners) in eventually liberating the area in the late 2060s.

Once the new Emperor rescinded the Yomi Island decree in February of 2062, rebel forces (called the Huk) in the Philippines made their move to liberate their nation from Japanese control. After decades of foreign occupation, many Filipinos felt that it was beyond time to take back control of their own destiny, and did so with the backing of the great dragon Masaru.

GHOSTWALKER

We should have known something was going to happen as early as September of 2061, because that's when Dunkelzahn's Rift began fluctuating and acting more strangely than anyone was used to seeing. We think that's also when powerful shedim ("the dead," various ancestor spirits called them) had begun breaking through the Rift to plague us. One of these may in fact have reanimated Ibn Eisa, leader of the Islamic Unity Movement and one of the most influential men in the Middle East and Muslim world, shortly after his assassination (the imposter wasn't unmasked until 2064, but by then the damage to the Islamic world had been done).

It wasn't until Christmas Eve (December 24) of 2061 that the astral form of a previously unknown great dragon—dubbed Ghostwalker by the media—broke through the Rift. It's been said that he flew directly to Denver, picked up his physical body somewhere along the way, and then began a rampage that ended up with Aztlan kicked out and the CAS inheriting that sector.

It was a tense couple of days, with people thinking that the Treaty of Denver might be nullified, and we'd have war between the NAN, the UCAS, and the CAS. Ghostwalker sorted things out in a meeting, reshuffling Denver's organization, making himself the prime authority of the region, and giving essential daily management powers to the Council that had previously handled everything with varying degrees of competency. The new Treaty of Denver also called for the creation of the Zone Defense Force (or Zonies, as the t-bird jammers and smugglers call them) from military personnel from all sectors. This granted Denver the ability to defend itself in case of attack without requiring any sector to raise its own armies (a violation of the treaty).

DRACONIAN MANEUVERS

Though the public at large wasn't terribly aware that this was going on, anyone clued in to the power behind the scenes of the world knew that something was not quite right between the great dragons. Many of them had appeared in the skies over Dunkelzahn's Rift in the FDC as some sort of tribute, but that didn't mean that they were entirely happy with the late President's decision to distribute his wealth via a metahuman invention rather than according to dragon convention. (That much some of us picked up. Chatty bunch, dragons, when they choose to be.) This meant a reckoning on their terms, of course, and Ghostwalker's appearance on the scene meant it was about to arrive.

A NEW DRAGON IN TOWN

Something many had noted about Ghostwalker was his almost uncanny resemblance, at least in draconic form, to the late Dunkelzahn. The resemblance was strong enough that some theorized that he was Dunkelzahn returned, or perhaps a sibling. Either way, Ghostwalker hadn't seemed to like what had been done with Dunkelzahn's will, the items within, and what it boded for dragons. He clearly wanted a reckoning. What that really means for the rest of us is anyone's guess, but I can tell you a few things: the dust has settled, and the world is still here; Hestaby is now a Prince in Tír Tairngire instead of Lofwyr; the other wyrms now seem as satisfied as they're ever going to be; Lofwyr retained as much power if not more than he previously had; and many shadowrunners were employed in very lucrative endeavors.

SLASH AND BURN

Smarting from being kicked out of Denver, Aztlan wasted no time in attempting to prove itself elsewhere. Ever since the 2050s or so, when the Campeche district of Aztlan rose up in rebellion, the bloody-minded country had been aching to retake control of the Yucatan and assert its authority. With plenty of recalled troops at hand, the government sent them into the Yucatan to slash and burn everything they encountered, which they did until the environment began fighting back. March 15, 2062, saw an earthquake, tidal waves, and storms hitting the Yucatan, pushing the Aztlan offensive back and touching off warfare between nature and toxic spirits. The Azzies have been squatting and waiting for things to die down until they can go back in, but I have a feeling it's never going to stop until one side or the other is defeated ... and I hope for everyone's sake that it'll be the toxics.

MATRIX CRASH 2.0

Let's go back for a moment to 2055. Back then, and for quite a few years, it was never clear how or why the otaku appeared, but they did and adamantly believed in the existence of something they called the Deep Resonance (a Matrix-dwelling quasi-deity or demiurge, in their eyes). These prodigy children were our future (we call them technomancers now), and they had a key role to play. In addition to this, unknown to all but a few of us, we had several AIs on our hands: Mirage, birthed from the ashes of Echo Mirage; Morgan, a rogue AI created within Renraku who escaped as soon as she could with a decker named Dodger; and Deus, another AI created within Renraku in an attempt to have a pet intelligence to heel, and built using code ripped from Morgan (who thenceforth became Megaera, poor broken thing).

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Now, to most people none of this meant a thing. Like dragons, none of them (otaku, AIs) had really ever touched our lives. They would, however, in a very real and brutal way—not once, but several times—between 2059 and 2064.

DEUS' AGENDA

In December of 2059, the Renraku Arcology in Seattle went offline for no apparent reason, shut down and otherwise cut off from the rest of the sprawl and the Matrix. Renraku sealed off the area, offering inadequate explanations of malfunctions. As time went by, more and more people (Matrix denizens and regular folks alike) realized that something quite serious was going on in there. It wasn't revealed until later, after General Colloton and UCAS troops were called in to take over and begin liberating the arcology, that the AI Deus had taken control and was busily experimenting upon its captive audience for its own purposes.

It was a long series of ugly, gory, and heartbreaking skirmishes, as well as many a Matrix battle, that eventually saw the end of Deus's stranglehold. Those who wanted to capture him afterward were disappointed, however, to find that he'd slipped their carefully prepared trap. As it turns out, he'd downloaded himself into the heads of many of his victims, released into the world after they had all been freed. These became part of the Network, which also contained Megaera thanks to the last fight between her and Deus. This would be very important later.

PERFECT STORM

A confluence of actors and events that contributed to the second Crash came together right at the point of Novatech's Initial Public Offering. The corporation, deep in debt and hoping to score big enough to dig out of it, had made all the necessary arrangements for its stock to go public. The Boston Exchange, which had hosted the East Coast Stock Exchange since New York's earthquake in 2005, upgraded itself in order to handle the projected high amounts of traffic on its grids from the IPO.

Deus wanted to take advantage of what promised to be the highest-Matrix-traffic-event ever (how often does a megacorp take its stock public?) in order to upgrade himself and become a god in the Matrix, purging himself of the remainder of Megaera's code at the same time.

Meanwhile, Pax—one of Deus's former devoted otaku servants—had become twisted through listening to something she'd called the Dissonance, an anti-Deep Resonance phenomenon. She was also undergoing Fading, meaning she was losing her otaku abilities, but she wasn't going to let them go without a fight. Pax would sacrifice anyone and anything in order to maintain them.

As it happened, Pax partnered up with the radical Norse cult Winternight, which was happy to help destabilize the Matrix, viewed as the primary tool of their enemy Loki. Not only did they plant a home-grown mega-worm, but also they stole nanotech weaponry from an AA-rated Eurocorp named Zeta-ImpChem as part of their plan to bring down Deus and the Matrix. The stolen nanovirus was accidentally released during the infiltration of a Swiss extraterritorial corp zone, killing everyone present but allowing Z-IC to identify the weapon. Z-IC also discovered a worm code egg in the nearby mainframe, thus getting the word out regarding Winternight and its potential plans—too late.

Pax and Winternight succeeded. The Dissonance worm triggered on schedule, wreaking havoc as it plowed through the Matrix. The worm's viral tidal wave struck the Boston ECSE shortly after the launch of the IPO—and right after Deus had erupted into the middle of the virtual trading floor and began his aggressive upgrading. Add in a few key EMP strikes on major Matrix nodes to this massive upheaval, and you can see why the whole thing melted down spectacularly and brought everyone and everything along with it. Even the Shadow Matrix was not completely immune, though it was able to sever itself from the rest of the Matrix before too much damage had been done. But it was too late for the rest of us, especially in North America.

As you kids say today, it was completely glitched.

IT'S A WIRELESS WORLD

So, that brings us up to 2065 through present-day 2072. Most of you know what happened, having already lived it, but for completeness's sake, I'll lay it out for you so you've got the whole picture. You can't appreciate the puzzle's image until all the pieces are in place, after all.

NEONET AND THE WMI

The first priority was having a system to replace the old Matrix; we'd become so dependent on it to run everything that society, for a while, simply fell apart in some places. Here's where two companies, Transys Neuronet and Erika, come on the scene: they'd been developing wireless technology for the Wireless Matrix Initiative since 2058, and had been planning on getting it online in the fall of 2064 anyway. With the second Matrix Crash happening in that same timeframe, it was a foregone conclusion to many that this was the answer to our prayers. After Transys Neuronet and Erika merged, Novatech immediately entered negotiations for a merger as well, wanting to take advantage of the additional influx of money it would bring and having the advantage of being a corporation used to dealing with Matrix-related technology. The only problem was that in the minds of many who were aware of what happened the day of the second Crash, Novatech's name was mud. The new combined corp christened itself NeoNET and proceeded to set up the Matrix in its virtual and augmented form as we know it today.

WINNERS AND LOSERS

The years following the Crash saw some significant changes on the Corporate Court landscape, as the megas jockeyed for position and took advantage of each other's weaknesses. The two biggest changes occurred as one mega lost its seat on the Court and another one rose to claim it.

Cross Applied Technologies' troubles began when its CEO, Lucien Cross, died in a plane crash on the day of Crash 2.0. Damien Knight of Ares had always had his eye on CATco, but Cross's death brought him out to declare open warfare, snapping up Cross assets left and right as Cross's son tried desperately to hold the corp together. This, coupled with various other financial difficulties and irregularities, placed CATco's Corporate Court seat in extreme jeopardy.

In the same period, another corporation was making its move, this time in the other direction. Horizon Group, a corp specializing in public relations, entertainment, and marketing, leveraged its close relationships with several key nations (including Tir Tairngire and Pueblo, among others) and its exclusive contracts for rebuilding California into a successful bid to claim CATco's vacated Corp Court seat. They're a new face on the AAA scene and we have yet to see what they'll do with their newfound power, but it should be interesting to say the least.

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GENERAL COLLOTON FOR PRESIDENT

The second Matrix Crash also completely screwed up the November 2064 elections, as far as electronic or remote-voting was concerned. In addition, a group calling itself the New Revolution, with the aim of forcefully reuniting the old United States of America, attempted to stage a coup and failed. Still, they succeeded in killing quite a few leaders (President Kyle Haeffner among them) before loyal UCAS troops were able to wrest control back. Under orders from the President pro tem Nadja Daviar, General Angela Colloton (famed for her work with the Renraku Arcology situation in 2059) declared martial law until the country was brought back under control.

When elections were held again, we had little choice but to elect a President who ended up being nothing but a tool of the corps during his entire term. We'd been through enough at this point that controversy wasn't at all welcome in a candidate. We learned from our mistakes, though, and in 2068 elected General Colloton as President.

NATION (RE)BUILDING

Everyone slowly began picking up the pieces of their lives as soon as they could after the second Crash. In Boston, for example, a memorial was erected to mourn the loss of so many lives, and the ECSE was moved back to New York. The latter city had long since rebuilt from its 2005 earthquake, and had previously hosted the Stock Exchange, so it only made sense.

Meanwhile, the Ute Nation in the NAN, having already been in a slow downward spiral since the early sixties, finally cracked in the aftermath of the Crash. More in need of resources than pride, they grudgingly but gratefully accepted assistance from the newly wireless Pueblo Corporate Council and were absorbed in 2067. Their sector in Denver followed suit with Ghostwalker's blessing. The withdrawal of the megacorporation Mitsuhama Computer Technologies from Tsimshian after it was finished plundering left the territory rather empty; the Salish-Shidhe lost no time in making it a Salish protectorate. This started some interesting rumbling in the Sovereign Tribal Council, so I'd keep an ear out for more if I were you.

CalFree finally saw the last of Saito, but not the last of its woes. In early 2069, a pair of major earthquakes coming from the San Andreas Fault line and the San Pedro Shelf caused widespread flooding and destruction, killing tens of thousands. Much of Southern California and the Central Valley dropped below sea level and were inundated with tidal waves. While San Francisco and the Bay Area were mostly spared, waters flooded most of the Central Valley and Los Angeles (which, if nothing else, had at least fortified their sea walls in the more affluent corporate areas decades ago). They say that the floodwaters may recede after a year or two, but we'll see. Meanwhile if you want to visit, you'll either have to fly or learn to swim.

TIMES OF EMERGENCE

Unbeknown to the masses of metahumanity, the Crash of 2064 laid seeds that would take years to bear fruit in the fertile digital fields of the new Matrix. It is now widely believed that the Crash, intentionally or not, resulted in a singularity event. While thousands of online users were killed, others found themselves subtly changed, becoming true children of the Matrix. A select few survivors discovered they were able to interface with the new wireless Matrix using only the power of their minds and the elusive force known as the Resonance. Though their numbers remain small, they seem to have grown in the years since the Crash.

Identifying rare individuals with this strange gift, the megacorps initiated secret pogroms to ruthlessly capture and examine these "technomancers," in a bid to contain, control, and harness their power for profit and security. In June 2070, the disastrous and bloody breakout of a handful of such test subjects from a research facility in Hong Kong shoved technomancers into the public eye in the worst possible way. Faced with justifying their actions or scapegoating these potentially dangerous individuals, several megacorps fed the media hysteria and public paranoia. Technomancers were linked to the Crash of '64 and the virus and blamed for everything from illegal Matrix access to brainhacking. The media-fed frenzy quickly spiraled into worldwide persecution and violence, forcing many technomancers further underground and into the shadows.

A SECOND REVELATION

During the height of the technomancer persecutions, metahumanity stumbled upon an equally unexpected and frightening surprise. Matrix security trawls for virtuakinetic activity revealed an increasing number of anomalies, strange oddities and sightings in the Matrix started to add up, and soon we were faced with the undeniable truth that technomancers were not the only children of the Crash. Forced from hiding by stringent new Matrix security measures, a new generation of Artificial Intelligences emerged from the depths of the Matrix.

Significantly less powerful than the first generation of self-aware Matrix programs, these new AIs emerged from existing software and programs. They soon found themselves not only facing metahuman prejudice, but also locked in a battle to see their rights as autonomous, sentient beings recognized by the corporations that laid claim to their original programs.

While debate blazed for months, with some megacorps siding with the Emerged factions—whether for strategic convenience or enlightened self-interest—it was only the revelation of the horrors of unsanctioned experimentation on technomancers and the compromises struck by an AI faction led by the digital intelligence Pulsar that settled things down. Though this was not before stringent security and Matrix regulation legislation was passed in several nations.

UNDERWORLD AT WAR

The echoes of the technomancer witch-hunts and the AI emergence had barely settled down when a very different sort of social problem took hold of numerous sprawls in early 2071. A mysterious new Bioengineered Awakened Drug named "tempo" took inner cities and youth culture by storm. Granting limited astral sight as well as an empathy-heightening buzz, tempo soon became the drug *du jour,* insinuating itself into all walks of life by exploiting legal loopholes regarding Awakened drugs. The damage the tempo craze wrought on traditional syndicate gold mines like BTL and regular drug trade, as well as the impressive profits it pumped into its distributors, soon set the global criminal underworld at each other's throats. Syndicates clashed locally and internationally. Drug-related crime and violence soared to unprecedented levels in many sprawls. Syndicate wetwork hit all-time highs and some big names were removed from play. Gangland battles have shaken the underworld status quo so badly the dust has yet to fully settle.

It's been a busy few years, but like the old shadow adage goes, "Trouble is good for business." And business has definitely been good.

So what now? Well, you've had your history lesson. Time to go out there and make your own.

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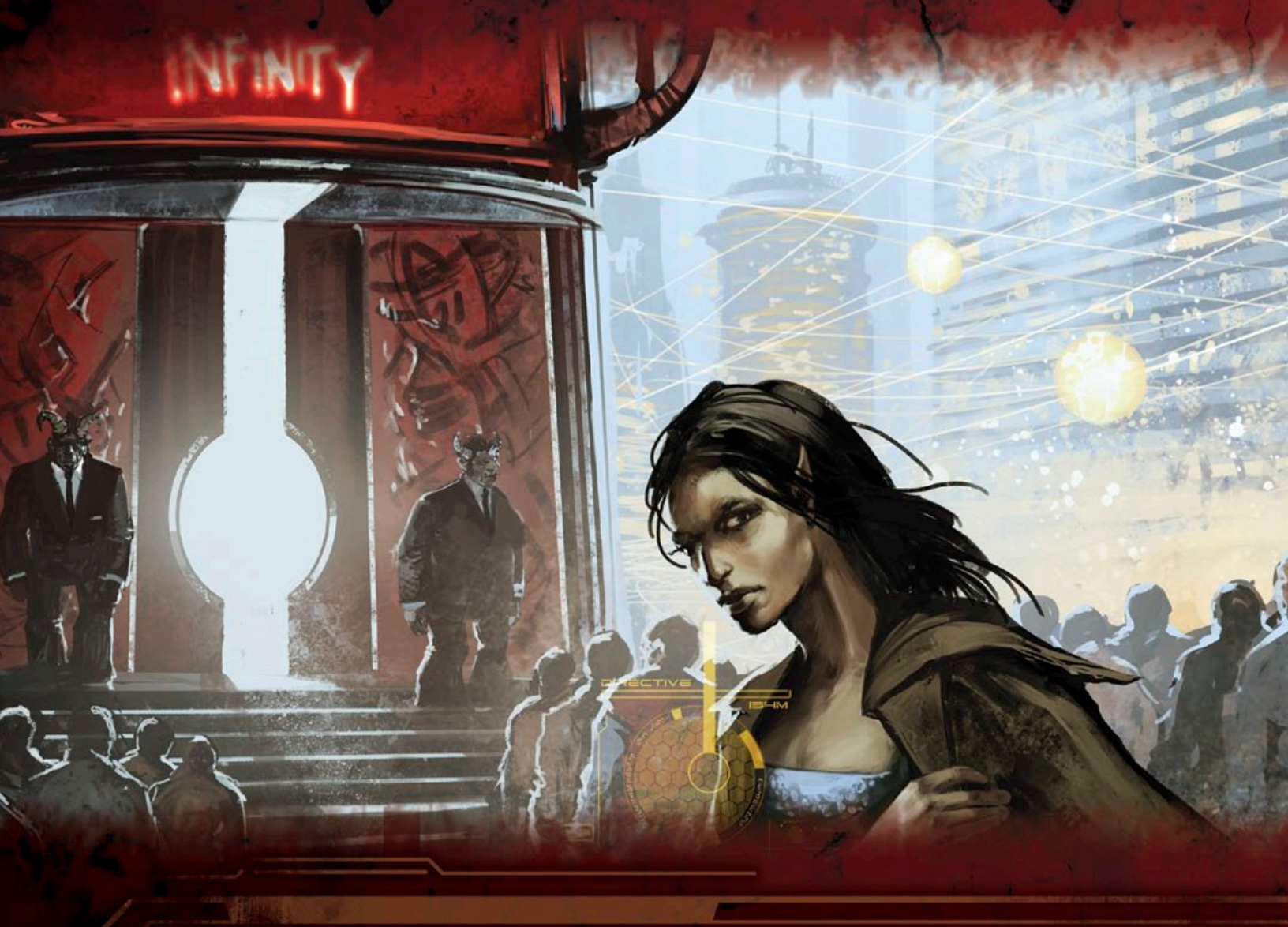

WEEKEND EDITION

BY STEPHEN MCQUILLIAN

"Eugh ... what time is it?"

Taylor sat up, massaging his neck muscles to work out the kinks. Last night he'd collapsed face down in bed, still fully dressed and armored. His body was paying for it this morning. The world was pitch-black except for a dim red clock in his upper field of vision. He wished he could cut the ache from his muscles the way his vision turned off at night.

Noon.

There was a flash of pain and light as the optical relays in his cybereyes kicked in. The streetdoc had told him to get used to it—that's what you get for buying secondhand 'ware. His vision restored, Taylor eventually found the intrusion on his sleep. His commlink buzzed loudly from the pile of weapons and electronics at the foot of his bed. He'd crashed hard after getting home, barely remembering to take off his shoulder rig before falling into bed.

Aside from the exhaustion, the night had been a good one—they'd gotten paid. The forty-eight hours before hadn't been nearly as fun, however. They'd been hired to find a leak. Trailing hackers through a half-dozen nodes to intercept a data drop without triggering a single alarm—yeah, it'd been brutal. He and his team were each running three comms to keep anyone from noticing the same persona following. Everyone had been on stims just to keep up. Then came the easy part, sneak into some B-rate cube farm and upload the data to frame someone else.

"Oh well, time to get up anyways ..."

The commlink still in his hands, he programmed the apartment's central node to make a pot of soykaf and defrost some fruit-flavored soy cubes. Shuffling to the shower, the part-time hacker launched an agent to pull up local newsfeeds. Their job shouldn't have made the media feeds, but he needed to know if it did.

With eyes half-closed, his fist hit the steam reclamation unit. While scrubbing down, Taylor flipped through headlines, the AR window filing his vision. He lingered over an article from Horizon. An emergent AI had given an exclusive

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interview to the media giant. The interview itself wasn't notable; Horizon had received several exclusives from the growing AI community since they first announced themselves. This AI, however, was different. She—it thought of itself in the feminine—had been born out of a social network, and seemed much more human than the others. The reporter capitalized on its apparent humanity and asked questions about memories, emotions, and experiences. Luckily, he had enough sense to stop before asking about dreams of electronic sheep.

Finished with the shower, Taylor didn't bother with a towel. He was a week behind in his laundry, again. Better to air dry, he thought. The mirror showed in glowing detail exactly how badly he had landed, and where each of the bullets had slammed into impact plates. Bruises the size of his fist had darkened across his torso and left shoulder. None on his face this time, though. Shaving over bruises and a cracked jaw was an experience he never forgot.

The ork minimized the AR feeds, reducing them to a small alert window. Taylor stared at his usual tusky grimace and got to work. Changing out the piercings from the professional matte black polycarbonates to his traditional silver rings came first, then the skin posts down his right arm. After the jewelry was swapped, he began the slow process of shaving. Though he had his mother's fair Scandinavian coloring, aided by the Seattle weather, his father's legacy had been a full beard by the time his classmates were just getting stubble. Taylor was going out tonight, so it wasn't time to skimp. After shaving along his neck and jawline, he moved up along his scalp, cleaning up the stubble from the last few days beneath the longer hair.

A blue flash surrounding his vision grabbed his attention. Someone was calling his implanted comm, which meant it was work-related. The call was coming in full video, so he squared himself off and gave the command to his cybereyes to transmit the reflection from the mirror. Just don't look down...

A Latina elf with bleached hair and several months of dark roots filled the display. Turbo Bunny was a great mechanic, when she could keep off the BTLs. As far as Taylor knew, she'd been clean about six months. He wondered if her hands

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would ever lose the twitch. She was an elf, which automatically put her in the cuter than average pile, but she also had a broken quality about her. The kind of broken he thought he could fix.

"Hey chummer, how you been? You look like shit." She asked with what sounded like concern. It was obvious she thought he'd been jumped.

"Well, I keep saying I fell down the stairs, but no one buys it anymore." If she wanted this to be a social call, Taylor would gladly play along. He continued, "Don't let the bruises fool you though, I'm doing fine."

"Good to hear. Listen, I'm not supposed to be calling you, but the boss is going to be throwing your car on the auction block tomorrow unless you pay it off. You said you had a big score coming through, and since you answered, I thought that maybe you had earned the cred."

"He wouldn't get half of what the repairs cost at auction. And luckily, I did finish the job. The payment's transmitting now." With a quick thought, he released the 8,000¥ to Lou's Garage. Taylor decided to go out on a limb. "I was thinking, if you're free tonight, maybe you could bring the car over to my flat. You could even let me take you to dinner as thanks for running interference with Lou."

Turbo Bunny weighed the request—and obvious intent—for a second, then smiled. Mischief sparkled in her eyes. "Sure, I'll be by around eight. You take me to dinner for running interference, and then to the new club, Infinity, for dropping your car off."

She'd gone further than Taylor expected, and he tried to play it cool. "Perfect. I'll see you tonight."

"One thing though, I hear Infinity has a strict dress code. Make sure to wear some pants."

Turbo burst out laughing and cut the call before Taylor could respond. His excitement was crushed by rising embarrassment as the blood rushed to his face. After regaining his composure, Taylor finished shaving. Smelling the fresh soykaf in the kitchen, he trudged across the flat for breakfast.

Taylor had grown up drinking soykaf, so he was used to the way it coated his throat and even the aftertaste. Real coffee wasn't the same—it had the same amount of caffeine, but the taste wasn't right. Sipping the black liquid, he popped the fruit-flavored cubes into his mouth and chewed. How am I going to get into Infinity? The question nagged at him. The hacker had run his mouth one time too many to the cute girl who fixed his car.

Time to call his friends, see if any of them could help him out before possibly frying his brain on IC. He shrugged into a clean shirt and jeans first. Best to not make the same mistake twice. Using his public commlink, since he'd be traveling under his public SIN tonight, Taylor called Bakatare. Bakatare was one of those mage types, always doing magic except when you counted on him for it. He'd scoffed at going and seeing this year's Karl Kombatmage release; still he was good at what he did. Today's call wasn't about flinging mojo though; Taylor needed Bakatare's connections to work a different type of magic.

"Good afternoon," the mage's rich baritone was accented lightly with Japanese. "Ahh, Taylor. What can I do for you today?" The subtext of "this isn't a secure line" came through very clearly.

Taylor gave his best toothy grin and began. "Well, actually, I was hoping for a favor. I heard you've been hitting the club scene a lot recently, and I'm hoping you could get an old friend into Infinity tonight. Me and a guest, that is." A sub-channel to the call transmitted a picture of Turbo Bunny—it was a frozen screenshot from their call earlier. "I really need this, man. She caught me with my … off-guard earlier, and I want to impress her."

Bakatare manipulated something at the lower edge of the display. The device was out of the camera's angle, probably intentionally. He concentrated for a few seconds before looking back up. "I can get you on the VIP list for tonight, under my name. Do you like Goblin Rock? There's a rising star out of Denver on his North American tour playing tonight named Syaf. You'll get in, but it's a chic dress code, so you better look sharp. Also, make sure you drop the doorman a hundred or so. On my name means you have to play the part."

"I owe you man, I owe you big for this. You know I'm good for it." Taylor pumped Bakatare for info about Infinity for a few more minutes, then hung up.

▼

By eight o'clock, Taylor had done enough laundry to have clothes for the next few days and something to wear to the club. The rest of the mess had been shoved into his closet as he ran frantically around trying to make his flat presentable for guests—drugs and guns put away, questionable electronics locked under his bed in their fireproof case. The commlink shoved into one of his dozen pockets gave a constant update to the nanotat on Taylor's back. An eastern dragon coiled and undulated across his skin beneath the sheer shirt.

He met Turbo on the street in front of his building, and was firmly rebuked when he tried to take the driver's seat. The last time he'd been behind the wheel, Taylor had wrapped his car around a building. He couldn't tell her that he'd been trying to drive and shoot at the same time. It was the first time he had tried something out of the trids—a mistake he wasn't going to repeat any time soon.

"So, where we going for dinner?" Turbo nudged Taylor, then reached over to lift his chin so they were looking at each other and he stopped staring at her thighs. She had put on weight since getting off the chips—eating regularly helped—and though everyone, Taylor included, told her she looked great, Turbo was still self-conscious. The ten kilos had given her back some semblance of curves though—he knew the prepubescent look wasn't one she fancied.

"Here." He programmed the street address to the car's GridGuide system. It wouldn't fully drive itself there, but the system had an upgraded pilot processor to react to changing traffic patterns in real time. "It's a small place, but they know me, and it has the best noodles this side of the

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ocean." The restaurant was little more than a sidewalk stand with stools along the front for customers. Taylor had spent hours there in his youth, and gotten to know the former dishwashers who now owned the business.

They talked a bit over dinner, and after the second small carafe of genuine sake, Taylor broached the question he'd been curious about since first meeting his favorite mechanic. "So, why Turbo Bunny? Did your parents have an odd sense of humor?" He was certain it wasn't her real name, but didn't want to push too hard.

"It was a handle I used—as a teenager, my favorite icon was a crazy rabbit in a race car. The fact that I used to boost cars helped, I'm sure. Then, when I grew up, I met most of my friends online first, and it was easier to go by handles. None of us wanted any deep questions. If Turbo doesn't work for you, try Tuesday. It was the day I was conceived and also the day I was born—my parents thought it was too much of a coincidence to pass up." She took another fast shot of the hot sake and refilled both their cups.

An explosion of noise and light burst past Taylor's spam filter as a car drove down the street. There was a powerful broadcast blowing out in all directions, flooding the AR for blocks. MANDATORY REGISTRATION FOR TECHNOMANCERS! CONTROL THE THREAT, SAVE LIVES! Beneath the signal was an emotive track laced with fear and uncertainty, designed to undermine the wills of people hit by the message. Taylor began pulling agents out of remote storage and loading them for bear with IC before he even knew what he was doing. Can't go picking fights just because some fucker overrode your buffers ...

Tuesday's eyes were closed, her nails digging into her legs. At first Taylor thought she was in pain from the message, and then saw she was smiling. "Are you okay?" He wasn't sure what else to say.

"Yeah, I'm good. They were piping it hot. My wires got tied up is all," she replied. Taylor's eyes narrowed as he stared at her. That was probably the first time she'd tasted hot sim since quitting the chips. He didn't like her reaction.

She slapped his thigh. "Come on, let's go to the club. If I stick around here, I may do something I shouldn't." Even though she echoed his own thoughts, Taylor was certain they had two very different sets of actions planned.

Tuesday hopped into the driver's seat again, cutting the GridGuide controls and driving manually. She pumped the vehicle in and out of turns. Taylor sensed this was Turbo Bunny driving, with Tuesday buried beneath adrenaline and instincts. She was good and obviously showing off. He let it ride, never commenting about how close she came to other cars or the several GridGuide alerts that popped up. At the last bridge from Capital Hill, she became Tuesday again and re-enabled the controls, throwing a dazzling smile at him as she let the grid take over.

There were no street lights downtown. Everywhere you turned, neon signs flashed and AR ads popped up offering passes to multiple clubs and blaring drink specials. At the end of the block, they saw Infinity, with a line wrapping around the building. Taylor scanned it, looking for IDs he recognized. The profiles were the standard fare; flirts and fashion plates mixed with a few desperate forty-somethings who came to the club looking for someone to take home. Throughout the line, signs of AR embellishments were obvious. Too perfect make-up and hyper-real tattoos wrapped around bodies perfected with a surgeon's scalpel. It was all an attempt to make themselves more appealing, and the social contract let everyone know it was real at the moment, even if the AR wouldn't be there in the morning.

A street performer stood across from the club, on the path many of the people walked to get into line. He was watching the line and smiling as he juggled balls of light. At his feet was a commlink for simple cred transfers, which was smart since most of the people here wouldn't have a certified credstick on them, much less hard currency.

As Taylor passed, he whispered, "Remember to tip the doorman." Taylor stumbled on the curb and took the second as he recovered to look closely at the performer. Bakatare's eyes gleamed underneath an excellent nano-disguise.

"Aren't we getting in line?" Tuesday asked, gesturing to the long line stretching around the corner. Taylor watched her eyes widen as she spotted the micro-transactions of drugs changing hands. Just something to take the edge off, make you more desirable ... The selling points never changed; everyone wanted to have a better life even for just a few hours. It was a lie, but one she wanted to believe. Taylor knew the line already—she'd been off chips for six months, one wouldn't hurt her ...

Not on his watch. "Only if you feel like standing in the cold. Come on, we're on the VIP list." Taking her hand, he led her past the long line. Taylor noticed her hand was warm, despite the weather and her revealing outfit. Pulling up a tight beam message on his private comm, Taylor shot Bakatare another thanks, along with a query: "You on the job?" The only response was: "I may call in that favor tonight."

At the head of the line, Taylor stepped up to the VIP section and gave his name. The bouncer asked them to wait until the doorman finished his count. They stood in the chill night air until a broad-shouldered Aryan came back to the door. He had mirrored lenses that showed Taylor and Tuesday's warped reflection. Beneath the doorman's skin was enough cyber to outfit an entire SWAT team. *I should have known if Bakatare was working, his crew would be too,* Taylor thought. He gave his name again and transferred 100 ¥ to the tillbox floating in AR next to the door. Emilio waved him through, wishing them both a pleasant evening.

If there was a full shadow crew working the front of the house, Taylor was pretty sure another club would be a better choice. Still, Turbo had chosen it, and he gave his date what she wanted. They checked their coats and drifted onto the dance floor. Work would come later, for now he just wanted to live.

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DAY TO DAY

Face it—you're not going to spend every moment living on the edge, running from the corps, and raising your rep as the hottest runner in the 'plex. In fact, you'll probably spend more time living in a doss, running to the Stuffer Shack, and getting stuck in traffic when the grid's running as slow as a troll on BTL. Here's a taste of what everyday life might be like for your friendly neighborhood shadowrunners.

LIFE ON THE EDGE

A PLACE TO STASH YOUR GEAR

Everybody's gotta live somewhere, and that "somewhere" can vary from a squat in a condemned building up to a palatial apartment in a chic corporate enclave. Shadowrunners usually gravitate more toward the "squat" end than the "palace" end, but hey, anything's possible, right?

Most people these days, especially in the sprawls, live in apartments. A standard mid-priced apartment includes a wide array of amenities, all of which are wired or wireless so they can talk to each other and keep your life running smoothly. When you get up in the morning, your coffee maker has your fresh soykaf ready for you. Your fridge monitors your food's freshness dates and quantities and orders up replacements when needed. Your vacuum-cleaner drone rolls around doing its job quietly and unobtrusively. Lights turn on and off automatically when you enter or leave a room, and your windows can be programmed to show you any view you want—who wouldn't prefer, say, a South American beach to the rainy squalor of the sprawl? You can even have a robot pet to come home to—all the fun with none of the walks or litter-box cleaning. All this is usually controlled by a central terminal—and good news for shadowrunners is that most people don't upgrade its security settings past the defaults.

For those who don't want—or can't afford—such accommodations, squatting (occupying a residence without the permission of the legal owner) is widespread, especially in areas where the police don't feel as welcome. Don't expect much in the way of perks, but if you have the right know-how or the right friends, these squats can be surprisingly comfortable.

For the shadowrunner on the go, motels and hotels come in all price ranges and luxury levels—but naturally the higher-end establishments are going to want all sorts of pesky data before they'll let you in. Motels, usually with lower levels of security and fewer questions, are more popular with the shadow set. And for the ultimate in quickie lodging, there are always "coffin hotels"—they'll rent you a cubicle barely larger than you are, complete with trid unit, Matrix hookup, and a door with a lock on it. Need a place to stash your stuff (or yourself) for a few days? If you can get around the dehumanizing aspects of the whole thing, coffin hotels can be just the ticket.

GETTING AROUND

There are all kinds of ways of getting from point A to point B in 2070—it's just a matter of how fast you want to get there and how much money you want to spend doing it. Most cities have at least decent public transportation, with trains, monorails, buses, and intracity air transports that will get you almost anywhere you want to go as long as you don't mind walking part of the way. Taxis (ground and air) are common too, and, like the trains and monorails, are often autopiloted drones or controlled by riggers. It's safer that way—at least for the operators.

If you're lucky enough to have your own vehicle, it probably runs on electrical power and finds its way around via GridGuide, a system that theoretically manages traffic, shows you the quickest routes and latest maps and alerts, and instructs your car's autopilot how to get there—when it works, that is. Just keep in mind that the grid doesn't go everywhere—in bad neighborhoods, for example, you're on your own. For that matter, in barrens areas, you can't even count on the *roads* to be in good shape, let alone the navigation aids—and that's not mentioning the go-gangs and road predators that come out at night.

MAJOR CHAINS AND FRANCHISES

DEPARTMENT STORES

Luxury: Lordstrungs, Lacy's
First-Class: Fallon and Nelson, The Beaux
Family Style: Wordsworth, Lears and Mervins, Meyer's Superstores
No Frills: Kong-Wal Mart, Saver's Central, WeaponsWorld (guns & ammo)

GROCERIES AND CONVENIENCE STORES

Luxury: Society Grocers
First-Class: Meyers Groceries, Natural Vat Foods
Family Style: Allenson's Groceries, Carrefour, Carry&Save, SAMS Virtual Marketplaces, Quickway
No Frills: Stuffer Shack, Loco Foods, MiniMart, Buy-Low Foods

RESTAURANTS

Luxury: Azteca International, The Edge, Takuri's, Trattoria Pagilacci's
First-Class: Green Village, The Gravity Bar, La Gallaria, Kau Kau's, Purple Haze
Family Style: Gracie's for Ribs, Bosco's, McKraken's Seafood, Bangkok Hut, Maximillion's
No Frills: Cap'n Beef, McHugh's, Nacho Mama, Nukit Burgers, Street Pizza, You Should Not Eat So Much!

HOTELS

Luxury: TripleTree, Lucas, Hilton, Sheraton, Elysium
First-Class: Westin, Gold Lion Inn
Family Style: Wylie's Gala, Rubikan Int'l,
No Frills: Rent & Rest, Comfy Cubicle, Aston's Moneymakers, The Cubes

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS

Luxury: Nybbles & Bytes, Gate's Computer Showcase
First-Class: Hardware, Etc., Blood Monies Software
Family Style: Software Sellers, Microdeck, DeGear's Electronics
No Frills: Computer Exchange, Hacker's Delight, Kennedy's Used Electronics

CLUB FRANCHISES

End of the Earth, Miami, Dante's Inferno, Equilibrium, Congregation of Rhythms, Flair

SPECIALTY STORES CHAINS

Armanté (Fashion), Body + Art (Bodyart), Life by Evo (Design Megastore), Lord's AutoShops (Auto Repair), Lore Stores Inc., Pentagrams (Talismonger), Robyn's (Hardcopy Bookstore), Facets of New York (Jeweler), Link'n'Fix (Commlink Repair Clinic), Zoe (Fashion)

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

For long-distance travel, you can compete with the road trains, drone convoys, and asphalt pirates on the highways, grab a bullet-train, or pay a smuggler to get you there faster and without hitting border checkpoints. Or you can book everything from short-hop commuter airlines to high-flying suborbitals or even semiballistics that actually leave the Earth's atmosphere (magicians beware!), but keep in mind that you'll need a SIN (or a reasonable facsimile) to fly any significant distance on public airways.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

It's amazing what they can do with soy these days. Seriously—the staple diet of all but the rich and elite is heavily based on the huge array of foodstuffs formulated using "new foods" like soy and mycoprotein and krill. Sure, the texture can get a little monotonous after a while, but the stuff is clean, nutritious, cheap, and for the most part tastes pretty darn good with the right flavorings, even when compared to the real thing. Most homes contain appliances that let you start with a soy base and add assorted flavors until you've approximated whatever food you've got the munchies for. Same goes for beverages—synthahol isn't quite as tasty as a real brew, but it'll get you just as drunk for a lot cheaper.

That's not to say "real" food and drink don't exist—agriculture and technology have made great strides, allowing crops to grow in unlikely places (like underground, in vertical farms, or on polar icecaps, for example). This means that even the poor can afford to supplement their diets with real meat and vegetables now and then—as long as they don't mind the health risks of eating genetically engineered "franken-foods" or genetic-hybrid chimera foods.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Nowadays more than ever it's almost quaint to see someone carrying actual money, including credsticks—*so* last decade. Almost everybody simply beams funds back and forth using their commlinks and online accounts, and the only credsticks you're likely to see are the certified variety—the payment method of choice for people who don't want to leave a data trail behind them.

If you look hard enough or travel to enough places, you'll run into areas where they still use hard currency, but since it's a lot more convenient to keep your money in electronic form, it's getting rarer every day. Then there's corp scrip, a specialized form of currency that the megacorps issue to do things like pay their employees. It's no good outside the issuing corp, and in theory only authorized corp employees should have it, but in practice there's a thriving black market in corp scrip—one that even has its own underground "stock exchanges."

While we're on the subject, there's actually a thriving black market out there in just about *everything*, tempting you with all sorts of fun and illegal goodies. In these transactions, payment methods are all over the map, from certified credsticks to hard cash to barter to favors.

LIVING IN SIN

The SIN, or System Identification Number, can be your best friend or your worst enemy. Without one, it's very difficult to do otherwise simple things like rent an apartment, buy a car, or check into a hotel. *With* one, however, the system can track almost every move you make—what you buy, where you go, what you connect to on the Matrix.

Technically, everybody is supposed to have a SIN (it's illegal not to), but in reality, many people don't. Some had them erased; some lost them when the Matrix went down in '64 and getting a new one was too much of a hassle; some never had one at all because their births were never recorded. The SINless, as they're called, tend to operate outside the system and have a hard time doing anything legitimately, since not having a SIN marks you as either an alien or a person subject to lesser rights.

Of course, the best of both worlds for shadowrunners is to have one—but not their own. Underground services for setting up fake SINs are in high demand, and there's no shortage of customers. Some runners even maintain more than one fake SIN, corresponding to one or more false identities based in different cities and even different countries. If one is discovered, the runner simply dumps it and picks up another.

Be careful, though—if the cops arrest you and you don't have a SIN (or you have one that doesn't match up), they'll assign you a "criminal SIN," which has significantly fewer rights and privileges than a regular one.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

For the most part, medical care comes in two flavors: public and private—which in reality mean "poor" and "rich." Thanks to privatized healthcare, most people are forced to throw themselves and their ailments on the not-so-tender mercies of an overstressed public healthcare system. Spirits help you if you're seriously sick or hurt and have to deal with a public hospital; most of them mean well, but they're notoriously understaffed, awash in red tape, and generally a nightmare to navigate—and this is if you have a SIN. If you don't—good luck.

If you're rich (or have the right friends), you have access to all sorts of medical advances, including clone "spares" for organ replacement, le-onization treatments to stay young, state-of-the-art implants, the latest gene therapy, and every other cutting-edge technology medicine has to offer. Even corp citizens, though they don't often have this level of coverage, can take advantage of limited corporate healthcare.

Not sick, but just need "a little work done"? Bodyshops are common, handling basic cybersurgery and cosmetic alterations—things like datajacks, cybereyes, cosmetic bioware, and the like—but as always, it's good to do your homework first since they vary widely in

BODY SHOPS AND STREET CLINICS

BODY SHOPS AND STREET CLINICS

Bodyshop	Seasource Rating
Executive Body Enhancements	★★★★★
Humana Hospital	★★★★★
Body+Tech	★★★★
Nightengale's Body Parts	★★★★
Red Star Clinics	★★★★
Spin Shop	★★★★
Universal Upgrades	★★★★
Body Pagoda	★★★
CrashCart Clinic	★★★
DocWagon Clinic	★★★
A Whole New You	★★
Billing's Medical Services	★★
Cyborgs'R'Us	★★
Dr. Bob's Quickstitch Clinic	★★
Body Mall	★
NuYou	★

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

competence and professionalism. If you need something more extensive done and you can make the right connections, "black clinics" with corp-exile surgeons and all kinds of stolen and experimental technologies and techniques can provide whatever enhancements you desire, legal or not.

Savvy shadowrunners don't take chances with these matters—as soon as they've got the cred to do it, most of them sign up for a contract with one of the "armed response" providers like DocWagon or CrashCart. These services will do everything from swooping in to snatch your injured body out of a firefight to bringing you back from the other side of flatlined. Yeah, that little biomonitor and contract are expensive, but when you think about it, what do you own that's more valuable than your life? Just one thing to note, though: if you're going to get yourself shot up, don't do it on megacorp property—these outfits won't cross extraterritorial boundaries without permission, so you'll be out of luck.

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

Back in the latter part of the last century, futurists and cyber-pundits were all excited about the coming of "ubiquitous computing"—the total integration of computer technology with everyday life. They were right, but they didn't know the half of it. While your average 2070s citizen probably wouldn't think of it in those terms, computers and the Matrix *are* ubiquitous nowadays—in fact, you'd have to try pretty hard to get away from them. Here are a few everyday-life examples—you can check out *The Wireless World,* p. 216, for the full lowdown on using the Matrix for fun and profit.

MATRIX 2.0

The times, they are a-changin', but people are nothing if not adaptable. Even before Crash 2.0 took down the Matrix and caused widespread chaos on multiple fronts, the seeds of wireless network connectivity were already sown. By 2070, the new wireless Matrix is mostly in place, and the whole Matrix model has shifted from wired virtual reality to wireless augmented reality. That's not to say that you can't still go for the full-immersion experience, but AR has proven itself to be more practical in most situations. Most people by now have embraced the new technology, to the point where even the poorest sprawl denizens are likely to have commlinks that connect them to the Matrix on a constant basis. What this means is that everybody's wired (or, rather, wireless) and everybody's connected. For most people, the question isn't *whether* to be connected, but how *much.*

THE NETWORK IS THE CONSUMER

Every time you go out to the mall or the Stuffer Shack or that new club downtown, you're surrounded by computer networks. Everybody's heard of LANs and WANs, but 2070s society brings a new one: PANs, or Personal Area Networks. People don't just *belong* to networks these days—they *are* networks. All hooked together by a commlink (a combination cellphone, PDA, wallet, and network router), PANs are accessed and controlled by a wide array of useful devices, including goggles, contacts, or cybereyes that let you perceive the sights of augmented reality; headphones or cyberears that give you the sounds; gloves for the touch; clothing that regulates your temperature and lets you change its color with a thought; simsense modules that let you experience sensations, emotions, and even others' senses; weapons and peripherals tied directly into your conscious control; and a whole lot more. It's called a "mesh network," and it means that all your goodies talk to each other seamlessly, keeping each other up to date with status reports and working together to enhance your computing experience.

SHARING THE LOVE

All this PAN stuff is wiz, but just like the dinosaur days of the Internet, networking isn't much fun if you can't share it. When you open up your PAN to the outside world (or whatever part of it you choose to allow in), you open the door to a myriad of interactions. Heading down to the mall to check out the latest gear, you can subscribe your PAN to the mall's network and view *arrows* (AROs, or augmented reality objects) that show you everything from a map of the place to current sales to recommendations your friends have left for you last time they were there. You can connect your commlink to your friends' networks and hold private conversations completely inside your head. You can (if you're not careful) be bombarded by advertising and spam—but you can also hook up with other people who read the profile you're broadcasting and want to meet you. You can play a video game in your head with a friend on another continent as your opponent. In short, pretty much anything you can think of that can be done with a computer, you can do it wherever you happen to be. No wires, no clunky cyberdeck—just you, your commlink, and the airwaves.

Of course, those who want to take things a little further can do a lot more—hacking into systems (including other people's commlinks), controlling vehicles with their thoughts, even injuring other users. That's where the real fun is—but that's a topic for another time and another place (see *The Wireless World,* p. 216).

TAGGING, 2070'S STYLE

What can control shoplifting, keep track of your cat (or your kid, or your employees), mark gang territory, or give you the skinny on that weird statue in the park? If you answered RFID tags, you get a gold star. Radio Frequency Identification tags are even more ubiquitous than Matrix connections in 2070s society, and almost as useful. Since your commlink can read the data on a tag from about 40 meters away, they're used for all kinds of purposes where some small message needs to be broadcast over a short distance. For instance, every item in almost any store you walk into will have an RFID tag embedded within it, to help track inventory and keep the items from wandering out of the store. They also help you when you're ready to buy—you simply pick up the items you want, they're scanned automatically, and the charge is deducted (with your permission) from your cred balance.

Tags have lots of other functions, too. When viewed with AR, the data from an RFID tag is called a *dot* (DOT, or Digital Object Tag). Some dots are beneficial, helping you find your way around unfamiliar areas or giving you information about local historical sites or areas to avoid. You can also program your own to offer items for sale, look for lost items, or anything else for which your grandmother might have posted flyers on the street corner. Tags also have less savory purposes—corps routinely implant tags in their employees, while gangers use spray-painted dots to mark their turf. Regardless of how they're used, tags are cheap and easy to get, which means the world is awash in them. Better get used to it.

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

As wiz as all this technology is, don't think it's all a big hacker party. The downside of the fact that everything's networked and the Matrix is everywhere (especially for shadowy types) is the fact that this gives authorities and other nosy folks the means to make some serious inroads into your privacy, especially when you're out in public.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

Sensors and cameras are everywhere, almost every transaction you make is tracked in one way or another, and if you're not careful, your every movement—in the Matrix and in the meat—can be traced, monitored, and analyzed. Paranoid yet? Think of this: in most major sprawls, sensors on every street corner in certain 'hoods can not only monitor sights, sounds, and chemical odors, they're also smart enough to automatically recognize aberrant patterns—say, a gunshot or an abnormally large crowd of people gathering near a business. This info is automatically transmitted to the proper authorities, and unwary miscreants can be in custody before they can say "What happened?" Naturally there are ways around Big Brother, and savvy shadowrunners are wise to study up. Life in the shadows isn't easy but fortunately the all-knowing Big Brother isn't without his failings.

HOLES IN THE SYSTEM

Several factors help those who are looking to stay off the grid.

First there's simply too much data out there and it's growing by the nanosecond. Trying to find that one visual ID in the oceans of pointless videos uploaded by the public to their blogs, chat rooms, and data havens is like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Simply hoping that someone in Redmond might have recorded the events of a crime scene with his cybereyes does not actually *get* you the data. The images, if they're even uploaded onto the Matrix, might be posted on Connections! or another one of the hugely bloated blogging networks. The effort of sifting through the masses of images, blogs, and gripefests on those is often monumental. Agents are only minimally useful, generally, since they don't have the intelligence or intuitive ability to spot details like a metahuman can, no matter how thorough their programming. And even worse, getting the visual data from corporate, government, or police cameras involves enough red-tape to wrap around the globe a few times, or a massive hacking attempt on potentially hundreds of nodes. And that's before you get to the thousands upon thousands of public nodes: commlinks, cybereyes, or other recording devices. (And even if they manage all that, it's useless if they have no records to match it against.)

The second factor revolves around those wonderful things, the Business Accords. Yes, those wonderful extraterritorial rights given to corporations of certain size (and the privacy rights accorded to all corporate entities, regardless of size). Few corporations are willing to share their information unless they have something to gain from it. Do you really think that "Kiddy Land," the Aztechnology-owned chain, is likely to give Knight Errant, a subsidiary of Ares, access to all their video feeds and other sensor data just because their shop cameras *might* have caught an image of some criminals sometime in the last 24 hours? No? Damn right.

A third factor is data completeness. Camera coverage in the Sixth World is by no means total. You might be caught by several cameras while walking downtown, but most of the time, only a small part of you, like the back of your head, part of your clothes, or your hat is caught on camera, while the rest is obscured by other people and items. You might pass behind a street light, a crowd, or a car. You walk into a shop, but you walk out through a different entrance. Getting all of this together is a complicated and time-consuming process, especially if you know these facts and exploit them. By the time a reliable identification is patched together, the freelance criminals involved will have delivered the goods to their anonymous Johnson.

GET YOUR MOJO WORKIN'

Magic is power, and you'd have to live under a rock not to know it. The ability to sling the mojo is something you're born with; if you don't have it, there's nothing out there that's going to give it to you, and if you *do* have it, you've got opportunities not available to your mundane buddies. As you might expect, there are a lot of opinions and popular misconceptions about magic. You can find the nuts and bolts in *The Awakened World*, p. 176, but here's a brief look at how the world at large perceives the magically gifted and their art.

MAGIC IN THE MEDIA

The entertainment industry loves magic. How could they not love something that lets them indulge their desire for tossing around spectacular pyrotechnical effects, weird landscapes, and eerie mysterious characters? The problem (at least to hear real magicians and adepts tell it) is that the trids and sims don't often get it right. Oh, sure, they retain "magical consultants" on staff to tell them that you can't blow up a building with a Powerbolt spell (not even if you're a dragon), but as soon as the story calls for boffo mojo, the spellslinger-in-residence might as well step out for a sandwich for all the good her advice is going to do. As long as box-office extravaganzas like the "Karl Kombatmage" series pull in big nuyen for the studios, the bosses aren't going to worry too much about whether their magician characters are doing things that would have a real practitioner's brains oozing out his ears.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

That doesn't even touch on the subject of the magicians themselves. Most real spellslingers react with either amusement or disgust at the portrayal of their fellows in the media: males as lantern-jawed heroes with six-pack abs or weird inscrutable "masters of the mystic arts" festooned with (fake) arcane symbols; females as half-dressed temptresses with body-shop figures and dramatic makeup and tattoos. Adepts of both genders are almost always martial artists or sneaky "ninja" types, and metahuman Awakened types usually get stuck with the villain roles.

JOHN Q. PUBLIC

Hard as it is to believe, even in 2070 there's still a decent percentage of average citizens out there who have never seen anybody do magic outside of the trids and sims. Magical ability is getting more common with each generation, but it's still rare enough that full-fledged magicians and adepts don't turn up on every corner.

What this means, as in the case of anything that's powerful and unknown, is that people's attitudes toward magicians aren't always the most charitable. Almost nobody is neutral on the subject, and for most, their reaction to magic is either fear, hatred, or fascination. The "fascination" end of the spectrum isn't too much of a problem (many mages would be flattered to discover they had groupies), but the "fear" and "hatred" end (everything from concern about things like astral snooping and mind control to good old-fashioned superstition and paranoia) can lead to all kinds of things that can cause trouble for the Awakened—like stricter laws governing registration of mages and restrictions on magic use, for example. As it is, the laws regulating legal magic use are quite stringent, especially on combat spells and anything that affects the mind, but if some activists and political groups have their way, things could get a lot worse.

MAGIC AND RELIGION

Most of the major religions have come to an uneasy truce with magic by 2070, incorporating it into their belief systems with varying degrees of success. Some faiths, like Wicca, embrace magic, and have even grown in popularity once again; others, like most Christian and Jewish denominations, accept it when it's used in the service of good (the Pope weighed in on the subject back at the early part of the Awakening); others still, like most (but not all) branches of Islam, view it as evil and heretical.

Even so, there are still many who would use religion as an excuse to persecute magic and its practitioners—for example, the racist Humanis Policlub hates magicians almost as much as they hate metahumans, and they use their own twisted religious interpretations to support their faulty arguments.

GHOULS AND SPIRITS AND DRAGONS—OH MY!

Human and metahuman magicians aren't the only ones out there who are touched with the Talent. Awakened critters come in all shapes and sizes, from the nearly mundane (common pests like devil rats) to the magically superior (dracoforms, great and otherwise). Critters with any significant magical ability are rare, and you're not likely to blunder into one on your evening constitutional—but don't get the idea that you're safe in the city, either. Plenty of urban predators hang around places like sewers, toxic areas, and sprawl barrens, just waiting for juicy tidbits to come along. Ghouls, for instance, are a common threat in urban areas, banding together and hunting in packs to satisfy their never-ending need for metahuman flesh. There's also the insect-spirit bogeyman to worry about—bugs aren't as common as they used to be, but that doesn't mean that most people don't maintain a healthy (and justified) level of paranoia about them.

MAGIC IN THE SHADOWS

Most magicians have "real" jobs—mages often work as corporate researchers, university professors, healthcare providers, and such, while those from magical traditions that don't mesh well with the corporate lifestyle (shamans and witches, for example) do things like run lore shops and act as tribal or community healers and wise folk. Because they're so rare, they're usually valued, paid well, and kept happy. So what about the ones who choose a less lawful (and potentially more lucrative and dangerous) path?

The public is even more fascinated with criminal and shadowrunning mages than it is with the garden-variety types. Every year you can count on at least a few new sims and trids featuring daring and charismatic magical scoundrels duking it out in arcane battles with corporate security mages (while teammates on both sides make sure that the bullets and grenades are flying at the same time). The truth is, the reality of slinging mojo in the shadows is usually a lot less glamorous than Big Media wants people to believe. For most magical types, they'd be a lot better off (and a lot safer) to keep their nice cushy job with the regular paycheck and medical plan. Still, there are plenty of them who (for whatever reason) don't have that option—and for those who can handle it, the rewards of shadowrunning can be great.

WE'RE NOT ALONE

Magic is far from being the only force at play in the Sixth World. The ubiquity of the Matrix means it touches every aspect of everyday life, from private life to social interactions to work. Consequently, it came as a shock to global society to realize that the Crash populated the digital world with metahumans with their own inexplicable talents, and mysterious entities, known collectively as the Emerged.

Even rarer than Awakened talent—some believe this "virtuakinetic" gift is present in less than 1 in 100,000 individuals—these gifted few exhibit the ability to interface with the Matrix with the power of their minds. The origin and exact mechanisms of this ability remain unclear, which led to widespread public suspicion, and fears that have only recently started to subside. Keeping these technomancers company is a menagerie of Artificial Intelligences, sprites, and other entities confined to the digital realms—a realm that stretches across the globe and beyond.

Regardless of the theories behind these new abilities and new beings, everyone agrees—the Matrix is no longer just the playground of metahumanity.

COMING OUT

For years prior to the Crash 2.0, rumors circulated in the shadows of otaku—children able to manipulate the Matrix without programs or a computer. These children banded together in tribes, eking an existence on the edges of society, hiding in the slums and back alleys of urban sprawls. Some said they even worshiped digital deities—powerful Artificial Intelligences. Behind the rumors was a grain of truth, although the role these beings played in the Crash is known only by a few. Those who were aware of the AI/otaku agenda were relieved when the guilty factions appeared to have been destroyed in the Crash they'd engineered.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

For five years after the Crash, corporations worked overtime to build the new, "resilient" wireless Matrix—and only realized after the fact that the new technology had unleashed *something* unknown. Whether technomantic abilities were sparked by Crash-related trauma, or they always existed and were triggered when the wireless network became widespread enough to support them is unknown. The existence of these abilities was unknown to the public or even in the shadows—until 2070, when the world was rocked by the explosive coming-out of the Emerged. Fear of these people, called technomancers or virtuakinetics by pundits, ignited a world-wide witch-hunt, spurred on by corporate machinations. And if that wasn't enough, another group revealed itself to metahumanity shortly afterward: Artificial Intelligences.

PUBLIC OPINION

The witch-hunts have died down over the last two years, largely due to efforts by several megacorporations—including Horizon and Evo—and the work of non-profits dedicated to helping the Emerged and digital intelligences integrate into society. Like the kneejerk reactions to the Awakened, to metahumans, and to changelings before them, the Emerged are slowly becoming accepted into society.

For the average Joe and Jane, the existence of technomancers is still a frightening thought, one that tears open the scars left by the Crash. When every daily action is facilitated by the Matrix—from home safety to bank accounts, virtual offices to educational systems—the existence of metahumans who can wreak havoc with those essential systems using nothing but their *minds* is a terrifying prospect. Unlike magic—which, while prevalent in the media, is still uncommon enough on the streets—the Matrix is everywhere. To address these fears, most nations have instituted required registration for the Emerged (much like that of the Awakened). The extreme rarity of technomancers has also helped to relieve some fears, and the media coverage—provided by shadowrunners in many cases—of inhumane corporate experimentation on technomancers has swayed public opinion to their side.

CORPORATE PARANOIA

Corporations continue to experiment on technomancers, trying to understand their abilities (with some notable exceptions). As more is learned, corporations realize there is even more to fear. Rumors of the Resonance Realms and of the digital entities who reside there are enough to strike fear in any corporation that relies on the Matrix. Security departments are scrambling to find ways to block access, while at the same time trying to discover how to harness the abilities of the Emerged for themselves. There is a corporate arms race going on, much like in the early days of the Awakening—only with so much of their business reliant on the Matrix, the corporations have even more at stake now.

SPRITES, AIS, AND DIGITAL CRITTERS

Metahumanity is not the only thing prowling the digital realms. AIs have fared well in public opinion, due to the intensive media coverage of benign AIs like Pulsar and his Undernet Alliance. Many people don't realize just how sapient these AIs really are—or that they may not have metahumanity's best interests at heart. Sprites also seem to be sentient creatures, and technoshamans believe they come from the Deep Resonance—a realm that isn't understood even by technomancers, although a few are brave enough to venture into it. And rumors of other creatures, from insects to house cats, who are able to access the Matrix are just now starting to float around the chat rooms and data havens ...

TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS

In the world of *Shadowrun,* there's no getting away from the corporate presence. From the day he's born (probably in a corporate-owned hospital) until the day he dies (buried in a corp-made casket), the average 2070s citizen is surrounded by evidence of the megacorporations' influence on nearly everything in society. They—or their countless shadowy subsidiaries and smaller competitors—provide nearly everything he wants or needs, directly or indirectly: his employment, his home, his entertainment, his food and drink, his clothes, and, if he works for one of them, most likely his ideas and his outlook on life. Their power rivals that of governments, and they're accountable to no one save their shareholders and the Corporate Court.

EXTRATERRITORIALITY

Apart from creating or having a hand in just about everything we buy, how did the megacorporations get so powerful? One word: extraterritoriality. What this means is that the megacorps essentially make their own rules within their own territories—governmental authority can't touch them and can't enforce laws on them. Similar to the way a country's embassy is considered a part of that country regardless of where it's located, extraterritoriality means that megacorps call their own tune on their own turf. Only the Corporate Court can confer extraterritorial status; all the megas have it, naturally, and it's a coveted prize among the second-tier AA mega-wannabes.

GUARDING THE HENHOUSE

Consisting of thirteen justices drawn from the ranks of the Big Ten megacorps, the Corporate Court represents the only authority that has any chance of riding herd over the megacorporations. In reality it has no way to enforce its directives, but the megas follow them nonetheless because they all realize that allowing things to devolve into chaos would hurt the bottom line for all of them. Since profits are what it's all about, this is a powerful motivator.

The Corp Court is based at the Zurich Orbital habitat, which happens to be *the* most secure facility on or off Earth. Most of the justices live there, but some some commute by shuttle or telecommute via the Matrix.

IN THE FAMILY

For the average citizen with a SIN, a spouse, a mortgage, and 2.4 children, employment with a megacorporation is a good thing to aspire to. When you join a corp, you join an extended family, business nation-state, or driven meritocracy, depending on the corp in question—each has its own culture. It's not uncommon for people to join up right out of college (agreements even prior to this aren't unheard of for certain key prospects) and remain employed at the same corp—advancing up the corporate ladder and living in the cozy confines of a corporate arcology—until their retirement. If you're a loyal employee, the corp takes care of your every need; in the case of some of the largest, there's no real need to ever leave corp territory if you don't want to—they provide literally everything you could want. It's only when employees (especially those highly valued for their uncommon skills) get itchy feet that things can start getting uncomfortable. The corps expect and enforce loyalty in return for their beneficence.

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THE BIG TEN

Here's a quick primer on the ten biggest megacorporations on the corporate scene.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

World Headquarters: Detroit, Michigan, UCAS

Ares is sitting pretty after swallowing up a big chunk of former AAA Cross Applied Technologies following the Crash. Run by wealthy playboy Damien Knight, the corp has a reputation as a very "American" outfit: gung-ho, militaristic, patriotic, and individualistic—Mom and apple pie, in other words. Don't let that fool you—sure, they're one of the better megas to work shadow ops for, but keep your eyes open, because they can be as underhanded as the rest.

Ares specializes in law enforcement (Knight Errant, one of the two biggest private security corps in the world, is a subsidiary), military hardware and arms, aerospace (they own what used to be NASA and have five orbital habitats), entertainment, automotive (the former General Motors is also part of the Ares family), and smaller divisions in many other areas.

AZTECHNOLOGY

World Headquarters: Tenochtitlán, Aztlan

If you've bought any kind of consumer goods recently, chances are you've contributed to Aztechnology's bottom line. This Aztlan-based megacorp produces everything from snack foods (60 percent of the goodies you find at your local Stuffer Shack come out of their factories) to chemicals to trideo-game software to military goods and magical supplies. They've got their fingers in more pies than just about any other mega around (including the strategically important Nicaragua Canal, which took up the slack when Winternight trashed the Panama Canal), and their public relations campaigns are second to none. They've got a great rep—everywhere except in the shadows, that is. Too many years of association with nasty things like blood magic and evil conspiracies have seen to that.

EVO CORPORATION

World Headquarters: Vladivostok, Russia

As suggested by its name, Evo is a corporation that looks to the future. Formerly called Yamatetsu, the erstwhile Japanese megacorp with its headquarters in Russia and a free spirit as its largest stockholder has reinvented itself, focusing its considerable resources on transhumanist projects ranging from bioware and genetics to cutting-edge nanotech, anti-aging experiments, and other even more out-there projects designed to take metahumanity to the next stage of evolution. Aside from being transhumanist, Evo is also *transplanetary,* as the first megacorp to successfully set up a base on Mars.

Along with all this, Evo hasn't forgotten its other pet cause: "metahuman factors engineering" (designing and producing metahuman-friendly products), and it still leads the megas in goods and services designed with orks, trolls, elves, dwarfs, changelings, and other nonhuman people in mind.

HORIZON GROUP

World Headquarters: Los Angeles, Pueblo Corporate Council

The newest face on the AAA scene, Horizon used the years following the Crash to take advantage of its close relationships with both Tir Tairngire and the Pueblo Corporate Council to secure itself a position on the Corporate Court. Based in the midst of media wonderland Los Angeles, the corp has managed to score many exclusive contracts for dealing with the development of California, and its star is currently on the rise. With a charismatic ex-sim star at the helm, Horizon is poised for great things at the dawn of the 2070s.

Horizon specializes in anything that can be used to manipulate opinion (personal or public), including public relations, advertising, mimetics, viral marketing, trendsetting, and social networking. Its corporate culture is much less hierarchical than those of most other megas, emphasizing consensus, workgroups, trends, and "people-centered" management models. Employees are well taken care of and encouraged to develop their talents and pursue their interests on company time—though, of course, Horizon expects to share in the fruits of their innovation.

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In addition to its primary focus on entertainment and media pursuits, Horizon is also strong in consumer goods and services, real estate and development, and pharmaceuticals.

MITSUHAMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

World Headquarters: Kyoto, Japan

As its name suggests, Japanacorp Mitsuhama Computer Technologies (MCT) is primarily known as a computer company that's also involved in robotics and heavy industry—but it's less well known that they're one of the biggest manufacturers of magical goods around (after Aztechnology). They're also rumored to be in bed with the Yakuza, though the jury's still out on who's pulling the strings in that relationship. In any case, they've established quite a presence in CalFree over the last few years, taking a lead role in the control of San Francisco following the fall of rogue General Saito.

Shadowrunners have a love-hate view of working with MCT—the corp pays very well for success, but their tolerance for failure is only slightly less draconian than Saeder-Krupp's (and S-K at least has the excuse of an actual *dragon* running the show). When running against them, success becomes even more important, because their "zero-zone" policy usually means unsuccessful runners don't get out alive.

NEONET

World Headquarters: Boston, Massachusetts, UCAS

This corp's primary mover and shaker, Novatech, might just as well be called "Phoenix" for its skill in rising from the ashes of potential disasters. Born first of the leavings when former megacorp Fuchi Electronics fell apart, Novatech has caused quite its share of stirs over the past few years—the most recent being that its spectacular IPO back in 2064 was one of a series of catalysts that led to the second Matrix Crash and the world's subsequent descent into chaos. Another was the fact that they came out of the Crash and the IPO smelling like roses, joining up with

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communications giant Erika and cybertech powerhouse Transys Neuronet to establish the backbone for the new wireless Matrix and catch most of their competitors flatfooted.

With the influx of money brought on by the IPO and the merger, the new megacorp has diversified its interests into just about every industry, including Matrix infrastructure, cyberware, electronics, software, biotech, aerospace, small arms, and many others. They're definitely one to watch.

RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

World Headquarters: Chiba, Japan

Renraku, already reeling from the Seattle Arcology debacle, didn't fare too well following the Crash—due to the machinations of former Renraku America division manager Sherman Huang (now rotting in some Renraku jail cell, assuming he's still alive at all), the corp lost a big chunk of money and, much more importantly, the opportunity to get the jump on the emerging augmented-reality market. In the world of megacorps, second best is the first loser, and Renraku didn't even make second best.

That's not to say that the Big R is hurting that bad, though—as their name implies (it means "communication" in Japanese), they're still the world's largest data repository and they own a substantial piece of Asia's telecom grids, so they're not without their bargaining chips. After all, when nobody knows what kind of useful or potentially incriminating information you've got squirreled away in your databanks, it's going to take some strong motivation to risk messing with you. That's what Renraku is counting on as it rebuilds and reinvents itself.

SAEDER-KRUPP HEAVY INDUSTRIES

World Headquarters: Essen, Germany

Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries can be summed up in one word: Lofwyr. The great dragon owns nearly 100 percent of this German-based megacorp, and he rules it with the kind of attention to detail that only one of his kind can maintain. It's not impossible to put one over on Lofwyr, but it's *very* difficult—and usually fatal. The wyrm doesn't suffer fools gladly, and shadowrunners who go against him (or fail in one of his jobs) might just find themselves on his list—which also happens to be his lunch menu.

Primarily involved in heavy industry, S-K is also strong in chemicals, finance, and aerospace with a presence in many other areas. Secure in its position as the largest corporation in the world, it wields extensive power and influence.

SHIAWASE CORPORATION

World Headquarters: Osaka, Japan

The oldest of the megas, Shiawase holds the claim to fame of being behind the court case that ultimately led to the extraterritoriality that all megacorps know and love today. A classic Japanese zaibatsu, Shiawase is run in a traditional "family" style, with most employees signing lifetime contracts and even marrying within the corp. Families, however, tend to squabble—and a big squabble between the corp's various (and interrelated) warring factions back during the Crash resulted in a huge shakeup, redistributing vast swaths of stock and rewriting the top levels of Shiawase's org chart in one fell swoop.

As for what they do, a better question would be, *"What* don't they do?" Either directly or through subsidiaries, Shiawase has its hands in nuclear power, environmental engineering, biotech, heavy industry, technical service, minerals, military goods, and a whole lot more.

WUXING INCORPORATED

World Headquarters: Hong Kong Free Enterprise Enclave

The only Chinese player on the megacorp scene, Wuxing owes its ascension to the rarefied ranks of the Big Ten to the late great (dragon, that is) Dunkelzahn, who bequeathed a big pile of nuyen to the company—along with a couple of wiz magical goodies for Wuxing's CEO Wu Lung-Wei and his wife Sharon. Wu parlayed this windfall into a position of new power for his corp, allowing Wuxing to muscle its way

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onto the Corporate Court and into AAA status. Following the Crash, Wuxing swallowed up sizable pieces of the Pacific Prosperity Group (including the plum-prize Malaysian Independent Bank) which increased its clout significantly.

Traditionally focused on finance and shipping concerns, Wuxing has drastically expanded its magical services and magical goods projects, making a name for itself as the new "mystic" megacorp. Thanks to its post-Crash buyouts—fueled by profits from the Orichalcum Rush during the Year of the Comet—Wuxing has also expanded heavily into other markets, including agriculture, engineering, consumer goods, and chemicals.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Keeping track of the megacorps and their shifting relationships with each other usually requires a scorecard—especially since they can and do change with the winds. Economic conditions, market movements, rises and falls of key players' fortunes, even the whims of a particular executive or board member—these are the things that lead to collusion and betrayal.

Because the corps usually don't overtly admit to these mercurial alliances and spats, this is one of the largest areas where shadowrunners can provide the grease that keeps the big machines running smoothly.

Most shadowrunners interact with the megacorporations with a sort of uneasy symbiosis—they hate the monolithic entities and everything they stand for, but on the other hand, they know they'd be out of a job if the corps didn't exist. In order to reconcile these two views, most runners are masters of compartmentalization, justifying the dirty work they do at the corps' behest by rationalizing that the cred's good and there aren't that many legal ways to pay the rent and keep the cat fed when you're SINless.

On the other side of this symbiotic relationship from hell are the megacorps themselves—huge, faceless, accountable to no one but themselves (and the Corporate Court)—but still constrained against running roughshod over the competition overtly by agreements with other corps and by fear of retribution. After all, if Aztechnology can just waltz in and blow up Mitsuhama's research lab, what's to stop MCT from turning around and torching the Azzies' secret testing facility? That's where shadowrunners come in: deniable assets that the megas push around like chess pieces in a deadly game. A team gets caught with their hands on a rival's hot new prototype? Hey, we don't know about any runners! Sure, go ahead and cack them—why should we care? All the corps do it, all the corps know about it, and nobody will ever mention a word about it in the light. There's a reason they call it *shadow*running, after all. While both sides are loath to admit it, the fact is that shadowrunners and megacorporations are inextricably bound to each other.

LIVIN' LARGE

Entertainment is big business in the Seventies, running the gamut from the sanitized and corp-approved to the downright deviant. No matter what floats your boat, it's guaranteed that somebody's out there to provide it—and probably to try selling you something in the process. Here's a quick survey of the smorgasbord of entertainment possibilities available in any sprawl.

NIGHTLIFE

The world of 2070 rarely sleeps, and most of the interesting stuff (at least from a shadowrunner's point of view) happens after the sun goes down.

Mainstream nightclubs—with their synthahol specials, DJs, and dance floors—are a dime a dozen. Some are more choosy than others, meaning you need to look good, dress well, or sport your exclusive-membership RFID tag implant to gain entry. Even the less exclusive clubs might have areas that the general public will never even know about, let alone hope to get in—including private rooms perfect for secure biz.

Besides the standard clubs you can usually find a large number of "niche-market" nightspots in most major sprawls. Under their skins the mainstream clubs are all essentially the same, but in the niche clubs you're more likely to find a wider variation of themes catering to a narrower range of customer—everything from the magically active to metahuman groups to lovers of Japanese anime (especially since Japanese culture shows no sign of giving up its hold on the world anytime soon). Newcomers who show a genuine interest in (and understand of the social conventions of) a particular theme are welcomed; others might be looked on with suspicion until their motives are determined. Some of these clubs are private and don't admit new members without sponsorship by an existing member.

Finally, there are Matrix clubs. In the Matrix nobody knows you're a dog—or a 12-year-old hacker, or a middle-aged ork pretending to be a cute Japanese schoolgirl—and nobody really cares, as long as you're cool. Matrix clubs exist only in cyberspace, and thus aren't constrained by those pesky real-world laws like physics and gravity. Naturally, hackers think this makes them far more fun than your typical meat market. Wizzer still are the clubs-within-clubs that can be reached only by that time-honored custom of hacking your way in. If you're good enough to make it past the IC, you might be amazed at what you'll see. After all, you don't think they share the good stuff with anybody who can plug into an off-the-shelf commlink, do you?

Sometimes people ignore the clubs entirely, arranging meets on the fly, flash-mob style, or setting up their own venues by staging "break-in parties" inside closed businesses or street raves in abandoned urban areas.

UNDERWORLD 93 BAR PRICES

Dawai! Energy Drink	2¥
Buzz Cola	1¥
Buzz Cola w/ Vodka	2.5¥
Afghan Nuke	3¥
Moonlite Pure	3¥
Soylent Red	3¥
Tir Lacrima White	3¥ (glass)
Tir Lacrima Rosé	50¥ (bottle only)
Hurlg	5¥
McDevitt Highlands Scotch	4¥ (shot) / 40¥ (bottle)
Sioux Scalper	3¥
Omega Fizz	2¥
Omega Fizz Extra	10¥
Hurricane	2¥
Carlsberg	2¥
Bottled Water	1¥
Tap Water	No chance!

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TOP MUSIC DOWNLOADS

Return Ticket—Speed Coma (Classic Chrome Rock)
Queen of Freaks—Roxanne (OrxRock)
Gun in My Pocket and Happy to See Ya—Nago (Gob Rap)
The Sound—Silicon Duo (Fractal Phaze)
Together Again—Domino Haley (C-Pop)
Kinetique—Kinetique (E-Trance)
Ma' Nbungo Do—Kaleope (Afroflash)
Victim of Causality—Ballistic Z (Nippon Glam)
Never Forgive, Never Forget:the Best of Shield Wall—Shield Wall (Classic Chrome Rock)
Decadance—Imaginaire (C-Pop)

MUSIC

Music is everywhere: in your house, your car, the places you shop, the ad kiosks you pass—even inside your head, thanks to your subdermal implants. Whether it's the squeaky-clean, corp-sponsored Top 40 "hits" or any of a dizzying number of genres from goblin rock to elven acoustic to synthrash to neo-classical to everything in between, music is an integral part of 2070s life. In many places it seems like everybody's listening to music—and if you get bored with your own sounds, you can always pick up something new by tuning your commlink in to whatever the people around you are broadcasting.

These days, music-makers enjoy many more options than their grandparents back at the turn of the century did. The old-style acoustic instruments still exist, of course, along with their old-school electric counterparts, but in the seventies they are joined by some wiz goodies that Grandpa could only dream about. Without a doubt the most important of these is the synthlink, which permits musicians to plug directly in to their instruments and create the music they hear in their heads. The synthlink was a breakthrough because it removed one of the last barriers to musical composition, opening up the creative floodgates for many talented musicians who lacked the formal training or the knowledge to produce songs the old-fashioned way. These days, most music (except for genres that emphasize their "natural" sound) is produced using synthlink-enhanced instruments, and with few exceptions, musical idols come and go with the fleeting vagaries of the public's hunger for the "next big thing."

SPORTS

Sports are big business in the seventies, every bit as much about making piles of cred for their corporate sponsors as they are about the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Equal parts contest of athletic prowess and media extravaganza, 2070s sports can be summed up in one word—intense. With the kind of nuyen that rides on the outcome of every contest in major sports, the field is wide open for every kind of edge that team, player, or technology can employ.

That's not to say that enhancements like cyber implants and magical augmentation are universally accepted. Take technological upgrades, for example: debate rages stronger than ever these days on the subject of cyberware, drugs, nanotech, and genetic manipulation. Some leagues ban them, some have split to accommodate them, others have begun to reluctantly accept them in limited forms, and a few have embraced them. Many top athletes don't want to touch them anyway, since there's always the chance they'll fail at the wrong time and put the athlete out of action; it's the up-and-comers and the over-the-hillers who most often look for the quick fix, but this is changing as attitudes change.

Magic, on the other hand, is frowned on pretty much everywhere. Even though lots of big-league sports boast adepts on their teams, spellcasting is a major no-no in almost every sport except urban brawl (a game that's part war, part football, part large-scale urban renewal), and leagues often employ trained magicians and spirits as referees to make sure everything stays firmly in the realm of the mundane.

One controversy that still surrounds major sports is the participation of metahumans. Some sports, like football and urban brawl, don't care and allow everyone to participate; others, like some baseball and soccer leagues, are humans-only clubs. Efforts continue to get these bans removed.

In addition to the classic major sports that have been around forever (auto racing, hockey, baseball, basketball, soccer, football, boxing, and so forth), more modern sports have fan followings every bit as large: urban brawl, combat biking (soap opera mayhem on motorcycles), court ball (ancient Aztec game akin to basketball, but with the loser's captain sacrificed at the game's end), and stickball (a Native American sport that's popular because it's one of the few that allows magic.)

2070 SIM BESTSELLERS

1. Paris '68 (*Horizon Media*)
2. Speedfreak 4: Cut to Chase. (*AGE*)
3. 10 Paths to Personal Success (*Regency*)
4. Fire - Legend of the Five Crowns, Part II (*Emerald Media*)
5. Wildcat (*Amalgamated Artists*)
6. The Great Work: Broaden your horizons (*Horizon Media*)
7. Spider J: A Half-True Story (*Ellis Alt*)
8. American Gods (*GMD*)
9. Forgetmenot (*Amalgamated Media*)
10. The Road (*Horizon Media*)

SIMSENSE

Why just watch a show when you can be part of the action? Why only get what your eyes and ears are telling you, when you can have the full spectrum of sensations and even feel the same emotions the characters are feeling? Simsense lets you do that.

The technology's mature these days, having been around since the middle part of the century, but as progress marches on, simsense just keeps getting better. How it works is easy—you experience it through a *sim module* (either implanted or part of your commlink), a standalone simsense player called a *simdeck,* or even electrically-sensitive nanopaste that you can apply directly to your body. Depending on the type of rig you have (and what kind of sim you're slotting), you can step into the main character's shoes and get the same sensory data she's getting, piped directly into your very own brain. Used to be that the lower quality sims only gave you the sensory side, but these days they all give you the whole shebang complete with emotional response.

As you might guess, the best simsense performers aren't necessarily the best actors, but rather the people who can experience the widest and most intense range of emotions. All the A-list sim stars have implanted simrigs, which are required to record the full experience. They have to keep themselves in top shape physically, mentally, and emotionally—after all, who'd pay to assume the personality of a flabby headcase? (Okay, some people would—but that's for the niche studios, not the majors).

Simsense comes in all varieties: action, romance, comedy, sports, children's, documentaries, educational, and so on. Pornography is huge,

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as you might imagine—as, unfortunately, are a wide variety of illegal sims that remove the safeguards designed to keep emotional and sensual responses to manageable levels. Of course, there's also the seedier stuff—but that's a subject for a little later in this file.

TRIDEO, RADIO, AND CINEMA

Simsense is great, but most of the time you don't want to experience your news or your idle channel-surfing in full-spectrum sensory glory. For this more casual form of viewing, there's trideo—3DTV. The name its mom calls it when she's angry is "digital high-definition three-dimensional holovision," but most people just call it "trid." Modern trids are hyper-real—it's something of an experience to project a dinosaur action-sim, war movie, or sexy thriller right into your living room. Though a huge variety of trid shows are broadcast via Matrix or satellite to suit your fancy, including pay-per-view, you can also program your own preferences and schedules and create your own personalized media feeds, from your favorite trids to the keyword-tagged news items—uncluttered by commercials, news, or other shows you don't care about.

If you prefer the big-screen experience, you can also head down to the nearest multiplex to watch the latest trid blockbuster with all your friends. Trideo cinema isn't as popular as simsense, but it does have its plus sides—after all, if you're the square-jawed hero in the latest bad action-adventure sim, you can't exactly take a break from the fight and start throwing popcorn at the bad guys, can you?

Radio is still alive and well in the 2070s. Most of it is corp-sponsored these days, but if you look around a little bit you can still find a few independent stations holding on to their small market niches and trying to fly under the corps' radar. Like trideo, radio comes in free and pay varieties, broadcast by local transmitter, satellite, or Matrix. Most forms come with their own AR "sense-spam" to supplement the audio portion of the broadcast.

Finally, this section wouldn't be complete without mentioning the pirates. Pirate trid and radio shows, broadcast using illegal mobile (and often highly sophisticated) tech, are a staple in most larger sprawls. Their content ranges from the near-professional (underground news organizations broadcasting the news the corps don't want you to hear) to embarrassing (the rantings of bigots, fringers, and tinfoil-hat types with too much nuyen), but the fact remains that these dissenting voices—for however long they last before they're caught and replaced with new ones—are a valuable part of the broadcast landscape. So too are the myriad of small broadcasters—after all, in 2070, anybody with a commlink can send out whatever content they want, albeit for a very short distance. Anywhere people gather in any numbers, the airwaves are clogged with live linkcasts of every media imaginable.

ADVERTISING

Advertising is literally all over the place. Unless you live on a desert island (and it had better not be a corporate-owned desert island, or all bets are off), you're bombarded by advertising from the moment you wake up to your alarm-clock radio to the moment you go to sleep with the hymns of trid commercials dancing in your head.

Ads come in all forms, from simple billboards and print spots to animated graphics, holographic images, catchy jingles, commlink-propagated word-of-mouth campaigns, targeted odors, and even subliminal cues and viral ads that replicate themselves to reach more markets. They show up on almost every surface that'll hold still long enough to slap an ad on it, and some guerrilla marketing organizations even specialize in altering other companies' ads to fit their own message—the Madison Avenue version of ganger graffiti wars. Memes (self-propagating units of culture) are prevalent, with Horizon being the acknowledged master of inserting these insidious bits of information into the public consciousness.

These days, targeted marketing has been raised to an art form. Because information about your every transaction is recorded, plugged into a relational database, data-mined within a millimeter of its life, and then shared with countless "affiliates," advertisers quite possibly know more about your buying preferences than you do. Using RFID tags and the information broadcast by your commlink, they can tailor ads to your preferences on the fly and beam them to your PAN from all angles every time you walk into a store. Sure, this can get annoying (and usually does), but isn't all the spam worth it for that one time when the clothing store points you at *the* perfect jacket you've been seeking for weeks—in your exact size, color preference, and price range?

FASHION

Seventies fashion isn't just about clothing—it's about your whole body and all the wiz things you can do to adorn it. Sure, clothes are one aspect: styles change radically from year to year, from the "natural look" of the early sixties to the tribal chic of a few years later, to the current trends in techno-inspired "wearable computing" couture, and getting caught in yesterday's threads can be the kiss of death for fashion-conscious club hoppers. But that's not where it ends.

For the 2070 fashionista, "the look" involves expressing yourself using that most intimate of canvases: the body itself. Other fashion trends include:

- **Body mods:** Piercings and tattoos are practically required (the more exotic the better—animated nanotats are hotter than ever),

BODY SHOPS AND STREET CLINICS

FASHION BRANDS

STREET AND URBANWEAR

6-Tees (Retro-American Casual), CD/Common Denominator (Practical Urban style), DressCode (Glo-Punk Clubwear), Furba (Pop Urban), ME MetaL (Meta-friendly Urban), NuZoot (Contemp. Asian Urban), Tribale (Ethnic Street), Victory (Practical Casual/Urban)

READY-TO-WEAR AND CASUAL

Beaux Retail (Middle class Casual), Lyric of Portland (NeoCeltic Casual), Trés Chic (Urban Casual), Tropicaliente (South Am Casual), Vashon Island (High-end Casual)

PROFESSIONAL AND EXECUTIVE-WEAR

De Button (Classic Exec), Europa (Classic Exec Ready-to-Wear), Mortimer of London (Old World Professional), RhineGold (Old World Professional), Laurentine de Lion (Upper class Professional) Soul of Seoul (Neo-Oriental Exec)

LUXURY

Armanté (designer), Zoé de Paris (designer), Ripon of Mumbai (designer), Ami Feather (designer)

PERSONAL ELECTRONICS BRANDS

Aquarius (Monobe), CD/Common Denominator (Horizon) Chungo-Ko (Eastern Tiger), Continuum (MCT), Deva (Mangadyne), Flair (Erika/NeoNET), Ikon (Hermes/S-K), Life by Evo (Metaergonomics/Evo), Moda (Aztechnology), Made In Aztlan (Aztechnology), Non-Linear Solutions (Transys/NeoNET), XXI (CatCo/Ares)

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while more extreme alterations like scarification, skin weaving, whiskers, and implanted gems and metals are gaining steady popularity. Full-body dye jobs, hot in the previous decade, have dropped some in popularity, though a new subtrend based on using slow-changing bioreactive inks is developing a small but dedicated following.

- **Hairstyles:** You name it, somebody's done it. Hair in non-natural colors is so common that people don't even look twice at it anymore, while alternative fiber implants, electrically-sensitive filaments that can change color with a thought, and head shaving (all the better to display your tattoos, implants, and scars) are all popular.
- **Advertising:** It had to happen at some point—more and more people these days are renting out their bodies as walking billboards for whichever product will give them the best deal. It's not at all uncommon to see ads tattooed (often in full animation) on people's foreheads, chests or backs, and in the days of the ubiquitous RFID tag, most mod providers will knock a bit off the price if you'll let them implant a tag advertising their wares along with your new look.

Of course, for the large percentage of the population who don't care whether they're "fashion-forward" and just want to be comfortable, the old standbys—jeans, athletic shoes, leather and synthleather jackets, sports-themed gear and so forth—are still as popular as ever.

If you *really* don't care (or you just want to blend in and keep your nice clothes from getting messy, gory, or otherwise trashed), there are always "flats"—buy them from a vending machine, wear them a few times, and recycle them for a new pair. Convenient, yes; fashionable—no way! On the other hand, flats mean never having to worry about getting out those troublesome bloodstains.

SEX

The sex trade is alive and well—if you know where to look, you can find a like-minded group of adventurers willing to share your deepest desire with you, usually for a price. Law enforcement has all but given up trying to keep control over the more vanilla end of the sex industry: strip joints and brothels (catering to all sexual preferences and metatypes and ranging from skanky street hovels to five-star luxury pleasure palaces) are common in every town of any significant size. Specialty sex clubs, usually private and invitation-only, serve the needs of all manner of sexual proclivities and desires: gay, transgendered, fetish, bondage and discipline, exhibitionism, and countless others. A quick look in the local directory should find you most of what you're looking for, though some of the more extreme clubs advertise by word of mouth only and you'll need to know somebody to get in.

If you're not quite ready for an "in-the-meat" relationship, there's plenty of fun to be had in the virtual world. Cybersex in the Matrix is extremely popular, especially with those whose chances of the real thing are limited by appearance, personality, or cred balance. There's also a thriving pornography industry, ranging from simple trideo broadcasts to full-sensory simsense experiences that rival (and for some, surpass) the real thing. Who'd settle for the boy or girl next door when they could have the latest novahot porn star as their own personal pleasure guide?

For the magically active guy or gal looking for fun, there's always their own private club: the astral plane. Free of their meat bodies in a way that even hackers can't match, magicians can enjoy a staggering array of pleasures by hooking up with one or more fellow astral travelers—whether from the next apartment or the next continent. There are even rumors of good times to be experienced with willing spirits ...

THE DARK SIDE

Turn any form of entertainment over and you'll expose the cockroaches crawling around on its underbelly. The dark side of the entertainment industry is something not many people like to talk about, but everyone except the most hopelessly naïve know that it's out there—and that you can find literally anything if you look hard enough.

This is the stuff the vice cops spend most of their time trying to stamp out, but its purveyors are smart and mobile and frighteningly well organized—and there's no shortage of customers. Do you like simsense? BTL ("Better Than Life") chips promise a sensory experience like no other, without those annoying governors to make sure you don't fry out your mind and end up drooling on a street corner somewhere. Crave something even more intense? Try a "snuff" BTL, where you can experience the moment of (usually violent)

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death from the comfort of your own home—if it doesn't flatline you in the process. Just try not to think too hard about the poor slot who "volunteered" so your "entertainment experience" could be recorded.

Maybe you like your pleasures a little more in-your-face. If that's your thing, most sprawls boast several private clubs where you can fight for cred against all kinds of opponents—other metahumans, critters (vanilla and Awakened), drones, you name it. Some go to first blood, but for those real adrenaline junkies out there, gladiator combat clubs featuring fights to the death are always looking for new meat. If you'd prefer not to fight, you can always make some cred by placing bets on the action. Just don't try to stiff the house, since the organized crime syndicates that run these houses have *no* senses of humor.

Are you a lover, not a fighter? Even in the sexually open society of 2072, there are still plenty of forbidden pleasures out there. You like little kids, furry animals, or nonconsensual sex? Guaranteed, there's a scumb—uh, that is, an *entertainment provider*—who can hook you up for a price. Want to share a night with Nadja Daviar or Winona Flying Horse? The real thing might be tough, but you won't know the difference at your local bunraku parlor, where "meat puppets" are surgically altered and equipped with personafix chips until they're better than real—at least for their customers' purposes. And why stop there? Bunraku puppets are just rented for the night—slaves are forever.

CRIMINAL ELEMENTS (OTHER THAN YOU)

Shadowrunners are certainly criminals, but that doesn't mean that they've got the mean streets to themselves. Let's take a look at some of the other two-legged predators who share the sprawl with you.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Wherever there's illegal money to be made, you can guarantee that the organized crime syndicates are on the scene and doing their best to take control of as much of the pie as they can muscle into. The syndicates that shadowrunners are likely to come in contact with include:

- **Mafia:** Everybody's heard of the Mafia—you know, that collection of Italian guys in pinstriped suits and pinky rings? Actually, the Mafia's come a long way in the last couple hundred years, and their influence is still strong all over North America and Europe. Organized into "families" and operating in every major UCAS city, the Mob is involved in just about every lucrative type of crime out there including shipping and smuggling, extortion, loansharking, hijacking, and gambling.
- **Yakuza:** An old and honorable Japanese criminal organization, the Yakuza demands unswerving loyalty from its members and punishes transgressions harshly. Its members—almost always male, Japanese, and human—are usually identified by their extensive tattoos and sometimes by missing pinky fingers (one of the more minor ways they pay for failures). The Yak's major areas of influence are prostitution, gambling, sokaiya (shaking down companies for credit and influence), drugs, and chips.
- **Triads:** The Chinese Triads don't get a lot of press when compared with the Mafia and the Yaks, but that doesn't mean they aren't a powerful force in their own right. Each Triad is its own organization, with none of the central control of the Mob and Yak groups. They take a far more enlightened stance toward women and metahumans, numbering many of both (as well as non-Chinese) among their ranks, and also featuring a number of adepts and magicians. Crime-wise, they specialize in extortion, protection, smuggling, gambling, illegal drugs, and BTLs.
- **Vory:** The Vory v Zakone, or "thieves who follow the code," originated at the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, but since then they've undergone many changes. Exported around the world by Russian expatriates, the Vory are organized into factions run by a single powerful leader (much like the Mafia). Though involved in smuggling and black market operations, the Vory's most profitable enterprise is black-market information, or "infobrokering."
- **Ghost Cartels:** Though the traditional Central and South American narco-cartels suffered setbacks with the development of

COMMON STREET SLANG IN 2072

arc—n. arcology.
beetle—n. Better Than Life (BTL) chip/download.
blank—n. a SINless person. v. to kill someone.
chiphead—n. someone hooked on Better Than Life (BTL) chips/downloads.
chromed—adj. cybered.
corpse (also wageslave, zombie)—n. corporate employee/citizen.
dandelion eater (also keeb)—n. vulg. derogatory term for elf.
gaijin—n. Japanese. foreigner, anyone not local or out of their element.
gillette—n. vulg. female street samurai or razorgirl.
glitched—adj. messed up, crazy, drunk.
grep (also grok)—v. understand.
halfer (also stuntie, squat)—n. vulg. derogatory term for dwarf
hermit—n. a commlink user who always operates in hidden mode.
hez—n. Or'zet. courage, sexual prowess.
hoi—n. v. a greeting.
ice—n. security software. Intrusion Countermeasures, or IC.
jacked in—adj. online, wired, having sex.
joyboy/joygirl/joytoy—n. prostitute.
kick artist (also cleaner)—n. assassin.
link (also comm)—n. commlink.
meshed—adj. online, networked.
Mr. Johnson—n. name often adopted by a person who hires shadowrunners.
mundane—n. or adj. non-magical; a non-magical person.
omae—n. Japanese. friend.
paydata—n. a datafile worth money on the black market.
rad—n. political activist, agitator.
rip—v. download, copy
scan—v. look at, check out, read
skraa—Or'zet. Hello.
slitch—n. vulg. derogatory term for a woman.
slot—v. mild curse word. n. guy ("the poor slot got cacked."). adj. have sex.
slot and run—hurry up, move quickly.
smoothie—n. vulg. derogatory term for non-ork or non-troll
so ka—Japanese. I get it, I understand.
spider—n. security rigger.
techno—n. short form for technomancers, also "VK" for virtuakinetic.
trog—n. vulg. derogatory term for troll.
vatjob—n. a person with extensive cyberware replacement; reference is to a portion of the process during which the patient must be submerged in nutrient fluid.
white hat—n. security hacker.
wiz—adj. cool.
wizworm—n. dragon.

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BTLs, thanks to biotechnology they have increased their crop sizes and profit margins and are getting back in the game with an assortment of traditional drugs and narcotics. Their biggest coup of late has been the development of Bioengineered Awakened Drugs—though they lack the full magical kick, they still carry enough mojo to take your mind on a ride—catered to exclusive clientele.

These are the big players, but the smaller ones deserve a brief mention as well. Ethnic-based organizations abound—the Pueblo Koshari, the Turkish or Kabul Maffiya, the Arabic Al-Akhirah, the Korean Seoulpa Rings/Jo-pok, the Scandinavian Vikings, and so on. There are also all sorts of specialty outfits, ranging from pirate crews and smuggler networks to assassin groups such as Chimera and the Smokers' Club, and also including the untold number of hacker groups who specialize in Matrix crime.

GANGS

Below the organized-crime syndicates on the criminal ladder are the gangs. Every sprawl has them, and they range in size from small groups that get together for self-protection or mayhem all the way up to well organized, multi-city gangs that nearly rival some of the smaller crime syndicates.

Gangs come in many varieties: the most common are garden-variety sprawl gangs that control territory and run criminal enterprises like protection, smuggling, or extortion, but most sprawls are also home to mobile "go-gangs" that prowl the highways looking for fun, profit, and victims. Rarer but no less dangerous are "wiz-gangs" made up of young spellslingers who seek their kicks on both the material and astral planes, and Matrix gangs that roam cyberspace terrorizing other users and hacking systems.

Some of the larger and more well known gangs with operations throughout UCAS major cities include the Ancients, the Cutters, and the Spikes, but old gangs die and new ones pop up every day. Wise shadowrunners know that staying on the right side of the right gangs can pay dividends when they need gear or the run starts going to hell.

ORGANLEGGERS

Getting involved with other criminal enterprises might end up costing you an arm and a leg, but rarely do they mean this literally. With organleggers, all bets are off—and you might end up losing a lot more than a limb or two.

Organleggers are the bogeyman nobody likes to talk about—even "legitimate" criminals like the Mafia and the Yak are leery of getting into the business (though this doesn't necessarily mean they aren't trying). In a society where somebody with a damaged or diseased body part can just head to the hospital or clinic to get it replaced, those body parts have to come from somewhere. Sure, they can be cloned, but that takes time, and often that's something the recipients don't have. Enter Tamanous, the big name in organlegging. These charming individuals specialize in getting the right part for the right person—and they don't care too much about whether the part's present owner is still using it at the time. They've even been known to hack hospital records to find people whose parts match their clients' specifications, and you'd be surprised to find out how many crooked doctors are on their payroll.

As you might guess, Tamanous is a great place for the up-and-coming ghoul (who not only gets paid to do what he'd do anyway, he also gets to keep the scraps), but there are plenty of non-ghouls in the bodysnatching business as well. The organization is secretive, well organized, and, since organlegging is all they do, they're very good at their jobs. Shadowrunners beware.

HE AIN'T HEAVY ...

Most people can't quite believe that there used to be a time when their ancestors discriminated against each other based on inconsequential differences like the color of their skin or which type of consenting adult(s) they liked to have sex with. These days, you're much more likely to encounter prejudice based on your horns or your pointed ears than because you're pink and the other guy is brown. Here's a look at race relations in the Seventies.

THE WAY IT IS

For the majority of people, race—or more accurately, metatype—doesn't figure too much into their view of the world. After all, it's been close to fifty years since UGE occurred and people started changing into orks and trolls, and almost sixty since elves and dwarfs arrived on the scene. The average citizen sees other metatypes every day: we work with them, run into them at the Stuffer Shack, and party with them at bars and clubs. Our kids attend school with them every day. For the most part, the five basic metatypes have gotten used to being around each other and problems are far less prevalent than they used to be. That's not to say that many people don't still prefer the company of their own kind (witness meta-heavy nations like Tir Tairngire or the Black Forest Troll Kingdom for extreme examples), but this is based as much on shared experience as it is on any overt racism.

Still, it would be naïve to say that racism doesn't exist. If you don't believe it, try being a troll and applying for a job as a corporate management trainee. Many workplaces still discriminate (particularly against orks and trolls) and other business establishments maintain subtle or not-so-subtle biases for or against particular metatypes. It doesn't just benefit humans, either—a human or elf walking alone into the Big Rhino (a notorious ork restaurant in Seattle) will find this out in a hurry.

Often it's the truly unusual who are singled out for discrimination: for example, even nearly ten years after the return of Halley's Comet brought SURGE and a new wave of changes, the so-called "changelings" still have a hard time finding acceptance within mainstream society, while the less common regional metavariants (such as menehunes, fomori, and night ones) encounter more prejudice than their more generic "vanilla" varieties.

PRO-META ACTIVIST GROUPS

In the face of such discrimination, it's only natural that metahumans would band together and form organizations to try to gain advantages for their group—whether they be political power, more resources or jobs, or simply the chance for their voices to be heard in government policymaking. Some of these organizations, like the Mothers of Metahumans (MOM), number all metatypes (even humans) among their membership, and their efforts aim to benefit everyone's needs regardless of type. Others, like the Ork Rights Committee (ORC), the Ghoul Liberation League and the dwarven Stonecutters' Guild, focus their efforts more tightly and seek to advance the cause of their own particular people. In any case, these organizations employ many tactics to get their points across: for example, ORC and MOM focus more on street-level grassroots activism (along with a healthy dose of civil disobedience) in addition to political lobbying, while the Stonecutters use their greater economic clout to advance the agendas of dwarfs. Regardless of the methods they use, there's no arguing that the meta-rights groups have made—and are continuing to make—great strides toward leveling the playing field for metahumans.

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RACIST ORGANIZATIONS

Of course, in any society there are always people who aren't content to just live and let live—they're convinced that metatypes other than their own are somehow less than people, that they're stealing the jobs and benefits that rightfully belong to *their* people, that they're destroying the moral fiber of society, and so forth. Some of these people have such big problems with metatypes other than their own that they band together with like-minded individuals and form their own organizations—sort of the dark side of the generally nonviolent meta-activist coalitions.

Groups like the sheet-clad Humanis Policlub and the pro-troll and –ork, anti-everybody-else Sons of Sauron range in aim from glorified political action committees to terrorist organizations bent on nothing short of the destruction (or at least the subjugation) of anybody who doesn't share their metatype. Sometimes, as is the case with Humanis, the same organization can operate at both ends of the spectrum, presenting itself as a benign pro-human social club while working behind the scenes for more nefarious purposes. The depressing thing about these organizations is that while their memberships aren't as strong as they used to be, they're still quite adept at manipulating the emotions of the young, the down-and-out, and the failures of society. Since none of these types is in short supply, the racist policlubs are guaranteed a steady stream of new members.

KSAF'S MAN-ON-THE-STREET SOUNDBYTES™

CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2071–72

How did the Crash 2.0 touch your life?

"It was bad, omae. Forget the money we lost. My brother died when his suborbital crashed outside Atlanta. My dad's Matrix startup went belly up too. He works for NeoNET now, but he never really got over the loss. Broke him and the family's never been the same since."—*Sharon [courier]*

"I don't talk much about it ... it was bad. I worked for MCT in Tsimshian back then and the RTG hub I worked on was targeted by Winternight. When the Crash hit we rushed to the hub and... a lot of people died. I saw friends burst into flames. I was in shock for days and missed a lot of it. I never could go back... sorry man I can't talk about it... sorry."—*Bluefeather [hardware tech]*

"I'd just given birth to Tommy here, we were in the maternity ward when the lights went. Then the computers went crazy. It was a nightmare. The nurses were in a panic, they couldn't get through to anyone. People were dying in other wards. I got Tommy and we huddled up in my room for a couple of days. Nobody came to see us. It was insane."— *Michelle [mother]*

What do you think of technomancers?

"Look, it's not like I blame them. It's like they're sick. AIPS. Not their fault. Doesn't mean they don't need help—thank God the corps have programs for people like that. It's safer for them and for us."—*Robyn [student]*

"Not so long ago people were getting their panties in a bunch over elves, trolls, and magicians. Hell, a lot of people still get the creeps around spellslingers, but hey, we came around. I don't think its fair to go around saying that elves and magicians are fine but these other people with odd abilities are not. Even though we don't fully understand them yet, we need to remember that they're people too."—*Aaron [talismonger]*

"I say we play it safe. We lock them up until we know more. For God's sake they could cause another Crash. Seriously! These freaks can read your mind, flat-line you with just a thought! My kid loves her VR games, and I worry about it."—*MarySue [house wife and mother]*

Civil rights for non-metahuman sentients?

"Look, I'm a black ork woman. You think my ancestors liked it when they didn't have civil rights 'cause they were women, or black, or because they had tusks? Everyone deserves basic human rights and without civil rights you have no voice. Things are bad enough as it is, people need a voice."—*Bibby [MOM activist]*

"What, Sasqs or AIs? AIs are programs, man. Smart programs, sure, but it's still something some programmer somewhere designed. That code was put together by someone human. You think my kid's BustaMove should get to vote, too?"—*Zander [maintenance tech]*

"A dragon got elected to the highest UCAS office over a decade ago. Why is this still a debate?"—*Arane [holistic healer]*

Have you ever been the victim of a hate crime?

"Probably more often than I realize. I see a lot of it too. There are a lot of people who haven't had the chance to learn about someone different, and people are scared of things they don't know about. It's just as common for a sheltered troll to be afraid of humans as the other way around."—*Anton [barman]*

"People think just orks and trolls have it rough, but do they ever think about how a guy like me feels when he gets laid off because they can pay them less? Or can't get a promotion because my elf boss never retires? I'm tellin' you Humanis isn't too far off."—*Raoul [police officer]*

"No. But my sister-in-law is an ork. Some bullies beat on my nephews, and the school kicked them out, just for defending themselves. I swear I almost went in to rearrange the principal's face myself."—*Patten [security guard]*

How do you feel about the trend towards personal augmentation?

"I'm fine with professional prosthetics, but what people get done to express themselves just freaks me out. But seriously, it's like they're saying 'I wanna be different just like everyone else.' Does it really make you happy to have a tail? Sheesh."—*Cybil [shop owner]*

"I think it's silly to try to control what people put into their own bodies, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. It's a dog-eat-dog world out there and people need every edge they can get."—*John [dock worker]*

"Augmentation is an art, and my body is a canvas. Who says cyber is passé?"—*Style P. [fashionista]*

"I don't know. I held out until I was 25, but most of the guys at the office have a headware implant or two. It's just the way things are. You want to keep up with the hotshots, like the ad says you need a 'whole nu you.'" – Brandon [broker]

"Well, it's dangerous isn't it? Too much of this stuff out there these days, and cheap too! Nobody's stopping kids from plugging their bodies 'cause they think it's cool. Hah! Then we complain society is losing its humanity, its values.—*Jack [pensioner]*

The 60th anniversary of the Awakening has just gone by. How do you feel the world has changed?

"It's hard to say. I was born after the Awakening. I don't know that it made the world a more dangerous place, but it certainly made it a more complicated one. Life can't have been this weird back in 2010."—*Amadeus [lawyer]*

"My parents lost everything when they had to relocate after the Great Ghost Dance. The Awakening tore the US apart. VITAS. Changelings. Bug spirits. Dragons. Don't get me started on magicians, can't trust any of them! The Awakening has been nothing but trouble."—*Sam [quality control officer]*

"I don't think it changed things enough. I mean, people were afraid when it first happened. And then they were afraid when SURGE came. And then they were afraid when technomancers came. That's all it was. One more change. When will we learn not to fear, but to embrace?"—*Sonia [publicist]*

If you could work for any megacorp, which one would you choose?

"I work for Mitsuhama. I always wanted to work for Mitsuhama. I am very happy to work for Mitsuhama, and would never want to work anywhere else. It's family."—*Lee [accountant]*

"Horizon. They're nice to most people, including metas. And they're really community focused, y'know? I mean, it'd be nice to make a difference."—*Ronnee [Matrix designer]*

"Aztechnology. They have real culture and history behind them. You don't have to worry about being taken over or merged with some other corp. They're like the oldest mega around. You can be proud to work for the Big A."—*Marcella [secretary]*

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GAIA'S HEART

by Jason M. Hardy

"There's a secret history out there you don't know anything about. This history is controlled by people far more powerful than you, and you're meaningless in it. Powerless, ineffective. Nothing."

Sleeter snorted, too loudly for the hushed room. "That's no secret," she said. "That's reality."

The room was dim, and what illumination there was reflected off the bright surfaces of a few objects safely enclosed in glass cases. A small amount of light came from overhead, but most gleamed from fixtures within the cases themselves, targeted to make the objects inside glow.

Koromatsu pointed to the case next to him, the long, trailing end of his black sleeve swaying beneath his arm.

"This," he said. "The real history of the Sixth World is about this."

Sleeter squinted. "A big emerald?"

"The Heart of Gaia."

"Really?" Sleeter looked again at the gem. The name Koromatsu had given it didn't make it appear any more powerful. It still looked like a shiny green gem.

"If this gem had never existed," Koromatsu said, "The history of the world would be quite different. This emerald has been sought by the most powerful people in the world, and they have been willing to do almost anything to obtain it."

"How come I've never heard of it?"

"Because it has not always gone by this name. And because you are not privileged to know the true history of the world."

When you have spent years believing that most of the world cares little about what you do, you walk the streets with a certain feeling of invisibility. It is startling and disconcerting if the day should ever come when that invisibility is removed.

Every time she approached a corner, Sleeter felt like sliding next to the dirty walls of boarded-up shops and peering down the cross street, looking for the people she believed might be watching her. But she'd been running long enough to know the worst way to hide was to act like you didn't want to be seen. So she made herself walk in a straight line, medium speed, head held at what she hoped was a confident angle.

She never should have spent so much time listening to Koromatsu. He told a good story, but he had no proof.

"2067," he had said as part of his dizzying monologue, speaking faster and faster the longer he went on. "The gem was held in a vault in the middle of Los Angeles. It was protected by one of the most daring spells ever created, a spell that drew its strength from each and every resident of the surrounding city, Awakened or not. It was only a small piece of each citizen's Essence, but when added together, the spell had more Essence going into it than any one mage, or even a team of them, could break. The gem was effectively protected by the entire city.

"There are solutions to problems like this, but few people are diabolical enough to conceive of them. Many of that group lie on the fringes of society, outcasts cackling in dark corners, unable to do anything about their mad schemes. But some of them, a very few people, have the means and ability to make these diabolical schemes come to pass. Unfortunately for the world, the existence of even one being with both the imagination and power to pursue these evil ends is one too many. That being can throw the entire planet into turmoil. Ever since the Awakening, our world has regularly hosted more than one such individual.

"And so it was that those who wanted the gem came up with a plan to take it. If the city was protecting the gem, then the city would need to be attacked. And their diabolical minds came up with a multi-pronged attack.

"It took them years to finally unleash their weapons on Los Angeles, but when they did, they fulfilled their mission perfectly. One of the weapons had a small flaw—the designers did not know how it would react to the local mana. So instead of killing hundreds of thousands in Los Angeles with a powerful earthquake, they sunk the city, rupturing the very astral space and unleashing the most devastating flood of all times. But it worked. Their combined weapons allowed them to briefly obtain the gem. And so they counted their project a great success."

It was utterly mad. The whole Deep Lacuna was formed so a few people could get their hands on some green rock? All Koromatsu had to support his story was his words, and if he wanted her to believe him he'd have to give her more than that.

There are bars that operate like permanent parties, places that forever gleam with the all-hours promise of empty fun. And there are bars where patrons with black souls perform research on whether alcohol can somehow make their spirits darker.

Kremlin wasn't sure how he always ended up working in the second type of place.

The worst part of these places was that he was expected to be something he was not. At a party bar, his only function would be to nurture the

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festivities, which he would do by providing drinks. Simple and straightforward. At the places he always worked, though, he was expected to be a friend, therapist, confessor, and even a source of wisdom, when all he really was was a guy who knew how much lime juice goes in a mojito.

He got through most nights by just letting patrons talk and drink themselves into a stupor. He was grateful that many of his patrons often mistook his silence for wisdom.

As soon as the girl with dusty hair walked in, he knew she'd take a while to shut down. Her eyes darted back and forth, her hands drummed energetic rhythms on her hips, and she sat with her feel planted flat on the ground so she could spring up at a moment's notice. If she ordered a mixed drink, Kremlin resolved to throw in a little extra alcohol, just to speed things along.

She made his work easy, though.

"Rum," she said. "A bottle. And a glass with no ice."

Kremlin had the bottle and glass in front of her immediately, and she grabbed the bottle before he could pour the first slug. She filled the glass almost to the brim, then downed most of it.

Kremlin watched the door, waiting for someone else to come in so he could pretend to be busy with other customers. But there was only an old ork snoring at a corner table, and Zeke, who was broke and hung around the bar most days hoping that Kremlin would be generous enough to give out a freebie. Kremlin positioned himself ten feet away from the woman and busied himself polishing glasses that just wouldn't shine any more, hoping that would be enough to keep the woman from talking.

It wasn't. Her pointy chin twitched, the skin over her cheekbones pulled even tighter, and words spilled out.

"There was a guy named Kooce, friend of mine, showed me some of the ropes, and he told me you never take anything at face value. 'If an ork tells you he's ugly, you still get a second opinion,' he said. Confirm everything, that's what he taught me.

"But he never said what counts as confirmation. I've now got five people telling me the same story, which sounds like confirmation. But the story is insane."

Kremlin pointedly did not ask anything about the story, but the woman kept talking.

"There's a group of people who want to steal a gem, this gem I've never heard of, and they've tried to get it before, and the things they've done ..." She shook her head. "The things they've done are the worst things that have happened to the world in the past hundred years. The Crash of '29. The Great Ghost Dance. VITAS. The Chicago bugs. The Ganges river floods and surges. The Ring of Fire volcanoes erupting, the big quakes in Japan, in Los Angeles. The flooding of Los Angeles. We think we know why these things happened, but we're wrong."

A word escaped Kremlin's mouth before he realized he was speaking. "Bullshit," he said.

The woman kept her eyes focused on the glass in front of her. "Right. Bullshit. That's what I thought at first. That's not how the world works, I thought. There aren't secret groups controlling everything that happens. There aren't artifacts shaping the destiny of the entire world.

"But there are people who think there are artifacts like that, and there are groups like that, and as long as people act like these things are true, then they kind of are."

She fell silent for a while, and Kremlin was grateful. She seemed no more or less sensible than most drunks, so he had no more—or less—desire for her to talk to him than any other drunk.

After about twenty minutes and five more glasses of rum, she spoke one more time.

"It's all over my head, anyway," she said. "I don't know what they want me to do about any of this."

Then she downed another swallow and walked out with the bottle of rum in her hand.

Sleeter couldn't stay away from the exhibit, even though it took her six visits to make it back into the room with the gem. Each time she came to the building, she stormed through the door, fully intending to march right up to the softly glowing object. But each time she was deflected. She was scared, and she knew it. Scared that the story was true, that the gem was a container of unparalleled power, that the mightiest people in the world were interested in it and would do anything to obtain it. The closer she came to it, the closer she came to the forces around it.

Five times she went to look at it, and five times she walked away without entering the room. The sixth time she came close enough to see it through a doorway, and at her first glimpse of it she turned and ran.

But after that, she got stronger. She made it into the room with the gem, she stared at it, then she pulled her eyes away to see who else was in the room.

Then her mind started spinning. How would they look if they were here? Would they disguise themselves? Or would they be so comfortable in their own power that they could walk around and show their real faces? Surely the dragons, if any of them came, would assume human form, but would it be one of the familiar ones known to the rest of the world, or a new one they used to walk around unseen?

Two weeks ago, if she had been in this room, she would have assumed she was there with an elderly local couple, a Japanese tourist, and a male dwarf with a human wife whose abdomen was at the level of his eyes. Just everyday people in a museum.

But the elderly couple, they both could be mages. They had that look, that firm bearing, and even though Sleeter couldn't assense for shit, she thought she could feel their auras. The tourist could be a samurai, a ninja, an assassin. And the dwarf and the human couple—a rigger and a hacker, ready to get the mage couple out there as soon as possible.

The elderly couple stood by the gem, reading the ridiculous placard that called the thing the Heartgold Emerald. An emerald! Can you imagine that? How blasé. How could the museum be so ignorant about what they were holding?

The couple had stared at the "emerald" for a long time, and none of the others left the room. Sleeter's eyes darted back and forth. Was it happening now? The first time she had managed to walk into the room, and it was happening? These were people who had killed millions to get the gem before. What would they do now? What would happen to her when they did it?

She wondered if the air was rushing around her as the couple pulled power to them. When whatever they were about to do finally exploded, would Sleeter feel anything? Or would her consciousness just be wiped out in a flash?

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But then someone else walked in the room. Two people. Teenage girls, their arms glowing with tattoos. Just like that, the room felt normal. Flat. The power was gone. The couple examined the emerald for a few more seconds, then walked out.

Sleeter stayed behind, watching the two girls. She had no idea who they were, but if they were powerful enough to scare away the elderly mages, they must be powerful indeed.

She stayed away from the gem for almost a week, and she was happy to feel its pull on her lessening. With each day, she became more convinced that she hadn't seen anything suspicious at all—just some people looking at a gem, then moving on. They weren't mages, and the stone was nothing more than an emerald. And since she gave herself a break from chasing after Koromatsu's story, she was able to go for the whole week without being exposed to more crazy stories. Life began to feel normal again. No one was watching her.

It all went wrong, though, when she heard the story about Lagos. It was a passing mention on some newsnet, something about yet another variant of VITAS springing up in that hellhole. As soon as she heard that word, VITAS, that shaky part of her mind opened up again. VITAS. The conspiracy. They had unleashed another virus, but they had set it off all the way over in Nigeria when the gem was sitting calmly in Seattle. What were they up to? How damned subtle could this operation be?

Maybe she had already missed it. Maybe they had already made her move.

She had run four blocks before she realized she was going somewhere. It took her a tiring half-hour to reach the museum.

She slowed, panting, as she reached the museum door. The air was cool but humid, and sweat ran freely under her leathers. She was going to walk into the museum—she didn't want to look like a madwoman—but then she saw them. The elderly couple. Strolling into the museum.

She didn't see the others—the dwarf, his wife, the tourist—but that was the couple. They were going back to see the emerald.

They were going to take it.

Decorum be damned. Sleeter ran through the doors, ignoring the stares of the desk clerks. If stares were the worst she got from security, she'd be fine.

She had lost sight of the couple, but it didn't matter. She knew where they were headed.

She ran by at least half a dozen white-haired couples on her way to the gem, and with each one there was a brief moment of hesitation as she thought *Is that them?* but then cast the thought aside. If they weren't in the right place, it wouldn't be them.

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It was simple. She arrived at the room, and they were there. The rest of the room seemed to be dimmer, the light coming from the gem almost blinding. The couple was there, near the gem, doing something to it, drawing power from it, building to who knows what. She had to stop them. Her only hope was that they would be too distracted by what they were doing.

At the back of her mind, a small voice told her that she was not ready for this. She was not prepared. This was the kind of spur-of-the-moment thing that tended to get you killed. Plus, didn't they look different than before? The last time, wasn't the man the taller one? And the other woman, from before, she had short hair, not long enough to put in a bun like this one.

So they had changed their appearance. It was a small matter for people like them. Her dagger was already out.

Both the man and the woman were on the floor, bleeding from several wounds, when a security guard's bullet went into Sleeter's temple.

All in all, it was the most fascinating object the man who had just discarded the name "Koromatsu" had ever encountered. He'd studied it, but that didn't mean he understood it.

Everything he did around it came out with a twist. He was one of the best, his adept talents pushing his lies into true artistry.

He'd helped it along, of course. Every illusion needed a little help from reality—or at least, the appearance of reality—to nudge it ahead. He'd made up the fancy name and the outlandish history, then found a few people willing to make his insane story somewhat credible. Ordinarily, a few lies wouldn't have been nearly enough, but with the force of his Talent behind them, fueled by the power of the emerald, the words had wormed their way into the woman's brain. She had been ready to believe. He just had to provide the food she was hungry for.

And the duration was astonishing! When the woman took her dagger to that poor couple in the museum, it had been weeks since he first spoke to her. He'd never seen anything like it. How had the emerald twisted a few well-woven lies into something that could fuel weeks of paranoia?

It clearly was an object worthy of more study. Sadly, the young street samurai who had been given an unceremonious burial in the Redmonds Barrens wouldn't be part of the team that would liberate the emerald. It was a shame she would never realize that he'd invented his entire secret history just for her.

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This section covers the key concepts and terms used in *Shadowrun.* Some are general roleplaying terms, and others are unique to this game system. Whether you are an experienced gamer or new to roleplaying, once you understand how these rules operate in *Shadowrun,* the rest will fall easily into place.

Some of the explanations provided here also appear in other appropriate sections in more detail. The first time a game term appears in this section, it is set in **bold** type.

We have attempted to take real world concepts and abstract them down into game mechanics as much as possible.

The mechanics for doing things in *Shadowrun* are actually abstract guidelines for all of an individual's actions, including combat, vehicle movement, and even how individuals think and react. These rules are not meant to be a direct copy of how things really work—they can't be. We try to approximate conditions and situations in reality as much as possible, but that can only go so far. That being said, we urge you to appreciate the rules in *Shadowrun* for what they are and not stress out when they don't simulate real life perfectly or fail to take into account certain conditions or factors. If something in these rules doesn't quite fit or make sense to you, feel free to change it. If you come up with a game mechanic that you think works better—go for it!

Above all, the rules are here to facilitate telling good stories. Don't get bogged down in rules disputes when it's important to keep the plot moving, just fudge it and move on. Don't allow powergaming to run out of control, but don't let an unexpected death or glitch derail the plot either. If you know in advance that a certain outcome would be more dramatic or amusing than what you are likely to roll, then don't bother to roll. When the rules get in the way of the story, ignore the rules and tell the story.

GAME CONCEPTS

PLAYING SHADOWRUN

Shadowrun is a roleplaying game that provides all the excitement of an adventure story in a collaborative format. Roleplaying games require one or more players and a gamemaster. The players control the main characters of the story, the protagonists of a plot whose outcome is uncertain. The gamemaster directs the action of the story and controls the opposition, the props, the setting, and everything else the player characters may encounter. The game is not a contest between the good guys (the players) and the bad guys (the gamemaster), however—the gamemaster may control all the bad guys, but he is actually in sympathy with the heroes. Players and gamemasters must work together to build and experience an intense and interesting adventure.

As a player in the game of *Shadowrun,* you control a player character (PC)—a shadowrunner. All of the character's statistics and information are noted on your Character Record Sheet. This is where you record your character's abilities, possessions, physical appearance, and other facts. Over time, you will likely expand your Character Record Sheet to include a detailed history of your character and her adventures in the 2070s.

During the course of the game, the gamemaster (GM) will describe events or situations to you. Using your Character Record Sheet as a guide, you decide what your character would do in a given situation. As you roleplay through some situations, the gamemaster will probably ask you to roll some dice, and the resulting numbers will represent your character's attempted action. The gamemaster uses the rules of the game to interpret the dice rolls and the outcome of your character's action. The gamemaster also controls any other characters that the player characters interact with.

THE ABSTRACT NATURE OF RULES

Shadowrun is a game and games have rules. That doesn't sound very odd; after all, you did plunk down your hard-earned nuyen to purchase this book of rules in order to play our game. But you also bought this book to become involved in a fictional world. The world of *Shadowrun,* however, is not the real world—no matter how closely it is based on it. It only makes sense, then, for us to make rules that reflect that fictional universe. In some cases this may mean certain game mechanics are structured more for ease of play or game balance than to reflect how things actually work. Not only do these rules sometimes reflect "creative license," but often they have to abstract things we take for granted in daily life. There are no "rules" for how well you play street basketball with your friends or how well you can write a web page. In this gameworld, however, we are expected to create rules that do in fact show these differences—a daunting task.

DICE

Shadowrun uses a number of six-sided dice to resolve tests and other semi-random factors. A typical player may use up to a dozen dice at any one time, so having plenty on hand is a good idea.

MAKING TESTS

Shadowrun is filled with adventure, danger, and risk, and characters usually end up in the middle of it all. You determine what your character does in a situation and how well she does it by making a **test**—rolling dice and determining the outcome by how well or poorly you rolled. There are many situations in which the gamemaster will ask you to make a test to determine how well you perform, be it bypassing an alarm system, shooting an assassin, or persuading a security guard that one's presence in the corporate facility is legitimate. The gamemaster should not require a player to make a test when the action is something that the character should be expected to do without difficulty. For example, if a character is driving downtown to buy soymilk and NERPS, no test is necessary. If she's suddenly found herself in a car chase, however—perhaps she ran a red light and a Lone Star officer is in pursuit—then it's time to break out the dice.

DICE POOLS

When a player makes a test, she rolls a number of dice equal to her **dice pool.** The dice pool is the sum of the relevant **skill** plus its **linked attribute**, plus or minus any **modifiers** that may apply. When a gamemaster calls for a test, he will provide the player with a description of the task at hand and which skill (and linked attribute) is most appropriate for it. The gamemaster and player then decide on the applicable dice pool modifiers—both positive and negative—to determine the final dice pool. The player then rolls a number of dice equal to the dice pool.

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example

Netcat is trying to bypass the maglock on a security door. To break open the maglock and mess with its interior, she needs to use her Hardware skill of 3 and its linked attribute Logic, which she has at 5. The gamemaster determines that she has a +2 dice pool modifier to the test. That means Netcat's dice pool for hacking the maglock is 10 dice (3 + 5 + 2).

A NOTE ON MODIFIERS

Shadowrun, Fourth Edition, uses four distinct types of modifiers: Attribute modifiers, Skill modifiers, threshold modifiers, and dice pool modifiers. Attribute and Skill modifiers affect the character's relevant stats directly, resulting in *augmented* Attribute Ratings and *modified* Skill Ratings respectively (see Attribute *Ratings,* p. 68, and *Skill Ratings*, p. 68). Threshold modifiers are situational modifiers that increase or decrease the thresholds of unopposed Success Tests and Extended Tests (see *Thresholds*, p. 63). Finally, dice pool modifiers are the most common type of modifiers; they represent dice pool increases and reductions from situational modifiers, the effects of augmentations, powers, spells, and from injuries, qualities, and various other sources (see *Dice Pool Modifiers*). These add and subtract from the dice pools but do not modify the basic Skills and Attributes in use.

The type of modifier in question is noted in the description of each modifier. Should there be any doubt, assume the modifier is a dice pool modifier.

OPTIONAL RULE: EYEBALLING MODIFIERS

Let's face it: while modifiers help to add realism to a game, they can also bog down gameplay when you have to consult a big list of possibilities and do a bunch of math. If you seek a sleeker and more fluid style of play, try one of the following options:

Adjust the Threshold: Rather than counting modifiers, tell the player to make a standard test without modifiers and simply adjust the threshold to account for how you think modifiers would affect the difficulty (as a rule of thumb, –3 dice would equal a +1 threshold). Note that this only works for Success Tests and Extended Tests.

Use the Most Severe Modifier: Instead of accounting for every potential modifier that could affect a test, quickly identify only what the most severe modifying circumstance is, and just apply that one. If it's a situation where you feel a lot of additional modifiers may apply, increase it by 1 or 2 according to your gut feeling. This should allow you to seize upon a single modifier quickly rather than accounting for all of the possible affecting elements, though it makes Tests significantly easier for characters with high dice pools.

For example, let's say you want a character to make a Perception + Intuition Test to notice a clue left in a room. Rather than looking up the Perception Test modifiers, the GM decides that the biggest modifying factor is that the room is dark, and applies a –3 modifier for that alone. If a lot of other modifiers might also apply (the character is wounded, the clue is partially hidden under something else, the character knows what he's looking for, etc.), the gamemaster can simply nudge the modifier up to –4 or –5 depending on his "eyeballing" of the situation, rather than looking all of the modifiers up.

Gamemasters should be warned that using the Most Severe Modifier may favor characters with high dice pools that might otherwise be kept in check by cumulative modifiers.

ATTRIBUTE-ONLY TESTS

For some tests, the gamemaster may decide that no skill is appropriate and instead pick two separate **attributes** that are relevant to the test (see *Using Attributes,* p. 138).

example

Netcat fails to bypass the maglock, so her pal Fei tries to force the door open with brute strength. This calls for an attribute-only test, so Fei rolls Strength 3 + Body 3 (for a dice pool of 6 dice) to shoulder through the door.

DEFAULTING

If the character lacks the appropriate skill for the test, she can still attempt the action, but will find it harder to succeed than someone else who has the skill. Improvising in this manner is called **defaulting.** In some cases, however, a task may be too difficult for someone who lacks the proper skill to attempt (such as brain surgery, for example). In this case, the character simply fails. For more on defaulting, see p. 121.

Characters who default use only the linked attribute in their dice pool. Additionally, they suffer a –1 dice pool modifier.

example

Now Fei is trying to follow a Triad soldier who she thinks may lead her back to his boss. The Shadowing skill is used to trail someone without being spotted, but Fei does not have that skill. The gamemaster allows her to default to Shadowing's linked attribute of Intuition instead. Fei has an Intuition of 3, so she rolls 2 dice (Intuition 3 minus a defaulting modifier of 1).

DICE POOL MODIFIERS

The *Shadowrun* rules often call for a plus or minus dice modifier to a test. These modifiers can result from injuries and situational factors that affect what the character is trying to do. The modifier affects the number of dice used in the dice pool. If more than one dice modifier applies, they are added together and applied to the dice pool.

Note that **threshold modifiers** (p. 63) do not affect the dice pool. Unless otherwise stated, any modifier mentioned is considered to be a **dice pool modifier** as noted above.

Optionally, gamemasters may choose to cap dice pools (including modifiers) at 20 dice, or at twice the sum of the character's *natural* Attribute + Skill ratings, whichever is higher.

example

Fei is trying to see what is happening between two orks on a busy street corner. The gamemaster calls for a Perception Test modified by the fact that Fei is currently talking with a street vendor (–2 for being distracted) and that the street is busy (–2 for interfering sights and sounds). This is a total of –4 dice to the Perception Test. Fei has Perception 3 plus Intuition 3, so she rolls a dice pool of 2 (6 – 4).

LONG SHOTS

In some circumstances, modifiers may reduce a character's dice pool to 0 or below. In this case, the character automatically fails the test unless she spends a point of Edge (see *Edge,* p. 74). Spending a point of Edge this way is called making a Long Shot Test. The character rolls only her Edge dice to make the test; this represents depending on blind luck rather than any innate ability or skill.

example

Going back to the previous example, let's say that the orks were a ways down the street and so the gamemaster applies another –2 dice pool modifier to Fei's Perception Test. This would reduce Fei's dice pool to 0, meaning that she automatically fails unless she spends Edge for a Long Shot Test. Since her Edge is 3, this would give her 3 dice to make the test with.

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As an optional rule, gamemasters may chose to limit the probability of extreme Long Shots by reducing the Edge dice available at a ratio of –1 for every increment of –3 negative modifiers accrued on the original test. For instance, if taking a Long Shot in a Pistols test where the character's dice pool would have been subject to a total –5 modifier, an Edge 3 character would roll only 2 dice on the Long Shot.

TARGET NUMBER AND HITS

Unlike other games, when you roll the dice in *Shadowrun,* you do not add them together. Instead, you compare each *individual* die to the standard **target number** of 5. This target number never changes. Each die that is equal to or greater than 5 is considered a **hit.** In other words, any die that rolls a 5 or 6 is a hit. The more dice that score hits, the better the result. Players should count the number of hits they score on each test and tell the gamemaster.

Note that scoring one or more hits does not necessarily equal success—it is possible to score hits but still fail a test (if you don't score enough); see the explanation of tests further on.

example

Manya makes an Infiltration + Agility Test to hide from the Lone Star officer searching for her, rolling a dice pool of 6 dice. She rolls a 1, 1, 2, 4, 5, and 5—both of those 5s counts as hits, so she has scored 2 hits on her test.

BUYING HITS

If the gamemaster allows it, a character may trade in 4 dice from her dice pool in exchange for an automatic hit. Gamemasters should only allow this when the character has an exceptionally large dice pool (and is unlikely to fail) or when the situation is non-threatening and non-stressful. If the character might suffer bad consequences from failing the test, then the gamemaster should require her to roll the test rather than buying hits. Buying hits is an all-or-nothing affair; you cannot spend part of your pool to buy hits and then make a test with the rest.

BUYING HITS

DICE POOL	AUTOMATIC HITS
1–3	not possible
4–7	1
8–11	2
12–15	3
16–19	4
20–23	5
24–27	6
28–31	7
32–35	8
36–39	9

SUCCESS TEST DIFFICULTIES TABLE

DIFFICULTY	THRESHOLD
Easy	1
Average	2
Hard	4
Extreme	6

example

Elijah is searching a room for a clue. He has a good Perception skill and Intuition attribute, and with various modifiers on his side (good lighting, knowing what he's looking for, etc.), he has a dice pool of 12 dice. Since Elijah has plenty of time to search and is not hurried, the gamemaster allows him to simply buy 3 hits rather than rolling 12 dice. That's more than enough to locate the chip buried under some papers on the desk.

GLITCHES

If half or more of the dice pool rolled come up as 1s, then a **glitch** results. A glitch is a mistake, error, fumble, or random fluke that causes the action to go wrong in some way. It's possible to both succeed in a task and get a glitch at the same time. For example, a character who rolls a glitch when jumping over something may knock the item over, or land on a nail she didn't see on the far side. The exact nature of the glitch is up to the gamemaster, though we recommend you choose a negative effect that is dramatic or entertaining, but not disastrous. The nature of the glitch can be tempered against the number of hits achieved: 6 hits and a glitch would be a minor setback, while 1 hit and a glitch would be a severe annoyance.

Characters may spend Edge to negate a glitch (p. 74).

example

Pistons makes a Climbing Test to get over a chain link fence. Rolling 5 dice, she gets 1, 1, 1, 5, and 6. While she succeeds with two hits, she also glitches since she rolled three 1s. The gamemaster rules that she climbed over the fence, but slipped on the way down and ripped open the bag she was carrying, spilling the contents all over the ground.

CRITICAL GLITCHES

If a character rolls a glitch *and* scores zero hits, then she has made a **critical glitch.** Critical glitches are far worse than regular glitches—they may cause serious injury or even threaten the character's life. The gamemaster decides the nature of the glitch based on dramatic effect. Perhaps the character's gun misfired or she hit a comrade with friendly fire, or her spell backfired at ground zero, or she accidentally set off the alarm.

Note that characters may spend Edge to downgrade a critical glitch to a regular non-catastrophic glitch (p. 74; note that the character still fails).

example

If Pistons had not managed to get any hits in the previous example, rolling no 5s or 6s, then things would have been much worse. Not only would Pistons have failed to climb the fence, but her gear would have gotten entangled on the top, making her stuck at the top and unable to get down without assistance—hopefully before the security patrol arrives.

RULE OF SIX

The **Rule of Six** only applies to tests made with Edge dice (p. 74). When Edge is spent on a test, any dice that roll sixes are counted as hits and then re-rolled. Thus dice rolled with Edge can potentially generate more than 1 hit (since you keep re-rolling sixes).

example

Jimmy No really needs to bluff his way past a guard, so he adds Edge dice to his Con Test. He rolls his Con 2 + Charisma 4 + Edge 4—a dice pool of 10 dice. He gets 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 6. That's 3 hits, but since he used Edge, the Rule of 6 applies and he gets to roll those two 6s again. He gets a 3 and a 6 for another hit, and then rolls that 6 again and gets a 5, for a total of 5 hits.

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DIFFERENT TYPES OF TESTS

The basic information you've learned so far about tests applies to every test you make in *Shadowrun.* There are, however, three types of tests that may be called for: **Success Tests, Opposed Tests,** and **Extended Tests.**

SUCCESS TESTS

A Success Test is the standard test to see if a character can accomplish a given task, and how well. Use Success Tests when the character is exercising a skill or ability for immediate effect and is not directly opposed by another person or force.

To make a Success Test, the character rolls her dice pool and counts the number of hits, as described above.

THRESHOLDS

Hits represent a measure of achievement on a test. In order to succeed completely on a Success Test, you must meet or exceed a gamemaster-determined **threshold** with your hits. The higher the threshold, the more difficult an action is. The standard threshold is 1 (so only 1 hit is necessary to succeed), though other tests may have thresholds as high as 4 or more. The Success Test Difficulties Table lists a range of difficulty levels along with a standard threshold for each. In some cases, a threshold modifier may apply to an action, raising or lowering the threshold by the stated amount.

The more **net hits** a character scores (the more hits *exceed* the threshold), the more the task was pulled off with finesse and flair. So a character who rolls 4 hits on a threshold 2 test has scored 2 net hits.

The gamemaster does not have to (and should not) tell the player what the threshold for any test is before she rolls, unless the character has good reason to know exactly how difficult the action will be.

If the threshold is larger than the character's dice pool, then there is simply no way the character can succeed unless she spends Edge (p. 74).

. . . example

Leila wants to pilot her speedboat between two larger ships and then take a hard turn down a narrow canal. The gamemaster decides that this is much more difficult than a normal Pilot Watercraft Test and increases the threshold to 3. Leila has a Reaction of 4 and a Pilot Watercraft of 2. Leila rolls and gets 2 hits, but that's not enough to meet the threshold so she does not succeed.

NOTATION

The standard notation for a Success Test in *Shadowrun* uses the skill called for by the test plus the skill's linked attribute, followed by the number that indicates the threshold in parentheses. For example, a Success Test utilizing the Infiltration skill with a threshold of 3 would be written as: "Infiltration + Agility (3) Test."

If no threshold is listed, then the threshold for the test is 1. So only 1 hit is necessary to succeed in an Infiltration + Agility Test.

If an attribute-only Success Test is called for, use the attribute in place of the skill: "Agility + Body (3) Test."

OPPOSED TESTS

An Opposed Test occurs when two characters are in direct conflict with one another. In this case, the chance of success is based not so much on the situation as on the opponent. When making an Opposed Test, both characters roll their dice pools and compare the number of hits they score. The character generating the greater number of hits achieves her goal.

In the event of a tie, the action is typically a stalemate, and the characters have to choose between continuing with another test or withdrawing. If the gamemaster needs or wants a result on a tie, then rule in favor of the defending character.

. . . example

Max is holding a door shut while a security guard tries to push it open. This test has no appropriate skill, so the gamemaster calls for a Strength + Body Opposed Test. Max rolls eight dice (STR 4 + BOD 4) and gets a 1, 2, 2, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6—four hits! The guard rolls nine dice (STR 5 + BOD 4) and gets 1, 2, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6—only 3 hits! Miraculously, Max barely holds the door shut while his team escapes.

OPPOSED TEST MODIFIERS

Situational modifiers that affect both sides of an Opposed Test in an equal fashion are applied to both dice pools. Situational modifiers that give an advantage to one character in an Opposed Test over another are only applied to the one initiating the action, unless otherwise noted.

Note that thresholds are never applied to Opposed Tests.

example

Lyran is trying to talk her way past a local street gang that wants to mug her, which is handled as an Opposed Test. Everyone involved happens to be intoxicated (they just left the same party), so both groups suffer a –1 dice pool modifier. The gang is hostile to Lyran, however, so she suffers a –3 modifier on her part of the Opposed Test.

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OPPOSED TEST VS. A GROUP

Some situations may call for a character to act against an entire group of opposing characters, such as a runner trying to sneak past a group of guards. In this event, only roll once for the entire opposing group, using the highest dice pool available to the group, but add +1 die for each additional person in the group (maximum +5).

example

Lyran's attempt to negotiate past the gang failed, so she distracted them long enough to run down an alley and is now attempting to hide in a dumpster. The gang is trying to find her, so this is handled as an Opposed Test between Lyran's Infiltration skill and the gang's Perception. The gamemaster uses the highest Perception + Intuition dice pool among the gang (a score of 6), plus they get an extra die for each member involved in the search. Since all four members are searching, this means they get +3 dice to their part of the test.

OPPOSED TEST NOTATION

When an Opposed Test is called for in *Shadowrun,* write it out using the skill + attribute called for on each side of the test: "Athletics + Strength Opposed Test." Many Opposed Tests, however, call for two different skills to be used against each other. For example, if a character is trying to sneak past a guard, the gamemaster would call for an "Opposed Test between the character's Infiltration + Agility and the guard's Perception + Intuition."

If the Opposed Test is between attributes, use the attribute in place of the skill: "Agility + Body Opposed Test."

EXTENDED TESTS

An Extended Test represents a series of tests that a character performs over time, such as a mechanic repairing a vehicle, a hacker programming a piece of software, or a scholar attempting to translate a foreign tome. When an Extended Test is called for, the player makes multiple tests and cumulates hits until she has enough hits to equal or exceed the threshold.

Rather than covering an overarching task (like working on a damaged car) with a single Extended Test, the gamemaster can instead divide it up into a specific set of goal-oriented sub-tasks (check-up, fix the engine, change the tires, upgrade the onboard computer, fill in the bullet holes) that are each handled separately.

Extended Tests assume that given enough time a competent character will eventually complete a given task. Though it may seem that characters are guaranteed of success over time, this might not always be appropriate or dramatic. The character may have a limited timeframe in which to accomplish the task, so she may run out of time before she finishes the job. The gamemaster can also limit the number of rolls under the assumption that if the character can't finish it with a certain amount of effort, she simply doesn't have the skills to complete it. The suggested way to do this is to apply a cumulative –1 dice modifier to each test after the first (so a character with a Skill 3 + Attribute 3 would roll 6 dice in their first test, 5 in their second, 4 on their third, etc). Note that a character can also fail an Extended Test by glitching (see below).

INTERVAL

The **interval** for an Extended Test is the time period that a character must work on a task in order to make a test. The interval period varies depending on the particular task. To simplify matters, we typically use intervals of 1 Combat Turn, 1 minute, 1 hour, 1 day, 1 week, or 1 month.

example

Chris's mechanic, Slick, runs a shadow garage on the side, repairing not-so-legal vehicles for friends. He's working on repairing a classic car owned by a local mob boss who wants it first thing in the morning—only 12 hours away. The car is pretty shot up, so the gamemaster, Adam, rules that this is an Extended Mechanic Test, with a threshold of 15 and an interval period of 1 hour. That means Chris has 12 tests in which to accumulate 15 hits.

After 1 hour of work, Chris makes a test with his dice pool of 7 (Mechanic 4 + Logic 3) and gets 1, 2, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6—that's a total of 4 hits on the first test. After 2 hours, he rolls again: 1, 1, 2, 4, 5, 5, 5—another 3 hits. After only two hours, Slick is almost halfway finished!

EXTENDED TEST NOTATION

When an Extended Test is called for, we write out the skill plus linked attribute used and follow it with the threshold and then the interval period in parentheses. So an Extended Test with a threshold of 5 and an interval of 1 hour is written: Swimming + Strength (5, 1 hour) Extended Test.

INTERRUPTIONS

Unless otherwise noted, characters who are pursuing Extended Tests can break off from their work and return to it at a later time with no penalty. The gamemaster must keep track of how much accumulated time the character spends on the task, calling for a test once the time equals the interval period.

If the gamemaster chooses, however, some tasks must be restarted if they are interrupted because there is no way for the character to "save" her work—such as methodically finding one's way through a maze, for example.

QUICK EXTENDED TESTS

In some situations, you may wish to avoid a lot of dice-rolling and focus on the storytelling. In this case, rather than repeatedly asking a

TASK DIFFICULTY THRESHOLD

DIFFICULTY	THRESHHOLD
Easy	6
Average	12
Hard	18
Extreme	24+

EXTENDED TEST DIFFICULTIES

To quickly set the guidelines for an Extended Test, pick an appropriate interval and difficulty:

TASK TIME	INTERVAL
Fast	1 Combat Turn
Quick	1 Minute
Short	10 Minutes
Average	30 Minutes
Long	1 Hour
Consuming	1 Day
Exhaustive	1 Week
Mammoth	1 Month

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character to roll for an Extended Test, the gamemaster can secretly roll once on behalf of the character and note the number of hits scored. Divide the threshold by these hits to determine the average amount of tests the character would've taken to reach the threshold. Multiply that amount by the interval, and you have quickly determined the amount of time the character will take to complete the task. Now you can continue to focus on the game, and you know exactly when you can tell the character she's finished the extended task.

example

Clockwork is trying to fix the prototype commlink his group recently liberated from Ares. The gamemaster sets the threshold and interval for the Extended Test at 10/30 minutes. Clockwork gets 2 hits on his first roll. Rather than asking for repeated rolls, the gamemaster simply determines that it will take him 5 tests (threshold 10 ÷ 2 hits) to fix the prototype, for a total repair time of 2.5 hours (0.5 hours x 5 tests).

EXTENDED TESTS AND GLITCHES

If a character rolls a glitch during an Extended Test, the task is not aborted, but the character should be inconvenienced in some way (broken tools, missing parts, or distracted from work by an annoying pest, for example). The gamemaster can also roll 1D6 and subtract this from the hits scored so far; if this reduces the accumulated hits to 0, the test fails.

If the character rolls a critical glitch, however, the task is immediately aborted—the character has simply failed and must start over. This failure does not need to be dramatic, dangerous, or catastrophic, unless that happens to make for a good story.

RUSHING THE JOB

In some cases, a character may not have the luxury of taking the time to do a job right—she needs to complete it by a certain deadline—*or else.* In this case, the character can rush the job and cut the interval period in half. Rushing the job, however, means that errors are more likely to occur. A glitch is rolled whenever half or more of the dice are a 1 *or* 2. She may get it done quicker, but she's unlikely to do it as well as she could have if she took her time.

TEAMWORK TESTS

Sometimes characters may choose to work together on a task, whether they are holding the door against a rampaging paracritter or fixing a car. To determine success, pick one character as the primary acting character. Each of the secondary characters makes the appropriate test; each hit they score adds +1 die to the primary character's dice pool. The primary character then makes the test, and her results determine success. The maximum dice bonus the primary character can receive from teamwork is equal to that character's skill.

If any of the assisting characters roll a critical glitch, raise the threshold for the test by 1 (3 for Extended Tests).

TRYING AGAIN

Just because a character has failed a test doesn't mean she has no hope of ever succeeding. A character may attempt a task she has previously failed, but each successive attempt incurs a –2 dice pool modifier. A magician who has failed twice to summon a spirit, for example, can try again with a –4 modifier.

If the character takes the time to rest for a sufficient period (anywhere from 5 minutes to 1 hour, as the gamemaster decides), the negative modifier no longer applies and the character gets a fresh start.

CRITICAL SUCCESS

Any time a character scores 4 or more net hits on a test (4 hits more than needed to reach the threshold or beat the opponent), she has scored a **critical success.** A critical success means that the character has performed the task with such perfection and grace that the gamemaster should allow her to add whatever flourishing detail she likes when describing it. If the gamemaster chooses, he can also reward a critical success with a point of Edge (see *Edge,* p. 74), though this should only be done when a critical success was unlikely (it shouldn't be used to reward highly-proficient characters undertaking an easy task).

example

Jones runs afoul of a go-gang that shoots up his motorbike. He manages to ditch the gangers and find a hiding spot before his engine craps out, hopefully long enough to make a quick repair job that will get his bike running again. The gamemaster tells Jones's player that she'll need to make a successful repair test with a threshold of 3. The player rolls 8 dice and gets 7 hits—a critical success! Jones not only gets the bike running again in record time, but he gets out of there before the gangers have doubled back to look for him.

TIME

In most situations, you don't have to keep strict track of time while playing *Shadowrun* as long as the gamemaster and players have a clear sense of continuity and the sequence of events. While it may often be necessary to keep track of time for specific periods within the game (for instance, if the runners must meet with the Mafia don for a dinner, and he hates tardiness), it is best dealt with in a fluid and abstract manner.

COMBAT TURNS

In certain situations, such as combat or pursuit scenes, timing becomes critical. When this occurs, the *Shadowrun* game proceeds in turns. Each character acts in order, the fastest first, according to their **Initiative Score.** Characters act in a set sequence known as the **Combat Turn** that is roughly 3 seconds long (see *Combat Turn Sequence,* p. 144). The point during each Combat Turn when a specific character can act is called an **Action Phase.**

INITIATIVE PASSES

Some characters may have magic or implants that allow them to act more than once in a Combat Turn. When this occurs, the Combat Turn is divided into **Initiative Passes.** Everyone gets to act during the first Initiative Pass (in order according to their Initiative Score), characters with two actions get to go again during a second Initiative Pass, characters with three actions get a third action during a third Initiative Pass, and so on.

ACTIONS

Within an Action Phase, a character can carry out a number of actions depending on their complexity. Each phase, a character can take one **Complex Action** OR two **Simple Actions** (see pp. 147–148 for a complete listing of what actions fall into which categories).

FREE ACTIONS

In addition to Complex or Simple Actions, a character can take one **Free Action** during each Initiative Pass in which she has an action. This Free Action can only be taken on the character's Action Phase or at any other point later in that Initiative Pass. Free Actions are detailed on p. 146.

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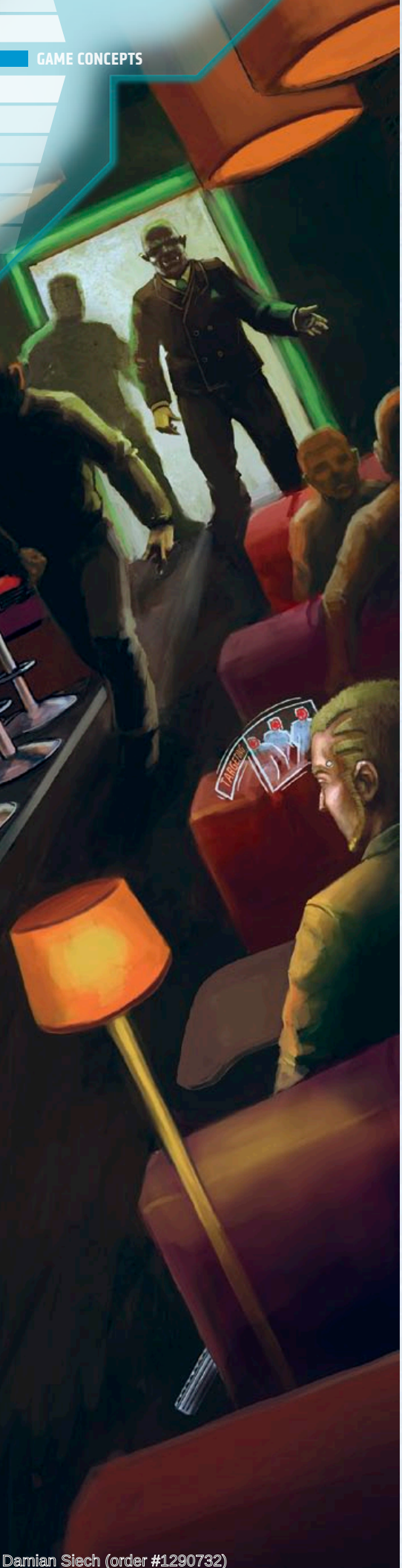

DELAYED ACTIONS

When a character's Action Phase arrives, the player may declare that she is **delaying action** until a later Action Phase (note that it is not necessary for the player to state which exact Action Phase). While the character waits, she may take Free Actions as normal. When something occurs to which the character wishes to react, she may then intervene and take her action as normal. Delayed actions can be carried over into the next Initiative Pass (or even the next Combat Turn), but the character loses any action she would have had that pass in exchange for taking the delayed action instead.

SHADOWRUNNING BY THE NUMBERS

In game terms, nothing defines a character more than her Character Record Sheet. It contains all the information and elements that make up a player character. This section will introduce and define these various components of a character.

THE CONCEPT

A character in *Shadowrun* is much like a character in a novel or film, except that the player controls her actions. Composed of a collection of attributes and skills, a character has the personality that the player injects into it. Without that personality, the character remains an *it.* Only when fleshed out can a character become minimally *he* or *she,* and, with good characterization, someone memorable.

METATYPE

Characters in *Shadowrun* usually belong to one of five subgroups of Homo sapiens: the predominant **human** (Homo sapiens sapiens), **elf** (Homo sapiens nobilis), **dwarf** (Homo sapiens pumilionis), **ork** (Homo sapiens robustus), and **troll** (Homo sapiens ingentis). Non-humans are known as **metahumans,** while the five subgroups as a whole (including humans) are known as **metahumanity.** As described in the section on *Metahumanity,* p. 71, all are human beings, at least according to the geneticists. Racists say differently.

In the early 2070s, humans are still the most numerous metatype populating the planet. Each of the other metatypes is represented about equally, but are scattered unevenly across the globe. In some places, humans form an extreme minority, but those tend to be areas where the other metatypes have gathered for safety, protection, and isolation.

Humans make up the statistical standard. As characters, their only statistical bonus is to the Edge attribute (p. 67).

Dwarfs are hardier (slightly higher Body), stronger (higher Strength), and more stubborn (higher Willpower) than humans, but are also slower on the draw (lower Reaction). They have thermographic vision, which allows them to see radiated infrared (heat) energy as well as the normal light spectrum simultaneously. They have a slower movement rate than other metatypes, but are more resistant to disease. And yes, they are short.

Elves are more agile (higher Agility) and more charismatic (higher Charisma) than humans. They also have low-light vision, which enables them to see clearly in near-total darkness.

Orks are much tougher (much higher Body), stronger (higher Strength), less charismatic (lower Charisma), and less acute (lower Logic) than humans. They too have low-light vision.

Trolls are big and nasty. They are a lot tougher (much higher Body), less agile (lower Agility), much stronger (higher Strength), less charismatic (lower Charisma), less perceptive (lower Intuition), and less acute (lower Logic) than humans. They have thermographic vision, really long arms that give them advantages in melee combat, and extremely tough skin with bony deposits that makes them more resistant to damage.

A player does not have to pay extra to create a human character. Players who want to play a metahuman (dwarf, elf, ork, or troll) must pay a little extra for the privilege.

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ATTRIBUTES

There are thirteen **attributes** in *Shadowrun,* though each character has just eleven or sometimes twelve. There are four Physical attributes, four Mental attributes, and five Special attributes. Out of the five Special attributes, most characters will have three while some (magicians, adepts, mystic adepts, and technomancers) will have four, but none can have all five.

Attributes are typically used to complement skills when making tests, though some tests are made with only an attribute or pair of attributes (see *Using Attributes,* p. 138).

A character's attributes—Agility, Body, Reaction, Strength, Charisma, Intuition, Logic, and Willpower—represent the raw material that makes up every person: her body and mind, what the character has done with both, and what's inside the person that makes her unique. Because attributes can be improved during the course of a character's life, they represent something more than genetics.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

Agility represents fine motor control—manual dexterity, flexibility, balance, and coordination. A character with a low Agility may be someone with an inner-ear problem, one leg that is shorter than the other, or a simple klutz. Higher Agility ratings may belong to characters that are "natural" athletes.

The **Body** attribute determines a character's resistance to outside forces. It represents the character's cardiovascular fitness and endurance, immune system, how well she heals, her tolerance for drugs and alcohol, and, to some extent, her muscle and bone structure and weight. Low Body could mean a character is skinny and frail-boned or has bad eating and health habits. High Body means a character is better fed, tough as nails, has strong bones with some spring to them, and an immune system that won't quit. Body does not *necessarily* correlate with physical size—a fat, out of shape character likely has a low Body, but a small character who is wiry and athletic may have a high Body.

A character's **Reaction** is, quite simply, her physical reflexes—how quickly she can react to a changing situation, and how well she can dodge the physical slings and arrows that shadowrunning brings. A character with a high Reaction is more likely to be on top of a situation and will be in a better position to react to danger, while low-Reaction characters will lag behind.

Strength denotes what a character's muscles can do, including things such as raw lifting power and running speed. Strength is somewhat dependent on a character's size and metatype. If your character is a 5'3" tall, 115-pound human girl, she's unlikely to possess an unaugmented Strength attribute of 6. On the other hand, dwarfs have a muscle density that rivals that of reptiles. Characters with low Strength may be small, skinny, or slight, or simply too busy to work out. A high-Strength character may be tough and wiry, know how to use her body to her best advantage, work out every day, or simply be fraggin' BIG.

HUMAN ATTRIBUTE RATINGS

RATING	DESCRIPTION
1	Weak
2	Underdeveloped
3	Typical
4	Improved
5	Superior
6	Max unmodified human

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

Charisma is a nebulous attribute. More than just looks, Charisma represents a character's personal aura, self-image, ego, willingness to find out what people want and give it to them, and ability to recognize what she can and can't get out of people. A whiny demeanor, a me-first attitude, or an inability to read body language or subtle hints are just a few traits that can give a character low Charisma. A character with high Charisma might simply enjoy entertaining others, may excel at making friends and/or manipulating people, or may be all flash and fun with whomever it is today. A high-Charisma character might deliver jokes at the right moment, have a sexy way of carrying herself, or command respect because her timing is always impeccable.

Intuition covers "mental alertness"—the ability to take in and process information, to read a crowd, to assess a situation for danger or opportunity. A character with little Intuition may be unobservant, may rarely think things fully through, or could simply be "slow." A character with a high Intuition is adept at making the best of a bad situation, knowing when to leave before an encounter escalates, noticing small clues, and working from instinct.

Logic represents a character's memorizing ability and raw brainpower. It denotes how fast a character learns, how much she can remember, and how well she can execute pre-planned sequences. A Logic-lacking character might get overwhelmed when confronted with a lot of details and may have a poor memory—especially for facts and figures. Characters with a high Logic rating will likely be excellent book-learners, able to deal with computer and magic theory with ease, and capable of building (and tearing down!) machinery and electronics.

Willpower keeps a character going when she wants to give up, or enables her to control her habits and emotions. Willpower determines whether or not a character is going to take charge of her life. A character with low Willpower might defer to other people when big decisions are being made, for example. A high-Willpower character is more assured and possesses a never-say-die streak. Such characters go down to the monowire because that's exactly the fragging *point.* Willpower also represents a character's cool under fire, her ability to resist intimidation and manipulation, and her resolve to stick to her guns when the pressure is on.

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES

A character's **Edge** represents that special *something* that can turn the tide and save the day—a successful gut check, a moment of brilliant inspiration or creativity, or a once-in-a-lifetime physical feat. Edge is a combination of luck, timing, and the favor of the gods. Characters with low Edge are unlikely to get unexpected breaks in life, much less win the lottery. A high-Edge character, however, is graced with good fortune and has an uncanny ability to succeed despite the odds. Edge can be spent at certain points in the game to help tip the odds in your character's favor. Unlike other attributes, Edge provides Edge points that may be spent in certain ways—once used, these points are not regained until certain in-game events occur, at the discretion of the gamemaster (see *Edge,* p. 74).

Essence is a measure of life force, of a body's wholeness. It represents the body's cohesiveness and holistic strength. Things that are invasive to the body, such as cyberware and bioware, reduce Essence. If a character abuses her body repeatedly with chemicals, toxins, or even just negligence over a long period of time, she may lose Essence as well. Long-time drug addicts and chipheads who have done permanent damage to their systems have lost Essence. Lost Essence can never be regained (short of the Essence Drain critter power). When Essence declines, Magic and Resonance decline by the same amount. All characters start the game with an Essence of 6.

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A derived attribute, **Initiative** is the sum of Reaction and Intuition, plus any additional dice from implanted or magical **reflex enhancers.** As it sounds, Initiative is used to make Initiative Tests (p. 144), which determine the character's **Initiative Score** for a Combat Turn. Any enhancements to Reaction and Intuition also affect Initiative.

Some implants and magic may give a character extra actions to take in each Combat Turn. These are noted as extra **Initiative Passes** on the character's record sheet. The maximum number of Initiative Passes a character can have is 5, but most character types can only ever achieve 4.

Magic is a measure of the ability to use magic and of the body's attunement to the mana that flows through our plane. Those with strong Magic ratings are able to handle powerful magic and mana manipulation. Those with weak Magic ratings are more sensitive and more easily drained by the use of magic. Those with no Magic rating have no magical capabilities and are tuned out from the magical realms. Serious damage to the body and invasive additions such as cyberware and bioware reduce the Magic attribute. Magic and Resonance are mutually exclusive attributes. A character who possesses a quality that grants a Magic of 1 or higher cannot have a Resonance attribute.

Resonance is a special attribute for technomancers, characters able to manipulate the Matrix with their minds alone (see *Technomancers,* p. 221). Resonance is an attunement to the echoes and transmissions that permeate the electronic world, an alignment with the wireless gestalt. The exact nature of Resonance is even more controversial than magic—some claim that Resonance is a form of magic that has adapted to the virtual and augmented realities of the modern world, others claim that Resonance is some new stage in the evolution of metahuman consciousness—but no one knows for sure. Resonance and Magic are mutually exclusive attributes. A character who possesses a quality that grants a Resonance of 1 or higher cannot have a Magic attribute.

ATTRIBUTE RATINGS

Care must be made to distinguish between *natural,* unmodified attribute ratings and those *augmented* by cyberware, bioware, adept powers, and magic. Generally, augmented ratings are listed in parentheses after the natural rating, such as: 4 (6).

The standard range of natural human attributes is rated on a scale of 1 to 6, with 3 being average. Physical and Mental attributes have a maximum *natural* rating of 6 plus or minus metatype modifiers, depending on metatype (p. 81). The maximum *augmented* attribute value for each metatype is equal to 1.5 times this figure, rounded down (see the Metatype Attribute Table, p. 81). This also applies to Initiative.

During gameplay, players can spend **Karma** to improve character attributes (see *Character Improvement,* p. 269). Improving an attribute increases both the natural and augmented ratings.

Essence Rating: All characters have a starting Essence attribute of 6. Cyberware and bioware implants reduce this rating. No character may start with an Essence greater than 6. Under basic *Shadowrun* rules, characters can *never* have an Essence of 0 or less. If they do, they die.

Characters with Magic or Resonance attributes are subject to penalties if they have an Essence lower than 6. For each point or partial point of Essence below 6, the character loses 1 full point from her Magic or Resonance and the maximum for that attribute is reduced by 1. The maximum rating for Magic is 6 + initiation grade (see *Initiation,* p. 198); for Resonance the maximum rating is 6 + submersion grade (see *Submersion,* p. 243).

The maximum natural rating for Edge is 6 (7 for humans).

SKILLS

Characters possess knowledge and techniques known as **skills,** which have ratings that are used to carry out tests. Skills define what a character knows and can do. They range from **Active Skills** such as Unarmed Combat to certain sets of **Knowledge Skills** such as Biology. The chapter on *Skills*, p. 118, has a complete listing.

All skills have a predetermined linked attribute—the attribute that applies when the skill is used. The combined ratings of the skill plus the attribute make up the dice pool for skill tests.

SKILL RATINGS

Skills are rated on a scale of 1 to 6, similar to attributes. A rating of 3 represents professional competency in a particular skill.

Beginning characters can only start the game with either a single skill at a rating of 6 (and all others 4 or less) or only two skills with a rating of 5 (and all the rest 4 or less).

The maximum natural rating available for a skill is 6, or 7 with the Aptitude quality (p. 90). Some implants and magic, as noted in their descriptions, may increase the actual skill, creating a *modified* skill rating, whereas others may simply provide bonus dice to the test (and do not affect the base rating at all). Note that the modified rating is used when calculating costs to improve the skill. The maximum modified rating allowed is 1.5 times the natural rating (making 9 the maximum achievable, or 10 with the Aptitude quality).

SPECIALIZATIONS

A **specialization** represents a focused field of training or education in one aspect of a **base skill.** For example, a character with Pistols skill can specialize in Semi-Automatics, improving her ability when firing any semi-automatic pistol. A specialization grants the character a dice pool modifier of +2 dice on tests using that skill when the particular specialty applies (see *Specializations,* p. 84). This is noted on the character sheet by adding "(+2)" after the skill rating. Only one specialization can be taken per skill.

SKILL GROUPS

Skill groups are sets of related skills that can be purchased and upgraded at the same time for a reduced cost per skill. The individual skills inside a group function identically to skills purchased separately (see *Skill Groups*, p. 84). Starting characters cannot have a skill group higher than Rating 4. Any time you improve a single skill within a skill group or add a specialization to one of those skills, that skill group no longer exists.

Taking specializations or raising individual skills in a skill group breaks up the group. Gamemaster approval is required to break up skill groups during character creation.

QUALITIES

Beyond skills and attributes, characters have **qualities**—both positive and negative—that affect them in specific game terms. Qualities range from Magician (which provides a character access to magic in the Sixth World) to Bad Luck (which turns her own Edge against her).

Positive qualities must be purchased during character creation, whereas negative qualities provide more points to be used during character generation. A complete list of qualities and their effects can be found, starting on p. 90.

Characters may not purchase more than 35 BP worth of Positive qualities or take more than 35 BP worth of Negative qualities.

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MAGIC

There are few who would argue that any single event in the known history of Earth is more significant than the return of magic. One morning the world woke up and the rules were different. The boundaries of existence changed and life had to be relearned. The world had Awakened. Some people have the ability to tap into the powers of the Awakened world and use them to do magic (see *The Awakened World*, p. 176).

In *Shadowrun*, Awakened characters must purchase the Adept quality (p. 90), Magician quality (p. 91) or Mystic Adept quality (p. 92) during character creation in order to have magical ability. Those with no magical ability are known as mundanes. Awakened characters who use magical skills are called magicians. Awakened characters who focus their power inward to enhance their bodies are known as adepts. Mystic adepts are a hybrid between adepts and magicians.

Magicians frequently use Sorcery to manipulate mana and form spells (see *Spellcasting*, p. 177) and Conjuring to summon spirits (see *Summoning,* p. 177). Both spellcasting and conjuring, as well as other magical activities, cause a type of fatigue to magicians called *Drain* (p. 178).

Each type of spell or spirit has a Force rating that begins at 1 and increases as its power increases, chosen by the magician and limited by her abilities, time, and money.

TRADITIONS

In *Shadowrun*, each magician follows a particular magic tradition. Traditions are the different ways in which magicians conceptualize and understand their magic—they are their paradigms, or personal outlooks. Whatever path the player chooses for her character, it is for life. There is no going back.

The path of magic the character follows affects how she learns spells and what kinds of spirits she can summon. It may also impose requirements on how the character acts. The choice colors the character's outlook, relationships, and motives in studying magic.

Two traditions are presented in these core rules, but characters can also invent their own.

A character who chooses the shamanic tradition is a shaman (p. 181). Shamanic magic is fueled through a link with the outer world of nature and the inner world of emotion, will, and faith.

A character who chooses the hermetic tradition is a mage (p. 180). Mages see the universe as patterns of force and energy they can control with complex symbols and formulae of power. Hermetic magic is more intellectual, relying on observation, theory, practice, and precise execution, rather than intuition and improvisation. Mages are scholars and often have elaborate libraries and equipment to assist their work.

Adepts have their own unique path, known as the somatic tradition. Adepts are concerned with the harmony and perfection of body and mind, focusing magical power toward that end. Adepts follow paths of self-improvement and personal improvement that focus on an idealized self image of themselves as warriors, athletes, speakers, pilots, and other vocations.

A magician's link to magic may be personified by a spirit-figure or totem, called a mentor spirit, which exemplifies her beliefs. Mentor spirits provide certain advantages and disadvantages (see *Mentor Spirits*, p. 200).

TECHNOMANCY

Technomancers are a new and unique character type in the *Shadowrun* universe. Emerged characters are mysteriously able to interface with the global Matrix via their "biological PAN" without resorting to foreign hardware or devices. Technomancers are able to tap into the enigmatic force known as the Resonance to power their abilities and manipulate the digital medium in hitherto unheard-of ways (see *Technomancers*, p. 239).

Technomancers must purchase the Technomancer quality (p. 93), in order to tap their Resonance abilities. Technomancers use complex forms (see *Complex Forms*, p. 88) instead of programs and compile Matrix entities known as sprites (see *Compiling*, p. 125) to do their bidding. Both Complex Forms and Compiling, as well as other activities, may cause a type of fatigue called *Fading* (p. 243).

GEAR

Gear is stuff the character owns. Gear includes a runner's trusted sidearm, her nightclub clothes and corporate drone disguise, her microtransceiver tuned to the team's encrypted frequency, her battered Eurocar that she bought hot from the local gangbangers for use as a getaway vehicle, her ancient Celtic wristband made of orichalcum that serves as a spell focus, and the commlink that wirelessly connects her to the augmented Matrix. The list of available gear appears in the Street *Gear* chapter, p. 310. Beginning characters purchase gear with a pool of resources available only during character creation. Once the game starts, anything a character wants to buy, she'll have to buy with money she *earns*. Welcome to real life, *omae.*

As with attributes and skills, let your character's background suggest appropriate gear when allocating resources. Characters should not be able to pull money and gear out of thin air—they should only possess items they can plausibly pay for and obtain, based on their backgrounds. Resources spent during character generation, however, do not necessarily reflect actual nuyen spent—if a character has something that would normally be out of her price range, it could be justified as a gift from a mysterious benefactor, something implanted against her will (perhaps with some sort of tracking device attached ...), or something she earned "in trade" for services rendered.

COMMLINKS

One piece of gear that almost every character in Shadowrun has is a commlink (p. 327). Commlinks are what everyone uses to get online, and thanks to the wireless Matrix, characters are usually online all of the time (see *The Wireless World,* p. 216). Commlinks are also the interface characters use to experience the augmented reality of the Matrix (p. 18). Commlinks (and other wireless mdevices) are not without their drawbacks however. Being online means you might be vulnerable to enterprising hackers and that you leave a digital footprint—if you don't take appropriate precautions.

GEAR RATINGS

Some gear has ratings, beginning at 1 and increasing with the capability and sophistication of the item. In addition to cost, gear usually has an **Availability,** which determines how readily and quickly the item can be obtained.

Weapons have a **Damage Value** that tells the player how much damage they do. The code consists of a number and a letter. The number indicates the base number of damage boxes the weapon inflicts. The letter indicates whether the weapon inflicts Physical (P) or Stun (S) damage. Some weapons also have an AP rating, which stands

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for armor penetration. The AP modifies the value of any armor used to resist the attack. See *Damage Codes,* p. 162, for further explanation of how these codes are used.

AUGMENTATIONS

In basic *Shadowrun,* characters may choose to have cyberware (technological devices) and bioware (modified organs) implanted into their body.

CYBERWARE

Various technological implants, chemical modifications, and structural enhancements to the metahuman body, collectively known as cyberware, can improve a character's attributes and abilities. Certain cyberware makes it possible for a character to accomplish extraordinary feats, such as acting three times as often as an unaugmented person (wired reflexes), recording a conversation across the room in a crowded bar (cyberear with select sound filter), or sending mental commands via wireless link to electronic devices.

Implanting cyberware in the body is an invasive procedure, so cyberware has an **Essence Cost.** The (meta)human body has limits—only a certain amount of cyberware can be installed before the body runs out of Essence and dies. Cyberware is particularly damaging to the magically active, because their Magic attribute is dependent on their Essence. Some burned-out mages, who have lost a bit of their Magic from accidents, drugs, or other abuses to their bodies, attempt to compensate for their weakened magical ability with more cyberware. This path is a rapid downward spiral, and more than one such runner has found himself unable to cast anything but the most weakened spells.

The more cyberware a character has installed, the more "inhuman" she becomes. Overly cybered characters tend to become a bit detached, and the empathy between them and other metahumans suffers for it. While some cyberware is so common that it can be implanted during lunch break at a corner bodyshop and is no longer remarkable to the general public (especially cybereyes and datajacks), heavy amounts of visible cyberware can still have a startling effect on many people. Implants are also an impediment to magical healing.

Many pieces of cyberware are considered to be dangerous and are either restricted to licensed security personnel or are outright illegal. This includes most cyber-implant weaponry, high-level wired reflexes, and so forth. Sporting 'ware like this can get a character heavily fined, jailed, or worse. This tends to make travel difficult for some, as most airports and border checkpoints scan for cyberware. Security companies have invented several methods of forcibly restraining people from using various implants.

Cyberware can be quite expensive, especially if it is illegal. Black clinics operate in the shadows, providing 'ware and installation services for hefty fees. Many of them offer used cyberware, and will pay for bodies that sport still-useful implants. Corporations and governments operate their own high-level clinics, far from prying eyes. Depending on a character's background, there should be some explanation as to how the character obtained the cyberware she has, what she had to do to get it, and perhaps who she still owes for it. It should be noted that many employers are not against removing 'ware installed in former employees.

For an extensive listing of various pieces of cyberware and their effects, see p. 338.

BIOWARE

Whereas cyberware is mechanical and alien to the body, **bioware** is of the flesh. Bioware implants usually enhance the body's existing functions by replacing old organs and organic systems with new and improved organs and systems. Bioware is harder to detect and easier on the body than cyberware, but it is typically harder to acquire and more expensive. Bioware can allow characters to do extraordinary things such as see in the dark (Cat's Eyes), sleep only three hours per night (Sleep Regulator), or move with more agility (Enhanced Articulation).

While it's true that bioware is less invasive to the body than cyberware, it still has an unbalancing effect on the character's holistic systems. Bioware also has an Essence Cost, just like cyberware.

For a listing of bioware items and their effects, see p. 345.

IMPLANT GRADES

Higher grades of cyberware and bioware known as **alphaware, betaware,** and **deltaware** are available. Alphaware is more Essence friendly than standard cyberware, but is more costly as well. Betaware and deltaware are even more Essence-friendly and expensive, but are also harder to acquire and are not available to starting characters.

In addition to the four implant grades some bioware must be cloned from the recipient's own cloned cells. Such bioware is known as **cultured bioware** and is more neurologically compatible and Essence friendly thand basic bioware, but is more costly as well.

CONTACTS

Contacts are non-player characters (NPCs) that gamemasters can use to make *Shadowrun* games richer, more unpredictable, and more exciting for players.

Contacts are vital in *Shadowrun.* These are the people a character knows who can reveal information important to the character's work, legitimate or not. Contacts are the purveyors of perhaps the most vital commodity of the 2070s: *information.* Need to know who's doing what to whom? What the latest street rumor is? Where a special piece of gear can be found? Ask a contact.

Contacts are not necessarily friends—many of them expect to be paid or to receive favors in turn. Contacts have their own lives and their own needs, so they may occasionally turn to the character for help (providing a new scenario basis). Contacts also vary in their dependability and trustworthiness—presumably if a character treats her contacts well and plays them straight, they can be trusted. A character will not get anywhere in the dicey world of *Shadowrun* if she doesn't trust *anyone.* To represent these factors, each contact has two ratings: Loyalty (indicating the depth of the relationship) and Connection (how networked they are), both described below.

Player characters start off with contacts acquired during character creation. These are contacts the character has established a working relationship with based on past legwork and social interactions. It is also possible to acquire contacts during the game, but only through roleplaying. Characters cannot "buy" contacts once the game begins; they have to earn them the hard way.

For more information, see *Contacts,* p. 285.

LOYALTY RATING

This is the contact's level of loyalty towards the character—how much the contact will inconvenience himself, protect the character, or put himself at risk for the character. See p. 285.

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CONNECTION RATING

A contact's Connection rating indicates how useful he is in terms of his own network of contacts and influence. Connection is rated from 1 to 6, with higher-rated contacts having a better chance of providing favors, acquiring swag, or getting the information needed. For more information, see p. 285.

LIFESTYLE

During character creation, the player must "purchase" the character's starting lifestyle. Lifestyle determines how well the character lives, and it eliminates the worry of daily expenses like food, laundry, phone bills, and so on. To maintain a lifestyle once the game begins, the character must pay a certain amount of money (based on the lifestyle) per month. Lifestyles are covered in detail on p. 267.

CONDITION MONITORS

An important part of the record sheet is the **Condition Monitor,** consisting of two tracks. The **Physical Damage Track** displays wound damage and shows when the character dies. The **Stun Damage Track** shows fatigue and stun damage and indicates when a character falls unconscious. See *Damage,* p. 162, for more information.

The Physical Damage Track has a number of boxes equal to 8 plus half a character's Body attribute (round up). The Stun Damage Track has a number of boxes equal to 8 plus half a character's Willpower attribute (round up).

Some pieces of equipment, such as vehicles, also have a Condition Monitor to track the amount of damage the object has taken.

KARMA

Karma is the numerical representation of a character's accomplishments (see *Karma,* p. 269). It is the equivalent of experience, awarded to characters at the end of adventures

METAHUMANITY

Humans are no longer alone—they are just one of the five major subspecies of *Homo sapiens.* Known collectively as metahumanity, each of the five metatypes—dwarf, elf, human, ork, and troll—are more or less evenly distributed ethnically, though populations tend to congregate geographically across the globe for various reasons. Though humans retain the majority, each of the others comprises a significant percentage of the worldwide population.

The first metatypes to appear were dwarfs and elves born during the first wave of UGE (Unexpected Genetic Expression) in 2011. Orks and trolls appeared ten years later, during the period of "Goblinization," when many humans suddenly transformed. Now a half century past the Awakening, goblinization is exceedingly rare, occurring only to humans, usually during puberty.

In 2072, most metahumans are born to parents of the same metatype. In the case of mixed parents, the child has a roughly even chance of being born as the metatype of either the father or the mother. There are no "half-breeds" in the Sixth World—no elf-orks or dwarf-trolls, no matter how amusing the concept may be.

Many first and second generation orks and trolls—especially those who goblinized—died young, indicating the relatively low lifespan of these metatypes. The early dwarfs and elves are still around, however, many of them showing little sign of aging. Lifespans for all metatypes are on the rise, which scientists partially ascribe to gene therapy and leonization (anti-aging treatments) and partially to improvements in social acceptance—leading to better medical treatment, living situations, and other quality of life measures. Few countries, however, factor the SINless into their average lifespan statistics—after all, how could they?—and thus official figures may be especially misleading, as orks and trolls are statistically more likely to be SINless than the other metatypes.

DWARFS

Homo sapiens pumilionis

Short, stocky, and barrel-chested, a dwarf typically has shorter legs than other metatypes. Dwarfs have natural thermographic vision (which helps fuel the stories that they prefer living underground—a stereotype that is only partially true as the 21st century marches on). They also have a hardy immune system and rarely get sick, even when exposed to toxins. They normally live in small family groups, sometimes isolating themselves from the rest of society.

In folklore, dwarfs are depicted as hard workers, taking on physical labor that no others would do. This holds true in the Sixth World, as dwarfs are known both for their strong work ethic and for an incredible ability to adapt to new technology and processes. When it comes time for megacorps to recognize the true brains behind many innovations, it's often a dwarf—to the surprise of many. Most dwarfs are quiet and unassuming about their abilities; as illustrated by noted programmer Frank "Friz" Baylor's live Matrixcast upon receiving the 2069 Innovative IC award: "I'm sorry I could not attend the awards in person, but I didn't want to take the evening off work—talk to you next year, when I repeat!"

Of all the metatypes, dwarfs tend to be the most assimilated into mainstream society. Dwarfs encounter less prejudice as they are not feared like orks and trolls or seen as glamorous or conspiratorial like elves, but they do often encounter paternalistic attitudes from those that equate short with child-like. Dwarfs must also struggle living in a world built for taller beings, as well as being literally overlooked when it comes to equal opportunities.

ELVES

Homo sapiens nobilis

Elves are taller and slimmer than the average human, though their bone structure and musculature are no weaker than a human's. Their ears are distinctly pointed, and many elves wear their hair—which is normally very fine—long, so they can cover their ears in some social situations. Elven body hair is sparse to non-existent, and their eyes are highly capable in dim light. Elves have the longest gestation period of the metatypes, at just under a year.

Elves hold a position in pop culture unchallenged by any other metatype, partly due to their exotic looks, striking features, and the adoption of Sperethiel, their own "ancient" language (a claim disputed by some). Many media icons—from models to singers to politicians to porn stars to high-profile lawyers—are elves. Unlike dwarfs, orks, and trolls, who are discriminated against on the basis of being "different and ugly," elves are often looked down upon by the other metatypes due to being "different and beautiful." According to stereotype, elves are either poncy faux-aristocrats, homosexual, or back-to-nature "dandelion eaters" (though, in fact, a majority of elves *are* vegetarian). This intolerance is fostered by the common perception that there is an "elven conspiracy" set to take over the world (a belief that is not entirely without credible support, as illustrated by the foundation of the "elven" nations of Tir Tairngire and Tír na nÓg).

A new generation of elves is attempting to dispel these myths and unfair media portrayal, though some reckless youth are going out of their way to paint themselves as rebellious street toughs, swelling the ranks of gangs like the Ancients.

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METAHUMAN CHARACTERISTICS TABLE			
METATYPE	AVERAGE HEIGHT	AVERAGE WEIGHT	AVERAGE LIFESPAN
Dwarf	1.2 meters	54 kg	More than 100 years
Elf	1.9 meters	80 kg	Several hundred years
Human	1.75 meters	78 kg	65 years (worldwide)
Ork	1.9 meters	128 kg	35–45 years
Troll	2.5 meters	300 kg	55 years

HUMANS

Homo sapiens sapiens

Humans still make up a slight majority of the Earth's population, on average. Most stand about 1.75 meters tall and weigh just under 80 kilograms. Sixty years after the Awakening, humans are still seen as "the norm" by laymen and scientific organizations, and are typically the measuring stick to which the other metatypes are compared.

ORKS

Homo sapiens robustus

Orks are proportioned similarly to humans, albeit with a heavier build that adds to their overall bulk. Beyond size, the most distinguishing physical feature of orks are large lower canines, which often look even more alien when paired with the metatype's characteristic thin lips and flat noses. Ork ears are pointed just like elf ears, though not as elongated. Also like elves, ork eyes are naturally adapted for low-light situations.

Likely due to their high birth rates, orks often live in large, communal, extended family groups. Children are most often born in litters of four, but some ork mothers have given birth to as many as eight young. When *sapiens* are born to ork mothers, they will express as *robustus* at puberty roughly 95% of the time. Ork gestation periods are the shortest of any of the metatypes at roughly 6 months.

In 2060, *The Or'zet Codex,* published by the Orkland Community Center, established the basics of an ork language and spread through academic and social networks. This was not a new language; Or'zet is an interpretation of an ancient text, one of the many secrets of the

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PLAYING IN THREE WORLDS

One of the bigger challenges for gamemasters, both experienced and new, to bringing an action packed shadowrun to life is the fact that the game can take place in three distinct—though connected—realms: the physical world the characters inhabit, the astral plane and the Matrix.

Keeping track of these three parallel worlds can be complicated, and gamemasters may prefer to play down both magic and the Matrix until they've familiarized themselves (and their players) with the basics of mundane shadowrunning. Introducing the complexities of the astral world and/or the Matrix gradually, over the course of the first few sessions. rather than presenting them up front will generally assuage some of the inherent difficulties and keep the game from getting bogged down and becoming non-fun.

Once familiarized with the nuances of the "three worlds", finding a balance and keeping the story flowing can sometimes still be difficult in the heat of the action. Gamemasters will find it helps enormously to plan and approach each scene in an adventure with a general idea of what *might* transpire in the three worlds, rather than just preparing the elements of the physical encounter. In essence, be prepared for the eventuality that astral space and/or the Matrix will come into play, and map out some details in case they are needed.

THE SIXTH WORLD: AN EVOLVING (HI)STORY

Over the past twenty years, numerous different authors, artists, editors, and developers have contributed their voice to the Shadowrun *setting,* shaping, expanding, transforming, plotting, and generally breathing life into the dystopic universe known as the Sixth World. Unfolding across dozens of sourcebooks, setting books, adventures, and novels the Sixth World is one of the richest and most detailed settings ever conceived for a roleplaying game. A world with it'ss own ongoing and evolving history.

Such depth can be as daunting as it is fascinating to new players—that's the bad news. The good news is that you don't need to worry about any of it to enjoy a game of *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition.* In fact, all you need is the core book you are holding in your hands, some dice, some friends, and a little time to spare.

Shadowrun, Fourth Edition moves the Sixth World setting into the Seventies, five years after the events described in the final book of the previous edition. The Sixth World has evolved with the times presenting fresh opportunities for adventure and mayhem, equally accessible to long time fans and newcomers.

The world is familiar and yet different; things have changed. New technologies, new megacorps, and new powers have carved their stake in once familiar territories. New developments, new characters, and new settings will be introduced in coming books, but fans of Shadowrun's long and illustrious history can rest assured, old mysteries, familiar characters, and old plots have not been forgotten.

old world that the great dragon Dunkelzahn hoarded until his death. Though some tried to suppress this discovery, Or'zet soon became a cultural phenomenon and helped fuel "ork pride" throughout the sixties. On the other hand, it also has led to an explosion of "orxploitation" media that exploits the stereotyped image of orks as poorly tempered or prone to criminal activities.

TROLLS

Homo sapiens ingentis

The largest and most exotic of the metatypes, trolls stand two and a half meters tall and can weigh upwards of 350 kilograms, though weights closer to 300 kilograms are more common. Most trolls have arms that are far longer in proportion to those of the other metahuman races, and their skin is often ridged and lumpy due to natural dermal bone deposits, resulting in a natural armor effect. Like dwarfs, trolls have natural thermographic vision, granting them enhanced sight, especially in low light conditions. A troll's ears are pointed, and they have two extra teeth—for a total of 34—including prominent lower canines. Trolls also have a pair of horns that grow in all manner of ways—straight, curled, twisted, etc.

Though stereotyped as stupid or frightening, trolls are no less intelligent or well mannered than other metatypes, though they do suffer from disproportionally high illiteracy and poverty rates. Perhaps because they still face a certain amount of prejudice in society—not to mention the daily size difficulties of living in a society primarily oriented towards smaller people—trolls often band together socially and culturally. Like orks, many trolls have been driven to the fringes of society by fear and intolerance, leading to extensive populations of SINless squatter trolls. Some trolls prefer the outcast lifestyle, preferring to live simple isolated lifestyles in wilderness or remote urban settings. On the flipside, many trolls have found gainful employment for the very traits that make them marginalized: size, strength, and intimidation. Trolls often work as manual laborers and are in high demand as bouncers, bodyguards, and other security positions.

METAHUMANITY AND BEYOND

Life and sentience in the Sixth World take a bewildering variety of forms, from "plain" metahumanity to the decidedly inhuman intellects of dragons, free spirits and artificial intelligences. The dynamics of how these sundry entities co-exist and interact is one of the key elements of Shadowrun's unique universe. Consequently, it's important to understand some basic facts.

The five metatypes (ie. dwarf, elf, human, ork, and troll) presented in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* represent the overwhelming majority of Earth's sentient population in 2072—approximately 98 percent. These are the races that populate the megalopolises and lesser sprawls of the Sixth World. Humans represent about 60 percent of that total, the other metatypes collectively making up the rest. Additionally, each baseline metatype is known to have unique ethnic/regional expressions, known as metavariants, though these are invariably minorities even among the global baseline metatype population.

In many parts of the Sixth World, even cosmopolitan and developed areas, metahumans are still subject to fear, racial prejudice, and social exclusion, particularly the "Goblinized" (orks and trolls). This is one of the reasons many metahumans gather in their own communities and nations, why others are pushed into a life in the criminal underworld, and why the shadow community has an uncommon concentration of metahumans compared to other walks of life.

The remaining 2 percent of the global population includes dracoforms, ghouls and other vampiric entities, spirits, artificial intelligences, shapeshifters, and other sentient non-metahuman species. All these beings are comparatively rare on the streets of 2072—even within their native habitats—and are usually viewed with a mixture of awe, fascination, fear, and suspicion if not outright hostility by common metahumanity. While rules for playing such exotic character types (and metavariants) are introduced in the advanced core book Runners' Companion, such characters are notably exotic, rare, and otherwise remarkable compared to normal metahumans (few of which are good survival traits in the dangerous world of the shadows).

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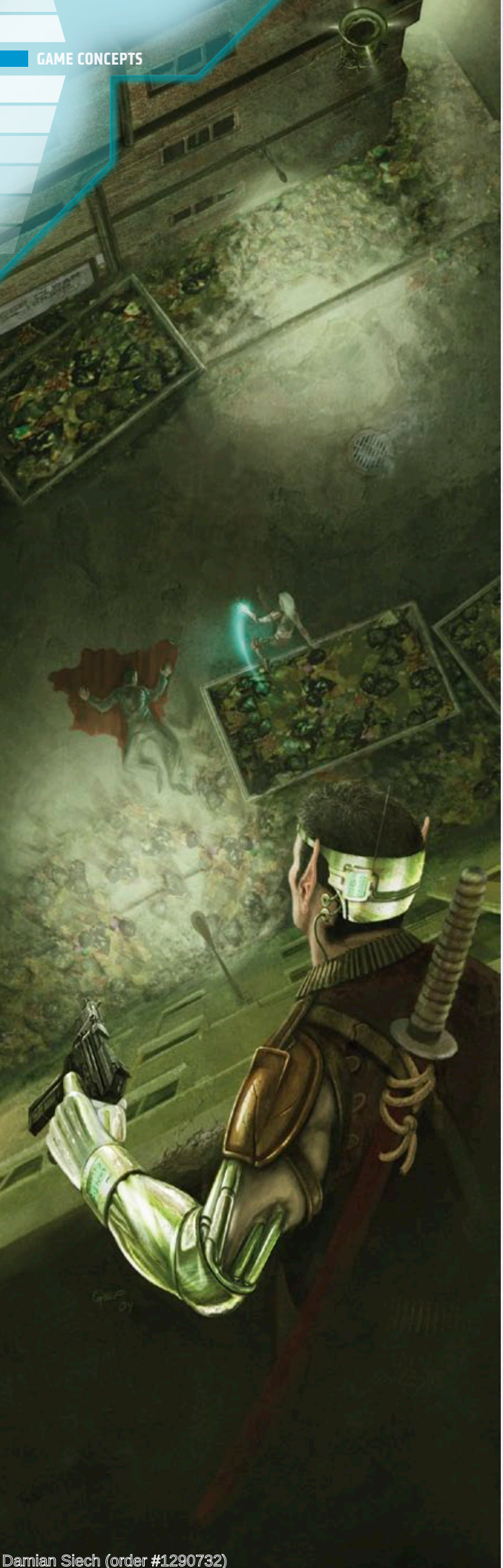

EDGE

Edge is a character's luck, the favor of the gods, that unexplainable factor that allows her to beat the odds. A character's Edge attribute represents the number of **Edge points** a character has to spend during gameplay. Edge points can be used for a wide range of benefits, each noted below. Edge points that are spent are temporarily unavailable (see *Regaining Edge,* below)—luck will only take you so far. Note that a character's Edge attribute never actually changes, even when Edge points are spent, unless the character permanently burns Edge (see *Burning Edge,* p. 75)

SPENDING EDGE

When you spend a point of Edge, you can choose to have one of the following happen:

- You may declare the use of Edge before rolling for any one test (or one interval roll on an Extended Test). You may add a number of extra dice equal to your full Edge attribute to the dice pool. All dice (not just Edge dice) rolled on this test are subject to the Rule of Six (p. 62), meaning that if you roll a 6, you count it as a hit and roll it again.
- You may declare the use of Edge after you have rolled for one test. In this case, you may roll a number of extra dice equal to your full Edge attribute and add their hits to the test's total. The Rule of Six (p. 62), however, applies only to the additional Edge dice rolled, not the original dice pool.
- You may re-roll all of the dice on a single test that did not score a hit.
- You may make a Long Shot Test (p. 61) even if your dice pool was reduced to 0 or less; roll only your Edge dice for this test (the Rule of Six does not apply).
- You may go first in an Initiative Pass, regardless of your Initiative Score (see *Initiative* and *Edge,* p. 145). If multiple characters spend Edge to go first in the same pass, those characters go in order according to their Initiative Scores first, then everyone else goes according to their Initiative Scores.
- You may gain 1 extra Initiative Pass for that Combat Turn only (see *Initiative and Edge,* p. 145).
- You may negate the effects of one glitch or critical glitch.
- You may invoke the Dead Man's trigger rule (p. 163).

A character can only spend Edge points on her own actions; she cannot spend it on behalf of others (except when engaged in a "teamwork" test, p. 65). No more than 1 point of Edge can be spent on any specific test or action at one time. If you spent a point of Edge for extra dice and rolled a critical glitch anyway, for example, you cannot use Edge to negate that critical glitch since you have already applied Edge to that test.

REGAINING EDGE

The gamemaster decides when a character's Edge points refresh to the full Edge attribute. We recommend refreshing Edge at the beginning of each game session, though in some cases it may be more interesting or challenging to only refresh Edge when a full adventure has ended, or when specific goals have been met. One possibility is to refresh 1 point of Edge for each achieved goal, and the rest when the scenario is completed. Alternately, Edge can simply refresh every day.

There are many other possibilities for rewarding characters with Edge points:

- Impressive roleplaying.
- Heroic acts of self-sacrifice.
- Achievement of important *personal* goals.
- Scoring a critical success (p. 65) against the odds.
- Rolling a critical glitch (p. 62)—you get a point of Edge to balance the scales.

Note that you may never have more Edge points than your full Edge attribute—luck only counts if you use it.

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There are several options you can consider to change these rules. Most of them add more complication to the game, but they may also fit your particular style of game play. Advanced *Shadowrun* rulebooks will touch on additional optional rules.

CINEMATIC GAMEPLAY

Try any combination of these options for a more heroic or cinematic style of play:

- Hits occur on a 4, 5, or 6, rather than just a 5 or 6. This makes it much more likely for characters to succeed in their tasks; extra hits can be interpreted as "flair." This may be a preferred style of play if you're seeking dramatic action-movie scenes with lots of stunts and flourishes.
- You could also award extra dice to characters who describe their actions in colorful, inventive ways.
- You could allow Edge to negate all of the damage inflicted by any single attack (the attack miraculously misses or leaves you unharmed).
- As in previous editions, you can apply the Rule of Six to all dice rolls, not just tests on which you have spent Edge. This means characters will score more hits on average.

MORE LETHAL GAMEPLAY

You may desire your games to be deadlier, in which case these options are suggested:

- Increase the DV of weapons by 2 across the board and don't convert Physical damage to Stun if the DV doesn't exceed the Armor rating.
- Only allow full defense actions (p. 148) when they are taken on the character's Action Phase.
- Treat glitches on Damage Resistance Tests as severe wounds—bleeding, broken bones, mangled limbs, ruined implants that will require special medical care or repair.

GRITTIER GAMEPLAY

If you want your game to be more challenging and harder, tinged with an element of desperation, try one of these options:

- The total hits scored on any test are limited to no more than the character's skill rating x 2. This increases the relevance of skills over attributes, but it also means that low-skilled characters will have a more challenging time. Defaulting tests would be limited to 1 hit. Edge, however, would allow you to bypass these limits.
- When Edge is spent for extra dice, you only get dice equal to your current unspent Edge points rather than your full Edge attribute (so if your Edge is 4 but you have already spent Edge twice that session, you only get to add 2 extra dice).
- Refresh Edge rarely—at the very end of a campaign arc, for example.
- Increase the chance for glitches when defaulting or taking Long Shot Tests—count 2s as well as 1s.
- Allow critical successes only on non-combat actions.

ALTERNATE COMBAT

While the advanced *Shadowrun* rules will explore a variety of combat options, you can also consider one of these methods:

- Rather than handling all combat as an Opposed Test, you can handle ranged combat as a Success Test with a threshold based on range (1 Short, 2 Medium, 3 Long, 4 Extreme). Some situational modifiers will affect threshold rather than dice pool, such as blind fire, cover, etc.
- To cut down on dice rolling during combat, you could drop Damage Resistance Tests entirely, reducing combat to a single Opposed Test. In this case, Armor would deduct directly from the attack's DV.
- **Cover as Attack Modifier:** Rather than applying Cover as a Defense Modifier, groups may opt to reduce the number of rolls by having cover provide negative dice pool modifiers to the attacker instead (Partial Cover -2 and Good Cover -4).

CHANGING ATTRIBUTE-ONLY TESTS

There's *always* an applicable skill. If someone comes up with a task not immediately associated with a particular skill, the GM assigns whichever skill is most appropriate. For example Strength + Athletics to break down a door (with Athletics measuring the applied use of muscle-power in this case).

EDGE VARIATIONS

You can tweak the applications of Edge to fit your style. Here are a few examples:

- Rather than adding extra dice, Edge can be used to buy automatic hits (or perhaps even automatic success).
- Allow Edge to be spent to reduce an Extended Test interval by half.

BURNING EDGE

In certain drastic situations, even spending Edge may not be enough. A character can choose to *burn* a point of Edge—permanently reducing his Edge attribute by 1—for one of the following effects:

- Automatically achieve a critical success on one action. The character must be capable of carrying out the action—you can't buy a critical success for something you have no hope of achieving. (Note that you do not refresh a point of Edge for getting a critical success in this case.) If two opposing characters burn Edge in this manner, they cancel each other out.
- Hand of God: this option allows characters to escape certain death. This use of Edge represents another shot at life—something the spirits are rare to provide. The streets have decided that they have more uses for this character before she's discarded to the trash heap and miraculously pull her from the jaws of Death. Gamemasters can explain this phenomena with any rationale they like, from sheer coincidence to the intervention of the gods. Note that this does not mean the character gets off scot free. The character should not escape unharmed from whatever circumstances would have led to her death. In fact, the character should suffer most of the consequences of the action that would have killed her; if shot in the head, for example, she may be knocked into a coma and appear dead to her enemies, but she will survive to get revenge another day. A character who uses Hand of God should be incapacitated until the end of the current adventure or until the gamemaster deems she has recovered from the side-effects of her close call.

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FRESH MEAT

by Jennifer Harding

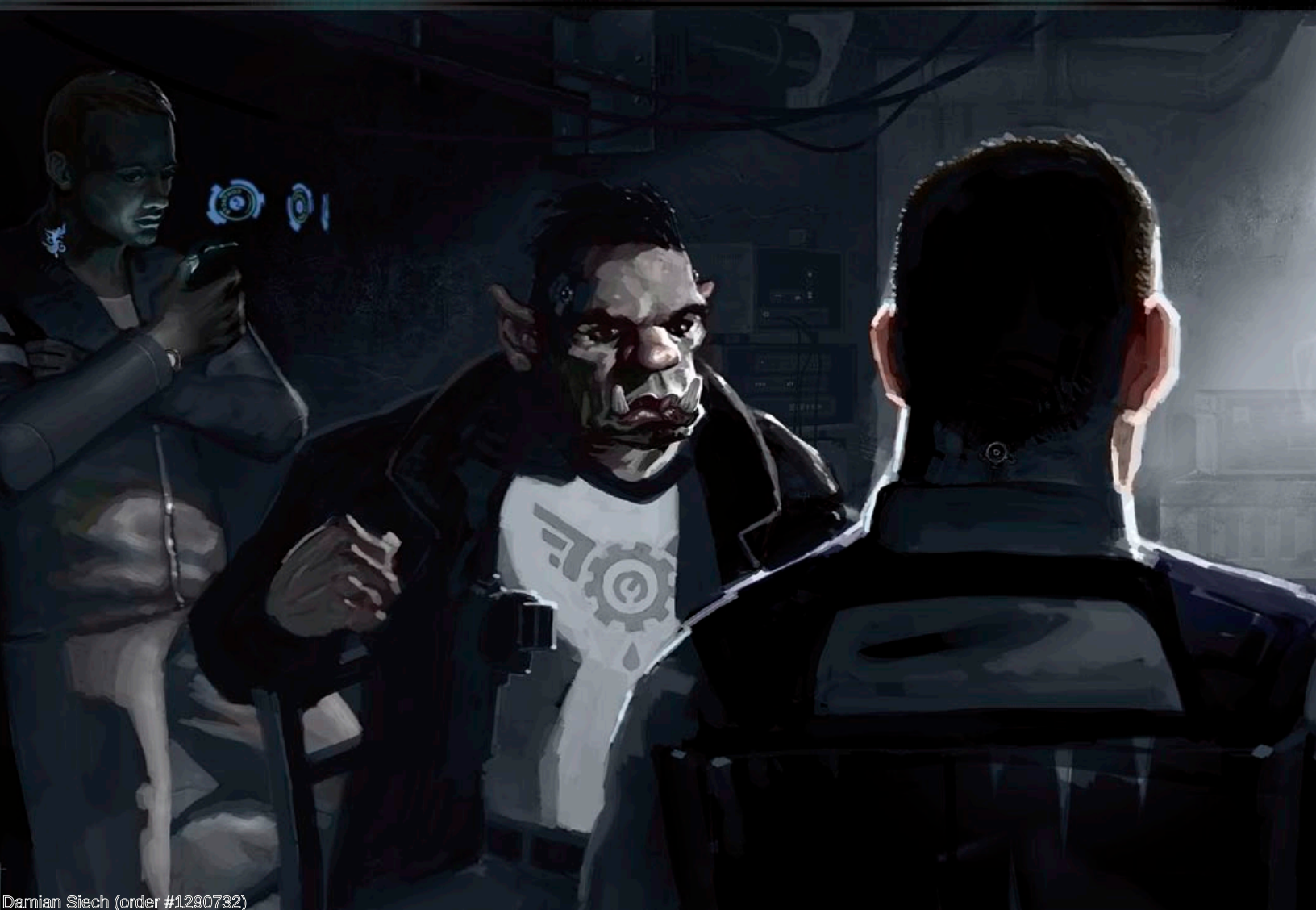
The meet was in a small restaurant attached to the bar. It was early, so most of the chairs were up on the battered plastic tables. Ten people stood and sat around the room, eyeing each other suspiciously. When I walked in beside Mr. Johnson, they all looked over at us. Most passed over me and focused on the well-dressed corporate suit beside me, smiling at them with just the right amount of teeth, just the right amount of a crinkle at the corner of his eye. He probably practiced in front of his mirror, labeling this smile Confident Professional. I didn't blame any of the prospects for ignoring me, with my off-the-rack suit that'd been out of style a few years ago, hair several weeks overdue for a trim, and a face could best be described as bland.

Mr. Corporate Suit—Mr. Johnson for today—handed me a piece of electronic paper. Its wireless capabilities were turned off—which meant there was at least one hacker in this group, and Mr. Johnson wanted to preserve privacy. Fair enough. I glanced at the paper, saw it held ten neat little picture-icons, each one a snapshot of one of the hopefuls. I touched one, and the paper filled with text; name, age, history. Skills.

Roger Merino. Street Alias: *Humes.* Age: *21.* Status: *Pueblo citizen.* Resident: *Pomona refugee camp 37.* Previous employment: *Bouncer, bartender, auto mechanic.* Education: *trade school dropout.* Primary skill set: *Pilot, ground craft. Mechanic, ground craft. Small firearms. Hand-to-hand combat (no discipline).* Secondary skill set: *Pilot, watercraft. Mechanic, watercraft.* Positive qualities: *mechanically inclined, athletic and fit, overall perceptive, strong survival skill.* Negative qualities: *gang affiliation (37th Street Hombres).*

Twenty-one. A kid. An uneducated Latino street tough with a few talents and a nice physique. I flipped through the other nine profiles, then looked up at the hopefuls.

I pointed to the Latino kid, who watched me with wary black eyes. "Why do you think you're here?"



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He narrowed his stare at me, flicked an almost imperceptible glance towards the suit. "For a job."

"What's the job?" I asked.

"Snatch and grab," he said, using some street lingo. "Dunno any more details."

"And why should I hire you?"

He sneered at this, as though I was some annoying Mr. Johnson. "I'm a wheelman. I know the streets. I'm good with my fists, an' I can shoot straight. I got experience, never been caught."

"What, you've boosted a couple of cars, taken them to a chopshop for some easy cash. Maybe knocked over a stuffer shack for some soy crunchies when you've gotten drunk with the gang," I said scathingly. I looked around at the ten hopefuls, all of whom now stared at me as if I'd suddenly sprouted an extra pair of arms. "And now you think you can be a professional? You want to play in the big leagues?"

I leaned forward. "Do any of you care that less than ten percent of runners survive their first year? There's ten of you here. Do the math—if you can count that high—and that means *one* of you might still be standing this time next year." I pointed to Humes. "Think that'll be you?"

His dark eyes were a bit wider now, and he looked around with a touch of nerves under his bravado.

"Or maybe you?" I pointed to a thin redhead, a girl with more freckles than skin. "You think your magic will protect you, keep you alive? Let me tell you, mages burn out in the shadows faster than idiot kids with hard heads and fast fists. You go against another team, or some corp sec goon, and the first thing they're gonna do is try to take you out."

"Or you?" I pointed to a beefy ork, "Think 'cause you've got some second-hand 'warez, 'cause you've been faster than some overweight security blobs, that you're ready to be a pro? What happens when you go up against some corporate sec team with first-class cyberware and guns that'll punch a hole through your armor jacket? When you come up against a hacker who puts a virus in your cheap 'warez? When you slow down and get a couple of your teammates killed 'cause you're a cocky son-of-a-bitch who doesn't listen to your own team's hacker?"

I turned around, left the room, Mr. Johnson following me with a frozen smile on his face. I'd call it his *oh, shit* smile.

When we were alone in the hallway, he cleared his throat.

"Perhaps if you reviewed the files, you'd see that they have solid skills, and, while, yes, they're inexperienced, I'm sure your experience can compensate—"

I held up a hand, cut him off. "I know what you want to do. *I* don't want to see a bunch of kids die. You can't just take a couple of street toughs and hand them a Predator and call them shadowrunners. *That's* how you end up with dead

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kids and botched jobs. But I'll talk to them individually, see what I think—and then I'll tell you."

That evening, I sat in a ratty chair, looking over five young faces. The safehouse was being rented out of the stingy expense allowance I'd negotiated. Otherwise, we were on our own. No funding, no support—just their talents and my experience. Sink or swim, baby.

It was too late to regret the favor. I was already feeling the weight of responsibility, of knowing that these fresh young faces might not make it, hell, probably *wouldn't* make it. I gritted my teeth. My job was to keep them alive for a month. To make them into a team. To teach them survival skills before throwing them out to the wolves. Goddess help me.

"Okay, I'm DangerSensei. For the next month, you're gonna be my team. Mr. Johnson has hired us for a job. We're to hit a warehouse, under Yak guard, and get several crates of material. That's not the real test, though."

I looked around at them. The Latino wheelman was looking much more humble, after the ripping I'd given him last night, during our "interview." He also sported a nice shiner, a gift of the knowledge I'd given him as well: being "good with your fists" didn't mean dick if you didn't know how to duck. I'd picked up the red-headed magician—a wiccan, goddess help us all, fresh off the farm, but magic was rare enough that you worked around what you had. An elf *chica*, a techie—not the best techie they'd offered, but she'd surprised me with a burning wit, and I figured that a good dose of brains could make up for inexperience. Muscle came packaged in a hulking troll who was fidgeting on the floor. His specs said he could handle heavy weapons, and someone had put some 'warez in that oversized body. Probably best if we avoided asking *who* had put it there. Hell, he could double as a vehicle if we ever needed a ride somewhere. And finally an all-about man, a twenty-three year old guy with a completely eclectic variety of skills and charm in spades. I'd had hopes he'd make a face. Or a used-car salesman.

"The test?" Mr. Charm asked.

"Survive for the month," I said. "All of you. We lose anyone, we've all failed.

"I'll start. I've taken this job because I owed someone a favor and I couldn't say no. You've taken it because you don't have any better options," I said. Tech girl gave a snort. "My job is to show you guys the ropes. The 'What Not To Do' stuff. Teach you how to use your skills, how to build your team."

They looked at each other, wondering. I nodded.

"Muscle-bound boy here," I pointed to Humes. "He's got the makings of a good wheelman, a good rigger. Good reflexes, courtesy of some secondhand wires that're probably loaded with malware. He's fast with his fists, and can handle a gun. Never handled anything bigger than an AK. He's got more guts than brains, and needs to learn to listen to a leader."

Humes narrowed his eyes, opened his mouth to object. I held up a hand.

"Look, you don't know each other. You can't rely on each other. A lot of teams start this way, thrown together by a Fixer because he *thinks* you have a good complement of skills. Well, first thing you should do is say what you can—and can't—do. Because if your team is counting on you to smooth talk some guard, and you've got the charm of a ghoul, you're gonna all end up dead. Got it?

"Now, you, tech-girl. Introduce yourself."

The elf looked around, cleared her throat. "People call me Gidget," she said. "I'm—as DangerSensei so elegantly put it—a tech. I can do some hacking, good at doing data searches, but I'm best at hardware. Building it or taking it apart, either way. I can handle a gun, I'm quiet, and I'm pretty good at blending into a crowd. I may not have graduated from charm school, but I can string together a sentence just fine. I don't know anything about fighting up close, though."

I gave Mr. Charm a nod.

He smiled around at everyone, giving the two women a wink. "I'm Rick," he said. "I'm quick on my feet, quick thinker, and I'm comfortable going into most any place, high class or low. I've run with gangers and I've served drinks at corporate to-dos. I can ride a bike and drive a car, but I haven't got a clue as to how they work. I know how to shoot, I know how to duck—" he gave a pointed look at Humes, "—and I can handle a knife. I also know a bit about patching people up, basic first aid, that sort of thing. I can get around in the Matrix, but I'm no hacker. Chat rooms, that's more my style."

Gidget rolled her eyes at that, but I shrugged, then pointed to the skinny redhead.

"I'm, uh, I'm Riley," she said, her voice soft and nervous. "I'm a Wiccan. I can do magic... um, healing, and shielding, and turning people invisible. And, confusing things a bit, if necessary. Spirits. I know about spirits." She fell silent, her checks almost as red as her hair. Mr. Charm eyed the girl with a bit of awe and envy, Humes, a touch of fear. The troll looked like he was wondering if she'd turn him into a newt. Yeah, magic can do that to folks. I was pleased to see the techie seemed blasé, even though she was sitting right beside the redhead. Girl had a good head on her shoulders.

"Now, you," I said, pointing to the troll. He shifted on the floor. "Buster," he said. "I'm a troll." I closed my eyes, counted to ten.

"Right. *Buster* is here for muscle. Heavy weapons. Close combat. And he'll serve as a living shield in a fight—Riley, you and Buster are going to be best friends. Buster, someone starts shooting, your first job is to get yourself between the bullets and the redhead. Understand?" The redhead and the troll looked equally terrified at the prospect. I smiled.

"So, there you have it. A wheelman, a hacker, some muscle, a face, and a magician. Some of your skills overlap. Some don't. We're missing some, but I'm working with what I've got.

"Now, let's talk gear. Our budget is covering the safe house for the month, and there's plenty of soybars in the cupboard. We don't have the cash for anything else, though. A lotta times, you come into a one-shot deal like this, it's each man—or woman—for themselves for gear. Since we're spending a fun-filled four weeks together, let's talk about what you can bring to the table." I pointed to Humes, who was scowling.

"What?" he asked, belligerent. "I've got my own gun, my own clothes. If I was rolling in the nuyen, you think I'd be here?"

I gave a short bark of a laugh. "How about a car, wheelman? Or some bikes?"

He nodded, grudgingly. "I got a truck," he said, shrugging. "It's even got seatbelts. I can install a leash in the back to hold Buster."

"Good," I said, biting my tongue. "Transportation, check. Now, you, tech-girl."

"I've got my 'link, my programs. I may have even, ah, cracked the copyright on them, so I can patch up your links with something a bit higher-end.

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I've got a few odds and ends. Tech gear. A toolkit. That sort of thing."

"Tech, check. Rick?"

Mr. Charm smirked, and spread his hands wide. The meaning was clear: *It's all me, baby.* Gidget rolled her eyes again.

"Riley?" I asked.

The Wiccan blushed once more. "I have my own tools, for my, uh, magic. I have some spirits I know, too. Um. Nothing else, really. I'm sorry."

"Spirits are good, kid. They can make a big difference, so don't sweat the rest," I said, making an effort to be nice. You pampered your magic a bit, in the shadows. Hell, for a team like this to even have a magician, that was a miracle. I'd point that out to the rest of them privately, later on.

"Buster?" I asked. In reply, he unzipped a large duffel beside him, and a handful of bullets spilled out and rolled across the concrete floor. Inside, I saw a jumbled assortment of guns, spotting the standard Predator IV, an Uzi, an AK-97, a Remington, and—fuck me, was that a Panther? I took another deep breath. I could almost *feel* my hair turning grey.

"Okay, next up, contacts. Who you know can make the difference between getting work—getting work that doesn't get you killed—and starving. We'll start with Rick this time," I said.

"Oh, I've got lots of friends. Got a friend who works up at the charity clinic in Pomona, she can get her hands on lots of stuff. Another friend who works for the PCC, in their ID services department, and her sister, who's in the police secretarial pool. I know a lady in the Ancients, and another girl whose brother's in the Koshari. Know a girl who works at the Long Beach port facility. Know—"

I stopped him with a raised hand again. "Do you anyone who's *not* female?"

He gave me a grin.

"Okay, we'll leave the contacts to Mr. Charm here. Now, this is the part where, if you all had some experience and knew each other, we'd start planning the job. But since we don't know squat about each other, or about what we can do... let's do some team-building bullshit. Go do some mountain climbing."

Four sets of eyes looked at me with shock. I cracked a grin; the first one of the day.

"Or we can go grab a beer and swap life stories," I said, and they all sighed in relief.

I shook my head. Kids these days.

■cue intro music. pan team: Rick, Gidget, Humes, Riley, Buster. close up faces. fade to intro scene■

//director's note: Can we get Rick into a jacket with more chrome on it? And get Gidget a tighter tank top with a sponsor logo across the breasts//

■cue visual: male human, off-the-rack suit, shaggy salt and pepper hair, sitting across from polished corp type, tinted brown hair■

■cue DangerSensei voiceover, layer over entry scene. run full-facial reconfig on DS.■

//director's note: Give him more scruff. I don't want five o'clock shadow, I want three-day stubble//

{I'd agreed to meet with Mr. Johnson because I owed someone a favor. Contacts, friendships, go both ways. Sometimes that was good. Sometimes it sucked the big one. Today was the latter. The favor had gotten me to the meet, with an agreement to help him out—although my friend wouldn't actually say what the favor was. Now I knew why.}

"You want me to do w*hat*?" DangerSensei asks. "You've *got* to be kidding."

"I'm perfectly serious. I've already found ten potentials. You take them for the first month, and then they're on their own. We'll have discrete cameras imbedded in the safehouse. You, of course, would be fitted with a camera. They don't need to know. It'll be more honest that way—gritty, that's what I'm hoping for. Realism. With the popularity of shadowrunners these days—I believe a show that follows a group of people, plucked from the streets, as it were, and watches them as they develop into professionals, into a professional team—"

DangerSensei interrupts him. "Is ludicrous. Is a complete joke. Is a *farce*."

"Actually, it'll have immense appeal. You have the experience, they have the variety of skills. Put together a team, do a few jobs. Show how someone forms a team. How a person makes that step from law-abiding—or mostly law-abiding—citizen to a denizen of the shadows. You only have to commit to a month. I'll pay you ten thousand."

{Money might not be my prime motivator anymore, but sometimes I just had to look at the bottom line. And this was a real low bottom line. Ten grand, in a month, was equal to a couple days' earnings as a security consultant. And all for the pleasant experience of taking some newbies and probably watching them die. But I owed my friend a big favor, and he'd cashed it in.}

"Why me?" he asks. The suit smiles.

"You come highly recommended," the suit says. "You have the contacts, the experience, the know-how. You've been in the business for more than ten years—although you've recently been working as a security consultant, you still have the right background. You're said to be patient, knowledgeable, and practical. And you don't have a team. It's very difficult to find good shadowrunners with your tenure who aren't already committed to a team."

{Hell, who was I kidding? I couldn't say no. I knew it, even if this Mr. Johnson didn't.}

"Okay, Mr. Johnson. Show me your potentials. If I do this—*if*—I get full veto rights on the newbies."

"Of course," he replies. "They're waiting in the restaurant."

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Armed with your imagination and a basic understanding of what you want to do and play in Shadowrun, it's time to create a character. Characters are just numbers on a piece of paper until you give them life. It therefore makes sense to think about what kind of character you would like to play before the game begins.

Start simply: Do you like orks? Do hackers sound interesting? Do you think magical characters rock? Perhaps you want to play a compulsive liar who can easily pull the wool over people's eyes? Maybe the specifics don't matter, as long as you get to wield the most kick-ass weapon in the game.

decisions and stick to them. Such a process can also lead to interesting and varied characters, perhaps featuring some unanticipated combinations.

BUILD POINTS (BP)

The Build Point System works by allocating a character a set number of Build Points (BP). Build Points can be used to learn skills, increase attributes, acquire gear, learn spells, and so on. Each new or improved ability costs BP, thus limiting how powerful a character can be. So it's important to choose your advantages wisely, or you may end up overspending your BP!

CREATING A SHADOWRUNNER

Once you have a basic idea of what you want to play, you can either use a pregenerated sample character or create your own from scratch. Using a sample character may be the best choice if you are new to *Shadowrun* and wish to start playing right away. Creating your own character takes more time, but gives the satisfaction of developing your own character exactly the way you want.

BUILDING A SHADOWRUNNER

Creating your own character means building one from scratch using the Build Point System. Under this system, players have a pre-set pool of Build Points (BP) that they use to improve their attributes, learn skills, gain special qualities, and acquire resources. You can use the sample characters to generate ideas, and then use the Build Point System to flesh out that concept into a playable character.

It's best to have some concrete ideas in mind when you begin character generation. Unlike other game systems, the Build Point System isn't random; you fully direct your character's abilities, advantages, and disadvantages, from start to finish. Some players find that in order to take full advantage of this system's possibilities, they prefer to flesh out some of their character's history, background, and personality beforehand.

You can also leave all those options open, developing the character's background and personality as you work your way through the creation process. In this situation, you may only know the basics initially—for example, you'd like to play a mage this time. Creating a character this way requires some flexibility, and you should be prepared to make on-the-spot

Characters for a typical *Shadowrun* campaign should be built with **400 BP** total. This gives plenty of room for flexibility, but it's also limited enough to provide adequate challenge to players. Gamemasters can adjust the value up or down to suit their tastes. For example, if a group is interested in a low-level street campaign, the GM may only allow 300 BP to build starting characters. On the other hand, if the group likes high-powered, elite-operative campaigns, they may need 500 BP for starting characters.

Players may purchase abilities in any order they choose, but we strongly suggest that you start by first selecting your character's metatype, and then purchasing attributes. This will lay the general foundation for the character and could significantly affect capabilities in other areas (namely skills and magic).

example

Brian, Michelle, and Dan are eager to join in the new Shadowrun game that Steve is planning to run. Before the game gets started, Steve tells the three to create the characters they wish to play.

Dan is a relative newcomer to Shadowrun, so he opts to use one of the sample characters. Glancing at the portfolio of characters on pp. 98–113, Dan selects the Street Samurai.

While Dan is a novice to the game, Brian and Michelle are veteran Shadowrun players and have opted to use the Build Point System. Steve informs the two that they each have 400 BP for creating their characters. They start by thinking about the characters they want to play. Michelle likes magicians, so she decides to play a street witch. Brian, on the other hand, wants to play a weapons specialist, a hired gun who's an expert at all types of firearms.

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Shadowrun, Fourth Edition includes sample characters on pp. 98–113. These write-ups give basic descriptions and backgrounds for a few of the archetypical shadow denizens. These characters embody stereotypical assumptions about the world of *Shadowrun,* but they are certainly not the only character types you can play. They are designed to give insight into what various types of shadowrunners are like.

The sample characters were built following the standard character creation process outlined here. They include the character's attributes, skills, and gear (including cyberware and spells, if any), as well as suggestions for playing them. Each was built to the standard 400 Build Point total.

The sample characters allow you to begin playing *Shadowrun* right away.

ADVICE

ADVICE TO NEW PLAYERS

Shadowrun's character creation is extraordinarily flexible, and the array of options available can be daunting to new players. The easiest way to build a character is to approach creation with a strong character concept in mind and try to recreate that concept within the rules step by step.

The best way to accomplish this—until you familiarize yourself with the nuances of *Shadowrun*—is to follow a straight progression between the following sections: Choose your Metatype, Pick Qualities, Purchase Attributes, Acquire Skills, Assign Resources, and finally Finishing Touches.

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METATYPE ATTRIBUTE TABLE

BP	METATYPE	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI
0	Human	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
Human Metatype Abilities: +1 Edge										
20	Ork	4/9 (13)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	3/8 (12)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
Ork Metatype Abilities: Low-Light Vision										
25	Dwarf	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/5 (7)	3/8 (12)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	2/11 (16)
Dwarf Metatype Abilities: Thermographic Vision, +2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins										
30	Elf	1/6 (9)	2/7 (10)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	3/8 (12)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	1/6 (9)	2/12 (18)
Elf Metatype Abilities: Low-Light Vision										
40	Troll	5/10 (15)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	5/10 (15)	1/4 (6)	1/5 (7)	1/5 (7)	1/6 (9)	2/11 (16)
Troll Metatype Abilities: Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach, +1 natural armor (cumulative with worn armor)										

CHOOSE YOUR METATYPE

The Metatype category refers to your character's "race" (human, elf, dwarf, ork, or troll). Each metatype carries bonuses and restrictions; some have unique special abilities. A character's metatype sets his or her attribute limits, so it's strongly recommended that you perform this step first.

The Metatype Attribute Table lists the available metatypes characters may play, the associated BP cost for each, the starting and maximum attribute ratings for each metatype, and that metatype's special abilities. Attributes are listed with the starting value first and the maximum value following after a slash (/). Additionally, the maximum augmented attribute is listed in parentheses following the maximum attribute value. Human characters are the norm in *Shadowrun,* so there is no BP cost for being a human. All other metatypes have a BP cost.

example

Since Brian and Michelle are using the BP system, the first step is to select a metatype. Michelle decides she wants to stick with the norm and play a human, for a cost of 0 BP. All her character's Physical and Mental Attributes start at 1, with a natural maximum of 6 + submersion grade. Furthermore, her character gains an extra point of Edge, so her street witch automatically starts with an Edge of 2.

Brian wants his weapons specialist to be a dwarf. A dwarf has a cost of 25 BP, reducing his total from 400 to 375. All his character's attributes start at 1 except for Body, Strength, and Willpower, which start at 2, 3, and 2 respectively. His natural maximums for Body and Willpower increase to 7, while the maximum for Strength increases to 8. His natural Reaction, however, is limited to 5 instead of the normal 6. Brian's specialist also gains thermographic vision, as well as an extra 2 Body dice when resisting pathogens and toxins.

PICK QUALITIES

Qualities are special advantages and disadvantages that may help or hinder your character. They aren't special gear or magical powers, but rather innate or intangible characteristics that often come to the forefront during the stressful situations shadowrunners find themselves in. Qualities can either be positive or negative.

Players purchase qualities during character creation. Note that some qualities function as prerequisites if you wish to create certain types of characters (ie. Adept, Magician, Technomancer, etc).

The Qualities Table lists the basic positive and negative qualities available at character creation; full descriptions are presented at the end of this chapter (*Quality Descriptions*, p. 90).

example

Michelle decides that she doesn't need to buy any qualities for her character aside from the Magician quality, which she needs to be a mage. Brian needs a few extra build points though, so he takes the Scorched negative quality which gives him 5 extra build points. He decides that this reflects a former BTL addiction his character had that he cleaned up from. This means that his character has trouble dealing with black IC and BTLs and has more trouble resisting their effects. This brings his BP total back up to 380.

POSITIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Adept	5	p. 90
Ambidextrous	5	p. 90
Animal Empathy	10	p. 90
Aptitude	10	p. 90
Astral Chameleon	5	p. 90
Blandness	10	p. 90
Codeslinger	10	p. 90
Double Jointed	5	p. 90
Erased	5 or 10	p. 90
Exceptional Attribute	20	p. 91
First Impression	5	p. 91

POSITIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Focused Concentration	10 or 20	p. 91
Guts	5	p. 91
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15	p. 91
Home Ground	10	p. 91
Human Looking	5	p. 91
Lucky	20	p. 91
Magician	15	p. 91
Magic Resistance	5 to 20	p. 91
Mentor Spirit	5	p. 92
Murky Link	10	p. 92
Mystic Adept	10	p. 92

POSITIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Natural Hardening	10	p. 92
Natural Immunity	5 or 15	p. 92
Photographic Memory	10	p. 92
Quick Healer	10	p. 92
Resistance to Pathogens & Toxins	5 or 10	p. 93
Spirit Affinity	10	p. 93
Technomancer	5	p. 93
Toughness	10	p. 93
Will to Live	5 to 15	p. 93

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NEGATIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Addiction	+5 to +30	p. 93
Allergy	+5 to +20	p. 94
Astral Beacon	+5	p. 94
Bad Luck	+20	p. 94
Codeblock	+5	p. 94
Combat Paralysis	+20	p. 94
Elf Poser	+5	p. 94
Gremlins	+5 to +20	p. 94
Incompetent	+5	p. 95

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Infirm	+20	p. 95
Low Pain Tolerance	+10	p. 95
Ork Poser	+5	p. 95
Pacifist	+5 or 10	p. 95
Scorched	+5	p. 95
(+10 BP for hackers/technomancers)		
Sensitive Neural Structure	+5	p. 95
(+10 BP for hackers/technomancers)		
Sensitive System	+15	p. 95

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

QUALITY	BPs	PAGE
Simsense Vertigo	+10	p. 95
(+15 BP for hackers/technomancers)		
SINner	+5 or +10	p. 95
Spirit Bane	+10	p. 96
Uncouth	+20	p. 96
Uneducated	+20	p. 96
Weak Immune System	+5	p. 96

PURCHASE ATTRIBUTES

As mentioned in *Game Concepts,* p. 40, normal attributes range between 1 and 6. A character's metatype may adjust the maximums higher or lower. Augmentation (either through technology or magic) can allow a character to exceed their metatype maximum to a certain point.

All characters start with the minimum attributes as noted for their metatype on the Metatype Attribute Table. Characters also start with a value of 6 in Essence, 1 in Edge (2 for humans), and a value of 0 in Magic and Resonance. Initiative is a derived value and is not calculated until after attribute values have been finalized.

PHYSICAL/MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

Improving a character's Physical or Mental attributes costs 10 Build Points to increase an attribute by +1. The final increase spent to raise an attribute to its natural maximum (known as "maxing out") costs 25 BP instead of the normal 10.

Players may not spend more than half their total BP on Physical and Mental attributes (for a standard 400 BP character, this means a cap of 200 BP). Also, characters cannot have more than one attribute at their natural maximum. This measure prevents overspending in attributes and ensures that characters are well rounded.

EDGE

Improving a character's Edge costs 10 BP per +1 increase (25 BP for raising it to its natural maximum). The metatype maximum for Edge is 6 (7 for humans).

ESSENCE

All characters start with an Essence of 6. This may be decreased by implants such as cyberware or bioware, but it can never be increased.

MAGIC/RESONANCE

In order to possess either Magic or Resonance , a character has to first purchase either the Adept, Magician, Mystic Adept, or Technomancer qualities (see *Quality Descriptions,* p. 90). Purchasing Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept gives the character a Magic attribute of 1. Purchasing the Technomancer quality gives the character a Resonance attribute of 1. A character can possess either Magic or Resonance—never both.

Once a character possesses a Magic or Resonance attribute, it may be raised normally at a rate of 10 BP per +1 increase, with the sixth point costing 25 BP. Magic and Resonance can both be raised to a natural maximum of 6 (+ initiation/submersion grade) regardless of metatype.

INITIATIVE

Initiative is a derived attribute, calculated by adding your character's Reaction and Intuition together. Initiative cannot be directly increased by spending BP during the character creation process (certain spells, adept powers, and cyberware may augment Initiative; see *Assign Resources,* p. 86).

example

Now that Brian and Michelle have selected their characters' metatypes, it's time to establish their attributes. Steve informs them that they can only spend up to half their total BP (200 BP) on Physical and Mental attributes.

Michelle wants her character to be well-rounded, with no glaring strengths or weaknesses, so she chooses not to "max out" any attributes. She decides her street witch is a hermetic mage. Because the most important attributes for a mage are Logic and Willpower, Michelle spends 40 BP to increase Willpower from 1 to 5 (a +4 increase) and 30 BP to increase Logic from 1 to 4 (a +3 increase). Michelle also determines that Intuition and Agility are important to her street-smart magician, so she increases both from 1 to 4, for a total of 60 BP. Michelle doesn't see her street witch as a brawler, so Strength isn't that important; she only spends 10 BP to raise it to 2. So far she's spent 140 BP on Physical and Mental attributes, which leaves her with 60 BP; Michelle uses these to boost Charisma, Body, and Reaction from 1 to 3 each.

Attribute	Value	BP Cost
Body	3	20
Agility	4	30
Reaction	3	20
Strength	2	10
Charisma	3	20
Intuition	4	30
Logic	4	30
Willpower	5	40
TOTAL		**200**

With her Physical and Mental attributes now addressed, Michelle looks at her Special attributes. Since Michelle wants her character to be a magician, she has to purchase the Magician quality for 15 BP. This gives her a Magic attribute of 1. Michelle wants her magician to start at least average in power, so she decides to increase her Magic from 1 to 3 for 20 BP. She thinks Edge will be important, so she spends 10 BP to increase it from 2 to 3. Essence starts at 6 (for now), and Initiative is automatically derived from adding Reaction and Intuition together, resulting in 7.

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Altogether, Michelle has spent 245 BP. Michelle's street witch ends with the following attributes:

Body	3	Essence	6
Agility	4	Magic	3
Reaction	3	Initiative	7
Strength	2	Edge	3
Charisma	3		
Intuition	4		
Logic	4		
Willpower	5		

Now let's take a look at Brian's weapons specialist. Since all firearm-related skills are linked to Agility, Brian decides he wants to max out that attribute. The maximum Agility for a dwarf is 6. For Brian to max out Agility, he has to spend 40 BP to raise it from 1 to 5, then another 25 BP to raise it from 5 to 6.

Next to Agility, the most important attributes for a weapons specialist are Reaction and Intuition. Since Brian has already maxed out his Agility, though, he can't take either to their maximum values. Instead, Brian raises both attributes to just below their maximum: Reaction at 4 (30 BP) and Intuition at 5 (40 BP).

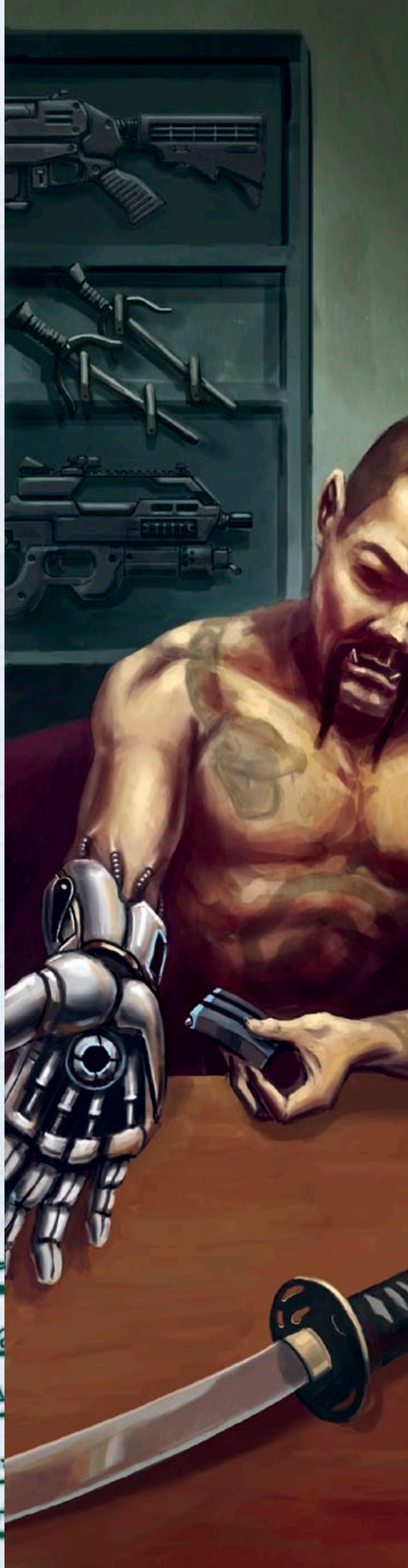
Body is also fairly important for Brian's character as it helps resist damage, so Brian increases it from 2 to 4 (20 BP). Brian sees his specialist as strong-willed, like most dwarves, so he raises Willpower from 2 to 4 (20 BP). This leaves Strength, Charisma, and Logic to consider and only 25 BP remaining. Brian doesn't think his character is either antisocial or stupid, so he puts in the minimal 10 BP each to raise both Charisma and Logic to 2. With only 5 points left over, Brian doesn't have enough to increase Strength further. He leaves it alone, content to keep it at 3.

Attribute	Value	BP Cost
Body	4	20
Agility	6	65
Reaction	4	30
Strength	3	0
Charisma	2	10
Intuition	5	40
Logic	2	10
Willpower	4	20
TOTAL		**195**

Brian now looks at Special attributes. He decides his dwarf specialist has average luck, so he increases his Edge from 1 to 3 (20 BP). Since Brian isn't playing a magician or technomancer, he doesn't have to worry about Magic or Resonance. His Essence starts at 6, like everyone else, though that may decrease if Brian acquires any cyberware or bioware (more on that later). Finally, he adds Reaction and Intuition together to get an Initiative of 9.

At this point, Brian has spent 215 BP on attributes, and 235 BP altogether. The weapons specialist's attributes are as follows:

Body	4	Essence	6
Agility	6	Initiative	9
Reaction	4	Edge	3
Strength	3		
Charisma	2		
Intuition	5		
Logic	2		
Willpower	4		



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ACQUIRE SKILLS

Skills represent what your character knows and how well he or she can perform certain actions. In the shadows, what you can do is often more important than what you may know.

TYPES OF SKILLS

There are three types of skills in *Shadowrun*—Active skills, Knowledge skills and Language skills. Characters can learn new skills and improve existing ones throughout the game.

Characters use Active skills to perform actions. Athletics, Pistols, Spellcasting, Negotiation, Etiquette, or any other skill that represents something your character does are Active skills. A list of the basic Active skills in *Shadowrun* appears on p. 120 of the *Skills* section.

Knowledge skills represent what your character knows. Such knowledge can come from education, hobbies, or experience. These skills flesh out your character's background and help add a personal touch to the character.

Language skills represent the languages your character knows.

PURCHASING ACTIVE SKILLS

Your character starts with a rating of 0 in all skills. Rating 0 doesn't mean that your character is ignorant or clueless, only that he has the same amount of training (or lack thereof) as anyone else. If a character has a skill at a rating greater than zero, then he knows more than the average person on the street. (See the Skill Ratings Table on p. 119 for more information.)

Raising a skill costs 4 BP per rating point. Skills can only be improved to a maximum rating of 6.

The maximum skill rating for starting characters is either one skill at Rating 6 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less) or two skills at Rating 5 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less). Your character cannot start with both one Rating 6 skill and two Rating 5 skills.

RESTRICTED SKILLS

Only astrally active characters can use the Assensing and the Astral Combat skills—meaning characters with the Magician quality (p. 91), or characters with either the Mystic Adept or Adept quality (p. 92 and p. 90) and the Astral Perception power (p. 195).

Likewise, if your character does not have the Magician or Mystic Adept qualities, you cannot purchase skills in the Sorcery and Conjuring skill groups. You can, however, purchase them as Knowledge skills; see *Knowledge Skills,* p. 85.

Only technomancers can use the Tasking skill group—meaning characters with the Technomancer quality (p. 93)

SKILL GROUPS

Skill groups are groups of related skills collected in a larger category. For example, the Firearms skill group includes the Longarms, Pistols, and Automatics skills. A skill group allows a character broad proficiency rather than specific expertise, and may appeal to players who wish to portray their characters in broader strokes. See *Skill Groups,* p. 118.

To acquire a skill group for your character, you must pay 10 BP per level of expertise you wish to acquire. (Since skill groups contain three or four skills together, this is actually cheaper than purchasing each skill individually.) Starting characters may raise purchased skill groups to a maximum rating of 4. Skill groups may not be broken up into individual skills for further improvement and specializations may not be taken for skill group skills at character creation—although, as always, individual gamemasters are free to allow this option.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Skills are general—your character can shoot any pistol with the Pistols skill, or drive any car with the Pilot Ground Craft skill. If you want your character to have a signature ability, something he is better at than everyone else, you can give him a *specialization*.

For example, a character with the Pistols skill can choose to specialize in Revolvers, which means he's a crack shot at using revolvers, but not quite as good while firing semi-automatics. If your character has a specialization, he adds 2 extra dice to the skill test whenever the specialization applies (see *Specializations,* p. 121).

Specializations only cost 2 BP. You can only acquire specializations to skills you currently possess. Characters may only have one specialization per skill. Characters may not purchase specializations for skill groups.

example

With their attributes set, Michelle and Brian look at skills. We'll look at Active skills for now, going to Knowledge and Language skills later.

Since Michelle and Brian are building their characters from scratch, they will have to decide for themselves which skills their characters have. In keeping with the well-rounded theme, Michelle decides that her street witch is a general practitioner, equally skilled in all aspects of magic use. She decides to pick up both the Sorcery skill group and the Conjuring skill group at Rating 3.

That takes care of the "witch" part of street witch; now Michelle looks at her character's street smarts. First, she ought to have some street cred; Michelle acquires Etiquette at Rating 3 and decides to specialize in Street Etiquette. Also, the streets are pretty rough, so she ought to be able to hold her own in a fight. To that end, Michelle gets Pistols 1, Dodge 2, and Unarmed Combat 1. To round out her character, Michelle adds Perception 3 and First Aid 2.

The BP cost for these skills add up as follows:

Sorcery 3	30 BP
Conjuring 3	30 BP
Etiquette 3	12 BP
(Street specialization)	2 BP
Pistols 1	4 BP
Dodge 2	8 BP
Unarmed Combat 1	4 BP
Perception 3	12 BP
First Aid 2	8 BP
TOTAL	**110 BP (355 BP total)**

Now it's Brian's turn. Since he wants his character to be a weapons specialist in more than just name, he wants to be the best shooter possible. Brian opts to acquire skills individually, since skill groups are limited to a maximum rating of 4 for starting characters. He can only have one skill at Rating 6, so he decides to put those points in Pistols.

With the top spot filled, all the remaining skills must be Rating 4 or lower. Brian takes Dodge 4 (a good shooter should know how to get out of the way), Longarms 3, Heavy Weapons 2, Automatics 4, and Thrown Weapons 2 (useful for throwing grenades). Brian also decides to get Negotiation 2 (a hired gun ought to know how to negotiate a contract), Perception 4 (to find his targets before they find him), Infiltration 2, and Armorer 2 (a good weapon specialist takes care of his tools). Brian also gets Etiquette 1 with a specialization in Military to establish part of his background.

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The BP cost for these skills add up as follows:

Pistols 6	24 BP
Automatics 4	16 BP
Dodge 4	16 BP
Longarms 3	12 BP
Heavy Weapons 2	8 BP
Thrown Weapons 2	8 BP
Negotiation 2	8 BP
Perception 4	16 BP
Infiltration 2	8 BP
Armorer 2	8 BP
Etiquette 1	4 BP
(Military specialization)	2 BP
TOTAL	**130 BP (365 BP total)**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Your character starts with a number of Knowledge skill points equal to (Logic + Intuition) x 3. You may also purchase additional Knowledge skill points at a rate of 2 BP per point. The maximum number of Knowledge skill points you may purchase is also equal to your (Logic + Intuition) x 3. In other words, you can only increase your total Knowledge skill points up to double your starting amount. Note that Language skills are also purchased from this pool of Knowledge skill points.

Knowledge skills come in four categories: Street Knowledge, Academic Knowledge, Professional Knowledge, and Interests (for specific definitions, see p. 129 of the *Skills* chapter). Depending on its category, a Knowledge skill links to either Intuition or Logic. You can choose as many skills as you want from each category. Be creative! Anything your character knows—from science-fiction TV shows to basic chemistry to pop music—can be a Knowledge skill. The only limits are your imagination and the gamemaster's tolerance.

Knowledge skills are open-ended in their definition, so a player should feel free to allocate them as desired to portray the character's breadth of knowledge. As a general guideline, a Knowledge skill should have two to three defining terms in the subject title (for example, "Aztechnology Business Practices"); anything else tends to make the subject either too broad or too limiting for the value of the skill.

As with Active skills, your character can specialize in Knowledge skills. Specializing in a Knowledge Skill costs 1 Knowledge Skill Point (or 2BP). No more than one specialization can be taken per Knowledge skill.

Characters cannot start the game with any base Knowledge skill rating higher than 6. Additionally, players may have a maximum of either one Knowledge skill at Rating 6 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less) or two Knowledge skills at Rating 5 (with the rest at Rating 4 or less). No base Knowledge skill can be rated lower than 1. Players cannot save Knowledge skill points; any left over after character creation are lost. New Knowledge skills can be learned and existing ones improved as the game goes on (see *Character Improvement,* p. 269).

LANGUAGE SKILLS

The Sixth World is a global village, and people often must be multilingual regardless of where they live. Characters may acquire Language skills to reflect this ability.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS BY CLASS

Category	Linked Attribute	Type of Knowledge
Street	Intuition	This is information available to characters with street connections. These skills are limited to a specific location or city. *Examples:* Gang Identification, Criminal Organizations, Smuggling Routes, Fringe Cults.
Academic	Logic	This is research and education, ranging from the sciences to history, literature and the arts. *Examples:* Biology, Medicine, Magic Theory, Politics, Philosophy, Poetry, History, Music.
Professional	Logic	This is the knowledge gained from normal trades and occupations. *Examples:* Journalism, Business, Military Service.
Interests	Intuition	These are the hobbies characters have or other interests that make them unique. Use your imagination! *Examples:* Woodworking, Urban Brawl Teams, Sci-Fi Sims, Elven Wine

At the beginning of the game, a player must declare what his character's native language is. A character has no problem communicating in his native language and does not need to make a Success Test when doing so. For record keeping purposes, you should list your native language under the Skills column, using the letter "N" instead of the skill rating to identify it as the character's native tongue.

If a player wants his character to communicate in other languages, he may purchase Language skills. Language skills count as Knowledge skills for character creation purposes, and skill points for Language skills deduct from the same pool used for Knowledge skills.

Specializations of Language skills are called *lingos.* Lingos are the languages of subgroups: hackers, mages, lawyers, corp wage slaves, street gangs, tribes, and so on. For more information, see p. 130 of the *Skills* chapter.

example

With Active skills already set, the duo takes a look at their characters' Knowledge skills.

Michelle's street witch has her Intuition and Logic attributes at Rating 4, so she gets (4 + 4) x 3, or 24 free Knowledge skill points. Ancient Egyptian heka rituals have always fascinated Michelle, so she takes "Ancient Egyptian Magic" as an Academic Knowledge skill at Rating 5. She figures her character is familiar with many talismongers around Seattle, so she takes "Seattle Talismongers" as a Rating 4 Street Knowledge skill.

As a survivor of the streets, Michelle knows who's top dog, as reflected by Seattle Street Gangs 4, Seattle Safehouses 4, and Seattle Syndicates 3, also Street Knowledge skills. Lastly, to round out her street witch, Michelle gives her character an Interests Knowledge skill: Ancient Mythologies 4. This uses up the last of Michelle's free Knowledge skill points, so she's done.

Brian's specialist has an Intuition of 5 and a Logic of 2, so he gets (5 + 2) x 3, or 21 free Knowledge skill points. Since a weapons specialist ought to know where to get guns, Brian first chooses North American Arms Dealers as a Street Knowledge skill at Rating 4. Similarly, Brian allocates 4 Knowledge skill points to Arms Manufacturers and 4 points to UCAS Military, both Professional Knowledge skills. Brian also takes Global Conflicts 3 as an Interests Knowledge skill, as well as Military History 3 as an Academic Knowledge skill. With only 3 free points left, Brian decides to invest them into German, a Language skill.

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ASSIGN RESOURCES

All the attributes, skills, and qualities your character has can be worthless if he doesn't have the resources to get the job done. Resources cover all the tools of your character's trade, including gear, cyberware, magic spells, and technomancer complex forms. Each type of resource has its own separate BP cost. (Intangibles such as contacts and spells are priced in BP, not Resource nuyen.)

GEAR

Gear provides your character with the starting cash to gear up for street-level warfare. For every BP invested in Gear, the character gets 5,000 nuyen to purchase weapons, armor, cyberware, and other equipment, up to a maximum of 50 BP or 250,000¥.

Players can use this money to purchase their characters' starting gear, including cyberware, weapons, ammunition, foci and magical items, commlinks, vehicles, and plenty of other toys, described in the *Street Gear* section, p. 310. You can purchase gear in any order you wish. Starting characters must have the money to cover the full cost of an item.

All gear is subject to gamemaster approval—just because you can purchase something doesn't mean you should be allowed to get it at the start of the game. Finally, no piece of gear purchased at character creation can have a rating higher than 6 or an Availability higher than 12 (for more information, see *Availability & Buying Gear,* p. 312).

Players need not spend starting resources down to the last nuyen. For suggestions on what to do with leftover money, see *Finishing Touches,* p. 88.

QUICK GEAR REFERENCE

WEAPONS & ARMOR
- Melee Weapons, p. 314
- Projectile & Throwing Weapons, p. 315
- Firearms, p. 316
- Firearm Accessories, p. 322
- Ammo and Explosives, pp. 323–325
- Clothing and Armor, p. 326

MISCELLANEOUS GEAR
- Commlinks and Electronics, pp. 327–328
- Data Chips and Software, pp. 330–331
- ID & Credsticks, p. 331
- Tools, p. 332
- Sensors & Sensory Enhancements, pp. 332–334
- Disguise, p. 338
- Biotech, p. 337

VEHICLES & DRONES
- Groundcraft, Cars & Bikes, pp. 348–349
- Watercraft, p. 349
- Aircraft, p. 349
- VTOL/VSTOL, p. 349
- Drones, p. 349

AUGMENTATIONS
- Cyberware, p. 338
- Bioware, p. 345

CYBERWARE AND BIOWARE

In addition to the nuyen cost, each item of cyberware or bioware also has a secondary cost in Essence. This Essence Cost is the amount by which the character's Essence is reduced when the cyberware or bioware is installed. Starting characters cannot have an Essence of 0, but any fraction above zero is fine. Some cyberware can be "packaged" with other cyberware for lower cost, or may allow a certain number of Essence-free attachments (cybereyes, for example). See individual cyberware descriptions in *Street Gear*, beginning on p. 338.

Essence losses from cyberware and bioware are tracked separately. Only the higher of the two totals deducts from Essence in full, with the other deducting at half. For example, if a character has an Essence loss of 1.5 from cyberware and 2.5 from bioware, then the character's Essence is 6 – 2.5 (full bioware) – 0.75 (half cyberware), or 2.75. Players should keep track of both, as it's possible one can outpace the other as the character implants more cyber or bio into his body.

Players should consider the grade of cyberware or bioware when choosing it. Two grades are available to starting characters: Basic and Alpha.

Basic cyberware is cheap, but not very Essence-friendly. Most people don't care what brand of cyberware they get, as long as it works—datajacks, cybereyes and other common mods are low enough in cost and Essence loss that neither matters to the general public.

Alpha cyberware appeals more to the guys and gals who count on cyberware to survive. Alphaware costs more, but is easier on the body (and Essence). If you purchase alpha grade cyberware, multiply the listed nuyen cost of the item in question by 2. The Essence Cost of alphaware equals the original Essence Cost x 0.8. See *Cyberware and Bioware Grades,* p. 313.

Note that any attribute boosts gained from implants do not affect other aspects of character creation—a boost to Logic, for example, does not increase the Knowledge skills you start with.

Any reductions to a character's Essence will also affect his Magic or Resonance (see p. 177).

LIFESTYLE

Lifestyle is a catch-all category that covers ordinary expenses, such as rent or housing, food, Matrix access, and so on. Everyone needs to live someplace, even if it's the third sewer grate on the left. A character's lifestyle, purchased in one-month increments, represents this requirement. Lifestyle encompasses your living conditions and possessions. The higher the lifestyle, the less you have to worry about and the more benefits you get.

Thumbnail definitions of each lifestyle appear below. For more information on what each lifestyle represents, see p. 267 of *Running the Shadows.*

Street: Literally living on the street; few or no expenses; eating out of the trash.

LIFESTYLE COST TABLE

LIFESTYLE	MONTHLY COST
Street	Free
Squatter	500¥
Low	2,000¥
Middle	5,000¥
High	10,000¥
Luxury	100,000¥

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Squatter: One step up from the street; a jury-rigged shelter, abandoned building or the like.
Low: An apartment, but nothing to brag about. Just you and the masses.
Middle: Nice house or condo, maybe even real food.
High: A high-rise luxury flat, building security and good food on demand.
Luxury: Imagine it, friend, just imagine it.

Characters can only purchase one lifestyle at a time, though they may pre-purchase it for months in advance if they like. Lifestyles only account for the character's regular daily living expenses and accommodations—additional investments such as safehouses, private storage, garages, workshops, etc. must be bought and paid for separately.

Lifestyle also determines the starting money a character has at the beginning of his shadowrunning life. See *Starting Nuyen* on p. 88 for more information.

THE NUYEN SHUFFLE

Once you get to Resources, your character should be pretty well thought out. The trouble comes when you try to purchase everything you want or need and find out that you can't. If this happens, you might need to backtrack and make a few adjustments. Remember that a character isn't finished until you are happy with it. If you decide that you spent too much on cyberware or lifestyle, erase it and start over. If you decide you were too conservative with some choices, feel free to go back and add new angles to the character.

If you just don't have enough nuyen to do what you want and need to change your choices, the end of the character creation process is your last chance to do so. You control the character you create; feel free to mix and match and revise as you go along. Nothing is finished until the gamemaster gives you a thumbs-up on the character sheet and the game begins. Don't worry—money and Karma will flow your way once play begins, so you'll be able to improve your character and gear in countless ways.

example

Michelle has 45 BP left. Magical resources, such as spells and spirits, are more important to her character than more mundane concerns, so she only puts 10 BP into gear, giving her 50,000¥. This is enough for her to purchase a low-end commlink, a Colt American L36 light pistol, a medkit, a Force 3 magical lodge, a Force 2 sustaining focus, some spirit binding materials, and three months of Low Lifestyle.

Brian has spent 365 of his 400 BP so far, which leaves him with only 35 BP for gear. He decides to spend 22 of those 35 BP, which gives him 110,000¥.

Brian also uses some of his nuyen allocation to purchase cyberware. He decides to get the following implants: a smartlink (0.1 Essence), wired reflexes 1 (2 Essence), and retinal flare compensation (0.1 Essence). The total Essence loss from cyberware is 2.2 Essence, which reduces the weapon specialist's Essence from 6 to 3.8.

MAGICAL RESOURCES

Magicians and adepts have their own special abilities that money can't buy. Magicians are able to cast spells, bind spirits into their service, and draw power from magical foci. Adepts have special powers that augment their own natural ability, sometimes allowing them to do things that are physically impossible. Each specific spell, spirit, focus, or power has an associated Build Point cost that draws from the character's total.

Note that Awakened characters can only initiate (see p. 198) during gameplay, not during character creation.

SPELLS

Magicians can only cast spells that they have learned. During character creation, players can spend Build Points to have their magician character learn spells before beginning the game. Learning a spell costs 3 BP. (Players from previous editions should note that you don't have to learn the spell at a certain Force.) The maximum number of spells your character can learn during character creation is equal to twice the highest rating of your Spellcasting or Ritual Spellcasting skills.

SPIRITS

Magicians have the capability to summon five types of spirits. The types of spirits a magician can summon depends on his particular tradition (see p. 180).

Spirits may be summoned on a temporary basis during gameplay (see *Conjuring,* p. 186), or even bound into longer-term service (see *Binding,* p. 188). A magician character can choose to begin gameplay with bound spirits. Bound spirits cost a number of BP equal to the number of services owed. The number of services it owes may not be greater than the magician's Summoning skill (or Conjuring skill group, if applicable). The bound spirit's Force equals the magician's Magic attribute. The maximum number of spirits a magician may have bound into service is equal to his Charisma attribute.

FOCI

When buying gear, Awakened characters can purchase foci, magically enchanted objects that can increase a magician's power (see *Foci,* p. 199). To use a focus effectively, the magician or adept must bond the focus to him. This requires time and effort.

A starting Awakened character can begin the game with one or more foci already bonded. First, the character must purchase the focus with Gear nuyen. To bond a focus to the character, the player must then spend a number of BP equal to the focus's Force. The total Force of all bonded foci is limited to five times the character's Magic attribute.

A magician cannot bond more foci than their Magic attribute.

example

Michelle wants to get several spells for her mage. Looking over the spell list (p. 204) she selects the following spells; Lightning Bolt, Detect Enemies, Heal, Invisibility, Armor, and Magic Fingers. This is a total of 6 spells (the max she can take) and costs 18 BP, bringing Michelle's remaining BP down to 17. She also decides to spend 6 points on an air spirit and a fire spirit that both owe her three services (both are Force 3, as her Magic is 3). She also binds her Force 2 sustaining focus for 2 BP leaving her with 9 BP.

ADEPT POWERS

Adepts receive a number of Power points equal to their Magic attribute to purchase adept powers. Adept powers are described starting on p. 195. Power points that are not spent during character creation may be "saved up" for later investment.

RESOURCE REFERENCES

MAGICAL RESOURCES
Spells, pp. 204–211
Spirits, p. 302
Foci, p. 199
Adept Powers, pp. 195–197

TECHNOMANCER RESOURCES
Complex Forms, p. 239
Sprites, p. 240

OTHER RESOURCES
Contacts and Sample Contacts, p. 285, 289

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TECHNOMANCER RESOURCES

Technomancers rely on their living persona, complex forms (p. 239) and sprites (p. 240) to manipulate the Matrix. The living persona represents the technomancer's attributes when dealing with the digital world, and is derived from his other attributes (see *The Living Persona,* p. 239). Complex forms and sprites both have an associated Build Point cost.

COMPLEX FORMS

Technomancers may only affect the electronic world with complex forms they have learned. These forms can be bought during character creation at a cost of 1 BP per rating point. A Rating 4 Armor complex form, for example, would cost 4 BPs. The maximum number of complex forms your character can learn during character creation, regardless of rating, is equal to your character's Logic x 2.

SPRITES

Technomancers have the ability to compile and register entities called sprites in the Matrix during gameplay. A technomancer can also choose to begin gameplay with registered sprites. Registered sprites cost a number of BP equal to the number of tasks owed. The number of tasks it owes may not be greater than the technomancer's Compiling skill. The registered sprite's rating equals the technomancer's Resonance. The maximum number of sprites a technomancer may have registered into service is equal to his Charisma attribute.

CONTACTS

Contacts are your acquaintances, buddies, and assorted street informants (for full details, see *Contacts,* p. 285). These are the people your character turns to when he needs to track down information, acquire black market goods, put the word out, or otherwise seek out a favor.

Each contact has both a Connection rating (from 1 to 6) that indicates exactly how influential and useful that contact can be and a Loyalty rating (also 1 to 6) that infers how much of a sacrifice the contact will make on the character's behalf. The contact's BP cost is equal to his or her Connection rating + Loyalty rating. Connection and Loyalty are described in detail on pp. 285–286.

You should be careful to purchase at least two contacts during character creation—more if your character is a social networking type and/or is likely to have or need them. You don't want to be caught on the cold streets of the sprawl without any friends.

example

Michelle and Brian are almost finished. All that's left now is determining contacts.

Michelle only has 9 BP left, and she decides to go for a single contact. She chooses a well-established talismonger with Connection 4 and Loyalty 5. Michelle decides that her magician is new to town, and the talismonger is a childhood friend who is her only contact in the city.

Brian has 13 points remaining. He decides to go for one well-connected contact: a Mafia underboss with Connection 6 and Loyalty 1. Brian decides that his character has a family connection to the mobster through marriage—enough to get his ear, but not enough to make him part of the family. Brian buys two more contacts with his remaining points: a fixer (Connection 2, Loyalty 1) and a Lone Star beat cop (Connection 2, Loyalty 1).

FINISHING TOUCHES

The following are the few final steps that will help you make sure your character is finished. Use these as a final checklist before you begin play.

FINAL STATISTICS

If you gave your character cyberware, bioware, or purchased adept powers, the character's attributes may have changed. If so, write down your augmented attribute ratings in parentheses to reflect the bonuses. Write affected attributes in this fashion: Body 4 (6). The first number is the character's natural Body rating; the second, the augmented rating. In most situations, your character will use the augmented rating unless otherwise noted.

Separate Initiatives exist for magicians in astral space, as well as hackers and technomancers in full-sim virtual reality in the Matrix. Rules for astral Initiative appear on p. 193, and those for Matrix Initiative on p. 226.

CONDITION MONITORS

The player also needs to indicate how many boxes the character has on the Physical and Stun Tracks of his Condition Monitor: 8 + (Willpower ÷ 2, round up) for Stun, and 8 + (Body ÷ 2, round up) for Physical. Use the character's augmented attributes rather than the natural ratings (yes, this means that if a character receives a temporary Body or Willpower attribute boost that character will temporarily have additional boxes on the Condition Monitor). For each of the character's cyberlimbs another box is added to the Physical Condition Monitor.

All remaining boxes on those tracks should be blackened out.

STARTING NUYEN

Nuyen used to purchase gear under Resources doesn't carry over when you finish character creation and are ready to play. The amount of nuyen you start the game with depends on your lifestyle. Consult the Starting Money Table and roll randomly. Add up the total results of all dice. If you have any nuyen left over from Resources, you may add +1

CONDITION MONITOR BOXES

BODY (PHYSICAL) OR WILLPOWER (STUN)	NUMBER OF BOXES
1–2	9 boxes
3–4	10 boxes
5–6	11 boxes
7–8	12 boxes
9–10	13 boxes
11–12	14 boxes
13–14	15 boxes

STARTING MONEY TABLE

LIFESTYLE	DICE ROLLED	MONEY MULTIPLIER
Street	1D6	x 10¥
Squatter	2D6	x 20¥
Low	3D6	x 50¥
Middle	4D6	x 100¥
High	4D6	x 500¥
Luxury	4D6	x 1,000¥

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to the dice roll for every 100¥ left over, up to a maximum of 3 times the number of dice rolled (in other words, you may add up to half the maximum possible dice result). Multiply the result by the appropriate factor listed, and the result is your character's starting nuyen.

Starting nuyen can come in multiple forms—certified credsticks, securities, stocks in corporations, secret bank accounts, a big pile of cash and so on. Starting nuyen cannot come in gear (magical or otherwise), weapons, cyberware, contacts, or anything that must be bought. Characters can purchase things immediately upon entering the game, but any items bought are subject to Availability and the whim of the gamemaster.

GAMEMASTER'S APPROVAL

Gamemasters make the final decision as to whether a character should be allowed in the game. While this seems like a lot of power to give one person, character creation should be shared between gamemaster and player, working together to make characters that fit the style of game and the level of play. Bringing a cybered-up, gun-toting monster ork into a subtle game full of mysterious elven magic-users would probably be frowned upon, so check with the gamemaster first and try to work with him or her to achieve a balance between the needs of the group and story and your own personal goals.

BACKGROUND AND STORY

Most likely, you have been fleshing your character out throughout character creation. What does she look like? Why does he do what he does? Where did she get that cyberarm? Why is his street name Lucky Louie? Why does she run the shadows? Who gave him his first hacking program? This is the point at which you write down your character's story. Depending on the needs of your game, you can do this in great detail or in a rough, open-ended sketch. Consider the following three suggestions:

- Write down some quotes that your character might say. Three or four should be good. Fiction is filled with characters that can be captured in a quote—everything from "Do you feel lucky, punk?" to "Double Deuce!"—capture our imaginations and give us something to hook a character on.
- Write down a short paragraph, as if someone else was talking about your character. Use the descriptions of the sample characters to get an idea of what this might be like.
- Write down a quick outline of how your character got started. This exercise puts a fictional background on the character creation system. Go back and read the examples. We made decisions all along that route, and in doing so fleshed out a background for each character. This method allows you to explain your character's traits, magical ability, and where he received his resources, training, and gear.

GET OUT THERE AND PLAY!

Now it's time to pick up your dice and go on some shadowruns!

example

With the statistics and numbers for their characters complete, the last steps for Brian, Michelle, and Dan are to determine starting nuyen and come up with a background story for each of their characters. Steve the gamemaster also reviews the character sheets and gives his approval for their use.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

QUALITY DESCRIPTIONS

The following section includes descriptions for the basic positive and negative qualities available in basic *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* character creation.

POSITIVE QUALITIES

Positive qualities have a BP cost, like everything else. Characters may not spend more than 35 BP on Positive Qualities.

ADEPT

Cost: 5 BP

Adept characters use their magic in a radically different way than other Awakened characters, by channeling magic through their bodies and minds; they do not cast spells or conjure spirits, nor do they typically have access to astral space (see the Astral Perception adept power, p. 195). Instead, adepts develop powers that improve their physical and mental abilities.

A character with this quality is an adept and starts with a Magic attribute of 1, which can be increased like any other attribute up to a maximum of 6 + initiation grade (see *Purchase Attributes,* p. 82). A character with this quality cannot take the Magician, Mystic Adept, or Technomancer qualities.

Characters with the Adept quality get a number of Power points during character creation equal to their Magic attribute. These Power points are used to buy specific adept powers (see p. 195). Additional Power points can be gained by increasing the character's Magic attribute through the expenditure of Karma. Note that the Magic attribute cannot be raised above the natural maximum of 6 without initiation (see *Initiation,* p. 198).

The adept is fully described on p. 195 of *The Awakened World* chapter; a sample adept character appears on p. 104.

Though this quality is inexpensive, gamemasters should be careful not to allow it to be abused. It should only be taken for characters that are intended to be played as adepts.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Cost: 5 BP

The character can use and handle objects equally well with both hands. The character does not suffer any modifiers for using an off-hand weapon (see p. 150). When using two weapons at once, however, the character must still split his dice pool.

ANIMAL EMPATHY

Cost: 10 BP

A character with Animal Empathy has an instinctive feel for handling animals of all kinds. The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier for all tests involving the influence or control of an animal (including riding). Characters with this quality become more sensitive to the animal's point of view, and are typically reluctant to harm or show cruelty to an animal. This quality does not affect a character's interaction with sentient critters, such as sasquatches, naga, or dragons.

APTITUDE

Cost: 10 BP

A character with the Aptitude quality is a prodigy in one particular skill. Characters with this quality may improve one Active skill one point above its natural maximum to a 7. Note that this doesn't actually increase a skill that's currently at Rating 6; it just opens the door for further advancement. Increasing a skill level beyond 6 costs double the normal Karma Cost (see *Character Improvement,* p. 269).

The Aptitude quality may be taken during character creation to allow a beginning character to start with a skill of 7. If a character takes advantage of this quality, the cost for raising the skill from 6 to 7 is also twice normal, or 8 BP.

Characters may only take the Aptitude quality once.

ASTRAL CHAMELEON

Cost: 5 BP

With the Astral Chameleon quality, the character's astral signature blends into the background of astral space more quickly. All signatures left by the character last only half as long, and others assensing the signature receive a –2 dice pool modifier. Only characters with the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities may take this quality.

BLANDNESS

Cost: 10 BP

This character blends into any crowd. He is average in height, weight, and appearance, and has a distinct lack of distinguishing physical characteristics or mannerisms. Anyone attempting to describe the character cannot come up with anything more precise than "he was kinda average."

Individuals attempting to shadow or physically locate the character through social means or in even slightly crowded settings receive a –2 dice pool modifier on all tests made during such attempts. The modifier does not apply to magical or Matrix searches.

CODESLINGER

Cost: 10 BP

A codeslinger is particularly adept at performing a particular Matrix action and receives a +2 dice pool modifier to that Matrix action. Only Matrix actions with an associated success test apply; Codeslinger does not apply to actions that do not require a success test, such as Jack Out. Codeslinger may only be taken once.

DOUBLE JOINTED

Cost: 5 BP

A Double Jointed character has unusually flexible joints and can bend and contort his body into extreme positions. The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier for Escape Artist Tests (p. 133). At the gamemaster's discretion, the character may be able to squeeze into small, cramped spaces where less limber characters couldn't fit.

ERASED

Cost: 5BP or10BP

Better than SINless—the character with this quality officially doesn't exist and never did; someone or something actively works to remove her traces from the system. Maybe it's an elite hacker who owes her a favor or an AI she befriended, but the end result is that her data trail and records vanish from all but the most secure systems shortly after being entered. For 5 BP, criminal SINs and unwanted data disappear within a week. For 10 BP, any SIN, undesirable credit history, or personal information on the Matrix that she wishes is burnt after 24 hours. Obviously, the eraser will preserve any data the character wishes preserved and that is vital for her to function in society. Note that vanishing data may prove an unwanted complication if the character is in custody or doing prison time (the Man may "forget" she is there).

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EXCEPTIONAL ATTRIBUTE

Cost: 20 BP

The Exceptional Attribute quality allows a character to possess a natural Physical or Mental attribute at a level above the metatype maximum. A character with this quality has one attribute with a natural maximum one point higher than his metatype would normally allow (for example, a human character would have one attribute with a natural maximum of 7). This also increases the augmented maximum for that attribute as appropriate. This quality may only be taken once.

FIRST IMPRESSION

Cost: 5 BP

A character with the First Impression quality slides easily into new situations, groups, cities, and jobs. Whenever attempting to fit into a new environment—such as infiltrating a group or trying to meet contacts in a new city—the character gains a +2 dice pool modifier on any Social Tests during the first meeting. This modifier does not apply to second and subsequent encounters.

FOCUSED CONCENTRATION

Cost: 10 BP per rating (max rating 2)

A magician character with Focused Concentration has a naturally strong ability to concentrate. This allows him to channel mana more efficiently, making him less susceptible to Drain. A character with this quality gains a +1 dice pool modifier per rating point for all Drain Tests. Only characters with the Magician or Mystic Adept qualities may take Focused Concentration.

GUTS

Cost: 5 BP

A character with Guts is not easily frightened. He receives a +2 dice pool modifier on tests made to resist fear and intimidation, including magically induced fear from spells or critter powers.

HIGH PAIN TOLERANCE

Cost: 5 BP per rating (max rating 3)

High Pain Tolerance enables a character to better shrug off the distraction of pain from his concentration. A character who possesses this quality can ignore one box of damage per rating point when calculating wound modifiers (see *Wound Modifiers,* p. 163). So a character with this quality at Rating 2 can take 4 boxes of damage without suffering a wound modifier. This quality may not be used with the Pain Resistance adept power, pain editor bioware, or damage compensator bioware.

HOME GROUND

Cost: 10 BP

Home Ground provides a character with a +2 dice pool modifier for all Active Skill Tests made within the character's home turf. Any Knowledge skills relevant to the people, places, or things within this area receive a +4 dice pool modifier.

The character's home turf is a particular location with which the character is intimately familiar. The location must either be a small area—no larger than a large building or small neighborhood—or an environment encountered infrequently during the campaign. For example, in a Seattle-based campaign, the desert would be an infrequently encountered region and could be considered home ground. The desert would not be a suitable home ground for a campaign set in the magic-soaked Mojave. Gamemasters must approve all home grounds in their campaigns.

For hackers and technomancers, a home ground might be a particular computer network the character knows extremely well. In this case, the character receives a +2 dice pool modifier for all tests made while accessing that network. Favorite data havens like the Denver Nexus make suitable home grounds for hacker characters. Many corporate hackers have the Home Ground quality for their corporate systems.

All home grounds must be fixed locations—characters cannot move them around. If a character's home ground is destroyed, the quality is lost.

HUMAN-LOOKING

Cost: 5 BP

A metahuman character with the Human-Looking quality can "pass" for human in most circumstances. Human NPCs respond with neutral attitudes toward such characters when making Social Skill Tests (see p. 130). The character may suffer increased animosity from metahuman NPCs who are prejudiced against humans and who mistake him for human (or think that he is trying too hard to "look human"). Only elves, dwarfs, and orks can take the Human-Looking quality.

LUCKY

Cost: 20 BP

This quality allows a character to possess an Edge attribute one point higher than his metatype maximum. (For example, a human character could raise his Edge to 8.) Note that this does not actually increase the character's Edge, it just allows him to do so; the Karma cost for improvement must still be paid (see *Character Improvement,* p. 269). This quality may only be taken once.

MAGICIAN

Cost: 15 BP

A character with this quality is a magician and starts with a Magic attribute of 1. This may be increased like any other attribute, up to a maximum of 6 + initiation grade (see *Purchase Attributes,* p. 82). A character with this quality cannot take the Adept, Mystic Adept, or Technomancer qualities.

Magicians can cast spells and conjure spirits (see *The Awakened World* chapter for more information, p. 176). The Combat Mage, Occult Investigator, Radical Eco-Shaman, and Street Shaman sample characters on pp. 99, 106, 107, and 111 are examples of magicians. Each magician follows a specific magical tradition that defines his worldview and how he perceives and manipulates magic. Two common traditions—hermetic and shamanic—are described in this book, but players can also devise their own (see *Traditions,* p. 180). Magicians may also have a mentor spirit (see *Mentor Spirits,* p. 200) that confers its own benefits or penalties; players should note these, especially when choosing spells.

Magicians also have astral perception and the ability to astrally project (see *The Astral World,* p. 191).

Though this quality is inexpensive, gamemasters should be careful not to allow it to be abused. It should only be taken for characters that are intended to be played as magicians.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

Cost: 5 BP per rating (max rating 4)

For every 5 BP spent on Magic Resistance, a character receives 1 additional die for Spell Resistance Tests (see p. 183). The Magical Resistance quality, however, works even against beneficial spells such as Heal.

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Characters with the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities cannot take this quality. A magically resistant character cannot choose to lower his magical resistance; it affects all spells and magical effects, good or bad. A character with Magic Resistance is never a willing subject for spells that require a voluntary subject; such spells automatically fail when used on magic resistant characters.

MENTOR SPIRIT

Cost: 5 BP

This quality is only available to characters with either the Magician, Adept, or Mystic Adept quality. The character has a patron mentor spirit (see *Mentor Spirits,* p. 200) that guides him in his practice of magic and provides certain advantages and disadvantages. A character may only ever have one mentor spirit.

MURKY LINK

Cost: 10 BP

Any ritual sorcery (p. 184) directed against the character receives a –3 dice pool modifier. Note that this quality may work against the character in some circumstances, such as when friendly magicians want to use ritual sorcery to locate or aid the character.

MYSTIC ADEPT

Cost: 10 BP

Mystic adepts are a hybrid between magicians and adepts. Mystic adepts choose whether to dedicate their individual Magic attribute points toward somatic adept powers (gaining 1 Power point per Magic attribute point allocated) or towards Magic skills such as spellcasting and conjuring instead.

A character must purchase this quality in order to be a mystic adept and starts with a Magic attribute of 1. This may be increased like any other attribute, up to a maximum of 6 + initiation grade (see *Purchase Attributes,* p. 82). A character with this quality cannot take the Adept, Magician, or Technomancer qualities.

Like adepts, mystic adepts do not have access to astral space unless they purchase the Astral Perception adept power. Mystic adepts may not astrally project.

Though this quality is inexpensive, gamemasters should be careful not to allow it to be abused. It should only be taken for characters that intend to explore their nature as mystic adepts.

NATURAL HARDENING

Cost: 10 BP

Something about this character's neural structure makes him resistant to feedback. This quality gives the character 1 point of natural biofeedback filtering, which is cumulative with a Biofeedback Filter program or complex form (see p. 233).

NATURAL IMMUNITY

Cost: 5 or 15 BP

Characters with Natural Immunity have an innate or developed immunity to one single disease or toxin. This quality is available at two levels. If purchased at the 5 BP level, the character is immune to a single natural disease or toxin. If Natural Immunity is purchased at the full 15 BP level, the character is immune to a single synthetic (artificially created) disease or toxin. Natural Immunity does not affect diseases or toxins which are magically based, such as HMHVV.

The player and gamemaster must agree on the disease, drug, or poison to which the character is immune. It must be something the character would have a reasonable chance of coming into contact with. The character can take one dose of the agent every (12 – Body) hours with no ill effects. If the character ingests more than a single dose during that period, he takes damage as normal, but recovery time is halved.

Note that characters with Natural Immunity to a disease may still infect other characters with the disease, even though they are not suffering any ill effects from it.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

Cost: 10 BP

A character with Photographic Memory rarely forgets anything he has experienced. The character can instantly recall faces, dates, numbers, or anything else he has seen or heard. When making Memory Tests (see *Attribute-Only Tests,* p. 61), the character gains a –1 threshold modifier to the test.

QUICK HEALER

Cost: 10 BP

A Quick Healer recovers from damage more quickly than other characters. The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier to all Healing Tests made on/for/by him, including magical healing.

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RESISTANCE TO PATHOGENS/TOXINS

Cost: 5 or 10 BP

A character with Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins can fight off toxins and drugs more easily than other characters and receives a +1 dice pool modifier to Resistance Tests. This quality comes at two levels; at 5 BP the character is resistant to either pathogens or toxins, not both. If the character purchases this quality at 10 BP, he is resistant to both.

SPIRIT AFFINITY

Cost: 10 BP

Characters with Spirit Affinity are naturally attuned to one type of spirit (see *Spirits,* p. 302). These spirits find the character interesting, will be drawn to him, and are more inclined to assist the character. In certain situations, they may be reluctant to attack the character, using a nonlethal power if forced to attack regardless.

This quality may be taken by any character, not just magicians; magicians may possess this quality for a type of spirit that is not part of their magical tradition.

TECHNOMANCER

Cost: 5 BP

Technomancers can access and manipulate the Matrix through their own sheer force of will (see *Technomancers,* p. 239). Known as otaku prior to the Crash of 2064, technomancers have emerged among all walks of life since the advent of augmented reality.

A character must purchase this quality in order to be a technomancer and will start with a Resonance attribute of 1. This may be increased like any other attribute, up to a maximum of 6 (see *Purchase Attributes,* p. 83). A character with this quality cannot take the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities.

Technomancers have a living persona—their Matrix alter ego—with its own separate set of attributes that govern virtual actions in the Matrix. The Resonance attribute, combined with certain other attributes, determines how strong (or weak) the persona is.

TOUGHNESS

Cost: 10 BP

Characters with the Toughness quality shrug off damage more easily than others. Such characters gain a +1 dice pool modifier to their Body when making Damage Resistance Tests.

WILL TO LIVE

Cost: 5 per rating (max rating 3)

For each rating point in Will to Live, the character gains 1 additional Damage Overflow Box (see p. 163). These additional boxes only allow the character to sustain additional damage before dying; they do not raise the threshold at which the character becomes unconscious or incapacitated. They also don't affect wound modifiers from damage the character has taken.

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

Negative qualities provide bonus BP that can be used toward the cost of attributes, skills, qualities, and other resources and abilities. Characters may not earn more than 35 BP from purchasing Negative Qualities.

ADDICTION

Bonus: 5 to 30 BP

A character with the Addiction quality is addicted to alcohol, drugs, BTL chips, or a similar substance with a detrimental effect on the character's health (note that nicotine, caffeine, and sugar do not count). The value of this quality depends on how severe the addiction is: Mild, Moderate, Severe, or Burnout. Additional addiction rules, including listings of drugs and roleplaying guidelines, can be found on pp. 256–259.

Mild (5 BP): The addiction is omnipresent but not blatant or intrusive; it may not even be recognized or acknowledged. At this stage it is easier to seek help, but very few recognize their addiction as something needing help at this stage. Addicts experience cravings at least once a week (if not every few days), but can ignore them if necessary without too much difficulty. The addict suffers a –2 dice pool modifier to Willpower and/or Body Tests to resist the craving.

Moderate (10 BP): The addiction at this stage is marked and difficult to overcome. Addicts experience cravings at least once a day (if not more), and they are more difficult to ignore. The addict suffers a –4 dice pool modifier to Willpower and/or Body Tests to resist the craving.

Severe (20 BP): The addiction is out of control. The addict experiences constant cravings (at least twice a day), suffering a –6 dice pool modifier to Willpower and/or Body Tests to keep from giving in.

Burnout (30 BP): This is the same as a Severe addiction, except the addict has been in this state for some time and is experiencing the tell-tale signs of habitual use on his body. Reduce the character's Essence by 1 to reflect a loss of health from abusing his body. If the character does not kick the habit soon, he will continue to lose Essence at a rate determined by the gamemaster until he dies.

MORE QUALITIES

The advanced rulebooks for *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* bring even more options to the table introducing more qualities specific to their themes. While these are entirely optional and are by no means required to enjoy the game, they do offer a variety of advanced options to customize and add depth to both player characters and NPCs.

Street Magic introduces 8 new Awakened qualities which expand the list of positive and negative options available to Awakened characters.

Augmentation presents 26 new medtech qualities running the gamut from implant-related, to genetics, and even to mental disorders.

Arsenal features advanced rules for Martial Arts presenting individual styles as qualities that may be of interest to any melee specialist looking to expand his repertoire.

Unwired features 14 Matrix-related qualities, including new positive and negative options, for regular users, hackers and technomancers alike.

Runner's Companion spotlights a plethora of advanced character options and devotes an entire chapter to new qualities with close to 100 new positive and negative options available.

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ALLERGY TABLE

CONDITION	VALUE	DESCRIPTION
Uncommon	2	The substance or condition is rare for the local environment. *Examples:* silver, gold, seawater in a landlocked campaign setting (like Denver).
Common	7	The substance or condition is common for the local environment. *Examples:* sunlight, plastic, pollutants, seawater in a coastal setting (like Seattle).
Mild	3	Symptoms are discomfiting and distracting. Apply a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests made while a character experiences the symptoms.
Moderate	8	Contact with the allergen produces intense pain. Apply a –4 dice pool modifier to all tests made while a character experiences the symptoms. Increase the Damage Value of weapons made from this substance by +2 when used against the character.
Severe	13	Contact with the allergen results in actual physical damage. The character receives 1 box of damage for every minute he touches or remains exposed to the allergen. Apply a –4 dice pool modifier to all tests made while a character experiences the symptoms. Increase the Damage Value of weapons made from this substance by +4 when used against the character.

ALLERGY

Bonus: 5 to 20 BP

A character with the Allergy quality is allergic to a substance or condition. The value of this quality depends on two factors. First, determine whether the substance or condition is Uncommon (2 BP) or Common (7 BP). Then determine the severity of the symptoms: Mild (3 BP), Moderate (8 BP), or Severe (13 BP). Add the appropriate point values to find the final value. For example, the value of an Uncommon Moderate Allergy is 10 (2 + 8) points.

The Allergy Table gives descriptions of conditions and severity.

ASTRAL BEACON

Bonus: 5 BP

The astral signature of a character with the Astral Beacon quality sticks out like a sore thumb on the astral plane. All signatures left by the character last twice as long, and others assensing the signature receive a +2 dice pool modifier. Only characters with the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities may take this quality.

BAD LUCK

Bonus: 20 BP

This character is cursed—his own luck often turns against him. Whenever this character uses Edge, roll 1D6. On a result of 1, the Edge is spent, but it has the exact opposite effect intended. For example, if a character hopes to gain additional dice, instead he loses that many dice from his dice pool. If a character spends Edge to go first in an Initiative Pass, he ends up going last. If a character spent Edge to negate a glitch, Bad Luck turns it into a critical glitch.

CODEBLOCK

Bonus: 5 BP

A character with the Codeblock quality always has trouble with a particular Matrix action. He receives a –2 dice pool modifier any time he attempts that type of Matrix action. Codeblock only applies to Matrix actions with an associated test; it does not apply to actions that do not require a test (jacking out, for example). Gamemasters should not allow non-hackers to apply Codeblock towards hacking actions that they are never likely to take.

COMBAT PARALYSIS

Bonus: 20 BP

A character with Combat Paralysis freezes in combat situations. On the character's first Initiative Test in combat, the character only rolls half his Initiative attribute. On the second and subsequent Initiative Tests, however, the character rolls his normal Initiative. The character also receives a –3 dice pool modifier on Surprise Tests. Finally, the gamemaster should apply a +1 threshold modifier to any composure tests (see *Composure,* p. 138) the character must make in combat situations.

ELF POSER

Bonus: 5 BP

Elf Posers are human characters who want to be elves. This desire prompts them to associate with elves as much as possible, talk like elves, and alter their appearances so that they resemble elves. Real elves consider them an embarrassment, many humans think of them as sellouts, and even the other metatypes generally consider posers to be pathetic.

Characters with this quality who have undergone cosmetic surgery to get "elf ears" and "elf eyes" may successfully pass as elves and avoid any negative Social skill modifiers associated with being a non-elf. If an elf discovers the character's secret, however, the elf is likely to treat him with contempt and hostility (see the Social Modifiers Table, p. 131). An outed elf poser may also face stigma from other humans as "race traitors," if those humans harbor any prejudice against elves.

Only human characters may take the Elf Poser quality.

GREMLINS

Bonus: 5 BP per rating (max rating 4)

Characters with the Gremlins quality never seem to get along with technology. Devices malfunction inexplicably in the character's hands, software constantly crashes whenever he uses it, components become unusually fragile at his touch, and wireless links suffer faltering connections and odd interference.

For every 5 BP gained in this quality, reduce the number of rolled 1s necessary to get a glitch (p. 62) by 1 whenever the character is attempting to use a moderately sophisticated device (late 20th century technology or later). For example, a character with a dice pool of 8 and Gremlins Rating 2 (10 BP) would trigger a glitch if two or more 1s result from the test. The gamemaster may also require the character to make a test for operations that would otherwise succeed automatically, simply to see whether or not a glitch occurs.

When describing the effects of a Gremlin-induced glitch, gamemasters should play up the notion of a particularly weird mechanical or electronic malfunction. For example, if a Gremlin-plagued character glitches while shooting a pistol, the clip might inexplicably fall out of the gun, or the slide might jump off the rails and go flying into the distance. Similarly, if the character was using a commlink to access a restricted node, the language interface might suddenly convert into Lithuanian for no apparent reason.

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Note that Gremlins is a Negative quality—its effects should be hindering to the character (and entertaining to others). Gremlins should not be used as an "offensive ability," where a character causes his opponent's high-tech toys to fall apart merely by touching them. Consider Gremlins to be a curse on the character—if he wants the technology to fail, then it should be more likely not to.

This effect only applies to external equipment and does not affect cyberware, bioware, or other implants.

INCOMPETENT

Bonus: 5 BP

A character who is Incompetent possesses a total lack of knowledge or ability with a certain Active skill. If this quality is taken, the player must specify an Active skill in which the character is Incompetent. Incompetent may not be applied to Language or Knowledge skills.

The character is treated as having a skill level of "unaware" for that particular skill (see the *Skill Ratings Table,* beginning on p. 119 for more information). In some cases, a Success Test may be required to perform certain tasks that most people take for granted. Characters may not possess that skill, nor may they default on it. Gamemasters are free to reject any choices that would prove irrelevant or exploitative in actual play (ie. such as Incompetent: Pilot Aerospace in a campaign where characters are street-level gangers).

Incompetent may be purchased more than once, choosing a separate skill each time.

INFIRM

Bonus: 20 BP

The Infirm quality represents a character with substandard physical fitness. Infirm characters could be old or simply quite ill, or they may be individuals in poor health who neglect their physical well-being, such as "couch potato" hackers or magicians.

The cost for learning or improving Physical skills is twice normal (including at character creation) for Infirm characters, and they may never learn any Physical skill groups. Additionally, Infirm characters are treated as "unaware" in any Physical skills that they do not possess at Rating 1 or higher (see *Skill Ratings,* p. 118), and they may not default on skill tests for that skill. The quality does not affect performance in Physical skills the character possesses.

LOW PAIN TOLERANCE

Bonus: 10 BP

Characters with Low Pain Tolerance are particularly sensitive to pain; they incur a –1 wound modifier for every 2 boxes of cumulative damage, instead of the normal 3 boxes.

ORK POSER

Bonus: 5 BP

Influenced by Goblin Rock or over-hyped orxploitation trends, an Ork Poser is an elf or human character who alters his appearance to appear as an ork. Various cosmetic biomods—tusk implants, steroids, larynx alterations, etc.—allow the character to successfully pass as an ork. Ork posers are an embarrassment to many orks, and an ork who discovers the secret may treat the character with hostility. Other orks, however, might be willing to let the character join the "family"—provided he passes an appropriate hazing ritual to prove his "orkness," of course. An outed ork poser may also face stigma from other humans or elves as "race traitors," if those humans/elves harbor any prejudice against orks.

Only humans and elves may take the Ork Poser quality.

PACIFIST

Bonus: 5 or 10 BP

The Pacifist quality makes a character unusually principled and humane for the dark streets of 2070. If the quality is taken at 5 BP, the character actively avoids needless violence and will not kill unless in self-defense (and even then, she will do so as humanely as possible). Such characters cannot participate in premeditated murders or wetwork and are compelled to dissuade their fellow shadowrunners from embarking on such operations.

If the quality is taken at 10 BP, the character has severe moral qualms about any violence and will refuse to harm any living creature that possesses more intelligence than a gnat, regardless of the provocation. If she does, she is overcome by a deep depression, during the onset of which the character refuses to do anything other than eat, sleep and go about her daily routine. Such a state typically lasts several weeks, but may vary at the gamemaster's discretion.

Some individuals respect the restraint of Pacifist shadowrunners, while others consider them useless wimps.

SCORCHED

Bonus: 5 BP (10 BP for hackers/technomancers)

A Scorched character had a nasty experience (or experiences) with Black IC or BTLs in the past, suffering near-permanent effects. The character receives a –2 dice pool modifier to any Willpower-related tests made when facing Black IC or BTLs. This does not include Damage Resistance Tests, but does apply to tests to jack out, log off, resist the effects of Psychotropic IC, or resist addiction.

SENSITIVE NEURAL STRUCTURE

Bonus: 5 BP (10 BP for hackers/technomancers)

A character with a Sensitive Neural Structure has a particularly delicate nervous system, making him more vulnerable to neural damage from BTLs, Black IC, dumpshock, and other damaging forms of simsense. When resisting damage from Simsense, the character receives a –2 dice pool modifier.

SENSITIVE SYSTEM

Bonus: 15 BP

A character with the Sensitive System quality has immuno-suppressive problems with implants. Double all Essence losses caused by cyberware implants. This quality does not affect Essence losses for bioware.

SIMSENSE VERTIGO

Bonus: 10 BP (15 BP for hackers/technomancers)

Characters who suffer from Simsense Vertigo experience feelings of disorientation whenever they work with augmented reality, virtual reality, and simsense (including smartlinks, simrigs, and image links). Such characters receive an extra –2 dice pool modifier to all tests when interacting with AR, VR, or simsense.

SINNER

Bonus: 5 or 10 BP

The character was born with or somehow acquired a legal System Identification Number, or SIN (see *Identification, Please,* p. 266). This means the character's real identity, personal history, biometric data, credit records, medical history, travel history, etc. are stored and accessible in numerous databanks. This does not mean the character is required to use that SIN, merely that a legal record of him does exist (and may serve as a detriment some day).

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

At 5 BP, the character has a standard SIN and is a bona fide citizen of the nation or extraterritorial megacorp of his choice. At 10 BP, the character has a criminal SIN, meaning that the character also has a verifiable criminal record on file, and likely served prison time in the past. As many law enforcement agencies share their data, this means that character is more likely to be identified if linked to a crime.

SPIRIT BANE

Bonus: 10 BP

A character with the Spirit Bane quality really torques off a certain type of spirit (see *Spirits,* p. 302). These affected spirits are likely to harass the character when he is in their presence and they may be reluctant to obey or perform favors for the character or his friends. If ordered to attack a party that includes the character, these spirits will single the character out first in an attempt to destroy him.

This quality may be taken by any characters, not just magicians, and magicians may possess this quality for a type of spirit that is not part of their magical tradition.

UNCOUTH

Bonus: 20 BP

Uncouth characters are antisocial or sociopathic and have a difficult time interacting with others. The cost for learning or improving Social skills is twice normal for Uncouth characters (including at character creation), and they may never learn any Social skill groups. Additionally, Uncouth characters are treated as "unaware" in any Social skills that they do not possess at Rating 1 or higher (see *Skill Ratings,* p. 118). The gamemaster may require the character to make Success Tests for social situations that normal people would have no problems with.

UNEDUCATED

Bonus: 20 BP

An Uneducated character has grown up far away from the modern sprawl and is thus ignorant of modern society in general, possessing only a rudimentary knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. This quality is fitting for characters who grew up in primitive societies or back-to-the-land anti-technological communes (for example, Amazonian primitives, Luddite collectives, or NAN pinkskins). This quality also applies to certain sentient paracritters that have developed their own primitive society (such as shapeshifters, naga, and merrow).

Characters with the Uneducated quality are considered "unaware" in Technical, Academic Knowledge, and Professional Knowledge skills they do not possess (see *Skill Ratings,* p. 118), and they may not default on skill tests for those skills. The gamemaster may also require the character to make Success Tests for ordinary tasks that the typical sprawl-dweller takes for granted. Additionally, the Karma cost for learning new skills or improving existing ones in these categories is twice normal (including at character creation), and the character may never learn skill groups belonging to these categories.

WEAK IMMUNE SYSTEM

Bonus: 5 BP

A character with the Weak Immune System quality is more susceptible to infection by disease than normal. The character gains a –2 dice pool modifier to any tests for resisting diseases. Weak Immune System often results from immuno-suppression treatments used in cybersurgery and bio-genetic procedures, so it's reasonable to believe that characters that have undergone extensive body modification are more likely to acquire this quality.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

WALKTHROUGH

Shadowrun's Build Point system is intended to offer a great deal of flexibility in characer creation. Experienced players may feel comfortable dispensing with a linear order and allocating BP as they see fit. It is recommended new players follow these steps until they are familiar with *Shadowrun* character creation.

1. CHOOSE A METATYPE

The five basic metatypes are described on p. 66 and pp. 71–73.

HUMAN: 0 BP
ORK: 20 BP
DWARF: 25 BP
ELF: 30 BP
TROLL: 40 BP

2. PICK QUALITIES

Basic qualities are presented on p. 90–96.

3. ASSIGN BPS TO ATTRIBUTES [MAX. 200 BP]

Attributes are described and listed on p. 67-–68, minimum and maximum Attribute ratings by metatype can be found in p. 81.

Physical / Mental: 10 BP per Att. Point [except max point]
Edge: 10 BP per Att. Point [except max point]
Magic: 10 BP per Att. Point [except max point; requires Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept Quality]
Resonance: 10 BP per Att. Point [except max point; requires Technomancer Quality]
Max Attribute value 25 BP for final Att. Point

4. ASSIGN BPS TO SKILLS

Skills and skill groups are presented on p. 120

Active Skills: 4 BP per Skill Point
Knowledge Skills: 2 BP per Skill Point, start with (Intuition + Logic) x 3 for free
Skill Groups: 10 BP per Group Point
Specializations: 2 BP per Active specialization; 1 BP per Knowledge specialization

5. ASSIGN BPS TO RESOURCES

The various categories of Resources are briefly addressed on p. 86.

Gear: 1 BP per 5,000¥ [max 50 BP]
Melee Weapons, p. 314
Projectile & Throwing Weapons, p. 315
Firearms, p. 316
Firearm Accessories, p. 322
Ammo and Explosives, p. 323–325
Misc Gear
Clothing and Armor, p. 326
Commlinks and Electronics, p. 327–328
Datachips and Software, p. 330–331
ID & Credsticks, p. 331
Tools, p. 332
Sensors & Sensory Enhancements, p. 332–333
Disguise, p. 338
Biotech, p. 337
Augmentations
Cyberware, p. 338
Bioware, p. 345
Vehicles and Drones
Groundcraft, Cars & Bikes, p. 348–349
Watercraft, p. 349
Aircraft, p. 349
VTOL/VSTOL, p. 349
Drones, p. 349

MAGICAL RESOURCES

Spells: 3 BP per spell (max = 2 x Spellcasting/Ritual Spellcasting)
Street Grimoire, p. 203

Spirits: 1 BP per service owed (max services = Summoning, max spirits = Charisma)
Spirits, p. 186

Bonding Foci: 1 BP per Force Point (max = 5 x Magic)
Foci, p. 199

TECHNOMANCER RESOURCES

Complex Forms: 1 BP per rating point (max forms = Logic x 2)
Complex Forms, p. 239

Sprites: 1 BP per task owed (max services = Compiling, max sprites = Charisma)
Sprites, p. 240

Contacts: (Connection rating + Loyalty rating) BP
Contacts and Sample Contacts, p. 285, 289

Lifestyles, p. 267

6. FINAL TOUCHES

Calculate final Essence, Magic/Resonance, Initiative

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

BOUNTY HUNTER

RACE: **TROLL** (40 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (200 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
8	3	3 (5)	8	2	3	3	4	3

Essence:	**4.65**
Initiative:	**6 (8)**
Initiative Passes:	**1**
Physical Damage Track:	**12**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (126 BP)

Archery:	**3**
Athletics Skill Group:	**2 (+1)***
Blades (Knives +2):	**1**
Clubs (Batons +2):	**2**
First Aid:	**3**
Longarms (Shotguns +2):	**3**
Perception:	**3**
Survival:	**2**
Tracking:	**3**
Unarmed Combat:	**5**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(18 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Cop Trids	3
Crook Hangouts:	**3**
Lone Star Procedures:	**4**
Parazoology:	**2**
Poison Antidotes:	**2**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Sioux:	**N**
English (Cityspeak +2):	**3**

QUALITIES (0 BP)

Animal Empathy	(10 BP)
Quick Healer	(10 BP)
Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins	(10 BP)
Gremlins	(+5 BP)
SINner	(+5 BP)
Uncouth	(+20 BP)

Vicious paracritter on the loose? Escaped murderer on the run? Rebellious daughter ran off with a ganger again? The Bounty Hunter's the guy to call. The ultimate stalker, he lives for the thrill of the chase—the thought of pitting his skills and his customized toys against the instincts of a dangerous animal or criminal is what makes him happy to get up in the morning. He'll track down prey of any variety—two-legged or four-legged—as long as the pay is good. He'll hunt 'em down and bring 'em back alive, hunt 'em down and bring back the body, or hunt 'em down and just bring back a souvenir. Rest assured, the Bounty Hunter always gets what he's after.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (100,000¥) (20 BP)

5 Thermal Smoke Grenades; 3 Flash-Paks; Lined Coat; Fake SIN (Rating 3); 4 Plasteel Restraints; 2 Containment Manacles; 20 Security Tags; Doc Wagon Contract (Gold, 1 Year); Middle Lifestyle (3 months)

AUGMENTATIONS

Cybereyes [Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, Thermographic, Smartlink and Vision Magnification]; Cyberears [Rating 2, w/Audio Enhancement (3), Damper, Select Sound Filter (3)]; Reaction Enhancers (Rating 2); Synthacardium (Rating 1)*

MATRIX GEAR

Erika Elite Commlink [w/Isis Orb OS];
Programs [Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3]

WEAPONS

Extendable Baton; Stun Baton; 2 Survival Knives; 2 Shock Gloves; Bow [Rating 8, w/20 Arrows]; Mossberg AM CMDT [w/ Internal Smartgun System and 10 clips of Flechette ammo]; Ruger 100 [w/Bipod and 10 magazines of Regular ammo]

CONTACTS (14 BP)

Beat Cop (Connection 2/Loyalty 4)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Street Doc (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **4D6 x 100¥**
+1 Reach
+1 Natural Armor
Lost Natural Thermographic Vision with Implants

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

COMBAT MAGE

Whether you need your damage dished out physically or magically, the Combat Mage is your guy. You won't find him poring over mystical tomes in a library or pondering the meaning of life under the stars—he was trained for action, and smack in the middle of it is where he likes to be. With a full repertoire of punishing spells to match his impressive arsenal of artillery and his formidable fighting skills, he's guaranteed to have the right tool for the job. Support is not the Combat Mage's forte—he won't hang back in the rear to heal up his comrades or maintain the stealth and protection spells—he'll be at the front, fighting side by side with the street samurai and the adept.

RACE: **ELF** (30 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	2

Essence:	6
Initiative (Astral):	8 (6)
Initiative Passes (Astral):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (124 BP)

Astral Combat:	3
Blades:	2
Conjuring Skill Group:	3
Counterspelling:	3
Dodge:	3
Etiquette (Street):	2 (+2)
Perception:	2
Pistols:	3
Spellcasting:	5

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(21 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Corporate Security Tactics:	2
Lone Star Procedures:	2
Magic Background:	3
Magical Phenomenon:	3
Mercenary Hangouts:	2
Urban Brawl Odds:	2

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N
Latin:	3
Sperethiel:	4

QUALITIES (+20 BP)

Magician	(15 BP)
Mild Allergy to Sunlight	(+10 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Simsense)	(+5 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Stimulants)	(+5 BP)
Sensitive System	(+15 BP)

SPELLS (24 BP)

Armor
Clout
Increase Initiative
Levitate
Lightning Bolt
Manaball
Manabolt
Physical Barrier

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (20,000¥) (4 BP)

Lined Coat; Fake SIN (Rating 3); Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); Magesight Goggles (10m); 4 Stimulant Patches [Rating 3]; Low Lifestyle (2 Months);

MATRIX GEAR

Novatech Airware Commlink [w/Mangadyne Deva OS and Sim Module modified for BTL/hot sim];
Programs [Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3];
Simrig

WEAPONS

Katana; Yamaha Sakura Fubuki [w/Quick-Draw Holster and 200 rounds of Regular Ammo]

CONTACTS (8 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Talismonger (Connection 2/ Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6+1 x 50¥**
Natural Low-Light Vision

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

COVERT OPS SPECIALIST

RACE: **HUMAN** (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (220 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
2	5	5 (7)	2	3	4	4	3	4

Essence:	**4.7**
Initiative:	**9 (11)**
Initiative Passes:	**1**
Physical Damage Track:	**9**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (144 BP)

Athletics Skill Group:	**3**
Close Combat Skill Group:	**3**
Electronics Skill Group:	**2**
Disguise:	**2**
Etiquette:	**2**
Infiltration (Urban +2):	**4**
Perception:	**2**
Automatics (Submachine Guns +2):	**2**
Shadowing:	**3**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(24 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Corporate Politics:	**3**
Finances:	**2**
Fine Cuisine:	**3**
Modern Literature:	**2**
Safe Houses:	**2**
Security Systems:	**3**

LANGUAGES SKILLS

Japanese:	**N**
English:	**3**
French:	**2**
German:	**2**
Spanish:	**2**

QUALITIES (10 BP)

Blandness	(10 BP)
Double Jointed	(5 BP)
Murky Link	(10 BP)
Incompetent (First Aid)	(+5 BP)
Weak Immune System	(+5 BP)
Mild Allergy: Gold	(+5BP)

When the Covert Ops Specialist is doing his best work, you'll never see him. A master of infiltration and espionage, he's highly trained in the art of getting in, getting what he's looking for (be it information, that hot new prototype, or the security codes for the corp's secret R&D lab), and getting out. He moves like a ghost, quick and quiet, and his specialized gear helps him pass unseen and gather the information he needs. Don't think he can't handle himself in less covert circumstances, though—if need be, he can talk or fight his way out of most situations.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (80,000¥) (16BP)

Armor Jacket; Chameleon Suit; 5 Flash-Paks; 5 Smoke Grenades; Jammer (Area, Rating 4); White Noise Generator (Rating 4); Gas Mask; 2 Small Containers of Nanopaste Disguise; Grapple Gun w/Climbing Gear, 200m of Stealth Rope, Catalyst Stick; Rappelling Gloves; Gecko Tape Gloves; Autopicker (Rating 4); Wire Clippers; Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Monofilament Chainsaw; Keycard Copier (Rating 4); Medkit (Rating 6); 2 Fake SIN (Rating 4); High Lifestyle (1 month)

AUGMENTATIONS

Cybereyes [Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, Smartlink, Thermographic, and Vision Magnification]; Reaction Enhancers (Rating 2); Spur

MATRIX GEAR

Hermes Icon Commlink [w/Novatech Navi OS and Sim Module]; Programs [Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3]; Trodes; AR Gloves; Rating 2 Linguasoft (Cantonese)

WEAPONS

Monofilament Sword; Shock Gloves; Ingram Smartgun X (w/10 Clips of Regular Ammo)

CONTACTS (10 BP)

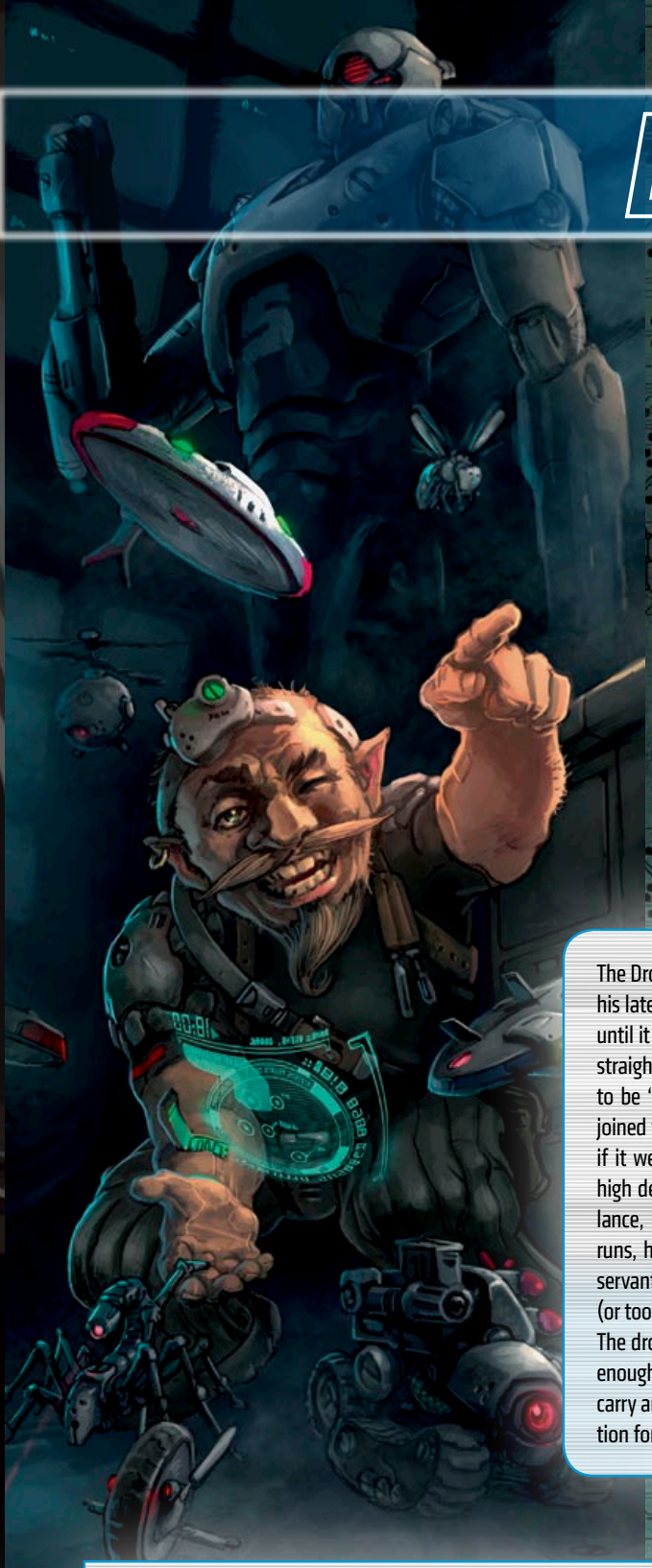
Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)
Mr. Johnson (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **4D6 x 500¥**

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

DRONE RIGGER



The Drone Rigger loves to be elbows-deep in his latest project—tweaking and adjusting it until it runs ten times better than it ever did straight out of the box. Otherwise, he prefers to be "inside" one of his drones—his mind joined to its electronic circuitry, moving it as if it were his own body. His services are in high demand; drones are prized for surveillance, protection, and attack. On shadowruns, he can direct his cadre of mechanical servants to perform jobs that are too touchy (or too dangerous) for live teammates to do. The drones' wide range of sizes—from small enough to fit in a pocket to large enough to carry an entire team—means he's got an option for every eventuality.

RACE: DWARF (25 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (180 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	4	4 (6)	3	2	5	4	3	3

Essence:	**4.5**
Initiative (Augmented) [Matrix]:	**9 (11) [11]**
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	**1 (3)**
Physical Damage Track:	**10**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (156 BP)

Aeronautics Mechanic:	**2**
Automatics:	**2**
Automotive Mechanic:	**2**
Electronic Warfare:	**2**
Electronics Skill Group:	**4**
Gunnery:	**3**
Locksmith:	**2**
Perception:	**2**
Pilot Aircraft:	**6**
Pilot Anthroform:	**3**
Pilot Ground Craft:	**4**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(27 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Computer Background:	**3**
Local Junkyards:	**5**
Hospital Routes:	**4**
Pirate Trid Broadcasts:	**4**
Safe Houses:	**3**
Sci-Fi Sims:	**3**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Japanese:	**N**
Cantonese:	**2**
English (Cityspeak):	**2 (+2)**

QUALITIES (+15 BP)

Aptitude (Pilot Aircraft)	(10 BP)
Low Pain Tolerance	(+10 BP)
Moderate Allergy to Gold	(+10 BP)
Weak Immune System	(+5 BP)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥250,000) (50 BP)

Armor Jacket; Fake SIN (Rating 3), Automotive Workshop; Autopicker (Rating 1); Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Automotive Toolkit; Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

AUGMENTATIONS

Control Rig; Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, and Thermographic Vision]; Datajack; Reaction Enhancers (Rating 2)

MATRIX GEAR

Transys Avalon Commlink [w/Response 5, Signal 5, Firewall 5, System 5, and sim-module w/hot sim modification];
Programs [Scan 5; ECCM 5; Encrypt 5; Command 5; Stealth 5];
Autosofts [Clearsight 4; Defense 4; Electronic Warfare 4; Maneuver (Aircraft) 4; Maneuver (Ground Craft) 4; Targeting (Heavy Weapons) 4; Targeting (Automatics) 4]

VEHICLES & DRONES

GMC Bulldog Step-Van [Pilot 4, Signal 4, Firewall 4, Response 4, Rigger Adaptation]
1 Lockheed Optic-X Drone
2 GM-Nissan Doberman Drones [Pilot 4, Signal 4, Firewall 4, Response 4, w/Ingram White Knights, 2 belts of 100 rounds of Explosive Ammo for each]
2 MCT-Nissan Roto-drones [Pilot 4, Signal 4, Firewall 4, Response 4, Weapon Mount w/ HK-227x, 10 clips of Exploding Ammo for each]
1 Shiawase Kanmushi Microdrone
1 Offensive Lone Star iBall

WEAPONS

HK MP-5 TX [w/ 10 clips of Exploding Ammo]

CONTACTS (8 BP)

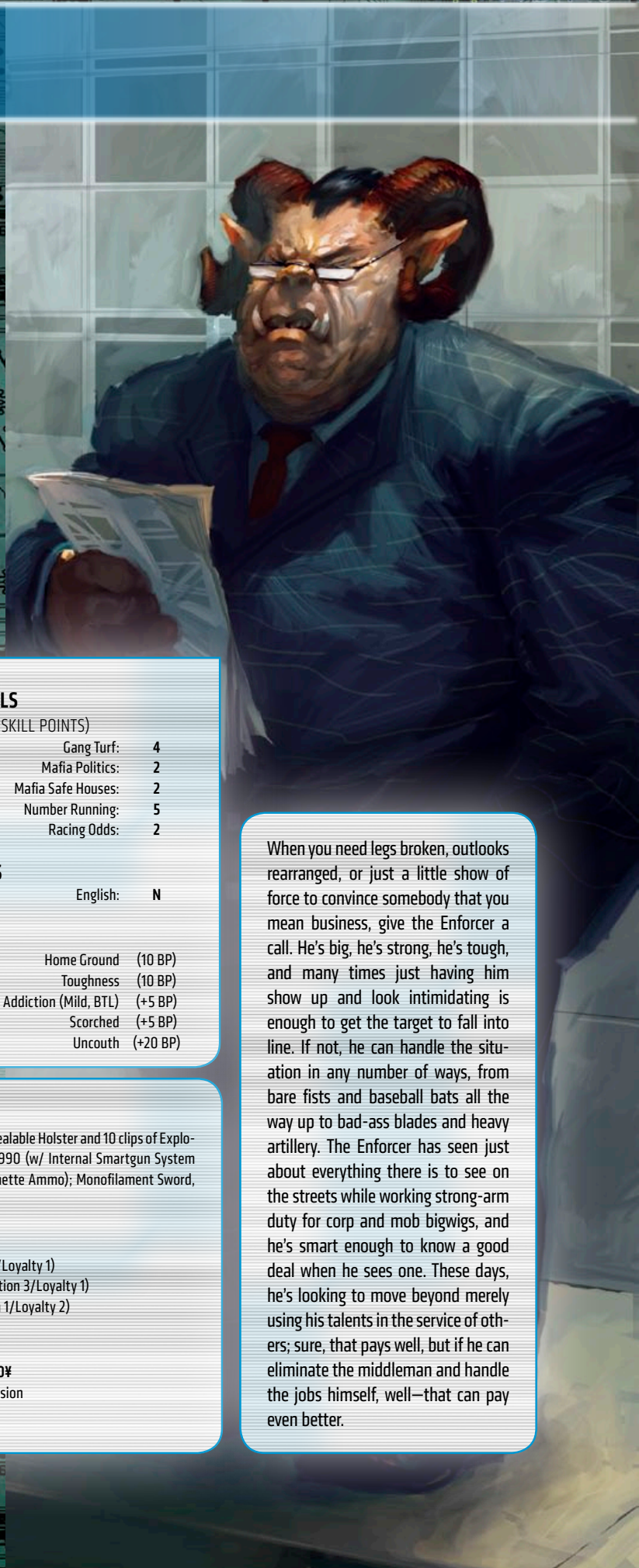
Fixer (2 Connection/2 Loyalty)
Mechanic (2 Connection/2 Loyalty)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**
+2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins
Lost Natural Thermographic Vision due to implants

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

ENFORCER



RACE: **TROLL** (40 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (190 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
9	3	3 (5)	9	2	3	2	3	2

Essence:	**2.9**
Initiative:	**6 (8)**
Initiative Passes:	**1 (3)**
Physical Damage Track:	**13**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (160 BP)

Close Combat Skill Group:	**4**
Con:	**2**
Dodge:	**3**
Etiquette (Mafia):	**1 (+2)**
Firearms Skill Group:	**4**
Forgery:	**3**
Intimidation:	**3**
Palming:	**3**
Pilot Ground Craft (Car):	**1 (+2)**
Shadowing:	**3**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS
(15 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Gang Turf:	**4**
Mafia Politics:	**2**
Mafia Safe Houses:	**2**
Number Running:	**5**
Racing Odds:	**2**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	**N**

QUALITIES (+10 BP)

Home Ground	(10 BP)
Toughness	(10 BP)
Addiction (Mild, BTL)	(+5 BP)
Scorched	(+5 BP)
Uncouth	(+20 BP)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (55,000¥) (11 BP)
Lined Coat; 3 Different BTL Chips; Fake SIN (Rating 4), Fake Gun License (Rating 4); Italian Linguasoft (Rating 2), Middle Lifestyle (1 Month)

AUGMENTATIONS
Datajack; Wired Reflexes (2)

MATRIX GEAR
Transys Avalon Commlink (w/Renraku Ichi OS and Sim Module Modified for BTL/Hot Sim);
Programs [Analyze 2, Browse 2, Edit 2];
AR Gloves; Glasses [Rating 2, w/Smartlink and Image Link]

WEAPONS
Ares Predator IV [w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo]; Remington 990 (w/ Internal Smartgun System and 5 magazines of Flechette Ammo); Monofilament Sword, Shock Gloves

CONTACTS (9 BP)
BTL Dealer (Connection 1/Loyalty 1)
Mafia Consiglieri (Connection 3/Loyalty 1)
Mafia Soldier (Connection 1/Loyalty 2)

NOTES
Starting Nuyen: **4D6 x 100¥**
Natural Thermographic Vision
+1 Reach
+1 Natural Armor

When you need legs broken, outlooks rearranged, or just a little show of force to convince somebody that you mean business, give the Enforcer a call. He's big, he's strong, he's tough, and many times just having him show up and look intimidating is enough to get the target to fall into line. If not, he can handle the situation in any number of ways, from bare fists and baseball bats all the way up to bad-ass blades and heavy artillery. The Enforcer has seen just about everything there is to see on the streets while working strong-arm duty for corp and mob bigwigs, and he's smart enough to know a good deal when he sees one. These days, he's looking to move beyond merely using his talents in the service of others; sure, that pays well, but if he can eliminate the middleman and handle the jobs himself, well—that can pay even better.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

FACE

RACE: DWARF (25 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (220 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	3	3	3	5	5	4	5	4

Essence:	5.7
Initiative:	8
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	11

ACTIVE SKILLS (130 BP)

Con:	4
Dodge:	2
Electronics Skill Group:	2
Etiquette:	5
Ground Craft (Car +2):	2
Intimidation:	3
Negotiation:	5
Perception:	4
Pistols:	2

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS
(27 FREE KNOWLEDGE POINTS)

Fine Cuisine:	3
Fine Restaurants:	3
Urban Brawl Schedule:	3
Combat Bike Schedule:	3

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N
Arabic:	3
Cantonese:	3
German:	3
Japanese:	3
Spanish:	3

QUALITIES (+5 BP)

Exceptional Attribute (Charisma)	(20 BP)
First Impression	(5 BP)
Combat Paralysis	(+20 BP)
Gremlins	(+10 BP)

Living in the shadows isn't all about big guns, major mojo, and dancing the electron two-step. Sometimes a more personal approach is needed, and that's where the Face comes in. As the public persona of the shadowrunning team, he uses his charm and charisma to negotiate with Mr. Johnson, wine and dine information sources, and talk his way out of tricky situations where blazing guns aren't the smart way to go. The Face's strengths are in his wide web of contacts and business associates, magnetic personality, and an uncanny ability to figure out what people want and give it to them—all the while cutting a better deal for himself and his team. He's got style, he's got flair, he's up on all the latest fashions and trends, and he's just as comfortable chatting over drinks with a corporate bigwig as he is discussing this year's Urban Brawl draft with a group of sprawl gangers. He's the consummate social chameleon, easily slipping in and out of character to make the best of any situation.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (50,000¥) (10 BP)
Mercury Comet; Armor Clothing; Basic DocWagon contract (1 year); 2 Fake SINs (Rating 4); Jammer [Area, Rating 4]; 4 Certified Credsticks (Blank); High Lifestyle (1 Month)

AUGMENTATIONS
Implanted Commlink (Transys Avalon w/Iris Orb OS); Datajack

MATRIX GEAR
Monocle [Rating 1, w/Image Link];
Programs [Analyze 2, Browse 3, Edit 2];
AR Gloves

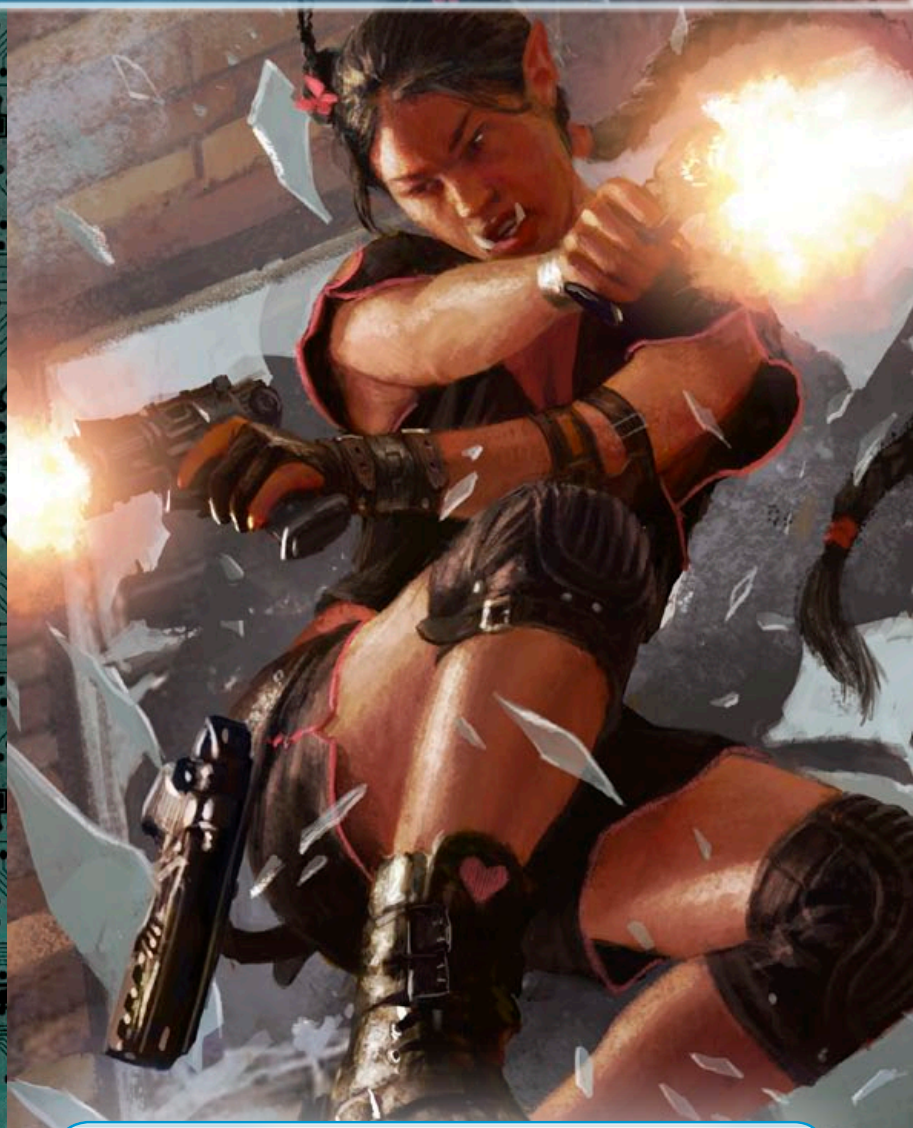
WEAPONS
Fichetti Security 600 (w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Regular Ammo)

CONTACTS (20BP)
Arms Dealer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Bartender (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)
Fixer (Connection 4/Loyalty 2)
Mr. Johnson (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Triad Soldier (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)

NOTES
Starting Nuyen: **4D6 x 500¥**
+2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins
Natural Thermographic Vision

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

GUNSLINGER ADEPT



RACE: **ORK** (20 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (250 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
5	5	5 (7)	4	2	3	4	3	5	4

Essence:	**6**
Initiative:	**8 (10)**
Initiative Passes:	**1 (3)**
Physical Damage Track:	**11**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (112 BP)

Athletics Skill Group:	**3**
Etiquette (Street +2):	**2**
Firearms Skill Group (Pistols Improved Ability):	**4 (6)**
Perception (Visual +2):	**3**
Pilot Ground Craft (Car +2):	**1**
Unarmed Combat:	**3**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS
(21 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Firearms Design:	**4**
Firearms History:	**2**
Hong Kong Action Movies:	**3**
Hong Kong Triads:	**3**
Lone Star Procedures:	**3**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Cantonese:	**N**
English (Cityspeak +2):	**2**
Mandarin:	**2**
Japanese:	**1**

QUALITIES (+5 BP)

Adept (5 BP)
Ambidextrous (5 BP)
Mild Allergy to Pollutants (+10 BP)
SINner (+5 BP)

ADEPT POWERS
(5 POWER POINTS FROM MAGIC)

Attribute Boost (Agility):	**2**
Combat Sense:	**2**
Improved Ability (Pistols):	**2**
Improved Reflexes:	**2**

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (45,000¥) (9 BP)
Medkit (Rating 6); Lined Coat; Autopicker (Rating 5); Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1; Fake Detective License (Rating 4); Fake Driver's License (Rating 4); Fake Gun License (Colt Manhunter, Rating 4); Fake SIN (Rating 4); Low Lifestyle (3 months)

MATRIX GEAR
Hermes Ikon Commlink [w/Mangadyne Deva OS]; Programs [Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 2]; Contact Lenses [Rating 2 w/Smartlink and Image Link]; AR Gloves

WEAPONS
2 Colt Manhunters [w/ Internal Smartgun System, Quickdraw Holsters and 20 clips of Explosive Ammo]; Raecor Sting [w/ Concealable Holster and 2 clips of Flechette Ammo]

CONTACTS (14 BP)
Arms Dealer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 3)
Lone Star Detective (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

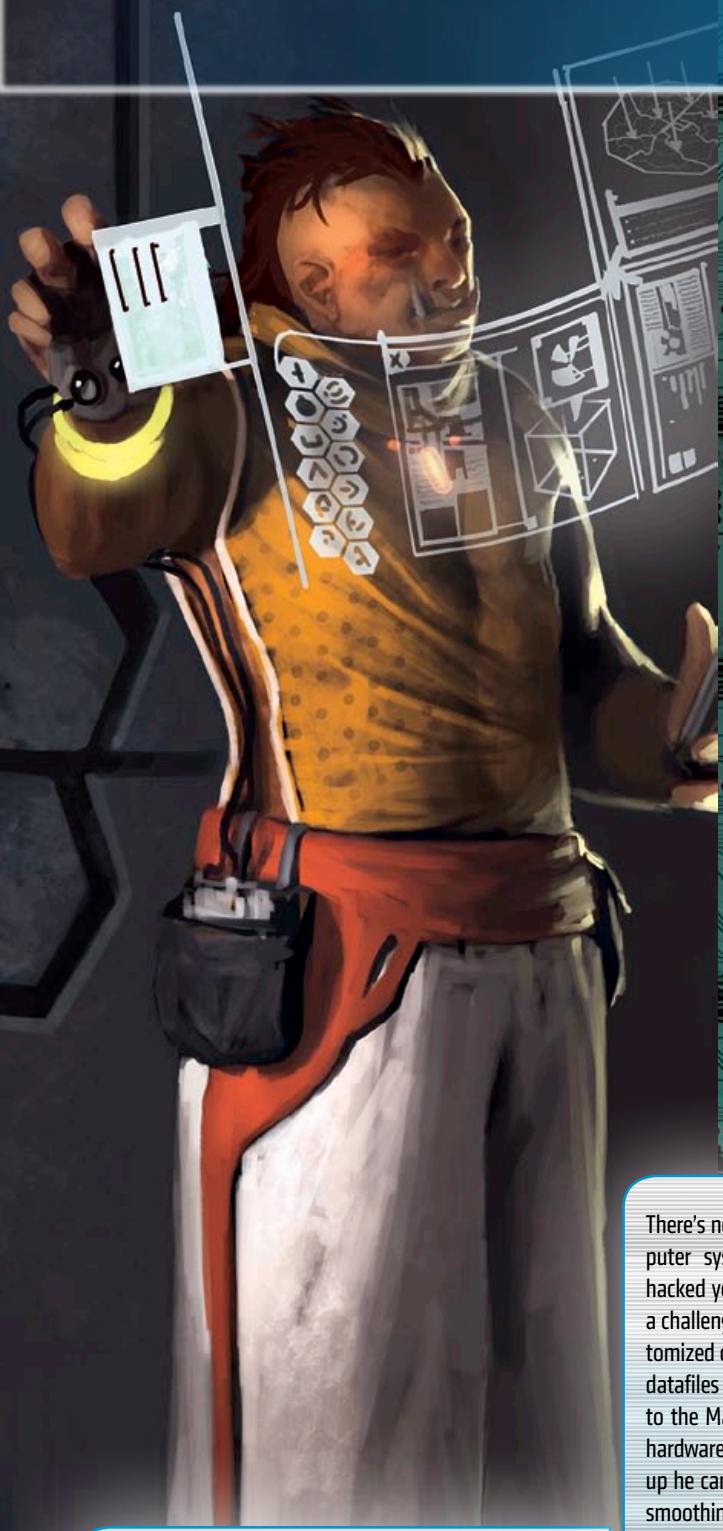
NOTES
Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**
Natural Low-Light Vision

Many adepts channel their magical abilities toward honing their bodies into lethal unarmed killing machines, but the Gunslinger Adept has a different approach. With her uncanny ability to wield firearms of all types, she leans more toward Gun Fu than Kung Fu, taking down challengers before they've even had a chance to draw.

The Gunslinger Adept can perform tricks with firearms that most people can only dream of copying, but if the going should ever get tough she can also count on her phenomenal streak of luck to pull her butt out of the fire long enough for her to set her guns blazing once more. "One shot, one kill" is her motto—sure, on the mean streets of the Sixth World it's hard to fulfill that vow every time, but nonetheless she doesn't often miss what she's aiming at. A peerless gun for hire, the Gunslinger Adept finds no job too small and no challenge too great.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

HACKER



RACE: **ORK** (20 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (200 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
4	3	5	3	3	5	4	3	4

Essence:	**4.32**
Initiative (Matrix):	**10 (11)**
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	**1 (3)**
Physical Damage Track:	**10**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (138 BP)

Cybercombat:	**4**
Dodge:	**2**
Electronics Skill Group:	**4**
Electronic Warfare:	**5**
Etiquette (Matrix):	**1 (+2)**
Forgery:	**2**
Hacking:	**5**
Perception:	**3**
Pistol:	**2**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (27 FREE BP)

Conspiracy Theories:	**3**
Corporate Matrix Security Procedures:	**5**
Matrix Chat Rooms:	**3**
Operating Systems:	**5**
Safe Houses:	**3**
Underworld Politics:	**3**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	**N**
Chinese:	**3**
Japanese:	**2**

QUALITIES (0 BP)

Codeslinger (Hack on the Fly)	(10 BP)
Photographic Memory	(10 BP)
Uncouth	(+20 BP)

There's no such thing as an unhackable computer system—only one that hasn't been hacked yet. The Hacker sees every system as a challenge, every encrypted file as an invitation to test his skills, the power of his programs, and his customized commlink. It is him against whatever the Matrix has to offer. Everything from remote cameras to datafiles to the cyberware and weapons of his foes are subject to his whim, as long as they're connected to the Matrix—and what isn't these days? The Hacker uses his state-of-the-art, personally-customized hardware and software to manipulate the electronic world and augmented reality, and when things heat up he can immerse himself fully into virtual reality, moving at the speed of thought through the Matrix, smoothing the way for his meat-bound teammates.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (150,000¥) (30BP)

Biometric Reader; Armor Vest; 4 Fake SINs (Rating 4); Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

AUGMENTATIONS

Implanted Commlink (Sony Emperor w/ Sim Module modified for BTL/Hot Sim, w/Response 5, Signal 5, System 5, Firewall 5); Control Rig; Cybereyes [Rating 2, w/Low-Light Vision, Smartlink, Thermographic Vision, and Protective Covers]; Datajack; Data Lock (Encryption 5); Enhanced Articulation; Skin Pocket; Sleep Regulator

MATRIX GEAR

Subvocal Microphone; Programs [Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 4, Black Hammer 4, Browse 5, Command 5, Data Bomb 2, Decrypt 3, Edit 5, Exploit 5, Scan 5, Spoof 4, Stealth 5, Track 4]; 15 different VR Games

WEAPONS

Hammerli 620S (w/10 clips of Regular Ammo)

CONTACTS (12 BP)

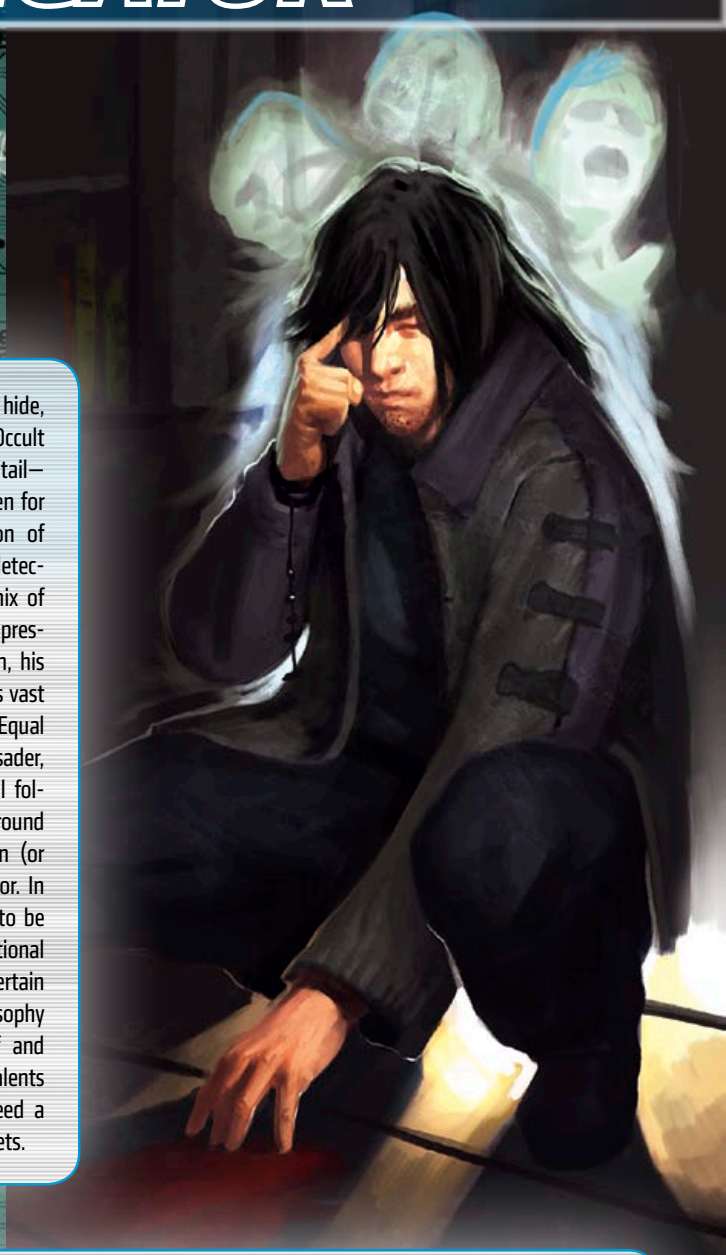
Blogger (Connection 3/Loyalty 1)
Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)
Spider (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**
Lost Natural Low-Light Vision due to implants

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

OCCULT INVESTIGATOR



RACE: **HUMAN** (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	3

Essence:	6
Initiative (Astral):	7 (8)
Initiative Passes (Astral):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (146 BP)

Assensing:	3
Conjuring Skill Group:	3
Data Search:	3
Dodge:	2
Influence Skill Group:	2
Locksmith:	1
Perception (Visual +2):	4
Pistols:	1
Shadowing:	2
Sorcery Skill Group:	3

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(24 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Chemistry:	3
Local Area Knowledge:	4
Magic Theory:	4
Underworld Politics:	4

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Arabic:	N
English (Cityspeak +2):	3
Japanese:	2
Latin:	3

QUALITIES (+10 BP)

Magician	(15 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Alcohol)	(+5 BP)
Bad Luck	(+20 BP)

SPELLS (15 BP)

Ignite
Improved Invisibility
Influence
Mind Probe
Stun Bolt

If you've got anything to hide, you'd better hope that the Occult Investigator isn't on your tail—because it won't stay hidden for long. An Awakened version of the traditional gumshoe detective, he uses an eclectic mix of spells to supplement his impressive talents in investigation, his dogged persistence, and his vast network of street contacts. Equal parts bloodhound and crusader, once he's on a trail he will follow it until he's run it to ground and found the information (or the suspect) he's looking for. In his past, he was on track to be a top detective in conventional law enforcement, but certain disagreements over philosophy spurred him to break off and go freelance, making his talents available to those who need a little extra edge on the streets.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (25,000¥) (5 BP)

Radio Signal Scanner (Rating 3); 20 Security Tags; Micro Directional Microphone; 3 Micro Microphones; Lockpick Set; 4 Micro Cameras; Autopicker (Rating 3); Lined Coat; Magical Lodge Materials (Force 3); Mage Sight Goggles; Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Fake Press License (Rating 4); Fake SIN (Rating 3); Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

MATRIX GEAR

Sony Emperor Commlink [w/Renraku Ichi OS]; Programs [Analyse 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3]; Glasses [Rating 4, w/Image Link, Low-Light, Flare Compensation, and Thermographic Vision]; Earbuds [Rating 3, w/Audio Enhancement (Rating 2) and Select Sound Filter (Rating 1)]; AR Gloves

WEAPONS

Colt Manhunter [w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Regular Ammo]

CONTACTS (14 BP)

Bartender (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)
Lone Star Beat Cop (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)
Street Snitch (Connection 1/Loyalty 1)
Talismonger (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

RADICAL ECO-SHAMAN

Metahumanity has spent far too long raping the earth in the pursuit of "progress," and the Radical Eco-Shaman is ready to exact a little revenge in the name of Mother Gaia. Though her ideals are peaceful, she's no pacifist—she'll do whatever it takes to strike back at the people and corps she believes are destroying the planet, from spiking trees and blowing up bulldozers to organizing rallies and staging media events to publicize the cause. The fact that she's Awakened and therefore more closely connected to the Earth not only makes her more devoted to her crusade, but gives her magical firepower that can't hurt when she needs to get the job done. She will avoid risking lives—damaging property is what hurts the corps' bottom line anyway—and with her healing skills she can treat damage as well as dish it out. She's a powerful ally, especially when going up against the very corporations she hates.

RACE: **DWARF** (25 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	3	3	3	5	4	3	5	5	3

Essence:	6
Initiative (Astral):	7 (8)
Initiative Passes (Astral):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	11

ACTIVE SKILLS (130 BP)

Banishing:	3
Binding:	5
Demolitions:	4
Etiquette:	2
First Aid:	2
Perception:	2
Pistols:	2
Sorcery Skill Group:	3
Summoning:	5

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (21 FREE BP)

Astral Research:	3
Engineering:	2
Magical Theory:	3
Megacorp Law:	3
Parazoology:	3
Radical Groups:	4

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N
Spanish:	3

QUALITIES (+15 BP)

Magician	(15 BP)
Mentor Spirit (Wolf)	(5 BP)
Allergy (Moderate, Pollutants)	(+15 BP)
Spirit Bane (Fire Spirits)	(+10 BP)
Low Pain Tolerance	(+10BP)

SPELLS (18 BP)

Chaotic World
Critter Form (Wolf)
Flamethrower
Heal
Manabolt
Mob Mood

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (15,000¥) (3 BP)

3 Tranq Patches (Rating 5); Armor Vest; Medkit (Rating 6); 2 Trauma Patches; Camouflage Suit; Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); 10 Kilos of Foam Explosives [w/10 Detonator Caps] (Rating 4); Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

MATRIX

Sony Emperor Commlink w/Renraku Ichi OS

WEAPONS

Colt Manhunter [w/ 10 Clips of Regular Ammo]; Survival Knife

CONTACTS (9 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Talismonger (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)

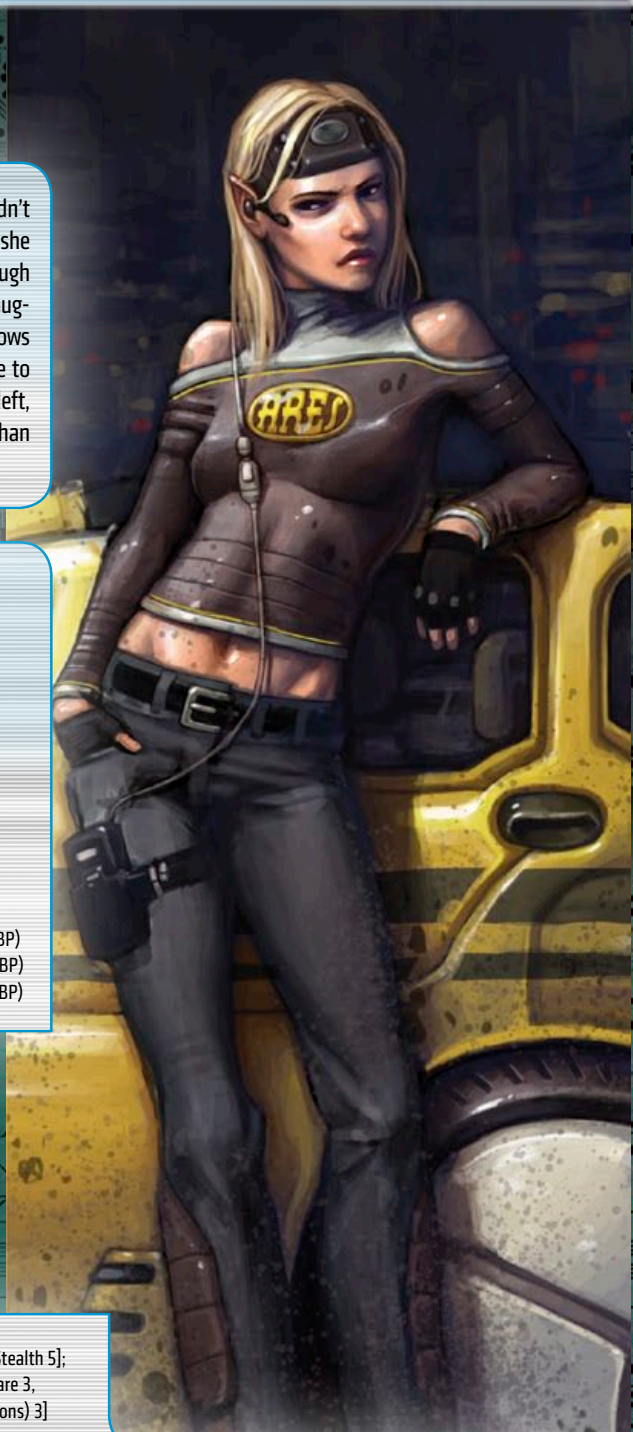
NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**
The Radical Eco-Shaman follows Wolf and has +2 dice for Combat spells, and +2 dice to conjure beast spirits.
The shaman must succeed in a Willpower Charisma (3) Test to retreat from a fight.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

SMUGGLER

Part grease monkey, part hotshot driver, the Smuggler never met a vehicle she didn't like—or couldn't drive. Not only that, but she can fix it if it breaks down or gets shot up, and odds are very good that she can improve it so it will do things that the original designer never intended. Whether screaming through a border crossing in a souped-up T-Bird or dogfighting in a specially modified cargo plane, the Smuggler's got the nerve and the know-how to get your cargo where it needs to go in one piece. She knows all the checkpoints, all the weaknesses in border patrols, and every smuggling route from Seattle to Denver and beyond. If you need to get somewhere in a hurry without anybody knowing you've left, the Smuggler's your best bet—but even if things get a little hot and you pick up a tail, she's more than capable of blowing it away in vehicle-to-vehicle combat.



RACE: HUMAN (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (210 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	5	5 (7)	2	2	5	3	3	3

Essence:	3.4
Initiative:	10 (12)
Matrix Initiative:	11
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (156 BP)

Dodge:	3
Etiquette (Smugglers +2):	2
Electronic Warfare:	4
Gunnery:	4
Mechanic Skill Group:	2
Navigation:	2
Negotiation (Bargaining +2):	2
Perception:	3
Pilot Aircraft:	4
Pilot Ground Craft:	5
Pistols:	1
Infiltration:	3

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(24 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Auto Mechanics:	5
Border Patrol Tactics:	4
Engineering:	3
Smuggler Safe Houses:	4
Smuggling Routes:	5

LANGUAGES SKILLS

English:	N
Spanish:	3

QUALITIES (+30 BP)

Elf Poser	(+5 BP)
Low Pain Tolerance	(+10 BP)
Moderate Allergy to Sunlight	(+15 BP)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (250,000¥) (50 BP)

Helmet; Lined Coat; Automotive Toolkit; Automotive Shop; Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

AUGMENTATIONS

Plastic Bone Lacing; Control Rig; Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/ Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Smartlink, and Thermographic Vision); Datajack; Reaction Enhancers (Rating 2); 2 Smuggling Compartments; Touchlink

MATRIX GEAR

Fairlight Caliban [w/Firewall 5, System 5, Response 5, Sim Module modified for BTL/Hot Sim]; Programs [Command 5, ECCM 5, Encrypt 4, Scan 5, Stealth 5]; Autosofts [Clearsight 3, Defense 3, Electronic Warfare 3, Maneuver (Ground Craft) 3, Targeting (Heavy Weapons) 3]

VEHICLES & DRONES

Eurocar Westwind 3K [Pilot 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4, Response 4

GMC Bulldog Step-Van [Pilot 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4, Response 4, Rigger Adaptation, Weapon Mount w/ Ingram White Knight LMG, 2 belts of 100 Explosive Rounds]

WEAPONS

Ares Predator IV [w/ Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo]

CONTACTS (14 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Mechanic (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)
Mr. Johnson (Connection 4/Loyalty 1)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 +4 x 50¥**

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

SPRAWL GANGER

RACE: **ORK** (20 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (220 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
7	4 (5)	3	6 (7)	2	3	3	4	4

Essence:	4.9
Initiative:	6
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	12
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (144 BP)

Close Combat Skill Group:	4
Etiquette (Street +2):	3
Firearms Skill Group:	3
Intimidation:	3
Pilot Ground Craft (Bike +2):	2
Running:	3
Shadowing:	4
Survival (Urban +2):	2

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(18 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

BTL Dealers:	2
Gang ID:	4
Gang Turf:	5
Local Area Knowledge:	2
Urban Brawl Statistics:	3

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N
Spanish:	2

QUALITIES (0 BP)

Guts	(5 BP)
Home Ground	(10 BP)
Toughness	(10 BP)
Scorched	(+5 BP)
Uneducated	(+20 BP)

The Sprawl Ganger is an urban predator, born and raised on the streets and well versed in what it takes to survive in a world where anybody you meet might kill you because he doesn't like your looks (or your colors). He's tough, strong, and trained from childhood in the arts of combat, intimidation, and street smarts. He doesn't need guns or magic to stay alive—his fists, a good lead pipe, a chain and a knife are his weapons of choice, and he's very good at using them. He knows that to stay alive in the Barrens, you've either got to be the toughest hombre on the streets or under that hombre's protection—and since he's not about to kiss up to anybody, that only leaves him one choice. Still, though, he knows the score, and he knows that no matter how tough you are, there's always somebody younger and tougher coming up behind you. This is why he's looking for his ticket up to the next rung of the ladder—maybe doing some intimidation work for the local Mob family or running courier jobs for the area's drug lord will get him noticed, and maybe getting noticed will give him a chance to show just how well this big fish in a small pond can swim with the sharks.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (30,000¥) (6 BP)

Armor Jacket; Harley Davidson Scorpion; Fake Drivers License (Rating 4); Fake SIN (Rating 3); Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

AUGMENTATIONS

Datajack; Muscle Replacement (Rating 1)

MATRIX GEAR

Sony Emperor Commlink [w/Redcap Nix OS and Sim Module Modified for BTL/Hot Sim]; Programs [Analyze 2, Browse 1, Command 1, Edit 1];
Glasses [Rating 1, w/Image Link]; AR Gloves; Miracle Shooter (1 Year) and 2 misc. VR Games; Virtual Pet

WEAPONS

Combat Axe; Extendable Baton; Remington Roomsweeper (w/10 clips of Flechette Ammo); Survival Knife

CONTACTS (10 BP)

BTL Dealer (Connection 1/ Loyalty 1)
Gang Leader (Connection 2/ Loyalty 1)
Gang Member (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **3D6 x 50¥**
Natural Low-Light Vision

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

STREET SAMURAI

RACE: HUMAN (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES: (200 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
4	5 (8)	4 (6)	5 (7)	2	3	2	3	2

Essence:	**1.08**
Initiative:	**7 (9)**
Initiative Passes:	**1 (3)**
Physical Damage Track:	**10**
Stun Damage Track:	**10**

ACTIVE SKILLS (150 BP)

Athletics Skill Group: **3**
Automatics: **5**
Blades: **4**
Heavy Weapons: **3**
Infiltration: **4**
Negotiation: **2**
Perception (Visual +2): **1**
Pilot Ground Craft (Bike +2): **1**
Pistols: **4**
Unarmed Combat: **5**

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS
(15 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Firearm Design: **3**
Safe Houses: **4**
Zen Meditation: **3**

LANGUAGES

Spanish: **N**
English (Cityspeak +2): **2**
Japanese: **2**

QUALITIES (0 BP)

Guts	(5 BP)
High Pain Tolerance	(10 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Stimulants)	(+5 BP)
Incompetent (Hacking)	(+5 BP)
Allergy (Mild, Gold)	(+5 BP)

Part man, part machine, all dangerous—sometimes it's hard to tell where the Street Samurai's meat body ends and her cybered enhancements begin. Tough, strong, frighteningly fast, and trained in the arts of combat and tactics, she's a hyper-efficient killing machine who can handle just about any situation she gets into. Whether former military, former corp, or former something-she-won't-discuss, these days she's a freelance street operative who prides herself on her strict sense of honor. She is as learned in the ways of the samurai warrior as she is in the practice of security procedures, and she prides herself on always remaining one step ahead of the dishonorable street scum who seek vainly to best her.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (195,000¥) (39 BP)
Armor Vest (w/Rating 2 Nonconductivity Modification); Firearms Repair Kit; Doc Wagon Contract (Gold, 1 Year); Fake SIN (Rating 4); 5 Fake Licenses [2 Ares Predators IVs, Katana, Ingram Smartgun X, Wired Reflexes, each at Rating 4]; Suzuki Mirage; Low Lifestyle (3 Months)

AUGMENTATIONS
Wired Reflexes [Alpha] (2); Cybereyes [Alpha, Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Protective Covers, Smartlink, and Thermographic Vision], Right Obvious Customized Full Cyberarm [w/Armor 2, Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Strength 2, Spur, Shock hand], Left Obvious Customized Full Cyberarm [w/Armor 2, Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Strength 2, Small Smuggling Compartment]

MATRIX GEAR
Hermes Ikon [w/Redcap Nix OS and Sim Module]; Programs [Analyze 2, Browse 2, Command 1, Edit 2] AR Gloves;

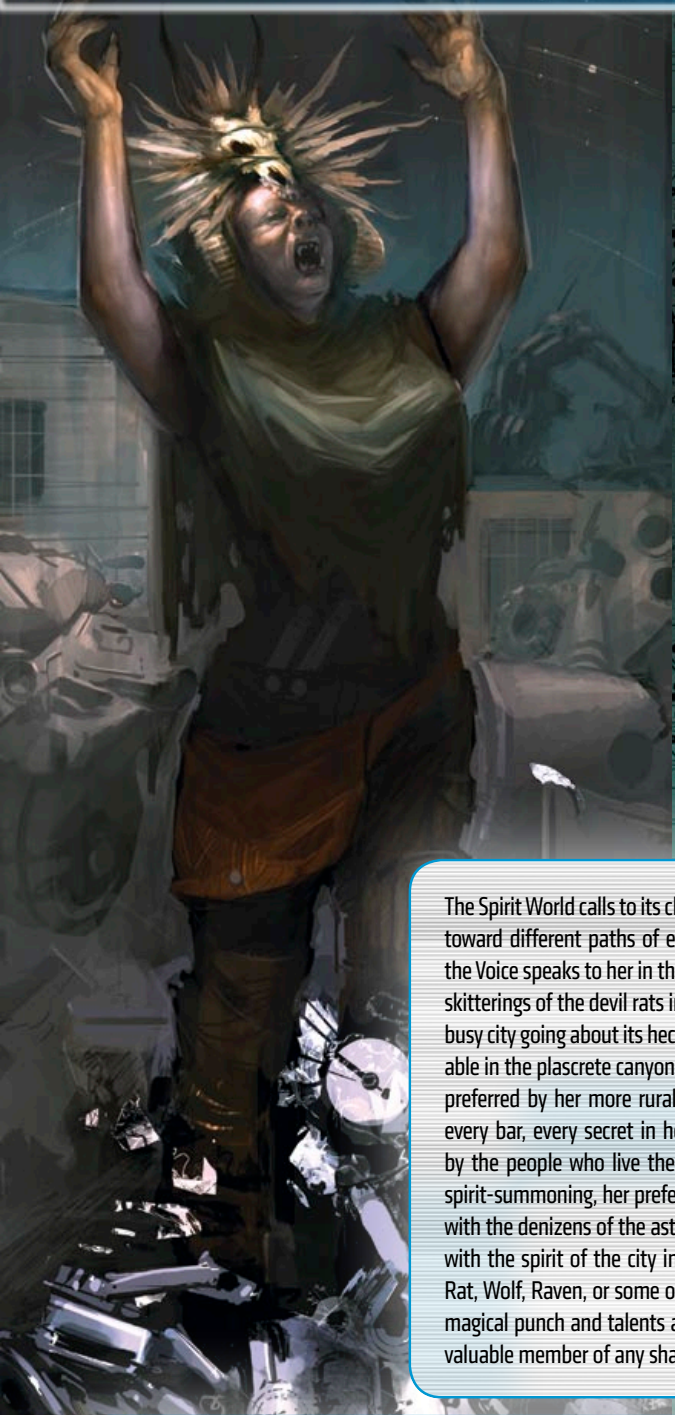
WEAPONS
2 Ares Predator IVs [w/Concealable Holsters and 10 clips of Exploding Ammo for each]; Ingram Smartgun X [w/Sound Suppressor, Gas Vent 3, 10 clips of Regular Ammo]; Katana; Stoner-Ares M202 [Internal Smartgun System, w/2 100 round belt of Regular Ammo]; Survival Knife

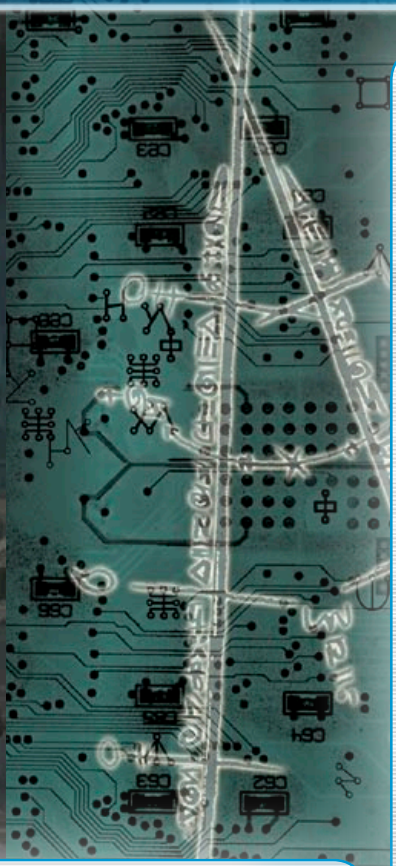
CONTACTS (11 BP)
Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 3)
Street Doc (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)

NOTES
Starting Nuyen: **3D6+8 x 50¥**

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

STREET SHAMAN





The Spirit World calls to its children in different ways, pointing them toward different paths of enlightenment. For the Street Shaman, the Voice speaks to her in the whispers of the homeless people, the skitterings of the devil rats in dark alleys, the hum and hubbub of a busy city going about its hectic daily existence. She's more comfortable in the plascrete canyons of the sprawl than in the wilder lands preferred by her more rural counterparts—she knows every alley, every bar, every secret in her neighborhood, and she's fascinated by the people who live there. Though skilled at both spells and spirit-summoning, her preferences lie in the latter; her interactions with the denizens of the astral plane help her to literally commune with the spirit of the city in which she lives. Whether she follows Rat, Wolf, Raven, or some other urban totem, the Street Shaman's magical punch and talents at sneaking and infiltration make her a valuable member of any shadowrunning team.

RACE: TROLL (40 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (225 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
5	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	5	2

Essence:	6
Initiative (Astral):	7 (8)
Initiative Passes (Astral):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	11
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (120 BP)

Assensing:	2
Banishing:	2
Binding:	3
Dodge:	2
Infiltration:	3
Palming:	2
Perception:	2
Sorcery Skill Group:	3
Summoning:	5
Survival (Urban +2):	1

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS
(24 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Goblin Rock:	2
Local Charity Shelters:	4
Local Area Knowledge:	4
Magical Theory:	4
Public Transportation Routes:	3
Safe Houses:	2
Spirits:	5

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N

QUALITIES (+5 BP)

Magician	(15 BP)
Mentor Spirit (Rat)	(5 BP)
Combat Paralysis	(+20 BP)
Gremlins	(+5 BP)

SPELLS (12 BP)

Confusion
Heal
Improved Invisibility
Manabolt

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥5,000) (1BP)
Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); Leather Jacket; Medkit (Rating 4); Gas Mask; Squatter Lifestyle (2 Months)

MATRIX GEAR
Meta Link Commlink [w/Vector Xim OS];
Programs [Analyze 1, Browse 1, Command 1, Edit 1];
Goggles [Rating 1, w/Image Link]

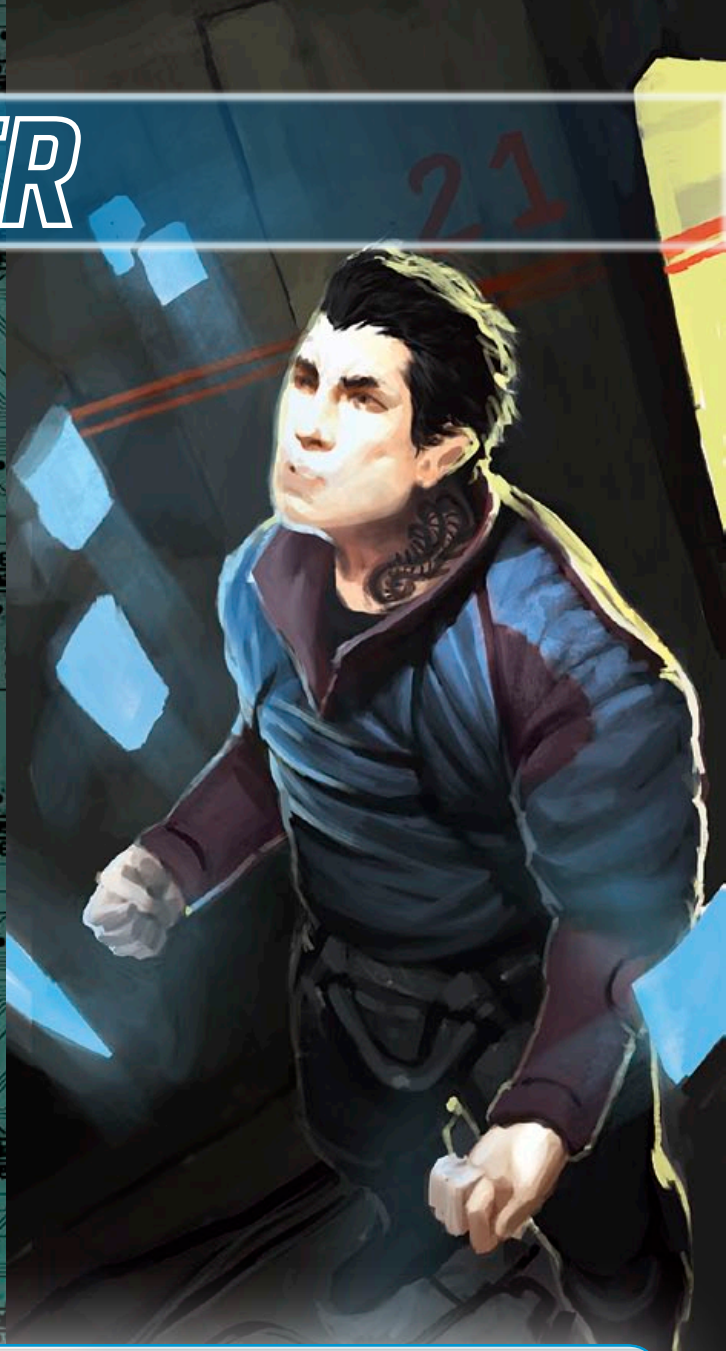
WEAPONS
Survival Knife

CONTACTS (7BP)
Squatter (Connection 1/Loyalty 2)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES
Starting Nuyen: **2D6 x 20¥**
Natural Thermographic Vision
+1 Reach
+1 Natural armor
+2 dice for Infiltration Tests,
+2 dice for resisting disease and poisons
The Street Shaman must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to not immediately flee or seek cover whenever caught in a combat situation. If there is nowhere to flee, then she is forced to fight.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

TECHNOMANCER



RACE: **HUMAN** (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	R	E
2	3	4	2	3	5	5	3	5	2

Essence:	6
Initiative (Matrix):	9 (11)
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	9
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (134 BP)

Cracking Skill Group:	3
Electronics Skill Group:	3
Dodge:	2
Negotiation:	2
Perception:	3
Pistols (Light Pistols +2):	1
Tasking Skill Group:	4

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(30 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Comic Books:	3
Corporate Matrix Security Procedures:	4
Data Havens:	3
IC Identification:	3
Matrix Theory:	2
Operating Systems:	5

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish:	N
English (Cityspeak +2):	4
Cantonese:	2
Japanese:	3

QUALITIES (+10 BP)

Natural Hardening	(10 BP)
Technomancer	(5 BP)
Combat Paralysis	(+20 BP)
Weak Immune System	(+5 BP)

LIVING PERSONA

Firewall:	3
Response:	5 (6)
Signal:	3
System:	5
Biofeedback Filter (Natural Hardening):	3 (4)

The Technomancer does not merely run the Matrix—he inhabits it, moving through it with the easy familiarity of a fish in home waters. He doesn't need a clumsy commlink to give him access, nor does he need to spend his time writing tedious programs to do his bidding—his mind and his reflexes are all he needs to ride the electron waves and shape the virtual world. Touched by the Resonance, he communes with the soul of the machine and finds his home more among its datatrails and network traffic than he ever did among the streets and buildings of the sprawl.

COMPLEX FORMS (35 BP)

Analyze 2; Armor 3; Browse 3; Attack 4; Decrypt 3; Exploit 5; Edit 3; Scan 3; Stealth 5; Track 4

WEAPONS

Colt America L36 [w/Internal Smartgun System, Hidden Gun Arm Slide, and 5 clips of Regular Ammo]

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥15,000) (3 BP)

Lined Coat; Fake SIN (Rating 4); Dodge Scoot; Metalink Commlink running Vector Xim OS, Low Lifestyle (3 Months)

CONTACTS (8 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Blogger (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 2 x 50¥

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

WEAPON SPECIALIST

RACE: **ELF** (30 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (180 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3

Essence:	6
Initiative:	7
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (142 BP)

Archery:	2
Armorer:	5
Close Combat Skill Group:	3
Demolitions:	3
Dodge:	2
Firearms Skill Group:	4
Heavy Weapons:	2
Negotiation:	2
Throwing Weapons:	2

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

(18 FREE KNOWLEDGE SKILL POINTS)

Blade Design:	3
Chemistry:	2
Engineering:	4
Firearm Design:	4
Gun Trivia:	2

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Arabic:	N
English:	3

QUALITIES (10 BP)

Guts	(5 BP)
Lucky	(20 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Stimulants)	(+5 BP)
Allergy (Mild, Seawater)	(+10 BP)

The Weapons Specialist is a literal martial artist. A master of unarmed combat, she is equally skilled at building and repairing weapons and armor of all types. If it deals damage or prevents you from getting hurt, she can fix it, improve it, or make you a new one. She's up on all the latest developments in the weapons industry, and odds are she knows somebody who can get hold of that hot new toy that's not quite on the market yet. She's a veritable walking arsenal, bristling with guns, knives, and a few more exotic things squirreled away in her many pockets, but even if somebody manages to catch her unarmed, she's a wiz at improvising weapons from whatever happens to be around her—including her opponents.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (130,000¥) (26 BP)

5 Flash-Paks; Armorer Facility; Armor Jacket; Armorer's Kit; Fake SIN (Rating 3); 2 Fake Licenses (Rating 3); Middle Lifestyle (1 Month)

MATRIX GEAR

Novatech Airware Commlink [w/Renraku Ichi OS and Sim Module]; Contact Lenses [Rating 2, w/Image Link and Smartlink]; Programs [Analyze 2, Browse 2, Command 1, Edit 2]

WEAPONS

Combat Axe; 2 Katanas; Medium Crossbow w/20 Bolts; 10 Throwing Knives; 10 Shuriken; 10 Fragmentation Grenades; Ares Predator IV [w/Quick Draw Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo]; Yamaha Sakura Fubuki [w/Smartlink, Concealable Holster, and 80 rounds of Regular Ammo]; Walther MA-2100 [w/4 clips Regular Ammo]; Aztechnology Striker; Survival Knife; Stun Baton

CONTACTS (12 BP)

Arms Dealer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Mercenary (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: **4D6 x 100¥**
Natural Low-Light Vision

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

EXTRACTION

by Daffyd Porter

LOS ANGELES, PCC

The night was fog and dark and running footsteps. Several someones converging from side alleys. A heavy dustbin, pooled in shadow ten meters ahead, offered perfect cover. Monica sprinted, her own crepe-soled boots silent on the cobbles.

Getting jumped on the way to a meet was not a propitous way to start a job. The place was up here. Her choice was to risk leading the gangers hunting her to the meet, or be late. And Monica prided herself on her timing.

At the edge of shadow, one step short of the perfect-cover dustbin, she launched herself left. A narrow alcove; a dead end with a metal-clad door and a clasp that broke beneath her heel. Monica slid through the door and eased it silently shut before the running feet reached the alcove.

Turning, she found herself facing a semicircle of guns.

Monica let the goons see her Steyr while her eyes and her Warhawk targeted the lone suit without a weapon against the far wall. The tableau held for three bated breaths. Then the suit straightened out of his casual lounge and applauded gently.

"Brava," he said, his light tenor voice a perfect match for his slender frame. "You are everything promised."

The room was bare concrete, six meters wide by twelve long, inhabited with six assorted humans with guns, one effete, well-dressed elf. Doorways, dark and doorless, were centered in the long walls. At the far end, just to the left of the elven boss, a stairway led up to places unknown.

"You were watching?" she asked, her voice husky.

"Of course. This is Iron Cross hunting grounds. Consider getting here alive your audition."

Monica took a slow step to the left, clearing the door in case whoever was in the alley—Iron Cross ganger assholes—decided to burst through. Her eyes were unfocused, watching wide for the least threat, but her Warhawk remained locked on the bridge of the suit's aquiline nose.

"I'm told that hand cannon weighs over three kilos," the elf said conversationally. "Heavy even for an ork. You can't hold that pose forever, muchacha."

"If my arm gets tired, I'll blow your brains out," Monica replied.

"Pedestrian."

Another elf stepped through the doorway to Monica's left. Flexible body armor hugged his form and his harness was replete with throwing knives, fighting blades

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and a truly beautiful katana. A heavy crossbow was slung across his back. Though his hands were empty, her Steyr stopped hovering and locked on the newcomer's head. Six guns were still trained on her, but the bladed elf was the greatest threat in the room.

"Her reflexes are preternatural, her accuracy unerring," the warrior elf said. "About what you'd expect from a gun adept. But her battle sense is barely adequate. She avoided the most obvious trap, only to fall for the second most obvious."

"Which is why you'll be leading the run, Gershwin," the suited elf replied. "She'll just be along to be sure the package arrives safely."

"In that case you might want to see about hiring her before she becomes weary and kills you."

"Of course," effete elf smiled a 'how silly of me' smile. "Gentlemen? If you'll please give us a moment?"

Without a word the assembled thugs rose from their various crouches, secured their guns, and began filing out the door Monica had kicked in. Apparently they weren't worried about the racist gangers outside. Or perhaps the gangers had moved on.

Monica witnessed no eyes rolling, no smirks, and no one was cracking wise—unheard of in street punks dealing with a ponce. Their flat-affect compliance told her that for all his evident triviality, elf-in-a-suit was someone to be taken seriously.

For her part, Monica reslung the Steyr at the small of her back and seated the Warhawk firmly in its thigh holster. She considered replacing the two slugs she'd fired earlier, but reloading the revolver would tie up her hands in the presence of her enemies. Instead she hooked her right thumb in her waistband, splayed fingers light on the butt of the Ares Viper at her belt. With any luck the street samurai would keep an eye on that hand and miss the left, currently wrapped firmly around the Colt Manhunter deep in her greatcoat pocket. Not that she thought it likely the samurai-elf missed much.

"Okay," she said, keeping all inflection from her voice. "What's the offer?"

Fat Tony was not fat. He was plump, and always seemed sheened with sweat, but he was not truly fat. He earned his living running a bar. Hard up against the wrong side of the Fun City wall, it was neither fancy nor a dive. A place where the strippers were fair and the booze mostly real. But what made Fat Tony's special was the fact it was one-hundred-percent-guaranteed bug-proof. Low lights, deep booths, white-noise generators susurrating under the music, and top-nuyen ECM and ICE suites running in constant rotation combined to make Tony's cozy neighborhood bar the place to meet to conduct business.

And Monica was all business.

Tony's eyes bugged at the sight of her, but she was around the bar before he'd taken a step. Flat of her palm center chest, she shoved, staggering him backwards through the service door. If the half-dozen patrons noticed their bartender had disappeared, they gave no sign.

Monica kept pushing until Tony hit a low stack of crates. Her hand slid to his throat and she forced him over backwards.

"What the hell, Tony?"

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"You know, I have a fantasy about you that starts just this way," Tony tried for a smile. "You've always had my heart, chica."

"I'll have your liver if you don't tell me why you set me up, sent me into Iron Cross territory."

"I didn't set you up, I got you a job interview," Tony protested. "And you did good, too."

"How do you know?"

"Because you're standing here hot between my knees instead of laying cold in some alley," Tony tried his smile again. Monica tightened her grip on his throat. "Heterodyne's job interviews are tough."

"Heterodyne?"

"The name's a joke. I don't think any of those elves ever seen a girl."

"What does Heterodyne do?"

"Information assets, mostly people."

"Talk sense."

"Could you push a little while you're squeezing?" Tony asked. "Maybe lick your lips? Building some really hot ork fetish memories here."

Monica snorted in disgust and released the pudgy human.

"Darn it," Tony said, straightening up. He rubbed his throat. "Did you leave a mark?"

"You're lucky I left a pulse," Monica snapped. "What do you mean 'information assets, mostly people'?"

"Most information hustlers steal data," Tony said. "Heterodyne steals the people who have the ideas before the ideas become data."

"Slavery?"

"No, more like kidnapping, but without the ransom?"

"You're babbling."

"What can I say? Alone in the dark with a dusky Latina ork, my brain just turns to mush."

"Your knees will turn to mush if you don't give it to me straight and fast. And!" she raised a warning finger. "You turn that into a double entendre and your elbows will bend backwards."

Tony grinned, then sobered.

"Their gig is simple. Heterodyne grabs idea people. Not the top guys, nobody can reach those. They grab the nuts and bolts idea people, the ones who make things work a little better, entienda?"

Monica didn't bother to answer.

"Anyway, they grab these guys, use the right drugs, the right stimulus, and they empty his brain. Everything he knows, everything he's seen, everything he's thinking about, the works. Then they add a few more drugs, a false memory or two to cover the missing time, and the guy's good as new."

Tony spread his hands, inviting her to admire the elegance of the operation.

"Whole gig takes a day, maybe two. Not enough time for the corp to tumble there's a leak. Keeps them from changing everything up to make the data useless."

"That's stupid," Monica said. "What about the target's link? If he's worth grabbing, his brain can't go dark without triggering half a hundred watchdogs."

"Yeah, well, Heterodyne's got some gizmo that puts out some sort of signal," Tony waved his hand vaguely. "Not a jammer. Somehow it blends in with the Matrix wave and makes a new wave that looks like nothing's happening."

Monica's mouth twitched.

"Heterodyne doesn't mean what you think it does, Tony."

"Oh?"

"So why do they suddenly need me?"

"They need you fast?" Tony looked surprised. "I thought they were just expanding their operation, maybe adding a second team. You're a replacement?"

"We go live tonight," Monica answered without hesitation. Information was a two-way street.

"But they just—" Tony's eyes narrowed. "That means...."

Monica gave him a moment to think.

"Right before they asked for a referral they pulled a job," he said at last. "Somebody they were expecting to get a lot from, they needed.... Never mind that. It was a job that was going to take a couple of days for full extraction. Them going into action now—and needing a new gunner to do it—means something went way wrong.

"If corp security chewed them, they'd just lay low. Rebuild, find a new target. No. No." Tony's eyes lit up. "Somebody else hit them. Somebody figured out their gig, let them do the hard part—snatching the target from the corp—and then snatched the prize from them. Killed at least their gunner doing it.

"Now they're going after the guys who got them. Hit hard, send a message about messing with Heterodyne. And they want to do it fast enough to get the info and put the target back before he's missed."

"Okay," Monica drew the word out. "Last question: What corp did they hit to begin with?"

IRVINE, PCC

Gershwin was smooth.

All of them were. With the exception of the three new hires—Monica, and the hacker who called himself Buzz, and a double (triple?) jointed infiltration specialist by the name of Freak—the team fit together like they'd been doing it for years. Six males, elves and humans, each just a little more elegant, a little more attention-to-personal-style than strictly necessary. Team Heterodyne looked good in a way seldom associated with runners.

Monica wondered if they intended to remake a rough-edged Afro-Latina ork in their image or if this was meant to be a one-off job. She suspected the latter.

The other two were even less likely to coordinate with Heterodyne's décor. Buzz, an albino dwarf built like a tank, had apparently been hired while she was working her contacts—pumping Tony for info and running everything by Sydney—and been bum-rushed straight from interview to orientation to job. Underneath the universal hacker's haze, he looked bright enough to figure out this was no long-term affair. She wondered if he had an exit strategy when the run was done.

She doubted Freak had an exit strategy. The girl was truly a freak, even for LA, with skin that had a strange pearlesence that reminded Monica of a snake's, red-rimmed eyes, and joints that seemed ... non-existent. Monica figured the girl got a hundred times the prejudice she'd ever had to deal with, and resolved to keep her eye on the changeling.

She didn't know how Gershwin & Co. had found the team that had taken their prize away. No doubt they had sources as good as hers—in fact, at least one of their sources was hers. Whatever the provenance, the data had led them not to a back alley or automated warehouse, but a residential district on the north side of Irvine. Condo towers, not private estates, but the buildings were well maintained, edged with landscaping and spaced far enough apart for Monica to see the lights of John Wayne Airport a good three klicks to the west. Rich, but not too. She bet the locals described themselves "upper middle class."

Monica and five of the team were walking more or less openly, though not obviously together, along a mall just settling down after the evening rush. Buzz was ensconced in the back of a parked delivery van, surrounded by really pretty equipment of the kind that keeps hackers happy and protected by an elven gunner doing a passable impression of a delivery driver catching a nap between runs. Freak had already been deployed, crawling through the target building's convoluted system of access tunnels and air vents to place the signal relays Buzz would need to pierce the wifi-inhibiting security. Gershwin made no effort to hide what he was, but he was so casual and matter-of-fact—chatting pleasantly, smiling and nodded when his gaze met another's—that everything about him screamed "off duty; just relaxing." It was a disguise more effective than any effort at concealment.

Monica's mind boggled slightly when Gershwin smiled and threw a sketchy salute at a brace of Horizon Corp enforcers in antique police uniforms. One of the two acknowledged the gesture with a nod.

Both enforcers gave Monica the hard eye, of course; she was not one of the beautiful people. Taking a page from Gershwin's playbook, Monica answered their

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glares with an acknowledging nod. She didn't try for the smile—humans didn't always find an ork's smile reassuring.

At a signal Monica didn't catch, a human with a shoulder bag full of sniper rifle peeled off and headed toward one of the towers. On the ghostly tactical overlay suspended just above her line of sight, a green spark floated away from the others. When she wondered where he was going, Buzz obliged by glowing the ghostly image of a building near their target. A mauve triangle gently indicated his field of fire.

A second spark drifted free and a second building and triangle glowed alive before Monica thought the question. Either Buzz was good or she was predictable. Probably a bit of both.

One Heterodyne regular guarding Buzz and two long shooters out of reach left Monica responsible for three armed elves. And whatever prize they picked up.

The four of them, very much not in formation, strolled past the target building.

Monica broke away first, entering a frilly gift boutique in the base of the next tower. Somewhat to her surprise, the first minority ork to ever cross the threshold did not set off any alarms. But she did have the undivided attention of the sales staff and customers as she strode purposefully between the displays to the discrete portal labeled "employees only."

Buzz had the back door unlocked before she crossed the storeroom. Without breaking stride Monica found herself in the cleanest utilities access tunnel she had ever seen. Even the rats looked like they'd had pedicures.

Monica had no idea what routes the other three were following. Freak should be in the maze here somewhere, ghosting to the right doors to get them unlocked and open at the right moment. The access tunnels might be big, but the secret passages past those locked doors wouldn't fit a child—unless that child happened to have no joints. Buzz was providing green sparks without context, letting her know the elves were not too distant, but with no indication of location, location, location. Nothing on where the changeling was. Monica wondered if he was protecting the girl too, or if he just didn't know.

Her own path to the target was stupidly simple. Walking tunnels, halls, and stairs with security cameras turned blindly to walls and an uncanny dearth of sentient life. Secured doors opened at her touch. She couldn't help but wonder how much of her ease of access was Buzz and Freak and how much was their enemigos greasing the rails.

Monica figured she'd know the answer to that one soon enough.

She leaned a shoulder against the last door and rolled her eyes up—watching Buzz's ghost display as she awaited her cue. This door was manual only, and it only unlocked from the other side. Yet another reason for the changeling.

Three green sparks converged on a single point. Suddenly a half-dozen red sparks appeared—someone had kicked open a door and given Buzz access to intel on enemy locations. One of the red dots turned purple as Buzz clarified the data—their target.

Two red lights winked out as she watched. The purple spark was surrounded by green and moving away from the red. Another red disappeared. The green with purple was moving, coming her way, though there were no direction markers on the display. Four more reds appeared, closing fast.

The door's lock clicked. Freak stepped through, moving with a disturbing grace, right on time. Monica did appreciate punctuality.

"Go," she said to the changeling, jerking her head towards the ventilation shaft that intersected the tunnel.

"But, Gershwin said—"

Monica raised an eyebrow. The girl swallowed, then shimmied up the wall and slithered into an opening a cat couldn't have squeezed in. Freak indeed. Nice girl, though. The dots were almost to her. Another second …

Fading the overlay, Monica checked her guns. Two Colt Manhunters. Perfect for aimed fire in confined space.

"Now."

Heart—

Monica shoved and the heavy steel door swung open, shielding the fleeing elves as she faced the charging humans.

Both Manhunters barked, and the two closest goons sprayed their companions with brains and blood. Some mage wasted his only chance trying to blind her. He was partially successful; the twin slugs from her paired pistols tore through his throat and collarbone instead of his face.

Two more shots for effect and the goons—human to a man—switched from charging to diving, scrambling for any cover they could find.

Monica turned, dodged the edge of the closing door—

—beat.

—and ran.

Feeling the incoming, she bobbed and swayed without breaking stride. Bullets holed her flapping greatcoat, patterned the wall ahead of her. Then she hit the wall, used the bounce to make the corner and was out the emergency door and scrambling down the fire escape.

Gershwin & Co. were a flight below her, half-carrying a thoroughly unremarkable man wearing a bulky headband. She holstered one Manhunter, freeing the hand to slide the rail as she risked her ankles taking the steps three at a time.

The door above her banged open and two red sparks appeared on her tactical overlay. Then promptly disappeared as the Heterodyne snipers earned their keep.

The streets edging the condos were devoid of juke joints or pubs and practically empty. No crowds, no noise but the distant city.

Monica caught up with the others. One elf was wounded, she saw; left arm hanging useless and a spreading stain ruining his tailored jacket. Unremarkable-man was talking, seemingly oblivious to the fact he was being prodded and carried down steep metal stairs. Monica caught a couple of disconnected phrases about asymmetrical interface synchronicity.

She was very aware her knowledge of the Heterodyne plan ended at the bottom of the fire escape. Her ignorance could indicate Gershwin intended to wing it from here on out. Or it could mean their disposable asset was slotted to get disposed among the dustbins in the covered corral at the base of the fire escape.

Gershwin went to full alert as his foot hit the ground—his katana up and his head swung, eyes sweeping the shadows.

The tactical overlay went dark.

Monica's foot lashed out, catching wounded elf in the middle of his bloodstain. He went down with a scream, tumbling into the legs of unremarkable-man and the elf guiding him down the last few steps.

Monica fired for effect, hoping Gershwin would duck instead of throw a knife, and jumped the railing. She grabbed unremarkable-man, swinging him around and stumbling him back, and shoved him under the fire escape. She snatched the Heterodyne headband, jamming it deep in an inside pocket before turning to face Gershwin.

At close quarters, with his fighting blades already out, she had no doubt the samurai elf would kill her.

Or would have if he hadn't been facing fourteen assorted Ares firearms in the hands of Horizon Corp security.

"Buenas noches, Monica," the security captain grinned.

"Buenas damn noches, Sydney," she answered. "That was cutting it close."

"Had to wait for you to get the professor out of the line of fire," Sydney shrugged. "UC-Irvine has a lot of nuyen invested in him."

By which he meant Horizon Corp, but Monica didn't press the issue.

Nor did she ask about Buzz or Freak. The dwarf's exit strategy was his business, and she'd given Freak all the hints the changeling needed.

Right now was about her walking away, alive, with a pocket full of hot spooky tech and the gratitude of a powerful contact. That and Horizon Corp's hefty finder's fee made for the happiest ending she'd had in weeks.

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When you want your character to be part of the action and accomplish something beyond breathing, talking, or standing, you use skills. Skills represent the abilities and understanding that a character has acquired. In Shadowrun, skills are general techniques and knowledge bases rather than narrow, limited actions. This approach allows players to customize their characters so that even two characters with the same background or occupation may have skills that vary in style and application. Keeping things general also limits the number of statistics and specifics that players need to keep in mind. To define specific areas of focus or increased knowledge for their characters, players may use specializations (*Specializations*, p. 121).

USING SKILLS

As an adventure unfolds, players are going to want to use their characters' skills and attributes to get things done: to con their way past a guard, fix a broken detonator before the trolls find their hiding place, or understand what the corp suit is saying to them in Japanese. The gamemaster, meanwhile, will want to know things like whether the player characters saw that all-important clue or whether they inadvertently kicked it under the trash.

For many of these situations, gamemasters must rely on their own judgment to decide which skills are needed, determine the situation modifiers, and interpret what it all means. The following guidelines and rules will help resolve some more common situations.

SKILLS

BASE SKILLS

Base skills are the fundamental skills in Shadowrun. Whereas attributes represent an individual's inherent capacities, skills are abilities an individual learns over time. Each skill represents the training and methods a character has picked up that enable her to use her natural attributes in a certain way. To reflect this connection, each skill is linked to an attribute. A list of skills and their linked attributes appears in the Skills and Linked Attributes Table, p. 120.

Skills are grouped into three broad categories: Active, Knowledge, and Language skills. Characters begin the game with a set of skills chosen by the player (*Creating a Shadowrunner*, p. 84). During game play, characters can improve or specialize in skills, or learn new ones as they experience new things. See *Improving Existing Skills*, p. 270.

ACTIVE SKILLS

Active skills are the skills characters use to take action, affect something, or somehow make an impact. These skills are the ones that usually matter the most to shadowrunners—firing a gun, negotiating a new contract, driving a hovercraft, and so on. For a complete description of base Active skills and specializations, see pp. 121–128.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge Skills represent what a character knows about certain subjects. Beginning Knowledge skills are based on a character's Logic and Intuition attributes and can be further modified with Build Points. Knowledge skills are useful for fleshing out a character by defining her background or areas of interest, and are used in the game most often to represent legwork, show character development, or allow characters to come up with information they might not otherwise have a chance to gain. They can range from fields of knowledge important in the game universe—such as Corporate Finance, Political History, Cyberware Research, or Magic—to more esoteric, bizarre, or mundane interests such as Sim-Starlets, Seattle Troll Thrash Metal Bands, or Elven Wines.

Knowledge skills fall into four categories: Academic, Interests, Professional, and Street. For a complete description of base Knowledge skills, see *Knowledge Skills*, p. 128.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language skills represent languages a character knows and her ability to speak, read, and write them. More information on Language skills appears in *Language Skills*, p. 129.

SKILL GROUPS

Skill groups are a collection of three or four related skills acquired and increased at the same time for fewer Build or Karma Points. Any time a character uses a skill that he purchased through a skill group, the skill group rating is used instead. Skill groups are identical in function in all ways to individual skills purchased singularly, and a character with a skill group containing a skill at rating 3 is just as good as another character with that skill alone rated at 3. You cannot use specializations with skill groups.

Skill groups have their own special rules for improvement, as they are cheaper to increase than the same individual skills improved separately. For more detailed information, see *Improving Existing Skills*, p. 270.

example

Ashley decides to create a stealthy character and purchases the Stealth skill group at Rating 4 at character creation. After a month of play, she notices that she really only uses Infiltration and so makes the decision to raise it by one point without raising the rest of the Group. This means she no longer has the Stealth skill group, but instead has Disguise 4, Infiltration 5, Palming 4, and Shadowing 4. Ashley can regain her Group by raising the other three skills to 5, at which point she will have Stealth skill group 5, but will have paid more for it than if she had just raised the skill group initially.

SKILL RATINGS

Skill ratings are the numerical values assigned to skills or skill groups, either at character creation or when the skill is learned during game play. They represent how good a character is at a task when using that particular skill. Skill ratings are written as the name of the skill or group, followed by the rating. For example, Infiltration 3 means the character has the Infiltration Skill at a rating of 3. The skill rating is added to the linked attribute to determine the number of dice rolled when that skill is used. For example, if the character with Infiltration 3 also had an Agility 4, she would roll 7 dice when making an Infiltration Test.

Characters are considered to have a Skill Rating of 0 in any skill for which they have not purchased a higher rank. Skill ratings cannot be purchased at a rating higher than 6 (or 7 with the Aptitude Quality, p. 90).

The unmodified skill rating assigned at character creation or purchased during game play is considered to be the character's base skill rating. Some abilities and implants (as noted) may increase this rating, creating a modified skill rating. A modified skill cannot exceed the base skill rating x 1.5 (making 9 the maximum possible rating, or 10 with the Aptitude quality). Specializations, spells, and other implants may

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NO RATING — UNAWARE

A complete absence of knowledge or practice. Generally, this degree of ignorance can only be achieved with the Incompetent negative quality (p. 95). A character rated "unaware" in a skill may not default for that skill.

Athletics Example: Couch potato.
Firearms Example: Never seen a gun before.
Technical Example: Shapeshifter, Luddite, or someone born before the Computer Age.
Social Example: Hermit.
Vehicle Example: Has never seen a car before.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Mentally damaged in some manner.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Lives alone in a cave.

RATING 0 — UNTRAINED

The general baseline of knowledge shared by society. This is not incompetence; it is the standard level of untrained knowledge held by any Joe Average.

Athletics Example: Has played catch with friends in the backyard.
Firearms Example: Point the barrel, pull the trigger.
Technical Example: Can send an email, browse a Matrix site, or store data on a commlink.
Social Example: The typical man on the street.
Vehicle Example: Basic operator's license. Can get from here to there, but can't handle driving in adverse conditions.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): High school student. Screamsheet-level of knowledge.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Never visited Seattle before, but can find it on a map.

RATING 1 — BEGINNER

Has done this a few times. Can handle some easy tasks, some of the time.

Athletics Example: Little League/Pop Warner skill.
Firearms Example: Shot some tin cans with a BB gun a few times.
Technical Example: Hobbyist.
Social Example: Telemarketer.
Vehicle Example: Weekend off-roader. Seasoned driver with low insurance premiums.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): High school graduate.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Visited Seattle on a few trips.

RATING 2 — NOVICE

Has a solid grasp of the fundamentals, but shaky on more complex yet still routine procedures.

Athletics Example: High school athlete.
Firearms Example: Trainee in police academy or military boot camp.
Technical Example: Trade apprentice, or college work-internship.
Social Example: First-line supervisor, door-to-door salesman.
Vehicle Example: Air Force Academy cadet, go-gang initiate.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): First-year college or university student.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Moved to Seattle one or two years ago.

RATING 3 — PROFESSIONAL

Competent at general skilled tasks. "Average" skill level for starting characters and NPCs.

Athletics Example: College athlete (NCAA Division III).
Firearms Example: Regular beat cop or military grunt.
Technical Example: Trade journeyman or entry-level professional straight out of college.
Social Example: Professional sales representative, social dilettante, face, Mr. Johnson.
Vehicle Example: Commercial driver: truck driver, taxi cabbie, airline pilot. Ordinary go-ganger.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Associate's degree (two-year college degree).
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Lived in Seattle for five or more years.

RATING 4 — VETERAN

Very good at what you do; can handle difficult tasks with ease.

Athletics Example: Minor leaguer: NCAA Division I, AAA baseball, or other farm team.
Firearms Example: Riot control cop, combat veteran, superior regular force (Marines, Airborne).
Technical Example: Mid-career professional (four or more years experience).
Social Example: Politician, diplomat, socialite, senior manager.
Vehicle Example: NASCAR or Formula One driver, regular military combat pilot, go-gang boss.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Bachelor's degree (basic four-year university degree).
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Grew up in Seattle, or has run the shadows for at least a year.

RATING 5 — EXPERT

Star status: your expertise gives you a reputation.

Athletics Example: Athletic star: most major pro sports athletes (MLB, MMA, NBA NFL, NHL, etc.).
Firearms Example: SWAT team, elite military (Rangers, Special Forces).
Technical Example: Top scientist. Published in peer-review journals.
Social Example: Incumbent politician, Grand Tour regular, corporate vice president.
Vehicle Example: Ancients go-ganger. Military combat pilot with combat experience.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Master's degree.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Ran the Seattle shadows for 5+ years.

RATING 6 — ELITE

The "best of the rest." Maximum skill level for "rank-and-file" unnamed NPCs and starting characters.

Athletics Example: Athletic superstar: Peyton Manning, Roger Clemens, Shaquille O'Neal, David Beckham.
Firearms Example: Individual superstars amongst elite forces. Ghost-Who-Walks-Inside, Hatchetman, Matador
Technical Example: Wiz-kid. Has more than one patent to their name. The Wright Brothers.
Social Example: Presidents and other heads of state, CEOs.
Vehicle Example: Blue Angel stunt pilot.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Doctorate degree.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): SPD, Smiley, Findler-Man, and other old-school Seattle runners.

RATING 7 — LEGENDARY

The "best of the best." Someone whose expertise outranks all others in all of known history. Can only be achieved with the Aptitude Quality (p. 90).

Athletics Example: Wayne Gretzky, Michael Jordan, Joe Montana, Pele, Babe Ruth.
Firearms Example: "Wild Bill" Hickock, James Bond, Thunder Tyee.
Technical Example: Thomas Edison, Nicholai Tesla, FastJack.
Social Example: Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Damien Knight.
Vehicle Example: The Red Baron, Evil Knievel.
Knowledge Skill Example (Academic): Stephen Hawking, Albert Einstein.
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Wolfgang Kies, Dr. Raven, Captain Chaos.

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SKILL GROUPS

ATHLETICS (USUALLY STR)
- Climbing
- Gymnastics
- Running
- Swimming

BIOTECH (LOGIC)
- Cybertechnology
- First Aid
- Medicine

CLOSE COMBAT (AGILITY)
- Blades
- Clubs
- Unarmed Combat

CONJURING (MAGIC)
- Banishing
- Binding
- Summoning

CRACKING (LOGIC)
- Cybercombat
- Electronic Warfare
- Hacking

ELECTRONICS (LOGIC)
- Computer
- Data Search
- Hardware
- Software

FIREARMS (AGILITY)
- Automatics
- Longarms
- Pistols

INFLUENCE (CHARISMA)
- Con
- Etiquette
- Leadership
- Negotiation

MECHANIC (LOGIC)
- Aeronautics Mechanic
- Automotive Mechanic
- Industrial Mechanic
- Nautical Mechanic

OUTDOORS (USUALLY INT)
- Navigation
- Survival
- Tracking

SORCERY (MAGIC)
- Counterspelling
- Ritual Spellcasting
- Spellcasting

STEALTH (USUALLY INT)
- Disguise
- Infiltration
- Palming
- Shadowing

TASKING (RESONANCE)
- Compiling
- Decompiling
- Registering

SKILLS AND LINKED ATTRIBUTES

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

AGILITY
- Archery
- Automatics
- Blades
- Clubs
- Escape Artist
- Exotic Melee Weapon (Specific)
- Exotic Ranged Weapon (Specific)
- Forgery
- Gunnery
- Gymnastics
- Heavy Weapons
- Infiltration
- Locksmith
- Longarms
- Palming
- Pistols
- Throwing Weapons
- Unarmed Combat

BODY
- Diving
- Parachuting

REACTION
- Dodge
- *Pilot Aerospace*
- *Pilot Aircraft*
- *Pilot Anthroform*
- *Pilot Exotic Vehicle (Specific)*
- Pilot Ground Craft
- Pilot Watercraft

STRENGTH
- Climbing
- Running
- Swimming

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

CHARISMA
- Con
- Etiquette
- Instruction
- Intimidation
- Leadership
- Negotiation

INTUITION
- Artisan
- *Assensing*
- Disguise
- Interests Knowledge
- *Language*
- Navigation
- Perception
- Shadowing
- Street Knowledge
- Tracking

LOGIC
- Academic Knowledge
- *Aeronautics Mechanic*
- Arcana
- Armorer
- *Automotive Mechanic*
- Chemistry
- Computer
- *Cybertechnology*
- Cybercombat
- Data Search

LOGIC (CONT.)
- Demolitions
- *Electronic Warfare*
- Enchanting
- First Aid
- *Industrial Mechanic*
- Hacking
- *Hardware*
- *Medicine*
- *Nautical Mechanic*
- Professional Knowledge
- *Software*

WILLPOWER
- *Astral Combat*
- Survival

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES

MAGIC
- *Banishing*
- *Binding*
- *Counterspelling*
- *Ritual Spellcasting*
- *Spellcasting*
- *Summoning*

RESONANCE
- *Compiling*
- *Decompiling*
- *Registering*

Note 1: You cannot default on *italicized skills.*

Note 2: Attributes listed are the typical default for that skill. However, occasionally Tests will call for different Attributes or other ratings to be used in dice pool calculation, and sometimes defaulting may not be possible.

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provide bonus dice to a skill, but do not change the base skill rating. These extra dice are listed in parentheses after the base skill, as in Spellcasting 4 (+2).

The Skill Ratings Table on p. 119 describes the levels of knowledge and ability that accompany different skill ratings.

SPECIALIZATIONS

Players can choose to have their characters specialize in a particular form, style, or sub-set of a base skill. Specializing means that the character has allocated a large chunk of her study and practice time to mastering a specific aspect of a skill rather than the skill as a whole. By narrowing the focus this way, the character becomes much more proficient in the specialized application of that skill.

Specializations add 2 dice to any tests made for that skill when the specialization is applicable to the test. Each specific specialization may be taken only once per character. A character must have a rating of at least 1 in a skill to take a specialization in it. Specializations may not be used with skill groups.

A specialization is usually listed in parentheses after the skill name. For example, if a character with the Pistols skill at 3 specializes in the use of Revolvers, that character's skill and specialization would read Pistols 3 (Revolver +2).

Only one specialization is allowed per skill, and specializations are not allowed for skill groups. For more information on beginning the game with specializations, see *Creating a Shadowrunner*, p. 84. Characters may take on additional specializations during game play.

example

Neko wants a sneaky character whose specialty is urban areas. Neko takes the Urban specialization for her Infiltration skill. She writes in on her character sheet as Infiltration 5 (Urban + 2). That means she rolls 5 dice (plus attribute) for her skill on Infiltration Tests, and 7 dice (plus attribute) when infiltrating in an urban area.

DEFAULTING

Sometimes a character wants to attempt an action but does not have the necessary skill. A character in this situation can still act; however, she will find it more difficult to succeed than a character who has the needed skill. Improvising when your character doesn't have the necessary skill is called defaulting. Defaulting allows a character to still make the test using only the linked attribute in their dice pool, but with a dice pool modifier of –1. Players can use Edge to augment this test. Note that characters may not default to any attribute other than the linked attribute.

Some tasks are simply too complex for someone who lacks the proper skill to attempt. These skills may not be defaulted on, as noted in the skill descriptions starting below.

example

Ashley may be stealthy, but she's no Houdini. One bad step has gotten her caught and cuffed. Now that the guard isn't looking, she has a chance to slip out. Too bad she doesn't have Escape Artist skill.

Without the skill, Ashley tries to default to its linked attribute—in this case her Agility of 4—leaving her only 3 dice to roll in her dice pool (4 plus the defaulting modifier of –1). Good luck, Ashley …

COMBAT ACTIVE SKILLS

These Active skills encompass a range of martial proficiencies. For details on using them in combat, see the *Combat* chapter, p. 144.

ARCHERY (AGILITY)

Archery governs the use of muscle-powered projectile weapons.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Bows, Crossbows, Slingshots

AUTOMATICS (AGILITY)

The Automatics skill governs the use of personal firearms larger than a pistol, capable of autofire, but typically with a shorter barrel than a longarm.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Firearms
Specializations: Assault Rifles, Carbines, Machine Pistols, Submachine Guns

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BLADES (AGILITY)

The Blades skill governs the use of hand-held melee weapons that have a sharpened edge or point. This skill allows a character to use various knives, swords, and axes effectively. This skill is used for cyber-blades implanted in the hands or forearms, but not other areas of the body. See *Exotic Melee Weapons*, below.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Close Combat
Specializations: Axes, Cyber-Implant Blades, Knives, Swords, Parrying

CLUBS (AGILITY)

Clubs governs the use of hand-held melee weapons that have no edge or blade. This skill allows a character to use any blunt, weighted item as a weapon, from a baseball bat to a tire iron to a chair leg.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Close Combat
Specializations: Batons, Hammers, Saps, Staves (two-handed clubs), Parrying

DODGE (REACTION)

Dodge governs your ability to move out of the way of a perceived attack or other incoming threat.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Melee Combat, Ranged Combat

EXOTIC MELEE WEAPON (AGILITY)

The Exotic Melee Weapon skill must be taken separately for each different weapon you wish to be able to use. Some examples: sais, pole arms, chainsaws, cyber-implant weapons in unusual locations (i.e., elbow spurs, foot blades).

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: N/A

EXOTIC RANGED WEAPON (AGILITY)

Like Exotic Melee Weapon, Exotic Ranged Weapon skill must be taken separately for each different weapon you wish to be able to use. Some examples: lasers, gyrojet pistols, flamethrowers, cyber-implant guns.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: N/A

HEAVY WEAPONS (AGILITY)

The Heavy Weapons skill allows the user to handle ranged projectile and launch weapons larger than an assault rifle, including large weapons when they are mounted on tripods, pintles, gyromounts, or in fixed emplacements (but not in or on vehicles).

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Assault Cannon, Grenade Launchers, Guided Missiles, Machine Guns, Rocket Launchers

LONGARMS (AGILITY)

This skill governs the use of all personal firearms with extended barrels, especially those designed to be used braced against the shoulder.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Firearms
Specializations: Shotguns, Sniper Rifles, Sporting Rifles

PISTOLS (AGILITY)

The Pistols skill governs the use of all types of hand-held firearms, including hold-outs, light and heavy pistols, and tasers.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Firearms
Specializations: Hold-Outs, Revolvers, Semi-Automatics, Tasers

THROWING WEAPONS (AGILITY)

The Throwing Weapons skill governs the use of any item thrown by the user.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Lobbed (grenade-style), Overhand (baseball-style), Shuriken, Throwing Knives

UNARMED COMBAT (AGILITY)

Unarmed Combat skill (also known as hand-to-hand combat) governs the use of combat techniques based solely on the use of the individual's own body parts. In addition to Boxing, this skill covers such combat styles as Oriental martial arts and Brazilian Capoeira. It also covers the use of certain cyber-implants, such as shock hands.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Close Combat
Specializations: Cyber-Implants, Martial Arts, Subdual Combat, Parrying

MAGICAL ACTIVE SKILLS

Unless otherwise noted in the description, only characters with the Magician or Mystic Adept quality and a Magic attribute of 1 or greater may take or use Magic skills. The use of Magical skills is described in *The Awakened World*, p. 176.

ARCANA (LOGIC)

Arcana governs the practical applications of a tradition's magical theory and the tapping of arcane potency dormant in various materials. Characters use the Arcana skill to develop new spell and magical foci formulae from scratch (rather than learning someone else's tricks) and to produce all types of spirit formulae. Note that Arcana is available to mundanes as well as Awakened. Though they can't put their formulations into practice, non-magical characters can design formulae just as well as magicians. See *Enchanting*, p. 178.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Spell Design (by spell category), Focus Design (by focus type), Ally Spirit Formula, Free Spirit Formula

ASSENSING (INTUITION)

Assensing is the skill of learning information from auras, astral forms, and astral signatures (*Astral Perception*, p. 191). Only characters capable of astral perception (they have the Magician quality or the Adept or Mystic Adept quality and the Astral Perception adept power) may take or use this skill.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Aura Reading, Astral Signatures, Psychometry, by aura type (Metahumans, Spirits, Foci, Wards, etc.)

ASTRAL COMBAT (WILLPOWER)

The Astral Combat skill is used to fight while in astral space, where normal combat methods are next to useless (*Astral Combat*, p. 193). Only characters capable of astral perception (they have the Magician

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quality or the Adept or Mystic Adept quality and the Astral Perception adept power) may take or use this skill.
Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: By specific foci types or opponents (Weapon Foci, Magicians, Spirits, Wards, etc.)

BANISHING (MAGIC)
Magicians use the Banishing skill to disrupt spirits, removing them from the physical and astral planes. See *Banishing*, p. 188.
Default: No
Skill Group: Conjuring
Specializations: By spirit type (Spirits of Air, Spirits of Fire, etc.)

BINDING (MAGIC)
The Binding skill is used to ask/demand long-term services from a spirit the magician has already summoned. See *Binding*, p. 188.
Default: No
Skill Group: Conjuring
Specializations: By spirit type (Spirits of Air, Spirits of Earth, etc.)

COUNTERSPELLING (MAGIC)
Magicians use the Counterspelling skill to remove existing sustained spells from people or objects, or defend against spells cast at them or others. See *Counterspelling*, p. 185.
Default: No
Skill Group: Sorcery
Specializations: By spell type (Combat Spells, Detection Spells, etc.)

ENCHANTING (MAGIC)
Enchanting comprises the techniques needed to harness the latent magical potency in natural materials and the artificing of magical foci used to assist magic performance. It also includes the creation and preparation of spirit vessels and the evaluation of magical goods. See *Enchanting*, p. 190.

Only characters with the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities and a Magic attribute of 1 or more may use this skill.
Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Artificing, Alchemy, Vessel Preparation

RITUAL SPELLCASTING (MAGIC)
The Ritual Spellcasting skill is used to cast spells in a ritual fashion (*Ritual Spellcasting*, p. 184). In those cases, Ritual Spellcasting is used instead of Spellcasting to determine the results.
Default: No
Skill Group: Sorcery
Specializations: By spell type (Combat Spells, Detection Spells, etc.)

SPELLCASTING (MAGIC)
The Spellcasting skill governs the control of magical energy in the form of spells. See *Spellcasting*, p. 182.
Default: No
Skill Group: Sorcery
Specializations: By spell type (Combat Spells, Detection Spells, etc.)

SUMMONING (MAGIC)
This skill is used to summon spirits and determines how many services they owe you. See *Summoning*, p. 188.
Default: No
Skill Group: Conjuring
Specializations: By spirit type (Spirits of Fire, Spirits of Water, etc.)

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PHYSICAL ACTIVE SKILLS

Specific rules for using these skills can be found starting on p. 130.

CLIMBING (STRENGTH)

Climbing is used to ascend vertical obstacles or walls, whether using tools or unassisted. See *Using Climbing*, p. 132.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Assisted, Freehand, Rappelling, by condition (rock climbing, ice climbing, building scaling, etc.)

DISGUISE (INTUITION)

When a character wants to take on a false appearance of some kind, she uses the Disguise skill. This is true whether she wants to look like someone else or blend into the background. See *Using Disguise*, p. 133.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Stealth
Specializations: Camouflage, Cosmetic, Theatrical, Trideo

DIVING (BODY)

This skill covers all forms of underwater diving, including underwater swimming techniques and the use of SCUBA and other underwater gear.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Liquid Breathing Apparatus, Mixed Gas, Oxygen Extraction, SCUBA, by condition (Arctic, Cave, Commercial, Military, etc.)

ESCAPE ARTIST (AGILITY)

Escape Artist comes into play whenever a character tries to slip out of bonds or shackles without using brute force. See *Using Escape Artist*, p. 133.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: By restraint (Ropes, Cuffs, Zip Ties, etc.)

GYMNASTICS (AGILITY)

Gymnastics involves acrobatics feats and balance as well as jumping, vaulting, and tumbling. See *Using Jumping*, p. 134.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Balance, Breakfall, Dance, Jumping, Parkour, Tumbling

INFILTRATION (AGILITY)

Infiltration is the skill used when a character wants to sneak around undetected by either other characters or security sensors.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Stealth
Specializations: Urban, Vehicle, Wilderness, by detection method (Motion Sensors, Pressure Pads, Thermal Imagers, etc.)

NAVIGATION (INTUITION)

This skill governs a character's ability to determine directions, read maps, plot a course, and stick to it without getting lost. See *Using Navigation*, p. 135.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Outdoors
Specializations: Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Polar, Urban, other appropriate terrain

PALMING (AGILITY)

Those who have hands quicker than the eye can see use the Palming skill, which is as much about misdirection as it is dexterous motion. This skill is used to conceal small objects about the character or remove them from others without being noticed.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Stealth
Specializations: Legerdemain, Pickpocket, Shoplifting

PARACHUTING (BODY)

The Parachuting skill is used when a character exits an aircraft or other high area with a parachute and wishes to stop her quick descent.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: BASE Jumping, HALO, Low Altitude, Recreational (standard skydiving), Static Line

PERCEPTION (INTUITION)

Perception is used to determine what a character notices about her surroundings that is abnormal or strange. See *Using Perception*, p. 135.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Hearing, Scent, Taste, Touch, Visual

RUNNING (STRENGTH)

The Running skill is used to increase the distance a character can run, as well as determine how well she can pace herself and conserve energy while running. See *Using Running*, p. 136.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Long Distance, Sprinting, Urban, Wilderness

SHADOWING (INTUITION)

Shadowing involves following someone else discreetly without being noticed or ensuring that you are not being followed the same way. See *Using Stealth Skills*, p. 136.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Stealth
Specializations: Stakeouts, Tail Evasion, Tailing

SURVIVAL (WILLPOWER)

This skill governs a character's proficiency in surviving outdoors for an extended period of time. It determines her ability with various camping and survival gear, as well as how well she can scrounge for food and water, create makeshift shelters, and adapt to harsh natural conditions. See *Using Survival*, p. 137.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Outdoors
Specializations: Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Polar, Urban, other appropriate terrain

SWIMMING (STRENGTH)

The Swimming skill is used to increase the distance a character can swim, and also helps determine how much experience she has had with water. See *Using Swimming*, p. 137.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Long Distance, Sprinting

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TRACKING (INTUITION)

This skill is a character's ability to track metahumans or critters in the wild. It includes her ability to detect signs of passage, follow a trail, and locate game paths. See *Using Tracking*, p. 138.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Outdoors

Specializations: Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Polar, Urban, other appropriate terrain

RESONANCE ACTIVE SKILLS

This category covers those skills known only to characters with the Technomancer quality (p. 93).

COMPILING (RESONANCE)

This skill is used to create sprites and determines how many tasks they owe you. See *Sprites*, p. 240.

Default: No

Skill Group: Tasking

Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

DECOMPILING (RESONANCE)

This skill is used to decompile sprites. See *Sprites*, p. 240.

Default: No

Skill Group: Tasking

Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

REGISTERING (RESONANCE)

This skill is used to register sprites for long-term service. See *Sprites*, p. 240.

Default: No

Skill Group: Tasking

Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

SOCIAL ACTIVE SKILLS

CON (CHARISMA)

Characters using the Con skill are misrepresenting the truth in some way and trying to get someone else to believe them. This may be flat out lying, evasion, or double talk, but the intended result is to have the target believe something that is false. Con Tests are opposed by the target's Con (or Negotiation) + Intuition. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills,* p. 130.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Influence

Specializations: Fast Talk, Impersonation, Seduction

ETIQUETTE (CHARISMA)

The Etiquette Skill allows a character to function within a specific subculture without appearing out of place. It allows the character to fit in, put suspicious or agitated people at ease, and defuse tense social situations. It also allows the player to negate a social gaffe she made that the character wouldn't have. See *Using Etiquette*, p. 133.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Influence

Specializations: By culture or subculture (High Society, Street Gang, Mafia, Catholic Church, Corporate, Media, Goblin Rock, etc.)

INSTRUCTION (CHARISMA)

The Instruction Skill allows a character to teach something efficiently to another character. See *Using Instruction*, p. 134.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: None

Specializations: By Active or Knowledge skill category (Combat, Language, Magical, Academic Knowledge, Street Knowledge, etc.)

INTIMIDATION (CHARISMA)

This skill allows a character to make people do what they normally might not, simply out of fear inspired by the character's in-your-face appearance or behavior. Intimidation Tests are opposed by the target's Intimidation + Willpower. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills* (p. 130) for Intimidation Test modifiers.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: None

Specializations: Interrogation, Mental, Physical, Torture

LEADERSHIP (CHARISMA)

The Leadership Skill governs a character's ability to get others to do her bidding through the exercise of example and authority. It includes an aspect of problem-solving, but is not intended to substitute for clear thinking and good planning on the part of the players. Leadership Tests are opposed by the target's Leadership + Charisma. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills,* p. 130 for Test modifiers.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Influence

Specializations: Gut Check, Morale, Persuasion, Strategy, Tactics

NEGOTIATION (CHARISMA)

The Negotiation Skill governs the psychology and bargaining tactics used when the character deals with another and seeks to come out ahead, either through careful and deliberate bartering or through

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fast talk. It is opposed by the target's Negotiation + Charisma. Negotiation can also be used to determine if a character has noticed if someone is lying to them. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills* (p. 130) for Test modifiers.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Influence
Specializations: Bargaining, Diplomacy, Sense Motive

TECHNICAL ACTIVE SKILLS

AERONAUTICS MECHANIC (LOGIC)
Characters with this skill can repair and maintain aircraft. The proper tools and time are still necessary. See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair*, p. 138.
Default: No
Skill Group: Mechanic
Specializations: Aerospace, Fixed Wing, LTA (blimp), Rotary Wing, Tilt Wing, Vector Thrust

ARMORER (LOGIC)
This skill is used to create or repair any weapon or piece of armor for which the character has designs. Armorer also assumes that the character has access to the tools and/or equipment commonly used in that area of expertise.

The character still needs time, tools, and materials to build something from scratch. Even a character with a superb level of skill can do little without the proper equipment. If the character is trying to build something new, she also needs theoretical knowledge to design the item, unless someone else provides a detailed blueprint for its construction. For Threshold determination and success results, see *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair,* p. 138.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Armor, Artillery, Explosives, Firearms, Heavy Weapons, Weapon Accessories

ARTISAN (INTUITION)
The Artisan skill represents a number of different creative skills, including singing, painting, and the like. Characters who are well-developed artistically use this skill.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Carpentry, Guitars, Painting, Sculpture, other crafts

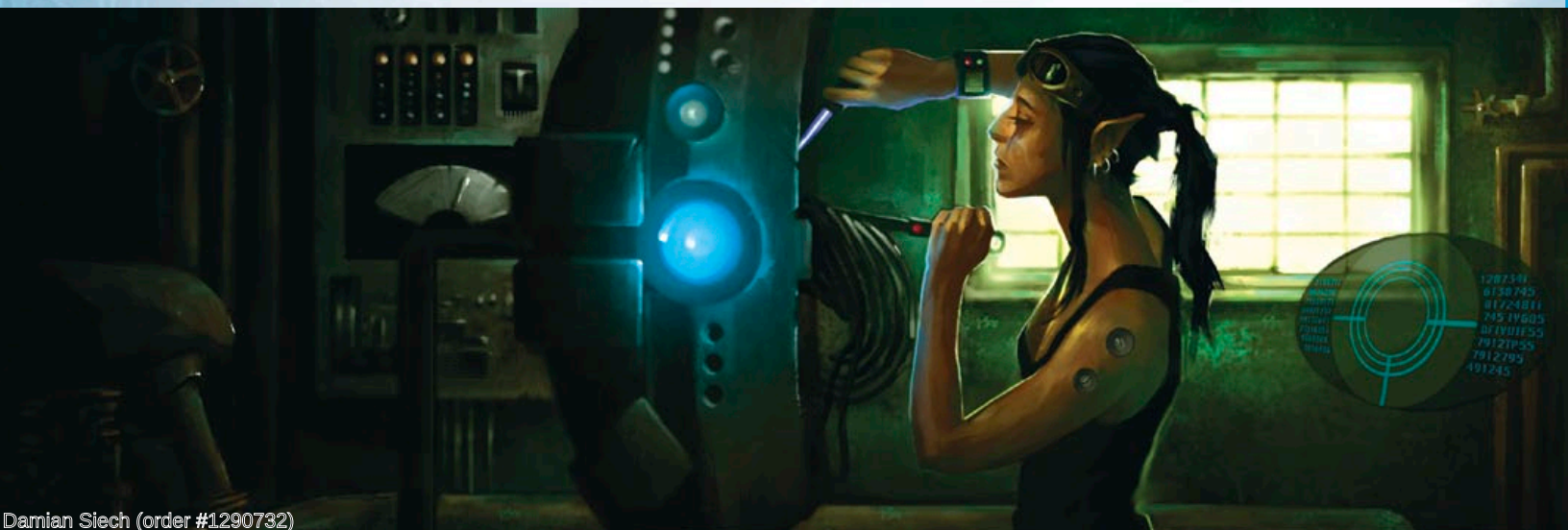
AUTOMOTIVE MECHANIC (LOGIC)
The Automotive Mechanic skill is used to repair and maintain ground craft of all kinds. The proper tools and time are still necessary. See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair*, p. 138.
Default: No
Skill Group: Mechanic
Specializations: Anthroform, Hover, Tracked, Wheeled

CHEMISTRY (LOGIC)
The Chemistry Technical Active Skill governs the use of and understanding of the properties of matter. It includes proper laboratory procedure and the ability to read chemical formulae.
Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Compounds, Drugs, Toxins

COMPUTER (LOGIC)
The Computer skill governs the use and understanding of computers and electronic devices, which in the 2070s is just about everything powered by electricity. It does not include knowledge of exploiting or subverting such systems, which is covered by the Hacking (software) or Hardware skills.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Electronics
Specializations: By program (Analyze, Edit, etc.), by device type (commlink, surveillance, media, etc.)

CYBERCOMBAT (LOGIC)
Cybercombat skill is used to attack other icons in the Matrix, utilizing attack programs and system tricks. See *Cybercombat*, p. 236.
Default: Yes
Skill Group: Cracking
Specializations: By specific opponents (Persona icons, Agents, IC, Living Persona icons, Sprites, etc.)

CYBERTECHNOLOGY (LOGIC)
Cybertechnology is the ability to create and care for cybernetics and bioware, possessed primarily by inventors, medical professionals, and cyberdocs. This skill also includes knowledge about the current state of the field of cybertechnology and the ability to repair damaged cyberware. A proper facility and the right materials are needed to manufacture cyberware—see *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair*, p. 138.
Default: No
Skill Group: Biotech
Specializations: Bioware, Bodyware, Cyberlimbs, Headware, Nanoware



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DATA SEARCH (LOGIC)

This is the character's research ability, her ability to use search engines, databases and other tools to track down information online or in computer storage. Data Search includes the character's ability to refine search parameters as well as her knowledge of lesser known archives and resources. See *Using Data Search*, p. 227.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Electronics

Specializations: By source (Data Havens, Public Archives, News Indexes, Financial Records, etc.), by data type (Corporate, Celebrity Gossip, Street Rumors, Trid Footage, etc.)

DEMOLITIONS (LOGIC)

The Demolitions Skill governs the preparation, measuring, and setting of chemical explosives. See *Explosives*, p. 325.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: None

Specializations: Commercial Explosives, Defusing, Improvised Explosives, Plastic Explosives

ELECTRONIC WARFARE (LOGIC)

Electronic Warfare is used to disrupt communications in a variety of ways, such as jamming, signal degradation, or complete overtaking of control of a target's communication systems. It is also used for encoding and decoding communications. Appropriate equipment is necessary to make use of this skill.

Default: No

Skill Group: Cracking

Specializations: Communications, Encryption, Jamming, Sensor Operations

FIRST AID (LOGIC)

The First Aid skill governs basic medicine in a hands-on sense, as a paramedic rather than a physician. This skill provides little knowledge of cybernetics and how they function, and cannot be used to repair them.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Biotech

Specializations: By type of treatment (Chemical Burns, Combat Wounds, Sports Injuries, Electric Shock, etc.)

FORGERY (AGILITY)

Those who wish to make a copy of a document or other item use Forgery. Most duplicated items are in the form of art or official paper documents. See *Using Forgery*, p. 134.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: None

Specializations: Counterfeiting, Credstick Forgery, False ID, Image Doctoring, Paper Forgery

HACKING (LOGIC)

Hacking skill is used to exploit and subvert the programming of computers and electronics, specifically Matrix systems and interactions. For specific uses of the Hacking skill, see *Hacking,* p. 227.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Cracking

Specializations: By program (Exploit, Sniffer, etc.), by device type (commlink, surveillance, media, etc.)

HARDWARE (LOGIC)

This skill governs the creation, repair, and technical manipulation of computers and electronic devices. To create something, a plan, the proper materials, and time are still needed. See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair,* p. 138.

Default: No

Skill Group: Electronics

Specializations: By specific device (Commlinks, Maglocks, Sensors, etc.)

INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC (LOGIC)

The Industrial Mechanic skill is used to repair and maintain mechanical devices used in various industries and teaches a baseline of mechanics ability. The proper tools and time are still necessary. See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair,* p. 138.

Default: No

Skill Group: Mechanic

Specializations: Electrical Power Systems, Hydraulics, Robotics, Structural, Welding

LOCKSMITH (AGILITY)

Locksmith is the art of manipulating, opening, and repairing mechanical locks. See *Using Locksmith*, p. 135.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: None

Specializations: By lock type (Combination, Cylinder, Pin Tumbler, Safe, etc.)

MEDICINE (LOGIC)

Medicine is the skill used for more detailed attempts at helping a character medically, beyond what mere First Aid can do. It includes the proper treatment of disease and illness as well as wounds. Medicine interacts with cybernetics only when they are being implanted into a body or removed from one. For more information, see *Healing*, p. 252.

Default: No

Skill Group: Biotech

Specializations: Cosmetic Surgery, Extended Care, Implant Surgery, Magical Health, Organ Culture, Trauma Surgery

NAUTICAL MECHANIC (LOGIC)

The Nautical Mechanic skill is used to repair and maintain watercraft of all kinds. The proper tools and time are still necessary. See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair*, p. 138.

Default: No

Skill Group: Mechanic

Specializations: Motorboat, Sailboat, Ship, Submarine

SOFTWARE (LOGIC)

The Software skill comes into play when a character is writing utilities for use in the Matrix. See *Using Software,* p. 228.

Default: No

Skill Group: Electronics

Specializations: Defensive Utilities, Offensive Utilities, Masking Utilities, Operational Utilities, Special Utilities (specify)

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VEHICLE ACTIVE SKILLS

Vehicle skills are used for driving and vehicle combat (p. 168).

GUNNERY (AGILITY)

The Gunnery skill governs the use of all vehicle-mounted weapons, whether in mounts, pintles or turrets. This skill includes manual and sensor-enhanced gunnery.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Artillery, Ballistic, Energy, Guided Missile, Rocket

PILOT AEROSPACE (REACTION)

This skill is used to control rocket-boosted parabolic aircraft, suborbital aircraft, and anything that is piloted outside the atmosphere. This includes remote control.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Deep Space, Launch Craft, Remote Operation, Semiballistic, Suborbital

PILOT AIRCRAFT (REACTION)

Pilot Aircraft governs the use of all aircraft piloted within the atmosphere, including those remotely controlled.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Fixed-Wing, Lighter-Than-Air, Remote Operation, Rotary Wing, Tilt Wing, Vectored Thrust

PILOT ANTHROFORM (REACTION)

This skill is used to operate any vehicle that walks on legs. It is also used if such operation is remotely controlled.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Remote Operation, Biped, Quadruped

PILOT EXOTIC VEHICLE (REACTION)

This skill is used for exotic vehicles such as undersea sleds, personal lifters, jet packs, hot-air balloons, etc. Each time this skill is taken, a specific exotic vehicle must be chosen to which it applies. This skill is then used whenever piloting that vehicle, whether remotely or in person.

Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: N/A

PILOT GROUND CRAFT (REACTION)

Characters use Pilot Ground Craft to control ground vehicles without legs, whether remotely or in person.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Bike, Hovercraft, Remote Operation, Tracked, Wheeled

PILOT WATERCRAFT (REACTION)

Pilot Watercraft is used to control water vehicles both remotely and personally.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Motorboat, Remote Operation, Sail, Ship, Submarine

SPECIAL ACTIVE SKILLS

The skill system in Shadowrun is not completely comprehensive, meaning that it is impossible for us to cover every skill imaginable. The skills listed here, however, should cover the vast majority of Active skills that any shadowrunning team may find necessary. Should a gamemaster deem that a new skill is called for and presently unaccounted for by the system, he can allow it in his game. This should be done rarely, however.

You must link any new skill allowed in your game with an appropriate attribute, and the gamemaster must decide if it should be grouped with existing skills in a skill group. Gamemasters should also take care not to include new Active skills for a single character or a single effect. A good skill should have at least two specializations and be open to all characters, should they want to use it.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Players can choose Knowledge skills from any of four categories: Street, Academic, Professional, and Interests. They are used primarily for legwork and character development. They occasionally provide information in the game, but have nowhere near the impact that Active skills do.

During character creation, each player is given a certain number of points with which to buy Knowledge skills. Afterward, new Knowledge skills must be purchased like any other skill.

CHOOSING KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Knowledge Skills are the wild cards of Shadowrun. Various Knowledge skills are listed as examples below, but players and gamemasters should feel free to invent others that seem appropriate, useful, or amusing, tailoring them to fit their campaigns. Knowledge skills can add levels of detail and familiarity to characters and situations, especially if the gamemaster and players work together.

Gamemasters should be cautious about allowing Knowledge skills that are too broad-based or too focused. Some skills can be so all-encompassing that they upset game balance, or so generic or narrow that their usefulness is limited. Choosing "Politics" as a Street Knowledge skill, for example, would probably be too broad. Political situations differ drastically from city to city and group to group, not to mention country to country. To allow this skill would give a character knowledge of political arenas that have little connection, such as Mafia politics, UCAS politics, and Tir Tairngire Council politics. Any of those sub-categories, however, would make a well-balanced Knowledge skill—Mafia Politics, for example, would make an excellent Street Knowledge skill because it would provide the character with information on who's who and what's going down in the local Mafia hierarchy. Note that Politics taken as an Academic Knowledge skill—an understanding of political theory and systems—would be fine and not too generic, though it may not be as useful in figuring out who's behind a local political scandal.

Players should carefully think out their characters' Knowledge skills and determine why their character would have them. Knowledge skills may also help provide players with insight into their characters, perhaps fleshing out the character's background and history. For more info, see *Using Knowledge Skills*, p. 135.

KNOWLEDGE SKILL SPECIALIZATIONS

The same warning about choosing Knowledge skills that are too broad also applies to choosing specializations for Knowledge skills. Any specializations chosen should be a focused sub-category of the skill in question.

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STREET KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	
SKILL EXAMPLES	**SPECIALIZATION EXAMPLES**
Seattle Street Gangs	Halloweeners, Ancients, Brain Eaters, 405 Hellhounds
UCAS Politics	Congressional, Presidential, by state, by lobby group, by political party
Ares Macrotechnology	Damien Knight, AresSpace, Ares Arms, Seattle Operations
Hong Kong Triads	Yellow Lotus, Red Dragons, Black Chrysanthemums
Security Companies	Lone Star, Knight Errant, Hard Corps, Seattle Sec Corps

ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	
SKILL EXAMPLES	**SPECIALIZATION EXAMPLES**
History	By region (American, European, Asian, etc.), by era (Ancient, Medieval, Modern)
Literature	By region, by period, by type (Sci-Fi, Poetry, Fiction, Romance)
Economics	Micro-economics, Macro-economics
Biology	Anatomy, Microbiology, Parazoology, Physiology
Chemistry	Industrial Chemicals, Inorganic Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Pharmaceuticals

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	
SKILL EXAMPLES	**SPECIALIZATION EXAMPLES**
Architecture	Commercial, Residential, by style (Baroque, Bauhaus, German Gothic)
Business	Finance, Distribution, Manufacturing, Megacorp, Retail, Small Business Engineering Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Nuclear
Military	Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Special Forces
Security Procedures	By company (Ares, Aztechnology, Wuxing, etc.), Government, Military
Security Design	Corporate, Magical, Matrix, Military, Physical, Private Home

INTERESTS KNOWLEDGE SKILLS	
SKILL EXAMPLES	**SPECIALIZATION EXAMPLES**
Club Music	Goblin Rock, Powernoize, Rockabilly, Sinthcore, WizPunk
Matrix Games	Dawn of Atlantis, Dark Eye, Grand Larceny, Killing Floor, Paranormal Crisis
Sports	Baseball, Combat Biking, Football, Hockey, Soccer, Urban Brawl, Wrestling
Street Drugs	BTLs, Cram, Deepweed, Novacoke, Spike
Wines	California Wines, Elven Wines, French Wines, Vineyards

STREET KNOWLEDGE

Street skills cover the rumor mill, who's-who lists, and other useful factoids that come from "knowing people who know people." They are generally more concerned with "who" and "why" than "what" or "how." Street Knowledge Skills are usually the most useful as far as shadowrunning goes, in that the information is more real-time and generally shadow-relevant. It's still just information, though; how you use it is a different story altogether. All Street Knowledge skills are linked to Intuition.

ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

Academic Skills are generally higher-education subjects normally taught at colleges and universities and include both the humanities (literature, history, arts) and sciences (biology, chemistry, economics). All Academic Knowledge skills are linked to Logic.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Professional Knowledge Skills cover subjects related to normal trades, professions, and occupations. This includes things like Journalism, Engineering, Business, and so on. Within the framework of Shadowrun, they may be indirectly helpful when doing Legwork, interacting with Contacts, or fitting into polite society. All Professional Knowledge skills are linked to Logic.

INTERESTS

Interests is where you pick skills that give your character an inventive background and hobbies. The only limits are your imagination and what type of background you want your character to have. While Interests may occasionally be useful, they primarily serve to illustrate your character and his or her background and personality. All Interest Knowledge skills are linked to Intuition.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Language is neither an Active nor a Knowledge skill, but a little of both. Language skills should be used only when language may cause a problem in communication, such as when a correct translation or message in a secondary language may be particularly important.

It is not necessary to roll dice for Language skills to communicate on an everyday basis. Characters need not make tests to understand each other every time they speak. If a character must interact with someone in another language for an extended period of time, simply make one test to see how well they understand each other during this period, or just benchmark their level of communication based on the skill rating.

For more information, see *Using Language Skills,* p. 135.

LANGUAGE IN 2070

Halfway through the 21st century, reading and writing have lost some of their importance as society has become more attuned to icons and images. Who needs to spell well in an age of voice recognition software and automated spell-checking? Hi-rez visual displays mean that written communication is highly graphics-oriented, integrating logos, symbols, and emoticons into standard discourse.

Globalization and the Matrix have also made the world a smaller place, so that borders no longer limit languages. Migrating communities have spread various cultures (both traditional and new) across the planet. The proliferation of linguasofts and translation programs makes it even easier to bridge the communication gap.

Though English remains a dominant language, especially in commerce, the influence of Japanese culture and economics is also felt around the world, leading to widespread use of the Japanese language

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as well. The large and dispersed nature of some ethnic groups have also led to more common usage of Cantonese, Hindi, Arabic, Spanish, and Russian, among many others. As a result, your standard sprawl dweller possesses a small repository of pidgin terms for dealing in other tongues.

Two new languages have appeared in the world of Shadowrun: Sperethiel (the complex and tonal language of elves) and Or'zet (the guttural language of orks). Though proponents of both claim that they were reconstructed from languages of ancient elf and ork civilizations, this is highly disputed. It has not stopped them from being adopted into common usage, however, especially in the elven nations and ork communities.

LANGUAGE (INTUITION)

This skill must be taken separately for each language desired.
Default: No
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Read/Write, Speak, by dialect, by lingo

LINGOS

Lingos are spinoffs of existing languages. They exist because a subgroup has created its own language from its specific terminology, phrasings, and slang. Common examples of lingos are Cityspeak (the street jive of the gangs and other "street-educated" people), legalese (the language of lawyers and therefore of the business and political worlds), 'l33tspeak (the code-talk of hackers), wiz (the jargon of the magically active), trog (the slang of the Seattle Ork Underground), military jargon (those who have formal military training speak a language all their own), techie (the lingo of research scientists and people who never leave the lab), orbital (the banter developed by off-Earth colonies), and so on. Lingos are almost exclusively spoken or visual.

Lingos are treated as specializations of existing languages.

CHARISMA-LINKED SKILLS AND LANGUAGE

When a character attempts to influence someone using another language, her persuasive ability is limited by her ability to convey ideas and concepts in that language. To reflect this, whenever a character uses a Charisma-linked Social skill to interact with another character in a non-native tongue, the Social skill dice used may not exceed the character's Language skill rating.

example

Leon is trying to negotiate with a Japanese salaryman, but Leon's Japanese is rusty (Skill Rating 2). Even though Leon has Negotiation 5, he may only roll 2 Negotiation Skill dice, plus his Charisma, Negotiation specialization, and any other social modifiers that apply to the test.

USING SPECIFIC SKILLS

USING ARCANA

See *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

USING ASTRAL PERCEPTION

See *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

USING ASTRAL COMBAT

See *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

USING BIOTECH

See *Using First Aid* and *Using Medicine,* pp. 252–253.

USING BUILD OR REPAIR

See *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair,* p. 138.

USING CHARISMA-LINKED SKILLS

Charisma is the gut-reaction attribute. It influences an NPC's reaction to a character before any words are spoken or actions taken. It represents the way a character reacts after a first glance across a crowded room, out on the street, or in a dark alley. Various factors may affect it, including racism and large amounts of cyberware. These factors and others also influence Charisma-linked skills such as Etiquette, Intimidation, and so on.

In most cases, using Charisma-linked skills calls for an Opposed Test, as one person attempts to influence the other.

SOCIAL MODIFIERS

Many sorts of modifiers may apply to social skill tests, depending on the situation and characters in question. For example, trying to influence someone in a club where the music is overbearingly loud, while being covered in blood, or when wearing a rival team's sports jersey in the wrong sports bar may all impact a character's Charisma-linked tests. The gamemaster should evaluate each situation and apply modifiers as he feels appropriate. The Social Modifiers Table (p. 131) provides some examples.

Gamemasters must also keep the nature of the Shadowrun world in mind when assigning modifiers. For example, racism and prejudice still exist. Though it is often directed towards metahumans, it may also affect characters of certain ethnic, cultural, subcultural, or economic class backgrounds. Of course, one does not need to be racist to be intimidated by a menacing, hulking troll. Heavy amounts of visible cyberware or wearing bulky armored clothing may be faux pas and looked down upon in some circles, but down at the corner runner dive they might be par for the course. Likewise, while everyone knows that magic exists and has seen magic (real and simulated) on the trid, few people are used to seeing it in real life and may be unnerved by, intimdated by, or hostile to those who can wield it.

Unless otherwise noted, Opposed Test modifiers only affect one character or another—usually the acting character—but not both. Cumulative positive Social Modifiers may not exceed the character's combined natural Attribute + Skill Ratings.

USING CON, INTIMIDATION, LEADERSHIP, AND NEGOTIATION

When one character attempts to influence another character with Con, Intimidation, Leadership, or Negotiation skill, an Opposed Test is called for. To determine what each character rolls, see the Charisma-Linked Opposed Tests Table.

If the character is attempting to influence a group of NPCs who have no designated leader, the Opposed Test applies to the whole group—use the highest dice pool available among the members of the group, then add +1 for each extra person (max +5). Groups tend to react as a whole, with reluctant members drawn along by enthusiastic ones. Alternatively, the gamemaster may appoint a leader or a "ringer in the crowd" and base the success or failure of the endeavor on that character's reaction to the player character.

CHARISMA-LINKED OPPOSED TESTS

SKILL USED	ACTING CHARACTER ROLLS	TARGET CHARACTER ROLLS
Con	Con + Charisma	(Con or Negotiation) + Charisma
Etiquette	Etiquette + Charisma	Perception + Charisma
Intimidation	Intimidation + Charisma	Intimidation + Willpower
Leadership	Leadership + Charisma	Leadership + Willpower
Negotiation	Negotiation + Charisma	Negotiation + Charisma

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SOCIAL MODIFIERS TABLE

SOCIAL SITUATIONS	DICE MODIFIER*
With respect to the character, the NPC is:	
Friendly	+2
Neutral	+0
Suspicious	–1
Prejudiced	–2
Hostile	–3
Enemy	–4
Character's desired result is:	
Advantageous to NPC	+1
Of no value to NPC	+0
Annoying to NPC	–1
Harmful to NPC	–3
Disastrous to NPC	–4
Control Thoughts/Emotions spell cast on subject	–1 per hit†
Character has (known) street reputation	+Street Cred (p. 265)
Subject has (known) street reputation	–Street Cred (p. 265)
Subject has "ace in the hole"	+2†
Subject has romantic attraction to character	+2
Character is intoxicated	–1‡
Con Modifiers	
Character has plausible-seeming Fsupporting evidence	+1 or 2
Subject is distracted	+1
Subject has plenty of time to evaluate situation	–1

SOCIAL MODIFIERS TABLE

SOCIAL SITUATIONS	DICE MODIFIER*
Etiquette Modifiers	
Character wearing the wrong attire or doesn't have the right look	–2
Character is obviously nervous, agitated, or frenzied	–2
Subject is distracted	–1†
Intimidation Modifiers	
Character is physically imposing in some way	+1 to +3
Subject is physically imposing in some way	–1 to –3
Characters outnumber the subject(s)	+2
Subjects outnumber the character(s)	–2
Character is wielding a weapon or obvious magic	+2
Subject is wielding a weapon or obvious magic	–2
Character is causing (or has caused) subject physical pain (torture)	+2
Subject is oblivious to danger or doesn't think character "would try something so stupid"	+2†
Leadership Modifiers	
Character has superior rank	+1 to +3
Subject has superior rank	–1 to –3
Character is an obvious authority figure	+1
Character is not part of subject's social strata	–1 to –3
Subject is a fan or devoted to character	+2
Negotiation Modifiers	
Character lacks background knowledge of situation	–2‡
Character has blackmail material or heavy bargaining chip	+2‡

* Unless otherwise noted, these dice pool modifiers apply to the acting character's dice pool.
† These modifiers apply to the target character's dice pool.
‡ These modifiers can apply to either character's dice pool.

example

Ashley wants to do some snooping at a local Mitsuhama subsidiary. To get in, she tries to waltz past the gate guard with a little Con and a tattered ID card she found in a dumpster. Ashley has Con 4 and Charisma 5. The rent-a-cop has Charisma 3 and no Con or Negotiation skill. The guard is suspicious (–1 to Ashley, because it's the guard's job to be suspicious) and will be in trouble if he allows unauthorized personnel into the compound (a result harmful to him, which adds –3 to Ashley). Ashley has an ID card, however (+1 for supporting evidence).

Ashley also decides to lay it on thick; she drops the name of some Mitsuhama execs that work at the facility and tells the guard she's going to be advising them on recommending some personnel for private well-paying security work and she'll put in a good word to the bosses about the guard's diligence and thoroughness—she even asks for his name and badge number and enters it into her commlink. The gamemaster therefore applies an additional +2 modifier for Ashley. Applying all the modifiers (–4, +3), the gamemaster reduces Ashley's dice pool by 1. That means she'll be rolling 8 dice (4 + 5 –1) against the guard's 2 dice (3 –1 for defaulting).

Ashley gets 3 hits and the guard gets 1. Two net hits gets her past the guard, temporarily convincing the poor fool that she really is a Mitsuhama employee. With only 2 hits, however, the gamemaster decides that the guard will check up on her soon afterward, as the holes in her story become apparent with hindsight.

Crazy Mary, by contrast, doesn't go for subtle. She waits outside an Ares Macrotechnology subsidiary for a mid-level exec to leave. With pictures of his family in hand, Mary is going to Intimidate the corp exec to let her inside the complex and lead her to the paydata she needs. Mary has Intimidation 5 and Charisma 6, and the exec has Intimidation 2 and Willpower 4. The gamemaster applies the following modifiers: +2 for the gun in her hand and +2 for the pictures of the exec's family. Mary rolls a total of 15 dice (5 + 6 + 4) and the exec rolls a measly 6 dice (2 + 4). Crazy Mary rolls 5 hits, and the exec rolls 2. With 3 net hits (5 – 2), the gamemaster decides this guy is so afraid of Mary that not only does he escort her into the office complex, but he takes her in through a back entrance to ensure that no guards will see them.

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USING CHEMISTRY

These rules assume the character using Chemistry is home cooking and does not have access to industrial-grade production resources. With that caveat, a character with the formula for the right chemical ratios and processes (a Chemistry Professional Knowledge skill or a Data Search + Browse) and all the correct ingredients can produce a compound by making a Chemistry + Logic Extended Test with an interval of 1 hour and a threshold as noted on the Home Cooking Table, further described below. Characters receive dice pool modifiers on this test based on the Build/Repair Table, p. 138. Each hit can produce a single dose of the compound, or increase the Rating of the compound (where applicable) by 1. The number of doses (for drugs/toxins) or kilograms (for explosives and other chemicals) produced is determined by the equipment used, as noted on Chemistry Tools Table. The base interval for this test is 1 hour. To produce a larger number of doses, simply double the interval time for each doubling of the amount of doses.

Simple: Natural products. This includes isolating something that is relatively easy to find. Examples: dye from a plant, sea salt from ocean water, natural drugs, or venom from a critter. These sorts of preparations do not require any specialized tools, so a chemistry kit or higher would be considered Superior tools (p. 138).

Complex: Simple compounds and isolates. This would be things that are just a matter of mixing or purifying a natural product. Examples: distilling liquor; mixing saltpeter, sulfur, and charcoal to make black powder; or increasing the volatility of common acids and bases. A chemistry kit is considered adequate tools for this type of operation.

Intricate: This is where you get to chemistry as cooking. It includes mixing reagents as well as many synthetic street drugs or advanced explosives. Examples: cram, plastics, TNT, plastic explosives. A chemistry shop is considered adequate tools for this type of cooking. Having the wrong tools can also be dangerous (which the gamemaster should keep in mind for glitches).

Exotic: Complex synthetic compounds and isolating volatile substances. Most of the processes involve precise pressure and temperature control, as well as timing. Examples: complex plastics, radioactive substances, advanced synthetic drugs, etc. A private chemistry facility is considered adequate for these types of chemical processes.

HOME COOKING TABLE

TYPE OF CHEMICAL	THRESHOLD
Simple chemicals. Example: opium.	4
Complex chemicals. Example: morphine.	8
Intricate chemicals. Example: heroin.	12
Exotic chemicals. Example: methadone.	16+

CHEMISTRY TOOLS TABLE

DOSES PER KILOGRAM	TOOLS
1	Chemistry Kit
10	Chemistry Shop
50	Chemistry Facility or Chemistry Microfac

USING CLIMBING

Characters perform either assisted or unassisted climbing. Unassisted climbing is exactly what it sounds like—the character climbs using only her own ability. Assisted climbing involves the use of climbing equipment like ropes and harnesses. Assisted climbing is easier and safer, but requires more preparation.

Climbing is an Extended Test, with a threshold based on the distance being climbed and an interval of 1 Combat Turn. Dice pool modifiers reflect the difficulty of the obstacle being climbed and other factors, as noted on the Climbing Table.

RAPPELLING

Assisted climbing downward—known as rappelling—is a lot faster than climbing up. With the proper equipment, rappelling allows characters to make a controlled descent at close to free-fall speeds, then slow down and land safely. Rappelling requires a Climbing (2) Success Test.

A rappelling character falls at a rate of 20 meters per Simple Action expended. Only one of the two Simple Actions available in a Combat Phase can be expended in this manner. Yes, this means that a character can rappel and shoot in the same Combat Phase; however, she must take a –2 dice pool modifier to both the shooting and climbing tests.

Rappelling characters can increase the number of meters descended during that same Combat Phase by 1 for each net hit past the threshold on the Climbing Test. When the character reaches the bottom (or her destination), she must make another Climbing (2) Test. On an unsuccessful test, the character falls 4 meters and takes appropriate damage (*Falling Damage*, p. 164).

CLIMBING FAILURES AND GLITCHES

If a character fails a Climbing Test while climbing, she does not necessarily fall—she merely makes no progress that Combat Phase. If the character glitches, however, she slips and starts to fall. Benevolent gamemasters may allow the character to make a Reaction + Strength Test to grab something and hold on, or allow another character a similar test to grab her. Even if the character succeeds, she still slides or falls 1D3 meters.

CLIMBING TABLES

SITUATION	THRESHOLD
Assisted Climbing Down (Rappelling)	2
Assisted Climbing Upward	Distance in meters
Climbing Horizontally	Distance in meters x 1.5
Climbing Upside Down (On a Ceiling or Overhang)	Distance in meters x 2
Unassisted Climbing Upward	Distance in meters x 1.5
Unassisted Climbing Down	Distance in meters
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Assisted Climbing	+2
Surface is:	
Easily climbable (chain-link fence)	+1
Broken (debris, tree, loose stone wall)	+0
Flat (brick wall, side of old building)	–2
Sheer (metal wall, seamless stone)	–4
Slippery or wet	–2
Greased or gel-treated	–3

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A character who rolls a critical glitch is in trouble. That character falls with no chance to catch himself and can only be saved by another character, safety equipment, or the good graces of the gamemaster.

Characters who are using climbing gear may be saved by their safety equipment if they fall. Make a test using the Climbing + Logic of the character who prepared the safety lines and harness against a threshold equal to half the falling character's Body (round down). The falling character may apply Edge to this test. If successful, the safety gear catches the character (though she may be stuck dangling). If it fails, the character falls (*Falling Damage*, p. 164).

USING CON

See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills*, p. 130.

USING CONJURING

See *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

USING DISGUISE

The Disguise skill uses Opposed Tests, except that the character crafting the Disguise rolls her Disguise + Intuition only once. The gamemaster records the number of hits rolled and uses this result as a threshold for any Perception + Intuition tests made to pierce the disguise later on.

example

Gwyn plans to sneak inside a corp facility disguised as the security guard she has bound and gagged in her closet. After getting her disguise in place, she makes a Disguise + Intuition Test and scores 3 hits. That means that anyone who takes a close look will have to make a Perception + Intuition (3) Test to see through the disguise.

ESCAPE ARTIST TABLES

RESTRAINTS	THRESHOLD	INTERVAL
Ropes	4	1 minute
Handcuffs	4	1 minute
Straitjacket	6	1 minute
Containment manacles	8	1 minute

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Character being watched	–2
Character carefully restrained	–Restrainer's Agility
Character has keys or cutting implement	+2
Character has High Pain Tolerance/Pain Resistance	+1 per rating

USING ENCHANTING

See *The Awakened World,* p. 190.

USING ESCAPE ARTIST

This skill allows the user to escape from confinement or restraints such as ropes, handcuffs, and other bindings through contortion and manual dexterity. Escape Artist requires an Extended Test with a threshold based on the complexity of the restraints, as noted on the Escape Artist Tables, above. At the gamemaster's discretion, some restraints may simply be too difficult to escape from without outside help.

example

Toshi is captured and worked over by some corporate goons, then put in handcuffs and locked up. Toshi has Escape Artist 5, Agility 5, and 4 levels of adept Pain Resistance. His threshold to escape from the handcuffs is 4. After a minute of slipping his hands through the cuffs, he rolls 14 dice (5 + 5 + 4) and scores 5 hits—beating the threshold with a net hit to spare. He slips free and begins planning how to get out of the cell and pay back the corp goons.

USING ETIQUETTE

The Etiquette skill allows a character to fit in. More than just the knowledge of customs, rituals, and proper behavior patterns, it represents a character's ability to talk the talk and walk the walk without stepping on anyone's toes. Because of the sheer variety of subcultures, social customs, and mores in the mid-twenty-first century, the Etiquette skill also encompasses

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a character's ingrained ability to feel a situation out, to instinctively know what is proper or what will get the character what she wants.

Etiquette can be used to put people at ease, convince someone that you belong, manipulate conversations to get information out of people, judge people's attitudes, and ease their suspicions. Unlike Negotiation, which involves giving and taking, making a deal or exchange, or convincing people to do or allow something, Etiquette involves getting by because you look, act, and feel like you belong.

When using Etiquette to ease someone's suspicions, make an Opposed Test between the character's Etiquette + Charisma vs. the target's Perception + Charisma. If the character wins, each net hit reduces the level of hostility/suspicion by one step (from Enemy to Hostile, Hostile to Prejudiced, and so on). If the target wins, no reduction takes place.

Etiquette can also be used to negate a gaffe made by the player that the character is unlikely to have made. In this case, the player makes an Etiquette Test against a Threshold equal to the severity of the gaff (1 minor, 2 medium, 3 severe, 4 disastrous). If successful, the gamemaster should treat the mistake as if it never happened, or as if the character was clever enough to conceal it before anyone noticed.

When using Etiquette against a group of characters, use the dice pool of the leader, the most vocal group member, or simply the largest dice pool among the targets with a +1 for each extra person (max +5).

ETIQUETTE AND GLITCHES

If a character rolls a glitch on an Etiquette Test, she's committed some faux pas that makes her look like a fool—the NPC may be less suspicious, but only because she thinks the character's an idiot and therefore harmless. If the character gets a critical glitch, the character gives something away that shows she does not fit in, and the level of hostility/suspicion is actually increased by one step (Neutral to Suspicious, Suspicious to Prejudiced, and so on).

USING FORGERY

The Forgery skill may be used for a number of illicit purposes, such as:

- Forging signatures or official seals.
- Forging or doctoring hardcopy ID, permits, or official paperwork.
- Counterfeiting hard currency.
- Making a bogus copy of an existing certified credstick.
- Manufacturing a realistic replica of an existing artwork or item.

To determine how well a forgery stands up to inspection, treat Forgery as an Opposed Test. The character makes a Forgery + Agility Test with appropriate modifiers determined by the gamemaster (see the Build/Repair Table for suggestions). The hits scored serve as a threshold for anyone that later examines the forgery with an Perception + Intuition Test.

Note that some forgeries will require additional skill tests in order to pull them off; the quality of the forgery (hits scored) will be limited by the complementary skill hits. Forging a painting, for example, requires an ability to paint—the hits on the Forgery Test cannot exceed the hits scored on the Artisan Test to create the painting. As another example, doctoring an image would require a Computer + Edit program Test in addition to the Forgery Test.

At the gamemaster's discretion, certain types of inspections may also receive bonus dice, or may even automatically detect the forgery, especially in the case of certain scientific analyses. Carbon-dating a forged archaic document, for example, can easily prove that it is not thousands of years old.

Bogus credsticks are especially vulnerable to detection; once either the original or copy has been used, verification systems will detect the anomaly as soon as the other is used, immediately flagging all transactions with either stick and preventing either from being used again until the situation is cleared up.

Note that Forgery skill is of little use in establishing reliable false identities, as such efforts require massive proliferation of fake or altered data throughout numerous secure databases throughout the Matrix (*Identification, Please*, p. 266).

USING INFILTRATION

See *Using Stealth Skills*, p. 136.

USING INSTRUCTION

When teaching someone a skill or a spell or some other subject, a good instructor can improve her pupil's chances of learning—and learning in less time. A character must possess a skill at rating 3 or higher in order to teach it to another. The instructor must also have the skill at a rating that equals or exceeds the rating the pupil wants to achieve.

Teaching requires an Instruction + Charisma Test. For every 2 hits achieved in this test, the student receives an additional die for making the test to learn the skill. Note that numerous "virtual instructor" programs are now available widely, especially through the Matrix.

USING INTIMIDATION

See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills*, p. 130.

USING JUMPING

Characters may make two kinds of jumps: a running jump (a Free Action) and a standing jump (a Simple Action). If a character is jumping vertically, treat it as a standing jump.

For running jumps, use the distance the character wishes to jump in meters divided by 2 (round up) as the threshold of the Gymnastics + Agility Test. Apply any appropriate modifiers. If the character is simply trying to jump as far as she can, she jumps a number of meters equal to twice the hits rolled on the Gymnastics + Agility Test. The maximum distance a character can jump horizontally is equal to her Agility x 1.5 (round up) in meters.

For standing horizontal jumps, make a Gymnastics + Agility Test with a threshold equal to the distance the character wishes to jump in meters. The maximum distance for these jumps is equal to the character's Agility in meters. If the character is simply trying to jump as far as she can, she jumps a number of meters equal to the hits rolled on the Gymnastics + Agility Test, rounding up.

For vertical jumps, the threshold is equal to the distance in meters x 2. If the character is simply trying to jump as far as she can, she

JUMPING TABLES

TYPE OF JUMP	THRESHOLD (TARGETED JUMP)	DISTANCE (OPEN JUMP)	MAX DISTANCE
Running Horizontal	Meters ÷ 2 (round up)	Agility + Gymnastics hits x 2	Agility x 1.5
Standing Horizontal	Meters	Agility + Gymnastic hits	Agility
Vertical	Meters x 2	Agility + Gymnastic hits ÷ 2 (round up)	Agility ÷ 3 (round up)

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jumps a number of meters equal to the hits rolled on the Gymnastics + Agility Test divided by 2, rounding up. The maximum distance for these jumps is equal to the character's Agility ÷ 3 in meters.

A failed jump or a jump down may result in a fall (*Falling Damage*, p. 164).

example

Ma'fan is running across a rooftop, chased by three Yakuza thugs. There's a 3-meter gap between this building's roof and the next, and she decides to jump it. Ma'fan goes for distance, rolling Gymnastics 6 + Agility 4, getting 3 hits. That's enough to clear 6 meters (3 x 2) with a running start, so she easily clears the gap. The first Yakuza thug only rolls 1 hit, however, falling between buildings. The rest wisely choose to let Ma'fan get away.

USING KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Does the character know the capital of Tir Tairngire? What about the process of making a sim chip? What are the normal operating parameters of a smartlink and why does this chipped ork, whom the character just offed, have something that seems to work differently? Players may not know this information, but their characters might. The Knowledge Skill Table (below) offers a list of suggested thresholds and results for using the various Knowledge Skills.

Since Knowledge skills can range from general (Street Gangs) to obscure (Redmond Barrens Troll Street Gangs), the gamemaster needs to judge the level of detail sought against the level of specialization particular to the Knowledge skill used. For example, knowing the name of the Tacoma Mafia boss's mistress would be Obscure for a Mafia Politics skill, Intricate for a Seattle Mafia Politics skill, and Detailed for a Tacoma Mafia Politics skill.

KNOWLEDGE SKILL TABLE

CHARACTER SEEKS	THRESHOLD
General knowledge	1
Detail knowledge	2
Intricate knowledge	4
Obscure knowledge	6

example

Screaming Eagle never had much use for magic, but he knows science (Geology skill 6). He recently got his hands on a strange, white rock and wants to know what it is. The gamemaster, who knows that the object is a piece of metamorphosed flesh, secretly sets the threshold at 4 because the rock is not natural and because magical workings are not common knowledge, especially to Screaming Eagle. Eagle rolls his dice and manages to get 2 hits, which is not enough. The gamemaster informs Eagle that his analysis tells him the rock is a metamorphic carbonate of unusual structure, possibly a fossil, because of the presence of some apparently biological structures.

LANGUAGE SKILL TABLE

SITUATION	THRESHOLD
Universal concept (hunger, fear, bodily functions)	1
Basic conversation (concerns of daily life)	1
Complex subject (special/limited interest topics)	2
Intricate subject (almost any technical subject)	3
Obscure subject (deeply technical/rare knowledge)	4
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Speaking lingo (or variation of a particular language)	–2
Using augmented reality visual display help	+1 to +4

USING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Whenever a character tries to convey something in a non-native language or understand what someone is saying to them in a non-native language, the gamemaster should call for a Language Test. The Language Skill Table lists suggested thresholds for the complexity of the topic. Failure to achieve enough hits in a Language Test usually means that communication doesn't occur. When a glitch is rolled, information is misunderstood, even if the rest of it gets across accurately. The gamemaster may want to make any required die rolls himself, so that the players will not know whether what they intended to say got across.

example

A beautiful elven woman comes running up to Ashley, babbling something in Sperethiel. Ashley's knowledge of the elven language is minimal (Sperethiel 2). She rolls her dice and gets 2 hits. She understands that the woman is looking for help because someone is following her (General Subject, threshold 1). When the elven woman tries to explain just who it is and why they want her (Complex Subject, threshold 2), however, the convolutions become too much for Ashley (who rolls again, this time getting only 1 hit, not quite enough). Ashley loses the sense of what the woman is saying, but still, there might be a reward . . .

USING LEADERSHIP

See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills*, p. 130.

USING LOCKSMITH

Though maglocks have replaced mechanical locks as the security system of choice, many older facilities still employ traditional locks. Others use them as complementary systems or because they're now uncommon. Lockpicking is a Locksmith + Agility (Lock rating, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. See *Locks*, p. 262.

USING NAVIGATION

Thanks to modern day GPS and mapsofts, finding one's way around rarely requires a test. When a character finds himself lost in the jungle, trapped in the sewers, or needing to plot a foot path through rival gang territory that will get him by unseen, however, the Navigation skill still comes in handy.

Navigation is handled as a Success Test, with the threshold based on how confusing the terrain is. Apply modifiers for poor conditions (visibility, weather), helpful landmarks, or directions from locals. Mapsofts add their ratings in dice to the test.

USING NEGOTIATION

See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills*, p. 130.

USING PALMING

See *Using Stealth Skills*, p. 136.

USING PERCEPTION

To determine how observant a character is of her surroundings, the gamemaster can call for Perception Tests. Unless a character specifically takes an Observe in Detail Simple Action to perceive, she is considered to be distracted by whatever task is at hand (suffering a –2 dice pool modifier).

For tactical reasons, the gamemaster should make this test secretly on behalf of the character, so that the player is unaware of exactly how well her character succeeded or failed. In fact, it may be advisable in certain cases to not let the player(s) know that a Perception Test is being made, in order to avoid raising their suspicions.

When an entire group of characters has a chance to notice something, the gamemaster can simplify matters by making a single Perception Test for the entire team, using the largest dice pool available + 1 per extra character (maximum +5). Such group Perception Tests should not be made when surprise is possible (*Surprise*, p. 165).

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VISIBILITY MODIFIERS

VISIBILITY MODIFIERS	NORMAL	LOW-LIGHT	THERMOGRAPHIC	ULTRASOUND
Full Darkness	–6	–6	–3	–3
Partial Light	–2	0	–2	–1
Glare	–1	–1	–1	0
Light Fog/Mist/Rain/Smoke	–2	–1	0	–1
Heavy Fog/Mist/Rain/Smoke	–4	–2	–2	–2
Thermal Smoke	–4	–2	–6	–2

PERCEPTION TEST TABLES

ITEM/EVENT IS	THRESHOLD	EXAMPLES
Obvious/Large/Loud	1	Neon sign, running crowd, yelling, gunfire
Normal	2	Street sign, average pedestrian, conversation, silenced gunfire
Obscured/Small/Muffled	3	Item dropped under table, contact lens, whispering
Hidden/Micro/Silent	4	Secret door, needle in haystack, subvocal speech

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Perceiver is distracted	–2
Perceiver is actively looking/listening for it	+3
Object/sound not in immediate vicinity	–2
Object/sound far away	–3
Object/sound stands out in some way	+2
Interfering sight/odor/sound	–2
Perceiver has active enhancements	+rating
Perceiver using virtual reality	–6

Gamemasters may call for Perception Tests for any situation that involves sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. See the Perception Test Tables for a selection of potential modifiers. A single net hit on a Perception Test indicates that the character has noticed something; additional net hits provide more levels of detail to the character.

Gamemasters should limit their uses of Perception Tests, only calling for them when something is not immediately noticeable or when a situation is so hectic that certain things might be overlooked.

USING PILOTING

See *Vehicle Tests,* p. 168.

USING RESONANCE

See *Technomancer Skills,* p. 293.

USING RUNNING

Characters with the Running skill may attempt to increase the distance they can run by spending a Simple Action and making a Running Test. The Sprinting specialization applies to this test. Each hit adds 2 meters to the character's distance for that Combat Turn (*Movement*, p. 148). The gamemaster may apply modifiers for various types of terrain (slippery, rocky, and so on) and other conditions.

Characters that run for extended periods of time may suffer from fatigue (*Fatigue Damage*, p. 164).

USING SHADOWING

See *Using Stealth Skills*, below.

USING SORCERY

See *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

USING STEALTH SKILLS

When using most of the skills in the Stealth skill group—Infiltration, Palming, and Shadowing—the character makes an Opposed Test against the target's Perception + Intuition. Apply any appropriate Perception modifiers (p. 135) to the target.

At the gamemaster's discretion, the target may use an appropriate Stealth skill in place of Perception. A character skilled in Shadowing, for example, could use Shadowing + Intuition to notice someone tailing him.

example

Lance uses his Infiltration skill to sneak past a guard, rolling Infiltration 4 + Agility 3 and getting 3 hits with his 7 dice. The gamemaster rolls a Perception 3 + Intuition 3 test for the guard, but applies a –2 modifier as the guard is bored and sleepy. The guard gets 1 hit on 4 dice, so Lance moves past undetected.

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SURVIVAL TEST TABLES

WILDERNESS TERRAIN	THRESHOLD	DAMAGE VALUE
Mild (Forest, Plains, Urban)	1	2
Moderate (Foothills, Jungle, Swamp)	2	4
Tough (Desert, High Mountains)	3	6
Extreme (Arctic, Antarctic)	4	8

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Camping/Survival gear on hand	+2
No food or water	–2
Heat/climate control available	+1
Inappropriate clothing/armor	–1 to –4
Extended travel or exertion	–1 to –4
Toxic terrain	–2 to –4
Weather conditions:	
Poor	–1
Terrible	–2
Extreme	–4
Character injured	–Wound Modifier

USING SURVIVAL

Gamemasters can call for Survival Tests to determine how well a character braves the outdoors—finding edible food and water, for example, or finding protection from the elements and critters. Survival can also be used for getting by on the streets in urban environments, finding shelter in abandoned areas, dumpster diving, and so forth. Thresholds and modifiers for these tests are given on the Survival Test Table.

Characters who spend long periods outdoors risk exhaustion, dehydration, starvation, bug bites, damage from exposure, and worse. Each day requires a Survival Test with a threshold based on the harshness of the environment (as noted on the Survival Test Table). If the test fails, the character suffers Stun damage based on the harshness of the environment (DV = threshold x 2); she may not resist this damage. This Stun damage cannot be recovered until the character reaches civilization (or at least a situation where she is not forced to rely upon survival skills) and is able to rest for an 8-hour period.

If a character's Stun damage track is filled, she collapses from exposure and fatigue and can no longer make Survival Tests. Unless helped by others, she will continue to rack up damage from exposure each day, overflowing from Stun to Physical, until dead.

USING SWIMMING

Swimming requires a Complex Action. The movement rate for swimming is noted on the Swimming Rates table in meters per Combat Turn. Characters can make a Swimming Test and add 1 meter to this distance per hit.

Swimming characters suffer from fatigue in the same manner as running characters. See *Fatigue Damage*, p. 164.

HOLDING YOUR BREATH

A typical character can hold her breath for 48 seconds (16 Combat Turns). A character who wants to hold her breath longer makes a Swimming + Willpower Test. Each net hit increases the length of time the character can hold her breath by 1 Combat Turn. After that point, the character takes 1 box of Stun damage at the end of each Combat Turn. This damage cannot be resisted. Once all the Stun boxes are filled, the character passes out and her lungs attempt to fill with air again. The character will continue to take Physical damage at the same rate (1 box each Combat Turn) until dead or rescued.

TREADING WATER TABLE

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Character has:	
Cyberlimbs or torso	–1 per cyberlimb or torso
Aluminum/Titanium bone lacing	–2
Waterlogged clothing	–1
Dead weight (clothes and armor)	–1 per 2 kilos
Metatype:	
Elves	+1
Dwarfs and Humans	+0
Orks and Trolls	–1
Physical Condition:	
Obese	+2
Physically fit	+0
Out of shape	–1
Highly developed muscles or exceptionally low body fat	–2
Supported by a mildly buoyant object (plank of wood)	+1
Supported by a very buoyant object (life jacket)	+2
Wounded	–Wound Modifiers
Rough seas (crashing water)	–2 to –4

SWIMMING RATES

METATYPE	SWIMMING RATE (METERS/TURN)
Dwarf	4
Elf	6
Human	5
Ork	5
Troll	7

TREADING WATER

Treading water requires a character to make periodic Swimming Tests, modified by applicable conditions listed on the Treading Water Modifications Table.

Characters can tread water for a number of minutes equal to Strength times the hits on a Swimming Test. At the end of this interval, the character suffers 1 box of Stun damage that cannot be resisted and the test must be repeated.

A character who is treading water using a survival float makes a Swimming (2) Test every 15 minutes. If the character fails, she takes 1 box of Stun damage that cannot be resisted.

If the character's Stun damage track is filled in, she starts to drown.

FLOATING

Floating depends partly on natural buoyancy. In general, excluding cyberware or bioware from consideration, elves tend to be buoyant in water and can float on their own without external support (such as a

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life jacket). Orks and trolls have little buoyancy and usually sink without some form of external support. Dwarfs and humans may be buoyant or not, depending on their physical condition (highly muscular folks will tend to sink; fat people will float).

To float, a character makes a Body Test using the appropriate modifiers from the Treading Water Modifications Table. If the test is successful, the character can float for (Body x net hits) Combat Turns. If the Test is unsuccessful, the character must tread water or swim, or else she begins to drown.

USING TECHNICAL SKILLS TO BUILD OR REPAIR

Using a skill to build or repair something is an Extended Test with a threshold and interval based on the type of item being manufactured or fixed, as noted on the Build/Repair Table. Apply any appropriate modifiers from the table as well.

Note that "build" means putting together a new item/device from scratch, assuming that the component parts are on hand. Technical skills do not allow a character to create a new item/device from concept alone—that requires something along the lines of an engineering background and lots of collaborative effort.

example

Carter's on the run with a major price on his head, so he finds an unoccupied squat in the Barrens to hole up. When he finds some evidence that ghouls might be lairing in the basement, he realizes he doesn't have any weapons to protect himself with. He doesn't dare show his face on the streets, so he needs to be creative with the materials on hand. He scrounges up a piece of aluminum siding and some tape to fashion himself a shiv, as well as a battery pack and an old lighting fixture that he thinks he can convert into an ad hoc flashlight.

The gamemaster decides the knife is simple (threshold 2) and assigns it an interval of 30 minutes. The flashlight isn't that much more complicated, so the gamemaster assigns it a threshold of 4 and the same 30 minute interval. It's only 2 hours until dark—when the ghouls come out—so he'll have to work fast.

Carter has no Armorer skill, so he defaults to his Logic of 5 for making the knife. He suffers modifiers for defaulting (–1), inadequate tools (–2), and distracting conditions (–1), so he only rolls 1 die. He gets lucky and rolls two hits in a row, so after 1 hour he's crafted a makeshift knife.

With an hour to go, he starts on the flashlight. Carter has Industrial Mechanic skill at 2, so with Logic 5 he's rolling 7 dice. Except for defaulting, the same modifiers apply, so Carter rolls 4 dice. He gets 1 hit for the first half hour, so he's not even halfway finished with a half hour of light left. But on the second roll he gets 3 hits, so he gets the flashlight working right as the daylight dies and he starts to hear scrabbling sounds from the basement steps …

USING TRACKING

To find critter tracks or locate someone's trail is a simple Tracking Success Test with a difficulty threshold (Task Difficulty Threshold Table, p. 64) based on the terrain. At the gamemaster's discretion, modifiers for the age of the tracks, interfering weather conditions, and so on can be used. Net hits can be used to determine extra details, like the number of travelers, how old the tracks are, and so on.

If the tracking target is actively seeking to hide their trail, then Tracking is handled as an Opposed Test, similar to Infiltration. The tracking character rolls Tracking + Intuition against the target's Infiltration + Agility roll.

BUILD/REPAIR TABLE

ITEM OR PART/REPAIR	THRESHOLD
Simple/Malfunction	2
Basic/Easy Fix	4
Complex/Common Repair	8
Intricate/Serious Damage	12
Exotic/Broken Beyond Repair	16+

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Working Conditions:	
Distracting	–1
Poor	–2
Bad	–3
Terrible	–4
Superior	+1
Tools and/or Parts Are:	
Inadequate	–2
Unavailable	–4 or not allowed
Superior	+1 or more
Plans or Reference Material:	
Available	+1
Augmented Reality Enhanced	+2
Working From Memory:	
Character's Logic is 5+	+0
Character's Logic is 1–4	–(5 – Logic)

USING ATTRIBUTES

In some cases, there may simply be no skill applicable to a particular test. This specifically applies when a character relies on her own natural abilities rather than any trained proficiency.

ATTRIBUTE-ONLY TESTS

The gamemaster decides exactly when an attribute-only test is appropriate, as well as which attributes to apply. As a general rule, it is better to require two separate attributes to be used for a test, though in certain circumstances only one attribute may apply.

COMPOSURE (WIL + CHA)

There are many common occurrences in a shadowrunner's life—vicious violence, death, metahuman misery, scary monsters, and magic—that would make average citizens crumple into whimpering, traumatized rag-dolls. Whenever a character encounters a situation that she has not been hardened to, the gamemaster can call for a composure test to see whether she faces the situation with cool resolve, temporarily freezes with shock, or trembles and pisses herself.

Composure is a Willpower + Charisma Test, with a threshold based on the severity of the situation (keeping in mind how often the character has faced similar things in the past). Certain situations are bound to become routine to shadowrunners (getting shot at, attacked by an angry spirit, or seeing the remains of a ghoul's meal); in these cases, gamemasters should no longer ask for composure tests.

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JUDGE INTENTIONS (INT + CHA)

A character who wants to use her natural empathy to gauge another character's emotional state, intentions, or honesty can make an Opposed Intuition + Charisma Test against the target's Willpower + Charisma. Note that this sort of "psychological" evaluation is never a certainty—it's just a way for a player to judge what her character "feels" about someone else. It should never serve as a lie detector or detailed psychological analysis. The gamemaster should simply use it as a way to convey gut feelings the character gets when dealing with another.

LIFTING AND CARRYING (STR + BOD)

A character can lift off the ground 15 kilograms per point of Strength without making a test. If the character wishes to lift more than that, she may make a Strength + Body Test. Each net hit increases the weight she can lift by 15 kilograms more.

A character can lift 5 kilograms per point Strength over her head without making a test. If the character wishes to lift more than that over her head, she may make a Strength + Body Test. Each net hit increases the weight she can lift by 5 kilograms more.

Characters can lift and carry their Strength x 10 kilograms in weight without any sort of test. Lifting and carrying more than that calls for a Strength + Body Test. Each hit increases the weight she can lift by 10 kilograms more.

For more details on carrying gear, see *Carrying Gear*, p. 310.

MEMORY (LOG + WIL)

If a character needs to remember an important fact or detail, the gamemaster can call for a Logic + Willpower Success Test. The threshold assigned should be based on how memorable or noticeable the item was: the face of the man that shot him seen close-up would be an easy task (threshold 1), whereas trying to remember the color of some random stranger's tie glimpsed for only a moment would be more difficult (threshold 3, or even 4). Dice pool modifiers should be applied based on how far back the memory goes or anything that might have prevented a character from taking in all of the details (poor lighting, distractions, etc.).

A character may also attempt to memorize something in advance. In this case, make a similar Logic + Willpower Test to determine how well the character retains the information. Memorizing long or drawn-out information may have a higher threshold. Each net hit from this test adds an extra die to any memory tests made to recall this information later on.

A character who glitches on a memory test forgets some details or gets some parts of it wrong. A critical glitch means that the character has deluded himself into believing something entirely different.

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BEST SERVED COLD

by Peter Taylor

SALISH-TSIMSHIAN BORDER, 2062

Incoming.

The whine gave them away, and her instincts jerked her left and down, one hand yanking the rookie with her. Ahead, she saw Juan dive for cover.

Mud splattered her exposed neck as she dropped inside a muddy hollow left when a giant fir had fallen, its exposed roots rising a meter and a half over her head. Bullets chewed the ground in front of her. The hollow was filled with the earthy scent of clean dirt and torn foliage, contrasting sharply with panicked shouts, the occasional scream, and the barked orders of harried NCOs over the comm. Her FN HAR was in her hands, reassuring.

This was bad. They'd already put in a full day's march through the wet forest, but there'd been no Tsimshian raiders where they'd been told. The intel had been bogus.

And now they were pinned down.

Ambushed.

She heard more screams, tried to tune in the streaming chatter. *Rael down. Oscar hit! Oh god, oh god, Captain Tomasso!* Captain Tomasso? Shit. This wasn't some rogue Tsimshian militia raiding over the border. Whoever was pumping endless rounds into them, slicing through the company, was well-armed, too coordinated. The screams, the pounding bullets, the whine of heavy weapons ...

Then his voice cut through the clamor. Juan. Short, clipped commands in his Mexican accent. So different from her native Castilian. The calm at the heart of the storm. Bringing merciful silence to the airwaves. Five years they had been together. Friends. They had been lovers briefly. War did that. Threw people together, tore them apart. He was the one man who got her. Who never asked why she'd signed on to this life straight out of campus. Today he was her CO and like any of his men, she would follow him to hell and back.

She heard the thump of the mortars and closed her eyes, trying to make out the telltale screech of incoming. There. Grabbing Phillips' harness, she threw her weight down and dragged both to the bottom of the muddy hollow. The ground above them fountained mud and roots.

She rose instantly, her ears still ringing, ordered her HUD goggles online and lay down a long burst, suppressing a dense stand of forest on the rise above them. She kept her finger tight on the trigger and tracked a silhouette with tracer rounds. It went down. There was silence for a fraction of a second and then the treeline lit up with muzzle flashes.

She jerked back down as rounds tore into the rootball behind her.

The FN HAR's ammo readout was in the red. The smartgun spat out the magazine at her mental command and she slapped one filled with alternating tracers and regular rounds into the slot. She vaguely registered Phillips looking up in awe. She kept her mind on Juan's words, mentally mapping out the repositioning of Bravo and Charlie squads on the terrain. She smiled. She saw what he was planning.

She rose and popped an IR smoke grenade into the tree line. That should buy Charlie some cover.

There was tracer fire to her right. Bravo had encountered resistance. It didn't last long. Martinez was good, he'd sort it out.

Phillips was still trying to get up. For a second she thought he was hit. He was twitching and flushed, hot red in her HUD. She cursed. She'd expected better from the rookie. Grabbing his harness, she pulled him to his knees, shoving him hard against the side of the hollow. "You little fuck! If I ever catch you popping Kamikaze in the field, you won't have to worry about the enemy, I'll cut your throat myself."

She realized he was screaming, trying to say something. She was confused for a moment. Then she caught the smartgun sight in his goggles moving. She felt more than saw his gun coming up. Instinct took over. She twisted in one fluid move, drawing her monoknife from her forearm sheath. The silhouette was moving fast and closing, bigger than she was, that was good, she could use that. He didn't have an angle to shoot. He jumped instead. A mistake. She slipped easily out from under his path, shifting on one leg while bringing her knife up in both hands. His momentum did the rest. The monoblade sliced deep into the man's body armor, from belly to groin. Blood and guts spilled down her hands and arms as the dead body slammed into the ground above the hollow.

Point blank gunfire deafened her, blocking out Juan's commands.

A second merc fell backwards, twisting with the force of multiple impacts.

Picador looked over at Phillips, the muzzle of the rook's Alpha white hot in her thermal display. She nodded thanks. Her eyes tracked over the still form of the gutted ork. He was massive and black, probably central African, definitely not Tsimshian. Mercs. No unit insignia though. He still gripped his tribal

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machete. A meter away, she saw Juan, hunkered down behind a clump of bushes. Their eyes locked over the body of the black ork. She saw something dark in his gaze; knowledge, regret.

The voices on the comm returned. Charlie had contact. Juan barked orders.

There was a crack, a heavy caliber round cutting the air.

She felt the blood mist against her face, soft as rain, as Juan's head disintegrated.

"The Colonel is down! I repeat. *Matador is down*!"

She didn't recognize the voice screaming into the comm. Beside her, Phillips was tugging her down to safety.

Panicked voices filled her comm.

"Who's in charge?" Sergeant Martinez cut through it all. "Who the fuck is in charge?"

She felt it all falling apart. If it did, they were dead. Like Tomasso. Like Juan was dead.

"I am!" shouted Picador. She stood up, tears burning her eyes, lips curled into a snarl, "And I'll be damned if we die here today! Martinez, take Caramelo and Blake and flank that HMG. Do it now! Somebody get me a bead on that sniper!"

ISTANBUL, NOVEMBER 2068

Picador couldn't bring herself to like Mamba. She had the feeling the sentiment was mutual, but she couldn't quite put her finger on why. She had a feeling it wasn't just that she was an idealist born with a silver spoon in her mouth and a trust fund to her name, and Mamba was a deadpan realist who had clawed her way out of one of the worst African hellholes known to man. There was something more to it.

They'd never be friends, but they got along well enough, and had fought together on more than one contract. And of course they kept in touch and traded intel on FastJack's beta-VPN.

They were waiting for the waiter to bring them spicy *chai* in a small tavern off the Seraglio with a view of the blue waters of the Bosporus over the stepped rooftops of Sultanahmet's southern quarter.

Picador said, "I've been meaning to ask you something for a while now. I'm hoping you can help me."

Mamba stretched, toned muscles rippling like a panther under her "Dead Yet?" T-shirt. She winked at a patron at another table, and the young man blushed furiously while his companions scowled. Turning to Picador she laughed, "I love my Muslims. They make it so easy ... What can I help you with?"

"This." Picador drew a camo cloth-wrapped parcel from her knapsack. She placed it on the table and carefully unfolded the cloth to reveal a long, gleaming machete with a carved wooden handle. The grip was swathed in colorful tribal embroidery of geometric designs.

"It's Fanti," said Mamba in seconds. "Where did you get it?"

"Tsimshian."

"Long way from home," Mamba said carefully.

"Yes. It belonged to a merc. An ork. African. No unit ID."

"This about Matador, *chica*?"

Picador just nodded. Mamba gestured for her to continue.

Picador said, "I need to know who might recruit a ... Fanti."

"Quite a few outfits actually," Mamba said, then shrugged. "But I recognize the patterns on the grip. I know the clan. They're smugglers, not soldiers, though they often hire out their ship to transport mercs up and down the West African coast and all the way up to Algiers and Lisbon. Not too many outfits desperate enough to trust them, but they've got a good working relationship with a few small ones ... the 22nd Spartans, Falkenberg, and Navarre's Jackals. Maybe your boy was recruited off the boat ..." she let the words trail away. Picador had a concentrated look on her face that prompted Mamba to ask, "Recognize anyone?"

"I've heard of all of them, even mixed it up with the Spartan on that Sudan contract last year. If I remember correctly, they hire a lot of cannon fodder out of Lagos. Lots of Fanti there too. Haven't run into Falkenberg yet."

"Hope you never do," grimaced Mamba, running her finger along a long scar on her right arm meaningfully. "What about the Jackals?"

"I'm not sure. I remember meeting Navarre back in '58. He stages out of Lisbon most of the year, and we met out on the town. The outfit was on leave between contracts; I was still lily-fresh. Suave operator, cute in a bad boy kind of way. Fun in the sack. Juan blew his top when he found out. Warned me off, said Navarre was a nasty piece of work. All the Jackals were."

"Jealous?"

"Not Juan. This was something else. They were both hired for some pacification work out of Sarajevo in the early Fifties during a particularly bloody flare-up. Turns out the Jackals were pacifying townships by summarily executing civilians every time they lost a man to insurgents. Matador confronted Navarre and was blown off, so he reported it. But the NEEC observer was under Navarre's thumb. He turned it against Matador and it cost him the contract. They met again in Afghanistan a couple of years later and Matador gave the Jackals a serious beating. Almost wiped them out."

"Sounds like bad blood."

"Yes. It does, doesn't it?"

Then their *chai* arrived and conversation drifted.

JACKPOINT, MARCH 2070

Picador was early for her appointment. She liked to visit JackPoint in VR and see what 'Jack had done to the place since her last visit.

There was a cool breeze, and she knew he was here. She turned and there he stood, closer than anyone would ever have been able to get to her in the real world. He was using a psychedelic variant of the shimmering, speed-blurred humanoid she was familiar with. This icon bled multicolored rainbow afterimages with every motion.

As she looked at him she thought, as she often did, that all his choices had some meaning. Not unusual, for a man of his age. A couple of years ago, he'd coded her custom icon, an animated Doré sketch of Cervantes' immortal knight, and offered it to her as a gift.

She nodded a greeting, which the persona interface translated into a bow and flourish. "Jack."

His icon smiled, "Morning, Picador."

She smiled, impressed as usual. She'd routed her connection through seven different nodes in four different countries, including two anonymizers, and he still knew what time of day it was where she was logging on. It was just past midnight in Seattle. It was a little game they played.

"I believe I have something for you," said the blurred man. He brought his hands together and slowly separated them to reveal a small cube. A data file. There was a Salish-Shidhe flag on one side and the tribal marking for the Rangers on another. The upper face had several timestamps.

"Is that what I think it is?"

"Possibly. It's Salish Intel's analysis of the "incident." You've seen that before. That's not the interesting bit. Look at the latest date stamp."

She did. The file had been modified in March 2069. That made no sense, it should have long been inactive. Picador looked questioningly at FastJack, her icon exaggerating her frown.

"The Salish have been combing through Tsimshian files since the occupation started. MCT had the archives mined with data bombs and other nasty surprises, so it's taken some time. I was hired to expedite a few items. And came across this file again. I tracked the dates back into the Tsimshian archives

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and I found these…" He spread his hands further and two more files popped into view. One had MCT's trademark black-and-blue icon, the other had a logo she didn't recognize.

FastJack unfolded the data cubes and out popped a dozen or so documents: tactical maps, intelligence memos, operation reports, payment spreadsheets …

"It was a setup all along. The intel the Salish dug up was an intentional plant. The raids were real, but this one had nothing to do with border trouble. Someone used Tsimshian agents to seed info on the next target. They pulled strings with Mitsuhama, and MCT pulled strings with Tsimshian black ops to get the job. Someone knew you guys were there. This took a lot of planning and manipulation. Feels like something personal."

"Who?"

"The paper trail is a dead end, unless we can find a Tsimshian operative willing to talk. These were black ops and everyone used codenames. The money trail ends in a Swiss account. I haven't managed to crack it yet. But I did turn up this. Maybe it'll mean something to you." FastJack pushed a chart into her virtual hands.

It was a logistics and supply roster for merc units deployed to Tsimshian's southern border during 2063.

Picador recognized a name.

LISBON, JUNE 2071

Navarre walked the ambassador out of the artificial lights of his company's warehouse and into the dusk of the dockside. It took his cybereyes all of a second to adjust to the twilight, just enough time for two Jackals in field dress to materialize on either side of the pair, locking step with them. Navarre held back a smile; Dr. Jordão had no idea he'd pinged the mercs to ensure they were waiting at just the right time.

A bodyguard, a black-clad troll with skin so dark it had obsidian highlights, waited by the open door of a recent model Nightsky limousine. The African diplomat shook Navarre's hand one final time before folding himself elegantly into the diplomatic vehicle's backseat and riding off into the dusk.

Navarre turned to watch as the dockside cranes loaded another of the Jackals' APCs on an independent cargohauler. The ink was barely dry on the contract in his office, but it had been just a formality. It had been a done deal. Navarre had pulled a few strings. His men had to be in the field within two weeks, to counter the push Angolan intelligence was saying the Azanian and UniOmni forces were about to make. Navarre was well aware the push would never come, but it wasn't something he was going to tell his new employers—after all, he had engineered the rumor in the first place and had a few acquaintances in Cape Town spread the word so Angolan agents picked up on it.

In the distance, the Cristo-Rei was dwarfed by Lusiada's skyraker towering over the Tagus River and the Maersk cargowhale easing into port.

There was a hollow, liquid sound and blood splattered his dress uniform.

Instinct and boosted reflexes kicked in and he dived for cover between two stacks of ration crates before his dead bodyguard hit the ground. His second guard just stood there, rifle raised, searching for the sniper. Idiot. Another frangible round took him in the neck, spinning him around, a spiral of blood fountaining from his ruined throat.

Navarre drew his sidearm, precious little use against a sniper. He wirelessly

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sent an alarm code over the Jackal's VPN. It included his position and the sniper warning icon. Half his men didn't know how to read, but they knew the iconography by heart.

Ten seconds ticked by. He was still alive, which meant the sniper didn't have an angle on him. But he might be repositioning. Navarre couldn't afford to wait to see. He was terrified but alive, and in his job you learned to live with that fear.

There was movement in the warehouse and shouts from the ship—his men were rallying.

He risked a peek around the crate in the direction opposite the warehouse. There was movement on the docks too. Where there shouldn't be. Two figures, maybe three, moving up past the containers. He zoomed in with his cybereyes. Two men and a woman, all in urban camo. The woman looked vaguely familiar.

He pulled up an overhead map of the docks and signaled their position, wiring it to the Jackal's VPN, with a string of commands.

Several of his men appeared at the railing of the cargo ship and fired at the intruders. Others moved up from the warehouse. The intruders fired back as they retreated, taking cover by the cargo containers. A second squad of Jackals moved up and laid down suppressive fire. They seemed to have the attackers pinned for a moment, but then one of them went down, head exploding like a ripe watermelon. The sniper again.

That was his cue. The sniper's attention was elsewhere. He sprinted from cover, half-crouched, zigzagging across the weathered concrete to the warehouse.

Safe inside, his elation at being alive did nothing to dampen his cold fury. He walked briskly to his office, willing himself to look calm in front of his men. He kept the tactical map in his image link and occasionally spat out orders. The attackers were fading away. They must have an escape route. They had failed to kill him, and now they would pay. How dare they! It might take years, but he'd get them, whoever they were. He was not a man to take a slight, let alone this. He always paid back in kind, no matter how long and what he had to do to arrange it. "Never forgive, Never forget" was the Jackal's motto.

But something nagged at the back of his mind. They hadn't taken him with the first shot. Why?

Navarre slammed the door behind him, walked over to his drink cabinet and pulled the stopper from the decanter with the 20-year-old malt he'd brought out for the Ambassador. He filled a glass and downed it in one gulp. As he put the glass down, he noticed a card stuck under the decanter. It featured the matador-and-bull logo of Lisbon's Campo Pequeno bullring—and it had no reason whatsoever to be there. He flipped it over.

Suddenly, something icy gripped his stomach. He doubled over from the pain, his eyes watering, his mouth filled with bile. His hands began to blister. He fell to his knees. As he curled up in searing agony, he struggled to read the note scrawled on the card. It read: *I believe you like it served cold. - Matador*

One hundred meters away and three meters underground, Martinez paused at a juncture in the port's storm drain system, listening down the tube that led under the warehouse for sounds of pursuit. He thought no one had seen him, but you never knew. He remote activated the trip-laser claymore he'd planted earlier, just in case. Then he brought up his AR messenger and wired Picador that he was clear.

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The world of *Shadowrun* is violent and hostile. Inevitably, player characters will be drawn into combat situations. Whether the characters are spraying bullets or throwing kicks, these are the combat rules they'll use to get the job done.

COMBAT TURN SEQUENCE

Combat in *Shadowrun* proceeds in a set sequence known as the Combat Turn. Each Combat Turn is 3 seconds long (so there are 20 Combat Turns per minute). The Combat Turn attempts to mimic real combat, resolving issues such as who acts first, who is faster on the draw, what happens when one character punches another, and so on. During the Combat Turn, each player—starting with the fastest—takes turns describing his character's action and rolls dice to see how well he performs it. The gamemaster describes the actions and reactions of the non-player characters, as well as the final outcome of all actions.

Combat Turns may be broken up into a series of **Initiative Passes** if any characters have the ability to take extra actions in a Combat Turn. The point during each Combat Turn when a specific character can act is called an **Action Phase.**

B. RESOLVE ACTIONS

Resolve the actions of the acting character.

4. DECLARE AND RESOLVE ACTIONS OF REMAINING CHARACTERS

Move on to the character with the next highest Initiative Score and repeat Step 3. Continue this cycle until the actions of all characters have been resolved for that Initiative Pass.

5. BEGIN NEXT INITIATIVE PASS

Once all of the characters have acted and all of the actions have been resolved for the first Initiative Pass, Steps 2 through 4 are then repeated for characters who get a second Initiative Pass due to implants, magic, or other abilities. This cycle is repeated in full for characters who get a third pass, and then for those who get a fourth pass (if any). Few characters can act in more than four Initiative Passes in a Combat Turn and none under these basic rules.

If a character was wounded in a previous Initiative Pass, wound modifiers may affect his Initiative Score on this and any subsequent passes.

COMBAT

1. ROLL INITIATIVE

Determine Initiative for all the characters, critters, spirits, intrusion countermeasures, and anything else involved in the fight (see *Initiative*). The order of Initiative Scores from high to low determines the order in which the action will take place.

Note that wound modifiers affect the Initiative Score (see *Initiative and Damage*).

2. BEGIN FIRST INITIATIVE PASS

Characters involved in the combat now take their actions sequentially in the first Initiative Pass, starting with the character who has the highest Initiative Score. This character is the acting character.

If more than one character has the same Initiative Score, they go at the same time.

3. BEGIN ACTION PHASE

The acting character now declares and takes his actions, according to the steps below.

If another character has delayed an action (see *Delayed Actions,* p. 145) and wishes to act during this Action Phase, he must declare it here. That character chooses whether to act before, after, or at the same time as current acting character.

A. DECLARE ACTIONS

The acting character declares his actions for the Action Phase. He may take two Simple Actions or one Complex Action. Alternately, the character can choose to delay his action until a later Action Phase in that Combat Turn (see *Delayed Actions,* p. 145).

The character may also declare one Free Action during either this Action Phase or on any subsequent Action Phases in the Combat Turn. Likewise, any character who has already acted in the Combat Turn prior to this Action Phase and still has his Free Action left may declare it at this point if he chooses.

6. BEGIN A NEW COMBAT TURN

Begin a new Combat Turn, starting again at Step 1. Continue repeating Steps 1 through 6 until the combat ends.

INITIATIVE

Initiative determines the order in which characters act, as well as how often they act during a single Combat Turn. Initiative is based on two factors: Initiative Score and Initiative Passes.

INITIATIVE SCORE

To determine a character's Initiative Score, make an Initiative Test using his Initiative attribute. (A character's Initiative attribute is the sum of Reaction and Intuition.) Edge may be used on this test. Add the hits to your Initiative attribute—this total is your Initiative Score. The gamemaster records the score for each character, from highest to lowest. The character with the highest score goes first and the others follow in descending order.

If two characters get the same score, then they act simultaneously. If for some reason it is imperative to determine which one acts first, compare attributes to see who has the highest Edge, Initiative, or Reaction (resolving ties in that order).

example

Cottonmouth has an Initiative attribute of 8 (Reaction 4 + Intuition 4), so he rolls 8 dice on his Initiative Test. He rolls 1, 2, 2, 3, 5, 5, 6, 6—a total of 4 hits. That makes his Initiative Score 12 (8 + 4). The ganger running his way with a baseball bat has a score of 13, however, so Cottonmouth won't be going first.

INITIATIVE AND DAMAGE

When making the Initiative Test, wound modifiers from damage affect the Initiative Score. In addition, if a character takes damage that inflicts wound modifiers during a Combat Turn, apply those (additional) modifiers to his Initiative Score immediately. This means that a character's Initiative Score may be affected in the middle of an Initiative

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Pass (though if he has already acted in that pass, it won't matter until the next one).

If damage modifiers reduce a character's Initiative Score to zero or less, that character does not get any actions during that Combat Turn.

example

Lucky for Cottonmouth, one of his quicker friends shoots the ganger with a taser before he can act. The ganger takes 6 boxes of Stun damage and suffers a wound modifier of –2. That immediately drops his Initiative Score from 13 to 11, meaning that Cottonmouth will get to act before the ganger after all.

INITIATIVE PASSES

Some characters may have magic or implants that allow them to act more than once in a Combat Turn. When this occurs, the Combat Turn is divided into Initiative Passes. Everyone gets to act during the first Initiative Pass (in order according to their Initiative Score), characters with two actions get to go again during a second Initiative Pass, characters with three actions get a third action during a third Initiative Pass, and so on. Most characters may not act in more than 4 Initiative Passes in a Combat Turn (even if they spend Edge).

If a character does not get an action that allows him to act during an Initiative Pass, he can do nothing; he must bide his time until the next turn. The character also gets no Free Actions during those extra Initiative Passes; he may, however, still dodge and defend against attacks.

The same Initiative Score is kept for the entire Combat Turn—do not re-roll it for each Initiative Pass. The only way to affect an Initiative Score during the Combat Turn is with wound modifiers.

The number of Initiative Passes in which a character gets to act during a Combat Turn should be noted on his character sheet.

SWITCHING INITIATIVE

In some cases, a character's Initiative or Initiative Passes may change in the middle of a Combat Turn due to the use of certain gear, spells, or abilities (turning on your wired reflexes, for example, or a magician re-entering his body from astral space).

If a character's Initiative attribute changes, immediately apply the difference as a positive or negative modifier to the character's Initiative Score. This new Initiative Score applies for any subsequent actions in that Combat Turn. So a character with Initiative 8 and an Initiative Score 11 who activates an implant that changes his Initiative to 10 (+2) immediately raises his Initiative Score to 13 (11 + 2).

If the number of Initiative Passes available to a character *increases,* that character does not gain the extra Initiative Passes for that turn. So a magician with 1 IP who takes his first action to astrally project (+2 IP) does not gain any extra actions that turn, but he will have 3 IP for the next turn.

If the number of Initiative Passes available to a character *decreases,* then that character immediately loses any extra Initiative Passes for that turn he might have had. So when that same magician returns to his body, he immediately loses 2 IPs on that turn.

INITIATIVE AND EDGE

A character can use Edge to affect his Initiative in several ways during a Combat Turn:

- Edge may be used on the Initiative Test, as per normal Edge rules (see *Edge,* p. 74).
- Edge can be spent to go *first* in an Initiative Pass. The character must declare this at the beginning of the Initiative Pass. He then goes first, regardless of his Initiative Score. If more than one character spends Edge to go first, resolve which of the Edge-spending characters go first by their Initiative Scores; non-Edge spending characters go on their Initiative Scores as normal.
- Edge can be spent to get an extra Initiative Pass action. A character who only acts once a turn could, for example, spend 1 point of Edge to act during a second Initiative Pass as well. The character must declare this at the beginning of the Initiative Pass—it is not possible to buy an action in the middle of a pass. A character may only purchase 1 extra action this way in each Combat Turn.

INITIATIVE GLITCHES

If a character rolls a glitch on his Initiative Test, he automatically goes *after* anyone who has the same Initiative Score as him (rather than acting simultaneously). If the gamemaster chooses, she can also inflict a minor dice pool modifier (–1) to the character's first action, to reflect his stumbling start.

If the character rolls a critical glitch, he not only goes last in each Initiative Pass, but he also loses one of his extra actions (if any); this does not affect characters who have only one action per turn.

DELAYED ACTIONS

Sometimes players don't want to go when it's their turn. They prefer to wait to see what happens and how others act before they go. This is called a *delayed action.* A delayed action must be declared during Step 3A of the Combat Turn (see *Declare Actions,* p. 144). A player can declare a delayed action on any of his actions in any pass.

A character can delay an action until a later Action Phase. During the Declare Actions part of that Action Phase, the character must declare that he is intervening. Characters who have held an action and intervened in this manner go before anyone who is normally taking his action during that Action Phase. If multiple characters delay their actions until the same Action Phase, they act at the same time. Note that a delayed character can choose to intentionally act after another in an Action Phase, but only if he would normally have gone before.

The character delaying an action in this manner does not lose his original Initiative Score. Once that Initiative Pass is over, the character's Initiative Score applies to any additional passes that occur.

Players can also decide to go after the last player's Action Phase in a pass. As long as the character acts before that pass ends and the next one begins, there is no problem. If more than one character decides to act last in a pass, resolve who goes first as if resolving an Initiative tie.

A character can also delay his action until the next Initiative Pass. If he had an action in that Initiative Pass, then he automatically loses it (in place of the delayed action—you only get one action per pass).

example

Trig has his gun out, ready to shoot the ghoul that's trying to claw his buddy Ripper's face off. Trig doesn't want to risk shooting Ripper though, so he delays his action, hoping the two will separate enough for him to get a shot in. Trig's Initiative Score is 12. By the end of that Initiative Pass, Trig still hasn't gotten his opportunity, so he delays until the next pass. Trig normally wouldn't act in this pass, but since he delayed he can. When Ripper finally shoves the ghoul away on his action, Trig immediately intervenes and takes his shot, pumping two bullets into the ghoul's braincase.

TIMED ITEMS AND INITIATIVE

Some items, such as grenades, explosive devices, timed traps, and so on, are timed as to exactly when they will explode. In most situations, these items will detonate on the character's (current) Initiative Score during the next Initiative Pass. If there are no more Combat Turns, the item will detonate as the gamemaster sees fit.

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If an item has a timer set by a player character, that character can decide when it goes off, but he must declare this when the item is activated. As a default, it's best to have such items go off on the character's Initiative Score during a predetermined pass or at the beginning or end of a Combat Turn.

Timed items always go last in the case of tied Initiative Scores.

example

Natasha tosses a grenade at a pursuing police car during the first pass of a Combat Turn. Her Initiative Score is 4. The grenade will detonate on the Initiative Score of 4 during the second Initiative Pass.

THE ACTION PHASE

When a character's Action Phase arrives, he must decide what he's going to do. The character has many options to choose from: fire a gun, cast a spell, activate a computer program, and so on. Each of these is classified as one of three types of actions a character can take: Free, Simple, or Complex. A character can take either two Simple Actions or one Complex Action during his Action Phase. In addition, each character may take one Free Action at any point in the Initiative Pass (either during his own Action Phase or at any later time).

Note that the various actions possible in the Matrix or while rigging are detailed in *The Wireless World* section (see p. 216), while magical actions are detailed in *The Awakened World* (p. 176). A complete list of actions can be found at the back of the book.

When it's your turn to act, you must declare the actions that you will perform during the Action Phase. You may take Free, Simple, and Complex Actions in any order during your Action Phase.

The descriptions that follow list many of the Free, Simple, and Complex Actions a character might take during combat in *Shadowrun*. Gamemasters must determine on the fly whether other actions that a character wants to take would count as Free, Simple, or Complex, based on those noted and the effort the action would take.

FREE ACTIONS

Free Actions are relatively simple, nearly automatic actions that require little or no effort to accomplish. Examples are saying a word, dropping an object, dropping prone, or walking.

A character may take a Free Action during his own Action Phase or at some later point in the Initiative Pass. A character may not take a Free Action prior to his first Action Phase in the Initiative Pass.

Free Actions generally require no Success Test, though special circumstances may warrant one.

CALL A SHOT

A character may "call a shot" (aim for a vulnerable portion of a target) with this Free Action. See *Called Shots,* p. 161. This action must be immediately followed by a Take Aim, Fire Weapon, Throw Weapon, or Melee Unarmed Attack.

CHANGE LINKED DEVICE MODE

A character may use a Free Action to activate, deactivate, or switch the mode on any device that he is linked to either by a direct neural interface or by wireless link. This includes activating cyberware, changing a smartgun's firing mode, deactivating thermographic vision, switching a commlink to hidden mode, turning a device's wireless functionality off, and so on. Note that it takes longer to interact with some devices, as noted in individual gear descriptions.

DROP OBJECT

A character may drop a held object as a Free Action. If he is holding an object in each hand, he may drop both objects as a single Free Action.

DROP PRONE

A character may kneel or drop prone at any time, as long as he is not surprised (see *Surprise,* p. 165). A character who is surprised may not drop prone.

EJECT SMARTGUN CLIP

A character linked to and holding a ready smartgun may use a mental command to eject the weapon's clip. It still takes a Simple Action to insert a new, fresh clip. See *Smartgun System,* p. 322.

GESTURE

A character may execute one gesture as a Free Action. (However ludicrous this may sound, it pertains primarily to the use of gestures as silent communication in combat situations.)

INTERCEPT

A character may spend an available Free Action to intercept an opponent who attempts to move past him or break out of melee combat (see *Interception,* p. 161).

RUN

Running uses a Free Action and inflicts Running movement modifiers. Running is considered to be any movement over the character's Walking Rate (see *Movement,* p. 148).

SPEAK/TEXT PHRASE

Speaking one phrase or sentence of verbal communication is a Free Action. If the character wants to speak more, each additional phrase/sentence requires a Free Action. The gamemaster should be careful to control excessive, unrealistic conversations within the span of a Combat Turn (about 3 seconds). Some gamemasters and players may, however, prefer elaborate communication.

Characters who are equipped to send text messages through a neural connection with their commlink may also send short messages as a Free Action.

FREE ACTIONS
- Call a Shot
- Change Linked Device Mode
- Drop Object
- Drop Prone
- Eject Smartgun Clip
- Gesture
- Intercept
- Run
- Speak/Text Phrase

SIMPLE ACTIONS
- Change Gun Mode
- Fire Weapon (SS, SA, BF)
- Insert Clip
- Observe in Detail
- Pick Up/Put Down Object
- Quick Draw
- Ready Weapon
- Remove Clip
- Sprint
- Stand Up
- Take Aim
- Throw Weapon
- Use Simple Object

COMPLEX ACTIONS
- Fire Automatic Weapon
- Fire Mounted or Vehicle Weapon
- Full Defense
- Melee or Unarmed Attack
- Reload Firearm
- Use Complex Object
- Use Skill

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SIMPLE ACTIONS

A Simple Action is one step more complicated than a Free Action and requires a bit more concentration to attempt. Only a few Simple Actions, however, require a Success Test to accomplish. Simple Actions can only be taken on a character's Action Phase.

During his Action Phase, a character may take up to two Simple Actions *or* one Complex Action. An extra Free Action may be taken in place of a Simple Action (so the character would get two Free Actions and one Simple Action, or three Free Actions, instead of one Free and two Simple Actions).

CHANGE GUN MODE

A character holding a ready firearm can change its firing mode via a Simple Action. If the weapon is a properly linked smartgun, it takes only a Free Action to change the mode. See *Firearms,* p. 153, and *Smartgun Systems,* p. 322. This includes changing a shotgun's choke if the gun does not have a smartgun link. See *Shotguns,* p. 154.

FIRE WEAPON

A character may fire a ready firearm in single-shot, semi-automatic, or burst-fire mode via a Simple Action (See *Firearms,* p. 153). If a character has one weapon in each hand, he may fire once with each weapon by expending one Simple Action (see *Attacker Using a Second Firearm,* p. 150). Note that single-shot weapons may be fired only once per Action Phase. Likewise, only one long burst may be fired in each Action Phase.

INSERT CLIP

A character may insert a fresh clip into a ready firearm by taking a Simple Action, but only if he has first removed the previous clip. See the Simple Action of Remove Clip, below, and also *Reloading Firearms,* p. 324.

OBSERVE IN DETAIL

A character may make a detailed observation by taking a Simple Action. This allows a Perception Test (see *Using Perception,* p. 135).

Note that characters should always be able to observe what is immediately obvious (gamemaster's discretion, keeping in mind any perception enhancements the character may have) without having to spend a Simple Action and make a Perception Test. For example, a character might automatically be aware that someone is running toward him with a gun in hand; however, the gamemaster may decide that the character cannot tell if it is a friend or foe without taking an Observe in Detail action.

PICK UP/PUT DOWN OBJECT

A character may pick up an object within reach or put down one that he was holding by expending a Simple Action (note that just dropping an object is a Free Action).

QUICK DRAW

A character may attempt to quick-draw a pistol or pistol-sized weapon and immediately fire it by expending a Quick Draw action. For the character to successfully draw the weapon, the player must make a Pistols + Reaction (3) Test. If the pistol is held in a quick-draw holster (see p. 322), reduce the threshold to 2. If the test is successful, the character draws the pistol and fires as a single Quick Draw Simple Action. If the test fails, he clears the gun but cannot fire with the same Simple Action. If he glitches, the gun is stuck in the holster or dropped. On a critical glitch, it is flung across the room or misfired while still in the holster.

Only weapons that can be fired with a Simple Action can be quick-drawn. Two weapons may be quick-drawn and fired simultaneously, but this raises the threshold on the Pistols + Reaction Test to 4 (see *Attacker Using a Second Firearm,* p. 150). A separate Pistols + Reaction (4) Test is required for each pistol (threshold 3 if they are held in quick-draw holsters).

READY WEAPON

A character may ready a weapon by spending a Simple Action. The weapon may be a firearm, melee weapon, throwing weapon, ranged weapon, or mounted or vehicular weapon. Readying entails drawing a firearm from a holster, drawing a throwing or melee weapon from a sheath, picking up any kind of weapon, nocking an arrow in a bow, or generally preparing any kind of weapon for use. A weapon must be ready before it can be used.

A character can ready a number of small throwing weapons, such as throwing knives or shuriken, equal to one-half his Agility (round down) per Ready Weapon action.

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REMOVE CLIP

A character may remove a clip from a ready firearm by taking a Simple Action. See *Insert Clip,* p. 147, and also *Reload Firearm,* at right. It takes another Simple Action to grab a fresh clip and slam it into the weapon.

The wielder of a linked smartgun may eject the gun's clip by spending a Free Action to make a mental command. See *Smartgun System,* p. 322.

SPRINT

Sprinting allows a character to increase his Running rate by using a Simple Action and making a Running Test (see *Movement,* p. 148).

STAND UP

Using a Simple Action, a character who is lying down or prone may stand up. If the character is wounded and attempting to stand up, he needs to succeed in a Body + Willpower (2) Test to do so (wound modifiers apply to this test).

TAKE AIM

A character may take aim with a ready ranged weapon (firearm, bow, or throwing weapon) as a Simple Action. Take Aim actions are cumulative, but the benefits are lost if the character takes any other kind of action—including a Free Action—at any time. Take Aim actions may be extended over multiple Action Phases and Initiative Passes, even from Combat Turn to Combat Turn. The maximum number of sequential Take Aim actions a character may take is equal to one-half the character's skill with that weapon, rounded down.

Each Take Aim action applies a +1 dice pool modifier to the Attack Test.

Take Aim may also be used to line up a shot using an image magnification system (see p. 150); in this case the +1 Take Aim bonus does not apply (but range modifiers are neutralized).

THROW WEAPON

A character may throw a ready throwing weapon (see *Ready Weapon,* p. 147) by taking a Simple Action.

USE SIMPLE OBJECT

A character may use a simple object by taking a Simple Action. In this case, "simple" is defined as a device or mechanism that can be operated via a simple activity such as pushing a button, turning a knob (doors must be unlocked to be opened with a Simple Action), pulling a lever, and so on. The gamemaster must decide on a case-by-case basis if a device or mechanism is simple or complex. A character can also use objects such as pills, skillsofts, or slap patches by taking a Simple Action.

COMPLEX ACTIONS

A Complex Action requires concentration and/or finesse. Only one Complex Action is possible per Action Phase. A character who wishes to take a Complex Action may also take a Free Action that Action Phase, but no Simple Actions are possible.

FIRE AUTOMATIC WEAPON

A character may fire a ready firearm in full autofire mode by taking a Complex Action. See *Firearms,* p. 153.

FIRE MOUNTED OR VEHICLE WEAPON

A character may fire a ready mounted or vehicle weapon by taking a Complex Action. See *Vehicle Combat,* p. 167.

FULL DEFENSE

A character may choose to dedicate his attention to avoiding incoming attacks as a Complex Action (see *Full Defense,* p. 160). Note that full defense actions may be taken at any time, even before the character's Action Phase as an interrupt action, as long as the character is not surprised—but it uses up the character's next available action. Characters may go on full defense even if they don't have an action that pass, sacrificing their first action of the next Combat Turn instead (but only the first).

MELEE OR UNARMED ATTACK

A character may make a melee or unarmed attack by taking a Complex Action (see *Melee Combat,* p. 156). A character may also attack multiple targets within melee range with a single Complex Action (see *Multiple Targets,* p. 152).

RELOAD FIREARM

Weapons that do not use clips must be reloaded using a Complex Action (see *Reloading Firearms,* p. 324).

USE COMPLEX OBJECT

A character may operate a complex object, such as a computer, vehicle, mechanical tool, and so on, by taking a Complex Action. "Use" entails activating a program, issuing detailed instructions, conducting an internal operation (such as copying files), driving the vehicle, and so on.

USE SKILL

A character may use an appropriate skill by taking a Complex Action (see *Using Skills,* p. 118).

INTERRUPT ACTIONS

There are occasions when characters are allowed to take an action before it is their allotted Action Phase. Such rare instances are called Interrupt Actions and are clearly identified when they come up in the rules. When a character uses an interrupt action, such as *full defense* (above), he uses up his next available action. Characters may even take an interrupt action when they no longer possess an action that pass or Combat Turn, by "buying ahead" their very first action of the next Combat Turn instead (but only the first).

MOVEMENT

There are two types of movement: walking and running. Characters may move at one of these two rates during each Initiative Pass, or they may choose to remain stationary. To walk or run, the character must declare it during the Declare Actions part of his Action Phase. Walking does not take up any action, but running requires a Free Action.

Once a mode of movement has been declared, the character moves in that mode until his next Action Phase. A character continues to move in the last mode he chose during passes in which he does not have an action. This means a character with only one action, for example, who chooses to walk or run in the first Initiative Pass will be walking or running the same throughout subsequent Initiative Passes. The movement mode can only be changed when the character acts again.

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MOVEMENT RATE

The movement rates for each metatype are noted on the Movement Table. This rate is the distance the character moves by that method *per Combat Turn* (not per Initiative Pass).

If a character mixed his modes of movement during a Combat Turn and it becomes important to know exactly how far the character moved in a particular pass, simply divide his Movement Rate by the number of passes in that turn.

SPRINTING

Characters may attempt to increase their running distance by spending a Simple Action (rather than just a Free Action to run) and making a Running + Strength Test. Each hit adds 2 meters to their Running Rate.

RUNNING MODIFIERS

Characters who are running take a –2 dice pool modifier to any tests attempted while running, with the exception of charging attacks (see p. 159) and defending against attacks.

. . example

Twitch the elf samurai is chasing down an opponent. He's an elf, so his Running Rate is 25 meters per Combat Turn. This particular Combat Turn is three Initiative Passes long, so he moves (25 ÷ 3) 8 meters per pass. If Twitch stopped running for one pass to help up somebody his opponent knocked over, then he would only be moving 16 meters that Combat Turn.

MOVEMENT TABLE

METATYPE	WALKING RATE (METERS/TURN)	RUNNING RATE (METERS/TURN)
Humans, Elves, Orks	10	25
Dwarfs	8	20
Trolls	15	35

RESOLVING COMBAT

Shadowrun includes four types of combat: ranged combat (p. 150), melee (also known as hand-to-hand, p. 156), astral combat (p. 193), and cybercombat (p. 236). All combat, whether it involves firearms, knives, astral attacks, or attack programs, is resolved in essentially the same manner.

OPPOSED COMBAT TEST

Combat is handled as an Opposed Test between the attacker and defender. The exact skills and attributes used depend on the type of combat, method of attack, and style of defense, as described in each section. Various modifiers may also apply.

If the attacker scores *more* hits than the defender (the defender wins on ties), the attack hits the target. Otherwise, the attack misses.

THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

Use the procedure outlined below to resolve combat.

STEP 1. DECLARE ATTACK

The attacker declares an attack as part of the Declare Actions part of his Action Phase (p. 146) and spends an appropriate action depending on the type of attack.

The defender also declares what method he is using to defend. The defender can choose to go on *full defense* (p. 160) if he chooses.

STEP 2. APPLY SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS

Apply appropriate situation dice pool modifiers to the attacker according to the specific attack. Modifiers may also apply to the defender's dice pool depending on his method of defense.

STEP 3. MAKE THE OPPOSED TEST

The attacker rolls attack skill + attribute +/– modifiers. The defender rolls defending skill + attribute +/– modifiers. If the attacker scores *more* hits than the defender (the defender wins on ties), the attack hits the target. Otherwise, the attack misses. Note the net hits (the number of hits that exceed the defender's hits).

If the result of the Opposed Test is a tie, the gamemaster may choose to rule it as a *grazing hit.* A grazing hit does not do any damage, but the character nevertheless makes contact. This allows certain contact-only attacks (poisons, shock gloves, touch-only combat spells, etc.) to still do damage.

STEP 4. COMPARE ARMOR

Add the net hits scored to the base Damage Value of the attack; this is the *modified Damage Value.*

Determine the type of armor used to defend against the specific attack (see *Armor,* p. 160), and apply the attack's Armor Penetration modifier (see p. 162); this is the *modified Armor Value.*

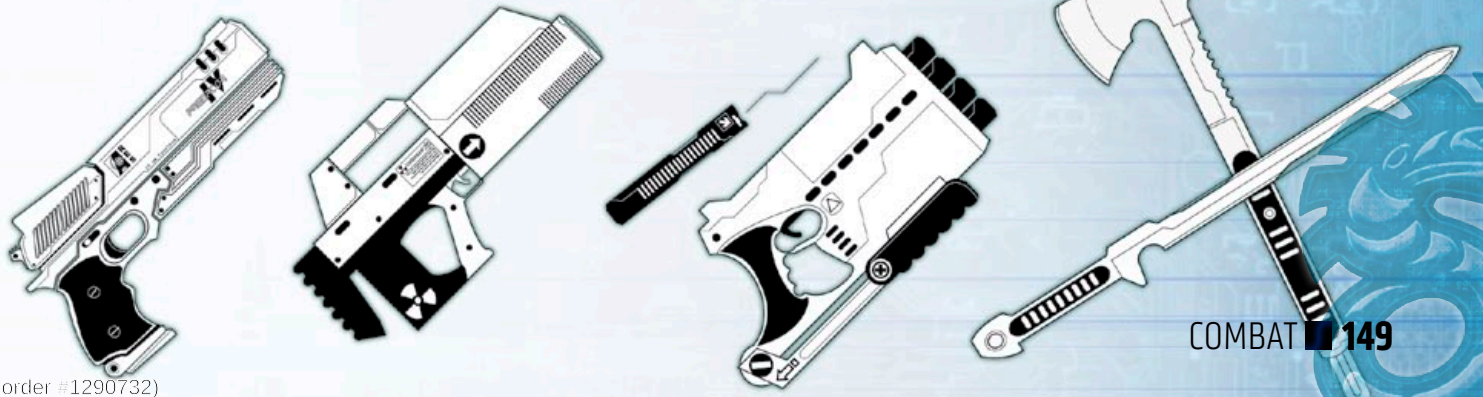
If the attack causes Physical damage, compare the modified Damage Value to the modified Armor Value. If the DV does not *exceed* the Armor, then the attack inflicts Stun rather than Physical damage.

STEP 5. DAMAGE RESISTANCE TEST

The defender rolls attribute + modified Armor Value to resist damage. Each hit scored reduces the modified Damage Value by 1. If the DV is reduce to 0 or less, no damage is inflicted.

STEP 6. APPLY DAMAGE

Apply the remaining Damage Value to the target's Condition Monitor (*Damage,* p. 162). Each point of DV equals 1 box of damage. Wound modifiers (see p. 163) may come into effect as a result of damage. Characters may also need to check for knockdown (see p. 161).



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RANGED COMBAT

All ranged combat in *Shadowrun*, whether it involves firearms, projectile weapons, or thrown weapons, is resolved in the same manner.

RANGED ATTACK MODIFIERS

Using a weapon is not always as easy as it might seem. Weapon accessories, range, intervening terrain, atmospheric conditions, and the movement of the attacker and the target can apply dice pool modifiers.

To determine the attacker's final dice pool for a ranged attack, add up all the applicable modifiers and apply that sum to the character's Agility + combat skill. The result is the final, adjusted dice pool. If the dice pool is reduced to 0 or less, the attack automatically fails, unless the character tries for a Long Shot (p. 61).

The various modifiers are listed on the Ranged Combat Modifier Table, above, Visibility Table, p. 152, and the Weapon Range Table, p. 151.

RANGE

Each weapon type has specified ranges, as noted on the Weapon Range Table (p. 151), broken down into categories of Short, Medium, Long, and Extreme. Distances are measured in meters. The range modifier appears at the top of the appropriate range column.

For some projectiles, range is based on the attacker's Strength (or the Minimum Strength for bows, see *Bows,* p. 315).

Minimum Ranges: Weapons marked with asterisks at short range have minimum range requirements, meaning that if they are used to attack targets at a closer range than the minimum, the attack automatically fails. See *Grenades,* p. 155, and *Rockets and Missiles,* p. 156.

ATTACKER RUNNING

If the attacker is running at the time of the attack or during his previous action, the attack suffers a –2 modifier.

ATTACKER IN MELEE COMBAT

If the attacker is attempting to conduct a ranged attack while engaged in melee combat, or if he is aware of another character trying to block his attack within two meters of him, the attack suffers a –3 modifier.

ATTACKER IN A MOVING VEHICLE

Shooting an unmounted weapon from a moving vehicle incurs a –3 modifier. See *Gunnery,* p. 171.

ATTACKER FIRING FROM COVER

Sometimes cover limits a character's ability to see the action and obstructs his view of his target(s), even when he moves quickly out from behind cover to shoot. If the Attacker benefits from Good Cover, or his cover obscures his view, apply a –2 dice pool modifier to any attacks.

ATTACKER USING LASER SIGHT

Attacks using weapons equipped with a laser sight receive a +1 dice pool modifier. Laser sights are only effective out to 50 meters from the weapon; mist, light or heavy smoke, fog, and rain all counteract them. This bonus is not cumulative with the bonus for using a smartlinked weapon.

ATTACKER USING SMARTLINKED WEAPON

Characters utilizing a smartlink system and using a properly equipped smartweapon (see p. 322) receive a +2 dice pool modifier. This bonus is not cumulative with the bonus for using a laser sight.

RANGED COMBAT SUMMARY	
Attacker rolls Attack Test:	Combat skill + Agility +/– modifiers
Defender rolls Defense Test:	Reaction +/– modifiers
Defender using Full Defense:	Dodge + Reaction +/– modifiers
DV Modifiers:	Net hits, ammunition, autofire*
Armor Used:	Ballistic or Impact
Condition Monitor Used:	Physical or Stun

*Autofire does not count when comparing the modified DV to the modified Armor.

ATTACKER USING IMAGE MAGNIFICATION

Image magnification equipment allows the character to "zoom in" on the target, reducing the Range category to Short, and thus eliminating any range modifiers. The character must take a Take Aim action (p. 148) to "lock onto" the target (the Take Aim does not apply a +1 aiming bonus for this purpose, unless additional Take Aim actions are made). As long as the target and attacker do not move, the attacker remains locked on and may continue to get the image magnification bonus on subsequent actions without further Take Aim actions. Image magnification can be used in conjunction with a laser sight or smartlinked weapon (but not both).

ATTACKER USING A SECOND FIREARM

Characters can use two pistol- or SMG-class weapons, one in each hand, firing both with a single Simple Action. Doing so, however, requires that the character split his dice pool between the attacks. If two separate skills are being used (Pistols and Automatics), use the smallest dice pool. Split the pool *before* applying modifiers. Two-gun attacks also negate any dice pool bonuses from smartlinks or laser sights. Additionally, any uncompensated recoil modifiers applicable to one weapon also apply to the other weapon.

ATTACKER USING OFF-HAND WEAPON

If the character is using his non-dominant hand to fire the weapon (a southpaw shooting right-handed, for example), he suffers –2 modifier for the attack. Note that all characters have a dominant hand (left or right, player's choice), unless they have the Ambidextrous quality (see p. 90).

ATTACKER WOUNDED

Wound modifiers apply if the attacker has taken damage. See *Wound Modifiers,* p. 163.

AIMED SHOT

Characters who aim receive a +1 dice pool modifier per Simple Action spent aiming. See *Take Aim,* p. 148.

BLIND FIRE

The Blind Fire modifier applies when the attacker attempts to hit a target that is completely obscured by cover, total darkness, or undetectable by sight to the character, but whose location can be guessed or estimated. The attacker suffers a –6 dice pool modifier representing firing in the general direction of the target, rather than aiming at a target. This modifier normally applies to attacks through opaque barriers or for indirect fire by grenade or missile launchers against unseen targets. Attacks against normally visible targets that are invisible at the time of the attack—for example, a character protected by an invisibility spell—also suffer this modifier.

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WEAPON RANGE TABLE

DICE POOL MODIFIER:	+0	–1	–3	–6
	RANGE IN METERS			
	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME
Pistols				
Taser	0–5	6–10	11–15	16–20
Hold-out Pistol	0–5	6–15	16–30	31–50
Light Pistol	0–5	6–15	16–30	31–50
Heavy Pistol	0–5	6–20	21–40	41–60
Automatics				
Machine Pistol	0–5	6–15	16–30	31–50
SMG	0–10	11–40	41–80	81–150
Assault Rifle	0–50	51–150	151–350	351–550
Longarms				
Shotgun (flechette)	0–10	11–25	26–40	41–60
Shotgun (slug)	0–10	11–40	41–80	81–150
Sporting Rifle	0–100	101–250	251–500	501–750
Sniper Rifle	0–150	151–350	351–800	801–1,500
Heavy Weapons				
Light Machine Guns	0–75	76–200	201–400	401–800
Medium/Heavy Machine Gun	0–80	81–250	251–750	751–1,200
Assault Cannon	0–100	101–300	301–750	751–1,500
Grenade Launcher	*5–50	51–100	101–150	151–500
Missile Launcher	*20–70	71–150	151–450	451–1,500
Ballistic Projectiles				
Bow	0–STR	To STR x 10	To STR x 30	To STR x 60
Light Crossbow	0–6	7–24	25–60	61–120
Medium Crossbow	0–9	10–36	37–90	91–150
Heavy Crossbow	0–15	16–45	46–120	121–180
Impact Projectiles				
Thrown Knife	0–STR	To STR x 2	To STR x 3	To STR x 5
Shuriken	0–STR	To STR x 2	To STR x 5	To STR x 7
Thrown Grenades				
Standard	0–STR x 2	To STR x 4	To STR x 6	To STR x 10
Aerodynamic	0–STR x 2	To STR x 4	To STR x 8	To STR x 15

* See Grenade Launcher Minimum Range, p. 155.

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Note that shooting via Blind Fire against hidden or unseen targets uses the Firearms + Intuition (rather than Agility).

Also consider that if the target is totally concealed behind cover, in addition to the blind fire modifier applying to the attack, the defender will benefit from possessing Good Cover in his Defense test.

For obscurity due to environmental conditions such as smoke or darkness, see the modifiers given on the Visibility Table (below) instead.

CALLED SHOT

Characters who seek to target a specific location on the target (the hole in an opponent's armor, a held item, a vital area, etc.) suffer a variable dice pool modifier. See *Called Shots,* p. 161.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

If a character attacks multiple targets within a single Action Phase, he takes a –2 dice pool modifier per additional target. For example, if a character engages two targets with burst fire, he receives a –2 modifier for the second target.

RECOIL

Weapons that fire more than one round in an Action Phase suffer from an escalating recoil modifier as the rounds leave the weapon. Semi-automatic weapons that fire a second shot receive a –1 dice pool modifier for the second shot only.

Burst-fire weapons receive a –2 recoil modifier for the first burst fired in that Action Phase and –3 for the second. Long bursts suffer –5 (first burst in phase) or –6 recoil (second). Full auto bursts suffer –9 recoil.

Characters can only counter a recoil modifier with recoil compensation or gyro stabilization (see *Firearm Accessories,* p. 322).

Heavy Weapons: Any weapon classified as a heavy weapon (light, medium, and heavy machine guns and all assault cannons) has all of its uncompensated recoil doubled. For example, if a medium machine gun fires a 6-round burst and only has 3 points of recoil compensation (reducing its recoil modifier from –5 to –2), its final recoil modifier would be –4 (–2 x 2).

Any shotgun fired in burst fire mode also doubles the modifier for any uncompensated recoil.

RECOIL COMPENSATION

Recoil compensation systems counteract the effects of recoil on a weapon. The recoil modifier is reduced by one for each point of recoil compensation the system provides. See *Firearm Accessories,* p. 322, for the exact degrees of recoil compensation. Recoil compensation does not counter any other situational modifiers.

RANGED COMBAT MODIFIER TABLE

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Attacker running	–2
Attacker in melee combat	–3
Attacker in a moving vehicle	–3
Attacker firing from cover	–2
Attacker wounded	–wound modifiers (see p. 163)
Attacker using laser sight	+1*
Attacker using smartlinked weapon	+2*
Attacker using image magnification	eliminates range modifiers (see p. 151)
Attacker using a second firearm	splits dice pool
Attacker using off-hand weapon	–2
Aimed shot	+1 per Simple Action
Blind fire	–6
Called shot	–variable (see *Called Shots,* p. 161)
Multiple targets	–2 per additional target that Action Phase
Tracer rounds with short burst	+1
Tracer rounds with long burst	+2
Tracer rounds with full auto	+3
Recoil, semi-automatic	–1 for second shot that Action Phase
Recoil, burst	–2 (first burst) –3 (second)
Recoil, long burst	–5 (first burst) –6 (second)
Recoil, full auto	–9
Recoil, heavy weapon	2 x uncompensated recoil
Recoil compensation	Reduces recoil modifier
Gyro stabilization	Reduces recoil or movement modifier
Target point-blank	+2
Visibility impaired	See Visibility Table, below

* Note that the bonuses for laser sights and smartlinks are not cumulative.

VISIBILITY TABLE

VISIBILITY MODIFIERS	NORMAL	LOW-LIGHT	THERMOGRAPHIC	ULTRASOUND
Full Darkness	–6	–6	–3	–3
Partial Light	–2	0	–2	–1
Glare	–1	–1	–1	0
Light Fog/Mist/Rain/Smoke	–2	–1	0	–1
Heavy Fog/Mist/Rain/Smoke	–4	–2	–2	–2
Thermal Smoke	–4	–2	–6	–2

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GYRO-STABILIZATION

Gyro-stabilization provides portable, stabilized firing platforms that counter the effects of recoil and movement-based modifiers (such as for running). Reduce the total recoil and movement modifiers by 1 for every point of gyro-stabilization the system provides. See *Firearm Accessories,* p. 322. Gyro-stabilization is cumulative with recoil compensation.

TARGET POINT-BLANK

A target within one meter can be difficult to miss; apply a +2 dice pool modifier to the attack. Note that this may be offset by the *Attacker in Melee Combat* modifier.

VISIBILITY IMPAIRED

Environmental conditions such as darkness or smoke occasionally affect combat; how much depends on the type of vision the attacker is using. Consult the Visibility Table for appropriate modifiers. Modifiers apply equally to all types of vision, whether they are natural or cybernetic.

DEFENDING AGAINST RANGED COMBAT

Normally no skill applies to defending against ranged attacks—defending characters simply roll their Reaction (the defaulting modifier does not apply). However, characters may chose to go on full defense (p. 160), thereby adding their Dodge (or Gymnastics) skill to the equation.

Additional modifiers apply to either option, including cover, wounds, and others. These can be found in the *Defending in Combat* section (p. 159).

FIREARMS

Most ranged combat involves firearms that fire in one or more of the following modes: single-shot (SS), semi-automatic (SA), burst-fire (BF), and full-auto (FA). Firearms are detailed in the *Street Gear* chapter (p. 310).

SINGLE-SHOT MODE

Most weapons that fire in single-shot mode can fire only in that mode. Firing a single-shot weapon requires only a Simple Action, but that weapon cannot be fired again during the same Action Phase.

SEMI-AUTOMATIC MODE

Guns that fire in semi-automatic mode can be fired twice in the same Action Phase. Each shot requires a Simple Action and a separate attack test. The first shot is unmodified; the second shot, if fired in that same Action Phase, takes a –1 recoil dice pool modifier. Recoil compensation can cancel out this modifier.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

If an attacker firing a semi-automatic weapon engages two different targets in the same Action Phase, apply a –2 dice pool modifier when attacking the second target.

BURST-FIRE MODE

In burst-fire mode, firearms spit out bullets in rapid succession every time the trigger is pulled. Firing a weapon in burst-fire mode is a Simple Action, which means that a character can fire up to two bursts per Action Phase. Each burst requires a separate attack test.

The firing character can choose to fire a narrow burst or a wide burst, each described below. Both use up three bullets. The first burst fired in an Action Phase inflicts a –2 recoil modifier, the second inflicts an additional –3 recoil (neutralized by recoil compensation, if any).

NARROW BURSTS

Narrow bursts cause more damage to the target. Increase the attack's DV by +2. Note that this DV modifier does not apply when comparing the DV to the armor rating.

WIDE BURSTS

Wide bursts spray bullets around for a better chance of hitting the target. Decrease the defender's dice pool by –2.

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example

Slinger has an Uzi in hand, ready to fire a burst against the hit man that just took out his friend. Slinger is rolling his Automatics 4 + Agility 5 (9 dice) against the target's Reaction 5. Though his recoil compensation of 2 accounts for the burst's –2 recoil, he's also facing some other modifiers (–3 total, for a dice pool of 6). Slinger goes for a narrow burst, increasing the Uzi's DV by +2. He rolls 3 hits, the target rolls 2, so he hits. His net hit of 1 increases the DV of the Uzi from 5P to 6P, which unfortunately doesn't exceed the assassin's armor rating of 6. That means the target has to resist 8S DV (base DV 5 + 1 net hit + 2 narrow burst, Physical converted to Stun by the armor).

With his next Simple Action, Slinger's facing a lot of recoil, so he goes for a wide burst. The extra –3 recoil reduces his dice pool to 3, so he only gets 1 hit. The target's dice pool suffers a –2 modifier from the wide burst and a further –1 from defending against an attack since his last action. He rolls only 2 dice but gets 1 hit. That's a tie, so Slinger just misses hitting the guy with the second burst.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

Bursts can only be fired at one target for each burst. If a burst-firing attacker engages two different targets in the same Action Phase (either with two separate short bursts or one short burst and one long burst), there is an additional –2 dice pool modifier when attacking the second target.

NOT ENOUGH BULLETS

If the firing character is short on ammo (2 bullets rather than 3), reduce each of the modifiers applied by 1 (so a narrow burst does +1 DV and –1 recoil on the first shot). Treat a burst with only 1 bullet in the clip as a single-shot attack.

FULL-AUTO MODE

Weapons that can fire in full-auto mode throw bullets for as long as the attacker keeps the trigger pulled. Characters can use a weapon in full-auto mode to fire bursts, as noted above, each taking a Simple Action. Full-auto weapons can also be used to fire *long bursts* with a Simple Action or *full bursts* with a Complex Action.

LONG BURSTS

Long bursts use up six bullets each. Firing a long burst imposes a –5 dice pool modifier if it is the first burst fired that Action Phase, –6 if it is the second (recoil compensation neutralizes this modifier). Like short bursts, long bursts can be fired as narrow or wide bursts.

Long bursts only take a Simple Action, but only one long burst can be fired in an Action Phase. An attacker could, however, fire a long burst and a short burst in the same Action Phase (or vice versa).

Narrow: Narrow long bursts apply a +5 DV modifier to the attack.

Wide: Wide long bursts apply a –5 dice pool modifier to the defender's dice pool.

Not Enough Bullets: If the attacker is a bullet or two short, reduce each of the modifiers applied by 1 (one bullet short) or by 2 (two bullets short). If there are only three bullets or less available, treat the attack as a short burst instead.

FULL BURSTS

Full bursts use 10 bullets and take a Complex Action. Firing a full burst imposes a –9 dice pool modifier (recoil compensation neutralizes this modifier)

Narrow: Narrow full bursts apply a +9 DV modifier to the attack.

Wide: Wide full bursts apply a –9 dice pool modifier to the defender's dice pool.

Multiple Targets: Full bursts may be made against more than one target as long as they are within one meter of each other, but in that case treat it as separate burst fire attacks against each target (one short and one long against two targets, or three short against three targets).

SUPPRESSIVE FIRE

Sometimes a character may just use full autofire to make his opponents keep their heads down. This type of shooting—where the character saturates an area with bullets without specifically targeting anyone—is called suppressive fire. A character using a full burst to suppress can target a triangular area projecting from the shooting character outward up to a distance of his choosing with a width of 10 meters at its end and a height of 2 meters. Suppressive fire takes a Complex Action and uses 20 bullets. The area remains "suppressed" until the shooting character's next Action Phase.

Suppressive fire is treated as a wide burst, but for simplicity we assume that the wide burst and recoil modifiers cancel out. The character laying down suppressive fire simply makes a Success Test using Agility + appropriate firearm skill. Note any hits.

Any character that is currently in the suppressed area (but not behind cover or prone), or who moves into or out of the area before the shooter's next Action Phase, risks catching some flying lead. That character must make a Reaction + Edge Test (+ Dodge if on full defense) with a threshold equal to the hits scored by the suppressing attacker. If the test fails, the character is hit, suffering damage at the weapon's base Damage Value. Characters in the suppressed area who do not move, remain behind full cover, or simply drop prone are not at risk.

AMMUNITION

Most weapons can fire an assortment of ammunition types. For ease of record-keeping and damage calculation, however, we suggest that ammunition cannot be mixed in a clip; each clip must contain only one type of ammo. Clips can be interchanged during Combat (see *The Action Phase,* p. 146).

A weapon's listed Damage Code is based on regular ammunition. If a specialized form of ammunition is used, it may modify the weapon's Damage Value and AP, as noted with the ammo description (see *Ammunition,* p. 323). Some weapons such as autocannons and tasers have distinctive ammunition that is already calculated into the Damage Code of the weapon (see *Street Gear,* p. 310).

SHOTGUNS

The shotguns described in the *Street Gear* section (beginning on p. 319) fire slug rounds. Characters can load them with shot rounds, but shot rounds have little effect against 21st-century body armor. To determine the damage done by shot rounds, apply the flechette ammunition rules to the Damage Code indicated for the weapon.

Shot rounds spread when fired, creating a cone of shot extending outward from the shotgun's muzzle. This allows the shot to hit multiple targets, but with reduced effectiveness (the same number of shot pellets are spread out over a larger area). The mechanism that controls this spread is called the choke.

The shotgun user can set his weapon's choke for a narrow spread, medium spread, or wide spread. Changing the choke setting requires a Simple Action (or a Free Action if the shotgun is smartlinked). Taking a shot requires a Simple Action, regardless of the choke setting.

NARROW SPREAD

A shotgun user can shoot at only one target with a narrow spread. Use the shotgun's standard flechette-modified (+2 DV, +5 AP) Damage Code.

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MEDIUM SPREAD

A shotgun user can catch up to two targets who are within one meter of each other with a medium spread. The shotgun wielder makes a single attack test against all targets, who each suffer a –2 dice pool modifier on their defense roll. Medium spread shots are more scattered, so their damage and armor penetration are reduced. Taking into account the flechette ammunition, they inflict +0 DV, +7 AP.

WIDE SPREAD

Up to three targets within one meter of each other can be caught in a shotgun's wide spread. The shotgun wielder makes a single attack test against all targets, who each suffer a –4 dice pool modifier on their defense roll. Wide spread shots are even less effective than Medium spread. Taking into account the flechette ammunition, they inflict –2 DV, +9 AP.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

The ranged combat rules also apply to bows and throwing weapons. Due to their nature, however, some special rules also apply. Projectile and throwing weapons are detailed in the *Street Gear* chapter.

PROJECTILE WEAPON TYPES

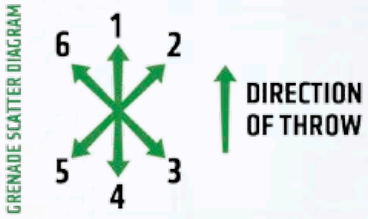
The Projectile Weapons Table (below) lists some of the projectile weapons available in the *Shadowrun* universe. Note that bows are purchased with a specified Minimum Strength rating which may affect a character's use of the bow (see *Bows,* p. 315).

PROJECTILE WEAPONS TABLE

WEAPON	DAMAGE VALUE	AP
Bow	(STR Min. +2)P	–
Light Crossbow	3P	–
Medium Crossbow	5P	–
Heavy Crossbow	7P	–1
Shuriken	(STR/2)P	–
Throwing knife	(STR/2 + 1)P	–

SCATTER TABLE

TYPE	SCATTER
Standard Grenade	1D6 meters – 1 per net hit
Aerodynamic Grenade	2D6 meters – 2 per net hit
Grenade Launcher	3D6 meters – 2 per net hit
Rocket	4D6 meters – 1 per net hit
Missile	4D6 meters – 1 per net hit (– Sensor rating)
Airburst	2D6 meters – 1 per net hit (– Sensor rating)



GRENADES

Hand-thrown grenades tend to be inaccurate and unreliable, but can be extremely effective when used properly. A character can deliver grenades to a target by throwing them or firing them from a grenade launcher. In either case, the number-one priority of the attacker is to land the grenade as near the target as possible. Because of their shape and method of delivery, grenades will scatter, bouncing and skittering across the ground. The better the throw or launch, the less the scatter.

Resolving a grenade attack is a two-step process. The first step determines where the grenade ends up in relation to the target (see *Determine Scatter,* below). The second step resolves the effect of the grenade's explosion (see *Blast Effects*).

GRENADE LAUNCHER MINIMUM RANGE

The shortest possible range for grenade launchers is 5 meters because the mini-grenades fired from standard grenade launchers do not actually arm until they have traveled about that distance. They do not detonate if they hit anything before traveling five meters—a safety feature in case of accidental misfire. Disarming this safety feature requires an adjustment to the grenade with an Armorer + Logic (4, 10 minutes) Extended Test.

TIMING GRENADES

As noted under *Timed Items and Initiative* (p. 145), a grenade detonates on the next Initiative Pass using the Initiative Score of the character who threw it (unless the attacker is using an airburst link, see p. 322, in which it detonates on that Action Phase).

DETERMINE SCATTER

To determine the grenade's final location, first choose the intended target. Make a standard ranged attack test using the attacker's Agility + appropriate combat skill (Throwing Weapons or Heavy Weapons), opposed by the target. If targeting a location, treat this as a Success Test instead. Apply standard ranged attack dice pool modifiers.

Next, the gamemaster must determine the grenade's base scatter. All grenades scatter to some degree, but an attacker who made a good attack can limit the distance the grenade scatters.

The gamemaster determines the direction of the scatter by rolling 1D6 and consulting the Scatter Diagram. The large arrow indicates the direction of the throw, so a result of 1 means the grenade continued on past the target, while a result of 4 means the grenade bounced back in the direction of the attacker.

Having determined the direction of the scatter, the gamemaster next calculates its base distance. The Scatter Table indicates the number of dice rolled to find the scatter distance. Airburst grenades only roll 2D6 for scatter (see Airburst Link, p. 322).

The attacker reduces this scatter distance by 1 meter per net hit for standard grenades or 2 meters per net hit for aerodynamic grenades and grenade launchers. If the scatter distance is reduced to 0 or less, the grenade hits the target exactly. (Note that additional hits do not add to grenade Damage Values). Otherwise, the grenade lands at the remaining distance in the direction indicated.

BLAST EFFECTS

Grenades are area-effect weapons, meaning that their blast affects a given area and any targets within it. The farther away the target is from the grenade's final location—the blast point—the less damage it takes, because distance reduces a grenade's blast effect.

Different grenade types lose blast effect at different rates. Consult the Grenade Damage Table (p. 156) to find the grenade's Damage Code and Damage Value reduction rate.

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GRENADE DAMAGE TABLE			
TYPE	DAMAGE CODE	AP	BLAST
Flash-Bang	6S	–3	10m Radius
Flash-Pak	Special	–	Special
Fragmentation	12P(f)	+5	–1/m
High Explosive	10P	–2	–2/m
Gas	Chemical	–	10m Radius
Smoke	–	–	10m Radius
Thermal Smoke	–	–	10m Radius

To resolve the effects of the grenade blast, roll a damage resistance test using the target's Body + Impact Armor. Apply the grenade's AP to the Impact armor rating. Each hit on this test reduces the DV by 1.

example

Slim, Rex, and Teak are all unlucky enough to be standing near a grenade when it goes off. The grenade is fragmentation, with a base Damage Code of 12P(f). Slim is standing 3 meters away when it detonates, so he is hit with a 9P(f) attack (DV 12 minus 1 per meter away). Rex stands 6 meters away and so suffers only 6P(f) damage. Teak happens to be 12 meters away from the blast point, so he is outside the grenade's blast effect entirely.

BLAST AGAINST BARRIERS

When a grenade's blast hits a barrier such as a wall, door, or other similar structure, check to see if the barrier is damaged or destroyed (see *Barriers,* p. 166). If the barrier falls, the blast continues on, though any targets past the barrier receive its Armor rating bonus. If the barrier does not fall, the blast may be channeled; see *Blast in a Confined Space,* below.

BLAST IN A CONFINED SPACE

When a grenade detonates in a confined space, such as a hallway or room, the gamemaster must first determine whether any barriers (usually walls) stood firm against the explosion. Consult the *Blast Against Barriers* rules above. If the walls or doors hold up, the blast is channeled. Otherwise, determine blast effects normally.

If the walls hold, the shock wave reflects off of them, continuing back in the direction from which it came. If this rebounding shock wave maintains enough Damage Value to reach a character, that character is subject to the appropriate blast effect. If the character is struck a second time by the shock wave (once as it headed out and again as it rebounded), the Damage Value of the blast is equal to the combined Damage Value of the two waves.

Theoretically, a detonating grenade could rebound repeatedly off each of the six surfaces in a small, well-built room, raising the effective Damage Value of the blast to a value far higher than the original damage of the grenade. This is known as the "chunky salsa effect."

example

Ortega is trapped in a hallway when a high-explosive grenade goes off. The first wave hits him with a Damage Code of 8P. It then reaches the wall (1 meter away), rebounds, and hits him again. Since it traveled 2 meters to the wall and back, the second wave has a Damage Code of 4P (–2 DV per meter). The Damage Values of these results are combined, for an effective attack of 12P.

ROCKETS AND MISSILES

Occasionally, characters get their hands on military-grade missiles and rocket launchers. Both use the same kind of launcher, but the two types of attacks have inherent differences. For details, see *Rockets and Missiles,* p. 325.

RESOLVING ROCKET AND MISSILE FIRE

Rocket fire is resolved in the same manner as for grenade launchers. See *Grenades,* p. 155.

Missile fire works a little differently. Missiles have a Sensor rating that reflects the sophistication of their targeting electronics. When using the missile's sensing and targeting circuits, the firing character rolls dice equal to his Heavy Weapons + the missile's Sensor rating.

If the missile is launched from a vehicle, use Gunnery + the missile's (or vehicle's) Sensor rating (see *Passive Targeting,* p. 171). Active Targeting (see p. 171), may also be used to fire missiles. When a missile is fired against a vehicle, the vehicle's Signature acts as a dice pool modifier to the attack (see *Gunnery,* p. 171).

Impact armor protects against missile and rocket attacks.

ROCKET AND MISSILE SCATTER

Like grenades, missiles and rockets scatter (see the Scatter Table, p. 155). For both, reduce the scatter distance by 1 meter per net hit rolled on the attack test. Missile scatter is further reduced by 1 meter for every point of Sensor the missile possesses.

ROCKET/MISSILE TABLE			
TYPE	DAMAGE VALUE	AP	DAMAGE VALUE REDUCTION
Anti-Vehicle	16P	–2/–6*	–4/m
Fragmentation	16P(f)	+5	–1/m
High Explosive	14P	–2	–2/m
* AVR/AVMs have an AP of –2 against people, –6 against vehicles.			

MELEE COMBAT

Whenever two or more characters engage each other in hand-to-hand combat or armed combat that does not involve ranged weapons, the following melee combat rules apply. Melee combat in *Shadowrun* assumes that some maneuvering occurs as part of the fight. Rather than a single blow, each attack is a series of moves and counter-moves executed by those involved. Melee combat is not "I punch you and then I wait for your turn to punch me;" rather, it represents several seconds of feints, jabs, punches, counters, attacks, defends, kicks, and bites by both combatants at the same time. For simplicity, the character who initiates the attack is considered the attacker. His opponent is considered the defender.

MELEE ATTACK MODIFIERS

Apply appropriate modifiers from the Melee Modifier Table, p. 157.

DEFENDING AGAINST MELEE ATTACKS

Defenders have three choices for defending against unarmed attacks. If they have a melee weapon in hand, they can *parry* the attack by rolling the appropriate weapon skill + Reaction. If they have Unarmed Combat skill, they can choose to *block* by rolling Unarmed Combat + Reaction. Or they can simply *dodge* out of the way using Dodge + Reaction.

Melee defenders can also choose to go on full defense (p. 160), and add Dodge skill dice to their defense roll.

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MELEE COMBAT SUMMARY	
Attacker Rolls:	Combat skill + Agility
Defender Rolls:	Weapon skill + Reaction (parry) Unarmed Combat + Reaction (block) Dodge + Reaction (dodge)
Defender using Full Defense:	Weapon skill/Dodge + Dodge + Reaction
DV Modifiers:	Net hits
Armor Used:	Impact
Condition Monitor Used:	Physical or Stun

Defenders apply dice pool modifiers according to the Defense Modifiers Table (p. 159). Some modifiers from the Melee Modifier Table (below) may apply to the defender as well.

example

An angry troll named Stu has cornered Lucien in a dark alley. Stu throws a meaty punch at Lucien, rolling his Unarmed Combat 4 + Agility 2 (6 dice). Stu has Reach (+1), but it's also dark (Partial Light w/thermographic, –2), so he rolls 5 dice, scoring 2 hits. Lucien tries to block, rolling his Reaction 3 + Unarmed Combat 2 (he has low-light, and faces no other modifiers). He only scores 1 hit, however, so Stu connects with 1 net hit. Stu's Strength is 10, so he does 5S unarmed, modified to 6S with the net hit. Lucien rolls his Body 3 + Impact 4 (7 dice), scoring 2 hits. Still, Stu's massive fist inflicts 4 boxes of Stun and knocks Lucien to the ground.

MELEE MODIFIERS

Various factors may affect a character's ability to attack, parry, or dodge in melee combat. The modifiers noted on the Melee Modifier Table (below) apply to both attackers and defenders, unless specifically noted.

CALLED SHOTS

Characters using melee weapons may call shots; see *Called Shots,* p. 161.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS AND FRIENDS IN MELEE

Characters may often find themselves outnumbered in a fight. When this occurs, the number of friends on hand becomes extremely important. In such a situation, total up the number of characters within a few meters who are involved in the same fight as the character. They only count if they are near the combatant character and fighting against the same opponent(s). If six friends are around, but are all spread out fighting their own combats, they can be of

MELEE MODIFIER TABLE	
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Friends in the melee	+1 per friend (max. +4)
Character wounded	–wound modifier (see p. 163)
Character has longer Reach	+1 per point of net Reach*
Character using off-hand weapon	–2
Character attacking multiple targets	Splits dice pool
Character has superior position	+2
Opponent prone	+3
Attacker making charging attack	+2
Defender receiving a charge	+1
Visibility impaired	Consult the Visibility Table, p. 152)
Called shot	Variable (see *Called Shots,* p. 161)
Touch-only attack	+2

* You may apply Reach as a –1 dice pool modifier per net point to the opponent instead.

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no help against the character's opponent. Total up the number of "friends" on each side. The character with the greater number of friends on his side gets a +1 dice pool modifier for each friend more than his opponent has, to a maximum of +4.

As characters move away or are taken out of the fight, they no longer count as "friends."

REACH

Certain weapons (or the arms of a troll) are longer and allow an attacker to hit a target from a greater distance, giving him a slight edge in melee combat. Weapons with this feature have a Reach rating of 1–4. When one melee fighter has a reach advantage over his opponent, he can choose to apply that reach offensively (attacking from a distance) or defensively (keeping his opponent at bay). Every point of Reach translates into a +/–1 dice pool modifier.

When a melee attack is made, compare the Reach of the two opponents and calculate the difference. The character with the higher net Reach can choose to apply his net Reach bonus as a dice modifier bonus to his test or as a negative dice pool modifier to his opponent's test.

Trolls have a natural Reach of 1 that is cumulative with weapon Reach.

example

Mukesh is attacking an opponent with his sword (Reach 1). His opponent is fighting back with a knife (Reach 0). Mukesh has a net Reach of 1. He can apply this as a +1 dice pool modifier on his attack test or inflict it as a –1 dice pool modifier on the opponent's defense test.

OFF-HAND WEAPON

If an attacking or parrying character is wielding the melee weapon in his non-dominant hand, he suffers –2 modifier for the attack. Note that all characters have a dominant hand (left or right, their choice), unless they have the Ambidextrous quality (see p. 90).

MULTIPLE TARGETS

Characters may attack more than one opponent in melee with the same Complex Action, as long as those opponents are within one meter of each other. The attacker's dice pool is split between each attack, and each attack is handled separately.

SUPERIOR POSITION

A character has a superior position if he is standing on higher ground (by at least half a meter) than his opponent, if he is standing on stable ground while the opponent is not, if he is attacking the opponent from behind, or if the opponent is in a restricted position and the character is not.

Note that if a target is not aware that an attack is coming (see *Surprise,* p. 165), then he cannot defend against it (no dodge or parry). It is generally assumed that characters engaged in combat have

MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

WEAPON	REACH	DAMAGE VALUE	AP
Blades			
Combat Axe	2	(STR/2 + 4)P	–1
Forearm Snap-Blades	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Katana	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–1
Knife	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Monofilament Sword	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–1
Survival Knife	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–1
Sword	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–
Clubs			
Club	1	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Extendable Baton	1	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Sap	–	(STR/2 + 1)S	–
Staff	2	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Stun Baton	1	6S(e)*	–half
Cyberware (Blades or Exotic Melee)			
Hand Blade	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Hand Razors	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Spur	–	(STR/2 + 3)P	–
Cyberware (Unarmed)			
Aluminum Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Plastic Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Titanium Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 3)P	–
Shock Hand	–	6S(e)*	–half
Exotic Melee Weapons			
Pole Arm	2	(STR/2 + 2)P	–2
Monofilament Chainsaw	1	5P	–2
Monofilament Whip	2	8P	–4
Riot Shield	–	(STR/2)S	+2
Taser Armor/Shield	–	6S(e)*	–half
UNARMED			
Shock Glove	–	5S(e)*	–half
Unarmed	–	(STR/2)S	–
Sample Improvised Weapons			
Bottle (unbroken: Clubs, broken: Blades)	–	(STR/2)P	+1
Chain/Whip (Exotic Melee)	1	(STR/2 + 1)P	+1
Chair (Clubs)	1	(STR/2 + 1)S	–
Frying Pan (Clubs)	–	(STR/2 + 1)S	+1
Metahuman Body (Unarmed Combat)	1	(BOD/2)S	+2
Pistol/Rifle Butt (Clubs)	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Pool Cue (Clubs, breaks after first hit)	1	(STR/2)S	–

*(e) means that the weapon inflicts Electricity damage (see p. 163).

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enough situational awareness to notice attacks from behind (and thus dodge/parry them) unless the attacker is using Infiltration skill to sneak up on the character.

CHARACTER CHARGING

A character who runs and attacks an opponent in the same Action Phase is considered to be charging. The charging character must cover at least 2 meters of ground to reach his opponent. Charging characters get a +2 dice pool modifier to their attacks and do not suffer a movement modifier for running.

DEFENDER RECEIVING A CHARGE

A character who has delayed his action and who is being charged by another character can intervene and take his action in the split-second before the charging character attacks. A character who receives a charge in this way receives a +1 dice pool modifier to his attack for bracing against the attack.

TOUCH-ONLY ATTACK

If a character is merely seeking to touch an opponent, rather than damage him (in order to cast a touch-only spell, for example), then the attacker receives a +2 dice pool modifier.

MELEE COMBAT WEAPONS

Melee combat weapons are any weapons wielded by combatants within a few meters of each other. Some of these weapons can also be thrown, but if the weapon is swung, melee combat rules apply. If you throw a melee weapon (a club, for instance), you resolve that action as a ranged projectile attack (see *Projectile Weapons,* p. 155, and *Ranged Combat,* p. 150). The Melee Weapons Table (p. 158) lists the melee weapons available in *Shadowrun,* along with their statistics. For full details, see the gear listings on p. 314.

MELEE DAMAGE

The Damage Value for most melee attacks is based on the attacker's Strength ÷ 2 (round up), modified for the weapon. A standard unarmed attack inflicts (Strength ÷ 2)S.

Impact armor is used to defend against melee weapons.

DEFENDING IN COMBAT

Regardless of whether they're being shot at or are locked in a knife fight, characters usually have a chance of avoiding or defending against incoming attacks before they connect—unless of course you are surprised (see *Surprise*, p. 165). The following section addresses the situational modifiers that apply in such circumstances.

Note that even stationary or inanimate targets may have a defense dice pool if they have Partial or Good cover.

DEFENSE MODIFIERS

Defending against attacks is not an easy task—bullets are faster than people. Various situational modifiers make a target harder to hit and affect a character's ability to get out of the way of both ranged and melee attacks. These defense modifiers are listed on the Defense Modifiers Table and described below.

DEFENSE MODIFIERS TABLE

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Defender unaware of attack	No defense possible
Defender wounded	–wound modifiers (see p. 163)
Defender inside a moving vehicle	+3
Defender has defended against previous attacks since last action	–1 per additional defense
Defender prone	–2
Ranged Attacks only:	
Defender running	+2
Defender in melee targeted by ranged attack	–3
Defender/Target has Partial Cover	+2
Defender/Target has Good Cover	+4
Attacker firing wide burst	–2
Attacker firing long wide burst	–5
Attacker firing full-auto wide burst	–9
Attacker firing shotgun on medium spread	–2
Attacker firing shotgun on wide spread	–4
Attacker using area attack weapon (grenade, missile)	–2

DEFENDER UNAWARE OF ATTACK

If the defender is unaware of an incoming attack (he does not see the attacker, the attacker is behind him, or he is surprised), then no defense is possible. Treat the attack as a Success Test instead. This does not apply to defenders who are already engaged in combat (see *Superior Position,* p. 158).

DEFENDER WOUNDED

Wound modifiers apply if the defender has taken damage. See *Wound Modifiers,* p. 163.

DEFENDER HAS DEFENDED AGAINST PREVIOUS ATTACKS

If a character has defended against at least one other attack (melee or ranged) since his last action, apply a –1 cumulative modifier for each additional defense roll.

DEFENDER PRONE

Characters who are on the ground have a more difficult time getting out of the way and suffer a –2 dice pool modifier. This modifier does not apply to defending against ranged attacks unless the attacker is extremely close (5 meters or less).

DEFENDER RUNNING

Moving targets are harder to hit with ranged attacks, and give a character more maneuverability when dodging. Defenders who are running receive a +2 dice pool bonus.

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DEFENDER/TARGET HAS PARTIAL COVER

When up to 50 percent of the defender's form is obscured by intervening terrain or other forms of cover such as brush, foliage, or various obstacles (crates, windows, doorways, curtains and the like) he benefits from a +2 modifier to his Defense test. Note that this modifier applies to all Ranged Combat tests and also to Spellcasting using line of sight.

DEFENDER/TARGET HAS GOOD COVER

If more than 50 percent of the defender's form is obscured by intervening terrain or cover, he gains a +4 dice pool modifier to his Defense roll against any attack. This modifier can also apply to prone targets that are at least 20 meters away from their attackers. This modifier too is applicable to both Ranged Combat and Spellcasting.

Note that this modifier does not negate the Blind Fire modifier the attacker suffers. Both the modifiers to the attacker and to the defender would apply when firing at a target that is totally concealed (100% behind cover).

example

Hot Shot sees Slick dive for cover behind a table, while he loses sight of him he has a good idea of where Slick might be and decides to try to hit him through the desk. Both men are at short range in a well/lit office and no further modifiers apply. Because he's guessing at where his target might be, rather than seeing him, Hot Shot rolls his Pistols 5 + Intuition 4 and then applies a –6 dice pool modifier for Blind Fire. Meanwhile to dodge the hot lead, Slick's rolls Reaction 5 + 4 for having Good Cover.

DEFENDER IN MELEE COMBAT

A character dodging and weaving in melee combat with another opponent has a more difficult time dodging attackers coming from a distance. The defender suffers a –3 dice pool modifier against ranged attacks, regardless of how many characters he is in melee with.

ATTACKER FIRING BURST OR SHOTGUN

The more bullets or flechettes thrown at a character, the harder it is to avoid them. Defending characters suffer a –2 dice pool modifier against wide bursts, –5 against long wide bursts, and –9 against full-auto wide bursts. Likewise, the defender suffers a –2 modifier if the attacker is using a shotgun set on medium spread, –4 against wide spread.

ATTACKER USING AREA ATTACK WEAPON

Dodging explosions is not as easy as it seems in the movies. Apply a –2 modifier when trying to defend against weapons like grenades, rockets, or missiles with a blast effect.

FULL DEFENSE

Characters who are expecting to be attacked can spend a Complex Action and go on full defense until their next Action Phase. Characters who choose this option focus all of their energy on dodging, weaving, ducking, and blocking incoming attacks. Characters on full defense may still walk or run, and in fact may be better off moving towards cover.

Full defense can be taken as a full dodge, full parry, or gymnastics dodge.

Full Dodge: Character on full defense may add their Dodge skill to their dice pool when defending against incoming attacks. So a character on full defense against a ranged attack rolls Dodge + Reaction, whereas a character on full defense against a melee attack could roll Dodge + Dodge + Reaction, or melee combat skill + Dodge + Reaction. Full dodge may be used against both ranged and melee attacks.

Full Parry: Characters who go on full parry roll (melee combat skill x 2) + Reaction against any and all melee attacks made against them. Full parry may not be used against ranged attacks.

Gymnastics Dodge: Characters skilled in Gymnastics can spend their action flipping, rolling, cartwheeling, etc. out of danger, and may add Gymnastics skill to their dice pool against either ranged or melee attacks.

FULL DEFENSE AS AN INTERRUPT ACTION

A character may invoke full defense against an attack at any point in a Combat Turn, so long as the character is not surprised (see p. 165). This means a character does not necessarily need to declare a full defense and take a Complex Action in advance—he can instead declare a full defense when attacked, even if it is not yet his Action Phase in the turn. Going on full defense as an interrupt, however, uses up the character's next available action.

example

An exchange with the Mob goes bad, and lead starts flying. Klaus's Initiative is 10, but one of the Mafia gunbunnies goes on 12 and starts shooting at him. Klaus is out in the open, and there are other attackers to worry about, so he decides to declare full defense so he can make his way towards cover. Klaus rolls Reaction + Dodge against the goon's attack, and manages to avoid getting shot. On 10, however, Klaus has already used his Complex Action to defend, so he spends his Free Action to run towards cover.

OTHER COMBAT FACTORS

Unless otherwise noted, the following rules apply to both ranged combat and melee attacks.

ARMOR

Two types of armor exist in *Shadowrun:* Ballistic and Impact. Armor is used with Body to make damage resistance tests (see *Damage Resistance Test,* p. 162). The armor rating is modified by the attack's AP value (see *Armor Penetration,* p. 162).

Good armor will protect a character from serious physical harm. If the modified DV of an attack causing Physical damage does not *exceed* the AP-modified armor rating, then the attack will cause Stun damage instead.

Ballistic and Impact armor ratings are frequently noted as (B/I), with Ballistic armor to the left of the slash and Impact armor to the right.

example

Crazy brings a knife to a gunfight, and ends up with a bullet to the chest. Her attacker scored 1 net hit with a light pistol (DV 4P). Crazy's wearing 5 points of Ballistic armor, however, so the modified DV of 5 doesn't exceed the armor. That means she must resist 5S damage rather than 5P. If her attacker had scored 1 more net hit, however, the bullet would have bypassed her armor and inflicted Physical damage instead.

BALLISTIC ARMOR

Ballistic armor protects against projectiles that deliver large amounts of kinetic energy to a small area in short amounts of time, such as bullets, bolts, and arrows.

IMPACT ARMOR

Impact armor protects against projectiles with lesser kinetic transfer: blunt projectile weapons, explosives, melee weapons, and stun ammunition.

To a lesser extent, Impact also protects against falling, fire, laser weapons, electrical attacks, and Indirect Combat spells—apply half of the Impact armor rating (round up) to such damage, unless otherwise specifically noted.

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ARMOR AND ENCUMBRANCE

If a character is wearing more than one piece of armor at a time, only the highest value (for either Ballistic or Impact) applies. Note that some armor items, like helmets and shields, provide a modifier to the worn armor rating and so do not count as stacked armor.

Too much armor, however, can slow a character down. If either of a character's armor ratings exceeds his Body x 2, apply a –1 modifier to Agility and Reaction for every 2 points (or fraction thereof) that his Body x 2 is exceeded. Note that this may affect Initiative as well. If a character is wearing multiple armor items, add their ratings together before comparing to Body.

CALLED SHOTS

Characters may "call shots" in an attempt to increase the damage their weapons will do. Calling a shot means that the character is aiming at a vulnerable portion of a target, such as a person's head, the tires or windows of a vehicle, and so on. The gamemaster decides if such a vulnerable spot is accessible.

A character can only make a called shot with weapons that fire in single-shot, semi-automatic, and burst-fire modes, as well as melee weapons. A character can aim (see *Take Aim,* p. 148) and then call a shot at the time of the attack. Calling the shot is a Free Action.

When a shot is called, and pending the gamemaster's agreement, the player character has the choice to:

- Target an area not protected by armor. The attacking character receives a negative dice pool modifier equal to the target's armor (better armor is more difficult to bypass). If the attack hits, the target's armor is ignored for the damage resistance test; the target rolls only Body.
- Target a vital area in order to increase damage. The attacking character can choose to increase the DV of his attack by +1 to +4, but receives an equivalent negative dice pool modifier to the attack. So a character that opts to increase his attack by the maximum +4 DV suffers a –4 dice pool modifier on the attack.
- Knock something out of the target's grasp. The attacking character receives a –4 dice pool modifier on the attack. If the modified Damage Value of the attack exceeds the target's Strength, the target loses his grip on the object. The gamemaster determines whether or not the object is damaged and how far away it is knocked.
- The gamemaster may also allow other specific effects for called shots if he chooses. For example, you could use called shots to knock an opponent over a ledge, shoot out a tire, temporarily blind an opponent, etc.

INTERCEPTION

If movement takes a character within one meter of an opponent, and the character attempts to pass by without attacking the opponent, that opponent can spend a Free Action to take a free melee attack. This rule also applies to characters who are attempting to move out of melee combat. If the opponent has a weapon ready, he uses his normal melee weapon skill rating; otherwise, he uses Unarmed Combat skill. This attack follows all of the normal rules for melee combat (see p. 156).

If the character attempting to pass takes damage, he is intercepted and cannot continue his movement.

KNOCKDOWN

Characters who take damage may be knocked down by the attack. If a character takes a number of boxes of damage (Stun or Physical) from a single attack that equal or exceed his Body, then the attack automatically knocks him down. Characters who take 10 or more boxes of damage in a single attack are always knocked down.

Note that certain less-than-lethal weapons are specifically designed to knock a target down, including gel rounds and shock weapons such as tasers and stun batons. Gel rounds reduce the Body of a character by 2 when comparing it to the DV to determine knockdown. Shock weapons have their own effects, noted under *Electricity Damage,* p. 163.

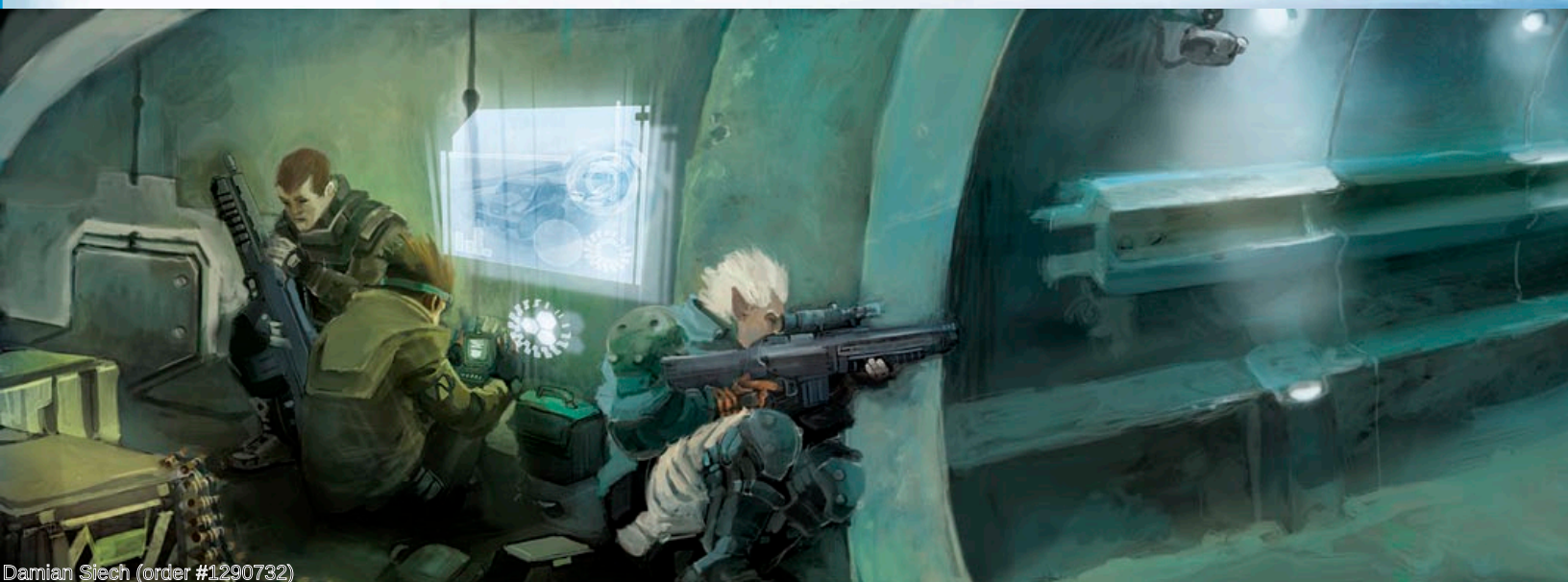
ATTACKING TO KNOCK DOWN (MELEE ONLY)

An attacking character may attempt to knock his opponent to the ground by bowling him over, sweeping his feet out from under him, pulling him off balance, or some similar maneuver. The attacker must declare his intention to perform a knockdown attack during the Declare Actions part of the Action Phase. The attacker makes a melee attack as normal. If he succeeds (he scores more hits than the defender), compare the attacker's Strength + net hits to the defender's Body. If the attacker's total exceeds the defender's Body, the attacker knocks the defender to the ground. This knockdown attack causes no damage.

The attacker chooses whether to follow the defender to the ground or stay on his feet—unless he glitches, in which case he falls as well. On a critical glitch, the attacker falls down while the defender stays standing.

SUBDUING (MELEE ONLY)

Sometimes, characters will find it necessary to subdue an opponent without beating him into unconsciousness. To do so, the attacker must engage in subduing combat.



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To subdue a character, resolve melee combat normally. If the attacker successfully hits, compare his Strength + net hits to the defender's Body. If the attacker's total exceeds the defender's Body, the attacker grapples and immobilizes the defender. This subduing attack causes no damage to the defender.

To break out of the lock, the defender must take a Complex Action and succeed in a Strength + Unarmed Combat Test with a threshold equal to the net hits scored on the grappling test. Otherwise the defender remains subdued and cannot take any actions requiring physical movement. Consider the subdued character to be prone for any attacks made against him.

The grappling character does not need to make any tests to maintain the grapple, but he must spend a Complex Action on each of his Action Phases to do so. The grappler may also choose to do one of the following on each Complex Action he spends to maintain the grapple:

- Make an additional Unarmed Combat Attack Test to get a better grip. The defender opposes as normal. The attacker gets the Superior Position bonus. If the attacker scores more hits, the net hits are added to his previous grappling net hits, making it harder for the defender to break free. If the defender scores more hits, however, reduce the attacker's net hits as his grip slips.
- Inflict Stun damage on the character with a Damage Value equal to his Strength. This requires no test, but the defender resists it as normal. Impact armor applies.
- Knock the defender down, following the rules for *Attacking to Knock Down*. The attacker gets the Superior Position bonus.

DAMAGE

Involved as they are in an illegal and often hazardous line of work, *Shadowrun* characters get hurt and get hurt often. What kind of damage, how bad an injury is, and how much it affects the character will vary greatly depending on the situation.

TYPES OF INJURY

Damage in *Shadowrun* is defined as Physical and Stun. Each type of damage is tracked separately.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

Physical damage, the most dangerous type, is the kind done by guns, explosions, bladed weapons, and most magic spells. Weapons that inflict Physical damage have the letter "P" following their Damage Value. As one might expect, Physical damage takes the longest time to heal.

STUN DAMAGE

Stun damage—bruising, muscle fatigue, and the like—is the kind done by fists, kicks, blunt weapons, stun rounds, shock weapons, concussion grenades, some magic spells, and magical drain. If something does Stun damage, the letter "S" will follow the Damage Value. Stun damage heals quickly, but its immediate effects can be as deadly as Physical damage.

DAMAGE CODES

All weapons have Damage Codes that indicate how difficult it is to avoid or resist the damage, and how serious the actual wounds are that the weapon causes. A weapon's Damage Code consists of two numbers representing Damage Value (DV) and Armor Penetration (AP). These are separated with a slash, with DV to the left and AP to the right of the slash. So a weapon with a Damage Code 7/–1 has a Damage Value 7 and an Armor Penetration of –1.

DAMAGE VALUE (DV)

The Damage Value (DV) indicates the severity of the damage inflicted by the weapon—its ability to transfer damage to the target. In game terms, each point of Damage Value inflicts one box of damage to the target's Condition Monitor. The base Damage Value of the weapon is modified by the attacker's net hits, ammunition type, and other factors.

ARMOR PENETRATION (AP)

A weapon's Armor Penetration (AP) represents its penetrating ability—its ability to pierce armor. AP modifies a target's Armor rating when he makes a damage resistance test. Some weapons fare poorly against armor, and so actually raise the value of the armor—if the target is not wearing armor, however, this bonus does not apply. Other weapons are designed to tear through armor, and so reduce its effectiveness. If a weapon's AP reduces an armor's rating to 0 or less, the character gets to roll no armor dice on his damage resistance test.

example

Jack is wearing 5 points of Ballistic armor when he is shot with an AP –1 attack. That reduces his effective Armor to 4, so he rolls only 4 dice for armor on his damage resistance test.

DAMAGE RESISTANCE TESTS

Unless otherwise noted, a character rolls Body + armor to resist damage. In some cases another attribute may be called for; Willpower is often used in place of Body, for example, against certain Stun damage attacks. The exact armor that applies is determined by the type of attack (see *Armor,* p. 160). The armor rating is modified by the attack's AP modifier. Other bonuses may also apply, such as a troll's natural armor bonus (which is cumulative with other types of armor).

Note that wound modifiers (see p. 163) do not apply to damage resistance tests.

Each hit scored on the damage resistance test reduces the attack's DV by 1. If the DV is reduced to 0 or less, no damage is inflicted.

example

Austin has been blasted with a devastating 10 DV, AP –2 attack. He has Body 3 and is wearing 6 points of armor (reduced to 4 by the AP). Rolling his 7 dice (3 + 4) on the damage resistance test, he scores 3 hits, reducing the damage to 7 boxes (10 – 3). Austin already had 2 boxes of damage filled in, so crossing out 7 more brings his damage total to 9—1 more and he'll be unconscious!

DAMAGE RESISTANCE GLITCHES

Glitches on damage resistance tests may be interpreted in many different ways. Perhaps the attack reduces the effectiveness of the character's armor, reducing its rating by 1. Alternately, there could be some complication caused by the applied damage—an implant is rendered inoperable until repaired; a vein is opened, leading to intensive bleeding; a bone is fractured; or a cut is made over the character's eye, inflicting Perception Test modifiers. The gamemaster should choose something appropriate to the situation and that will enhance tension in the story.

APPLYING DAMAGE

Once the final Damage Value is calculated, it must be recorded on the character's Condition Monitor. As described under *Condition Monitors,* p. 71, the Condition Monitor has two damage tracks: Physical and Stun. Physical damage is recorded in the Physical damage track, Stun damage in the Stun damage track. Each point of Damage Value equals 1 box on the appropriate damage track.

Damage is cumulative. A character who already has 3 boxes filled in and takes another 3 boxes of damage ends up with 6 boxes filled in.

A damaged character must also check for Knockdown (see p. 161).

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CONDITION MONITOR TRACKS

As noted under *Condition Monitors,* p. 71, the Physical Damage Track has a number of boxes equal to 8 plus half a character's Body attribute (round up). The Stun Damage Track has a number of boxes equal to 8 plus half a character's Willpower attribute (round up).

UNCONSCIOUSNESS

When all of the available boxes in a track (Physical or Stun) are filled in, the character immediately falls unconscious and drops to the ground. If the Stun track is filled in, the character is merely knocked out. If the Physical track is filled in, however, the character is near death and will die unless stabilized (see *Healing,* p. 252).

EXCEEDING THE CONDITION MONITOR

When the total number of boxes in a damage track (Physical or Stun) are filled in, and damage still remains to be applied, one of two things happens:

- If the damage is Stun, it carries over into the Physical damage track. For example, if a character with a Stun Condition Monitor of 11 boxes who has already taken 6 boxes takes another 8-box Stun hit, that character's player would fill in the last 5 boxes in the Stun damage track, and then fill in 3 boxes in the Physical damage track. If the character has already taken damage in the Physical damage track, treat the excess Stun damage as additional Physical damage and add it to the existing damage. When Stun damage overflows in this manner, the character also falls unconscious; he or she does not regain consciousness until some of the Stun damage is healed and removed from the Stun damage track. See *Healing,* p. 252.
- If a character takes more Physical damage than he has boxes in the Physical damage track, the character is in trouble. Overflowing the Physical damage track means that the character is near death. Instant death occurs only if damage overflows the Physical damage track by more than the character's Body attribute. One point over that limit and they will be toasted over drinks at their favorite shadowrunner bar.

Characters whose Physical damage has overflowed the Physical damage track by less than their Body attribute can survive if they receive prompt medical attention. If left unattended, such a character takes an additional box of damage every (Body) Combat Turns for blood loss, shock, and other things that affect a body on the brink of death. If this damage exceeds the character's Body attribute before medical help arrives, the character dies. See *Physical Damage Overflow,* p. 253, for the rules governing medical aid to characters in that condition.

. . . . example

Skuzz was shot real good: 12 boxes of damage. His Physical Condition Monitor has 10 boxes, so the damage overflows. His Body attribute is 3 and he took 2 extra boxes. Skuzz's teammates are trapped and can't get to him, so on the 3rd Combat Turn after taking that damage, Skuzz loses another box—the maximum he can take. Now he only has 3 Combat Turns for his friends to reach him before it's too late and his pals will have to feed him to the rats.

WOUND MODIFIERS

As a character records damage on his Condition Monitor, he suffers certain effects that simulate real-life injuries. For every 3 boxes of cumulative damage taken on a Condition Monitor track, the character suffers a –1 wound modifier. These wound modifiers are cumulative, so a character who has taken 6 boxes of Physical and 3 boxes of Stun suffers a total –3 wound modifier.

Wound modifiers are dice pool modifiers that apply to nearly all tests the injured character may attempt, except for resistance tests. Wound modifiers are also applied immediately to a character's Initiative Score, potentially affecting whether he goes before or after someone else in an Initiative Pass. If a wound modifier reduces his Initiative Score to 0 or less, the character cannot take any actions that Combat Turn.

DEAD MAN'S TRIGGER

A character may invoke the Dead Man's Trigger rule to perform one final action before dying or falling unconscious. To do so, all three following conditions must be met:

- The character must still have an available action left (either a held action, an extra action, or one that hasn't occurred yet because the character was taken down in a pass before he could act). If a character already used up all his available actions for his Combat Turn, he's out of luck.
- The character must spend 1 Edge point. This just activates the Dead Man's Trigger; it doesn't add any extra Edge dice to any tests (the character may spend extra Edge, however, to augment tests as normal). If the character has no Edge left, he's out of luck.
- The character must make a Body + Willpower (3) Test. Note that this takes place *after* the Edge Point is spent.

If the character passes all three conditions, he may perform one final Simple Action (no movement), which is resolved as normal.

SPECIAL TYPES OF DAMAGE

Certain environmental effects—acid, fire, extreme cold, electricity—have a slightly different effect than standard types of damage, as noted below.

ACID DAMAGE

Corrosives and specific spells and critter powers may inflict Acid damage. Acid damage is treated as Physical damage and resisted with half Impact armor (rounded up). The chemical protection armor upgrade (p. 327) adds its full rating to the armor value.

Acid damage will eat through many types of material, turning it into smoking sludge. The initial DV of an acid attack counts as the Acid damage rating. Acid that has been splashed onto an object will continue to eat through for a number of turns equal to its rating. This continued corrosion stops when the acid is washed off or a base is applied. Note that Acid damage Combat spells only inflict damage once—after that the instant spell effect ends. Acid often produces strong clouds of noxious smoke, applying an appropriate Visibility modifier (see p. 136) to those in the area.

COLD DAMAGE

Extreme environments and certain spells and critter powers may inflict Cold damage. Cold damage is treated as Physical damage and resisted with half Impact armor (rounded up). The insulation armor upgrade (p. 327) adds its full rating to the armor value.

Note that while electronics generally fare fine against cold, other gear may be damaged as liquid components freeze, lubricants gum up, and other parts become brittle.

ELECTRICITY DAMAGE

A wide variety of nonlethal weapons are designed to incapacitate targets with electrical shock attacks, including stun batons, tasers, cyberware shock hands, and similar electrically charged weapons. These weapons rely on a contact discharge of electricity rather than kinetic energy. Spells and critter powers such as Lightning Bolt and Energy Aura cause similar effects.

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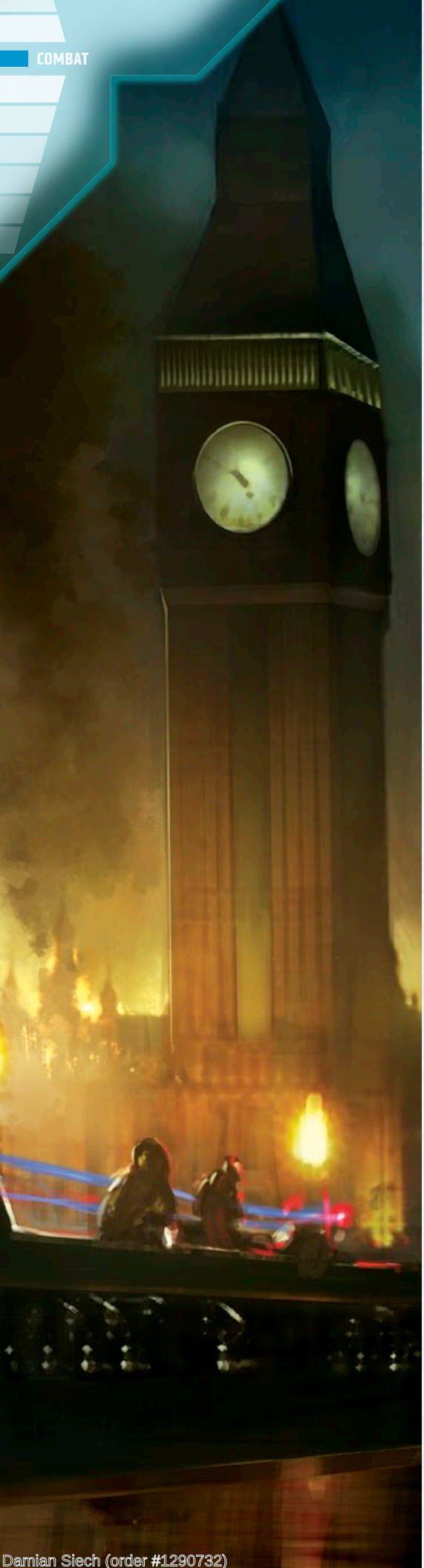

Electrical damage is treated as Stun damage and resisted with half Impact armor (rounded up)—metallic armor, however, offers no protection. The nonconductive armor upgrade (p. 327) adds its full rating to the armor value. Other factors may modify the target's damage resistance test at the gamemaster's choosing, such as lack of grounding (a character flying by levitation spell) or extra conductivity (a character immersed in water).

A successful Electricity damage attack can stun and incapacitate the target as well. The struck target must make a Body + Willpower (3) Test. Apply half the character's Impact armor (round down) and any other dice pool modifiers as noted above to this test. If the target fails, he immediately falls and is incapacitated for a number of Combat Turns equal to 2 + net hits scored on the attack test. Even if the target succeeds, he suffers a –2 dice pool modifier to all action tests due to disorientation from the shock for the same period. Incapacitated characters are prone and unable to take any actions.

Electronic equipment, vehicles, and drones can also be affected by Electricity damage. They never suffer Stun damage, but they do roll Body + Armor (drones and vehicles) or Armor x 2 (other objects) to resist secondary effects. If they achieve equal or more hits than the attack, they are unaffected. Otherwise, they cease to function for a number of Combat Turns equal to 2 + net hits scored on the attack test (and may need to reboot after that).

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

DISTANCE FALLEN (IN METERS)	DAMAGE
1–2	2
3–4	4
5–6	6
7–8	8
over 8	+1 box per meter

FALLING DAMAGE

When a character falls, use the Falling Damage Table to determine the damage. Use Body + half the rating of the character's Impact armor (round down) to resist this damage. Characters may also add Gymnastics skill dice to the damage resistance test. The gamemaster should feel free to modify the damage to reflect a softer landing surface (sand), branches to break the fall, and so on.

Falling characters drop 50 meters in the first Combat Turn, 150 meters in the second Combat Turn, and 200 meters every Combat Turn after that. Terminal velocity for a falling body is about 200 meters per turn.

FATIGUE DAMAGE

No one can run forever. After a period of sprinting, even the most conditioned athlete begins to slow down. These fatigue rules simulate this phenomenon.

A character can sprint for a number of turns equal to his Body plus the hits on a Running (Long Distance) + Strength Test before he or she begins to lose steam. If the character continues to run beyond this base period, he or she begins taking 1 box of Stun damage each Combat Turn from fatigue; this damage cannot be resisted.

If a character is merely jogging along at his base running rate instead of sprinting, the gamemaster should increase the base period to (Body + hits) x 2 *minutes*, and only apply 1 box of fatigue Stun damage each time that period passes (rather than each Combat Turn)

The maximum amount of fatigue that can be taken is 6 boxes of Stun. After that point, the character must make a Body + Willpower (2) Test each Combat Turn (sprinting) or Body + hits minutes (jogging). If the character fails, he collapses from exhaustion and is simply unable to continue any sort of strenuous activity until he rests.

FIRE DAMAGE

Certain types of flame or heat-based attacks inflict Fire damage, including (but not limited to): thermite, flares, Flamethrower and Fireball spells, and the Energy Aura and Engulf critter powers. Treat Fire damage as Physical damage, but Impact armor only protects against it with half its value (round up). The fire resistance armor upgrade (p. 327) adds its full rating to the armor value.

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Objects hit by a Fire damage attack are at risk of catching fire. Make a damage resistance test using the item's Armor x 2 (see *Barriers,* p. 166), or just Armor if they are vulnerable to the effect (flammable material vs. fire, for example). The gamemaster should use her discretion as to which objects in the area are worth rolling a test for; most effects can simply be improvised. The gamemaster also decides which items have caught on fire and will continue to burn—as a rule of thumb, any item with a (modified) Armor rating less than the Fire DV has caught fire.

If an object is on fire, note the original Fire DV inflicted—this is the Fire damage rating. At the end of each subsequent Combat Turn, the gamemaster decides whether the fire has grown, shrunk, or stayed the same, depending on the item's flammability, efforts to put the fire out, environmental conditions, etc.; adjust the Fire damage rating accordingly. If the rating is reduced to 0, the flames are put out. In any other case, make another damage resistance test against DV equal to the adjusted Fire damage rating. Continue in this way until the fire diminishes (nothing burns forever—but the fire may also spread to nearby items).

The exact secondary effects of Fire damage on items are determined by the gamemaster. Wood and paper are likely to be consumed; common plastics and fabrics melt; while fire-resistant fabrics and metals scorch but otherwise remain unharmed by normal flames. Damaged electronics may short-circuit and cease to function while weapons lose their integrity and are likely to misfire or fracture. Ammunition and explosives may explode.

SURPRISE

Characters sometimes appear unexpectedly. This may be deliberate (a planned ambush) or accidental (two unlucky security guards stumble into a group of shadowrunners breaking into a top-secret research lab). Surprise simulates these and similar instances. The following rules apply to critters as well as to characters. Note that non-sentient objects (astral barriers, foci, programs, IC, etc.) cannot be surprised.

A surprised character is caught off guard and can do little except watch events unfold. Surprise occurs on a character-by-character basis. A character walking into an ambush set by two opponents, for example, may be surprised by one of his enemies but not by the other.

Surprise normally occurs at the beginning of combat, but it is possible for surprise to happen within a Combat Turn as well.

SURPRISE AND PERCEPTION

Surprised characters are normally unaware that a situation to which they need to react is forthcoming. This normally occurs because they either failed to perceive something (they didn't get enough hits to notice the concealed sniper) or because the gamemaster decides that they didn't even have a chance to perceive it (they blithely walk into a room they expect to be empty, but it's in fact filled with relaxing guards).

In some circumstances, gamemasters may wish to give a character the chance to be alerted that something is about to happen. The best way to do this is to make a secret Perception Test for the character. If the character is lucky, he may, for example, hear approaching footsteps, notice the smell of cigarette smoke as he approaches the corner, or just get that tingly feeling that someone is behind him. A character who succeeds in the Perception Test is alerted in some way, and receives a bonus on his Surprise Test (see below).

The surprise rules below apply to all situations, whether all the parties involved are caught off guard or whether one or more parties are intentionally ambushing others.

SURPRISE TESTS

To resolve surprise situations, all participants must make an Initiative Test (Reaction + Intuition). Note the number of hits scored for each character—this is the threshold that other characters need to beat in order to act against them in the first Initiative Pass. Characters who have been alerted in some way receive a +3 dice pool modifier on this test.

At this point, the Combat Turn begins, and characters roll Initiative as normal. During the first Initiative Pass, however, characters are considered surprised by any other characters who scored more hits than they did on the surprise test. A character who is surprised may not directly act toward or react to characters who have surprised him—this includes friends as well as foes.

Surprise only counts in the first Initiative Pass. Once the second Initiative Pass begins, the effects of surprise no longer apply.

AMBUSHING

Characters who plan an ambush and delay their actions while they lie in wait for the arrival or appearance of their targets receive a +6 dice pool modifier on the surprise Initiative Test. Ambushing characters, however, are automatically not surprised by the characters they are ambushing—assuming they are aware of the movement and actions of their target(s). If the ambusher is unaware of his prey's activities (for example, he is waiting for someone to enter the room so he can leap out from behind the door, but he doesn't know when that will be), he still receives the +6 modifier, but must check for surprise as well (he may not be prepared when the target walks through the door).

Note that it is possible that the character(s) performing the ambush may get a lower Initiative Score than their targets. If a target is surprised, this doesn't matter. If a target is not surprised, however, he should be given a free Perception Test to notice the ambush. If he succeeds, he knows what's coming and can pre-empt the ambushers. If he fails, however, he has no idea what's coming, so the gamemaster should delay his action until the ambush commences.

SURPRISE WITHIN COMBAT

Surprise may also occur within combats that have already started. A security guard may, for example, walk in a room to find a shadowrunner trying to strangle his partner. Whenever new characters are unexpectedly introduced to a combat situation, the gamemaster should make a surprise test between the characters already involved and the ones just entering, and apply surprise effects as appropriate. The characters already involved in the combat do not have to check against each other for surprise.

EFFECTS OF SURPRISE

Characters who are surprised cannot take any actions that directly affect, impede, or counteract characters that have surprised them. This means surprised characters cannot attack those who surprised them, nor can they dodge or defend against attacks from those characters. The surprised character also cannot react to those characters' actions in any way. The surprised character can, however, carry out other actions that are not specifically directed at any surprising characters, such as dropping prone or readying a weapon (but not firing it).

Note that friends may surprise as well as foes. A character caught in an ambush situation may not react to his friend's warning to duck, for example, if the friend also surprised him.

SURPRISE AND GLITCHES

Characters who glitch on their surprise tests may still react appropriately, but they also jump or take an otherwise startled action, perhaps

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knocking into something or dropping something they were holding. The gamemaster determines the exact effect of the glitch.

A character who gets a critical glitch on the surprise test is either absolutely oblivious or flat-footed. He is considered completely surprised and cannot take any actions, including Free Actions. Effectively, that character loses a pass. The character may act normally in the next Initiative Pass.

example

Tess, Caitlin, and Mitch are lying in wait for three Mitsuhama security goons. As the goons approach, the gamemaster secretly makes a Perception Test to see if the goons notice the trap, but they are distracted and fail. The goons arrive, and our heroes spring their ambush. All six characters make an Initiative Test. Since the shadowrunners were lying in ambush positions and their targets were not alerted, they receive a +6 dice pool modifier and are automatically not surprised. Tess rolls 3 hits, Caitlin gets 4, and Mitch gets 5. Goon A gets 4 hits, Goon B gets 2, and Goon C gets a critical glitch. All six characters then roll Initiative. Tess gets an Initiative Score of 6, Caitlin 5, and Mitch 10. The goons get 8, 5, and 5, respectively.

The goons are in deep trouble. Goon A can only take actions against Tess and Caitlin. Goon B can't react to anyone except Goon C in the first Initiative Pass, and Goon C is caught with his mouth hanging open and can take no actions at all.

Mitch goes first on 10, taking out Goon B with a surprise attack. Goon A goes next on 8, but since he is surprised by Mitch, he cannot react against him. The gamemaster makes a Perception Test for Goon A to determine how aware of the situation he is. The goon gets 2 hits, so he sees enough to know he's being ambushed. Goon A dives for cover on his action. That makes it a little more difficult for Tess and Caitlin to take him out, but since Goon C seems oblivious, they figure they can safely ignore him for the moment.

BARRIERS

Sometimes, a character may wish to attack through a barrier, either to get at a target on the other side or to make a hole through which he can move. The procedure for each is described below.

BARRIER RATINGS

Barriers have two ratings: an Armor rating and a Structure rating. The Barrier Rating Table lists the Barrier ratings for various types of materials.

ARMOR RATING

Armor acts as a normal Armor rating, and is used to resist damage.

STRUCTURE RATING

The Structure rating is the number of "damage boxes" required to destroy a section 1 meter square and about 10 cm thick (approximately the typical wall thickness for a residential or office building).

SHOOTING THROUGH BARRIERS

If a character wants to shoot through a barrier to hit a target behind it, add the barrier's Armor rating to whatever armor the target already possesses. The attacker also suffers a –6 Blind Fire dice pool modifier because he cannot see the intended target, unless the barrier is transparent.

If the weapon's modified Damage Value does not exceed the barrier's Armor rating (modified by the weapon's AP), then the weapon is simply not strong enough to pierce the barrier, and the attack automatically fails.

example

Rambler is engaging in some corporate headhunting—literally. His target has taken cover behind his hardwood executive office door. Rambler decides to shoot the suit through the door, which has an Armor rating of 6. Rambler is packing a heavy pistol (DV 5, AP –1), loaded with APDS rounds (AP –4), so the door only offers an effective

BARRIER RATING TABLE

MATERIAL	ARMOR RATING	STRUCTURE RATING
Fragile	1	1
Example: standard glass		
Cheap Material	2	3
Example: drywall, plaster, door, regular tire		
Average Material	4	5
Example: tree, furniture, plastiboard, ballistic glass		
Heavy Material	6	7
Example: hardwood, dataterm, lightpost, chain link		
Reinforced Material	8	9
Example: densiplast, security door, armored glass, Kevlar wallboard		
Structural Material	12	11
Example: brick, plascrete		
Heavy Structural Material	16	13
Example: concrete, metal beam		
Armored/Reinforced Material	24	15
Example: reinforced concrete		
Hardened Material	32+	17+
Example: blast bunkers		

DAMAGING BARRIERS TABLE

WEAPON	DV MODIFIER
Melee or Unarmed	No change
Whip/Monofilament whip	DV of 1
Projectile	DV of 1 per projectile
Bullet	DV of 2 per bullet
Explosive	base DV x 2
AV Rocket/Missile	base DV x 3
Combat spell	No change

1 point of armor (6 – 5). Even with the –6 Blind Fire modifier, Rambler scores 2 net hits. The whimpering executive must resist 7 DV (5 + 2), but he receives 1 extra die for the door's modified armor.

Against melee attacks with blunt weapons such as fists, clubs, or similar items, a barrier maintains its normal rating. Against melee attacks with edged weapons, such as swords and the like, the barrier has twice its normal rating.

DESTROYING BARRIERS

If a character is attacking a barrier with intent to destroy it (or create a hole), resolve the attack normally. Since barriers can't dodge, the attack test is unopposed. The purpose of the attack test is to generate extra hits to add to the Damage Value. If a character got no hits, then only apply the base Damage Value. The only way a character could "miss" is if he got a critical glitch on the attack test. A character may use Demolitions as the attack skill if he has the proper materials and time to set charges.

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Before rolling the barrier's damage resistance test, adjust the modified Damage Value to reflect the type of attack, as noted on the Damaging Barrier Table.

Resolve the damage resistance test by rolling the barrier's Armor x 2. Against Indirect Combat spells and explosives attached directly, barriers roll only their Armor rating. The weapon's AP is ignored. Each net hit reduces the modified DV by 1.

Apply the remaining DV as damage to the barrier. If the total boxes are greater than or equal to the Structure rating, the attack has made a hole in the structure. Each hole is one square meter per increment of Structure rating. For example, an attack that dealt 30 net points of damage to a Structure 15 barrier would create a 2-square-meter hole.

example

Rambler has had enough of trying to shoot through the door, and decides to blast a hole in it. He switches his clip out for regular ammo, and makes an attack test, scoring 6 hits. One bullet only has a base DV of 2 against barriers, so he's inflicting 8 DV (2 + 6). His AP of –1 is ignored. Rather than rolling Armor x 2 (12 dice), the gamemaster just trades the dice in for 3 hits. That means the door takes 5 boxes of damage (8 – 3). Since the door has a Structure rating of 7, that's not enough to blow a big hole in it, so Rambler will have to take another shot.

VEHICLE COMBAT

Inevitably, characters will get in a car chase or face combat with a well-armed drone. Combat involving vehicles generally falls into one of two categories: standard tactical character combat, and chase combat.

Tactical combat primarily occurs when vehicles (usually drones) are supporting (or opposing) the characters, or in pretty much any situations where flesh-and-blood characters are involved as well as vehicles. (For example, the party is trying to stop the bad guy from boarding a helicopter and getting away.)

Chase combat occurs predominantly when only vehicles are involved (though this may not always be the case) and is generally a lot more fluid, based more on maneuverability than positioning. It's more abstract and takes place over a much larger scale and timeframe than standard tactical combat.

VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

Vehicles have a number of attributes that are relevant to vehicle combat.

VEHICLE INITIATIVE

Any vehicle that is being physically piloted or remotely controlled operates on the same Initiative as the character who controls it. If the controlling character is using full-immersion virtual reality to control the vehicle (this is called "rigging" the vehicle), the vehicle operates on his Matrix Initiative (see p. 236).

Drones that pilot themselves have an Initiative equal to their Pilot + Response attributes and they get 3 Initiative Passes per turn.

VEHICLE BODY

Vehicle Body functions much like a character's Body, and is primarily used for damage resistance tests.

CONDITION MONITOR

Vehicles have a Condition Monitor to track damage and operability, just like characters. Vehicles do not suffer from Stun damage, however, so they simply have one Physical Condition Monitor. Higher Body vehicles have more damage "boxes," same as with characters. A vehicle's Condition Monitor has a number of boxes equal to 8 plus half the vehicle's Body attribute (round up). A Body 3 vehicle, for example, has 10 boxes on its Condition Monitor.

VEHICLE ARMOR

Vehicle armor functions just like character armor, and is used for the vehicle's damage resistance tests. Vehicle armor is the same rating against both ballistic and impact attacks.

Since vehicle armor is often much higher than ordinary character armor, gamemasters should remember to use the trade-in rule for large dice pools (4 dice for 1 hit, see *Buying Hits,* p. 62).

If an attack's modified DV does not exceed a vehicle's modified Armor rating, then the attack automatically fails.

PILOT

Pilot is an attribute that measures how sophisticated the vehicle's dog-brain computer is. In general, Pilot substitutes for character attributes (typically Agility, Reaction, Intuition, and Logic) for any Success Tests that the vehicle makes. The skill portion is covered by autosoft programs that are loaded into the vehicle's memory. See *Pilot Programs,* p. 245.

HANDLING RATING

Every vehicle has a Handling rating that indicates how easy it is to pilot and maneuver. See the Handling Rating Table for specific examples.

SENSORS

Sensors are the vehicular equivalent of the Intuition attribute. Almost all vehicles in *Shadowrun* have some kind of sensor array, if only to interact with GridGuide and other traffic network systems. Only retro pre-Crash vehicles lack sensors, and most of them are retrofitted with add-on sensors.

When driving a vehicle, a driver may use the Sensor attribute instead of Intuition when making Perception Tests and other Intuition-linked Success Tests. Drones *always* use the Sensor attribute for Perception Tests.

ACCELERATION

Vehicles have an Acceleration rating that determines their movement rates. The number to the left of the slash is a vehicle's Walking rate in meters per turn. The number to the right is its Running rate.

HANDLING RATING TABLE

VEHICLE	HANDLING
Motorcycle	+2
Car	0
Sports car	+3
Truck	–1
18-Wheeler	–3
Autogyro	+2
Utility helicopter	0
Combat helicopter	+3
Single-engine airplane	0
Jumbo jet	–3
Jet fighter	+3
T-bird	0

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A driver or drone can attempt to move a greater distance by making a Vehicle Test (see below). Each hit on the test adds 5 meters to the vehicle's movement rate.

SPEED

Speed is the reasonable high-end maximum velocity of the vehicle. Drivers can accelerate past this, but they encounter difficulties in pushing their vehicles to go faster while still maintaining control. The gamemaster should apply modifiers as she feels appropriate.

Speed is expressed in meters per Combat Turn.

VEHICLE TESTS

Characters don't need to make a vehicle test every time they operate a vehicle. For normal everyday tasks, like driving to the Stuffer Shack, it's assumed the character performs this automatically. A vehicle test is called for only when there's a chance of bad consequences (like crashing), or if time is a crucial factor (like jumpstarting a car while under fire).

To make a vehicle test, the character rolls Reaction + the appropriate vehicle skill +/– the vehicle's Handling. The threshold depends on the difficulty of the task being performed—see the Vehicle Test Threshold Table. A simple task (avoiding a large boulder in the middle of open terrain) may only have a threshold of 1 hit, while a more difficult task (making a hairpin turn to dive into a narrow opening) may require as many as 3 or 4 hits.

VEHICLE TEST THRESHOLD TABLE

SITUATION	THRESHOLD
Easy	1
Ground Example: merging, passing, sudden stop	
Air Example: landing under normal conditions	
Average	2
Ground Example: avoiding pedestrian or obstacle, steering through narrow spot, wheelie	
Air Example: takeoff on a short runway	
Hard	4
Ground Example: hairpin turn, "stoppie" on a motorbike, jackknifing a truck	
Air Example: landing on short runway	
Extreme	6
Ground Example: 180 without stopping, jumping an obstacle on a motorbike	
Air Example: landing in a planted field	

Depending on the circumstances, failure to achieve threshold doesn't necessarily mean that the vehicle crashes—it just means the driver failed to perform the maneuver he intended. Unless the purpose of the vehicle test was to avoid crashing, the driver manages to pull away in time and can make another attempt.

DRIVING WITH AUGMENTED OR VIRTUAL REALITY

Characters who are physically driving/piloting with the aid of augmented reality (they have subscribed to the vehicle as a service) receive a +1 dice pool modifier on all Vehicle Tests. If they are remotely controlling the vehicle, they receive no bonus.

Characters who are driving a vehicle through virtual reality (whether they are directly jacked in to the vehicle or piloting it remotely), receive a –1 threshold modifier to all Vehicle Tests.

VEHICLE TEST GLITCHES

A glitch on a vehicle test causes something to go wrong with the vehicle. This can be anything from accidentally turning on the wipers to getting a flat, at the gamemaster's discretion. At its most severe, a glitch might cause a temporary loss of control; apply a –2 modifier to tests made by any characters within the vehicle. The driver must succeed in a Vehicle Test within one turn or the vehicle crashes.

If the driver gets a critical glitch on the vehicle test, then the vehicle crashes.

TERRAIN

The terrain a vehicle is moving through serves as a threshold modifier to the vehicle test, as noted on the Terrain Table. The terrain type depends on the number of obstacles that must be dodged or that block line of sight. Weather and visibility are not included in terrain and should be treated as standard dice pool modifiers.

TACTICAL COMBAT

In standard tactical combat, a vehicle is treated as an extension of the driver. Initiative is resolved as normal.

ACTIONS

Drivers must spend at least one Complex Action each turn driving their vehicle, or the vehicle goes out of control at the end of the Combat Turn. Apply a –2 dice pool modifier to all actions by characters in an uncontrolled vehicle. If the driver does not make a Vehicle Test to regain control of the vehicle in one Combat Turn, it crashes.

In most cases using any onboard vehicle accessories (sensors, vehicle weapons, etc.) requires spending a Complex Action. (However,

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TERRAIN TEST TABLE

TERRAIN TYPE	THRESHOLD MODIFIER
Open	0
Ground Example: highways, flat grassy plains	
Water Example: open seas, gently flowing rivers	
Air Example: open sky at high altitude	
Light	+1
Ground Example: main street thoroughfares (e.g., Michigan Ave.), rolling hills	
Water Example: dock areas	
Air Example: intra-city air traffic	
Restricted	+2
Ground Example: side streets, light woods, rocky mountain slopes, light traffic	
Water Example: shallow water zones, gentle rapids	
Air Example: heavy air traffic, Nape-of-earth (NOE) flying over normal traffic	
Tight	+4
Ground Example: back alleys, heavy woods, very steep slopes, high traffic streets, mud, swamp, sand	
Water Example: confined spaces (e.g, inside a pipe), heavy rapids	
Air Example: canyon gorges, flying at street level	

there may be some cases where only a Free or Simple Action is necessary, such as turning on/off Sensors or ECM, arming missiles, and so on.)

Below is a sample list of vehicle-specific actions:

FREE ACTIONS

Change Linked Device Mode: A driver who is rigging the vehicle or has a direct neural link to it may activate or deactivate various systems such as sensors, ECM, weapons, and so on as a Free Action. The driver may also call up a status report to monitor the position, heading and speed, damage report, and/or current orders of the vehicle.

Note that activated sensors, ECM, and ECCM systems come online at the start of the next Combat Turn.

SIMPLE ACTIONS

Use Sensors: A driver or passenger may use sensors to detect or lock onto targets.

Use Simple Object: This action can be used to manually activate/deactivate sensors, ECM/ECCM, weapon systems, and other onboard vehicle systems.

COMPLEX ACTIONS

Fire a Vehicle Weapon: A driver or passenger may fire a vehicle weapon.

Make Vehicle Test: A driver spends a Complex Action when executing a maneuver that requires a Vehicle Test. (It doesn't cost an action if the driver is making a Vehicle Test to avoid a crash.)

Ram: The driver may attempt to ram another vehicle (see *Ramming,* below).

RAMMING

If a driver wants to ram something (or someone) with the vehicle, treat it as a melee attack. The target must be within the vehicle's Walking or Running Range (a –3 dice modifier applies if the driver has to resort to running). The driver rolls Vehicle skill + Reaction +/– Handling to attack. The target rolls Dodge + Reaction if a pedestrian, or Vehicle skill + Reaction +/– Handling if driving another vehicle.

RAMMING DAMAGE TABLE

VEHICLE SPEED (METERS/TURN)	DAMAGE VALUE
1–20	Body ÷ 2
21–60	Body
61–200	Body x 2
201+	Body x 3

If the driver gets more hits, he hits the target. Make the damage resistance test as normal. The base Damage Value of the attack is determined by the ramming vehicle's Body and speed, as noted on the Ramming Damage Table. The ramming vehicle must resist only half that amount (round down). Characters resist ramming damage with half their Impact armor (round up).

If the ram succeeds, each driver must make an additional Vehicle Test to avoid crashing. The threshold for the ramming driver is 2; the threshold for the rammed driver is 3.

CHASE COMBAT

Chase combat is designed to abstract vehicular combat between multiple vehicles moving at high speed over a longer time frame and across larger distances than tactical combat. This covers everything from car and motorcycle chases to aerial dogfights to armored vehicles in mounted battle. Consequently the rules involved are intended for vehicle-only combat.

Chase combat is radically different from ordinary tactical combat. Because everyone is moving around quickly, it's nearly impossible and practically pointless to keep track of everyone's position. Instead, chase combat is handled in abstract terms, where each driver tries to maneuver his vehicle to gain an advantage over his opponent(s).

While Chase Combat is intended to represent combat between multiple vehicles, it assumes only two sides are involved. Should the chase involve more than two distinct sides refer to *Multiple Opponents*, p. 170.

CHASE COMBAT TURN SEQUENCE

Chase combat is in many ways similar to regular combat. Here is the sequence for resolving Chase combat:

Step 1. Opposed Vehicle Test.

Step 2. Roll Initiative. Roll Initiative as usual. All the normal rules for Initiative apply.

Step 3. Begin Chase Combat Turn.

Step 4. Declare Action/Stunts. Instead of actions, vehicles execute stunts. Like regular combat, stunts may be Free, Simple, or Complex. See *Chase Stunts.*

Step 5. Resolve Actions/Stunts by Initiative Order. Resolve as normal, from highest Initiative Score to lowest.

Step 6. Resolve Actions/Stunts in subsequent passes.

Step 7. End of Chase Turn. The Chase Turn ends. Go back to step 1. Continue resolving chase combat until all opposing vehicles involved have crashed, broken off, or been destroyed.

CHASE TURNS

Time during chase combat is measured by Chase Turns. One Chase Turn is one minute long (20 Combat Turns). As with standard combat, Chase Turns are further subdivided by Initiative Passes.

SET UP

At the beginning of the first Chase Combat Turn, the gamemaster determines the starting Range of Engagement between the two sides—

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for ease of reference all opposing vehicles on each side are treated as being at the same Engagement range to begin with. If the gamemaster deems this inappropriate with regards to the scene he's described, treat the vehicles further out under the *Multiple Opponents* rules, at right.

OPPOSED VEHICLE TEST

At the beginning of the first Chase Combat Turn, each driver makes a Vehicle Test. For every vehicle still in play on the driver's side during the Chase combat add a +2 modifier to the test. For every vehicle on the opposing side apply a –2 modifier. Then compare the Speed values of all vehicles on each side. Whichever side has the greater Speed value adds a +1 modifier for every 10 points (rounded down) that their Speed exceeds their opponents. The drivers with the most hits on either side are compared in an Opposed Vehicle Test. Ties are broken first by Edge, then Reaction, then Handling.

The rules for glitches and critical glitches on Vehicle Tests apply here.

The winning driver may change the Engagement Range for the vehicles on his side by one step with regards to all vehicles on the opposing side(s).

At the beginning of each subsequent Chase Combat Turn, if no one has succeeded to Break Off (below), each driver makes a new Vehicle Test.

ENGAGEMENT RANGE

There are four Ranges of Engagement in Chase Combat: Short, Medium, Long, and Extreme.

Short Range is very close—the vehicles are side by side or otherwise in near proximity, and may attempt to ram each other or cut each other off. This is close enough that a character could attempt to jump from one vehicle to another. This is Short range for most ranged weapon attacks.

Medium Range is near to each other, but not close enough to directly engage the other vehicle. This is Medium Range for most ranged weapon attacks.

Long Range is within sight of the other vehicle, but trailing a distance away. This is Long Range for most ranged weapon attacks.

Extreme Range is at the limit of detection and at the greatest range that engagement is still possible. This is Extreme Range for most ranged weapon attacks.

DRIVER COMPLEX ACTIONS AND CHASE STUNTS

Drivers must spend one Complex Action each Chase Turn controlling their vehicle. If they choose, they may spend this Complex Action performing one of the following Chase Stunts. A driver may only perform one Chase Stunt per Turn.

If the driver fails to spend a Complex Action controlling the vehicle, it becomes uncontrolled: apply a –2 dice modifier to the actions of all characters in the vehicle next turn. The driver must succeed in a Vehicle Test to regain control of the vehicle next turn or it will crash.

Break Off (Long Range Only): The driver tries to break contact with all other opponents and flee the scene. To do this, the driver must succeed in a Vehicle Test with a threshold modifier of +1 per pursuing vehicle after the first. The driver must succeed in this test 3 turns in a row—only then has he escaped. If at any point he fails a test, or fails to maintain Long Range, he must start to Break Off all over again.

Cut Off (Short Range Only): The driver tries to cut off another vehicle in Short Range, forcing it to crash. Make an Opposed Vehicle Test. The loser must make a Vehicle Test to avoid crashing, with the net hits generated from this test serving as a negative modifier.

Maneuver (Any Range): The driver attempts to maneuver for a better position. For each net hit he scores on a Vehicle Test (over the threshold), he adds +1 die to his Opposed Vehicle Test at the beginning of the next Chase Combat Turn.

Ram (Short Range Only): The driver attempts to collide with another vehicle in Short Range. Resolve this as noted under *Ramming,* p. 169.

PASSENGER ACTIONS

Passenger actions take place as normal, in Initiative order.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

On occasion Chase combat may involve more than two opposing sides (such as in a three way chase). In this case apply a –2 dice pool modifier to any Chase Stunts for each additional faction beyond the first that becomes involved in the action. For instance should a Lone Star helicopter be following a shadowrunning team trying to evade a corp sec unit would constitute three sides and apply a –2 dice pool modifier to everyone's tests.

In situations where vehicles on one side have a significant Speed advantage over the others, additional negative modifiers apply. Add the Speed of all the vehicles on each "side" and compare totals. For every 20 points that the highest total Speed Rating exceeds the second highest total, apply an additional –1 dice pool modifier to all Chase Stunt Tests performed by the slower factions' vehicles.

ATTACKS AGAINST VEHICLES

When a vehicle is attacked in ranged combat, the driver rolls his Reaction +/– Handling as the defense part of the Opposed Test. Drones roll their Pilot +/– Handling. See also *Rigging,* p. *244* for tests while "jumped in."

EVASIVE DRIVING

Vehicles that are under attack can take a Complex Action and undertake evasive driving—the vehicle equivalent of full defense. This means the driver of the vehicle can add his Vehicle skill dice to the defense dice pool to dodge ranged attacks (drones add their Defense autosoft rating, see p. 246). Evasive driving cannot be used against ramming attacks.

VEHICLE DAMAGE

Whenever a vehicle is hit by an attack, it resists damage as normal, rolling Body + Armor. If the attack's modified DV does not exceed the vehicle's modified Armor, no damage is applied. Note that since many vehicles will have large Body dice pools, gamemasters are encouraged to use the trade-in-dice-for-hits rule (4 dice equals 1 hit) to simplify tests. Your average tank, for example, will automatically get 4 hits on a Body Test by trade in, so there is no point in rolling unless the hits needed are higher than 4.

CRASHING

Just like Knockdown, if a vehicle takes more damage from a single attack than it has Body, then the driver must make an immediate Vehicle skill + Reaction (3) Test to avoid crashing.

A vehicle that has crashed is out of Chase Combat.

Vehicles that crash suffer damage from whatever they collide with. Apply damage as if the vehicle rammed itself (see the Ramming Damage Table, p. 169).

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CALLED SHOTS ON VEHICLES

Called shots against vehicles follow the same rules as for *Called Shots,* p. 161. Another option, however, is available to the attacker if the called shot succeeds. The attacker can choose to target and destroy any specific component of the vehicle: window, sensor, tire, etc. The gamemaster determines the exact effect of this called shot, based on the DV inflicted. In most cases, the component will simply be destroyed. Shot-out tires inflict a –2 dice pool modifier per flat tire to Vehicle Tests. Note that the attacker is calling a shot at the vehicle and not a passenger.

DAMAGE AND PASSENGERS

Attacks must specifically target either the passengers (in which case, the vehicle is unaffected) or the vehicle itself (in which case, the passengers are not affected). The exceptions to this rule are ramming, full-automatic bursts and area-effect weapon attacks like grenades and rockets—these attacks affect both passengers and vehicles.

If an attack is made against passengers, make a normal Attack Test, but the passengers are always considered to be under Good Cover (though the Blind Fire modifier may apply to the attacker as the situation dictates.) Passengers attempting to defend an attack inside a vehicle suffer a –2 dice pool modifier to their dodge, since they are somewhat limited in movement. Additionally, the passengers gain protection from the vehicle's chassis, adding the Armor of the vehicle to any personal armor the characters are wearing. Called shots may be used to circumvent one armor or the other but not both.

In the case of ramming, full-auto and area-effect attacks, both passengers and vehicles resist the damage equally.

GUNNERY

The rules for ranged combat apply to vehicle-mounted weapons. The action required for shooting weapons depends on the mode fired, same as with normal firearms, but in almost all cases vehicle weapons require a Complex Action to fire. The Gunnery skill is used for vehicle-mounted weapons.

Ordinary characters shooting handheld weapons (for example, sammies leaning out a car window firing handguns) follow the normal rules for ranged combat, except that they suffer a –3 dice pool modifier due to the motion of the vehicle. Firearms mounted on a weapon mount (a pintle mount or a ring mount) ignore this penalty.

DRONES AND GUNNERY

Drones attack using their Pilot + Targeting autosoft rating (see p. 246). Drones must have an autosoft appropriate to the weapon they are wielding in order to attack.

SENSOR TESTS

SIGNATURE TABLE

TARGET VEHICLE SPEED	MODIFIER
Large and oversized vehicles (trains, construction vehicles, zeppelins, tractor-trailers, airliners)	+3
Electric-powered (EP) vehicles	–3
Metahumans, critters	–3
Drones	–3
Micro-drones	–6

To detect a person, critter, or vehicle with sensors, the character/vehicle must make a successful Sensor + Perception Test (Sensor + Clearsight autosoft in the case of drones). If the target is trying to evade detection, make this an opposed Test versus the target's Infiltration + Agility (metahumans, critters) or Infiltration (Vehicle) + Reaction +/– Handling in the case of vehicles. Since vehicle stealth is limited by the driver's ability, the dice applied for Infiltration skill should not exceed the driver's appropriate Vehicle skill.

Sensors are designed to detect the "signature" (emissions, composition, sound, etc.) of other vehicles, so modifiers from the Signature Table apply to the detecting vehicle's dice pool.

SENSOR TARGETING

Characters can use the vehicle's Sensor Attribute to help with Gunnery. They can do this by two means: passive targeting and active targeting.

PASSIVE TARGETING

In passive targeting, the vehicle's Sensor attribute substitutes for Agility (or Pilot) as the linked Attribute, so the attacker rolls Gunnery + Sensor. The target's Signature modifiers are also applied as a dice pool modifier.

ACTIVE TARGETING

Active targeting uses a vehicle's Sensors to lock onto a target. To use active targeting, the character/vehicle must first make a Sensor Test to lock onto a target. This requires a Simple Action (see *Use Sensors,* p. 169). If the character/vehicle wins the test, the net hits are added as a dice pool modifier to the subsequent Gunnery Test. If no hits are achieved, the sensors fail to lock onto the target and an active targeting attack cannot be made.

Once a target has been locked onto, active targeting can be used against it without requiring additional Sensor Tests. If the target vehicle somehow breaks sensor contact, a new target lock must be acquired.

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BY ROBERT DERIE

La Quinzième Section,

The sun doesn't rise in the Astral, thought Desiree Demijour, as she felt the heat on her skin as dawn found her taking the ferry from Algiers to the French Quarter. Any onlooker would have seen a tall woman with classic Mediterranean features and dressed in a pale cotton suit. With her eyes closed and half-hidden by her pince-nez shades, white panama hat drawn low, anyone would have thought she was dozing against the plasteel railing. It would be an understandable mistake. Only the wand holstered on her hip gave any hint of her Talent.

To the mage-detective's Sight, the Mississippi glowed with life, the aura of fat and lazy fish swimming through the translucent shadows of the water; scuttling crawdads and hardy weeds clinging to either bank. A shiver ran through the ferry as it docked, and Desiree stepped out onto the familiar streets, dark pince-nez riding high on her face. New Orleans was probably one of the few places in the CAS where a woman walking down the street with her eyes closed wouldn't be a cause of conversation, but there were always tourists about and Desiree didn't feel like scaring the mundanes.

Breakfast was beignet and demitasse. Nothing better in the Sixth World. Desiree was just draining the dregs of her coffee when the commlink began chirping out Fairytale of New York, her fixer's code. Unlike most people, she preferred to keep her commlink strapped to the small of her back, where it was hidden by the hang of her coat, and where it could plug directly into the datajack installed in the back of her spine. It sometimes made sitting uncomfortable, but that's one of the reasons she preferred this café: the old ironwork chairs on the sidewalk were mostly open at the back, letting her lean back and sit comfortably. Desiree dialed the flare compensation on her pince-nez up before she opened her eyes; it wouldn't do to be blinded by the morning sun when she needed to read her morning mail.

There was a theft early this AM from the Voodoo Museum. Something the curators didn't want to talk to the police about. Suspicion that the thief was a magician. Pre-agreement to pay her standard day rate plus expenses, one hundred fifty thousand CAS dollars (a quick check on Brokerage X made that about fifty-six thousand nuyen at current rates) if the item was

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le Sixième Monde

recovered—no questions asked. So ... semi-legitimate job, decent cred, at least two possible magical angles, plus a mystery. Desiree signaled her acceptance and stood up, the café automatically deducting the cost of breakfast from her account. She loved a good mystery.

The Voodoo Museum was a staple of the French Quarter, an ancient tourist trap that became a veritable institution overnight with the Awakening. It was only a few blocks down from the café, around the corner from a bookstore that Desiree knew dealt in black-market grimoires under the counter. She stopped in and accessed an online lorestore, browsing through their skillsofts for something on voodoo, and selected their top model, watching the cred disappear from her account—it paid to be informed, and if necessary she could make it the first item on her expense account. Desiree loaded the program, and some of the books and items in the shop window took on new meaning—she recognized the Great Book of St. Cyprian, which some considered a sin to own or even touch—Desiree focused her concentration away from the book and the flow of facts stopped. She turned the corner and arrived at the museum. The humidity was already climbing into the nineties and a trickle of sweat ran down her sides.

Professional instinct told her she shouldn't come around to the front of the museum; it wouldn't be open for another hour yet and her employer obviously wanted to keep things quiet, so she slipped around back to the loading dock.

▼

"It was a fifteenth-century iron dagger from Benin, smuggled into the Americas aboard a slave ship and used in voodoo rituals in the Caribbean before the Awakening." Cora Rushmore, the museum curator explained. "The design of the blade, its craftsmanship, and metallurgy appear consistent with other items of that period. The exact provenance is unknown, and we were tasked with authenticating the blade and documenting what we could of its history. Aside from being an object of significant historical value, if genuine, the dagger is also enchanted. A weapon focus."

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

"Pre-Awakening?" Magical artifacts from before 2011 were nearly unheard of.

"Possibly, but impossible to confirm at this point. We only received the dagger yesterday evening and conducted a preliminary assay, then placed it in my private safe for the night. At 0527, the silent alarm in the safe went off. By the time I arrived, the thief—or thieves—were gone."

▼

The curator's private safe was disguised as a disused storage closet in the basement. The robber had apparently headed straight down here, no detours, and ripped the deceptive reinforced door off of its hinges. The walls appeared to be plasteel-reinforced ferroconcrete, and were scribed with the signs and sigils of a ward in chalk—the power in the ward was broken, but one glance at the sigils and Desiree had no doubt a houngan or other voodoo magician had drawn them, the artificial certainty that comes from a skillsoft. The safe itself was a plasteel affair connected to the floor by a chain, crumpled now by some terrific force; the door deformed and popped off its hinges. Desiree took out her gloves and brush and dusted for fingerprints, but the only prints she found were curator's.

Desiree focused her Sight on the safe. Whatever had done this might have left their signature behind in the astral. As she concentrated, the mage-detective felt traces of something; like the taste of bitter tears and a dry snakeskin drawn slowly across the front of her brain. With practiced discipline she didn't pull away from the sensation but continued to open herself to it, letting the astral signature sink in before it faded—she would recognize it when she came across it again. Still facing the safe, she turned her astral attention to the broken ward, and wasn't surprised to find the same signature there. Here, however, she found a different impression, something she had missed earlier on the safe—the dull fragments of the ward had a definite wet texture to them.

"It was a water spirit." She mused out loud. "You were right, your thief—whoever they are—is a magician. They used the spirit to break the ward, bust the door, then crack the safe."

Desiree set her commlink to take dictation and focused on where her feet were touching the floor, then drew the ivory wand from its holster. The spell was a relatively simple one, and she probably didn't need the extra power the focus provided, but Desiree didn't want to take any chances that something small and high-tech would slip through. She began the mnemonic mantra of the spell: Picture the whole room, and yourself as a part of it, as an element of it, all things broken down into elements; the Law of Synecdoche: the part is related to the whole, the whole to part, great to small, small to great, as above so below, all things that are in heaven are in hell ...

Rushmore looked suitably spooked as Desiree eyes rolled up in a light trance as the spell worked, the mage-detective's voice half an octave lower than normal as she reeled off an itemized list of the contents of the room, her ear implants dutifully recording the catalog and her commlink transcribing it into a text file. In a few seconds, Desiree finished and came out of the trance, the knowledge fading from her mind, but the text file visible before her. She browsed through, looking for something out of place ... and found it. Getting on her hands and knees, she felt under the crumpled safe, her hand closing on something scaly, and dragged it into the light. A three-toed chicken's foot grasping a marble eyeball. The perpetrator had been in such a hurry to get away, they dropped a fetish. Desiree popped the item into a plastic baggie and took off her gloves.

"I've got enough to go on for right now, ma'am. I'll keep you informed should I find anything."

▼

In her library, the afternoon sun shone in as Desiree cleared a space to draw a circle. With a draftswoman's care she laid out the circle in alchemist's paint, and then a square inside it, the corners touching the circle; she lit four candles and set them at the intersections. The old familiar words and symbols came easily to her, words and letters in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, the sigils to bind the lesser spirits to their tasks.

Mundane methods had only taken her so far, now was the time for a bit of magic.

With her left hand, Desiree plucked a hair from her head and held it to one of the candles. Hermetic lore spoke of four elements, paired as opposites: earth and air, fire and water. The flame caught the hair, and Desiree felt the burning in her fingers, focused on it, brought it forward until it filled her mind. A sudden flush came to her, and Desiree felt the heat well up inside her, seeming to radiate from her face, her hands. Desiree smiled as she felt an alien heat in answer to her own, distant but growing nearer. As soon as it had come, the fever was gone from her, a thin sheen of sweat its only reminder. In the astral before her was a figure made of flames. Vaguely humanoid in shape, but it did not move like a man. The alchemist's paint glowed like phosphorous in the dark. The sun had set hours ago while she was busy summoning and binding.

This voodoo magician likes water spirits? Desiree thought. Let's see how well he plays with fire.

With her right hand, Desiree took the chicken-foot fetish from its bag. To target someone with sorcery, Desiree needed a link to the target. Normally that would require her to see or touch the target, but there were other ways. For months she had been reading up on the Law of Contagion, practicing the exercises in her textbooks. Long association of an object with a person caused a link between them. The fetish she had taken was no longer attuned to the magician she sought, but it had been closely associated with him; touching his skin, engulfed by his aura. There was a link between them she could use.

The link between it and its master was weak, invisible to the astral eye, but present. Desiree cradled it in her right hand, feeling the textures he must have felt, feeling the oils he must have left behind on it. As she began the spell, she addressed the spirit.

"Follow the link. Find where it ends. Tell me when you do."

The spirit made no move or sign, but Desiree sensed it acknowledge her order.

Taking a breath, Desiree began her spell.

▼

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To the spirit, the fetish gave off little more warmth than an ember. By contrast, the mage was like a forge, her heat contained and channeled in and around her by the walls of her mana lodge. A corona grew around her hands, the burning ember the cold iris of a fiery eye as the spell built up around it. Then there was a flash like heat lightning, and a trail burned from the ember, away and into the cold world beyond the lodge. The spirit followed it, a burning comet in a twilight world.

The trail led across the shadow of the water, dully warm with life. Metahumans went about their business in the busy streets of the French Quarter, a moving wall of warm bodies, but the spirit was resolute on its task and passed through them. Some shook as the fiery substance of the spirit passed through their auras, but most did not even register their brush with magic. The trail led to a far building, away from the river, teaming sparks of termites burrowing through its wooden foundations; the spirit did not hesitate to pass through the chill walls to the dark spaces beyond, the trail still plain.

Now the spirit was below the living earth, the welcome warmth of it enclosing him like a shroud. There was another magician down there, a crippled engine whose fires were banked, and around him a group of mundanes. A dagger in the crippled magician's hand glowed like a burning coal, and on his chest were glowing embers like that whose trail led him here. The link led directly to the crippled magician.

The spirit announced its success; its first service complete.

▼

Desiree continued the ritual as the spirit made its report, its description of the gangan's astral signature the same as her own. She continued questioning it until she was sure she knew exactly where the crippled magician was, or at least that the spirit could lead her there if necessary.

"Wait there. I will call on you again."

Satisfied, Desiree released the spell. There was no more need for it, and no more time to waste. The last ferry would leave soon; if she missed it she'd have to drive over the bridge and probably miss whatever ceremony was going on. Quickly, the mage-detective put on her most potent talismans—a ring with a large, smoky gem; an amulet bearing a lapis lazuli Eye of Horus stolen from some Egyptian tomb; and her shoulder holster with the Ruger. With any luck, she could recover the dagger tonight.

▼

For the third time that day, Desiree took the ferry over the river. Tired by her magical exertions, she dialed her pince-nez to low-light as she walked away from the waterfront to the worst part of the French Quarter: the buildings the city was unable to afford to have repaired properly and unwilling to drop the back-taxes that kept them from being purchased by someone that could. The abandoned buildings sagged and glowered in stark contrast to the new hurricane-proof towers of the distant skyline. Desiree ignored the temptation to read the historical guide AROs each house was tagged with, and by and by found the house she was looking for, a red eye painted high on the lintel; the chain on the door cut through.

Desiree entered the house carefully, drawing the wand in her right hand. Every floorboard seemed to creak as she placed her weight on it, and some sagged alarmingly, but she carried on. The door to the cellar was marked with another red eye. Crouched at the top of the stairs, the mage-detective could hear a dozen muffled voices chanting and singing in Creole. Her skillsoft activated, and Desiree knew she was hearing an invocation to Erzulie: prayers for love to be requited, for husbands to leave their wives, for a woman to get with child. Desiree waited until she had picked out the name of the magician leading the ceremony, then called the fire spirit to her manifest around her.

The mage-detective walked down the stairs noisily, haughtily, a blazing nimbus around her head visible to all, even the mundanes. The cultists at the bottom were caught off guard by her entrance and her showy magic. They were mostly blue-collar workers, from the look of them, but in the center stood a tall and skeletally thin ork in tattered top hat and tails, face painted, a dozen chicken-foot fetishes hanging from his chest.

"Pauvre Diable! You have stolen that which is not yours." Desiree shouted, pouring on the melodrama. "Return it now, or your life and those of your followers are forfeit."

A harsh, grating laughter came, seemingly from everywhere at once. The gangan raised himself to his full height, one skeletal hand grasping the iron knife. His lips moved, and Desiree could hear his hoarse whisper in her ear as if she was standing right beside him.

"I will cut out your eyes and offer them to Erzulie Ge Rouge."

With a gesture, a rainbow-colored serpent arose around the ork magician, its scales shifting from pink coral to oily black, and launched itself at Desiree. At her own gesture, the fiery elemental surrounding her moved to intercept. As the opposing energies in their auras clashed, the fire elemental engulfed the water-serpent, and the flaming snake-shaped column of water rolled around the room, over and through the horrified and fascinated cultists, many of whom pounded up the stairs. If the spirits had been materialized on the physical plane instead of merely manifest, Desiree knew that most of the cultists would have been burned or drowned.

As the spirits moved to clash again, the mage-detective turned her attention to the water-spirit, lips tired from hours of litany forming the rite of banishment.

"By fire and water, I command thee; depart, and return no more."

Without a sign or sound, the binding on the water spirit was broken, and the uncontrolled spirit, wracked with pain from its fiery opponent, fell on the gangan. The ork magician shrieked and attempted to fend off the embroiled spirits, stabbing at them with the iron knife, but in moments the blade dropped from nerveless fingers. The water-spirit lasted little longer, Desiree's fire elemental boiling the rest of its essence away.

The mage-detective picked up the fallen dagger, eager to be away. The fire elemental stood at the ready, the horrendous damage it had suffered from the water-spirit not apparent except to Desiree's Sight.

"Servant of fire, you have served me well. I release you. Return to your own plane and recover."

The only response Desiree received was the sudden breaking of the mental link she and the spirit had shared these last few hours.

▼

In the cold and dark beneath the earth, the fire spirit came into itself, free of the mystic compunctions that bound it to its summoner.

FREE.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

THE BASICS

The Awakened world is permeated by *mana,* the energy of magic. Mana is invisible and intangible. It cannot be detected, measured, or influenced by machines, only by living beings. Mana is sensitive to emotion and responds to the will of the Awakened. It allows magicians to cast spells and summon spirits (the arts of Sorcery and Conjuring, respectively). Mana also makes the powers of adepts and various Awakened creatures possible (for more about Awakened creatures, see p. 292).

Magic can be defined as the manipulation of mana. Sorcery is the manipulation of mana to create or influence effects known as spells; Conjuring manipulates mana to call forth or affect spirits.

AWAKENED ATTRIBUTES

Awakened creatures and magical effects have their magical potency measured by either the Magic or Force attributes. Magic is the attribute possessed by Awakened creatures—including metahumans—while Force is the principle attribute for magic items and entities of pure mana—spirits and spells.

THE AWAKENED WORLD

THEORIES ON THE NATURE OF MAGIC

—FROM THE MANUAL OF PRACTICAL THAUMATURGY, 32ND EDITION

ON THE THREE REALMS

Magicians are aware of three "realms" of existence. The first is the physical realm, our natural physical world, and all of its corresponding physical laws.

On one "side" of us, we have the astral realm. The astral realm occupies the same "space" as the physical plane, but has different "physical" ("astral?") laws. It is always there, right next door, just a step sideways. It thrives on life, and so emotion, thought, and spirit are emphasized on the astral. Without life, there is no astral space; and so without a thriving gaiasphere to support it, the astral plane does not extend into space.

On the other side (and curving around, as it were, to meet the astral plane on its far edge) we have the metaplanar realm. The metaplanes are not one place but many, and their true nature and purpose are beyond the ken of ordinary magicians.

Each realm is separated by a barrier, a wall of sorts that stops us from randomly wandering from one realm into another. Magicians have learned to extend their senses onto the astral realm, to astrally perceive what goes on there. Full magicians can actually leave their physical bodies and project their spirits onto the astral plane. Psychic travel to the metaplanes is also possible, but is a much more complicated affair.

ON MANA

Mana, the essence of magic, saturates all three realms. It is everywhere, connecting everything—one big mana field linking all life together.

Some compare mana to a flowing river—an analogy useful to describe the ley, dragon, and chi power lines. It is more accurate to describe it like the waves of an ocean, circulating in currents throughout the three realms. In the physical realm, we know that mana flows in cycles—sometimes the ambient mana is rich and magic is possible (like now), but sometimes the level is poor and magic becomes difficult if not impossible (as it was before the Awakening). According to research, myth, and the accounts of some great dragons, we currently live in the sixth cycle of magic—the Sixth World.

On the physical plane, mana cannot be seen, tasted, or touched, but the Awakened can sense it and manipulate it. The mana here seems inherently tied to the mana on the astral plane, flowing in the same eddies and currents.

Mana casts reflections of living things, called auras, from the physical plane onto the astral. Auras are intangible on the astral plane—astral entities pass right through them—but those who can assense them can gather information from them. Anything magical in nature also casts a reflection on the astral; spells—the manipulation of mana—on the physical plane have a visible aura on the astral plane. Non-living things have no aura.

Certain creatures and items (especially active foci) that are infused with magic lend a certain resonance to the mana flow that allows them to exist in both the physical and astral planes at the same time. These are called dual beings. Much as mana reflects auras into the astral, the reflection of dual beings into the astral is strong enough to create an astral form for these beings. Dual beings exist on both sides of the barrier simultaneously, and their astral and physical forms are connected. Awakened entities who astrally perceive are also striking this chord of resonance and creating astral forms; they too are dual beings. Spells are never dual-natured, because they are created through mana, and mana permeates both planes.

Because the astral plane is fueled by life force, it is lit with a glow that emanates from the gaiasphere itself. Things that exist on the physical can be seen and heard from the astral, though any non-living objects appear as gray, faded semblances of their physical appearance. The auras of living things are vibrant and colorful.

Anything that exists on the astral plane has an astral form—projecting full magicians, spirits, dual beings, and so on. Astral forms are solid and substantial on the astral plane and are more colorful and brighter than auras. Astral forms cannot pass through each other. The earth itself, as a source of life, has an astral form.

ON THE MANIPULATION OF MANA

Magical skills are defined as the manipulation of mana. Sorcery is the manipulation of mana to create effects known as spells; Conjuring manipulates mana to call forth, create, or affect spirits.

Sorcery involves the intuitive manipulation of the mana field by a magician, who shapes it in certain ways for certain effects. A good metaphor for this is to equate the mana field with the airwaves, making the use of Sorcery the transmission of certain radio signals that create different effects. To cast a spell, a magician channels mana through herself and transmits it on a specific frequency. The act of channeling is fatiguing to a magician, and causes drain. The signal that the magician creates is based on a spell formula that the magician has learned, determining its form and effect. The target of the spell is the radio signal receiver, and the signal is sent on the target's frequency. When the signal is received, it channels mana through the target to create a specified effect (thus Direct Combat spells bypass armor, because they affect the target from within). All of this occurs on the same plane—physical or astral—as the magician and the target.

Area-effect spells work roughly the same way, except that instead of transmitting a signal to one target, the caster sends the signal out on multiple frequencies corresponding with the targets within the area of effect. If there are targets within the area that the caster cannot see, they will not be affected, because the caster cannot synchronize with them to transmit the spell signal on a frequency they will receive.

The metaphor continues with counterspelling, which equates to "jamming" the mana field, disrupting all frequencies within an area of effect so that a spell is jammed and thus disrupted.

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MAGIC

The Magic attribute is only available to characters with the Magician, Adept, or Mystic Adept qualities (pp. 90, 91, 92). Magic is a Special attribute that measures the character's magical power. Like other attributes, Magic has a starting value of 1. The Magic attribute may be increased in the same way as other attributes, to a maximum of 6. Magical study and insight can raise a magician's Magic attribute beyond the normal maximum though a process called *initiation* (p. 198 for more information).

Anything that reduces a character's Essence will also reduce Magic. For every point (or fraction thereof) of Essence lost, the character's Magic attribute and her Magic maximum rating are reduced by one. A character with a Magic of 4, for example, whose Essence is reduced to 5.8 has her Magic immediately reduced to 3 and her maximum to 5. Further Essence reductions do not reduce the character's Magic again until Essence drops below 5.

If a character's Magic is ever reduced to 0, she can no longer perform any kind of magic. The magician has "burned out," losing all magical ability and becoming a mundane forever. She retains all magical skills and knowledge, but lacks the ability to use them. Active skills become Knowledge skills.

FORCE

Spells, spirits, and magic items (foci) have an attribute known as Force. This measures the magical power of the object, spell, or being. Force is measured on the same scale as metahuman attributes (natural 1 to 6). For spells and foci, this is often their only attribute.

MAGIC USE

The use of magic largely revolves around the Magic-linked skills of the Sorcery and Conjuring skill groups, though Arcana and Enchanting are essential to round out the versatile magician.

SORCERY

Sorcery is the term used for manipulating spells in Shadowrun. Sorcery is a skill group composed of the Spellcasting, Ritual Spellcasting, and Counterspelling skills.

SPELLCASTING

When a magician casts a spell, the player first chooses the Force of the spell and then rolls her Spellcasting + Magic dice. Other sources of power (foci, spirit spellcasting aid) and Visibility modifiers (p. 136) may affect the dice pool. The success of a spell is measured by the number of hits attained on the test, though some spells may require a minimum number of hits before they work.

Using Spellcasting requires a complex action. For more information on spellcasting, see p. 182.

RITUAL SPELLCASTING

Ritual Spellcasting is the process of casting a spell over a longer duration, usually with a group of magicians. Ritual Spellcasting allows the magicians involved to cast a spell at a target they cannot see.

Hits scored on a Ritual Spellcasting + Magic Test determine the success of a ritual spell. Additional magicians on the ritual team grant bonus dice to the Ritual Spellcasting Test.

Ritual Spellcasting is a Complex Action that requires an extensive length of time to complete (as long as 12 hours). For more information, see p. 184.

COUNTERSPELLING

Counterspelling is used to interrupt other spells, either as they are being cast or while they are sustained. For spell defense, Counterspelling dice are added to each protected defender's dice pool. When dispelling, a Counterspelling + Magic Opposed Test is made against the target spell's Force + caster's Magic, with net hits reducing the hits scored to cast the spell. For more information, see p. 185.

CONJURING

Conjuring is the skill group used to deal with spirits. The group is composed of the Summoning, Banishing, and Binding skills.

SUMMONING

The Summoning skill deals with the calling and commanding of spirits. When a magician summons a spirit, she first chooses the Force of the spirit she wishes to summon and then makes a Summoning + Magic Opposed Test against the spirit's Force. Other sources of power (such as Summoning or power foci) may add to the summoner's dice pool. Net hits scored determine the number of services that the spirit owes. The services of a summoned spirit remain only until sunrise or sunset, whichever comes first, unless the spirit is bound to the magician (see *Binding,* p. 188).

Summoning is a Complex Action. For more information, see p. 188.

BANISHING

The Banishing skill is used to sever the magical ties between a spirit and its summoner, freeing the spirit to return to its native metaplane. In order to banish a spirit, the magician makes a Banishing + Magic Opposed Test against the spirit's Force (or Force + summoner's Magic for bound spirits). Each hit reduces the services owed by that spirit by one. If the services are reduced to 0, the spirit returns to its home unless a magician immediately moves to summon it once again.

Banishing requires a Complex Action. See p. 188.

BINDING

The Binding skill is used to compel spirits into a longer period of service. Bound spirits can perform a wider variety of services for magicians. Binding is an Opposed Test pitting the character's Binding + Magic against the spirit's Force x 2. This test requires a number of hours equal to the spirit's Force.

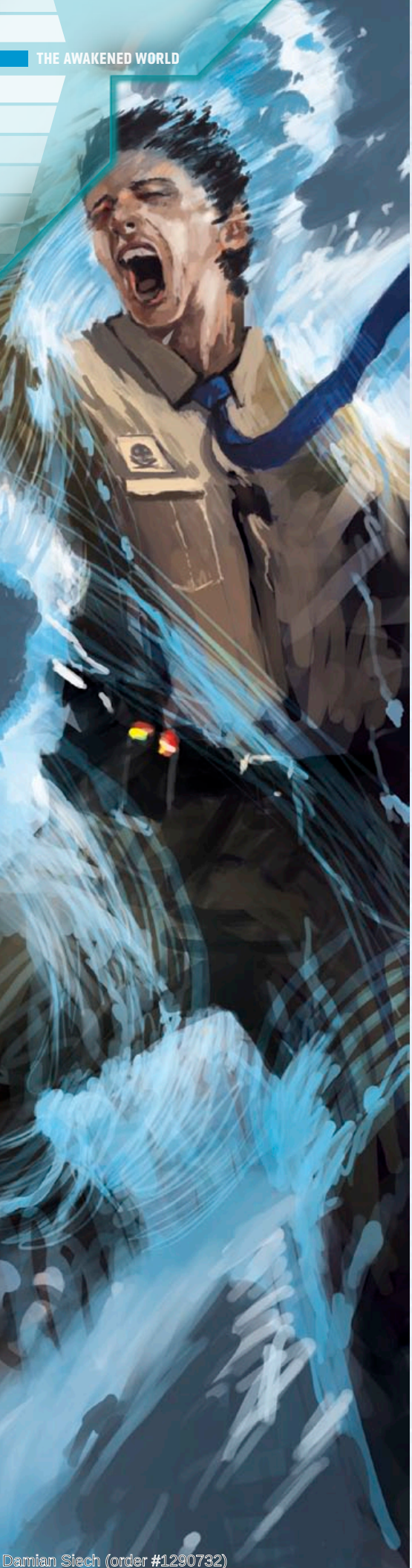
If the magician gains one net hit, the spirit is magically bound to him. The services it owes from its original summoning will remain until expended, rather than expiring at sunrise or sunset. Each additional net hit after the first further increases the number of services owed by the spirit by one.

For more information on binding spirits, see p. 188.

ARCANA

The Arcana skill is what a magician uses to translate his magical tradition's arcane formulations and magical theory into practical magical formulas. These formulas can take a variety of physical shapes, forms, and materials appropriate to each tradition. Whether they take the form of parchment scrolls or whalebone statuettes, these formulas distill arcane knowledge and symbolism into a material representation that can be used to design a focus (or develop a new spell). While of limited application under the basic rules, Arcana is greatly expanded upon in the advanced magic rulebook, *Street Magic*.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)



ENCHANTING

Enchanting is the skill magicians use to tap the latent potency in natural elements and transform them into magical goods. Its most common use is in the artificing of foci and other magical items. Enchanting is complex and requires time, concentration, and appropriate tools. Details about the usage of Enchanting can be found in the *Enchanting* section (p. 190). *Street Magic* features complete rules for creating a variety of additional magical goods and introduces other useful applications of Enchanting.

DRAIN

The effort of manipulating mana can exhaust or even injure a magician. As mana is a form of energy, channeling greater quantities of that energy may strain the body and mind. The effect of this strain is referred to as *Drain.* Magical actions that cause Drain have a *Drain Value*, much like a weapon's Damage Value.

All magicians use Willpower plus another mental attribute appropriate to their tradition to resist Drain. For example, most hermetic mages use Willpower + Logic to resist all Drain while shamans use Willpower + Charisma.

example

Salamander has just cast a Manabolt with 2 net hits and must now resist the Drain (Drain Damage Value 3 + 2). He's a hermetic mage, so he uses his Logic 5 in addition to Willpower 3 to resist Drain DV5. Rolling 8 dice, he gets only 3 hits, so he suffers 2 boxes of Stun damage from Drain.

The base Drain Value for Spellcasting is listed in the spell's description (p. 203). For Summoning and Binding spirits, the Drain Value is twice the number of hits (not net hits) generated by the spirit during the Opposed Test.

Each hit on the Drain Resistance Test reduces the Drain Value by one. Any remaining Drain is suffered by the magician. Drain is usually Stun damage, though there are situations in which it can be transformed into Physical damage (see the *Sorcery* and *Conjuring* sections). Neither Stun nor Physical damage resulting from Drain can be healed by magical means such as sorcery or spirit powers.

MAGICAL LODGES

In order to progress in her studies, a magician must have a collection of symbols, writings, tools, and other material that allows her to record her progress, gives her room to expand her knowledge, and assists her in her magical endeavors. Such a collection of items and information is known as a magical lodge. Magicians of the same tradition can share a magical lodge.

A magical lodge is required to improve Magic-linked skills, learn new spells, and perform Ritual Spellcasting. A lodge has a Force rating that is used to measure its power. The Force of a lodge must be at least equal to the skill rating being learned or the force of a spell being cast (in the case of Ritual Spellcasting).

A lodge costs 500¥ per Force point, and the lodge's rating can be improved later. The money is spent to buy the supplies used to build the lodge. Once the supplies are gathered, the magician must complete an activation ritual that will "awaken" the lodge and construct its astral presence. The actual process requires 1 day per point of Force desired. An activated lodge acts as an astral barrier (p. 194). Any magicians involved in the activation of the lodge are unaffected by this barrier, and can allow other astral forms to pass through it at will. A lodge contains the astral signatures of the magicians who activated it (see *Astral Signatures,* p. 192), and is magically linked to them. This link can be tracked using astral projection (see *Astral Tracking,* p. 193).

To increase the rating of an existing lodge, additional materials must be acquired. An activation ritual must also be performed, taking a number of days equal to the difference between the current Force and the desired Force. The cost of searching and gathering can be simplified to a cost of 500¥ per Force point. Improving a Force 4 lodge to Force 6, for example, would cost 1,000¥ and take two days of ritual.

The contents of a lodge vary according to a magician's tradition. Hermetic lodges contain ritual tools such as daggers, scrollwork, runes, and—above all—books (though virtual libraries are increasingly common). Shamans are known to have crystals, stones, hides, colored sand or paint, herbs, and so forth.

Lodges can be established almost anywhere. While the contents of a lodge can be moved, lodges are not portable. It is an Awakened place, more than the sum of the objects it contains. After being moved a lodge must be set up again and a new activation ritual performed.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

NOTICING MAGIC

Just how obvious are magical skills? Not very, since most spells and spirits have little, if any, visible effect in the physical world (unless the magician prefers to have flashy effects, or her tradition calls for it). An observer has to notice the magician's intense look of concentration, whispered incantations, and small gestures. Magicians of some traditions display a more visible change when practicing magic known as the shamanic mask. The shamanic mask typically changes the magician's features temporarily to display characteristics appropriate to her mentor spirit or tradition—an eagle shaman, for example, might seem to have feathers or beaklike features while spellcasting or summoning.

Noticing if someone is using a magical skill requires a Perception Test (p. 135) with a threshold equal to 6 minus the magic's Force. More powerful magic is easier to spot with the gathered mana normally appearing as a disturbance or glowing aura in the air around the caster. The gamemaster should apply additional modifiers as appropriate, or if the perceiver is Awakened themselves (+2 dice), astrally perceiving (+2 dice), or if a shamanic mask is evident (+2 dice).

MAGIC ACTIONS

The following list describes the magically oriented Free, Simple, and Complex Actions a character may take, as noted under *The Action Phase*, p. 146.

FREE ACTIONS

Centering: An initiate may take a Centering action to focus himself and block out distractions in order to better resist Drain. See *Centering,* p. 198.

Deactivate Focus: An Awakened character may deactivate a focus that is bound to him as a Free Action, turning the focus off. See *Foci,* p. 199.

Declare Counterspelling Protection: A magician who wishes to protect others with Counterspelling (p. 185) must spend a Free Action and declare it in advance (a magician never needs to declare that he is using Counterspelling on himself).

Drop Sustained Spell: A magician may drop a sustained spell as a Free Action.

SIMPLE ACTIONS

Activate Focus: An Awakened character may take a Simple Action to activate a focus that is bonded to him. Note that activating a sustaining focus requires the magician to cast a spell and thus is a Complex Action. See *Activation,* p. 199.

Call Spirit: A magician can use a Simple Action to call forth a spirit that was previously conjured and placed on "standby." See *Conjuring,* p. 186. More than one bound spirit may be called at once with the same Simple Action if they are all of the same type (fire spirits, for example). See *Binding,* p. 188.

Command a Spirit: Using a Simple Action, a magician may issue a command to a spirit under his control. More than one spirit may be commanded in this manner if they are all given the same command. See *Conjuring,* p. 186.

Dismiss Spirit: A magician can use a Simple Action to send a conjured spirit away on "standby." See *Conjuring,* p. 186.

Shift Perception: A Simple Action allows a magician to shift perception to or from astral space. Actual astral projection requires a Complex Action. See *Astral Perception,* p. 191.

COMPLEX ACTIONS

Astral Projection: A magician may project his spirit onto the astral plane by taking a Complex Action. Returning to his physical body also takes a Complex Action. Note that once on the astral, maintaining astral projection does not require an action. See *Astral Projection,* p. 192.

Banish Spirit: A magician can attempt to banish a spirit by taking a Complex Action. See *Banishing,* p. 188.

Cast Spell: A magician may cast a spell by taking a Complex Action. See *Spellcasting,* p. 182.

Erase Astral Signature: A magician using astral perception may take a number of Complex Actions equal to the Force of an astral signature to erase it completely. See *Astral Signatures,* p. 192.

Summon Spirit: A magician may summon a spirit by taking a Complex Action. See *Summoning,* p. 188.

STREET MAGIC

The advanced magic rulebook for *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* introduces numerous new options for all magical characters and plenty of material for gamemasters too:

- 18 additional magical traditions and 5 Adept ways
- Advanced initiation rules and 23 metamagic techniques
- Rules for magical groups and 14 groups
- Advanced Enchanting rules
- Advanced spirit rules, including 4 more basic spirits, ally spirits, free spirits, and wild spirits
- Advanced rules for astral space and the Metaplanes, including astral phenomena like background count
- New Magical threats: twisted magicians, toxic magic, shadow spirits, insect spirits, and shedim
- Rules for Arcana use and spell design plus more than a hundred new spells
- 43 adept powers
- 17 mentor spirits

MAGIC ACTIONS LIST

FREE ACTIONS
- Centering
- Deactivate Focus
- Declare Counterspelling Protection
- Drop Sustained Spell

SIMPLE ACTIONS
- Activate Focus
- Call Spirit
- Command a Spirit
- Dismiss Spirit
- Shift Perception

COMPLEX ACTIONS
- Astral Projection
- Banish Spirit
- Cast Spell
- Erase Astral Signature
- Summon Spirit

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

TRADITIONS

Magic is a very personal and often-debated subject. There are a multitude of belief systems and methods of working magic practiced across the world. These differing magic worldview paradigms are called *traditions.* While there are some predominant schools of magical thought, each magician finds her own means of practicing magic, typically following whatever path she was taught when she first Awakened. This path can come from a metahuman teacher, a mentor spirit, a collection of writings such as those found in universities, or it can be created out of whole cloth by a self-taught individual (though most of these who survive are lucky rather than great).

While discovering and exploring a tradition can take an entire lifetime for a character, in game terms the creation of a tradition is far simpler. Two examples of the most commonly followed traditions—hermetic and shamanic—are provided here for use by players who do not wish to create their own.

CREATING A TRADITION

To create a tradition, the player must choose the following:

1. What the concept of that tradition is.
2. The types of spirits that followers of that tradition can summon.
3. The magical associations of those spirit types.
4. The means by which followers of that tradition resist Drain.

Though only some of these decisions have a tangible rules representation, the paradigm is as vital to the magician as the air we breathe. Put simply, a tradition is nothing more than belief made concrete by those who have the will and ability to give it shape. The gamemaster and the player should work together to create a tradition that makes sense within the scope of their specific game and the *Shadowrun* universe as a whole.

CONCEPT

The core of any tradition is its system of beliefs. How does magic work? *Why* does magic work? These often-debated theories and concepts explain where magical power comes from and how metahuman magicians can learn to manipulate it. The fundamental beliefs of any tradition have no game effect, but they may color a magician's worldview, roleplaying, and relationships with other characters.

It is fundamental to sketch out a tradition's core philosophy before detailing how the tradition works in game terms. Does your character believe that magic is simply a practical arcane science, and that spirits are simply semi-sentient entities molded by metahuman will? Is her gift a side effect of her personal relationship with Dog, and dependent upon their close empathic link? Does she view the talent as a spiritual art form, to be exercised on the path of true enlightenment? Or does she believe her power is channeled to Dog through her devotion to the spirits, with whom she must bargain for favors? Each of these ideas is a stepping stone to fleshing out how the character perceives herself in relation to the cosmos.

For example, the hermetic tradition teaches that mana is an energy that flows throughout the known world. It obeys natural laws which are different from, but parallel to, the laws of physics. Manipulation of this energy is accomplished by will alone, and understanding allows magicians to better master themselves and mana. Thus hermetics tend to be scientific, rational, and structured in their approach, adhering to and improving upon established formulae and methodologies.

MAGIC AND SPIRITS

Each tradition can master five types of spirits. Different traditions call spirits by different names, but what separates one type of spirit from another is its essential nature. Thus, whether a particular spirit is named a wind spirit or air elemental, its essential nature is unchanged, and both are fundamentally different from a water sylph or spirit of the waves. The innate nature and powers of a spirit are independent of the tradition of the magician who summons it, though the particular way in which the spirit appears will vary according to the magician's outlook. A fire spirit, for example, might take the form of a living fireball to a mage, a fiery lizard to a volcano worshipper, or an angel with a flaming sword to a Christian theurge.

A tradition associates each of its spirit types with a category of magic. These associations serve to color how that tradition views a particular type of spirit. They also limit how a bound spirit of that type may serve a magician of that tradition (see *Spirit Services*, p. 186). For examples of spirit associations with magic, see *Spirits*, p. 302.

As part of the concept for a tradition, the relationship between magicians and mentor spirits—and some understanding of what a mentor spirit is—must also be established. Mentor spirits may be anything from ancestor spirits to loa, totems, abstract concepts, or personal demons who whisper the secrets of the universe.

DRAIN ATTRIBUTE

Every tradition relies on Willpower to resist Drain. In addition, each tradition uses one other mental attribute (Intuition, Logic, or Charisma) to assist in Drain resistance. The attribute used is the same for all members of that tradition and may not be changed later.

EXAMPLE TRADITIONS

Two traditions with a significant presence in *Shadowrun* are hermeticism and shamanism. Hermetic magic is intellectual. These magicians see the universe as a complex pattern of forces that can be controlled with the right formulae and rituals. Magical knowledge comes from intense study and research. Hermetic magicians often call themselves *mages.*

Shamanic magicians focus their magic through their relationship with the world of nature and the power of emotion and inspiration. To them, the world is a swirl of natural energies, most of which have personalities of their own. Shamanic magicians are referred to as *shamans.*

THE HERMETIC TRADITION

Concept: The scientific study of magic as a complex pattern of elemental forces that can be controlled with the right formulae and rituals.

Combat: Fire
Detection: Air
Health: Man
Illusion: Water
Manipulation: Earth
Drain: Willpower + Logic

A hermetic magician's ability to perform magic comes from the study of a complex set of theories that describe mana, the dimensions of astral space, and how they interact with the physical world. The science of thaumaturgy, as this discipline is called, draws those who rely on logic and reason as their means of evaluating the world. As with any vibrant field, while the basics are largely agreed upon, the theories as to how it all works and what magic can do are as varied as the mages themselves. By seeking understanding, mages can perform magic through ritual and focused power of will.

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Hermetic magic was studied widely even before the Awakening. The reasoned, intellectual nature of thaumaturgy appealed to corporate and government interests, who fostered hermetic magic even as society at large retained its skepticism. Once shamans like the Ghost Dancers proved the power of magic to the public at large, however, people took serious interest in the arts of the mage. While both traditions were eventually legitimized in the eyes of the public, far more mages work for corporations than shamans do even today. (*You* try telling a Coyote shaman he only gets an hour for lunch.)

Mages are scholars who study and practice magic using tried and established formulas and procedures. Mages continually research the theories and laws of magic, seeking a deeper understanding of the structure of the universe. As their knowledge increases, so does their power.

Mages summon spirits that represent the basic building blocks of the universe: air, earth, fire, and water. These are called elemental spirits in hermetic theory. In addition, they may summon a "fifth element" of consciousness: the spirits of man. The realization of these elemental spirits of the mind are a recent development and mages differ on what they believe these spirits to be. Some refer to the spirits of man as ghosts, while others call them mind or consciousness elementals. Some few even view these entities as ancestor spirits.

THE SHAMANIC TRADITION

Concept: Magic comes from a shaman's connection to the power of nature and the spirits. These latter forces are manifestations of the living Earth. Shamans are guided and aided by her children, the spirits, often through the auspices of a mentor spirit they call a totem.

Combat: Beasts
Detection: Water
Health: Earth
Illusion: Air
Manipulation: Man
Drain: Willpower + Charisma

When the Awakening brought magic to the world, native tribal shamans were some of the first to successfully use it. Shamanism also developed in many urban areas during the boom in occultism at the close of the 20th century. These "urban shamans" discovered the old ways worked in the cities just as well as in the wilderness. Shamans are in tune with the natural flow of the energies of life and magic.

To a shaman, the world is filled with living spirits, powers the shaman calls on for magical aid. Shamanic magicians summon spirits that are tied to nature: air, earth, water, beasts, and man. To a shaman, these are the spirits of the natural world. They are spirits of skies and storms, of mountains and valleys, of lakes and rivers, of birds and rats, and of the mass of humanity, for even man is a part of nature. Communion and trafficking with such spirits is a venerable and honored tradition among shamans.

Most shamans have a mentor spirit called a totem who gives the shaman magical power and knowledge. The shaman, in turn, follows the ideals represented by the totem and works toward its goals where applicable. Many shamans find that this totem expresses itself through them when they use magical skills, often changing their appearance slightly to suggest their totem animal . This phenomenon is called a shamanic mask (see *Noticing Magic,* p. 179). A player can choose whether or not this effect is apparent for her character.

SPELL CATEGORIES

Combat spells are quick, dirty, and violent. The energy of the spell is used to harm the target. Spell energy may be channeled directly into the target, damaging it from within, or it may generate external energy to damage the target from the outside.

Detection spells enhance the senses. They allow the subject of the spell to see or hear over great distances, or grant new sensory abilities like ESP (Extra Sensory Perception). There are also detection spells to sense the presence of other beings, magic, life, and enemies.

Health spells affect the condition and performance of a living body. They can be used to treat or heal injuries, purge poisons or toxins, and increase or decrease attributes.

Illusion spells fool the senses. They can be used to deceive, make things invisible, confuse the senses, or provide simple or complex entertainments.

Manipulation spells transform, transmute, and control matter and energy. They are powerful and complex spells, often exhausting to cast. Manipulation spells can control the emotions or actions of a person, move objects, shape, create, or channel energy, or change a target's form or appearance by altering its structure.

SORCERY

Sorcery is the art of shaping mana to create specific magical effects. It can be used to cast spells (Spellcasting and Ritual Spellcasting) as well as to protect against or eliminate them (Counterspelling). Different traditions teach wildly different philosophies and methods of interacting with magical forces. Regardless of these differences, however, a magician doesn't have to do anything other than concentrate in order to cast a spell. All the chanting, gestures, dancing, and other things are just window-dressing. All traditions cast spells using the same rules.

SPELLS

As mentioned, a spell is the manifestation of the caster's will, created either through formula or inspiration. While spell effects can take on a variety of forms, there are a few effects that have become so common as to be considered standard spells. These spells are listed in the *Street Grimoire* section, p. 203.

Spells have a number of characteristics that can be used for comparison between them. These characteristics are Type, Category, Range, Threshold, Duration, Force, Drain Value, and Effect. These are discussed in detail at the beginning of the *Spells* section, p. 203.

SPELLS 101

When looking at a spell, the first thing to determine about it is how it interacts with its target. Just as there are both the physical and the astral planes, like two sides of a coin, a caster can choose to either affect a target's physical form or to channel the spell into the aura of a creature—what many traditions believe to be the very essence of its life force.

SPELL FORMULAE COSTS

SPELL CATEGORY	FORMULAE COST	PERSONAL INSTRUCTION COST
Combat	2,000¥	Instruction skill x 1,500¥
Detection	500¥	Instruction skill x 250¥
Health	500¥	Instruction skill x 250¥
Illusion	1,000¥	Instruction skill x 500¥
Manipulation	1,500¥	Instruction skill x 1,000¥

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A spell that affects a target physically is called a *physical* spell, while a spell that affects a target through mana is called a *mana* spell. A physical spell can only affect a target that has a physical form, and is incapable of affecting an astral form (see the *Astral World,* p. 191). Mana spells can only affect living things or entities composed of mana—such as spirits or foci.

Beyond the initial division into physical and mana types, spells are also grouped into categories based on their intended effect. There are five categories: Combat, Detection, Health, Illusion, and Manipulation.

FORCE

A spell's only attribute is its Force—the measure of the spell's raw power. A spell's Force helps determine its effectiveness and its Drain. The Force of a spell is chosen by the caster during spellcasting, typically at a value up to the Magic attribute of the magician who cast it. The maximum Force that a spell can be cast at is equal to twice the character's Magic.

For simplicity, you may wish to decide that spells are always cast at a Force equal to the character's Magic attribute unless otherwise noted. This makes it slightly easier to keep track of spell effects and Drain (see *Simplifying Spell Drain,* p. 203).

A spell's Force limits the number of hits (not net hits) that can be achieved on the Spellcasting Test. So if you cast a Force 3 spell and get 5 hits, only 3 of those hits count. In other words, Force has a limiting effect on spells—the more oomph you put into the spell, the better you can succeed with it. This limitation does not apply to Edge dice that are used to boost a spell.

Overcasting: Magicians may cast spells at a Force higher than their Magic ratings (known as *Overcasting*), but this causes the spell Drain to be Physical damage rather than Stun.

LEARNING SPELLS

Before a magician can cast a spell, she must learn it. A magician can learn a spell from either a spell formula or from another magician, but the source has to be of a compatible tradition (gamemaster's discretion). A magician must have a magical lodge in order to experiment with and master what she has learned, adapting it to her own personal style and understanding of the magical world.

For most magicians (especially mages), the archaic master-apprentice model of learning a spell has largely passed by the wayside. Given the proliferation of magical information on the Matrix, learning from formulae has become the default method of learning new spells. Finding a spell formula is as easy as checking the Matrix.

The Matrix is also a good source of instructors, without the hassle of traveling to a remote location to learn a single spell. An increasing number of magicians of all traditions have been seeking out instructors online and learning their trade without ever meeting their teachers face-to-face. The nature of sorcery, however, makes virtual spell instructors useless.

In order to gain access to a formula or instructor, the character must pay the costs as listed on the Spell Formulae Costs table. Individual NPCs and sources may vary their prices somewhat depending on circumstances, but the table lists the going market rate. Certain spells (especially combat spells and mental manipulations) are illegal or controlled in some jurisdictions, so characters must engage caution when pursuing them, or look to black market providers/teachers. In addition, a character must expend 5 permanent Karma points per spell learned. The costs are the same whether the instruction is in person or through the Matrix.

Once a magician has access to a spell formula or teacher, she makes a Spellcasting + Intuition (5, 1 day) Extended Test. Instructors can make an Instruction Test (p. 134) to add extra dice to the learning test. Totem modifiers and the assistance of bound spirits may also add dice. All injury modifiers apply, as do distractions for sustaining spells, poor conditions, and so on.

A character engaged in learning a spell must work on it for consecutive days. Learning a spell does not require *all* of the character's attention during those days, but the magician must be able to devote 8 hours each day solely to learning the spell until she has it mastered. Should a day be missed before the test is completed, the character automatically fails the test and does not learn the spell. No Karma is expended in this case, but any money spent on instruction is lost.

LIMITED SPELLS

When learning a spell, a magician may choose to accept limitations on her ability to cast that spell. In exchange, the magician will have an easier time resisting the drain caused by the limited spell. These limitations on spellcasting come in the form of *fetishes*—reusable objects with minor enchantments appropriate to the magician's tradition.

Fetishes are available for sale from talismongers or other magicians, and are made for a specific category of spells (combat, detection, and so on). A given fetish can only be used for spells of that category. When the spell is learned, it is attuned to that particular fetish.

A magician cannot cast a limited spell without the fetish touching her body. If the fetish is lost, a new one must be tracked down and re-attuned to both the magician and the spell (requiring an Intuition + Magic [5, 1 hour] Extended Test). For examples of items used as fetishes, see *Foci,* p. 199.

When casting a spell attuned to the fetish, the magician gains +2 dice to resist Drain from casting that spell.

SPELLCASTING

The heart of the art of sorcery is spellcasting. While there are multiple ways to think of and learn about magic, in the end it all comes down to the spell you cast and what you do with it. The Spellcasting skill is what allows a magician to cast a spell, channeling mana through her own force of will to affect the target of her choice.

STEP 1: CHOOSE A SPELL

When casting a spell, the first thing a magician does is prepare for what she's about to attempt. First, the character chooses the spell she wants to cast. She can cast any spell she knows. If the magician has any other spells currently active, called sustained spells (see *Step 7: Ongoing Effects,* p. 184), she must choose whether to drop them or keep them active while she casts the new spell. Sustained spells are a distraction and will reduce the character's dice pool for any other tests by –2 per sustained spell. Dropping a sustained spell is a Free Action.

SPELLCASTING BY THE NUMBERS

Step 1: *Choose a Spell.*
Step 2: *Choose the Force* up to the caster's Magic attribute (unless overcasting—at left).
Step 3: *Choose a Target* within the caster's line of sight.
Step 4: *Roll Spellcasting + Magic.*
Step 5: *Determine Effect* (see spell description).
Step 6: *Resist Drain* by rolling Willpower + tradition's Drain attribute.
Step 7: *Determine Ongoing Effects* (–2 sustaining modifier).

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STEP 2: CHOOSE THE FORCE

Next, the character must choose the Force of the spell. The maximum Force a spell can be cast at equals the spellcaster's Magic rating x 2. Casting a spell with a Force that exceeds the magician's Magic rating is considered dangerous *Overcasting* (p. 182), however, causing Physical Drain rather than Stun.

STEP 3: CHOOSE THE TARGET(S)

The next thing a magician must do when casting a spell is choose her target(s). A metahuman spellcaster can target anyone or anything she can see directly with her natural vision. Physical cyber- or bio-enhancements paid for with Essence can be used to spot targets, but any technological visual aids that substitute themselves for the character's own visual senses—cameras, electronic binoculars, Matrix feeds, etc.—cannot be used. Some spells can only be cast on targets that the caster touches—these targets do not need to be seen, but the caster must succeed in an unarmed attack to touch an unwilling target of such a spell.

The act of choosing a target establishes a mystic link between caster and target. It is through this "targeting link" which the mana of a spell construct is channeled to produce a spell effect. Under the basic *Shadowrun* rules, such a link requires line of sight or touch. Line of sight can even be established using reflective surfaces and through transparent objects, and is subject to normal visibility and lighting modifiers. As noted above, sighting through an electronic vision-enhancing device or other technological rendering of the target does not establish the necessary link.

A magician in the physical world can only cast spells on targets that are in the physical world. Similarly, a magician in astral space can only cast spells on targets that have an astral form (though the auras of things in the physical world can be seen, auras alone cannot be targeted). An astrally perceiving (or otherwise dual-natured) magician can cast spells on a target in either the physical world or in astral space. An astral target can only be affected by mana spells—even if the magician is in the physical world astrally perceiving—as it has no physical presence.

Area Spells: Some spells target areas or points in space; in this case the caster must be able to see the center of the area affected. All visible targets within the area are affected; area spells can affect more than one target at a time. The base radius for all area spells is the Force in meters. Area spells affect all valid targets within the radius of effect, friend and foe alike (including the caster). For this reason, spellcasters often choose to vary the radius of area spells. This is done by withholding dice from the Spellcasting Test. The caster can reduce or expand the base radius by 1 meter for every die withheld from the Spellcasting Test. Dice expended to change the radius of effect cannot be used in any related test, such as resisting Drain for that spell.

Casting Multiple Spells: In some circumstances, a magician may seek to cast multiple spells simultaneously (including multiples of the same spell—for example, targeting two different opponents with a mana bolt in the same action). Multiple spells may be cast with the same Complex Action, but to do so the magician must split her Spellcasting + Magic dice pool between each target. Additionally, the Drain Value for each of the spells is increased by +1 per additional spell (Drain Resistance Tests are also handled separately). Multiple spells are resolved in whatever order the caster desires. The maximum number of spells a character can cast in a single Complex Action is equal to her Spellcasting skill, and each spell must be allocated at least one die.

OBJECT RESISTANCE TABLE

CATEGORY	THRESHOLD
Natural Objects (Trees, Soil, Unprocessed Water)	1
Manufactured Low-Tech Objects and Materials (Brick, Leather, Simple Plastics)	2
Manufactured High-Tech Objects and Materials (Advanced Plastics, Alloys, Electronic Equipment)	4
Highly Processed Objects (Computers, Complex Toxic Wastes, Drones, Vehicles)	6+

example

Zoe and Atom are on a bridge that is about to collapse. Zoe whips up a quick Levitate spell to fly her and Atom both off the bridge to safety. Zoe has a dice pool of 8 (Spellcasting 4 + Magic 4), so she splits it to roll 4 dice on herself and 4 on Atom. Whether or not she succeeds, she must still resist Drain for both spells, each increased by +1 DV.

STEP 4: MAKE SPELLCASTING TEST

Casting a spell requires a Complex Action. The Spellcaster rolls Spellcasting + Magic, modified by foci, totem bonuses, bound spirits, and/or Visibility modifiers.

STEP 5: DETERMINE EFFECT

Some spells simply require a Success Test, with hits determining the level of success (as noted in the spell description). The Spellcasting + Magic test must generate at least one net hit to succeed and may need more if the effect has a threshold for success. The spellcaster can always choose to use less than the total number of hits rolled in a Spellcasting Test.

Spells cast on living or magic targets are often resisted, and an Opposed Test is required. For area spells, the magician rolls only once, and each target resists the spell separately. The target resists physical spells with Body and mana spells with Willpower. If the target is also protected by Counterspelling (p. 185), she may add Counterspelling dice to this resistance test. This Opposing dice pool is further modified by any positive cover modifier the target might benefit from (see *Defender/Target has Partial Cover* or *Good Cover,* p. 160). If the target of a spell is on the other side of a mana barrier (p. 194), dice equal to the Force of that barrier are added to the target's resistance test. The caster must generate at least 1 net hit on the Opposed Test for the spell to succeed.

A spell cast on a non-living, non-magic target is not resisted, as the object has no life force and thus no connection to mana with which to oppose the casting of the spell (note that only Physical spells will affect non-living objects; mana spells have no effect). Highly processed and artificial items are more difficult to affect than natural, organic objects. Spells cast on non-living objects require a Success Test with a threshold based on the type of object affected (see the Object Resistance Table). Note that objects targeted by Combat spells get to resist the damage as they would any ranged attack; use their Armor rating x 2 (or just Armor against spells with elemental effects) to resist the damage (*Barriers,* p. 166).

Spells cast on astral objects like mana barriers or active foci are resisted with Force.

The hits scored on the Spellcasting Test may not exceed the spell's Force (see *Force,* p. 177).

Failed spells have no effect. Regardless of whether the spell worked, the magician must resist the Drain.

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Note that a magician can generally tell if her spell was successful or not by its results. In some cases, however, the gamemaster may determine that the magician has no way to confirm the success of her spellcasting. In this case, the gamemaster can make a secret Spellcasting + Intuition Test for the character against an appropriate threshold to see how well the character can gauge the spell's success.

Glitches: A spellcasting glitch can have all manner of interesting effects, depending on the spell and restricted only by the gamemaster's imagination. Most glitches will result in unintended side effects—a fireball that produces a ghastly amount of vision-obscuring smoke, a levitation spell that only allows circular movement, or an illusion spell that adds an unexpected sensory element. A critical glitch may strike the wrong target, affect the caster herself, or have similar disastrous consequences. If the gamemaster chooses, a glitch may actually increase the Drain Value—a critical glitch could even turn the Drain into Physical damage!

example

A go-ganger is about to ride Raze down with her motorbike, so Raze casts a Powerbolt at her. He chooses Force 5 and rolls his Spellcasting 4 + Magic 5 (9 dice), and gets 4 hits. The ganger rolls her Body 3 to resist, and gets only 1 hit. The base damage of the Powerbolt is 5, increased by the net hits (3) with the go-ganger taking a final damage of 8—ouch! The Drain Code for the Powerbolt is (F ÷ 2) + 1, plus 3 from the net hits, so Raze must resist 6 DV, rolling his Willpower + Logic (he's a mage).

If Raze had targeted the bike instead of the ganger, his 4 hits would have been enough to reach the threshold of 4, as a motorbike counts as a highly processed object. Since nonliving objects cannot resist against Directed Combat spells, the bike would have taken 5 DV from the spell (Raze didn't score any net hits over the threshold to raise the damage).

STEP 6: RESIST DRAIN

Magicians roll Willpower + an attribute appropriate to their tradition (Charisma for shamans and Logic for mages) to resist Drain. Each hit on the Drain Resistance Test reduces the Drain Value of the spell by one. Note that wound modifiers or sustained spells have no effect on the character's dice pool for Drain Resistance Tests. Drain damage for spells is Stun damage unless the magician is *Overcasting* (p. 182).

STEP 7: ONGOING EFFECTS

Many spells can be *sustained* for as long as the magician is willing to concentrate on the spell, as noted in the spell's Duration. While sustained spells do offer the opportunity to have an ongoing magical effect, they are also draining on the magician's magical abilities. For each sustained spell the magician maintains, she suffers a –2 dice penalty on all other tests.

If an area-effect spell is sustained, the affected area may be moved with a Complex Action, as long as it remains within line of sight. Characters who "drop out" of the affected area are no longer affected by the spell; characters who are "enveloped" by the area must defend against the effects of the spell as appropriate.

If the gamemaster chooses, certain circumstances may threaten to break a magician's concentration while she is sustaining a spell, such as taking damage, full defense, dropping prone, and so on. If a magician's concentration is disrupted while sustaining a spell, she must make a Spellcasting + Willpower (2) Test to avoid dropping the sustained spell (note that the sustaining modifier does not apply to this test).

RITUAL SPELLCASTING

Ritual spellcasting works much like regular spellcasting, except that it is cast over a longer period of time and can affect targets outside the magician's visual range. In addition, a group may collaborate and combine their skills using ritual spellcasting to make a spell more potent.

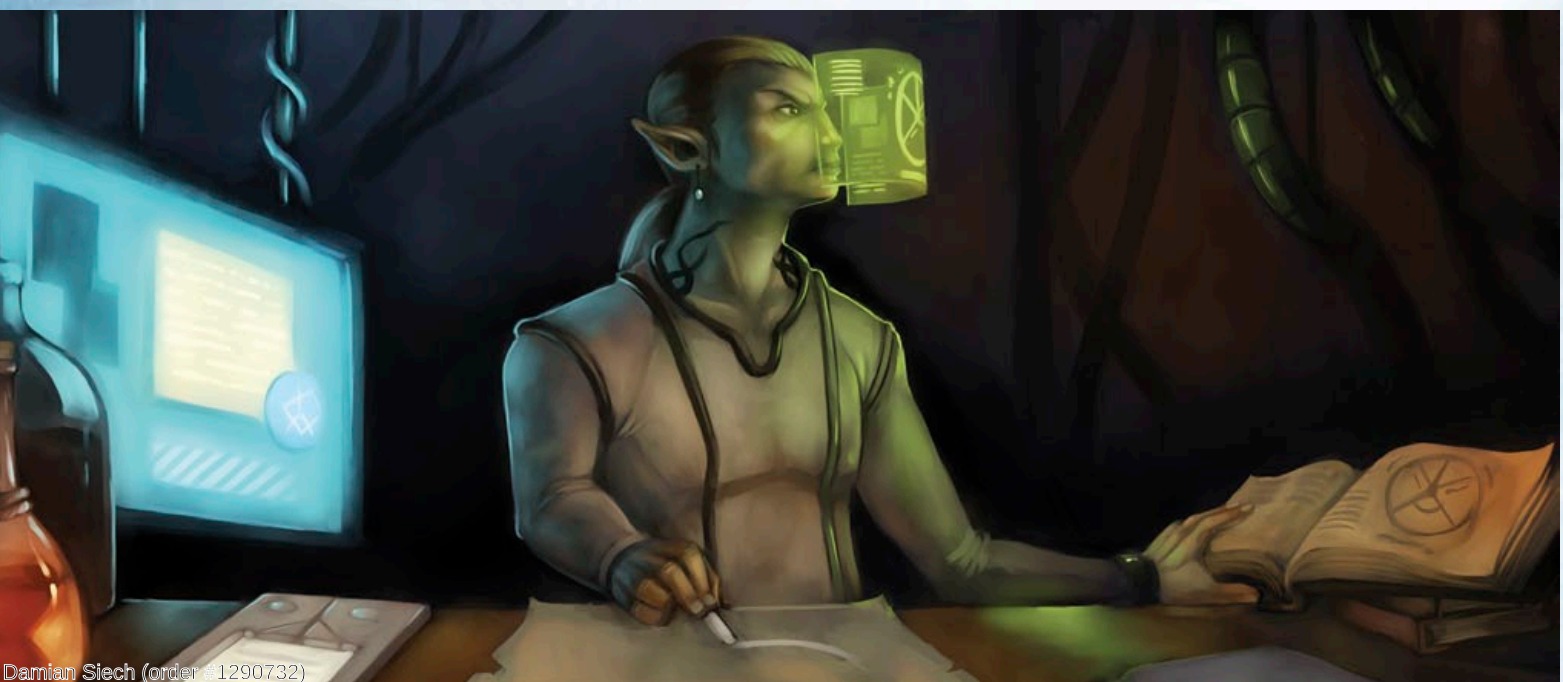
REQUIREMENTS

All members taking part in the ritual must be of the same tradition and must know the spell. In order to cast ritual sorcery, you must have a magical lodge appropriate to the tradition of those involved. The Force of the lodge limits both the number of spellcasters who can successfully contribute to the ritual and the Force of the spell cast. A group cannot ritually cast a spell of a higher Force than that of the magical lodge used.

The maximum size of a group casting a ritual is equal to either the Force of the lodge or the lowest Ritual Spellcasting skill among the members of the group, whichever is less. For example, Harry, Al, and Rowan have Ritual Spellcasting skills of 3, 5, and 4 respectively. They're trying to cast a spell using the hermetic lodge Harry built at a Force of 4. The lodge would accommodate one additional person, but Harry's skill rating of 3 precludes anyone else helping out. A ritual involving three people is the largest in which he can be involved.

RITUAL TARGETING

Ritual spells can be used on any target, whether within visual range or not. If the target is not in sight, the spellcaster or group needs someone who can see the target for them, generally referred to as a *spotter.* The



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individual acting as the spotter must be a member of the group casting the ritual—or a spirit bound to a member of that group—and must be able to astrally perceive the target. The spotter must be present in the lodge when the ritual begins, and then must travel physically or astrally to where she can assense the target of the spell. The target does not have to be astrally active (and it's often safer for the spotter if she isn't); the spotter must just be able to assense him. For the duration of the ritual, a link is present between the spotter's astral form and the ritual group. If the spotter is noticed by the target, it is possible to use the link to track her back to the ritual team's physical location. See *Astral Tracking,* p. 193.

Note that magicians have a limit on the length of time they can astrally project (p. 192). Any ritual that cannot be completed before an astrally projecting spotter has to return to her body must be aborted at that time. When a Ritual Spellcasting attempt must be aborted, the spell fails with no effect and all members must immediately resist Drain. Because of this limitation, bound spirits are often used as spotters for ritual teams—spirits that are not bound to a member of the ritual team cannot be used as spotters.

TEAM LEADER

Each ritual spellcasting team must have a leader. This is often the most powerful or skilled magician, but it doesn't have to be. The leader's Ritual Spellcasting + Magic forms the basic dice pool used to determine the spell's success. The spell's Force is limited by the leader's Magic attribute—if the Force is higher than the leader's Magic, then the entire team is assumed to be *Overcasting* (p. 182) and will be subject to Physical Drain.

CASTING A RITUAL SPELL

Ritual Spellcasting is carried out in the same manner as Spellcasting, except that the ritual requires twelve hours, minus the leader's Magic (minimum 1 hour). Ritual Spellcasting can be either a Success Test or an Opposed Test, depending on the spell in question and whether the target can resist it (see *Spells,* p. 87).

When casting begins, the dice pool is equal to the leader's Ritual Spellcasting + Magic. Each additional member of the team makes a Ritual Spellcasting + Magic test as if they were casting the spell; their net hits are added as a dice pool bonus to the leader's Ritual Spellcasting dice pool (see *Teamwork Tests,* p. 65). Individuals may use foci to supplement their own tests.

NOTICING RITUAL SPELLCASTING

There is a chance that the target of a ritual spell may notice the mana building up around him. The gamemaster makes an Assensing + Intuition (20 – spell Force, 1 hour) Extended Test for the target beginning an hour after the ritual spellcasting starts to determine if he notices anything unusual.

RITUAL DRAIN

At the end of the ritual, each member of the ritual team—including the spotter—must resist the Drain of the spell. Individual magicians with foci or bound spirits not otherwise occupied may use them to help with Drain.

COUNTERSPELLING

Counterspelling is used to interrupt other spells, either as they are being cast (counterspelling) or while they are sustained (dispelling).

SPELL DEFENSE

A magician can use Counterspelling to defend herself and others against a spell being cast. To do this, the magician must spend a Free Action and declare who she is protecting. If Counterspelling was not declared in advance, it may not be used to defend others, unless the magician has delayed her action (see *Delayed Actions,* p. 145). A protected character must also stay within the magician's line of sight in order for Counterspelling to be used. Note that a magician can always use Counterspelling to defend herself, unless surprised.

When a protected character is targeted with a spell, she rolls Counterspelling dice in addition to the appropriate attribute (Body or Willpower) for the resistance test. Hits generated on this test reduce the net hits of the spell's caster as with any Opposed Test. If multiple protected characters are targeted by the same spell, the Counterspelling dice are rolled only once and each target is protected equally.

If more than one magician protects a target with Counterspelling, handle it as teamwork (p. 65).

Note that Counterspelling is not "used up" after it defends against a spell—it continues to protect the designated characters against other spells until the magician decides to end it.

A magician who is actively Counterspelling can even defend against spells she is unaware of—specifically, Detection spells and Illusion spells—as the magician is actively "jamming" the mana around him. This does not mean, however, that the magician is aware such spells are being used. The gamemaster should make a secret Intuition + Magic (3) Test to determine if (and to what extent) the magician noticed the defense.

Using Counterspelling to defend against a spell as it is cast does not cause Drain.

Glitches: A glitch on the Counterspelling Test might "deflect" the spell onto another (friendly) target, or might cause the magician to suffer the Drain of the spell she is trying to counter (if the spell's Force is greater than her Magic attribute, the Drain causes Physical damage). A critical glitch on the test could make both the original target(s) and the Counterspelling magician suffer the full effects of the spell.

...example

Amul is protecting three of his allies with spell defense when they are targeted by a Manaball spell. Each of the three rolls their own Willpower to defend against the spell, getting 1 hit each. Amul only rolls his Counterspelling once, getting 2 hits. The Counterspelling hits are added to the hits generated by each target's Willpower, so each gets 3 hits (1 + 2) to defend against the Manaball spell.

DISPELLING SUSTAINED SPELLS

Counterspelling also allows a magician to dispel a sustained or quickened spell, canceling its effect. The character must be on the same plane, must be able to perceive the spell she is targeting, and must use a Complex Action.

The dispelling magician makes a Counterspelling + Magic Opposed Test against the spell's Force + caster's Magic (+ Karma spent in the case of quickened spells). Each net hit scored on this test reduces the hits from the original test to cast to spell. If a spell's hits are reduced, any effects the spell applies are also reduced accordingly. If the spell's hits are reduced to 0, the spell immediately ends.

After each dispelling attempt, the magician must resist Drain as if she cast the spell she was targeting, whether the dispelling succeeded or not. If the spell's Force exceeds her Magic, Drain damage is Physical.

The caster of a sustained or quickened spell that is targeted by dispelling is automatically aware of the attempt.

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CONJURING

Conjuring is the art of calling, dismissing, and controlling independent astral forms called *spirits.* Conjuring can compel a spirit to come to the magician and provide services or favors (Summoning), force an already-summoned spirit into more lasting service (Binding), or dismiss or destroy a spirit (Banishing).

SPIRITS

Spirits are creatures native to the astral plane and metaplanes. They primarily exist as purely astral forms. Though such entities can sometimes materialize and become tangible in the physical world, they dislike doing so, and their true home remains in the astral realms. Spirits have an existence deep in astral space outside the realm of metahuman experience, and theories abound as to why they can be bound by metahuman magicians.

SIX TYPES

There are six basic types of spirits presented here. While these are not the full gamut of spirits that exist in the Sixth World, they are the most common. These are the spirits summoned by followers of the hermetic and shamanic traditions: air, beasts, earth, fire, man, and water.

Hermetic magicians summon the base elements of the world: air, earth, fire, and water, as well as the spirits of man. Shamans summon what they view as the natural spirits: air, beasts, earth, man, and water. A shamanic spirit of clouds and storms has the same game statistics as an air elemental summoned by a magician. They are different spirits, as envisioned by the magicians who summon them, but their powers and abilities are the same.

Spirit attributes and powers are detailed on p. 302.

SPIRIT ATTRIBUTES

Spirits are creatures constructed of pure mana. Their power is primarily measured in their Force attribute, which describes the intensity of mana power residing in the spirit. The spirit's Force also determines how difficult it is for a magician to summon or control.

As Awakened creatures, however, spirits also use Magic to manipulate mana and use their spirit powers. A spirit's Magic is equal to its Force, unless the spirit suffers some damage or magical drain. The spirit's Force normally does not change, but may be reduced as a result of services paid to a magician (see *Bound Spirit Services,* p. 187.).

SPIRIT FORMS

The natural form of a spirit is its astral form. Most spirits also have the Materialization power (p. 296), which allows them to create a physical form. Changing between the two forms is a Complex Action for the spirit.

In astral form, a spirit exists entirely on the astral plane. All the spirit's astral attributes are equal to its Force. Such spirits follow all of the normal rules for astral forms (*Auras and Astral Forms,* p. 191). While in astral form, spirits can only perform services that affect the astral plane or that directly affect their summoner through the magical link between them. Astral spirits can also manifest in the same manner as projecting magicians (p. 192), and many of them prefer this to materialization if they need to interact with a physical person.

Spirits use the Materialization power to assume physical form when they must use a power on a target not present in astral space. Physical spirits have Physical attributes determined by their individual descriptions (see *Critters,* p. 292, for more information). Spirits in physical form are in fact dual-natured, interacting with the physical and astral planes simultaneously. Spirits dislike taking physical form because it makes them vulnerable to physical attacks.

In astral form, spirits have 3 Initiative Passes. When materialized, they have only 2.

As a rule, spirit forms are metahuman sized or smaller and tend to have an obvious ethereal or otherworldy nature (there is no mistaking them for real people). Materialized physical forms are not subject to gravity, though most spirits (except air spirits) stay earthbound or close to it (perhaps floating or hovering).

SPIRIT COMBAT

Combat with spirits follows the normal rules for physical (p. 144) or astral (p. 193) combat. Astral spirits use Force for all attributes in astral combat; physical spirits use their physical attributes. It is very difficult for non-magical characters to attack and damage a physical spirit. Only the truly courageous, driven, or mad have enough force of personality to allow their attacks to affect a spirit. Physical spirits have the power of Immunity to Normal Weapons (p. 295), giving them Armor equal to twice their Force against all attacks. This makes powerful spirits virtually immune to most physical attacks. A spirit in physical form can use its powers against any target in its line of sight.

If all of the boxes on a spirit's Condition Monitor Track are filled in, that spirit is disrupted and forced back to its home metaplane. Any services still owed by the spirit are lost.

SPIRIT-SUMMONER LINK

A telepathic link exists between a spirit and its summoner at all times. This allows the spirit to communicate with its summoner from astral space without revealing itself. This link also allows communication over a distance—though it does not extend to the metaplanes. For this reason, a summoner will know when a spirit she has summoned has been disrupted, as she will feel the loss of the mental link.

SPIRIT SERVICES

The manner in which a spirit helps a magician is measured by *services.* A service is a single continuous task the summoner demands or requests from a spirit (depending on her tradition); the number of services obtained depends on the number of hits that the magician scores on her Summoning Test. A spirit will perform the services it owes until the next sunrise or sunset. At that time, regardless of any remaining services or what it was doing, the spirit will depart and return to its home deep in astral space.

Continuous use of a specific power counts as only one service. A spirit can use its powers on an individual target or a group, depending on the power. If the parameters of a service are changed, for example by requesting a spirit use its Concealment power on more characters than it had been affecting previously, another service is used. The use of combative powers or abilities by a spirit on behalf of its summoner only counts as one service, regardless of the number of foes involved.

Spirits in physical form can also perform any physical task as a service, as appropriate to their form, of course. A fire elemental can burn through a door, for example, or a mountain spirit can move a great weight, and any spirit might use its powers against an enemy of the summoner. Asking a river spirit to put out a fire, however, might get the magician in hot water.

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Spirit Range: Spirits must not move farther from the summoner than the summoner's Magic x 100 meters (if forced out of this radius, they will return as quickly as they can). If a spirit is sent beyond this range, it counts as a remote service.

Remote Services: Spirits can also be commanded to undertake a *remote service,* allowing it to leave the summoner's immediate area. Remote services forfeit any other services the spirit might owe. The magician sends the spirit off to perform a particular task (or set of tasks, if more than one service is owed), which the spirit will single-mindedly pursue until it completes the task(s), it is destroyed, or its time of service ends (at sunrise or sunset). A spirit can perform a remote service in either astral or physical form, and may switch between the two as needed. Once a spirit has completed a remote service, it is technically released (unless it is a bound spirit). Spirits on remote service continue to count against the limit of summoned spirits until their remote service is completed.

BOUND SPIRIT SERVICES

Binding is the method of compelling long-term services from a spirit (p. 188). A bound spirit will not vanish at sunrise or sunset—its services remain until they are used regardless of how long it takes. A bound spirit may perform any of the types of services listed in *Spirit Services,* above. In addition, the services of a bound spirit may be given to another character, and bound spirits can assist the magician with magical tasks.

Remote Services: A bound spirit performing a remote service acts in the same manner as an unbound spirit. It will pursue the course of the service until it is complete. A bound spirit's terms of service do not expire at sunrise or sunset, however, so the spirit can continue on for a considerable time. A bound spirit that still owes service will go on standby after it finishes its remote task, unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Loaned Services: By ordering a bound spirit to obey another character, magical or mundane, a magician may effectively grant one or more of the spirit's services to the other character. Naturally, a mundane cannot use a spirit to learn, cast, or sustain spells. Any other type of service may be demanded of the "borrowed" spirit. Even if the spirit is loaned out in this manner, it is bound to the summoning magician, not the character she ordered it to serve (and the summoner can reclaim those services without penalty if she desires). Since the character loaned the services cannot call the bound spirit, the spirit must remain in her vicinity to receive orders (usually meaning that it will follow the character astrally until needed).

Magical Services: The magical services available from a bound spirit are Aid Sorcery, Aid Study, Spell Sustaining, and Spell Binding. A spirit intended to assist the magician with magic must match the category of magic, according to the magician's tradition. That is, a hermetic mage may use a fire elemental to Aid Sorcery for the magician's combat spells, while a shaman may call on a spirit of the sky to maintain an illusion spell such as Invisibility. A bound spirit may provide any of these magical services to its summoner while remaining in astral form. A spirit may only use one of its magical services at a time in aid of the summoner. To perform a magical service that involves use of a Sorcery skill, the spirit's Force must be equal to or greater than the Force of the spell to be affected by the service.

When a spirit performs the *Aid Sorcery* service, it adds its Force to the summoner's dice pool for any Spellcasting, Ritual Spellcasting, or Counterspelling attempt, regardless of the time required for the test. In the case of Spellcasting and Ritual Spellcasting, the spell being cast must be of a type appropriate to the spirit and the magician's tradition. With Counterspelling, the spell being countered must be of the appropriate type.

Spirits can provide extra dice to help magicians learn new spells through *Aid Study.* Doing so costs a service. The spirit adds its Force in dice to the Extended Learning Test (see *Learning Spells,* p. 182). A spirit can only help with a spell within the appropriate category (as described in the magician's tradition). A character can only use one spirit for the learning of a particular spell.

A magician can call upon a spirit for *Spell Sustaining* in the appropriate category. While the spirit maintains the spell, the magician does not suffer any sustaining modifiers for that particular spell. One service is used up for each period equal to the spirit's Force in Combat Turns that it sustains the spell. A Force 3 spirit that owes two services, for example, can only sustain a spell for 6 Combat Turns. The magician can take over sustaining the spell as the spirit finishes this service (or at any time) so that the spell does not end. If a spirit is disrupted or banished while sustaining a spell, the spell ends.

Similar to Spell Sustaining, a magician can also engage a bound spirit for *Spell Binding,* maintaining a spell for even longer periods. Doing so, however, irrevocably depletes the spirit's Force. A spirit can maintain a spell for a number of days equal to its Force. Each day, or part thereof, permanently reduces the spirit's Force by 1. When its Force reaches 0, it disappears, completely consumed—which explains why spirits dislike this service and will grow reluctant to aid a magician who abuses spirits this way. The magician can release the spirit before it runs out of Force in order to end the spell ahead of schedule, but the spirit is still free of its bond. Spell Binding uses up all of a bound spirit's remaining services.

BOUND SPIRITS

Spirits are powerful entities, and the ability to call on their potent skills is formidable. Whereas unbound spirits are limited in the services they can offer, bound spirits are compelled by the magical bond to do their utmost on the magician's behalf, even if it means draining their own Force to the point of disruption. Spirits also dislike being bound, as it forces them into a level of servitude they find distasteful, and so they sometimes fruitlessly struggle against the bond.

As a result, bound spirits can be an effort to handle, especially when more than one is on hand. If the gamemaster chooses, the strain of controlling a bound spirit that is on hand or actively performing a service (in other words, not on standby), can impose a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests, similar to sustaining a spell. This represents the concentration and magical power the magician must devote to channeling into the bond, allowing and compelling the spirit's enduring service. This modifier may apply per bound spirit, or alternately the gamemaster may decide to allow one bound spirit to be in service without requiring special effort.

This modifier should only be applied when roleplaying calls for it, such as when a magician has been abusive towards her bound spirits or has repeatedly put them at risk or forced them to undertake draining tasks like Spell Binding. Alternately, it can be used as a way to keep a player from abusing spirits in gameplay.

This magical power drain is the compelling reason why most magicians keep their bound spirits at rest. The magician can dismiss a bound spirit with a Simple Action, allowing the spirit to return to its home in astral space, where it awaits a summons from its master. Calling the spirit back simply requires another Simple Action—no test is involved. While the spirit is resting in astral space, the bond between magician and spirit has no effect on the magician.

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ROLEPLAYING SPIRITS AND SERVICES

Gamemasters and players are encouraged to treat spirits like actual NPCs, rather than just tools with no personality of their own. The exact relationship between a spirit and magician will depend largely upon the character's tradition. Hermetic mages typically view their elementals as servants to be commanded and ordered about, whereas shamans typically treat spirits as equals—if not gods or venerated elders—and so implore them for assistance or strike bargains for their aid (returning the favor with such tasks as ecological cleanup, gardening, animal tending, worship, and so on). A spirit's personality should be appropriate to the summoner's tradition, and may range from that of semi-intelligent beast or a distinctly nonhuman outlook to a very human personality (perhaps based on someone the summoner knows, or a reflection of the summoner herself).

SUMMONING

A magician may only summon the chosen spirits of her tradition (see *Traditions,* p. 180). Summoning a spirit requires a Complex Action, and only one spirit may be summoned at a time. The magician decides how powerful a spirit to summon, choosing the spirit's Force. She then makes an Opposed Test, her own Summoning + Magic versus the spirit's Force. Mentor spirit modifiers and summoning foci can add extra dice.

Each net hit on the Summoning Test represents one service the spirit agrees to perform for the magician. If the magician rolls no hits, no spirit appears. Whether a spirit comes or not, the magician must resist Drain.

The summoned spirit's Force is limited by the magician's Magic attribute. If the magician wants to summon a spirit with Force higher than her Magic, follow the same rules as given for Overcasting spells (p. 182) and apply Physical Drain. No magician may summon a spirit whose Force is greater than twice her Magic attribute.

Summoned spirits appear on the astral plane and manifest so that they are visible in the physical world as a ghostly image. The spirit can hang around in astral space awaiting orders, or the magician can instruct it to return from where it came to be called at a later time—as long as it is called before its services expire. Calling a spirit placed on "stand-by" takes only a Simple Action.

A magician may only have one unbound spirit summoned at any given time, and no more bound spirits than her Charisma attribute. Spirits on remote service and on standby count toward this total.

Glitches: As with spellcasting, gamemasters are encouraged to be creative when a magician rolls a glitch on a Summoning Test. Perhaps the summoned spirit is cantankerous, constantly looking for loopholes in the magician's orders or following them a little too literally. Or maybe one of the spirit's powers is lacking, defective, or replaced by something unexpected. On a critical glitch, the gamemaster can inflict increased Drain (say, +2 DV) and/or even rule that the magician is temporarily unable to summon spirits, at least until after the next sunrise or sunset.

If the spirit glitches, it may owe the summoner an extra service, be more susceptible to binding, or be saddled with a negative quality of some sort.

SUMMONING DRAIN

The Drain Value for Summoning is equal to twice the hits (not net hits) generated by the spirit on the Opposed Summoning Test (minimum 2 DV). This applies whether or not the magician generated any net hits in the Summoning Test—that is, whether a spirit appeared or not. Summoning Drain is normally Stun damage. If the spirit's Force is greater than the Magic of the summoner, however, the Drain becomes Physical.

Each hit on the Drain Resistance Test (using Willpower + the attribute appropriate for the tradition) reduces the Drain Value by one. Any remaining Drain is suffered by the magician. If the Drain kills or incapacitates the magician, the spirit simply departs.

SPIRIT SERVICES

Unbound Spirit Services	Bound Spirit Services
Combat	Any Unbound Spirit Service
Continuous Use of a Power	Aid Sorcery
Perform Physical Task	Aid Study
Remote Service	Loaned Service
	Spell Binding
	Spell Sustaining

example

Mika conjures up an air spirit. Her Magic is 5, so she goes for a Force 5 spirit. She rolls her Summoning 4 + Magic 5 and gets 3 hits. The air spirit rolls its Force 5 and gets only 2 hits. Mika achieved 1 net hit, so the spirit owes her one service. Mika must now resist Drain equal to 4 DV (the spirit's 2 hits x 2).

BANISHING

Banishing is the process of severing the tie between spirit and summoner—in a way, it is the opposite of summoning/binding. Banishing takes a Complex Action and is handled as an Opposed Test. The banisher rolls Banishing + Magic. The target spirit rolls Force if unbound or Force + summoner's Magic if bound. The banishing magician may use a banishing focus (p. 199) to increase her dice pool.

Each net hit scored by the magician reduces the services owed by the spirit by one (including any it is currently engaged in). If the spirit's services are reduced to 0, the spirit will seek to depart on its next action. The banishing magician (or any magician within line of sight, for that matter), can make a Summoning Test against the spirit before it departs, bringing the spirit into her own service instead. A spirit banished and then summoned this way can later be bound as well.

Banishing causes Drain equal to twice the hits (not net hits) scored by the spirit on the Opposed Test (minimum 2 DV). If the spirit is banished and then summoned, the new summoner must take summoning Drain as well.

BINDING

Binding is used to compel long-term service from a spirit the magician has already summoned. Binding requires a ritual of a number of hours equal to the force of the spirit. The ritual materials, available from a talismonger, cost 500¥ times the Force of the spirit. Magical lodges are not required for binding, but they are often used out of habit.

At the end of the ritual, the magician makes an Opposed Test pitting her Binding + Magic against the spirit's Force x 2. The magician may receive additional dice from a spirit focus or a mentor spirit, if she has one. The magician requires one net hit to bind the spirit. Additional net hits beyond the first add to the number of services the spirit owes.

The services of a bound spirit do not expire while the magician is alive and it will wait indefinitely to perform those services. A bound spirit is tied to the magician's Magic and has some impact on her ability to use her other magical abilities (see *Bound Spirits*, p. 187).

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UNCONTROLLED SPIRITS

Most spirits resent attempts to bind them, as it turns the relationship between magician and spirit from a short-term contract between equals (or near equals) to a forced servitude for an extended period of time. (Some pro-spirit groups even go so far as to claim that binding a spirit is the equivalent to enslaving a sentient being.) A bound spirit can be forced to harm itself to further the magician's ends—something no living being willingly suffers. Binding spirits, then, has a far higher potential for things turning nasty than simple summoning does—especially if the spirit becomes uncontrolled.

Spirits go uncontrolled under two circumstances: if the magician is knocked out from Drain during the Binding Test, or if she rolls a critical glitch on that test. An uncontrolled spirit owes no services to the magician (the connection between them is severed) and is free to act as it wishes within the limits of its power.

Most uncontrolled spirits will attack the magician who attempted to bind it, attempting to kill him. This is especially true of higher Force spirits, who take the binding attempt as a personal insult. A spirit with a Force less than half the magician's Magic attribute will simply flee, unless someone attempts to prevent it from doing so. All other spirits will attack the magician, hoping to kill him in a moment of weakness and so prevent him from attempting to bind them again. If the magician is already dead (or dying of physical wounds), an enraged spirit may even go on a rampage, attacking the nearest living beings—especially if they seem to be allies of the magician.

An uncontrolled spirit may be successfully brought back under control (but not bound) with a Summoning Test.

A bound spirit can perform some additional types of services (see *Spirit Services*, p. 180).

After the Opposed Test for the binding, the magician must resist Drain. The Drain Value is equal to twice the number of hits (not net hits) the spirit generated during the Opposed Binding Test (minimum 2 DV). The spirit will go uncontrolled (see *Uncontrolled Spirits,* above) if the magician is rendered unconscious from Drain damage. If the spirit's Force exceeds the magician's Magic, Drain damage is Physical rather than Stun.

A magician may have a number of spirits bound equal to her Charisma. Any attempt to bind a spirit beyond this maximum automatically fails.

Glitches: Glitches on the Binding Test should be handled like glitches on a Summoning Test, perhaps with slightly stronger consequences. For example, a glitch may mean that the magician is mystically bound to perform a service for the spirit (some spirits drive hard bargains after all). On a critical glitch, the spirit will become uncontrolled and may attack the magician.

REBINDING

A magician with a bound spirit can repeat the binding ritual in order to extract additional services from the spirit. The test requires another ritual taking a number of hours equal to the current Force of the spirit, requiring the same materials as before (at 500¥ per point of the spirit's Force). At the end of the ritual, the magician makes another Opposed Test, just as when binding a new spirit. Unlike Binding, every net hit adds to the services owed. The first hit is not required to form the initial bond since the spirit is already bound. The Drain Resistance Test is the same as with a standard binding, except that the spirit does not become uncontrolled if the magician is rendered unconscious or dying from Drain.

WATCHER SPIRITS

A watcher is a simple type of servant spirit. Some experts consider watchers to be a tangible expression of the magician's own consciousness, molded from the fabric of astral space, while others consider them the bottomfeeders of the spirit world. Watchers exist solely on the astral plane. They can never leave the astral plane, either to materialize in the physical world or to ascend to a metaplane. They may, however, manifest in the physical world (see *Manifesting,* p. 193). The Force of watcher spirits is always 1. A watcher's attribute ratings are equal to its Force (though watchers do not get Edge).

Watchers are single-minded and clever about carrying out their assigned tasks, but everything else tends to go over their little astral heads. Their intelligence can be compared to that of a well-trained, loyal dog. They also take their commands quite literally (never tell a watcher to search every corner of that building ...). Watchers rarely manage to overcome unforeseen difficulties. For example, if a watcher sent somewhere finds its path blocked by an astral barrier, it will most likely simply remain there until its time runs out and it dissolves.

Watchers' attributes and powers are detailed on p. 303.

SUMMONING WATCHERS

Any magician with Summoning skill can summon watchers; the summoning ritual requires no special equipment and can be performed at any time. To summon a watcher, the magician makes a Summoning + Magic Test. Each hit gives the watcher one hour of life span. The summoner must then resist Drain equal to the number of hours; watcher Drain is always Stun damage. The summoner may also choose to limit the watcher's life span to decrease Drain. At the end of its life span, the watcher dissolves back into the formless energies of astral space.

A character can maintain a number of watchers at once equal to her Charisma. Watchers do not count against the number of spirits a magician may have on hand (bound or unbound) at one time. Characters can dissolve watchers they have conjured at will, even before its time expires, whether or not the spirit is present.

Watchers can be banished; each net hit scored on the Banishing Test diminishes their life span by 1 hour. They can also be engaged in astral combat. They cannot inflict Physical damage and so cannot affect astral forms affected only by Physical damage, such as barriers and foci.

Watchers maintain the same mental link with their summoner as regular spirits do (p. 188).

WATCHER TASKS

Watchers will obey the commands of their summoner to the best of their limited abilities for as long as they last. Watchers do not need to remain in the summoner's vicinity, but they may get lost if sent on a remote mission. Watchers are commonly used for the following tasks:

- **Tracking:** Watchers excel at astral tracking, thanks in part to their one power: Search (p. 297).
- **Astral Alarm:** Watchers can be instructed to watch or patrol an area of astral space, and to alert a specified person if they spot an intruder.
- **Attack Dog:** Though largely ineffective in astral combat, watchers can be used to harry or distract opponents.
- **Courier:** A watcher can be sent to a specific place or person known to its summoner to manifest and deliver a spoken message. It can also display simple pictures, up to the complexity of a two-dimensional, non-moving photograph, shown to it by its summoner. If required, the spirit will get a reply and return to its master with it.
- **Irritant:** A watcher can be ordered to find a person and follow

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him or her around, loudly repeating some offensive slogan or insult or even carrying on an argument. For this job, the watcher manifests visibly and audibly on the physical plane. Alternatively, the watcher can go to a specific place and hang around, sounding off on its assigned theme. "Hey, there! Welcome to Hannibal's Grill. I hear the ratburgers are really tasty today. Hiya, welcome to Hannibal's Grill. Got your DocWagon card paid up?" And so on.

- **Shadow:** Watchers can be instructed to follow or even eavesdrop on someone astrally or physically and then report back to its summoner. If the target passes through an astral mana barrier or projects onto a metaplane, the watcher will lose track of him.

ENCHANTING

Enchanting is the technique of tapping into the fundamental power latent in natural elements and imbuing items with magic that aids and enhances a magician's abilities. The act of creating a magical focus is known as **artificing**. Unlike other magical goods, a focus is powerful, reusable, and intimately tied to its owner. A focus represents a permanent and complex enchantment built up slowly from an arcane formula and finished with Karma. All foci follow the same basic creation process: first a focus formula is needed, then an appropriate telesma (the material item to be enchanted) is selected, then the enchantment proper is created, and finally the finished focus is bonded. In many ways, artificing is the culmination of all enchanting.

THE FOCUS FORMULA

Designing a focus requires a complex arcane recipe known as a focus formula. Focus formulae, like all magical formulae, are produced using the Arcana skill. They are too complex for metahuman magicians to memorize, and must be recorded in some fashion appropriate to the creator's magical tradition.

Characters can buy formulae from lore stores and talismongers, but many choose to design their own in order to incorporate a specific item into the form of the focus.

All focus formulae specify the type of focus (spell, spirit, power, or weapon), Force, form (wooden quarterstaff, gold ring, vibroknife, etc.), and tradition of the focus (hermetic, shamanic, etc.). If the formula is designed by a character, it is always of the character's tradition. A focus formula does not dictate the type of telesma used (mundane, handmade, virgin, or exotic). The formulae sold by talismongers typically use "traditional" forms in widespread magical traditions (wands, magical amulets, rune-carved swords, etc.)—another reason player characters commonly craft their own formulae.

Researching a focus formula is an Arcana + Magic (Force x Force, 1 day) Extended Test. Once complete, the focus formula may be used by any magician of that tradition to make that specific focus. A character can translate a focus formula from one tradition to another with an Arcana + Magic (Force, 1 day) Extended Test. Gamemasters may wish to enforce the optional roll limit on Extended Tests to preserve game balance.

TELESMA

Before a character can create a focus, they need to acquire an item that matches the form defined in the chosen focus formula. An object being prepared for enchantment in this manner is known as a **telesma.** Obtaining telesma may be as simple or complex as the character chooses—if the formula calls for a knife, it may be no more difficult than buying a blade from the local Weapons World™ franchise. Any inanimate object can serve as the telesma: a wooden wand, a jeweled charm, a weapon, a car, an oddly shaped stone, and so on. The more unprocessed and natural the object, or the more work a character performed to create it, the easier the telesma is to enchant. For this reason, enchanters with the technical or artistic skill to do so often create telesma themselves.

There are four types of telesma:

- **Mundane telesma** are an items bought off the shelf, usually a highly processed item such as a monofilament chainsaw or a commlink.
- **Handmade telesma** are shaped or put together by a magician in some way, such as handmade jewelry or an amulet etched with diagrams. Firearms and other highly processed goods are generally difficult to manufacture in this fashion and are often less effective than their mass-manufactured counterparts.
- **Virgin telesma** must be crafted from raw, natural materials and shaped by the magician. A magician may shape a knife from a piece of flint, or weave a horsehair thong to hold a bird's skull as a form of amulet. Weapons made in this way are usually primitive and fragile.
- **Exotic telesma** are crafted from exceptional and rare materials, particularly parts of innately magical paracritters. Examples of exotic telesma include an amulet carved from unicorn horn, a jacket made from the leathery hide of a dragon, or an obsidian mirror crafted from the heart of an ancient volcano.

CRAFTING FOCI

Once the enchanter has assembled the focus formula, the telesma, and any radical reagents or orichalcum she wishes to incorporate, she may attempt to enchant the item into a focus.

Crafting a focus is an Enchanting + Magic (16 + Object Resistance, 1 day) Extended Test. The enchantment must take place in a magical lodge of the appropriate tradition with a Force at least equal to the Force of the focus being enchanted. The enchanter can gain a + 1 positive modifier to her Enchanting Test by incorporating a number of units of radical reagents of the same type (animal, herbal, metal, or mineral) into the focus equal to the foci's Force. This modifier may be gained multiple times, each with a different type of reagent, to a maximum of 4 extra dice. In the case of telesma that meet multiple descriptors, only the highest dice pool modifier applies.

Refer to the Enchanting Table (below) for a list of dice pool modifiers for this test.

After a successful Enchanting Test, the enchanter must pay 1 Karma to complete the enchantment. The focus is then ready to be bonded. The rules for bonding a focus can be found on p. 199.

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ENCHANTING TABLE

FOCUS ATTRIBUTE	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Force of Focus	–Force
Mundane Telesma	–4
Handmade Telesma	+0
Virgin Telesma	+2
Exotic Telesma	+4

* *Street Magic* adds additional options and includes an advanced version of this table.

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While the physical realm is the world characters know and walk in every day, another realm exists alongside it, invisible and unnoticed by most of the people on the planet. That place is called the astral plane, a sort of photo-negative of the physical world where only living things—things infused with mana—are real.

Mana, the essence of magic, flows from the metaplanes into our physical world and through it to the astral plane, where it pools and infuses the astral plane with its nature.

The astral plane is fueled by the life force that exists in and on our planet, and the general aura of that force illuminates the astral world at all times with an ambient glow. Things that exist only on the physical plane can be seen and heard from the astral, albeit with blurred features and indistinct sound—emotional content registers far more strongly than exact details.

AURAS AND ASTRAL FORMS

Living things that are not active on the astral plane still cast a reflection of themselves there, called an aura. Any non-living objects appear as faded semblances of their physical selves, gray and lifeless, while the auras of living things are vibrant and colorful.

Anything active on the astral plane has a tangible astral form—projecting magicians, spirits, dual-natured beings, and so on. Astral forms are more colorful and brighter than auras, as they are astrally "real." The Earth has an astral form, and many regard this as proof that the planet is a living entity apart from the creatures that inhabit its surface.

ASTRAL PERCEPTION

Many Awakened characters can perceive the astral plane from the physical world. This ability is called *astral perception.* It is the primary sense used in the astral plane; it shows auras, allowing magicians to examine living creatures in the physical world as well as creatures who live on the astral plane. Astral Perception is available to characters who take the Magician quality during character generation (p. 91), or to adepts and mystic adepts who buy the Astral Perception power (p. 195). It takes a Simple Action to shift one's perception from the astral to the physical, and another to shift it back again (it is not possible to see both at the same time, though almost everything in physical space is reflected on the astral, albeit without detail). A character using astral perception is considered dual-natured, active on both the physical and astral planes simultaneously.

While astral perception allows an Awakened character to sense the astral plane, actually interpreting what is sensed takes practice. Interpreting auras to gain information about the person or thing to whom they belong is called *Assensing*. A magician who wishes to learn more about an aura must make an Assensing + Intuition test, with the number of hits determining how much the magician learns, as outlined on the Assensing Table (at right). Without attempting to read an aura, a magician can still get an impression of what type of aura it is (spell, spirit, living creature, etc.).

Like physical perception, a character using astral perception should not need to make a test to see things that are immediately obvious (and since astral forms are bright and vibrant, this means that most astral forms are easily noticed). An actual test should only be called for when an astral being is specifically trying to hide, or when a character is trying to astrally observe in detail; in both these situations, an Assensing Test is made.

By assensing something's aura, a magician can gain information. The auras of living beings show their general health, emotions, and magical nature (if any). Enchanted objects show their magical nature. Non-magical and non-living objects have only gray, lackluster shadows rather than auras, but pick up impressions from being in contact with living auras. Assensing can read any impressions left behind on an object.

Spells cast upon an individual show up as a separate aura surrounding that person for the duration of the spell. Once a spell has been rendered permanent, the aura is no longer present. It is occasionally possible to see the traces that magic spells leave behind in a target's aura; see *Astral Signatures* for more information.

Whenever you have to perform a physical, non-magical task (shooting a gun, driving a car, and so forth) while astrally perceiving, you suffer a –2 dice pool penalty. While astrally perceiving, a magician can cast mana spells at astral opponents. Other astral forms can engage an astrally perceiving magician in astral combat (p. 193) or cast mana spells at him as well.

Astral perception is a psychic sense that is not linked to the character's physical sight. A blind magician can still magically perceive the astral plane and the creatures and auras within. Likewise, deaf magicians can "hear" in astral space.

ASSENSING TABLE

HITS	INFORMATION GAINED
0	• None
1	• The general state of the subject's health (healthy, injured, ill, etc.). • The subject's general emotional state or impression (happy, sad, angry). • Whether the subject is mundane or Awakened.
2	• The presence and location of cyberware implants. • The class of a magical subject (fire elemental, manipulation spell, power focus, and so on). • If you have seen the subject's aura before, you may recognize it, regardless of physical disguises or alterations.
3	• The presence and location of alphaware cyber-implants. • Whether the subject's Essence and Magic are higher, lower, or equal to your own. • Whether the subject's Force is higher, lower, or equal to your Magic. • A general diagnosis for any maladies (diseases or toxins) the subject suffers. • Any astral signatures present on the subject.
4	• The presence and location of bioware implants and betaware cyberimplants. • The exact Essence, Magic, and Force of the subject. •The general cause of any astral signature (combat spell, hearth spirit, and so on).
5+	• The presence and location of deltaware implants, genetreatments and nanotech. • An accurate diagnosis of any disease or toxins which afflict the subject. • The fact that a subject is a technomancer.

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ASTRAL SIGNATURES

Magical skills and abilities produce an *astral signature* on anything affected by them, which is detectable using assensing. An astral signature is the magical "fingerprint" of the Awakened creature who created it. A signature lasts for a number of hours equal to a magical effect's Force after the effect ends. Foci and other magical items (like magical lodges) *always* contain the astral signature of their owner (or owners).

A character can attempt to read an astral signature with an Assensing Test. Three or more hits are required to detect the signature. Once seen, a signature can be recognized if the character sees it again (perhaps requiring a memory test, as noted on p. 139). With five or more hits, she also gets an impression of what magical effect created the signature (the magical skill used and the general class of spell or spirit).

Magical forensic investigators use astral signatures to gather information about criminal magicians, so characters should be careful about leaving astral signatures where they are likely to be seen by anyone who knows them.

A magician using astral perception may take a number of Complex Actions equal to the Force of an astral signature to erase it completely.

ASTRAL PROJECTION

Some Awakened characters do more than simply perceive the astral world—they submerge themselves in it entirely, leaving the physical world and their bodies behind. This is called *astral projection.* Magicians who astrally project are no longer attached to their physical bodies. The projecting magician becomes an astral form. The magician can maintain this form for a number of hours equal to her Magic attribute. After this time, if she has not returned to her physical body, her astral form will die, leaving her physical body in a permanent coma (see *While You Were Out ...* , p. 193). Only characters who possess the Magician quality may astrally project.

ASTRAL MOVEMENT

Movement for an astrally projecting magician is much quicker than physical movement. In astral space, free of the concerns of the body, the magician moves at the speed of thought. She simply imagines herself at a place and her astral body travels there. Any nearby destination is reached in seconds. Mere minutes are required to cross great distances, and in hours the magician can circle the globe. When traveling this quickly, however, the magician has no time to perceive her environment. While this is usually not an issue, a magician trying to find a place must travel more slowly or she won't even see it as she passes. Astral barriers also block astral travel, and a magician traveling too quickly may run into such a barrier before she has a chance to notice it.

A magician may travel up to 100 meters each Combat Turn with no penalty to her actions; this is considered the "Walking rate" in astral space. Magicians may choose to move faster than that in astral space, up to the "Running rate" of 5 kilometers per Combat Turn (roughly 100 km/minute, or 6,000 km/hour). Fast astral movement goes by far too quickly for the magician to take in detail, so "running" magicians should suffer movement modifiers of –2 or more to their actions.

ASTRAL ATTRIBUTES

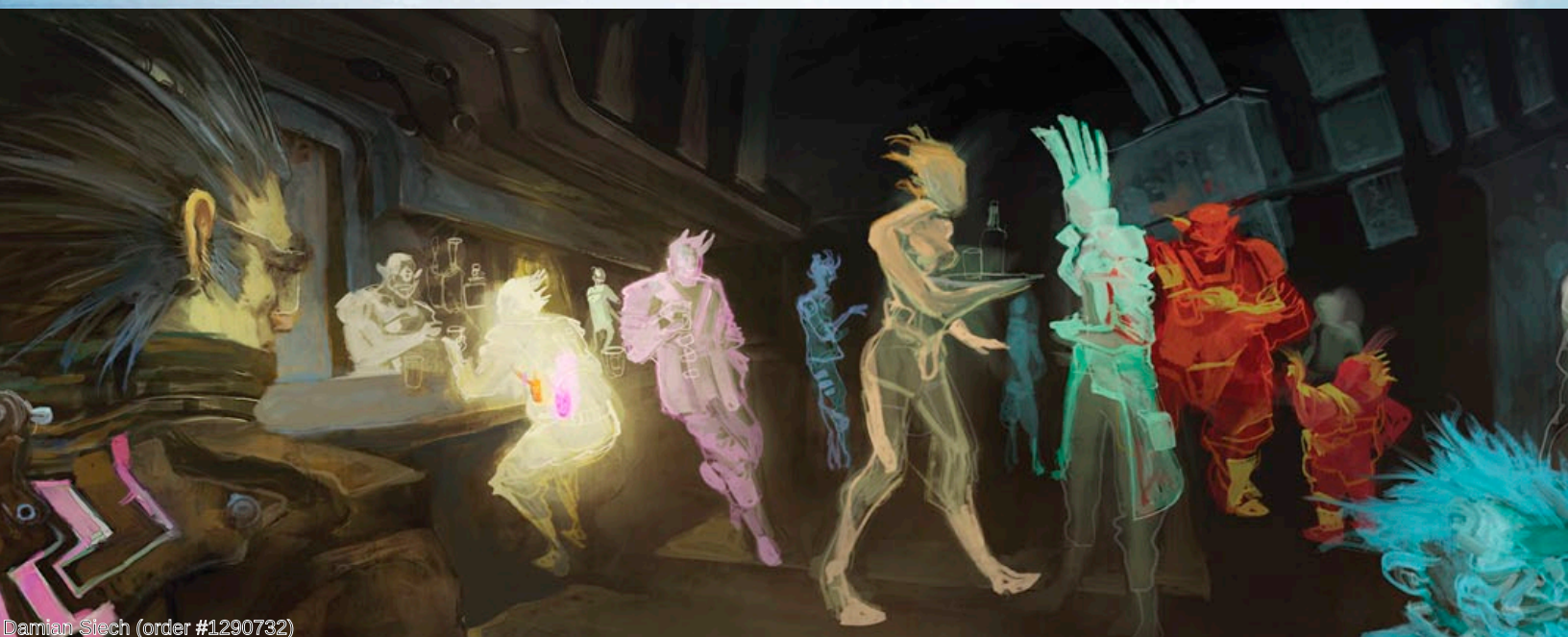
PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES	ASTRAL ATTRIBUTE
Agility	Logic
Body	Willpower
Reaction	Intuition
Strength	Charisma
Astral Initiative:	Intuition x 2
Astral Initiative Passes	3

ASTRAL TRACKING MODIFIERS

CONDITION	THRESHOLD MODIFIER
Each hour passed since astral link was active	+1
Target behind mana barrier	+Force of barrier
Tracking master by spirit:	
Bound spirit	No modifier
Unbound spirit	+2

ASTRAL COMBAT

ATTACK	DAMAGE
Magician	Charisma ÷ 2 (round up)
Magician w/weapon focus	By weapon type
Spirit	Force ÷ 2 (round up)
Watcher Spirits	1



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WHILE YOU WERE OUT ...

When astrally projecting, a magician's physical body and astral body are both still part of him. Damage to the astral body is felt by the physical body and vice versa. If the astral body is injured, the physical body may twitch or convulse. If the physical body is injured, the astral body may experience a ghostly sense of distant pain. Any damage inflicted to one form immediately affects the other.

While both aspects of the magician are connected, they do exist independently while projecting. If the magician's physical body dies, the astral body continues to project on the astral plane for a number of hours equal to her Magic attribute x 2 before fading into nothingness. Should the astral body die, the physical body falls irretrievably into a deep coma since it has no mind and no spirit. If the body is placed on life support, it can live its full lifespan; if not, it will die of thirst within a week (or sooner if organ harvesters or enemies get hold of it).

If the magician's physical body is moved while she is out, she will not feel anything. When she attempts to return to her body, however, she will discover it gone. The magician must attempt to find her body before her allowed astral projection time runs out, or she will die. See *Astral Tracking* for more information.

Astral forms can move in any direction—they are not limited by gravity as they are in the physical world, though most projecting magicians tend to stick close to the ground out of force of habit, if nothing else. The exception to this freedom of movement applies to those who attempt to fly past the limits of the Earthly atmosphere (about 80 kilometers up)—astral voyagers who try this usually die or go mad.

ASTRAL FORMS

While astrally projecting, the magician cannot rely on her Physical attributes. Her astral body is a construct of her spirit and will. In this form, her Mental attributes replace her Physical attributes (see the Astral Attributes table, p. 192). Any activity she undertakes that would normally rely on Physical attributes—such as combat—rely on parallel Mental attributes instead. The magician's senses while astrally projecting are the same as while astrally perceiving. If the magician's physical body was injured when she astrally projects, her astral body manifests the same wounds. For the effects of damage on either form during astral projection, see *While You Were Out ...* , above..

Initiative in astral space is based entirely on Intuition (astral Initiative is equal to Intuition x 2). Because astral forms move so quickly, they receive 3 Initiative Passes per Combat Turn.

Astral forms are unaffected by the physical world; non-living objects that are solid in the physical world offer no resistance to astral forms and allow a projecting magician to pass freely. Only astral forms can slow or affect another astral form. The Earth is solid on the astral plane, just as it is in the physical world; astral forms cannot pass through it. Secure facilities are often built underground to keep out astral intruders. Active weapon foci have a presence in astral space and can harm an astral form (see *Foci,* p. 199), but the wielder must be present on the astral plane to use the focus in astral combat. Only mana spells affect astral forms.

ASTRAL DETECTION

Physical beings may sense when an astral form passes through their aura. Make a Perception + Intuition (4) Test; apply a +2 dice pool bonus if the character is Awakened. If the test is successful, the character feels a chill or tingling from the passing of the astral form. Security personnel are often trained to recognize this feeling as a sign of an astral intruder.

MANIFESTING

If a purely astral form such as a spirit or an astrally projecting magician wishes to interact with the physical plane, she must *manifest*. Manifesting is a psychic effect that allows an astral form to make itself visible and audible on the physical plane through an act of will. Manifesting takes a Simple Action to engage or disengage. Manifesting characters and spirits appear on the physical plane as ghostly, hazy images and may freely communicate with physical characters. Unlike the Materialization power of spirits (p. 296), manifesting does not create a physical form, and so the character cannot physically interact with anything, nor can she be harmed by physical attacks. Because manifestation is a psychic effect, manifested characters cannot be detected, recorded, or affected by technological devices. Likewise, manifesting beings are still subject to astral attacks.

ASTRAL COMBAT

Astral combat is resolved in the same way as physical combat. Astrally perceiving and dual-natured characters use their Physical attributes and skills to fight opponents with a physical body, and their Astral Combat + Willpower to fight wholly astral entities. Astrally projecting characters use their Mental attributes in place of Physical ones (see the Astral Attributes Table, above) along with the Astral Combat skill. There are no known ranged weapons that function in astral space, so unarmed attacks, active weapon foci (p. 199), and mana spells are the only options for astral combat.

Most astral combat damage is based on the character's astral strength (Charisma), as noted on the Astral Combat table. Damage inflicted from astral combat attacks can be either Stun or Physical (attacker's choice). Astral objects like barriers can only be affected by Physical damage.

ASTRAL TRACKING

Nearly all magical things (spirits, spells, foci, and magical lodges) have an astral link to something. Active spells are linked to their casters, spirits are linked to their masters, astrally projecting magicians are linked to their physical bodies, and foci and magical lodges are linked to the magicians who activated them. Awakened entities who are aware of these links can follow them and track them through the astral plane back to their sources.

Following an astral link requires an Assensing + Intuition (5, 1 hour) Extended Test, modified as noted on the Astral Tracking Modifiers table (p. 192).

THE METAPLANES

There are realms beyond the astral plane, places known only to initiates (p. 198), who alone among metahumanity have the power to travel to them. These places are the metaplanes, often called the "higher," "inner," or "outer" planes of astral space, depending on whom you talk to. In truth, no three-dimensional reference can point toward the metaplanes. They are somewhere outside the physical world altogether.

Scientists, occultists, and magical theorists are engaged in an endless debate concerning the "real" nature of the metaplanes and whether they are actual places or merely very realistic hallucinations. Whatever the truth, most initiates travel to the metaplanes without worrying too much about the arguments. As any of them can tell you, for all intents

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and purposes the metaplanes seem to be real places inhabited by real beings. A traveler can die there—and you can't get much more real than that.

There are an infinite number of metaplanes, or maybe just one, depending on how you look at it. It is known that six metaplanes correspond to six types of spirits: air, earth, fire, water, man, and beasts. Initiates have traveled to other metaplanes corresponding to various mythical and magical places, such as Avalon, the fabled land of King Arthur; and Guinee, the home of the loa, also known as The Land Beneath the Sea. Some metaplanes cannot be visited under normal circumstances; the "metaplane of death" cannot be visited without the guidance of an ancestor spirit, for example.

Magicians may travel to any metaplane, regardless of their tradition: shamans can visit the metaplane of fire and mages can travel to the metaplane of beasts, should they find a need. In game terms, metaplanes do not differ much from one another except in inhabitants and scenery.

MANA BARRIERS

Magic can be used to create mana barriers on the physical or astral planes, and sometimes dual-natured barriers that exist on both. These barriers are created as spells (physical or astral), magical lodges (dual barriers), and wards (dual barriers).

Mana barriers on the physical plane are invisible (except to astral perception), but they act as solid barriers to spells, manifesting entities, spirits, and active foci. Should a magician try to cast a spell through a barrier, the target of the spell adds the Force of the barrier to its resistance dice pool.

Mana barriers on the astral plane are solid, hazily opaque walls. Such barriers stop astral movement and impose a visual penalty to astral perception equal to the barrier's Force. Astral mana barriers are resistant to astral spells as well as other astral forms, in the same manner as physical mana barriers noted above.

Dual-natured mana barriers are active on both planes simultaneously, and affect both as noted above.

Adept powers and many always-on critter powers are innate and so are unaffected by a barrier, though if the gamemaster chooses certain ranged and sustained critter powers (such as Concealment or Movement) may suffer the same fate as spells or foci (using the critter's Magic rather than Force).

Mana barriers do not affect their creators, who can see through them or pass through them at will and allow others to do so as well. Any attack on a mana barrier or attempt to break through is immediately felt by the creator.

MANA LODGES

Upon activation, magical lodges form a dual-natured mana barrier with a Force attribute equal to their own Force. The shape of the mana barrier roughly conforms to the physical shape of the lodge; the exact contours are determined at the time of creation and should be approximately Force in meters radius.

WARDS

Wards are a temporary form of dual-natured mana barrier that can be created by any Awakened being with astral perception (including spirits and adepts with the Astral Perception power). Wards are specifically used as a security measure, to protect locations from astral intruders. The maximum area that can be warded is the creator's Magic attribute times 50 cubic meters. A group of characters can ward an area measuring 50 cubic meters times the sum of their Magic attributes. A number of firms and freelance magicians contract to maintain wards for those who value their astral privacy, generally charging around 100¥ an hour (per magician).

A basic ward must be placed on a non-living thing (walls, rocks, and so on), and it must possess a physical anchor (an object or symbol of mystical significance that provides a "focal point" for the ward). The anchor cannot be moved in relation to the ward. The warding ritual takes a number of hours equal to the Force of the ward and requires no special materials. At the end of the ritual, make a Magic + Willpower Test (if more than one character is helping to create the ward, use the rules for teamwork, p. 65). The hits scored determine the number of weeks the ward lasts before dissolving. A ward can be made permanent by paying Karma equal to the ward's Force. A warding ritual can also increase the lifespan of an existing ward.

Creating wards is a draining task. Each participant suffers Drain equal to the ward's Force. If the ward's Force exceeds the character's Magic attribute, this damage is Physical. The maximum Force a character can give a ward equals twice the character's Magic attribute.

PASSING THROUGH BARRIERS

An astral mana barrier may be attacked in astral combat; treat it as a standard barrier with an Armor and Structure equal to its Force(see *Barriers,* p. 166). The enchantment on a mana barrier restores it to full Force after one Combat Turn of "rest," however, regenerating any damage or breaches and making such barriers impervious to all but the most determined foes.

Awakened characters have learned other methods of forcing their way through an astral barrier, however, and may "press through" a barrier with a Magic + Charisma Opposed Test against the barrier's Force x 2. If the character scores more net hits, she forces her way through the barrier to the other side. The character may also bring a number of friends, spirits, active foci, sustained spells, or other astral forms with her through the barrier equal to the net hits scored. If the barrier scores more hits, the character fails to break through.

In some cases a focus, spirit, or even a character may be unintentionally forced into a situation where either they or the barrier must give. For example, a character who unknowingly walks through a mana barrier carrying an active focus, or a dual being in an elevator that passes through a ward on its way up. In this case, make the same Opposed Test described above (using Force x 2 for spells, spirits, foci, etc.). If the barrier wins, however, the item or entity still breaks through but is automatically disrupted. Disrupted spells immediately end and disrupted foci deactivate. Disrupted spirits are sent back to the spirit's metaplane, whereas disrupted characters are knocked unconscious (fill in their entire Stun Condition Monitor).

SPELLS AND MANA BARRIERS

If a spell is cast at a target behind a mana barrier, the Force of the barrier is added to the target's normal resistance test.

If the spell is not Opposed or the target does not benefit from a resistance roll (such as an inanimate target that possesses only Object Resistance), then increase the threshold by 1 for every 3 points of Force or part thereof (round up) that the mana barrier possesses (i.e., a Force 4 mana barrier would increase such a threshold by +2).

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ADEPTS

An Awakened character who invests her power into physical abilities rather than Magic-linked skills is referred to as an *adept*. This investment is represented by the character's Power Points. These reflect the amount of magical energy tied into the character's physical abilities, such as enhanced reflexes, improved senses, or superior health. Characters who take the Adept quality during character creation get a number of Power Points equal to their Magic attribute. Additional Power Points can be gained by increasing the character's Magic attribute through the expenditure of Karma (1 Power point per Magic point). Like magicians, adepts may also increase their maximum Magic rating through initiation (thus giving them the opportunity to gain further Power Points).

Adepts can have traditions, just as any other magician. There is no in-game rules benefit for choosing a tradition; the decision is up to the player, and simply serves as a method of describing their world and outlook more fully.

Adepts can astrally perceive just like magicians if they take the Astral Perception power.

MYSTIC ADEPTS

Some adepts choose to learn less than their maximum number of adept powers, preserving some of their Power Points for spellcasting or conjuring. Such magicians are still called adepts by most magicians, though other adepts may refer to the character as following the "Magician's Way." Characters who wish to become mystic adepts have the option of splitting their Magic attribute between spellcasting and conjuring or physical abilities.

For every point of Magic invested in physical abilities, the character gets one Power Point that she can use to purchase adept powers. Every point of Magic invested in mana-based abilities grants the character one point to use with Magic-based skills. For all other purposes, including the determination of the maximum level for adept powers, the character's full Magic attribute is used. Such a character will not have as many adept powers as most other adepts, nor will they be able to cast spells with the same skill as true magicians. Mystic adepts may use their adept powers normally.

example

Roxanne is a mystic adept with a Magic attribute of 4. She spends 1 point of Magic for 1 Power Point, which she uses to purchase four levels of Rapid Healing. Her other 3 points of Magic are dedicated to Magic skills. When using her Magic-linked dice pools, such as Spellcasting or Summoning, she will be able to allocate 3 dice for Magic (since the other is tied up in her adept powers). For all other uses, her Magic attribute counts at its full value of 4.

ADEPT POWERS

Each adept power listed below provides the Power Point cost required to learn it and includes a description of how the power functions. Many adept powers may be purchased at a variable rating. The maximum level an adept may have in any power is equal to the adept's Magic attribute.

Many adept powers cost a fraction of a Power Point. Characters may save partial points if they choose.

ASTRAL PERCEPTION

Cost: 1

This power allows the adept to bridge the gap between the physical and astral realms and "see" into the astral plane. Adepts with this power follow all the normal rules for astral perception (p. 191).

ATTRIBUTE BOOST

Cost: .25 per level

You can call upon your inner strength to perform amazing feats beyond your normal abilities. Attribute Boost must be purchased for a specific Physical attribute: Agility, Body, Reaction, or Strength (separate Attribute Boost powers may be bought for different attributes). It cannot be purchased for a Mental or Special attribute.

To gain the boost, make a Magic + (Attribute Boost) Test. Each hit on this test boosts the attribute by 1. The boost lasts for a number of Combat Turns equal to the twice the number of hits generated. No attribute may be boosted past its maximum augmented value (p. 68). Attribute Boost requires a Simple Action to activate.

When the boost runs out, you must resist Drain equal to the Attribute Boost rating using Willpower + Body; each hit reduces the Drain Value by one. Attribute Boost Drain is Stun damage.

The attribute bonus from Attribute Boost is not compatible with any other attribute augmentations, whether from implants or spells, with the exception of the Improved Physical Attribute adept power.

COMBAT SENSE

Cost: .5 per level

Combat Sense provides an instinctive sense about an area and any potential threats nearby. The character gains one die per level for Reaction on Surprise Tests and when defending against ranged and melee attacks.

CRITICAL STRIKE

Cost: .25 per level

This power uses magic to increase the Damage Value of your unarmed attacks, as you strike with more proficiency and power. Each level of Critical Strike increases the character's Damage Value in unarmed combat by +1. Critical Strike may be used with Killing Hands (p. 196), and may also be used in astral combat. The use of Critical Strike must be declared with the Unarmed Combat attack.

ENHANCED PERCEPTION

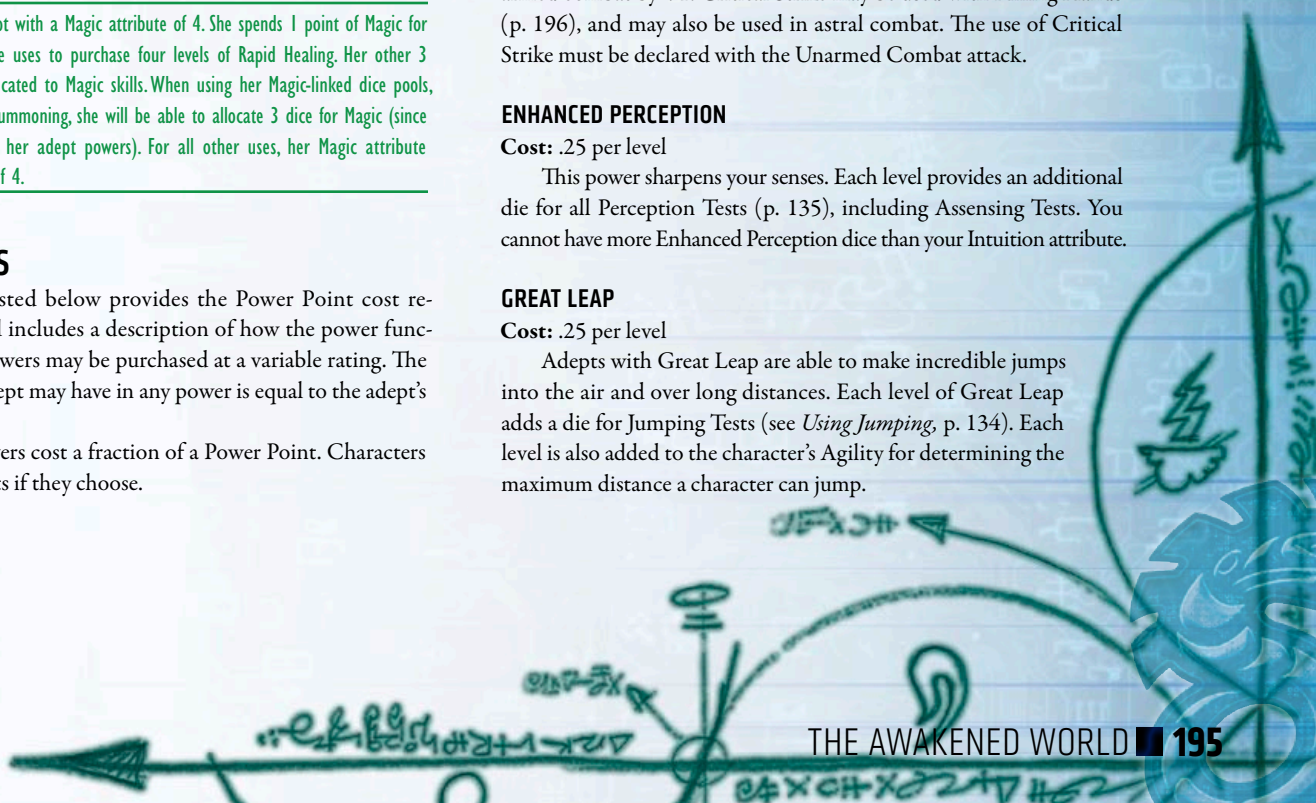
Cost: .25 per level

This power sharpens your senses. Each level provides an additional die for all Perception Tests (p. 135), including Assensing Tests. You cannot have more Enhanced Perception dice than your Intuition attribute.

GREAT LEAP

Cost: .25 per level

Adepts with Great Leap are able to make incredible jumps into the air and over long distances. Each level of Great Leap adds a die for Jumping Tests (see *Using Jumping*, p. 134). Each level is also added to the character's Agility for determining the maximum distance a character can jump.



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IMPROVED ABILITY

Cost: .5 per level (Combat skills),
.25 per level (Physical, Social, Technical, and Vehicle skills)

This power increases the rating of a specific Active skill by 1 per level. A skill's maximum modified rating equals its base rating x 1.5. Improved ability must be purchased for a specific skill, not a skill group.

IMPROVED PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE

Cost: .75 per level

With this power, you can raise a Physical attribute (Agility, Body, Reaction, or Strength). Each level increases the attribute by one. If you later want to increase the attribute using Karma (p. 269), the cost is based on the total attribute, including the magical improvements. Increasing Reaction with this power also affects Initiative.

This power allows you to exceed your natural attribute maximum up to the augmented maximum, but each point over the maximum costs double (1.5 Power points per level).

IMPROVED REFLEXES

Cost: Variable, see below

This power increases the speed at which you react, just like wired reflexes. For each level, you receive +1 die to Reaction (this also affects Initiative) and 1 extra Initiative Pass. The maximum rating of Improved Reflexes is 3, and the increase cannot be combined with technological or other magical increases to Initiative.

IMPROVED REFLEXES COST

LEVEL	COST
1	1.5
2	2.5
3	4

IMPROVED SENSE

Cost: .25 per improvement

You have a sensory improvement not normally possessed by your metatype. Improvements include low-light or thermographic vision, high or low frequency hearing, and so on. Any sense provided by cyberware can also be provided by this power (see *Street Gear,* p. 310, for more information), unless an improvement involves radio or similar technological phenomena. Unlike cyberware, there are no package deals on cost. Additional Improved Senses are described here:

Direction Sense: With successful Perception Test, your acute sense of direction tells you which way you are facing and whether you're above or below the local ground level. This ability is especially useful for tribal hunters, guides, spies, and runners who pursue similar occupations.

Improved Scent: You can identify scents in the same way as a bloodhound. You can identify individuals by scent alone, and can tell if someone whose scent you know has been in an area recently with a successful Perception Test. The strong smells of most sprawls impose modifiers on the use of this sense.

Improved Taste: You can recognize the ingredients of food or beverage by taste alone. A successful Perception Test allows adepts with Chemistry or a similar Knowledge skill to identify ingestive poisons and drugs concealed in food or drink. A successful Perception Test allows adepts to determine if a sample of water is pure enough to drink.

Flare Compensation: Your eyes adapt quickly to intense light, allowing you to avoid the effects of flash grenades and similar weapons. This power functions exactly like the flare compensation vision enhancement (p. 333).

Sound Dampening: Your ears are protected from loud noises and adjust quickly to sudden changes in noise level. The sound dampening power functions exactly like the cybernetic damper enhancement (p. 341).

KILLING HANDS

Cost: .5

This power uses magic to turn unarmed attacks into lethal, physical damage. When participating in unarmed combat, you may do normal Stun damage or declare the use of Killing Hands and inflict an equal amount of Physical damage instead. Killing Hands may be used with Critical Strike (p. 195).

A Killing Hands attack may also be used against creatures with Immunity to Normal Weapons (p. 295) to inflict either Stun or Physical damage; their defensive bonuses do not count against Killing Hands. Killing Hands can also be used in astral combat (see *Astral Combat,* p. 193).

KINESICS

Cost: .5 per level (max 3 levels)

An adept with Kinesics has complete control over her body's nonverbal and subconscious communication and social cues, even when engaged in stressful social scenarios. This control includes facial expressions, body movements, posture, eye movements, and internal biological stress functions such as heartbeat, blood pressure, and sweat glands. The adept is also gifted at reading others' body language and cultural-specific affectations and mimicking their cues to her advantage. As a result, this power boosts the character's natural presence and social charms.

Each level applies a +1 bonus for the adept when making or resisting Social skill tests. It also applies a +1 dice pool modifier to the adept on any Opposed Tests made to gauge the adept's truthfulness or emotional state, including Judge Intention tests (p. 139), assensing for emotional state, and other magical and technological tests.

Two adepts with Kinesics and within sight of each other can use a Complex Action to nonverbally communicate simple notions to each other, using body language alone. Only basic messages and emotional states can be conveyed: yes, no, bad idea, I don't want to, I'm angry, look out behind you, and so on.

MISSILE PARRY

Cost: .25 per level

You can catch slow-moving missile weapons such as arrows, thrown knives, grenades, or shuriken out of the air. When using this power, the defender rolls Reaction + Missile Parry (+ Dodge if on full defense) against the ranged attack test. To successfully grab the missile weapon out of the air, you must generate equal or more hits than the attack test. Using Missile Parry is a Free Action.

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MYSTIC ARMOR

Cost: .5 per level

This power magically toughens your skin to resist the effects of damage. Each level provides you with 1 point of armor (that counts as both Ballistic and Impact) that is cumulative with any worn armor. Mystic Armor also protects against damage done in astral combat (p. 193).

NATURAL IMMUNITY

Cost: .25 per level

Your power of mind-over-body allows you to resist the effects of toxins and disease. Each level of Natural Immunity provides 1 additional die for Resistance Tests against such effects.

PAIN RESISTANCE

Cost: .5 per level

Pain Resistance allows you to ignore the effects of injury. It does not reduce actual damage, only its effect on you. Subtract your level of Pain Resistance from your current damage before determining your wound modifiers. So, an adept with 3 levels of Pain Resistance does not suffer any modifiers for sustaining up to 3 boxes of damage and suffers a reduced penalty with more significant injuries. Pain Resistance works equally on both the Physical and Stun Condition Monitors.

Pain Resistance also allows you to resist pain from torture, magic, illness, and so on. Each level adds +2 dice to any tests you make to resist pain, such as a Body or Willpower Test against the symptoms of a painful disease, interrogation, torture, and so on.

RAPID HEALING

Cost: .25 per level

You recover more quickly from all forms of injury, using magical energy to boost the normal healing process. Each level adds 1 die to your Body for Healing Tests (p. 252). The power does not increase resistance to injury, toxins or pathogens, but does allow you to recover from their effects more quickly.

SPELL RESISTANCE

Cost: .5 per level

You possess an inherent resistance to sorcery. Add 1 die per level of this power to all your Resistance Tests against spells. Spell Resistance does not interfere with spells that you choose not to resist. The only critter power this protects you from is the Innate Spell power (and critters using Spellcasting of course).

VOICE CONTROL

Cost: 0.5

An adept with Voice Control has an amazing level of control over the properties of her voice. The adept can change her voice's pitch, modulation and tone at will, as well as increase her volume. This allows the adept to mask her voice and imitate sounds within the normal range of metahuman vocalization (i.e, no infrasound or ultrasound), including mimicking the voices of others. This trick can be used to defeat voice recognition systems; make an Opposed Test between the adept's Con + Charisma against the voice recognition system's rating, or against the Perception + Intuition of other characters the adept is attempting to fool. Voice Control also allows an adept to "throw" her voice up to (Magic attribute x 2) meters away.

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INITIATION

As Awakened characters grow in power, they often find that their initial explorations into magic and the astral plane can only take them so far in understanding and increasing their abilities. In order to increase their powers, magicians and adepts will often choose to undergo initiation in the mysteries of magic, the astral world, and the metaplanes in hope of increasing their connection with the Awakened world.

Initiation allows a character to wield greater magical abilities known as *metamagic,* access the metaplanes of astral space (p. 191), and raise her Magic attribute beyond her natural maximum of 6. Only characters with the Magician, Adept, or Mystic Adept qualities may initiate. Initiation is a serious process that requires a great deal of mental and spiritual preparation in the form of rituals or study appropriate to the character's tradition. A mage might spend months in research on a particular point of magic, writing a scholarly thesis in order to prepare, while a shaman might undergo a vision quest and seek guidance from her mentor spirit.

Initiation is measured in grades, beginning with Grade 1 and increasing. At the end of a character's first initiation, she is a Grade 1 initiate. When she completes her second initiation, she is a Grade 2 initiate, and so on. The numerical system is for tracking initiation levels in game terms: each tradition refers to grades of initiation in their own way.

The cost to initiate is equal to 10 + (Grade x 3) in Karma points. Characters who wish to initiate must pay that cost in order to achieve their new grade.

A character's initiate grade cannot exceed her Magic attribute. If a character's Magic is reduced below her initiate grade, she loses that level of initiation and the metamagic she gained with it.

INITIATE POWERS

Becoming an initiate gives an Awakened character access to a number of benefits and abilities:

INCREASED MAGIC

An initiate's natural maximum for the Magic attribute is 6 + her grade of initiation. She will still have to pay normally to increase her Magic attribute.

METAPLANAR ACCESS

Upon a character's first initiation, a character who can astrally project receives access to the metaplanes of astral space (see *The Metaplanes,* p. 193).

METAMAGIC

An initiate can choose one of the following metamagic initiate powers at each grade of initiation (including the first). Unless otherwise noted, no power may be chosen more than once.

Note that adepts can only learn the metamagic techniques of Centering, Flexible Signature, and Masking.

- **Adept Centering (Adepts Only):** Adept Centering is similar to the Centering metamagic (see *Centering* below) but only available to adepts and mystic adepts. It allows an initiate to reduce negative dice pool modifiers to Physical and Combat skills by her initiate grade—as long as she can physically perform her chosen method of centering.
- **Centering:** A character who learns to center has an easier time resisting the Drain inherent in magical activities. By using a mundane activity appropriate to her tradition to quiet her mind and block out distractions, she adds a number of dice equal to her grade of initiation to all Drain Resistance Tests. Centering requires a Free Action, which must be taken in the same Action Phase as the Drain Resistance Test. The character must be physically able to move and/or speak freely in order to center, and may attract attention to herself. Centering techniques include acts such as chanting in Latin, dancing, making arcane gestures, and so on.
- **Flexible Signature:** The initiate can choose to alter her astral signature (p. 192) at will, disguising it so that it cannot be used to identify her, forging the astral signature of another magician, or simply reducing the amount of time her signatures last.

  When someone attempts to assense a faked signature, add the faking magician's initiate grade to the Assensing Test threshold. So if a grade 2 initiate leaves a forged astral signature, another magician would need to score only 3 hits as usual to see the fake signature, but would need 5 hits to realize the signature was fake and spot the true signature hiding underneath. The initiate must have assensed someone else's astral signature in order to forge it.

  Initiates with this metamagic can also reduce the longevity of astral signatures they leave behind by the initiate's grade in hours. So a grade 3 initiate can choose to leave no signature on Force 3 or lesser effects, and the signature of a Force 5 effect would last only 2 hours.
- **Masking:** A character who learns masking can change the appearance of her aura/astral form to do the following: look mundane, look as though her Magic is higher or lower than it is (+/– your grade of initiation), or look as though she is a different type of astral creature.

  When someone attempts to assense the aura of an initiate using masking, make an Assensing + Intuition Opposed Test against the initiate's Intuition + Magic + initiate grade. If they get fewer hits, they see only the false aura. If they get more hits, they will see both the illusory aura she provided and her true aura.

  To disguise her astral form to look like a spirit or other astrally active creature, the character must be capable of astral projection.
- **Quickening:** A magician who has learned this power can manipulate her sustained spells so that they sustain themselves, rather than relying on the magician for power. The magician must cast the sustained spell normally. While sustaining the spell, she takes a Complex Action and spends 1 Karma point per point of Force. The spell will then sustain itself indefinitely. Spells sustained in this manner are still active and may be tracked back to the magician, but they do not inflict a dice pool modifier for sustaining.

  Quickened spells add extra dice equal to the Karma used to quicken them for any tests they must make, including against dispelling (an initiate may even spend extra Karma on a quickened spell—up to the Force extra—to make it harder to defeat). If a quickened spell is disrupted (such as losing to an astral barrier), the spell will end. The magician can also end the spell at any time as long as she can astrally perceive it. Regardless, when a quickened spell ends it is irrevocable and the magician's Karma points spent to quicken it are lost. The initiate is automatically aware if a quickened spell is dispelled or otherwise ended.
- **Shielding:** A character who learns shielding learns to better protect herself against hostile spells as they are cast. When using Counterspelling to protect against hostile spells, the magician adds a number of dice equal to her initiate grade to her Counterspelling dice. This bonus applies whether the magician is protecting herself or another. These additional dice are not gained for any other use of Counterspelling.

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FOCI

Foci are magic items, astral constructs embedded within physical objects. Foci act as pools of power that a magician can draw on to help accomplish a magical task. A focus must be bound to a magician before it can be of any assistance to him. The physical representation of a focus can vary depending on the tradition of its maker, but an Awakened character can bond any type of focus, regardless of tradition differences.

As with spells and spirits, the Force of foci measures their raw power—power that an Awakened character can draw on. When used, most foci add a number of dice equal to their Force to a character's dice pool. The character can only draw on these additional dice when undertaking a task for which the focus was designed.

Foci come in several types, each designed to help its master in different ways. Spell foci grant powers related to Sorcery skills, while Spirit foci grant powers related to Conjuring skills. Weapon foci allow an Awakened character to increase her combat abilities, while power foci boost Magic directly.

BONDING

A focus must be bonded to its owner before it can be used, impressing the owner's unique astral signature onto the focus. This requires a magical ritual that takes a number of hours equal to the Force of the focus, but no other special materials. At the end of the ritual the owner spends Karma, the amount determined by the type of focus and its Force, as shown on the Focus Bonding Table.

Once the required Karma is spent, the abilities of the focus are available to its owner. Only one person may bond a focus at a time, and only that person can use it. If you find or take someone else's focus, you have to bond it to yourself before you can use it, which severs the bond with the previous owner.

A focus always holds the astral signature of its owner (see *Astral Signatures,* p. 192). The connection between a focus and its owner can be tracked through astral space (see *Astral Tracking,* p. 193).

No magician may bind more foci than her Magic attribute. Regardless of the number of foci a magician may possess, only one focus may add its Force to any single dice pool. The total Force of all bonded foci is capped at the character's Magic x 5.

ACTIVATION

A character must activate a focus before it can be used. It takes a Simple Action to activate a focus, but requires no action to use or apply. Weapon foci require a Complex Action to use like any other melee weapon. Deactivating a focus is a Free Action and can be done at any time.

The number of foci you can have active at one time is equal to your Logic. Once activated, a focus continues to operate as long as it is on the owner's person, be it worn, carried, hand-held, or in a pocket or pouch. If the focus is snatched away or dropped, it immediately deactivates and all benefits are lost until it is recovered and reactivated. When activated, foci have an astral form and will accompany an astrally projecting magician to which they are bound. A projecting magician must activate any foci she wishes to take with her in advance (though she can deactivate them at any time).

SPELL FOCI

Spell foci empower a magician's Sorcery skills. There are three types of spell foci: Spellcasting foci, Counterspelling foci, and Sustaining foci. Each spell focus must be attuned to a specific category of spells (Combat, Detection, Health, etc.) when it is created, and this cannot be changed.

FOCUS BONDING TABLE

ITEM	KARMA COST
Spellcasting Focus	4 x Force
Counterspelling Focus	3 x Force
Sustaining Focus	2 x Force
Summoning Focus	4 x Force
Banishing Focus	3 x Force
Binding Focus	3 x Force
Weapon Focus	3 x Force
Power Focus	8 x Force

Spellcasting foci add their Force to a magician's Spellcasting and Ritual Spellcasting dice pools. These dice may be used to cast a spell more effectively as long as it is of the category appropriate to the focus.

Counterspelling foci add their Force in dice to any Counterspelling attempt, as long as the countered spell is of the category appropriate to the focus.

Sustaining foci are unusual in that they do not add any dice to a test. Instead, a magician may cast a spell through a sustaining focus and the focus will sustain the spell for him. A spell sustained by such a focus does not inflict a dice pool modifier for sustaining the spell. A spell sustained by a sustaining focus cannot have a Force greater than that of the focus. If a spell sustained by a focus is disrupted, it ends; the focus is still bound to its master and she may use it to sustain another spell.

SPIRIT FOCI

Spirit foci empower a magician's Conjuring skills. A different type of focus exists for each Conjuring skill: Summoning, Banishing, and Binding. Each spirit focus must be attuned to a specific type of spirit when it is created, and this choice cannot be changed.

Summoning foci add their Force in dice to any attempt to summon the appropriate type of spirit. These dice may be used for the Summoning Test, as long as the type of spirit is appropriate to the focus.

Banishing foci add dice to any attempt to banish the appropriate type of spirit. These dice increase the magician's Banishing + Magic dice pool.

Binding foci add their Force to the magician's Binding + Magic dice pool when binding an appropriate type of spirit. A binding focus can also add its dice when the magician is re-binding a spirit.

WEAPON FOCI

Weapon foci add magical power to an Awakened character's melee attacks.

When used in physical combat, weapon foci grant the character a dice pool modifier to melee attacks equal to their Force. The character still relies on her Physical attributes and skills in combat; the weapon focus merely makes her more effective. This also applies to astrally perceiving characters fighting an opponent on the astral plane. Weapon foci are effective against astral forms and continue to add their Force in dice against such enemies.

An astrally projecting character takes her weapon focus with her to the astral plane. Making an attack with a weapon focus in astral space relies on the character's Astral Combat + Willpower dice pool (see *Astral Combat*, p. 193), but this dice pool is increased by the Force of the weapon focus. The damage of the weapon is the same on the astral plane as it is in the physical world.

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POWER FOCI

Power foci are the most potent and treasured of all. Possession of a power focus feeds a magician's Magic directly, making her efforts more powerful in all forms of magical ability. A power focus adds its Force to all tests in which the magician's Magic is included. A single power focus can increase a magician's ability to cast spells, call on and control spirits, and bypass astral barriers. A power focus does not help in Counterspelling a hostile spell as it is cast, nor can it duplicate the unique ability of a weapon focus.

MENTOR SPIRITS

In the search for magical insight, many Awakened individuals find themselves drawn to a certain animal, mythological figure, or concept. This entity is somehow symbolic of their personality, their relation to magic, or their spiritual beliefs, and thus is deeply tied into the way they practice magic. Once a character Awakens, she may find that this person or idea she had always felt strongly about has taken on a more concrete existence, perhaps materializing in a physical form, perhaps speaking to her mentally, or perhaps appearing in astral space and guiding her to ever greater epiphanies.

Each mentor spirit embodies an ideal, a mythic image or archetype. By seeking to embody the same ideal, the magician gains magical power. Members of any tradition may have mentor spirits, including adepts.

A mentor spirit can be taken by any Awakened character with the Mentor Spirit quality (p. 92).

ROLEPLAYING A MENTOR SPIRIT

The gamemaster can use a mentor spirit as a tool to communicate information to the magician and enhance roleplaying. Mentor spirits provide cryptic clues, riddles, omens, and sometimes even straightforward advice. For example, the gamemaster can foreshadow a particular event in the game by having a magician's totem send a dream where she sees hints of what is to come. A mentor spirit might even become the driving force behind an adventure, telling a character of a magical threat only the player characters can handle.

If a magician strays from the path, the mentor spirit may send a vision or other indication of its displeasure, seeking to correct the character's behavior. If she fails to heed this suggestion, the magician begins to lose some of the mentor spirit's power, starting with any bonuses. If the magician continues to act contrary to her mentor's philosophy, reduce the character's Magic attribute by a point. Only by seeking to communicate with the mentor spirit and returning to its ideals can a magician hope to regain any lost power. A special adventure where the magician gains redemption in the eyes of the mentor spirit may be required, at the gamemaster's discretion.

MENTOR SPIRIT MODIFIERS

A mentor spirit places certain restrictions on the magician's behavior and use of magic. It also bestows various advantages. A magician gains bonus dice when acting or using Sorcery or Conjuring skills in accordance to the mentor's ideals. The magician may also lose dice when using magical skills outside her mentor's realm. These bonuses and penalties are called mentor spirit modifiers.

Some modifiers require the player of the magician to choose a particular bonus. This choice, once made, is permanent.

MENTOR SPIRIT ARCHETYPES

Each of the mentor spirits noted represents an archetype. These archetypes are idealized as totem animals, deities, and forces of nature by different cultures and traditions. The archetypes below serve merely as examples of different archetypes and are not meant to apply to all cultures. A totem animal considered a Healer in one culture may be considered a Deceiver in another. Additional archetypes will be presented in future sourcebooks, and players can always work with their gamemaster to develop a mentor spirit archetype that fits their character's outlook best.

BEAR

Bear is a mentor found in cultures wherever bears are known, from North America to Europe and Asia. He is powerful, but gentle and wise. He tends to be slow-moving and easygoing unless urgency requires speed. Bear is slow to anger, but terrible in battle. Bear tends to be calm, cool, and collected. He is the healer and protector of the natural world. Bear cannot turn down someone who needs healing without good reason.

Advantages: +2 dice for Health spells, +2 dice for resisting Physical damage.

Disadvantages: Bear magicians can go berserk when wounded (taking Physical damage) in combat or if someone under their care is badly injured. Make a Willpower + Charisma Test (wound modifiers apply). The character goes berserk for 3 turns, minus 1 turn per hit; 3 or more hits avert the berserk rage entirely. A berserk magician will go after the attacker(s) without regard for her own safety. If the magician incapacitates a target before the time is up, the berserk fury dissipates.

CAT

Cat is honored in cultures around the world. Cat is often seen as the guardian of mystical secrets, often involving the afterlife. She certainly knows many secrets, but rarely decides to share them, and never with anyone less than worthy. She is stealthy, sly, and arrogant. Cat toys with her prey—threatening, taunting, and confusing—rather than going directly for the kill.

Advantages: +2 dice for Illusion spells, +2 dice to either Gymnastics or Infiltration Tests (character must choose one).

Disadvantages: Cat magicians toy with their prey. Unless the Cat magician makes a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test, she cannot make an attack that will incapacitate her target (i.e., a Combat spell must be cast with a Force/damage level that will not disable). If the magician is wounded, all this playing around stops.

DARK KING

The grim ruler of the Land of the Dead dwells in his kingdom deep beneath the Earth. He has dominion over the spirits of the dead and knows many of the secrets that lie hidden beneath the Earth.

Advantages: +2 dice for Perception and Assensing Tests, +2 dice for spirits of man.

Disadvantages: –1 die to resist Physical damage.

DOG

Dog is a loyal friend. He fights ferociously to defend his home and those under his protection. Dog protects people from harmful magic and dangerous spirits. Dog is loyal, generous, and helpful to those who show him kindness. He is single-minded, often to the point of stubbornness.

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Advantages: +2 dice for Detection spells, +2 dice for spirits of man.
Disadvantages: A Dog magician is stubbornly loyal. She can never leave someone behind, betray her comrades, or let another sacrifice themselves in her place without making a successful Willpower + Charisma (3) Test.

DRAGONSLAYER

This most heroic of mentor spirits is also the most fun-loving. Though he fights to protect his own against all dangers, he loves a good party even more. He is a big brother who takes a friendly interest in everything his family does. Though sometimes naive, he makes a staunch friend and a deadly enemy. The dragons he slays have changed with the times. In addition to the literal dragons of legend, Dragonslayer also fights such modern-day monsters as crime, pollution, and corruption. Dragonslayer fights hard and plays hard. Once he has given his oath, he never breaks it. A Dragonslayer magician must behave with honor and respect, and demands the same from those around him.
Advantages: +2 dice for Combat spells, +2 dice for tests with one Social skill of choice.
Disadvantages: If a Dragonslayer magician breaks a promise, whether by choice or by accident, she takes –1 die to all actions until she fulfills the promise or otherwise atones for her error.

EAGLE

Eagle is the highest-flying bird in the sky, considered the most noble by cultures in North America, Central America, and Europe. He is proud and solitary, and sees everything happening in the world below. Eagles are noble defenders of the purity of nature. They are intolerant of those who do not share their views and have a strong distrust of technology and its tools. Those who damage nature are Eagle's enemies, and Eagle will brave great danger to defeat polluters and other evildoers.
Advantages: +2 dice for Detection spells, +2 dice for air spirits.
Disadvantages: Eagle magicians receive the Allergy (pollutants, mild) negative quality (p. 94; they do not receive bonus BP).

FIRE-BRINGER

The Fire-Bringer stole the secret of fire from the heavens and gave it to metahumanity as a gift and a tool. He is a figure of kindness and concern, but his good intentions sometimes get him into trouble and his plans sometimes fail to work out the way he envisions them. He is a shaper and a creator, forming new things from the primal clay and breathing the fiery spark of life into them. Fire-Bringers devote themselves to the betterment of others, even at their own expense. Most Fire-Bringer magicians devote themselves to a particular cause they follow with great zeal.
Advantages: +2 dice for Manipulation spells, +2 dice for fire spirits.
Disadvantages: –1 die for Illusion spells.

MOON MAIDEN

The Moon Maiden is the embodiment of the night sky. Moody, changeable, emotional, mysterious, sometimes gentle and pleasant and other times wild and uninhibited, she represents the triumph of woman's nurturing ways over man's destructive impulses. Not surprisingly, she is most venerated by women.
Advantages: +2 dice to Illusion spells, +2 dice to Negotiation Tests.
Disadvantages: –1 die for Combat spells.

MOUNTAIN

Mountain is rooted in the very heart of the Earth but reaches toward lofty heights. He has limitless strength and endurance, but Mountain's inflexible nature limits him. Mountain is a stubborn and unyielding force, and Mountain magicians are difficult to persuade once they have made up their minds about something.
Advantages: +2 dice for Counterspelling Tests, +2 dice for earth spirits.
Disadvantages: When a Mountain magician makes a plan, she sticks to it. The magician must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to abandon a planned course of action in favor of a new one. If she fails, she will endeavor to continue with her original plan, even if it means going on alone.

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RAT

Rat is found wherever humans are, for who else's bounty can sustain him? Rat is a scavenger, a stealthy thief who takes what he needs to survive. He dislikes working out in the open, preferring to stick to the shadows. Rat avoids fights whenever he can—when he must fight, he fights to kill.

Advantages: +2 dice for Infiltration Tests, +2 dice for resisting disease and poisons

Disadvantages: A Rat magician must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to not immediately flee or seek cover whenever caught in a combat situation. If there is nowhere to flee, then she is forced to fight.

RAVEN

Raven is a harbinger of trouble in cultures worldwide. He is a trickster and a transformer, dark and devious. Raven thrives off the bounty of carnage and chaos, but does not cause them—he merely knows an opportunity when he sees one. Raven loves to eat and rarely refuses an offer of food.

Advantages: +2 dice for Manipulation spells, +2 dice for air spirits.

Disadvantages: A Raven magician must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to avoid exploiting someone else's misfortune to her own advantage.

SEA

Sea is the birthplace of all living creatures. She is unfathomable and moody, tranquil and comforting one moment, fearsome and destructive the next. Though she possesses great wealth, she jealously guards what comes into her hands. Sea can be a powerful ally, but she must be courted with great care.

Advantages: +2 dice for water spirits, +2 dice for Swimming Tests.

Disadvantages: –1 die on Negotiations Tests.

SEDUCTRESS

The Seductress is the incarnation of desire. She has many whims and vices that she must frequently satisfy. She encourages jealousy and greed and seeks to inflame the wants of others. She avoids direct confrontation but gains pleasure when others fight for her attention or on her behalf. She exists to exploit weaknesses and will not hesitate to sacrifice those who get in her way.

Advantages: +2 dice for Illusion spells, +2 dice for Con Tests.

Disadvantages: Seductresses must succeed in a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to avoid pursuing a vice or indulgence (drugs, BTLs, sex, and so on) when it is made available.

SHARK

Shark is a cold and relentless hunter. His power is known to all who live near the sea. When Shark strikes, he does so without mercy, driven into a frenzy by the blood of his prey. Shark magicians tend to be wanderers, always on the move. They are fierce and deadly warriors. A Shark magician believes the only good enemy is a dead enemy. If challenged, he does not waste time with threats or boasts but strikes to kill.

Advantages: +2 dice for Combat spells, +2 dice for water spirits.

Disadvantages: Shark magicians can go berserk in combat (similar to Bear magicians) when they are wounded or when they wound an opponent (p. 200). A berserk Shark character may continue to attack the body of her last victim instead of moving on to attack a new target, if the player chooses.

SNAKE

Snake is wise and knows many secrets. She is a good counselor, but always exacts a price for her advice. Snake characters fight only to protect themselves and others. They are obsessed with learning secrets and take great risks in order to do so. They trade their knowledge to others for whatever they can get in exchange.

Advantages: +2 dice for Detection spells, +2 to Binding Tests.

Disadvantages: –1 die for Combat spells.

THUNDERBIRD

Thunderbird is a majestic creature who is storm incarnate. His wings are dark clouds, his beak and claws lightning, and his cries the clap of thunder. He is a primal force, often savage but necessary to the survival of the land and the continuation of the cycle of life. Thunderbird is a force to be respected and approached with great care, lest his anger be roused.

Advantages: +2 dice for air spirits, +2 dice for Intimidation Tests

Disadvantages: A Thunderbird magician must succeed in a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to avoid responding to an insult in kind.

TRICKSTER

The Trickster is the clever one, swift of mind and body, master of disguises and deception. He is always thinking up new pranks and ways to outwit his enemies rather than fighting them. He prefers to work in the service of others, turning and stealing behind their backs when they aren't looking. His tricks can often backfire, resulting in trouble for everyone, but the Trickster's cleverness always wins out in the end.

Advantages: +2 dice for Illusion spells, +2 dice for Con Tests.

Disadvantages: A Trickster character must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to resist an opportunity to pull a clever trick or prank, even if it is to the detriment of herself or her friends.

WISE WARRIOR

The Wise Warrior is skilled in the art of war, for battle is an art to her, an exercise in the powers of the mind as well as the body. She studies the tactics of her foes and overcomes them through a combination of superior strategy and battle prowess. The Wise Warrior does not act out of savagery or battle-lust, but from a position of knowledge and wisdom. Wise Warriors must follow the warrior's code of honor and conduct themselves properly or risk the loss of favor.

Advantages: +2 dice for Combat and Detection spells.

Disadvantages: –1 die to all tests if acting dishonorably, until the character atones for her action.

WOLF

Wolf is recognized as a hunter and warrior worldwide. He is devoted to the other members of his pack. As the ancient saying goes, Wolf wins every fight but one, and in that one, he dies. Wolf magicians are loyal to friends and family unto death. They do not show cowardice in battle and their word is their bond.

Advantages: +2 dice for Combat spells, +2 dice for beast spirits.

Disadvantages: A Wolf magician must succeed in a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to retreat from a fight.

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STREET GRIMOIRE

The following are the most common spells in use in the 2072 shadows. The name given for each spell is the common name used by shadowrunners. Spellcasters from different backgrounds may have different names for their spells, but the spells' effects and their game statistics remain the same.

SPELL CHARACTERISTICS

Each spell has the following characteristics: Category, Type, Range, Threshold, Duration, Drain Value, and Effect.

CATEGORY

This describes the manner in which a spell affects its target, as well as what spirits will be associated with that type of spell. The categories are: Combat, Detection, Health, Illusion, and Manipulation. See p. 181 for more information on spell categories.

TYPE

Spell Type is either mana (M) or physical (P). *Mana spells* affect their targets through the mana that permeates the astral and physical planes—affecting the target in a magical and spiritual manner that is only effectively resisted by the Willpower of a living or magical being. *Physical spells* directly target the body; resistance relies on the target's Body attribute. Only mana spells can affect astral forms. Either type of spell may be used in the physical world, but mana spells cannot affect non-living targets.

RANGE

All spells have a range at which they can be cast. For most spells, the range is *line of sight* (LOS). If the caster can see the target, regardless of distance, it can be affected.

Some spells, particularly health spells, require the caster to touch the intended target in order for the spell to work. To touch an unwilling target, the caster must make a normal unarmed attack as part of the Complex Action of spellcasting (see *Melee Combat,* p. 156). A tie on the Opposed Melee Test is sufficient for the caster to touch the target (p. 63).

Other targeting requirements may also be noted under Range. Some spells require a *voluntary* non-resisting subject; unconscious characters are considered to be voluntary. Other spells affect all valid targets within an area, defined as a circle with a radius equal to the spell's Force in meters (see *Area Spell,* p. 183).

THRESHOLD/RESISTANCE

Many spells require a threshold—a minimum number of net hits—in order for the spell to succeed. Other spells are resisted by their targets, and so are treated as Opposed Tests instead. Spells that affect non-living targets are not opposed, but may have a threshold for the spell to succeed (see *Object Resistance,* p. 183).

DURATION

Duration is either Instant, Sustained, or Permanent. *Instant* spells end the moment they are cast, and their full effects are felt immediately. *Sustained* spells last for as long as the magician concentrates on them. *Permanent* spells must be sustained for a short time, after which their effects become "natural" and no longer require magic or concentration to maintain. The time required to make a spell's effects permanent is equal to twice the Drain Value in Combat Turns.

OPTIONAL RULE

SIMPLIFYING SPELL DRAIN

Gamemasters and players should keep the following system in mind for making spell Drain calculation easier. Rather than choosing the Force and calculating the Drain each time a spell is cast, simply assume that spells are always cast at a Force equal to the character's Magic attribute. In this case, the Drain for each spell can be pre-calculated and written on the character sheet, so you do not have to bother calculating it during actual gameplay.

If a character decides at some point to cast a spell at a different Force value, simply modify the Drain by +1 or –1 for every 2 points the player increases or decreases the Force, respectively.

For example, a player who has a mage with Magic 5 can assume that she always casts her Acid Stream spell at Force 5, and so she writes the Drain down as DV 5 (based on Acid Stream's Drain formula for Force 5). If she decides to cast the spell at Force 3 instead, the Drain is modified to DV 4 (base DV 5 minus 1 per 2 points of Force reduction). If she decides to cast it at Force 7, her DV would be 6 (+1 per 2 points)—and the Drain would be Physical as the Force exceeds her Magic.

DRAIN VALUE

This describes the Damage Value the Drain causes. Drain is based on the spell's Force; the more powerful the spell, the more exhausting it is to cast. Drain is variable, based on the spell's Force ÷ 2, rounded down, and modified by Drain modifiers appropriate to each spell. Drain is Stun damage, unless the spell is overcast (cast at a Force higher than the magician's Magic), in which case it is Physical damage. Note that no Drain Value can ever be less than 1.

SPELL CODES

CODE	MEANING
Type:	
P	Physical spell
M	Mana spell
Range:	
LOS	Line of sight
T	Touch
V	Voluntary targets only
A	Area spell
Damage:	
P	Physical damage
S	Stun Damage
Duration:	
I	Instant
S	Sustained
P	Permanent
DV (Drain Value):	
F	Force

COMBAT SPELLS

Combat spells use mana to create damaging effects, either by direct or indirect means. *Direct Combat spells* channel damaging power directly into the target's inner being, affecting them from within, and so bypass armor. *Indirect Combat spells* create an external damaging medium (often elemental in nature) that is used to attack the target.

Direct Combat Spells: Handle these as an Opposed Test. The caster's Spellcasting + Magic is resisted by the target's Body (for physi-

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cal spells) or Willpower (for mana spells), plus Counterspelling (if available). This Opposed Test is done in place of the standard Damage Resistance test. The caster needs at least one net hit for the spell to take effect. Direct Combat spells affect the target from the inside, so armor does not help with resistance.

Direct Combat spells cast against nonliving objects are treated as Success Tests; the caster must achieve enough hits to beat the item's Object Resistance (p. 183). Net hits increase damage as normal (the object does not get a resistance test).

Direct Combat spells involve channeling mana directly into a target as destructive and damaging energies rather than generating a damaging effect. Affecting the target's being on this fundamental level with raw mana requires more focus and more power than producing basic effects; as a result every net hit used to increase the damage value of a Direct Combat spell also increases the Drain DV of the spell by +1.

Indirect Combat Spells: Indirect Combat spells are treated like ranged combat attacks; the caster makes a Spellcasting + Magic Success Test versus the target's Reaction. Indirect Combat spells generate a spell construct at the point of origin (the caster) which travels down the mystic link to the chosen target (see *Choose a Target,* p. 183), whereupon it discharges and the effect defined in the spell description manifests. The spell traverses the distance between the caster and the target near instantly, but travels over the physical or astral plane to do so only to take effect when it "hits". Hence, Indirect Spells are handled as ranged attacks and require a physically solid target or astrally active target to hit. As they travel down the link to the chosen target such effects may be impeded by physical obstacles or mana barriers. They may impact transparent obstacles (such as glass) and do not "bounce" off reflective surfaces used for line of sight. Instead the spell takes effect at the point of contact with an obstructing barrier. In the case of mana barriers, use the standard rules for casting through barriers, but if the spell's Force is insufficient to beat the mana barrier it "fizzles" at the point of contact with the barrier.

If the spell reaches the chosen target and it fails to dodge with Reaction (+ Counterspelling, if available), the target then resists damage with Body + half Impact armor. Each hit reduces the Damage Value. If the modified spell DV does not exceed the modified Armor, Physical damage is converted to Stun. Note that nonliving objects resist damage from an Indirect Combat spell with their Armor rating x 2 (see *Barriers,* p. 166). Note that unlike other spells, Indirect Combat spells may affect other targets that the caster cannot see if they are caught within the spell's area of effect.

Elemental Effects: Many Indirect Combat spells utilize damaging elemental energies such as Fire damage, Electrical damage, etc (see *Special Types of Damage,* p. 163). These spells are resisted by only half the Impact armor rating (round up), as noted.

Spells with elemental components also create *secondary effects* on the environment. For example, a Fireball might start fires, cook off ammo, ignite fuel tanks, and set fire to armor and clothing all over the blast zone. An Acid Stream can melt surrounding material into smoking sludge. These are noted in the special case damage descriptions.

Damage Value: The base Damage Value for Combat spells is based on Force, which is chosen by the magician at the time of casting. Any net hits scored on the Spellcasting Test increase the DV by 1 per net hit. Each spell description notes whether damage is Stun (S) or Physical (P).

example

A drone is hot on Sarai's tail as she makes her way out of an Evo lab, but she's ready to eliminate it with extreme prejudice. She casts a Flamethrower spell, sending a geyser of flame its way. She decides that a Force 5 spell will do the trick—possibly enough to destroy the drone in one shot, or at least give it a good broiling.

Sarai is a hermetic magician with Magic 5 and Spellcasting 4, for a dice pool of 9. She rolls and gets 1, 1, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5, 6, and 6. Flamethrower is an Indirect Combat spell, so the drone rolls its Response to avoid getting hit. It rolls 0 hits, so Sarai's 3 net hits increase the base damage from 5 to 8.

The drone has Body 3 and Armor 2, so it rolls 4 dice (Body + half Armor) to resist the spell damage. The drone rolls poorly and gets only 1 hit. It takes 7 boxes of damage, showering sparks from its charred hull. Then the spell's secondary effects kick in as explosive rounds in its weapon begin to explode.

Now Sarai has to resist the Drain. The Flamethrower's Drain Value is (Force ÷ 2, round down) + 3, which works out to 5. She rolls Willpower 4 + Logic 3 to resist (she's a mage), for a dice pool of 7. She rolls a 1, 2, 2, 2, 6, 6, and 6 for 3 hits. That's enough to reduce her Drain from 5 to 2. She shakes off the headache and turns her attention back to escaping.

Acid Stream (Indirect, Elemental)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
Toxic Wave (Indirect, Elemental, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 5**
These spells create a powerful corrosive that sprays the target, causing terrible burns and eating away organic and metallic material—treat it as Acid damage (p. 163), with appropriate effects on the affected area and any objects therein. The acid quickly evaporates in the turn following the spell's casting, but the damage done remains.

Acid Stream is a single-target spell, while Toxic Wave is an area spell.

Punch (Indirect, Touch)
Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 2**
Clout (Indirect)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
Blast (Indirect, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
These spells smack the target(s) with invisible psychokinetic force, similar to a bruising punch, that inflicts Stun damage.

Clout affects a single target, Blast is an area spell. Punch requires the caster to touch the target.

Death Touch (Direct, Touch)
Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 2**
Manabolt (Direct)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
Manaball (Direct, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
Death Touch, Manabolt, and Manaball all channel destructive magical power into the target, doing Physical damage. As mana spells, they only affect living and magical targets and are resisted by Willpower.

Manabolt affects a single target, Manaball is an area spell. Death Touch requires the caster to touch the target.

Flamethrower (Indirect, Elemental)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
Fireball (Indirect, Elemental, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 5**
These spells create an explosion of flames that flash into existence and scorch the target(s). These spells deal Fire damage (p. 164).

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These flames burn out after striking the target, but their secondary effects may ignite flammable materials that will continue to burn after the spell is exhausted.

Flamethrower is a single target spell, while Fireball is an area spell.

Lightning Bolt (Indirect, Elemental)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
Ball Lightning (Indirect, Elemental, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 5**
These spells create and direct vicious strikes of electricity that cause Electricity damage (p. 163). Lightning Bolt is a single target spell. Ball Lightning is an area spell.

Shatter (Direct, Touch)
Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 1**
Powerbolt (Direct)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Powerball (Direct, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **P** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
These spells channel destructive magical power into the target, doing Physical damage. They affect both living and non-living targets and are resisted by the target's Body.

Powerbolt affects a single target. Powerball is an area spell. Shatter requires the caster to touch the target.

Knockout (Direct, Touch)
Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 3**
Stunbolt (Direct)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 1**
Stunball (Direct, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Damage: **S** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
These spells channel magical energy directly into the target, causing Stun damage. They are often referred to as "sleep" spells because they can render targets unconscious.

Stunbolt affects a single target. Stunball is an area spell. Knockout requires the caster to touch the target.

DETECTION SPELLS

Detection spells give the subject a new sense, beyond the normal five senses, for as long as they are maintained. They are cast upon either the magician or a subject within Touch range. Using the sense may require the subject to take a Simple Action to Observe in Detail (p. 147). Detection spells are either *directional* (like normal sight), *area effect* (work in all directions at once, like hearing), or *psychic* (providing some other special "sense" such as telepathy or precognition). Additionally the sense is either *active* or *passive* (see below).

Active: The sense actively analyzes or seeks out certain information when the subject concentrates on it. Active Detection spells are treated as an Opposed Test, pitting the caster's Spellcasting + Magic vs. the target's Willpower (+ Counterspelling, if available); magical objects resist with Force. Against objects, handle the spell as a Success Test with a threshold based on the Object Resistance (p. 183). The Detection Spell Results table provides guidelines for how thoroughly the sense works, based on net hits scored.

Note that Counterspelling may be used to defend against active Detection spells, even if the magician is not aware of them (see *Counterspelling,* p. 185).

Passive: A passive sense is simply "on" and passes along any appropriate sensory input without any sort of interpretation (similar

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to hearing). The Spellcasting Test serves as a magical Perception test, against an appropriate threshold determined by the gamemaster. Other effects are noted in the spell descriptions. The Detection Spell Results table provides guidelines for how thoroughly the sense works, based on net hits scored.

Note that Counterspelling cannot be used to "defend" against the sense provided by passive Detection spells, but it can be used to dispel sustained or quickened passive Detection spells.

Range: The standard sensory range for a Detection spell is the spell's Force x Magic in meters. For extended range Detection spells, the effective range of the new sense is Force x Magic x 10 meters. Note that any of the standard range spells listed below may be learned with an extended range instead (adding +2 DV).

Note also that a separate test is not needed for each potential target in range of the sense. The character simply makes a single Spellcasting + Magic Test and compares the results against each potential target in range, using the Detection Spell Results table to determine the result. If a caster sustains a Detection spell, new targets may be detected as they enter the range of the spell; in this case, the gamemaster simply applies the results of the original Spellcasting + Magic Test to see if the new targets are noticed.

Glitches: A glitch on a Detection Spellcasting Test may result in false or misleading information. Likewise, a critical glitch may inflict extra (+2 DV) or Physical Drain, may temporarily strip the character of a sense, or may inexplicably apply the sense to others (particularly opponents) in range.

Analyze Device (Active, Directional)

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

This spell allows the subject to analyze the purpose and operation of a device or piece of equipment within range of the sense. The caster must gain enough hits on the Spellcasting Test to beat the item's Object Resistance (p. 183). Each net hit gives the subject a bonus die while operating the device, and allows the subject to ignore any skill defaulting modifiers for using the device while the spell is sustained.

Analyze Truth (Active, Directional)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

The subject can tell whether a target's statements are the truth. Half-truths or falsehoods the target believes to be true are not detected by this spell. The spell needs at least 1 net hit to determine validity. The spell does not work on written materials or through any sort of technological medium. The subject must hear a statement in person (with the target within range) to know whether it is true.

DETECTION SPELL RESULTS

NET HITS	RESULTS
1	Only general knowledge, no details. **Detect Life Example:** A group of metahumans.
2	Major details only, no minor details. **Detect Life Example:** Three male orks and a female troll, coming your way.
3	Major and minor details, with some minor details obscured or missing. **Detect Life Example:** They are all running and armed, with weapons out. The troll is leading.
4	Completely detailed information. **Detect Life Example:** The troll is your contact, Moira, and she's wounded and being chased by three ork gangers!

Clairaudience (Passive, Directional)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) –1**

The subject can hear distant sounds as if physically present at a chosen point within the sensory range of the spell. The "listening point" may be moved to any other point within range of the spell. While using clairaudience, the subject cannot use her normal hearing. This spell does not translate visual images, only sounds (and only sounds within the subject's natural range of hearing; augmented hearing does not apply).

Clairvoyance (Passive, Directional)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) –1**

The subject can see distant scenes as if physically present at a chosen point within the sensory range of the spell. The "visual point" may be moved to any other point within range of the spell. The subject cannot use normal vision or astral perception while using it. This spell does not translate sound, only vision. Any augmented vision possessed by the subject does not function through this spell, nor does astral perception. Magicians cannot use clairvoyance to target others with spells.

Combat Sense (Active, Psychic)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**

The subject can subconsciously analyze combat and other dangerous situations within range, sensing events a split-second before they happen. Every hit on the Spellcasting Test adds 1 die for Reaction on Surprise Tests and when defending against ranged and melee attacks for the duration of the spell.

Detect Enemies (Active, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**

Detect Enemies, Extended (Active, Extended Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**

The subject can detect living targets within range who have hostile intentions toward him. The spell does not detect traps (since they are not alive), nor can it detect someone about to shoot into a crowd at random (the hostility is not directed at the subject of the spell). The spell can detect targets preparing an ambush or other surprise attack.

Detect Individual (Active, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 1**

The subject can detect the presence of a particular individual anywhere within range of the sense. The magician names the individual during casting; she must know the target or have met him in the past.

Detect Life (Active, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

Detect Life, Extended (Active, Extended Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) +2**

The subject detects all living beings (but not spirits) within range of the sense and knows their number and relative location. In a crowded area, the spell is virtually useless, picking up a blurred mass of traces.

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Detect [Life Form] (Active, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) –1**

Detect [Life Form], Extended (Active, Extended Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) +1**

The subject detects all of a specified type of life form within the range of the sense and knows their number and relative location. Each different life form requires a separate spell (Detect Orks, Detect Elves, Detect Dragons, and so forth).

Detect Magic (Active, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

Detect Magic, Extended (Active, Extended Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**

The subject can detect the presence of all foci, spells, wards, magical lodges, and spirits within range of the sense. It does not detect Awakened characters or critters, astral signatures, or the effects of permanent spells once they have become permanent.

Detect [Object] (Active, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) –1**

The subject detects all of a specified type of object within range of the sense and knows their number and relative location. Each type of object requires a separate spell (Detect Guns, Detect Computers, Detect Explosives, and so forth).

Mindlink (Active, Psychic)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**

Mindlink allows the caster and one voluntary subject to communicate mentally, exchanging conversation, emotions, and mental images. One hit on the Spellcasting Test is enough to establish the link. The subject must remain within range of the spellcaster for the Mindlink to work.

Mind Probe (Active, Directional)

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**

This spell allows the subject to telepathically probe the mind of a specific target within range of the sense (chosen when the spell is cast). The target is aware of the probing, though they may not know the source of the spell. If the caster gains one or more net hits, consult the Mind Probe Results table for the information gained.

The subject may probe for one piece of information per Complex Action. Additional uses of Mind Probe against the same target within a number of hours equal to the target's Willpower are at a –2 dice pool modifier per previous Spellcasting attempt.

MIND PROBE RESULTS

NET HITS	RESULTS
1–2	The subject can read the target's surface thoughts only.
3–4	The subject can find out anything the target consciously knows and view the target's memories.
5+	The subject can probe the target's subconscious, gaining information the target may not even be consciously aware of, like psychological quirks, deep fears, or hidden memories.

HEALTH SPELLS

Health spells can heal physical injury, cure diseases (or inflict them), detoxify poisons or drugs (or mimic their effects), as well as modify attributes. No techniques currently known to magic can erase Stun damage or cure psychological conditions.

All health spells require the caster to touch the subject of the spell. This "laying on hands" is traditional in magical healing lore the world over. Health spells are handled as Success Tests, with hits providing specified bonuses.

Healing Characters with Implants: Low-Essence characters are more difficult to heal, as implants (or other damage) disrupt the body's holistic integrity. In game terms, this means a dice pool modifier applies to the Spellcasting Test equal to the subject's lost Essence (rounded down). So trying to heal a character with Essence 4 (2 Essence points of implants) incurs a –2 dice pool modifier.

Negative Health spells: Spells that negatively affect a character require an Opposed Test, pitting Spellcasting + Magic vs. the target's appropriate attribute (+ Counterspelling, if available).

Antidote

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Toxin DV) – 2**

This spell helps a poisoned subject to overcome a toxin. It must be applied before the toxin does damage (though an Antidote spell applied afterward may alleviate some side effects, if the gamemaster chooses). The poisoned character receives a number of additional dice on her Toxin Resistance Test (p. 254) equal to the net hits.

Cure Disease

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Disease DV) – 2**

This spell is used at any point after infection to help a patient overcome illness. The infected character receives a number of additional dice on her Disease Resistance Test equal to the spell's net hits. It does not heal any damage already inflicted by the disease (that takes a separate Healing spell).

Decrease [Attribute] (Negative)

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**

This spell weakens the target by decreasing a chosen attribute. A version of this spell exists for each Physical and Mental attribute, but not for Special attributes (Initiative, Edge, Essence, Magic, or Resonance). It affects both natural and augmented attributes.

The target resists the spell using the attribute affected. If the caster wins, the attribute is reduced by the spell's net hits. If a Physical attribute is reduced to 0, the victim is incapacitated or paralyzed. If a Mental attribute is reduced to 0, the victim stands about mindlessly confused.

Note that decreasing an attribute may affect other derived statistics (Decrease Intuition also affects Initiative, for example, while Decrease Willpower will remove boxes from the character's Stun Condition Monitor for as long as the spell lasts).

Detox

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Toxin DV) – 4**

Detox relieves the side effects of a drug or poison. The Force of the spell must equal or exceed the toxin's base DV. A single net hit is sufficient to eliminate all symptoms. Detox does not heal or prevent damage done by toxins, but it eliminates any side effects they may have on the victim (dizziness, hallucinations, nausea, pain, and so forth). Detox is the hangover cure of choice among those who can afford it.

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Heal

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Damage Value) – 2**
Heal repairs physical injuries. It heals a number of boxes of Physical damage equal to the spell's hits from the Spellcasting Test. Hits can also be used to reduce the base time for the spell to become permanent; each hit spent this way shaves off 1 Combat Turn (hits can be split between healing and reducing time as the caster desires).

A character can only be magically healed once for any single set of injuries.

Hibernate

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 3**
The caster must touch a voluntary or unconscious subject. The spell puts the subject in a form of suspended animation. The subject's bodily processes are slowed by a factor equal to the hits. For example, If 4 hits were scored, the subject's metabolism is slowed by a factor of 4. Such a subject sealed into a chamber with enough air to keep it alive for a day would be able to last four days.

Increase [Attribute]

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 2**
This spell increases an attribute (natural or augmented) on a voluntary subject. A version of this spell exists for each Physical and Mental attribute, but not for Special attributes (Initiative, Edge, Essence, Magic, or Resonance). The Force of the spell must equal or exceed the (augmented) value of the attribute being affected. The attribute is increased by an amount equal to the hits scored. Each attribute can only be affected by a single Increase Attribute spell at a time.

Note that increasing an attribute may affect other derived statistics (Increase Reaction also affects Initiative, for example, while Increase Body will add extra boxes to the character's Physical Condition Monitor for as long as the spell lasts).

Increase Reflexes

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
This spell increases the reflexes (Initiative and Initiative Passes) of a voluntary subject. Each level of increase adds +1 Initiative and +1 Initiative Pass. The caster must achieve a certain threshold for each level:
Threshold 2: +1 Initiative, + 1 Initiative Pass
Threshold 3: +2 Initiative, + 2 Initiative Passes
Threshold 4 (max.): +3 Initiative, + 3 Initiative Passes

A character can only be affected by a single Increase Reflexes spell at a time; the maximum IPs any character can have is 4.

Oxygenate

Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 1**
This spell oxygenates the blood of a voluntary subject, providing extra Body dice (1 die for every hit) to resist suffocation, strangulation, the effects of inhaled gas, or any other effect of oxygen deprivation. The spell also allows the subject to breathe underwater.

Prophylaxis

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 2**
This spell provides additional dice (+1 die per hit) for a voluntary subject to resist infection, drugs, or toxins. The spell does not discriminate between harmful and beneficial drugs, so the subject also resists medicines and other helpful drugs while under the effects of the spell. Reduce the effect of a beneficial drug by 1 for every hit of the spell. Two or more hits prevent the subject from being affected by alcohol while under the effect of this spell.

Resist Pain

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Damage Value) – 4**
Resist Pain allows the subject to ignore the pain of injuries, reducing the penalties from Physical or Stun damage. Each hit on the Spellcasting Test removes the effect of one box of damage from each of the subject's Condition Monitor tracks. It does not remove the damage itself, only eliminates the modifiers. Resist Pain can only be used once on any given set of injuries. If all of the boxes on the track are filled, the character still falls unconscious.

The spell is "permanent" in that the boost to the patient's endorphin levels does not wear off. If the subject's damage rises above the level at which the patient is resisting pain or if the existing injuries heal, the spell dissipates.

Stabilize

Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(Overflow damage) – 2**
When applied to a character with a filled Physical damage track, this spell stabilizes all vital functions and prevents the character from dying. The spell's Force must equal or exceed the overflow damage already taken when the spell starts. The full time must be taken for the spell to become Permanent (p. 203) before the character is stabilized; hits reduce the time it takes by 1 Combat Turn each. If successful, the spell prevents the character from taking further damage from Physical Damage Overflow (p. 253).

ILLUSION SPELLS

No matter how realistic they are, illusions cannot directly cause permanent harm. They can cause distractions, loss of balance or orientation, and even symptoms like nausea or pain. All such effects vanish as soon as the caster drops the illusion. Illusions can certainly cause harm by manipulating the senses so a victim walks into traffic or off a high building, for example, but they cannot directly cause damage.

Obvious illusions are used solely for entertainment and cannot fool subjects into believing they are real. *Realistic* illusions seem completely real. *Single-sense* illusions affect only one sense. *Full sensory* illusions affect all senses. Though mana-based illusions can be created on the astral plane, their magical auras give them away as illusions to anyone who makes a successful Assensing Test (see *Astral Perception,* p. 191). Illusions cannot fool assensing to disguise or create auras.

Mana Illusions: Mana-based illusion spells affect the mind and are ineffective against technological viewing systems like cameras. Mana illusions are resisted by Willpower + Counterspelling (if any).

Some mana illusions affect the target's senses directly, others affect the senses of anyone perceiving the subject of the spell (though the spellcaster is not affected by her own spell).

Physical Illusions: Physical illusion spells create actual images or alter physical properties, such as light or sound. Physical illusions are effective against technological systems, assuming the caster achieves enough hits to meet the Object Resistance threshold (p. 183). They are resisted by Intuition + Counterspelling (if any); non-living devices do not get a resistance test. The spellcaster must generate more hits than the observer for the illusion to be considered real. If the spell is not completely resisted, the character is fully affected by the illusion.

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Confusion (Realistic, Multi-Sense)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
Mass Confusion (Realistic, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
Chaos (Realistic, Multi-Sense)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Chaotic World (Realistic, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
These spells produce a storm of conflicting sensations and images to confuse the senses. For each net hit on the Spellcasting Test, the target suffers a –1 dice pool modifier to all tests from the distraction.

Confusion affects a single target. Mass Confusion is an area spell. The Chaos spell is a physical version of Confusion (above), so it also affects technological systems and sensing devices. Chaotic World is an area version of Chaos.

Entertainment (Obvious, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Trid Entertainment (Obvious, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
These area spells create obvious, but entertaining, illusions. Hits on the Spellcasting Test measure how creative, interesting, and captivating the audience finds the illusion. The caster can reproduce just about anything from her imagination, or re-create something she has experienced. The gamemaster might require additional hits for exacting detail.

Entertainment affects the minds of the subjects and cannot be detected by non-living sensors. Trid Entertainment is a physical spell, and can be perceived by both living subjects and non-living sensors.

These spells are used for amusement as well as art. The entertainment industry uses illusionists as literal "special effects wizards." Magical designers and artists work to create new and interesting sensations, including sensations that can't otherwise be experienced in the real world. Only the wealthy can afford the unique experiences offered by such spellcasters firsthand.

Invisibility (Realistic, Single-Sense)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
Improved Invisibility (Realistic, Single-Sense)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
This spell makes the subject more difficult to detect by normal visual senses (including low-light, thermographic, and other senses that rely on the visual spectrum). The subject is completely tangible and detectable by the other senses (hearing, smell, touch, etc.). Her aura is still visible to astral perception.

Anyone who might perceive the subject must first successfully resist the spell. Simply make one Spellcasting Test and use the hits scored as the threshold for anyone that resists at a later point. Even if the spell is resisted, the subject might remain unnoticed if she wins a Shadowing or Infiltration Test. An invisible character may still be detected by non-visual means, such as hearing or smell.

Attacks against invisible targets suffer the Target Hidden modifier (p. 150) if the attacker is unable to see or otherwise sense the subject of the spell.

Invisibility affects the minds of viewers. Improved invisibility creates an actual warping of light around the subject that affects technological sensors as well.

Mask (Realistic, Multi-Sense)
Type: **M** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
Physical Mask (Realistic, Multi-Sense)
Type: **P** • Range: **T** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
The Mask spell requires the caster to touch the subject. The subject assumes a different physical appearance (of the same basic size and shape) chosen by the caster. This alters the subject's voice, scent, and other physical characteristics as well.

Anyone who might see through the disguise must first successfully resist the spell. Simply make one Spellcasting Test and use the hits scored as the threshold for anyone that resists at a later point.

Mask affects the minds of viewers. Physical Mask creates an illusion that affects technological sensors as well.

Phantasm (Realistic, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) +2**
Trid Phantasm (Realistic, Multi-Sense, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) +3**
These area spells create convincing illusions of any object, creature, or scene the caster desires. They can create an illusion of anything the caster has seen before, from a flower or a credstick to a dragon breathing fire, as long as the illusion is no larger than the spell's area.

Anyone who might pierce the illusion must successfully resist the spell. Simply make one Spellcasting Test and use the hits scored as the threshold for anyone that resists at a later point.

Phantasm only affects living beings, while Trid Phantasm affects technological sensors as well.

Hush (Realistic, Single-Sense, Area)
Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
Silence (Realistic, Single-Sense, Area)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
These spells create an area that damps sound. Sonic attacks into or out of the field, as well as critter powers using a sonic medium (such as Paralyzing Howl), are reduced by –1 per hit on the Spellcasting Test. Anyone attempting to hear a sound from within or across the silenced area must successfully resist the spell.

Hush is a mana spell and so only affects living beings and magic sonic attacks. Silence affects technological devices and is useful for jamming alarms, detection devices, sonar, and tactical communications, as well as technological sonic weapons.

Stealth (Realistic, Single-Sense)
Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) +1**
Stealth makes the subject less audible to normal hearing (including augmented hearing). The subject moves in silence, making less or no noise. Things not directly touched by the subject can still make noise, so a character under a Stealth spell would make no noise knocking on a door, but the door would make noise hitting the floor or wall if it was kicked in.

Anyone who might hear the subject must first successfully resist the spell. Simply make one Spellcasting Test and use the hits scored as the threshold for anyone that resists at a later point. Even if the spell is resisted, the subject might remain unnoticed if she wins a Shadowing or Infiltration Test.

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MANIPULATION SPELLS

Manipulation spells control, animate, or transform matter and energy. Many Manipulation spells have a Threshold; this is the number of Spellcasting + Magic hits required for the spell to function. *Mental Manipulations* affect the mind, *Physical Manipulations* affect physical forms, and *Environmental Manipulations* affect conditions such as light, temperature, gravity, etc. Most Manipulation spells are handled as Success Tests, with hits determining the effect.

Mental Manipulations: For *Mental Manipulation spells,* the caster makes an Opposed Spellcasting + Magic Test against the target's Willpower (+ Counterspelling, if available). If the caster scores more hits, she controls the target as noted in the spell description. Every (Force) Combat Turns, the victim may spend a Complex Action to shake off the mental control. The victim rolls a Willpower (+ Counterspelling) Test; each hit reduces the net hits on the caster's original Spellcasting Test. If the spellcaster's net hits are reduced to 0, the spell no longer affects the target.

Armor (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
This spell creates a glowing field of magical energy around the subject that protects against Physical damage. It provides both Ballistic and Impact armor (cumulative with worn armor) to the subject equal to the hits scored.

Control Actions (Mental)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

Mob Control (Mental, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
The caster of this spell controls the physical actions of a target like a puppeteer pulling strings. The victim's consciousness is unaffected, but the caster controls the victim's body. The target uses any skills or abilities at the caster's orders, but these tests suffer a dice pool modifier equal to the target's Willpower because of the victim's resistance to the caster's commands. Controlling a target character requires the caster to spend a Simple Action; when not directly controlled, the victim may act as normal.

Control Actions only affects a single target, Mob Control affects any living targets within the area of effect. Victims of a Mob Control may be manipulated individually (with separate Simple Actions) or issued the same command as a group (with a single Simple Action).

Control Emotions (Mental)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**

Mob Mood (Mental, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
The target feels an overwhelming emotion chosen by the spellcaster (such as love, hate, fear, joy, sorrow, and so forth). The target believes the emotion wholeheartedly, but not mindlessly. A target who acts in accordance with the emotion (for example, fighting while filled with anger or hate) suffers no penalty. If the target takes action not relevant to the emotion (trying to drive while laughing hysterically), she suffers a –2 dice pool modifier for the distraction. The caster may switch emotions with a Simple Action.

Control Emotions only affects a single target, Mob Mood affects any living targets within the area of effect.

Control Thoughts (Mental)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**

Mob Mind (Mental, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 4**
The caster seizes control of the target's mind, directing everything the target does. The caster mentally gives commands with a Simple Action and the target is compelled to obey.

Control Thoughts affects a single target, while Mob Mind affects any living targets within the area of effect. Victims of a Mob Mind may be manipulated individually (with separate Simple Actions) or issued the same command as a group (with a single Simple Action).

Fling (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
This spell psychokinetically hurls a single object of no more than (Force) kilograms at a designated target with a Strength equal to one-half the spellcaster's Magic. Treat the Spellcasting Test as a normal Ranged Combat Test for the purposes of the item hitting the target. Throwing weapons propelled by this spell use their normal range based on the spell's effective Strength.

Ice Sheet (Environmental, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **I** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
This spell creates a slippery sheet of ice over the area of effect. Characters crossing the ice must make an Agility + Reaction Test with a threshold equal to the hits scored to avoid falling prone. Vehicles must make a Crash Test (p. 178). The sheet melts at a rate of 1 square meter per minute in normal temperatures.

Ignite (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(F ÷ 2)**
The Ignite spell accelerates molecular motion in the target, causing it to catch fire once the spell becomes permanent. The spellcaster must achieve enough net hits to beat a threshold equal to the target's Object Resistance (p. 183). Once the target ignites, it burns normally until it is consumed or extinguished.

Against living targets, treat Ignite as an Opposed Test pitting Spellcasting + Magic vs. Body (+ Counterspelling). If successful, Ignite wraps a living target in heat and flames once it has been made permanent, causing (Force) boxes of Fire damage (p. 164) on the first Combat Turn, and increasing by one box of damage each additional turn. Resolve the damage at the end of each Combat Turn by making a Damage Resistance Test using the victim's Body + half Impact armor. Ammo or explosives carried by a victim may go off. The gamemaster should reduce the Force of the fire accordingly for extinguishing efforts.

Influence (Mental)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **P** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
This spell implants a single suggestion in the victim's mind, like a powerful post-hypnotic command. The subject will carry out this suggestion as if it were her own idea and it will then fade. If confronted with the wrongness of the suggestion, the subject can make a Willpower Test to overcome it as described under *Mental Manipulations,* p. 210. The caster can also withdraw the suggestion at any time.

Levitate (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Levitate allows the caster to telekinetically lift a person or object and move it around. The caster must achieve a threshold on the Spellcasting Test equal to 1 per 200 kg of the subject's mass. The subject of the spell can be moved anywhere in the caster's line of sight at a Movement rate equal to the spell's Force x net Spellcasting hits in meters per turn.

Objects flung into other things should be handled as a Ranged Attack Test (see *Fling*), inflicting a number of boxes of Stun damage as decided by the gamemaster (especially sharp or dangerous objects may do Physical damage at the gamemaster's discretion).

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If the caster is attempting to levitate an item held by a living being, make an Opposed Test between the spell's Force x 2 and the holder's Strength + Body. The caster must have at least 1 net hit to levitate the item away. If the caster is attempting to levitate an unwilling living being, the Opposed Test uses the target's Strength + Body. You can use this spell to levitate yourself, if desired.

Light (Environmental, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) – 1**
This spell creates a mobile point of light, illuminating a radius around it equal to the spell's Force in meters. The spell cannot be used to blind, but does offset darkness visibility modifiers. Each hit on the Spellcasting Test counters a –1 die penalty for visibility.

Magic Fingers (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Magic Fingers creates a psychokinetic effect like "invisible hands" that can hold or manipulate items. The hits on the Spellcasting + Magic Test become the spell's effective Strength and Agility. The caster can use skills remotely with Magic Fingers, but all tests receive a –2 dice pool modifier due to problems of fine control. Even simple actions like picking up a coin may require an Agility Test, at the gamemaster's discretion.

The caster can fight, pick a lock, or perform any other action, using the magic fingers as if they were real hands. The spell can reach any point the caster can see, and Clairvoyance or remote-viewing technology can be used to get a close-up of the scene as long as it is within the caster's normal line of sight. This spell comes in very handy for disarming bombs and handling other hazardous work from a safe distance.

Mana Barrier (Environmental, Area)

Type: **M** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Mana Barrier creates an invisible barrier of magical energy with a Force equal to the net hits scored. This barrier does not restrict living beings or physical objects, but it does impede spirits, foci, dual beings, and spells. If cast on the astral plane, it also impedes astral forms and restricts visibility. Any target of a spell that is on the other side of the Mana Barrier receives a bonus to its spell resistance dice pool equal to the barrier's Force. If the target had no resistance dice pool, but instead has an Object Resistance threshold, increase the threshold by 1 for every increment of 3 Force in the Mana Barrier (round up). See p. 194 for more information on mana barriers.

Petrify (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
Petrify transforms living tissue into stone-like calcium carbonate. The caster must win an Opposed Test pitting her Spellcasting + Magic against the target's Body (+ Counterspelling). Additionally, the spell's Force must equal or exceed the target's Body. Non-living material—including clothing, gear, and cyberware—is not affected. The target is not conscious while under the effects of this spell, and any damage suffered by the stone-like form affects the target normally. While petrified, the subject has a barrier Armor rating equal to Body + net hits (see *Barriers,* p. 194).

Physical Barrier (Environmental, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
Barrier spells create glowing, translucent force-fields with both 1 point of Armor and Structure rating per hit (see *Barriers,* p. 194). The caster can form the barrier as a dome with a radius and height equal to the spell's normal radius. The caster can also form a wall with a height and length equal to the spell's Force. The caster can adjust size of the barrier the same as the radius of an area spell (p. 183).

Physical Barrier creates a physical wall. Anything the size of a molecule (or less) can pass through the barrier, including air or other gases. Anything bigger treats the barrier as a normal physical wall. Attacks directed through a barrier have a –1 dice pool visibility penalty. The barrier does not impede spells. The barrier can be brought down by physical attacks, but as long as it is sustained it regenerates damage quickly—any reductions in Structure Rating are restored at the beginning of the next Combat Turn. If the barrier is penetrated, however, it collapses and the spell ends. Physical Barrier cannot be used on the astral plane.

Poltergeist (Environmental, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 3**
Poltergeist picks up all small objects (up to a kilogram in mass) within the spell's area and whirls them around in random patterns. This imposes a –2 dice pool visibility penalty in the area. The spell inflicts 2 boxes of Stun damage (resisted with Reaction + Impact armor) to anyone in the area each Combat Turn, whacking them with flying debris. Poltergeist may do more damage in cluttered environments, or inflict Physical damage if the gamemaster feels the debris is sufficiently dangerous (broken glass and nails, for example).

Shadow (Environmental, Area)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS (A)** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Shadow creates a globe of darkness with a radius equal to the spell's Force in meters. Every hit imposes a –1 die pool visibility modifier against targets within the area (maximum –6).

Shapechange (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**

(Critter) Form (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 1**
Shapechange transforms a voluntary subject into a normal (non-paranormal) critter, though the subject retains human consciousness. The subject can only assume the form of a critter whose base Body rating is 2 points greater or less than her own. Consult the Critters section, p. 292, for the subject's Physical attributes while in critter form. Add 1 to the critter's Base attribute Ratings for every hit the caster generates. Her Mental attributes remain unchanged.

This spell does not transform clothing and equipment. Magicians in critter form can still cast spells, but cannot perform other tasks requiring speech.

Critter form works like the Shapechange spell, but only allows the subject to change into a specific non-paranormal animal. Each critter form is a different spell (Eagle Form, Wolf Form, and so on).

Turn to Goo (Physical)

Type: **P** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **S** • DV: **(F ÷ 2) + 2**
Turn to Goo transforms living tissue into a sticky, glue-like substance. The caster must win an Opposed Test pitting her Spellcasting + Magic against the target's Body (+ Counterspelling). Additionally, the spell's Force must equal or exceed the target's Body. Non-living material—including clothing, gear, and cyberware—is not affected. The target is not conscious while under the effects of this spell, and any damage suffered by the gooey form affects the target normally. The goo has a barrier Armor rating equal to Body + net hits (see *Barriers,* p. 194).

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GAME SET MATCH

Netcat eyed the little drone from where she lay on the bench, soaking up the rare sunlight—and the rich wireless dataflow, which was as warming to her as the sun overhead. The UW campus was crowded with students, all of them with active commlinks, messages thickening the datasphere as they enjoyed the unusually bright day. Classes be screwed; early spring in Seattle wasn't known for nice weather, and even the professors were probably out playing hooky. She wasn't a student any more, but she felt safe in the throngs of college kids, in their precious little bubble of campus life. She'd been in that bubble before the Crash 2.0.

And sometimes she just liked to return to it.

The drone was harmless, floating above the plaza and watching over the kids like a hen clucking over her chicks. Netcat closed her eyes, felt the sun soak into her bones, and sighed. With her e-sense, she didn't need to look around to know where every single person—and drone—was in the plaza.

When one of those people walked straight to her and stood there, blocking her sun, she didn't need any special abilities to know it was a guy. Unarmed, augmented with nothing more than a datajack, his off-the-shelf commlink projecting a dinky little icon. As if she'd be interested in some pampered college boy.

"Go away," she said, not bothering to open her eyes.

"And leave you here for the frat-boys to drool over?" replied an amused masculine voice. Netcat's heartbeat kicked up a notch and she jerked up, instincts—or maybe just her hormones—humming.

Slamm-O! gazed down at her, a grin spread across his square-jawed face. "Gotcha," he said.

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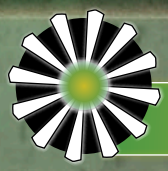

by Jennifer Harding and Aaron Pavao

Netcat dropped back against the bench, trying to get her heart rate back under control. "What are you doing here?" she asked, crossing her arms, torn between being flattered by the pure masculine appreciation in his gaze and being suspicious. How the heck had he found her? And why was he here?

"Just in the area," he said. "I saw you and thought I should say hi." Slamm-O! didn't bother mentioning that when he'd heard she was in Seattle, he'd begged her access ID off FastJack after she'd logged onto Jackpoint this morning—damn technomancers and their constantly changing access IDs—and set about tracking her down. Now he just had to be clever and dangle the right bait. And not think about how she'd looked, stretched out in the sun, the top few buttons of her shirt undone, framing creamy white skin. And somehow resist the urge to strike blind all those idiot boys who'd been admiring the view. *His* view.

She raised one eyebrow.

"Wanna get a bite to eat? Lunch?" he asked.

"I already ate," she said, her arms still crossed. "And now I'm enjoying the sun. Alone."

He smiled down at her. She narrowed her eyes at him. He slung himself down on the bench next to her, stretching out his long legs, casually sliding his arm along the bench back behind her.

"Uh-huh," he said, relaxing. "Real private here in the middle of kid-central."

Netcat felt her lip twitch and suppressed the grin.

"And what about that little guy up there?" Slamm-O! nodded at the little drone still hovering over the plaza. "I think it was trying to look down your shirt."

"It's a drone," she said, rolling her eyes. "If it was, you were probably telling it to."

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"Not me," he said, his boy-next-door face looking deceptively innocent. "That's something you'd do. Weren't you the one who hacked the drones in my place, and posted the photos on Jackpoint?"

"Ah ..." Netcat blushed. It'd been on a dare from Pistons, although she'd done a bit more looking than she probably should've ... but who knew the annoying hacker had such a fine body? She'd thought he'd be one of those pasty-skinned couch potatoes.

"What, you haven't hacked the drone yet?" he asked, a gleam in his eye. She just shook her head, her cheeks still burning. "How about a little contest?" he said.

"A contest?" she asked quickly, thankful for the subject change.

"Yeah," he said, looking around the plaza. The old campus buildings had their windows open, letting in the fresh air—it was a breather-free day—and sun. He called up the campus map, and the building was suddenly outlined in his AR vision, a neat ARO marking it as the Chemistry building. He pointed to a set of matching windows. "Whoever can get the drone into a window first. I'll even let you use your little sprite friends," he said, just a little patronizing.

Predictably, her back went up. "I'll take the left window," she said, opening an AR window and spinning a form that measured the distance between the fountain and the Chemistry building to the southwest. "And when I win, you're going to tell all of Jackpoint how I kicked your sorry ass and how I'm better than you in the Matrix."

"Right," said Slamm-O!, "And when I get it in the right-hand window, you let me take you out on a date. A real one."

Netcat eyed the hacker. They'd pitted their abilities against each other before, and so far she'd been on a winning streak—but that was in the 'trix, where her unique abilities balanced out his experience and skill. Out here ...

"What kind of date?" she asked.

"Not that kind," he said, keeping a straight face. "The kind where you wear a dress, I wear a suit, and we eat overpriced food in a quiet little restaurant while we share our life stories."

"I don't think I want to know your life story," she muttered. "Do you even own a suit?" Not that he didn't look just fine in those jeans, but she'd never let him know that.

"I do," he said. "I've even been known to eat with silverware on occasion. C'mon, Kitty. Worried I'll trounce you?" he asked, toying with a curl of her hair.

She raised one eyebrow. "As if you could," she said, pointedly moving his hand off her shoulder. "All right, but let's stick with AR. It would be weird if we both keeled over in the middle of the plaza."

"Great!" he said with a grin, "Ready, set, go!" Before the technomancer could react, he reached for his sunglasses and flashed the drone with a reflected sunbeam. Its little dog brain just wasn't complex enough to make its own decision, not when faced with something it didn't recognize. Slamm-O! knew standard operating protocols would make the drone contact its master—a security rigger somewhere on campus. Probably in the campus security headquarters. Without hacking it, he couldn't know how strong the drone's firewall would be, but with all the kids here, and the prime CompSci department, he bet the security riggers had beefed up the firewalls. Either that or risk having their drones decorating dorm rooms all across campus. And if he wanted to beat 'Cat—and god, did he—he had to move fast. That meant spoofing, not hacking. Hacking on the fly risked setting off a security alert. Spoofing was good for moving fast. But he needed the security rigger's access ID for it to work. And that required backtracking the communication line from the drone to the rigger.

He opened an AR window, the angular corners a stark contrast to the pretty fountain of the plaza. He sent the code scrolling for his sniffer, mentally manipulating the program as it found the communication channel. In another window, he tasked an agent to calculate the coordinates he'd need to win the contest.

Annoyed by the sudden start, Netcat turned her back to the hacker as she tugged one of her sprites out of the resonance. While it coalesced within her digitally augmented vision as a ball of shimmering lights forming into a tiny fairy with tattered wings, she reached out along the sense of the drone's uncertainty and located its hidden Matrix node, adding another bubble to her own AR display.

Slamm-O! moved with almost superhuman speed, skating down the drone's Matrix connection node by node, tracking it back to its controller. When he found it, it was a simple matter to analyze the rigger's node, catching his access ID.

Netcat asked the little sprite to help hide her from the drone's sight, and felt the little creature settle against her shoulder as it extended its resonance to help cloak her. Then she reached for her Exploit form, pouring her mental strength into it, feeling it grow stronger. With that done, she turned her attention to the drone's node, pushing against the thick guard of its firewall.

Slamm-O! chuckled behind her. "This is too easy. I've already got the rigger's access ID." He sent the drone orders, using the owner's identity as the sender, to fly into the open window on the right. Fooled by the spoofed headers, the stupid drone careened off of its normal path, flying directly for Slamm-O!'s target at an eager, if somewhat slow, pace. "Now all I've got to do is wait. Maybe I should start making reservations for a restaurant? You're a vegetarian, right?" Slamm-O! smiled as he opened a third AR window, confirming the 8 o'clock reservation for the Eye of the Needle he'd made when FastJack had finally given him the technomancer's access ID.

The technomancer growled at him as she pushed against the drone's firewall. Netcat didn't want normal user access, she wanted admin access. The extra time'll be worth it, she thought, ignoring the headache brewing behind her eyes. Finally, she saw the weakness in the drone's firewall that would allow her to slip through without affecting it. She was in. With a lovely admin passcode.

"Dream on," she said to Slamm-O!, wrinkling her nose. "How about you skip the reservations, and start composing that post. 'Netcat' is one word, no dashes." She reached for the drone's AR controls and turned the mechanical damselfly to the left.

A second later, her controls went dark. "It's not responding to my commands; that's not you, is it?" asked Slamm-O!

She perceived the words Rigger Control Override floating in the node space of the drone. "No," she muttered, "I think we've been made." She

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saw an icon of a large grey and white dog enter the node, presumably the drone's rightful controller. The rigger's sniffing icon had not yet caught her in his territory, but she cursed anyway. Her sprite wouldn't stay forever, and once it left, it would just be a matter of time before he spotted her.

"What, you trigger an alert, kitten?" Slamm-O! asked as he squared his shoulders for an outright attack on the firewall, unloading his own sniffer program and bringing up his exploit program. Stealth be damned, he wasn't losing this contest. Nor was he going to let some rigger attack Netcat, not when her technomancer weaknesses would translate a harmless Attack program into real damage.

"Not me," she muttered. "Think the rigger's onto our little game."

The drone began drifting back to the right, toward the UW Security Headquarters for maintenance, under the complete control of the proper authorities. "Nice try, pal," Netcat said, half to Slamm-O! and half to the rigger. She reached for the admin access accounts, attempting to delete the rigger's account and dump him from the drone.

When her attempt failed, she groaned. The security riggers had programmed the drone to not accept admin account deletions—a standard hacker trick. "God, I hate men with brains," she muttered, watching as the rigger opened the access logs. She hadn't been in the drone long enough for those to update. With both of them having admin access, they were at a stalemate.

Slamm-O!, meanwhile, unleashed his exploit against the firewall. Netcat heard the drone's firewall scream, and Slamm-O!'s cartoonish icon burst through. She and the rigger both turned to look at the lightning-haired youth at the same time.

"What the hell?" she asked, physically and in AR. The husky icon braced itself, then launched at the cartoon icon. Netcat bared her teeth.

"Shit," Slamm-O! muttered, dodging the rigger's attack. A pack of little grey and white puppies tumbled into the node, rolling around as they attempted to track the intruder's scent. As fast as he was, Slamm-O! knew the rigger would be faster in VR. He dodged another swipe of the husky's sharp teeth. With the firewall on alert, it was bad news for him—and he didn't even see Netcat's icon in his AR view. He did see the bumbling puppies as they began to trace him.

"You boys going to just dance all day?" Netcat asked, working to deactivate the IC.

"Sorry, kitten," Slamm-O! growled, "I'm being a gentleman. Keeping him away from you." He frantically loaded up a program to redirect the trace, and saw code bleed across his AR view as the husky landed an attack. He felt, more than saw, his icon slow down. A nuke program. God, he hated those. Moving slower, he attempted to dodge another attack from the husky, and again, felt his icon slow even more. Works both ways, dog-breath, Slamm-O! thought, loading his own Nuke program. The puppies were nipping at his heels, but with a little "pop" they disappeared from the node.

"Don't worry about me, Romeo," Netcat said as she called up another sprite, a protector. It burst into being in the node, trailing neon sparks, and she felt her headache shift from dull ache to sharp pain. It was worth it, though, when she saw the husky grab another bite of Slamm-O!'s icon. Protect him, she said, and the little fairy flew into the fray, settling on the cartoon boy's shoulder and screwing its pointed face up in concentration. The husky lost its grip. Its next lunge hit a shimmering bubble of light around the cartoon icon, and Netcat heard her tiny sprite chatter angrily as it redirected the attack, taking the damage onto itself and leaving Slamm-O! untouched.

Slamm-O! unleashed his own Nuke program, a fast hardball that flew directly at the husky's face, slamming into him so hard the dog fell to the ground. He didn't have some stupid campus security version of the program, his was cutting edge software gleaned from the best coders at Hacker House. The security rigger's icon was paralyzed ... and with his response reduced to zero, he had no room to subscribe to the drone. His connection fizzled out.

Slamm-O! rubbed his hands, gloating. "See, there's a real hacker at work. Now—"

His AR view of the drone's internal system went black. He swung his head around to glare at Netcat. She smiled.

"Silly hackers with their user level passcodes," she said, sugar sweet. "A real techno goes for an Admin every time. That's how I dumped your cute ass." Netcat's controls came back online and she re-routed the drone back towards the Chem building. She knew Slamm-O! had the rigger's access ID, so she altered the account to not accept movement commands—the easiest way to stymie him. Nothing interfered as the drone approached the chemistry building window. She slowed the drone to hover in front of the open right-hand window. "Well, then, I think that's game, set, and match. You were using that rigger's access ID, weren't you? Too bad I altered his account." She grinned at Slamm-O!, flush with success.

The hacker grinned back. "I do know one access ID our new little winged friend will like." He executed a command. "Yours."

Netcat reached for her controls, but it was too late. The drone lurched to the side and darted into the open window. Slamm-O! thrust both hands into the air in victory, but the shout died on his lips. A crash and a loud "whump" came from the open window, followed by screams and a billowing cloud of sickly orange vapor.

Netcat stared up at the building, her mouth open. "Chemistry building, huh?"

"Er ... oops. Yeah." Slamm-O! watched in fascination as alarms lit up his AR view of the building. Dozens of students stared up at the orange cloud drifting up toward the sky.

"We should go now," Netcat said, jumping up from the bench.

"Right behind you," he replied. She giggled as they hurried through the crowd of students. At the edge of the plaza, a Seattle Public Transit bus was pulling up to a stop. It took a simple thought to trigger the "handicap access" command, forcing the drone pilot to hold the doors open. Netcat stopped a few feet away from the bus.

"That's my ride," she said.

"Eight o'clock, tonight," Slamm-O! said. "Eye of the Needle. You want me to pick you up, or send a limo?"

"You did not just hack yourself a reservation there while we were doing all that!" Netcat said, then put her hands on her hips. "Did you?"

Slamm-O! reached out, tugged at one loose black curl. "Real hacker, Kitty," he said. "Don't forget to wear a dress."

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THE MATRIX 2.0

In 2029, a mysterious virus devastated the worldwide computer network, nearly bringing civilization to its knees. A new virtual reality Matrix was built in its stead, creating a digital realm for both data transactions and computer-aided socializing. In 2064, a second global Crash, called "Crash 2.0," brought down the Matrix once again. By 2072, the Matrix of old—from the datajacks and cyberdecks of its users to the wired computer hosts and mile upon mile of fiber-optic cable spaghetti—is now history. A new Matrix has arisen, a world of augmented perceptions and wireless connections, with the old wired infrastructure barely a fraction of the current ubiquitous network.

The Matrix seen from within is a virtual landscape, a consensual hallucination, an alternate world—or all three at once, depending on your point of view. It is the digital representation of all of the Matrix-capable devices in the world. Using it, you can see and hear the Matrix, and with the proper equipment even touch, smell, and taste everything in it. It is a far more intuitive evolution of the graphical user interface: rather than using a mouse to click-and-drag a small picture of a file to copy it, you could move through a virtual space, pick up a box that represents the file, and pull it apart to form two copies of it. This is only one possible way the Matrix could represent copying a file; it could just as easily allow you to use "magic," give voice commands, or appear as a

THE WIRELESS WORLD

In *Shadowrun*, nearly everyone is part of this interlinked electronic world, sometimes unintentionally. Your *commlink* is a computer the size of a PDA or mobile phone that allows you to be online wherever you go, 24-7-365, so that you are always in touch. *Augmented reality (AR)* overlays images, data, and Matrix feeds on your physical senses like a personal heads-up display; with the aid of personal electronics you can see a map, a restaurant's menu, or an incoming email message in real time and without even having to look down. Wireless networking also allows computer-aided socializing with anyone in your immediate vicinity, whether you want to read that hot elf's public profile, hock an extra pair of Speed Coma tickets, or take on a contender in an *Avatar Assassin* deathmatch.

Virtual reality (VR) immerses you in a digital world. To the VR user, the real world is replaced with a full-sensory simulation that represents the Matrix. It is commonly used by Matrix specialists, programmers, and professionals who might benefit from VR environments in their work. It also sees widespread use as a form of entertainment for gaming, simulated sensory recordings, and other experiences.

While everyone uses the Matrix, certain shadowrunners manipulate the wireless world to their advantage. *Hackers* specialize in commanding programs and machines to do their bidding, manipulating data, or ferreting out information locked away in digital vaults. *Riggers* are experts at controlling devices like vehicles and drones through the Matrix, using its advanced neural interface to "become" the devices they control. *Technomancers*—the evolved children of the Matrix—possess the ability to transform the wireless world with nothing but the power of their naked minds.

Runners in these roles excel in accessing and exploiting wireless (and wired) networks. They fill a vital role in any shadowrunning team, not just for their ability to compromise security systems and gather vital data, but for their skills in controlling armies of drones and fully interfacing with vehicles—giving them an edge that even cybered street samurai cannot match. They run side by side with their teammates, free to work anywhere wirelessly.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

The Matrix 2.0 is a macrocosm unto itself. Everything with any sort of electronics, from commlinks to cyberware to mainframes to household appliances, includes integral wireless networking. In fact, almost anything that can be manufactured with wireless capability comes with Matrix capability: from razors that remind you to change the blades to firearms that inform you of ammunition level and barrel temperature to articles of clothing that offer storage for your music.

hundred masked lackeys doing your bidding, however you configure your system to interpret 'copy this file.'

Each device creates a *node* in the Matrix, a digital "place" that represents the device's system and storage space. These nodes are where files are stored and users work and play. Each device and node are linked—one is in the physical world and the other in the Matrix, two sides of the same thing.

The Matrix is populated by *icons,* each a representation of a person, program, file, connection, data stream, control, or anything else with which you can interact. When you interact with the Matrix and the nodes and icons in it, you use a *persona,* a firmware program that allows you to interface with and manipulate the virtual world.

The way a node or icon looks and behaves in the Matrix is called its *sculpting.* Most users buy generic icon templates and customize them to taste, but hackers with the right skills take pride in sculpting their own icons. Sculpting may not be changed on the fly and is an integral, if customizable, part of every Matrix program. While there are potentially no limits to what icons can look and sound (and feel) like, it is generally considered polite for an icon to comply with certain accepted standards in size and presentation so that it doesn't conflict with the nodes it visits. For example, while a fifty-foot dragon in a VR node sculpted to resemble the inside of a compact tour bus might not crash the node or diminish the abilities of other icons, it would cause some very ugly graphical glitches and be considered crass. The sculpting of icons and nodes includes their behavior, for example the direction and force of gravity in a node or the way a persona sounds as it moves. By default, the sculpting of a node or an icon becomes more detailed and intricate at higher ratings (System rating for nodes), but it is possible to increase or decrease the resolution by manipulating icon parameters or with some coding work.

MATRIX TOPOLOGY

A network topology is the shape of the connections in a network. Technically speaking, the Matrix is a *ubiquitous ad-hoc wireless mesh network.* The "wireless mesh" part means that every device makes contact with every other device it can. "Ad-hoc" means that this is done on the fly. This is necessary because devices like vehicles and commlinks are often constantly moving, so the topology of the Matrix has to change over time in any given area. This creates a "cloud" of constant wireless traffic in any area with more than one device as each device passes connection information, data, messages, or just keeps track of neighboring devices. There are still wired parts of the Matrix, mostly leftovers from before the Crash 2.0, but these are mostly used as back-

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Agent: A semi-autonomous program that is capable of running other programs.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Self-aware and self-sustaining intelligent programs that evolved within the Matrix.

Augmented Reality (AR): Information added to or overlaid upon a user's sensory perceptions in the form of visual data, graphics, sounds, haptics, smell, and/or limited simsense.

Augmented Reality Object (ARO, "arrow"): Virtual representations (usually visual graphics) used to represent things in augmented reality.

Avatar: An icon of a persona.

Better-Than-Life (BTL, "beetle"): Hyper-real levels of simsense that are potentially dangerous and addictive.

Cold Sim: Standard simsense, operating at legal, safe levels. Used by most people to access virtual reality.

Commlink ("link"): The personal computer used by nearly everyone to access wireless services. Commlinks also serve as the hub of the user's PAN.

Complex Form: The mental algorithms that technomancers use to manipulate the Matrix.

Control Rig: An implant that enhances a rigger's abilities when "jumped into" a vehicle (p. 338).

Dead Zone: A location with no wireless networks.

Device: Individual electronics that are Matrix-capable, such as commlinks, terminals, cyberware, security cameras, drones, etc.

Direct Neural Interface (DNI): A connection between the brain's neural impulses and a computer system, allowing a user to mentally interact with and control that system. DNI is conveyed by an implanted commlink, an implanted sim module, a datajack, or worn trodes.

Drone: An unmanned vehicle, typically controlled via direct wireless link or through the Matrix.

Echo: An enhanced ability a technomancer can learn after undergoing submersion.

Fading: A type of mental drain technomancers sometimes experience when using their abilities.

Firewall: A program that guards a node from intrusion. It can be installed separately or included in an OS.

Gateway: The link between a mesh network and another network.

Geo-tagging: Assigning AROs to a specific physical location, often using RFID tags.

Ghosts in the Machine: Various mysterious phenomena and perceived entities that seem to exist entirely within the Matrix. Some believe these are AIs or spirits of the Matrix. Others believe they are the disembodied personalities of people trapped within the Matrix during the Crash of '64.

Grid: A series of stable, interlocking networks.

Hacker: Someone who explores and exploits technology in general and the Matrix specifically.

Haptics: Interactions based on the sense of touch.

Hot Sim: Simsense without the safeguards that prevent potentially damaging biofeedback. Illegal in most areas.

Icon: The virtual representation of a program, file, or other virtual object in the Matrix.

Intrusion Countermeasures (IC, "ice"): Any agent installed in a node with the express purpose of protecting that node from unauthorized users.

Jackpoint: Any physical location that provides access to the Matrix by plugging in with a wired connection.

Living Persona: The mental "organic computer" that allows technomancers to access the Matrix with their minds alone.

Local Area Network (LAN): A local communication system between computers and other electronics.

Matrix: The worldwide telecommunications network.

Meat: Slang term to refer to either an unwired individual, or the physical part of a hacker that gets left behind while surfing the Matrix in VR.

Meshed: Slang term for being online, connected to the Matrix.

Mesh Network: A network in which every device on the network is connected to every other device.

Networks: Interacting groups of computerized devices.

Node: The representation of a device in the Matrix.

Operating System (OS): The master program that controls a specific device. This normally refers to the System or Pilot program, but an off-the-shelf OS will also come with a Firewall.

Personal Area Network (PAN): The network created by all of the wirelessly linked electronic devices carried on (or within) a person. The commlink is usually the primary hub of this network.

Persona: The firmware program that represents a user in, and allows the user to interact with, the Matrix.

Pilot: A robotic brain program similar to the System program but including semi-autonomous decision-making abilities. Used for agents and drones.

Radio Frequency Identification tag (RFID, "arfid"): A small device that holds data and transmits it over short range to nearby receivers.

Real Life (RL): Anything not having to do with the Matrix.

Regional Telecommunication Grid (RTG): The largest type of grid, RTGs cover entire countries.

Response: A computer attribute representing raw processing power.

Rigger: A user who "jumps into" a properly adapted device (usually a drone, vehicle, or security system) in order to directly control it as if he was that device. Often equipped with a control rig (p. 338).

Sculpting: The "look and feel" of a node or icon in the Matrix.

Signal: A computer attribute representing the strength of its wireless radio signal.

Simrig: A device for recording simsense (p. 342).

Simsense ("sim," "simstim"): Hardware and programs that enable a person to experience the reality of what has happened to someone else. Requires a direct neural interface.

Spam Zone: An area flooded with invasive and/or viral AR advertising.

Spider: A security hacker/rigger employed by a corporation or law enforcement agency to protect certain Matrix areas from hackers.

Sprite: A Resonance-based entity created by—or called forth by—a technomancer out of the fabric of the Matrix.

Static Zone: An area where wireless access is unreliable.

System: A computer attribute representing the integrity and stability of the operating system.

Tags: RFID tags (see above).

Technomancer: Someone who is able to use and manipulate the Matrix without hardware.

Trodes: A headband or net worn on the head (often under a wig or hat) that creates a direct neural interface.

Virtual Reality: A state where outside stimuli are ignored and the user is only receiving impressions from the Matrix. Requires a direct neural interface.

Wide Area Network (WAN): A network, usually wireless, that covers several hectares.

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STORAGE MEMORY

A NOTE ON ...

Storage memory and data compression technologies by 2072 allow vast amounts of information to be stored in relatively minute spaces. For the most part, gamemasters and players can assume that characters have enough storage memory on any particular device to meet their needs, so there is no need to micromanage file sizes and available memory. The gamemaster can rule in some situations that a particular device is full or does not have the capacity needed to store something new, though this should be reserved for either small devices and/or massively large file collections. The ease and availability of wireless networking, however, means that even in cases like this, the character can quickly transfer the file to any number of other personal or remote storage devices.

bones for WANs and RTGs. All an area needs for it to stop being a dead zone is enough wireless devices, of which at least one can reach the rest of the Matrix.

When a wireless device needs to pass information to another device in mutual Signal range, it simply sends the data. If the destination is not within this range, for example when you are in the UCAS and trying to speak to Mr. Johnson in Lisbon, the information travels from device to device in a process called *routing.* When information is routed between devices, it is non-sequentially sliced into a number of pieces and sent to the recipient via multiple paths; this makes it almost impossible to intercept the traffic except within Signal range of the sender or the receiver, the only places the information is in one readable piece (*Capture Wireless Signal,* p. 229). The routing functions of a device are handled by a separate component of hardware than the other functions of the device. This makes the routing process invisible to the user, and allows the device's node to connect to the Matrix even when it is operating in Hidden mode (p. 223).

GETTING ONLINE

To use the Matrix, you first need a persona. Persona programs are simsense user interfaces; built-in firmware that allow a user to interact with the Matrix, like a control window or a video game interface of old. There are a couple of ways to get a persona, the easiest being on a commlink. Every commlink has one built-in persona, and commlinks are almost ubiquitous in any civilized area.

Once you have your commlink, you need to connect to the Matrix. Your commlink must be able to connect to at least one device, which must be able to connect to at least one other device, and so on throughout the civilized world. "The Matrix" is all of these nodes, including yours.

INTERACTING WITH THE AUGMENTED WORLD

Example #1

Sketchy Alex heads to the mall with her TekSense SP9 music player tucked behind her ear and her Fabrique ALLIN1 commlink in her jacket pocket. The two devices share a pair of headphones and are aware of one another; if the ALLIN1 needs attention, the TekSense SP9 will temporarily mute itself. Her commlink is her PAN's core component and gives her access to basic wireless services. Alex also has a cheap pair of Tandy smartglasses, but no datajack or trodes, so she controls the interface with the scroll wheel on her commlink. As she enters the mall, Alex accesses its public node, superimposing a map of the mall in her vision. She quickly browses the directory and adds the stores she wants to visit to her hotlist, auto-highlighting them in blue on the map. As she enters each store, her commlink displays a list of today's specials (tailored to her personal purchasing profile) and a detailed map. In Trendz Music, she instantly connects to the store's music library, sampling several songs before buying them and downloading them directly to her SP9. As she's purchasing the music, the system lets her know that Ingrid Needstrom—one of the musicians she bought songs from—is playing a gig downtown next week. She calls her friend Rachel via her commlink to let her know about the concert. Rachel is interested in going, so Alex buys two tickets online (still inside the store) and zaps one of them over to Rachel. As she's leaving the mall, Alex receives several anonymous text messages from some sleazy guy who read her commlink's social profile and is trying to hit on her. She sets her commlink to block all future messages from that user.

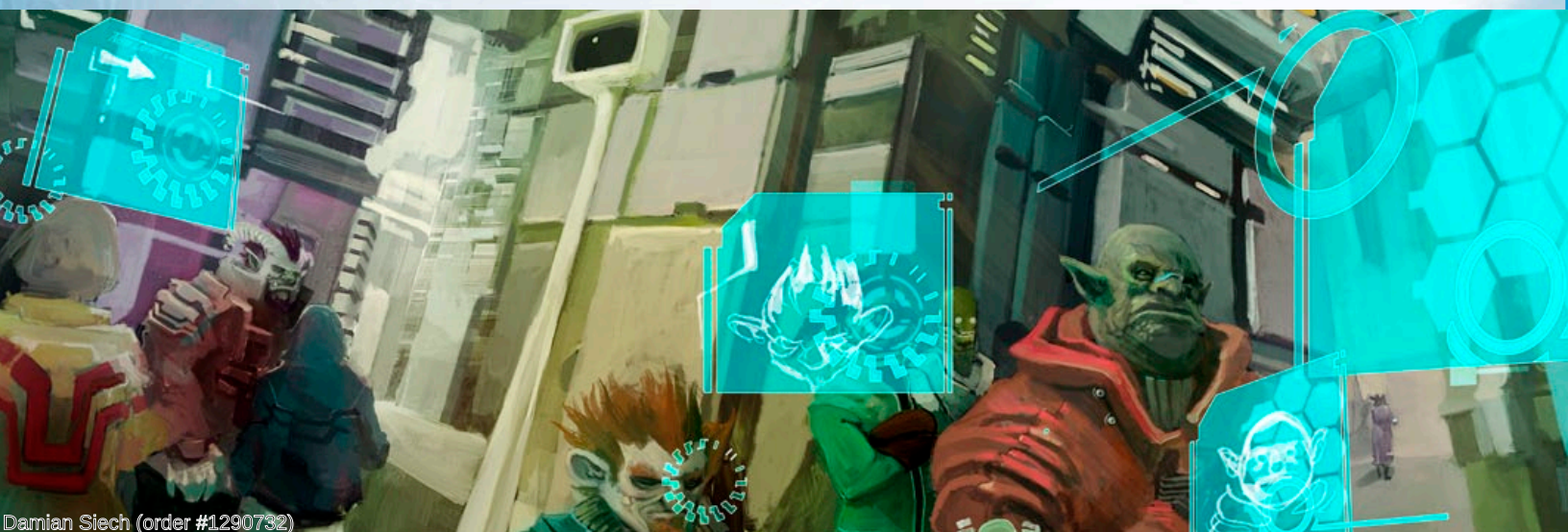
Many people have a Matrix service provider (MSP) that they use as a sort of front-end for the Matrix. An MSP is not necessary for surfing or hacking, but most casual users (and many shadowrunners) find the services offered by MSPs to be useful in their day-to-day routines.

Though incidental in these core rules, further details on the uses and functions of MSP services are featured in the advanced Matrix rulebook, *Unwired*.

COMMLINKS

Commlinks are the ultimate personal networking tool, used by almost everyone. They are a combination portable computer, wireless router, cell phone, PDA, GPS unit, chip reader, digital camera, wallet/credstick, and mobile gaming device, all in one easy-to-carry package that fits inside a pocket, belt-clip, or wrist-clip. Commlinks come in a dizzying array of shapes, sizes, and colors, from stylized head-sets or faux jewelry to cranial implants and commlinks woven into the fabric of your jacket.

Commlinks serve as the primary hub for your *personal area network,* or PAN, which is all of the devices you have on or near your person, which could include cyberware, AR shades, clothing-based



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Example #2

Vladimir is waiting for Mr. Johnson to arrive at Club Inferno and lamenting the lack of fun he's likely to have in the meeting. Vlad doesn't want to have to deal with the runner wannabes that frequent the club, so he switches his PAN to hidden mode. To all the other scum in the Inferno, his network is no longer "visible" and automatically refuses connections except from trusted friends on Vlad's buddy list—just the way he wants it. While he waits, he receives a message from Doc Sloth, one of his teammates. Doc has positioned himself on the other side of the bar in a booth so he can astrally scan Mr. Johnson as he enters, and his message says that the Johnson has an unusual magical aura. Vlad immediately triggers his wired reflexes, just in case there's trouble. Maybe the night will be fun after all.

Example #3

Bitsy is walking down the street on the way to meet her 'warez dealer in one of the nicer areas of town. She's in hidden mode since she doesn't want to have to deal with the obnoxious new viral marketing campaign Horizon has been spamming along the public thoroughfares. She's lost in thought as she walks, so she fails to notice the Lone Star drone overhead that scans her. The drone drops a spotlight on her and announces via loudspeaker that she's "hiding" in public—a violation in this high-security sector. Bitsy instantly sets to work finding the drone's signal so she can hack in and deal with the pigs. As she homes in on it and brute-force hacks past its firewall, the drone attempts to get a read on her access ID and also runs a sensor scan on her face to feed to a facial recognition program. Bitsy's access ID is forged—for exactly this sort of situation—but after she nukes the drone's OS she decides to get out of the area fast. Not only will the drone reboot itself soon, but a squad car may show up quick with her mugshot in hand, transmitted by the drone back to Lone Star's dispatch before she could take it out.

storage, weapons, or any other devices you carry. A PAN allows you to access and manipulate all of your connected electronics through your commlink. Need to make a call? Review a video file you took yesterday? Scan the diagnostics on your cyberlimb? Check the fuel on your drone? Program your alarm clock? IM a friend? You can do all of this and more through your commlink.

DATA MANAGEMENT

Commlinks also provide you with instant wireless access to the world around you. Not only can you send messages, make calls, transfer files, or access data via the Matrix, but you can access the wireless devices and networks all around you, from the store's sales catalog to your friend's PAN to the lamppost tourist-info RFID tag to the social networking profile of anyone else looking to play a game of chess in the park.

Commlinks typically carry all of your personal data, replacing the registered credsticks of old. Your ID, SIN, licenses, passport, medical history, insurance data, educational diplomas, credit balance, and far more can be securely stored on your commlink and instantly beamed to whomever you want to send them.

Many people openly broadcast certain portions of their personal data via their PAN for others to access. This is known as a public profile, represented by an expandable AR tab or an info window that opens when you select their icon in AR. This practice is used for convenience and for consumer purposes—for example, your favorite stores can access your purchasing history and wish lists as soon as you walk in, and offer specials tailored specifically to you. Some data is broadcast for social networking and gaming services, notifying you if someone single with your same hobbies and interests is in the same bar, or allowing you to engage random opponents in virtual battles or board games.

Most users carefully control how much information they make publicly available, but the law often requires certain core data be broadcast in certain areas (SIN must be made available on UCAS federal property and many corporate enclaves), or for certain data to be accessible by security officers who attempt to access it with authorized security codes. In high-security neighborhoods and traffic-heavy business districts, it is common practice for police drones to scan the PANs of random people on the street; those with something to hide are usually assumed to be up to no good.

AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

There are two ways to experience the Matrix: through augmented reality and virtual reality. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages, but both allow you to use the Matrix with equal access. With only a few exceptions (which are noted in this chapter), anything you can do in VR can be done in AR, and vice versa.

AUGMENTED REALITY

The majority of Matrix users operate in AR most of the time. With augmented reality, the Matrix is not a place you go so much as a parallel world of data and imagery that you experience as an overlay onto your normal range of senses via technological devices. Your commlink accesses Matrix data and feeds you the results by any number of interface devices. AR sensory input is specific and personalized to each user; while you and your buddy can both access the menu icon "displayed" outside a restaurant, it might be displayed to her and read out loud to you, and neither of you would see or hear the other's AR output.

In its most basic form, AR is experienced as visual sight cues, icons known as *augmented reality objects,* or AROs (pronounced "arrows"). You can see AROs with an image link (p. 333), which comes standard in cybereyes and can be installed in smart goggles, glasses, or even contact lenses, which is linked to your commlink. By default, ARO data appear as ghostly images and text in your field of view, so it does not fully obstruct your vision. You can customize your interface to view this data any way you like, or to filter out certain content (like visual spam AROs). If you accept an incoming video call, for example, the caller's image or icon appears in your field of vision, but transparent so the real world can be seen through it. If someone starts shooting at you, you can put the caller on hold and close the AR window or shift it to your peripheral vision so it doesn't interfere.

You can also experience AR through audible cues, transferred and heard via an audio link (p. 333) which can be in cyberears, earbud headphones, subdermal bone-vibrating speakers, or even goggles or glasses that send tight-beam audio to your ears. You can control the volume and you don't have to worry about snoopers overhearing since it's all in your head. Advanced AR systems can convey tactile information (called *haptics*) relayed through simsense or by feedback gloves and clothing customized to convey temperature, pressure, and resistance. If you want the full AR experience, you can translate AR input into smell and taste sensory data, usually through simsense although there are specialized cyberware mods for a small (and strange) market.

The easiest way to get your AR fix is through simsense. You need a direct neural interface—either via installed implanted commlink, implanted sim module, a datajack, or a trode net—along with a sim

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module for your commlink to interpret the signals and feed you the data. Simsense feeds take AR a step further because they can also relay emotions, though services that relay full emotive sim are rare and sometimes illegal or downright disturbing: advertising spam is bad enough, but do you really want to *feel* it?

Control and manipulation of the AR interface can be accomplished with a variety of means. Input devices include vocal commands into a microphone, AR gloves, micro-laser eye trackers in glasses, or even mental commands through direct neural interface. When all else fails, the rudimentary controls on the commlink itself can be used.

VIRTUAL REALITY

For those who want the full Matrix experience, you can go a step beyond AR and fully immerse your senses in the virtual reality of the Matrix. In VR, your physical perceptions are overridden by the Matrix's sensory information. Rather than experiencing the real world around your meat body, you experience the electronic simulation of the Matrix as your persona's icon.

A simsense module and a direct neural interface are required to access full VR. Implanted sim-modules can also be bought as add-ons for simrigs and implanted commlinks. As a safety precaution, simsense overrides your motor functions while you are in VR so that you don't unknowingly move in the real world and potentially harm yourself or your surroundings. This means that your physical body is limp while you're online, as if you were sleeping. With great difficulty, you can still perceive through your meat senses or move your physical body while in VR.

Virtual reality is popular for several reasons. VR environments are fantastic for intense and realistic gaming experiences, and customizable simsense entertainment feeds are more popular than standard trideo. Since your icon can have any sculpting, VR is more anonymous than AR and is an excellent medium for conducting shady deals or simply socializing without having to overcome barriers raised by looks, metatype, social class, etc. Sometimes just moving through some of the Matrix's specially sculpted VR landscapes is an interesting way to pass the time—like living in a video game. It is also extremely useful for a number of professional functions including virtual modeling, high-speed transactions, robotics control, security, remote cooperative ventures, etc.

To technomancers, VR is "home"—most feel more comfortable here than navigating the meat world, even with augmented reality. Most importantly for hackers, however, VR is fast—you move at digital speeds, which can be the extra edge you need while pulling a hack job. You can be faster than a street samurai at a fraction of the cost. The virtual reality experience is drastically different from AR. Someone interfacing with augmented reality while he walks down the street often operates more slowly than someone surfing through VR landscapes with his mind alone. Although VR is faster, it normally keeps certain safeguards that protect a user's brain from dangerous surges or tampering from the Matrix. This simsense interface, dubbed "cold sim" on the streets, is in turn slower than the illegally modified "hot sim" interface, which removes most of the protections, allowing users to risk their neural pathways in return for a little extra speed.

In VR, you become your persona icon. The persona firmware makes you feel like your senses and consciousness are embodied in the icon; in a very real sense it becomes your body in the Matrix. Persona icons are customizable and an immense range of possibilities are available; you can be literally everything. Want to be a purple ogre with eight arms? No problem. How about a cybernetic aphid with jet thrusters? That was last week's top seller. Maybe you want to look and sound like novahot Goblin Rockstar Orxanne? Easy, but if you want her full vocal range and accompanying soundtrack you'll have to splurge for the extra features.

STATIC AND DEAD ZONES

CIRCUMSTANCE	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Dead zone	No connection possible without satellite uplink
Spam zone	–1 to –3 to all actions (gamemaster's discretion)
Static zone	–1 to –3 to Matrix actions (gamemaster's discretion)
Technomancer in static or dead zone	–1 (non-Matrix actions only, gamemaster's discretion)

ZONES

Wireless mesh networks may saturate most urban areas, but there are many places in the world where the technology is either nonexistent, outdated, or unreliable. This is especially common in urban zones abandoned to decay, crime, and poverty, though some wireless infrastructure is maintained by crime syndicates, tech gangs, or anarchist groups. These areas are known as *static zones,* where access is intermittent or unreliable, and *dead zones,* where no Matrix access is available.

In static zones, Matrix activity is harder due to the poor tech quality and/or the extra lag required to route around holes in the network. In dead zones, wireless access simply isn't possible without powerful signal-boosting equipment or a satellite link (unless you happen to find an isolated wireless hotspot or old wired connection somewhere).

Technomancers find static and dead zones to be unnerving and uncomfortable. The absence of the constant background hum of data traffic makes them itchy. Technomancers may get depressed, irritated, or otherwise upset in the physical world.

To get around the lack of a network in some areas, people will sometimes set up temporary networks. This is usually done by scattering a number of cheap wireless-capable devices around an area. If you ever find a place in the Barrens that looks like it just snowed toasters, you'll know why.

On the flipside are *spam zones,* areas where manipulative advertising tricks are legal, or at least tolerated. These tricks include filter-bypassing, sensory-blasting AR pop-ups, emotive-charged simsense feeds (porn sims being common), spyware, and more. Common in tourist areas and red-light districts, spam zones can be highly distracting, but they are not usually harmful nor do they have a lasting effect once you have left.

THE EMERGED

The Matrix teems with tales of ghosts in the machine, unstoppable core-war viruses, secret "ultraviolet" grids, and other mysteries and dangers of the digital world. Many of these stories are no more than rumors and fictions created to frighten newbies and burnish the reputations of the Matrix elite. In the decades before the Crash of '64, however, a recurring myth became reality: stories of the "otaku," the so-called children of the Matrix.

It wasn't long before the rumors were proven true. All over the world, children were touched by something residing deep within the Matrix, and it changed them. These otaku could journey through the Matrix without the artifice of cyberdecks, commanding it with their wills alone. A new phenomenon had evolved in the Sixth World—but

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unlike other paranatural events of the Awakening, this one was rooted in technology. Was this a new stage in metahuman evolution? Signs of sinister meddling by artificial intelligences? Or was it a different type of Awakening catalyzed into existence by the subconscious interaction of metahuman minds with a unique new plane of existence? Those who studied it unearthed more questions than answers, and even otaku beliefs contradicted each other.

TECHNOMANCERS

The first steps toward deciphering the origins of otaku had barely been taken when the Crash of '64 catalyzed further transformations. All over the world, thousands of people found their consciousnesses trapped within the Matrix at the height of the Crash, some of them surviving there for hours or even days. Many died from lethal biofeedback stress, others were inflicted with psychotropic disorders and post-traumatic stress for years to come, but many others survived ... only realizing later that they had been fundamentally changed. It took several years for the new rumors and reports to cohere, but undoubtedly something was different. A new generation of otaku had come into being—only this time they were no longer just children. Most of the young otaku that survived the Crash had also undergone a transformation, and they found that their powers no longer faded with age. This new breed renamed themselves *technomancers,* specialists in manipulating the Matrix with nothing more than their minds.

These new technomancers had innate abilities that surpassed the abilities of the previous generation of children of the Matrix. In accordance with their affinity for the technological world, technomancers have an instinctive awareness of the fluctuations of data around them. This subliminal sense not only functions in the VR of the Matrix, but in the real world as well, where technomancers can "feel" the wireless data traffic flowing through the airwaves around them.

Technomancers are detailed under *Technomancers,* p. 239.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Shortly after the emergence of technomancers, another new phenomenon manifested. Self-aware programs capable of autonomous thought began to make themselves known. The common man briefly feared their coming, the unknown they represented. Those in the halls of power and the shadows feared the worst, for artificial intelligence (AI) was nothing new to the movers and shakers of the Sixth World. A few highly intelligent, immensely powerful, and undeniably alien AIs had terrorized parts of the world, and by some accounts were partly responsible for the Crash of '64.

But these new AIs were different. The majority were animal-like, others were just alien, but some had human-like sentience and self-awareness and a rare few had the personalities and memories of real people who died in the Crash. They had emerged quite by accident, awoken by elusive x-factors. Speculation rages on; some suggest the Crash 2.0 hid a singularity event; others claim these new lifeforms are the children of a new global network that utilizes genetic programming and self-correcting code. Metahumanity was a new parent.

Artificial intelligences under these core rules are plot devices and NPCs; however, new options are introduced in the advanced rulebooks *Unwired* and *Runner's Companion.*

NETWORKING

The Matrix is a virtual world, with its own places and attributes, a digital analogue of physical world. It is made up of devices, signals, data, and the connections between people or machines (or both). To understand the Matrix, you must understand its basic building blocks.

DEVICES

The Matrix exists on a series of *devices.* A device in this case is defined as any hardware with Matrix connectivity enabled, whether wired or (far more commonly) wireless.

There are three broad categories of devices. A device can be a *peripheral device,* a *commlink,* or a *nexus.*

PERIPHERAL DEVICES

A peripheral device is a Matrix-capable appliance or piece of equipment that is wireless (or in some cases wired) but is not intended to be used for full-blown Matrix interfacing and processing. Security cameras, stoves, ear buds, medkits, firearms, children's toys, doorbells, showers, biomonitors, cyberware, make-up kits, vehicles, coffee makers, store displays, electronic paper, drones, light switches, and many, many other items are all peripheral devices in *Shadowrun.*

Peripheral devices have no persona firmware, and are usually just smart enough to serve their function, although many have unused processing power. Such devices also often offer significant storage space in unused memory.

One advanced use of peripheral devices available to programmers and hackers is the clustering of multiple peripheral devices together to create a distributed computer (rules for such advanced applications such as clusters can be found in *Unwired*).

COMMLINKS

Commlinks are by far the most common way Average Joe and your typical shadowrunner gets online. Commlinks have the firmware to run one persona. Commlinks come in a wide range of models and capacities ranging from the unimpressive to the cutting edge. With enough skill or money, any commlink can become a powerful Matrix tool in the right hands.

NEXI

A nexus (plural "nexi" in this context) is a mainframe or supercomputer. It can host multiple personae and many programs simultaneously. Nexi are rarely seen out and about, and are usually sequestered in server rooms and data centers, away from the general public. Nexi also dispense with many of the program limitations of less powerful devices.

MATRIX ATTRIBUTES

Devices have Matrix attributes: *Firewall, Response, Signal,* and *System.* Two of the Matrix attributes are based on the hardware in the device, and the other two are software running on that hardware.

FIREWALL

Firewall is the device's built-in security software. It protects against unauthorized access and fends off hostile access attempts and exploits. A firewall will, for instance, instantly block access to multiple icons using the same access ID. Firewall is also used to defend against Matrix attacks in *cybercombat* (p. 236).

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SIGNAL RATING TABLE

SIGNAL RATING	SIGNAL RANGE	EXAMPLES
0	3 m	Nanoware transceivers, cyberware, intra-PAN devices
1	40 m	RFID tags, handheld electronics
2	100 m	Headware transceivers, micro-drone sensors
3	400 m	Average commlinks, residential/small business wi-fi routers, vehicular autonav sensors
4	1 km	Crawler-drone sensors
5	4 km	Cyberlimb transceivers, heavy drone surveillance sensors
6	10 km	Cell-phone towers, public access wi-fi routers
7	40 km	Targeting sensors for ground vehicle weapons (ATGMs, tank guns, etc.)
8	100 km	Flight radar, dedicated ground surveillance radar
9	400 km	Maritime/naval radar, commercial AM/FM radio

SAMPLE DEVICES TABLE

DEVICE TYPE	DEVICE RATING	EXAMPLES
Dumb	1	General appliances, bodyware
Simple	2	Public terminals, entertainment systems
Average	3	Standard personal electronics, headware, vehicles, drones, home/business terminals
Complex	4	Security vehicles, alphaware, research terminals, security devices
Smart	5	High-end devices, betaware, security terminals, military vehicles
Cutting Edge	6	Deltaware, credsticks

HARDWARE UPGRADE COSTS TABLE

MODULE RATING	RESPONSE COST	SIGNAL COST	AVAILABILITY
1	250¥	10¥	4
2	750¥	50¥	4
3	1,250¥	150¥	8
4	2,000¥	500¥	8
5	4,000¥	1,000¥	12
6	8,000¥	3,000¥	16

RESPONSE

Response is the processing power and speed of the device's hardware. Response is used for Matrix Initiative (p. 236). Response is negatively affected when you run too many programs.

SIGNAL

Signal represents the broadcasting power of the device's hardware. The higher the Signal, the farther the device can transmit. Signal ranges and examples are listed on the Signal Rating Table. When two devices are within the range of the lowest Signal rating of the two, they are said to be in *mutual Signal range;* this is required for direct device-to-device communication and for other applications.

SYSTEM

System measures the power of the device's operating system (OS) software. This includes its stability, multitasking properties, ability to control hardware, resources, and the general quality of its code. If the System software ever crashes, the entire device crashes. System limits the rating of programs running on the device, and sets the limit on most devices for the number of programs that can be run without a Response drop. The System program is limited by the base Response rating of the device it is on: if the base Response rating of the device is lower than the System rating, then the System rating is set to equal the Response rating. System also sets the size of the Matrix Condition Monitor of persona programs running on the device (*Cybercombat,* p. 236).

DEVICE RATING

There are far too many electronics in the world of *Shadowrun* for a gamemaster to keep track of their individual Matrix attributes. Instead, each device is simply given a Device rating. Unless it has been customized or changed in some way, assume that each of the Matrix attributes listed above for a particular device equals its Device rating.

If a particular device plays an important role in an adventure, the gamemaster should assign a full complement of Matrix attributes to it. If the item only plays a passing role, then a simple Device rating will suffice.

The Sample Devices table (at left) lists typical Device ratings.

UPGRADING DEVICES

If you are looking for more power in your device, you can upgrade its Matrix attributes. Upgrading a device is simply a matter of having the proper hardware module (for Response and Signal) or software package (for Firewall and System). Once you have the module or package, simply install it into the device, a matter of a few minutes' work. A device's ratings may only be upgraded by +2 with regards to their original ratings. Further improvements have no additional effect on performance.

You do not have to upgrade all of a device's attributes at once, even if the device has a Device Rating. In this case, the device can no longer be considered a "common" device, and should have its attributes recorded separately.

A device may have only one hardware module or software package for each attribute.

Rules for building your own modules or coding your own packages can be found on p. 228.

PROCESSOR LIMIT

Every device has a *processor limit,* the number of programs at which its Response starts to degrade. Like any computer, running too many programs at once can cause a device to slow down. At every multiple of the processor limit, a device's Response is reduced by 1, to a minimum

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of 0. For example, if a commlink has a processor limit of 5, then its Response is reduced by 1 for every 5 programs running on it.

Peripheral devices and commlinks have a processor limit equal to their System rating. Nexi have larger processor limits (System x3).

DEVICE MODES

Devices can run in one of three *modes: Active, Passive,* and *Hidden.* You can change the mode of your commlink (and the rest of your PAN) as a Free Action.

Active mode is the default for most PANs. In Active mode, you can both access and be accessed by other PANs, devices, and networks. You give permission for anyone to connect to your commlink and see what is on it. Certain areas may require your PAN to be in active mode, like airports, corp facilities, major metropolitan centers, etc. Your public profile is visible and available.

A PAN in Passive mode can be "seen" by other devices, but cannot be accessed by them without your approval. PANs in this mode will still show up as active networks. This mode is useful for operating in high-traffic areas, where advertising nets or spammers abound. Passive mode allows you to automatically filter out the noise, only alerting you if specific pre-authorized nodes request access. This is the default mode for peripheral nodes and nexi—in the latter case access approval is required from a sysop or ensured by using an established account (see *Access Accounts*, p. 225).

In Hidden mode, your commlink and PAN are invisible to other nodes unless you access or authorize them. Users in hidden mode are said to be "ghosting," since there is no way for other users to see them wirelessly. Using hidden mode is discouraged in some high-class social situations, where it is considered rude. In other areas, particularly tech-free zones or shadow establishments where privacy is expected, the opposite is true. Certain secure areas and high-class establishments prohibit users from operating in hidden mode, and will punish those doing so with expulsion, arrest, or worse.

PERSONA PROGRAMS

A persona is a firmware program built into the device's hardware that you use to interact with the Matrix, in AR and in VR. It allows you to perceive the digital world and projects your icon (or icons) into nodes. Without a persona, you would be unable to access the Matrix. Even technomancers have a (living) persona.

Your persona's Matrix attributes are inherited from the device on which it is running. If you are using the persona on your commlink, and your commlink has System 4, then your System rating is 4 in the Matrix. The persona can be loaded with programs allowing you to use software in nodes where you might not otherwise have access to necessary software.

ACCESS IDS

Your persona also bears your *access ID.* Your access ID is the way the Matrix "recognizes" you at a machine level; it is unique. The routers of the Matrix use it to pass data to and from your commlink. You can't use the Matrix without it, but it has one drawback: it can be used to trace you.

Every time you are online (which is usually all of the time) your presence is logged. Your access ID is associated with all of your online transactions and typically logged by any device you access. This record is called your *datatrail*, and it may be used to track you down or to link you to certain crimes or activities. Since you cannot just get rid of

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Your PAN connects you to the Matrix. More importantly, it also connects you to your teammates. Because of the ease with which data can be shared between commlinks, even over large distances, shadowrunners can be in constant contact. Subvocal microphones, text messaging, and direct neural interfaces allow for silent communication during a run, and images, audio, and video can be shared in real-time.

The practical upshot of this level of information technology is that table talk between players can be in-game, which is to say that "metagame" information is fair game in *Shadowrun.* Anything one player character knows can be instantly shared with the rest of the team.

Of course, networking in this manner means your team has an electromagnetic footprint that can be detected by someone watching for unauthorized broadcasts. Finding a tactical balance and avoiding detection by spiders is part of the role of the hacker on a shadowrun team.

your access ID, this would put a damper on staying in the shadows, but there are ways around the problem.

The standard technique to reduce your datatrail is to spoof your commlink's access ID. There are two ways to change your access ID; both take only a few minutes. You can alter your access ID by reprogramming your router settings with a Hacking + Software (2) Test, but this only lasts until your commlink is rebooted. A more permanent solution is to alter the hardware with a Hardware + Logic (2) Test, which lasts until the hardware is altered again or replaced.

Unwired introduces other forms of anonymizing your access ID.

COMMCODES

Everyone using the Matrix has a personal *commcode.* Your commcode is your Matrix address, like a cell phone number or email address, to which your calls and messages are directed. Your commcode is usually registered with a paid Matrix service provider, though there are plenty of free and anonymous shadow-sites that offer the same service. Hackers, shadowrunners, and other criminals typically pay extra for the anonymity and extra security of an anonymous commcode. In fact, most shadowrunners have several commcodes, some of which they regularly change.

When you are online, your commlink is normally set to automatically link to your provider(s) so that all calls and messages are immediately forwarded to you. You can choose to cut this link and "run silent" in order to avoid the risk of being interrupted or of someone tracing that link; your messages will be stored until retrieved later.

Whenever you change your access ID, the new one must be reassociated with your commcodes. This process is part of the time taken to change your access ID; you never need to worry about it as a player.

ICONS

An icon is the representation of something that exists purely in the Matrix. Your persona is represented by an icon in the Matrix, as are your running programs, files, agents, IC, links to nodes, etc. Nodes seen from the outside, data packages, and controls for physical devices (such as switches for door locks or environmental controls for an apartment) also appear as icons in the Matrix.

Icons have their own sculpting. While the perceived shape of an icon is often appropriate to its function (e.g., handlebars for a motorcycle control or a sword for an Attack program), it does not have to be so. Sometimes the metaphor used is intentionally obscure or outlandish. An Attack program could just as easily be sculpted as a cream pie or a baby as a weapon. A Matrix Perception Test is used to tell for certain what you may be perceiving.

Your commlink comes equipped with a number of options for customizing your persona avatar, file, program, and other icons. You can use the standard options or design your own with an Software + Edit (10, 1 day) Extended Test. Whether you bought your icon off the shelf or sculpted your own, icons are easily customizable with a library of features and you can trick them out on the fly with different animated movements, color schemes, mutable design elements, and other digital skin effects. Icons take many shapes and forms, from animated characters and anthropomorphic creatures to more artsy or abstract designs like mobile waterfalls or swirling color patterns. All persona programs have default icons loaded in case the user does not have his own, usually simple blank-gray anonymous anthroform shapes often emblazoned with the device manufacturer's stylized logo. Occasionally, the icons of programs you have loaded will be additions to your avatar, such as a glowing green force field of an Armor program or a blurring effect of a Stealth program.

NODES

A node is a virtual space in the Matrix. Every device in the physical world projects a node in the Matrix (unless it is shut down). If icons are the "what" in the Matrix, nodes are the "where."

Nodes appear in VR as places. Icons interact with the environment and one another in nodes. When you first enter VR, your icon starts in your commlink's node, which contains icons for everything in your PAN.

NODE SCULPTING

The sculpting of a node is not merely what it looks like, but also the behavior of the environment. For example, avatars might be allowed to fly in a node, or to walk on the ceiling as well as the floor. The details are set by the owner (and sometimes by mischievous hackers).

As with any sculpting, it is usually appropriate to the function of the device to which it is associated, but not always. A gigantic mainframe could appear as a bathtub, while a vast forest and castle may be found in a mere electric toothbrush. A Matrix Perception Test will reveal the truth (p. 228).

ACCESSING NODES

While online, you can access one or more nodes. Much of the time, you simply request information from nodes, like you do when you use the modern World Wide Web. You send a message to the node for some data, and the node sends it back to you. If you want to actually visit the node in the Matrix, whether to do some "on-site" research, hack the node, or just hang out with other icons, you need to log on to the node.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

To connect to a node (aside from the one on which your persona is running), you must *subscribe* to it. A subscription is a two-way communications link through the Matrix. This is a steady link that can be maintained for extended periods of time. You must subscribe to a node if you want to "travel" to it in the Matrix, which means that you must be able to either connect with it directly (with a wired connection, or when within mutual Signal range) or by establishing a route through the Matrix network. Subscribing to a node is a Complex Action (*Log On,* p. 231). When you log on to a node, your icon appears there.

You can have more than one subscription open at a time. Each persona is limited to a number of subscriptions equal to twice its System (e.g., a persona on a System 3 commlink could have up to six active subscriptions at a time). You do not have to subscribe to the

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node in which your persona is running; you are always in that node without the need to subscribe to it.

MULTIPLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

It is possible to be subscribed to multiple nodes at once. This means you can have icons in multiple places in the Matrix at any given time. You are aware of what is happening in all nodes in which your icon exists. You may only control one icon at a time, but may switch which is the "acting" icon at will. This has ramifications for cybercombat (*Simultaneous Combat in Multiple Nodes,* p. 237).

ACCESS ACCOUNTS

When you log on to a node, you do so at a certain access level, which is defined by your *account.* There are four types of accounts, *public, user, security,* and *admin,* in order of least to most access. Except for public accounts, access to an account level requires authorization, which is described in the next section, *Authorization and Authentication.*

A **public** account is a sort of "foyer" for a node. When logging on without any authentication, you get a public account. Public accounts usually allow the user to access public information about the node, and could also allow a small amount of functionality, like the ability to order food, shop, fill out forms, etc., depending on the node's purpose. Most retail outlets, malls, restaurants, and other nodes open to the public offer this account to customers.

A **user** account is offered to users who belong in the node, like the employees of a company or paid customers of a Matrix nightclub. Icons with this account are generally allowed to run programs, create and edit files, and perform the usual work of the node (whatever that may be), depending on the function of the node. User accounts require some form of authorization to access.

A **security** account is for users who are responsible for safeguarding the node. These users are allowed the privileges of user access, plus the ability to delete files, run IC, log off users, and initiate alerts. The threshold for hacking a security account is increased by +3.

An **admin** (short for administrator) account grants a user full access to the node. No action or command is denied to an admin account. Most nodes only offer this account to a few users, or only one. The threshold for hacking an admin account is increased by +6.

Peripheral nodes are simple constructs and only have public and admin access. The hacking threshold increase for admin access does not apply to peripheral nodes.

AUTHORIZATION AND AUTHENTICATION

In order to allow you access to anything beyond a public account, the node must be given three things. The first is your access ID, which is automatically given when you log on. Second, the node must have your access ID associated with an access level/account privileges (for example, your soycaf dispenser will have your access ID on a list that shows that you have an admin account on its node); this is called authorization. Third, you must have some way of proving you are the person who has the authorization in question; this is authentication.

There are a number of methods a node can employ to authenticate users. For low-security nodes like can openers or corporate restrooms, the access ID alone is enough.

A node could demand a **basic passcode** before permitting entry. Basic passcodes consist of sets of symbols that you enter to log on to a node. The most common passcodes are alphanumeric strings, but thanks to augmented and virtual reality, passcode "symbols" can also consist of images, tunes, or even specific movements.

If this is not secure enough, a **linked passcode** requires an extra bit of input from the user specific to a person or a device. This passcode is linked to something the user or his commlink uniquely possesses. This can be a scan from a security scanner (retina, fingerprint, palm print, and so on) or the correct signature from the device's OS or a unique RFID tag. If the scan or signature doesn't match the records, access will be denied.

Passkeys are one of the most secure ways of controlling access to a node. Passkeys are unique encrypted modules that plug into a commlink or terminal. Many corporations require this accessory for telecommuting workers. When a user attempts to log on to the node, it queries the module. If it does not receive the proper code, the user is denied access.

USING AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

There are a few similarities between augmented reality and virtual reality. You can perform Matrix actions using either, often with similar effect. The differences, however, are profound. In AR, you can perceive the Matrix, but in VR you can *be* there. AR offers something of a Reality 2.0 to the user, but VR can take you to entirely different worlds where the rules change and even reality can be bent to your will.

In the 2070s, almost everyone spends a significant part of their waking hours in either AR or VR.

Switching between AR and VR is a Free Action.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Depending on the situation, AR can be a bonus or a detriment. In most cases, AR will be beneficial simply by providing useful information. If it directly aids a task you are undertaking, such as overlaying internal schematics, help features, and real-time diagnostics while repairing an item, then the gamemaster can apply an appropriate dice pool modifier (usually +1 but possibly as high as +3) to the test.

AR can also be an important tactical aid. If your runner team is operating a linked PAN network, sharing data in real time—camera feeds, drone sensor pickups, interactive maps, etc.—you're going to have a tactical edge. At the gamemaster's discretion, this advantage can come in the form of extra dice for certain tests, applying an Initiative bonus to each meshed member of the team, a Surprise Test for the opposition, etc.

AR can also be a drawback. If, for example, you are simultaneously performing a data search and holding a conference call in your head, you are less likely to notice a ghoul sneaking up behind you. Spam and corp adverts specialize at bypassing your AR filters, so you may find yourself bombarded by intrusive infomercials at inopportune moments. Likewise, if someone hacks your commlink, you may be fed false data or blitzed with a sudden full-volume sensory blast. The gamemaster applies appropriate modifiers (usually –1 but possibly –3 dice) in such situations.

VIRTUAL REALITY

In VR, you "exist" wherever your persona is within the Matrix. You start either in the node of your own commlink or one of the nodes to which you are subscribed and from there "move" to other nodes. Physical distance is meaningless within the Matrix—it's all a matter of network connections, available memory, switching systems, and transmission rates, not actual meters and kilometers. Getting to a node on the other side of the world is practically instantaneous.

The simsense signal from the sim module translates the complex code structures of the actual Matrix into graphical icons and other sensory data (including emotions). Every object you see in full VR is an icon. These icons represent programs, devices, systems, and other users.

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Everything experienced in full VR is a symbolic representation. Not all icons are what they appear to be. To tell what something really is, you need to analyze it with a Matrix Perception Test (see p. 228).

How "real" is full VR? Most of it looks computer-generated. No matter how astounding or even photo-realistic the level of detail, it is still obviously artificial. Urban legend and hacker lore describe corners of the Matrix that are virtually indistinguishable from the real world—mythical and dangerous places called *ultraviolet nodes.*

Perceiving the VR Matrix in its full glory overwhelms the physical senses. Any action taken in the physical world while in VR suffers a –6 dice pool penalty.

Virtual reality can be experienced two ways: the safer *cold sim* or the more powerful and dangerous *hot sim*.

COLD SIM

Cold sim is standard, legal VR. When you are fully immersed in virtual reality, you operate at the speed of thought. You've cut yourself off from your flesh, making digital commands via direct neural input. Compared to physical meat speeds, you are lightning fast in the Matrix.

When operating in full VR using cold sim, you use your Matrix Initiative rather than your physical Initiative. Matrix Initiative equals your Response + Intuition, and you receive an extra Initiative Pass (for a total of two).

HOT SIM

A hot sim interface has been modified to bypass the simsense peak limiters that protect your nervous system from damaging biofeedback. Whereas cold sim is analogous to a legal sim flick, the signal strength of a hot sim interface is on par with the brainkicking current a wirehead gets from a BTL chip. The intensity of this input allows you to experience the Matrix in better-than-real conditions. It may seem like sheer madness to redline this way, as even random line noise could translate into potentially lethal feedback, but many hackers rely on the boosted signal strength to provide them with the speed they need. Under hot sim, you become hyper-alert, as every sense and every neuron becomes sensitive to the translated machine code streaming through the Matrix. You can literally feel the code of a program running under your fingers as your persona translates a wider degree of data that simply could not be perceived through the basic senses alone.

When operating with full VR using hot sim, use your Matrix Initiative rather than your physical Initiative. Hot sim Matrix Initiative equals your Response + Intuition + 1, and you receive two extra Initiative Passes (for a total of three). You also receive a +2 dice pool bonus to all Matrix tests while using hot sim.

OPTIONAL RULE:

USING ATTRIBUTES

The core Matrix game mechanics diverge from the basic Skill + Atribute model of *Shadowrun* skill use. This is intentional and is explained under *Attributes in the Matrix*. However, groups may prefer to streamline mechanics or give a greater emphasis to attributes, so attributes may be factored back into the various Matrix tests.

To do this, replace the program or complex form in each Success, Opposed, or Extended Test with the appropriate attribute (usually Logic). The maximum number of hits (not net hits) that can be generated by each Matrix Test is limited to the rating of the program or complex form in a manner similar to the way Spellcasting hits are limited by the Force of a spell (see *Force,* p. 118). Agents, IC, and sprites would use their Pilot rating in place of the attribute required.

Alternatively, the various Matrix Tests can remain unchanged. Instead, the attribute (again, usually Logic) limits the hits (not net hits) of every test in the same manner described above. In either case, each Matrix Action requires the use of the appropriate program.

To modify a sim module so that it can be run in hot sim mode, you must make an Hardware + Logic (10, 1 hour) Extended Test. Modifying a sim module in this way is illegal in most jurisdictions (as it also allows use of BTLs, p. 259). Hot sim also makes you vulnerable to the lethal aspects of Black IC (p. 237). Technomancers in VR via their living persona always use hot sim.

Hot sim can be as addictive as BTL use (*Substance Abuse,* p. 256). If the gamemaster feels a character is using hot sim too much, she can call for an Addiction Test.

ATTRIBUTES IN THE MATRIX

In the Matrix, you leave your meat body behind and surf the wireless world with your mind, your intellect, and the programs you carry. Your attributes take a back seat to the programs (or complex forms) you run. Even Mental attributes like Logic are feeble before a three-million-to-one-or-better speed advantage and the need to compute thousands of operations with every action taken. Ultimately your mind is simply commanding your software and hardware to do things. You're only as good as the programs and systems you use.

In Matrix tests, the attribute portion of the test is replaced with a program or Matrix attribute. For example, rather than using Gunnery + Agility to fire from an assault drone, you would use Gunnery + Command if you were firing a mounted medium machine. All rules that apply to attributes apply to programs or Matrix attributes instead.

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This substitution only applies for Matrix actions or for targets entirely in the Matrix. Interacting with a device would employ attributes normally, but using a device to interact with a node or icon would require that a program or Matrix attribute be used instead.

example

Clockwork's grandmother has no idea how to use a commlink. She just won a new Fairlight Caliban in a raffle, and tries to turn it on: a Computer + Logic (1) Test, according to the gamemaster. She succeeds and uses it to find Clockwork's commcode in all of the files that he gave her using a Browse program. The test would be Data Search + Browse.

USING THE MATRIX

Every shadowrunner possesses basic computer and electronics skills (barring the Incompetent or Uneducated negative qualities, p. 95 and 96) and has personal experience with networking, searching for data, and using the Matrix in general. Standard denizens of the Sixth World use their commlinks and PANs on a constant basis to make telecom calls, experience augmented reality, search for data, keep in touch with teammates, and manage their finances. This, of course, does not make them hackers or technomancers. Characters who want to truly run the Matrix need the skills, software, and techniques to rule the virtual landscape.

SKILLS

The basis of any work in the Matrix is your skill set. The most important skills to any Matrix specialist, whether hacker, technomancer, or rigger, lie within the Cracking Skill Group and the Electronics Skill Group. The skills and the actions and programs they encompass are as follows.

USING COMPUTER

The Computer skill is vital to most operations in the Matrix. It is used to operate computers of all kinds, whether dedicated machines like mainframes or commlinks or refrigerators or just about any other manufactured product. It is also used in the Edit, Repair Icon, Trace User, and the highly important Analyze Icon actions.

USING CYBERCOMBAT

Just as in the physical world, sometimes you cannot avoid a fight. The Cybercombat skill is used to attack icons in the Matrix. It is used with the Matrix Attack action exclusively.

USING DATA SEARCH

The Data Search skill represents a character's ability to sift through large amounts of data with the aid of search programs. The smarter the search parameters going into a search, the better the information one gets on the other side. It is used with the Data Search action, but may be used with multiple programs, depending on what information is being explored.

USING ELECTRONIC WARFARE

This skill is all about controlling the airwaves. In a wireless world, it is important to have the ability to find hidden nodes, collect intelligence from radio traffic, crack your opponents' codes, and block others' signals while protecting the integrity of your own. This skill is used in the Capture Wireless Traffic, Detect Hidden Nodes, and Initiate Decryption actions.

USING HACKING

If you aim to misbehave in the Matrix, this is the skill to have. This skill measures the ability to misuse Matrix software, finding and exploiting weaknesses in security and other programs. The list of actions associated with this skill is relatively long: Crash Node, Crash Program, Disarm Data Bomb, Hack on the Fly, Intercept Traffic, Redirect Trace, and Spoof Command.

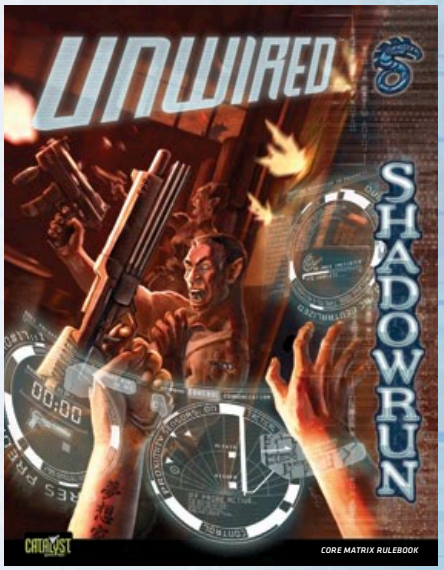
USING HARDWARE

The Hardware skill rarely comes into play when in the Matrix, but it affects everything on which the Matrix runs. Use it to install upgrades to your commlink. You can also use it to build your own hardware upgrades; use the Building Hardware Table, keeping in mind that the cost for parts is half the purchase price of the upgrade and following the rules for *Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair,* p. 138.

UNWIRED

This book contains everything you need to run the Matrix in your *Shadowrun* game. However, the possibilities opened up by the Matrix are so immense that we could dedicate an entire book to covering every advanced rule, detail, option, and esoteric possibility—which is in fact why we offer *Unwired,* the advanced Matrix rulebook. *Unwired* contains:

- A global overview of the Matrix and Matrix-empowered society of the 2070s.
- A beginner's guide to everyday Matrix use.
- A chapter devoted to System Security and spiders, with sample systems and new IC.
- Advanced rules for nodes and Matrix topology.
- The Hacker's Handbook of tricks and tactics.
- Detailed programming options and advanced software rules.
- Advanced rules for technomancers, including new echoes and advanced submersion options.
- 8 technomancer streams ("traditions" for the Emerged).
- 5 new sprites.
- Expanded simsense, skillsoft, and BTL rules.
- A chapter devoted to Matrix phenomena such as artificial intelligences, e-ghosts, resonance realms, and other Matrix phenomena.
- A section devoted to unique Matrix threats.



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BUILDING HARDWARE TABLE		
COMMLINK COMPONENT	THRESHOLD	INTERVAL
Processor (Response)	Rating x 2	1 day
Sim Module	10	1 day
Wireless Radio (Signal)	Rating x 2	1 day

CODING SOFTWARE TABLE		
SOFTWARE	THRESHOLD	INTERVAL
Agents/IC/Pilot	Rating x 3	3 months
Autosofts	Rating x 2	6 months
Common Use Programs	Rating	1 month
Firewall	Rating x 2	3 months
Hacking Programs	Rating x 2	1 month
System	Rating x 2	6 months

USING SOFTWARE

There is not much call for this skill while using the Matrix, unless you are a technomancer using the rules for *Threading,* p. 240. Matrix programs are huge and complex by today's standards, but you can write your own from scratch using this skill and the Coding Software Table.

There are also numerous advanced uses of this skill that can be found in the core Matrix rulebook, *Unwired.*

USING RESONANCE SKILLS

The Resonance skills, Compiling, Decompiling, and Registering, are important to technomancers. They are used to create (some would say summon) powerful sprites out of the Resonance and into the Matrix. They are described fully in *Technomancers,* p. 239.

MATRIX PERCEPTION

Perception within the Matrix is entirely computer-generated. The icons and nodes you see are not actually there, and the way they look and sound (and feel and smell and taste, in VR or sophisticated AR) are illusions chosen by the owners of the icons or your Reality Filter program. You are reliant on your commlink and programs to tell you what is "around" you in the Matrix. The vast majority of Matrix activity (data traffic, background processes, etc.) is highly uninteresting and would quickly overwhelm your senses, so the bulk of it is filtered out. Instead, basic Matrix perception is usually limited to a very narrow subset of things, such as the nodes and icons of users with which you are interacting, menus, AROs, and any display features you call up.

If you wish to specifically examine an ARO, users, programs, IC, nodes, files, etc., take a Simple Action to Analyze Icon/Node (p. 229). Make a Matrix Perception test using your Computer + Analyze program (rather than Perception + Intuition). Your hits determine how successful the examination is. For each hit scored, you can ask for one piece of information about the object—this could be type, rating, alert status, or any other pertinent information; a list of possible details you could gather from a Matrix Perception test can be found in the *Matrix Perception Data* sidebar.

If your target is running a Stealth program, the Matrix Perception test becomes an Opposed Test, with the target rolling Hacking + Stealth (or Firewall + Stealth for programs or nodes) as the opposing dice pool. The hits from this test reduce your hits and consequently the amount of information you get. If you garner no net hits, the target is not invisible as such, but its icon has melded into the background of data traffic, escaping your notice.

When you are accessing a node, you may set your Analyze program to automatically scan and detect other users/icons on that node with a Simple Action. The program will automatically scan the node using your Computer skill; the gamemaster secretly conducts Matrix Perception tests for your program. It will report the presence of any new icons to you. It will maintain that task for as long as you are on that node, until you use it for another purpose, or until you deactivate it.

You may also use Matrix Perception to determine whether someone has tapped wired Matrix traffic through this node (*Intercept Traffic,* p. 230) or to detect some of the tricks that sprites can perform (*Sprites* p. 240).

Technomancers receive an inherent +2 dice pool bonus on all Matrix Perception Tests.

MATRIX PERCEPTION DATA

This is a list of possible pieces of information you can ask about icons and nodes when you use Matrix Perception. It is a representative list, but not an exhaustive one.

- Access ID of a user or independent agent
- Alert status of node
- Edit date of a file
- Function of a control icon
- Hidden access to another node
- Matrix damage taken by icon
- Presence of a data bomb
- Programs run by persona or agent
- Rating of one Matrix attribute
- Type (file, user, agent, program type, etc.)
- Whether a file or node is encrypted
- Whether a Trace is running

MATRIX ACTIONS

The following actions are Matrix actions and may be performed by users in AR or VR. Every Matrix action requires use of a running program (or corresponding Complex Form)—listed in parentheses with the action—and an appropriate skill. Note that this is not an exhaustive list of actions that may be performed in the Matrix, but a list of actions designated as "Matrix actions" for the purposes of game mechanics, such as the bonus for using hot sim.

FREE ACTIONS

ALTER/SWAP ICON (SYSTEM)

You change a detail of an icon representing your persona or one of the programs, files, or nodes you own, or switch the icon to a pre-rendered icon you have stored.

CHANGE LINKED DEVICE MODE (SYSTEM)

You change the mode of a Matrix device that is linked to your persona either by a subscription or due to your access ID being trusted by the device. Mode changes include weapon firing modes (p. 147), on/off status, coffee maker settings, thermostat temperature, elevator floor, and the like.

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DETECT ACTIVE/PASSIVE WIRELESS NODES (SYSTEM)
You automatically find all of the nodes within Signal range that are in Active or Passive mode.

JACK OUT (SYSTEM)
You disconnect from your persona. In AR, this is simply a matter of shutting down your interface. In VR, it means removing your connection from your commlink, either by removing trodes, unplugging a datajack, or shutting off a neural connection. Technomancers mentally sever their connection to the Matrix. If you jack out while in VR, you suffer dumpshock (p. 237). This requires a Complex Action and a successful test if your connection is jammed open by a black IC program (p. 237).

SWITCH INTERFACE MODE (SYSTEM)
You switch your perception from AR to VR or vice versa. Note that switching to VR causes your body to go limp, so do not do it in dangerous places. If you switch from VR to AR, you might lose one or more Initiative Passes (p. 145). If your connection is jammed open by a black IC attack (p. 237), you cannot switch interface modes.

TERMINATE DATA TRANSFER (SYSTEM)
You terminate a data transfer you initiated. You may also terminate data transfers initiated by others if you have the appropriate access and permissions on at least one of the nodes involved in the transfer (p. 225).

TRANSMIT PHRASE (SYSTEM)
You speak or text a phrase as you would in the physical world (p. 146), only to one or more recipients over the Matrix. This may also be used to have an agent or device start or stop executing previously issued orders, such as having a drone launch an attack on a prearranged target or an autocooker start a pre-programmed dinner.

SIMPLE ACTIONS

ANALYZE ICON/NODE (ANALYZE)
You make a Matrix Perception Test, which is either a Simple or Opposed Computer + Analyze Test. This action is described in detail on p. 228.

CALL/DISMISS A SPRITE (COMPILING)
You either call a previously compiled or registered sprite from the Resonance, or dismiss one of your sprites to wait in the Resonance until you call it (p. 239).

DEACTIVATE PROGRAM (SYSTEM)
You switch a program's status from running to loaded. This action may also be used on an agent, in which case all of its running programs also stop running.

DECRYPT (SYSTEM)
If you have the key to a particular encryption, you decrypt it with this action. If you use this on a file, the file becomes decrypted. If you use this on a node or Matrix traffic, you may access the node or read the traffic, but it remains encrypted to others.

ENCRYPT (ENCRYPT)
You encrypt a file, set of files, node, or communication link. You also choose a passcode that you or another user can use to decrypt the file. You may encrypt multiple files together into a single archive file. You may also attach a data bomb (p. 233) to an encrypted file.

ISSUE COMMAND (SYSTEM)
You give a short list of commands to an agent, drone, or device that accepts your access ID as authorized to do so (p. 225). You may send the list of commands to multiple recipients, but it must be the same list of commands; different commands require the use of another Simple Action.

JUMP INTO A DRONE/VEHICLE/DEVICE (SYSTEM)
You jump into a drone, vehicle, or device in VR. This action is described in detail in *Jumping In,* p. 245.

LOG OFF (SYSTEM)
Your persona logs off of a node, severing the subscription and connection to that node. You may also use this to gracefully disconnect from your persona while in VR, avoiding dumpshock. Note that black IC programs are capable of preventing you from logging off (p. 237).

OBSERVE IN DETAIL (SYSTEM)
You look at one of the nodes to which your persona is connected (i.e., one that it is "in"). This is different from the Analyze Node action because it concentrates on the sculpting of the node rather than its attributes. Unlike observing in the physical world, you automatically perceive all icons that are not running Stealth because they are cataloged by your commlink.

TRANSFER DATA (SYSTEM)
You transfer a file or set of files from one node to another. Most transfers last until the end of the current Combat Turn; the connection speeds of the Matrix are fast enough that only files of truly epic size take longer than normal.

COMPLEX ACTIONS

CAPTURE WIRELESS SIGNAL (SNIFFER)
You eavesdrop on wireless traffic going to and from a device. You must be within the device's Signal range to capture the traffic. You must succeed in an Electronic Warfare + Sniffer (3) test to start the capture, and then you may copy, record, or forward the traffic without another test as long as you remain within the target device's Signal range and keep the Sniffer program running.

There is no way for other parties to detect your capture (without access to your commlink, of course). If the traffic is encrypted, you must break the encryption before it can be captured.

COMPILE SPRITE (COMPILING)
You compile a sprite using the rules on p. 240.

CONTROL DEVICE (COMMAND)
You control a device through the Matrix, using your Command program like a remote control or video game controller. The dice pool of any test you make using this action uses the rating of your Command program in place of the attribute you would use along with the appropriate skill as normal. For example, firing a drone-mounted rifle at a target would require a Longarms + Command test, and using a remote underwater welder would call for a Nautical Mechanic + Command test.

Note that if the action to be performed is normally a Simple Action, performing it through the Control Device action is still a Complex Action.

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CRASH NODE (EXPLOIT)

You crash a node (not a persona) that your icon is currently accessing. Make a Hacking + Exploit (System + Firewall, Complex Action) Extended Test. When you reach the threshold, the node is crashed and reboots (p. 238). The node issues a restricted alert against the attacker when it is first attacked (which grants the node a +4 to Firewall among other effects listed on p. 238). Any users accessing the node via VR must resist Dumpshock when the node crashes, including the hacker.

CRASH PROGRAM (EXPLOIT)

You initiate an attack on a running program that is not an agent, persona, or other icon with a Condition Monitor. The target program must be running in the same node as your icon or run by an icon that is in the same node as your icon. Make an Opposed Hacking + Exploit vs. the target's Firewall + System. If you succeed, you crash the program, which changes its status from running to loaded.

DATA SEARCH (BROWSE OR OTHER)

You search the Matrix for information about a topic. This is a Data Search + Browse Extended Test with a variable threshold and interval, depending on the general availability of the information in question and the "area" being searched, respectively. Some information is protected and kept secret, stored in a node that is not accessible from the Matrix, and so cannot be found without accessing the nodes on which the data is hidden, although a Data Search might be made to find the location of the information.

Not all Data Search actions use the Browse program. This action can be used on any large amount of data, such as a list of icons in a node, nodes in a Signal range, or network traffic. When using this action for these special searches, use the program that is used to collect the information through which you are searching. For example, use Data Search + Scan to find all of the wireless smartlinks in Signal range, or Data Search + Analyze to find all of the agents in a node, or Data Search + Sniffer to find a specific phrase in wireless traffic you have intercepted.

DECOMPILE A SPRITE (DECOMPILING)

You attempt to decompile a sprite, following the rules on p. 241.

MATRIX SEARCH TABLE

INFORMATION IS:	THRESHOLD
General Knowledge or Public	6
Limited Interest or Not Publicized	12
Hidden or Actively Hunted and Erased	24
Protected or Secret	n/a
INFORMATION IS:	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Intricate or Specialized	–1
Obscure	–2
AREA SEARCHED	**INTERVAL**
Single Node or Signal Area	Complex Action
All Subscribed Devices and Nodes	Complex Action
Entire Matrix	1 Minute

DETECT HIDDEN NODE (SCAN)

You attempt to locate a hidden node. You must be aware of the node, or at least have a good guess of where the device should be (for example, if your commlink is not detecting a node for Mr. Johnson but you are pretty sure he has a PAN, or when you can see the security drone but it is operating in Hidden mode). To find the node, make a Electronic Warfare + Scan (4) Test.

You may instead make a general search for Hidden nodes that are within mutual Signal range. In this case, the test is an Electronic Warfare + Scan (15+, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test, rather than a Complex Action.

DISARM DATA BOMB (DISARM)

You attempt to disarm a data bomb that you have detected (usually with a Matrix Perception Test). Make an Opposed Test between your Hacking + Disarm and the Data Bomb Rating x 2. If you score any net hits, the data bomb is removed and deleted. If not, the data bomb activates, causing its damage and possibly destroying any file to which it was attached.

EDIT (EDIT)

Edit allows you to create, change, or delete any kind of file. A Complex Action is required to alter one detail of a file: about a sentence of text or a detail of an image or about a second of video or audio (gamemaster's discretion). This requires a successful Computer + Edit Test with a threshold set by the gamemaster using the Success Test Difficulties Table (p. 62) based on the extent, quality, and complexity of the edits being made. Continuous editing of a device's output requires the expenditure of a Simple Action every Initiative Phase for the duration. Note that controlling the device (via the Control Device action, p. 229) may allow you simple control similar to Edit (i.e., by freezing image capture at source or turning off audio reception).

HACK ON THE FLY (EXPLOIT)

You attempt to create an account for yourself on another node. This is a Hacking + Exploit (target's Firewall, Complex Action) Extended Test. When you reach the threshold, you gain an account on the target node. This process is described in more detail in *Hacking the Matrix,* p. 235.

INITIATE CRYPTANALYSIS (DECRYPT)

You have your Decrypt program start working on an encryption to which you have access. Cryptanalysis is an Electronic Warfare + Decrypt (encryption rating x 2, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. When you reach the threshold, the encryption is broken. When you break the encryption of a file, the file becomes decrypted. When you use this on a node, you may access that node, but it remains encrypted to others.

Once you have initiated cryptanalysis, your Decrypt program takes over and runs autonomously, using your Electronic Warfare skill rating. A running Decrypt program can only work on one encryption at a time, but multiple Decrypt programs can work on different encryptions simultaneously; each Decrypt program makes its own Extended Test and cannot collaborate with other programs.

INTERCEPT TRAFFIC (SNIFFER)

You intercept traffic between two nodes. To do this, you must have access to a node through which *all* of the traffic passes; if the traffic is being split between intermediate nodes (see *Matrix Topology,* p. 216), you cannot intercept it unless you have an icon in all nodes through which the traffic is routed. For the most part, this action is only effective in a wired network, but it can apply to (mostly) wireless traffic if the number of nodes involved is sufficiently small.

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To eavesdrop on traffic, make a Hacking + Sniffer Test; the hits from this test are the threshold for others to detect the snooping with a Matrix Perception test. The traffic may be copied and recorded or forwarded to a third party with no additional tests. If you want to block or alter some of the traffic before sending it along, you must use the Edit action. To insert fake traffic, you must succeed in an Opposed Test between your Hacking + Sniffer and the recipient's Firewall + System.

If the traffic is encrypted, you must break the encryption before it can be intercepted.

JAM SIGNALS (NONE)

You start a jamming device. You may choose any number of known devices to be excluded from the jamming when you initiate the jamming, and may change the list with another Jam Signals action. When the jammer is activated, every device with a Signal rating less than the rating of the jammer (with modifiers given in the description of the jammer, p. 330) are jammed and lose wireless connectivity. Note that a device running an ECCM program adds the rating of that program to its Signal for purposes of countering jamming.

LOG ON (SYSTEM)

You open a subscription to a node, and your icon appears there. This requires no test, but does require either the proper authentication to an account (such as a passcode) or a hacked account. You also need a connection to the node's device, either with a wired connection or a wireless connection (by being within mutual Signal range or establishing a route across multiple devices).

MATRIX ATTACK (ATTACK, BLACK HAMMER, BLACKOUT)

You make an attack against another icon in a node where your icon currently exists. You may only make attacks against targets with a Condition Monitor: agents, IC, and other persona icons. This action is described in more detail in *Cybercombat* (p. 236).

REBOOT (SYSTEM)

You initiate a reboot of a device with a Complex Action. You must have the appropriate privileges to do so (usually an admin account) and you must make a System + Response (10, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. When enough hits are achieved, all programs stop running and all subscriptions are terminated and anyone who is still running their persona on the device is severed from the Matrix, suffering dumpshock (p.237) if they are in VR. The restarting the system takes a number of Combat Turns equal to the device's System (or Device Rating).The device then reboots itself by making a System + Response (10, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. The device creates no node after the initiation of a reboot until it reaches the threshold of the Extended Test.

REDIRECT TRACE (SPOOF)

You muddle your active datatrail against an active tracking attempt, making it harder for a running Track program to find your persona's node. Make an Opposed Hacking + Spoof vs. the tracking icon's Computer + Track; the number of net hits from this test are added to the threshold that the tracking icon needs. You may take this action multiple times against the same target. This action only works against a tracking attempt in progress.

REPAIR ICON (MEDIC)

You heal the Matrix Damage that a persona, agent, or IC icon has suffered. Make a Computer + Medic (damage taken x 2, Complex Action) Extended Test. When the threshold is reached, all damage is removed from the target icon. Note that it is possible for the threshold to change during the Extended Test if the icon suffers further damage.

This action only repairs Matrix Damage, and so cannot be used to heal technomancers.

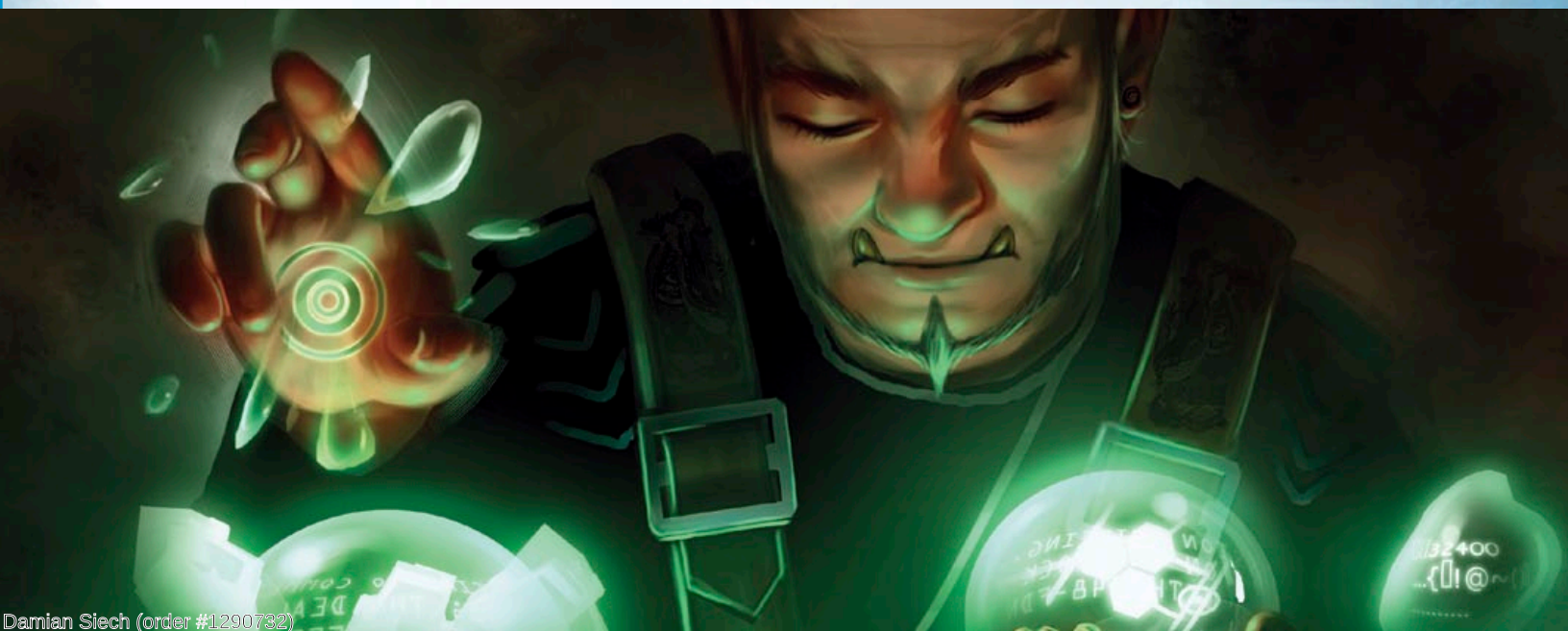
RUN PROGRAM (SYSTEM)

You run a program, agent, or IC that is loaded in a device to which you have access and the appropriate privileges. This changes the program's status from loaded to running. Programs must be running in order to be used.

SET DATA BOMB (DATA BOMB)

You set a data bomb in a file or node. When you do so, you must choose the rating for the data bomb (up to the rating of the Data Bomb program), whether or not it will delete the file or crash the node to which it is attached when activated as a secondary effect, and the passcode required to deactivate it. Data bombs may be attached to archives that are also protected by Encrypt programs.

The way a data bomb triggers depends on whether it is attached to a file or a node: it activates when a file is accessed, or when an icon logs onto a node, respectively, without using the data bomb's passcode. When a data bomb is triggered, it causes its rating in Matrix Damage to the icon that tripped it and performs its secondary effect (if any), and then is deleted. If the passcode is used, the data bomb does not activate and remains attached to the file or node.



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TRACE TABLE	
SITUATION	**THRESHOLD**
Each hit from target's Redirect Trace action	+1
Target's connection jammed open by black IC program	–2
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Target Running Stealth	–Rating
Target's connection jammed open by black IC program	–2

A data bomb can be detected with a Matrix Perception test (p. 228). If it has been detected, it may be defused with the Disarm Data Bomb action; a disarmed data bomb is deleted.

SPOOF COMMAND (SPOOF)

You send a command to a device or agent, pretending it is from an authorized source. You must have an access ID from which the target accepts commands (usually by making a Matrix Perception test on the authorized source or by tracing its icon). To spoof a target, choose a command (per the Issue Command action, p. 229) and make an Opposed Test between your Hacking + Spoof and the target's Pilot + Firewall (System + Firewall for peripheral devices); if you succeed, the target accepts the command as legitimate. Each Spoof Command action applies only to a single command; multiple commands require multiple Spoof Command attempts.

TRACE USER (TRACK)

You trace an icon back to its originating node. This is a Computer + Track (10, Complex Action) Extended Test. The target may increase the threshold with the Redirect Trace action, and a Stealth program run by your target acts as a negative dice pool modifier.

When you reach the threshold of the Extended Test, you have successfully traced the target, learning the target's access ID and the location of the device housing the originating node (usually the user's commlink). If the target is using a wired connection to the Matrix, you learn his exact location. If he is using a wireless connection, you have his location triangulated to within about 50 meters. As long as you keep your Track program running and the target remains connected to the Matrix, you may continue to monitor the target's location. Black IC can make the trace easier.

You can also use this action to trace a subscription to its other end. For example, you may trace the subscription from a drone to the rigger controlling it.

COMMON USE PROGRAM SUITES	COST*
Basic User: Analyze 2, Browse 2, Command 1, Edit 2	300¥
Basic+: Analyze 3, Browse 3, Command 1, Edit 3	400¥
Pro User: Analyze 4, Browse 4, Command 2, Edit 4	600¥
* When purchased at same time as commlink/OS	

PROGRAMS

In order to interact with the Matrix, you need to use *programs*. Programs can be purchased (or written by a hacker) and then stored with a persona or agent. A program that is stored is *loaded* into the persona or agent. This is analogous to wearing a holstered weapon or putting a tool in your pocket; a loaded program is being carried for later use. There is no limit to the number of programs that may be loaded into a persona or agent.

In order to use a program, it must be *running*. A running program is executed by the device on which your persona is running and belongs to your persona; only you may use the program. The System rating of the device limits the rating of the program. A program operates at its own rating or the System of the device, whichever is lower.

A running program counts against the device's processor limit. For every (processor limit) programs running on a device (not including persona programs but including agents), the device's Response rating is temporarily reduced by one; this Response loss does not affect the device's maximum System rating. A commlink has a processor limit equal to its System rating. For example, a commlink with System 4 and Response 4 would have a Response of 4 if it was running up to three programs, Response 3 if running 4 to 7 programs, Response 2 if running 8 to 11 programs, etc.

You may only use one program of each type at a time. For example, if you have an Armor 3 and an Armor 5 program running, you may only use one of them to resist Matrix Damage (we suggest the one with the higher rating).

Technomancers use *complex forms* rather than programs. However, the complex forms they use do the same things that programs do, even though they do not work the same way.

The following list describes most of the programs available in *Shadowrun*. The skill that is most commonly used with each program is listed in parentheses with the program name.

COMMON USE PROGRAMS

Common use programs are widespread and legal throughout the Matrix.

ANALYZE (COMPUTER)

Analyze programs gather data about icons and nodes in the Matrix by issuing queries, analyzing system resources, performing registry lookups, and so on. Use Analyze for Matrix Perception (p. 228). An Analyze program running in a node also helps detect hacking attempts (p. 235).

BROWSE (DATA SEARCH)

Browse programs are specialized search routines that help track down information on a particular node or in the Matrix at large. Use Browse programs for Data Search actions (p. 230).

COMMAND (VARIES)

Command programs give the user a modular and customizable control interface for various devices. This allows the user to control a device through the Matrix (p. 245), whether it be a surveillance camera, a drone, or any other Matrix-capable device.

MATRIX PROGRAMS	AVAILABILITY	COST (UP TO RATING 3)	COST (UP TO RATING 6)
Common Use	–	Rating x 50¥	Rating x 100¥
Hacking	(Rating x 2)R	Rating x 500¥	Rating x 1,000¥
Agents/IC /Pilot	Rating x 3	Pilot rating x 1,000¥ Pilot	Rating x 2,500¥
System	–	Rating x 200¥	Rating x 500¥
Firewall	–	Rating x 200¥	Rating x 500¥
Autosofts (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 2	Rating x 500¥	Rating x 1000¥

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EDIT (COMPUTER)

Edit is a combination word processor, graphic design tool, and video/animation editor. You can use it to create and alter files of any media type: text, graphics, video, trideo, simsense, etc. Edit sees common usage in the corporate world, but hackers use it for their own subversive ends. Use Edit with the Edit action (p. 230).

ENCRYPT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Encrypt programs utilize various cryptographic schemes and ciphers to secure files, nodes, and communications. Encrypted items can be decrypted with the proper passcode, otherwise they are gibberish. Use Encrypt programs for the Encrypt action (p. 229).

REALITY FILTER (RESPONSE)

A Reality Filter program translates a node's VR sculpting into a metaphor of your choice by attempting to interpret the node's algorithms. When you first run this program or enter a node while it is running, make an Opposed Test between your Reality Filter + Response and the node's System + Response. If the filter wins, your preprogrammed paradigm overrides the node's signals and you receive a +1 Response bonus while in that node. If the node wins, or a tie results, its metaphor overwhelms the filter enough that you suffer –1 Response while in the node.

SCAN (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Scan programs allow you to locate wireless networks. Every wireless device has a built-in Scan program at rating 1, but users who want better access control may upgrade to a superior utility. Scan is used for the Detect Hidden Node action (p. 230).

HACKING PROGRAMS

The following programs are generally only used by hackers and security specialists. In most jurisdictions, these programs are illegal without proper licensing. Hackers use these programs to exploit security flaws and attack icons. IC programs use them against intruders (p. 237).

ARMOR (NONE)

Armor programs are software redundancy and automatic backup systems that protect icons from attacks that cause Matrix damage (p. 237).

ATTACK (CYBERCOMBAT/HACKING)

Attack programs are hostile code carriers that attempt to kill processes, introduce random input, create program faults, and otherwise try to crash an icon or program. They are used in cybercombat (p. 236).

BIOFEEDBACK FILTER (NONE)

Biofeedback filters are software routines that monitor simsense signals and filter harmful feedback. Hackers specifically use biofeedback filters as a defense against Black Hammer and Blackout programs in cybercombat (p. 236) and against dumpshock (p. 237). Technomancers have an inherent Biofeedback Filter complex form equal to their Charisma, and so cannot take this as a complex form.

BLACK HAMMER (CYBERCOMBAT)

Black Hammer is a black IC program that samples the command transactions between the target and his commlink and injects dangerous biofeedback responses into the target's simsense interface. These aggravated signals may overload the target's neural connections and in turn render him unconscious or cause death from stroke, heart failure, respiratory paralysis, aneurysm, or neurotransmitter autotoxicity—and those are just a few of the possible effects. It is used with the Matrix Attack action (p. 231).

Black Hammer is intended as a weapon against hackers in full VR using hot sim, causing Physical damage rather than Matrix damage in cybercombat (p. 237). Against cold sim VR users, it only inflicts Stun damage. It has no effect on programs, agents, IC, sprites, or AR users.

BLACKOUT (CYBERCOMBAT)

Blackout is black IC program that is a non-lethal version of Black Hammer. It causes Stun damage to both hot sim and cold sim VR users. Like Black Hammer, it is used with the Matrix Attack action (p. 231) and has no effect on programs, agents, IC, sprites, or AR users. Damage from Blackout does not overflow into the Physical Condition Monitor.

DATA BOMB (NONE)

Data Bomb programs create a specialized form of reactive executable in a file or node, called a data bomb (note the difference in capitalization: Data Bomb is the program, whereas a data bomb is the executable set by the program). A data bomb is attached to a specific file or node and set to activate if someone accesses the file or node without authorization. When triggered, a data bomb "explodes" and attempts to crash the icon that accessed the file or node. Data bombs may also be instructed to erase the file or crash the node, if the owner chooses. Data bombs are set with the Set Data Bomb action (p. 231).

Only one data bomb may be attached to a particular file or device. You can detect a data bomb with a successful Matrix Perception Test.

You can defuse a data bomb simply by entering the correct passcode. Without the passcode, you can only disable a detected data bomb with a successful Disarm Data Bomb action (p. 231). When it "detonates," a data bomb inflicts a number of boxes of Matrix damage equal to (rating x 1D6), then the data bomb is deleted.

DECRYPT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

Decrypt programs are designed to conduct a number of cipher-busting attacks—from pattern analysis to brute-force dictionary assaults to sophisticated mathematical tricks—to break into an encrypted system or service. Use Decrypt programs for Initiate Cryptanalysis actions (p. 230).

DEFUSE (HACKING)

The sole purpose of the Defuse program is to deactivate data bombs that are protecting files or devices. It is used with the Disarm Data Bomb action (p. 230).

ECCM (NONE)

Electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM) filter out jamming signals that attempt to disrupt a wireless connection. An ECCM program adds its rating to the Signal rating of the device on which it is running when defending against jamming (see p. 246).

EXPLOIT (HACKING)

Exploit programs are constantly evolving hacker tools specifically designed to take advantage of security flaws and weaknesses so that a hacker can gain unauthorized access to a node or program. Exploit programs are used with the Hack on the Fly action (p. 230), Probing the Target for weaknesses (p. 236), and Crashing Nodes and Programs (p. 230).

MEDIC (COMPUTER)

Use Medic to repair Matrix damage inflicted on icons. Though legitimate users sometimes use Medic to fix corrupted files, misbehaving programs, and other errors, hackers use Medic to keep functioning after a bout of cybercombat. Some IC programs carry Medic programs to repair themselves. Use Medic for the Repair Icon action (p. 231).

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While this program cannot help technomancers, they may use the Medic complex form to repair other icons, such as personas, agents, or sprites.

SNIFFER (ELECTRONIC WARFARE/HACKING)

Sniffer programs gather data traffic and wireless signals and capture the information. Sniffer programs are the ultimate Matrix spying utility, used for the Intercept Traffic (p. 230) and Intercept Wireless Signals (p. 229) actions.

SPOOF (HACKING)

You can use Spoof programs to generate false access IDs and forge misleading data packets with the intent of confusing Track programs. Use Spoof for the Redirect Trace action (p. 231) or the Spoof Command action (p. 232).

STEALTH (HACKING)

Stealth is a clever hacker program that attempts to hide the hacker from other system processes. While it cannot make an icon completely undetectable, it makes the hacker seem innocuous by obfuscating his activities, erasing system tracks, and mimicking authorized traffic. While it is not used for any action, Stealth hides the hacker from detection by the Firewall as he breaks into a system (p. 227), as well as from Matrix Perception tests (p. 228) and Trace User attempts (p. 232).

TRACK (COMPUTER)

Track programs systematically analyze a user's connection and follow the datatrail back to the originating node. Track is commonly used as an intrusion countermeasure with the intent of identifying/locating a hacker or launching a counterattack, but it is also used to keep tabs on automated taxis and emergency service calls. Track is used for the Trace User action (p. 232).

AGENTS AND IC

Agents are semi-autonomous programs capable of using other programs. Matrix users employ agents as assistants or search-bots, while hackers also use them as hacking aides, decoys, watchdogs, or even weapons platforms. Agents run independently of the user in the Matrix, the Matrix version of drones. They are capable of a degree of autonomy and can comprehend complex orders.

Agents have a Pilot attribute, much like drones (p. 244), that determines just how "smart" the agent is. Pilot acts as the agent's brain, interpreting orders. The Pilot attribute acts as the agent's System rating, as well as its Computer, Cybercombat, Data Search, and Hacking skill ratings. Agents also have their own built-in Firewall attribute, equal to their Pilot rating. Agents use the Response attribute of the node on which they are running; this means that the attributes of an agent operating independently may vary as it moves from node to node.

USING AGENTS

Agents can be loaded and run like other programs, using a Complex Action to run the agent. The agent is a running program and counts against a node's processor limit. If you run the agent in the same node in which your persona resides (usually your commlink), it can assist you in any nodes you access. You must have an account with permission to run programs on the node (usually security or admin).

Agents can also access other nodes independently, if instructed to do so. They must have access to the node either by using your account or by hacking their own. When operating independently, an agent has its own icon. Agents may not have icons in multiple nodes like persona programs can.

Agents loaded into your persona use your access ID. Traces on an agent program trace back to your own point of origin.

Agents (or IC) acting independently of your persona, whether on your commlink or on some other device, use their own hardcoded access ID to identify themselves to other nodes. This access ID is identical in all copies of a given agent unless it is patched with a Software + Logic (Rating x 3, 1 week) Extended Test. Agents do not possess a Software skill and are not able self-patch/program.

To have your agent operate in the Matrix independently, you must either run it on a separate node from your persona (with an appropriate access account) or run it on your own node and then send it to other nodes. The agent will continue to operate in the Matrix even if your persona goes offline.

An agent on your node counts against your device's processor limit, but not your subscription limit. An agent operating independently counts toward your subscription limit, but not your processor limit.

The guidelines for issuing commands to agents are the same as those for issuing commands to drones (p. 244).

PAYLOAD

You may load copies of your programs into your agent so that it may run and use them on its own. If an agent is acting independently, any programs it runs count against the processor limit of the node it is in, and so may affect Response (p. 222). Any program run by an agent is limited by its Pilot rating.

If your agent is running in your node, you may run a program and designate it for your agent's use and vice versa.

AGENT AND PILOT COMPETENCY

Agents may be capable of operating independently, but this does not mean that they are just as capable as hacker characters. In fact, while they are very smart in many ways, agents possess a number of drawbacks that make them inferior to metahumans.

The Pilot program that guides an autonomous agent is an incredibly sophisticated piece of software with logical and analytic capabilities on par with any metahuman. This does not mean, however, that the agent has decision-making capabilities equal to metahuman. Not only do they lack a lifetime of experience to base their judgments on, they lack imagination, spontaneity, and often the context that would enable them to fully understand a situation. For example, while the agent may understand that certain icons engaged in cybercombat with others are considered enemies, and might even grasp some of the finer tactical points, it would not necessarily understand the personal relationships or social cues between them, and so would not realize that, say, attacking one icon might enrage another, or recognize that one icon is attempting to surrender or switch sides, or comprehend that one icon is simply toying with its opposition and hasn't unleashed the big guns yet.

Contextual information is even more lacking when the agent interacts with the physical world in some way (via sensor, security system, or drone, for example), as agent Pilots are programmed for Matrix activities, not for interfacing with meatspace. (This is less true of drone Pilots, which are programmed for real-world activity, but are specifically tailored for the drone model they occupy.)

Agents and Pilots are also limited in their capacity for creative thought. They tend to stick to their orders, making strictly logical choices according to programmed decision trees—which may not always be the best course of action. When faced with an unexpected obstacle or choices that don't fit their programming, they tend to fall back and regroup—a safer choice over improvisation. Note that agents do have "fuzzy logic" routines that allow them to judge and act on imprecise concepts and conditions, but taking action based on generalized probabilities also has its drawbacks. When in doubt, gamemasters can secretly roll a Pilot + Response Test against an appropriate difficulty threshold to determine how agents respond to difficult situations based on their orders (see *Issuing Commands*, p. 245).

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INTRUSION COUNTERMEASURES (IC)

The term intrusion countermeasures (or IC, pronounced "ice") refers to a specialized type of agent program that is used to defend a system. For all game purposes, IC programs are equivalent to agents and function the same way. IC programs are typically loaded with some of the more offensive programs to employ against intruders, like Attack, Black Hammer, or Blackout, as well as Analyze, Armor, or Track. IC rarely has too many programs loaded, as it and its running programs all count toward the node's processor limit.

Some nodes will launch an IC program when an alert is triggered and direct it to engage the intruder(s). Once launched, IC programs act independently of each other and the node, as with agents that are running independently. Each IC program has its own icon and Initiative (*Agent, IC, and Sprite Initiative*, p. 236).

More proactive IC programs may be loaded with additional utilities such as Exploit or Stealth, and may actively pursue intruders if they leave the node or even track the intruder back to his originating node and attack him there. IC programs are typically loaded with any necessary passcodes they may need to access any connected systems. Sometimes a node has IC patrolling in it, Analyzing icons at random.

Gamemasters are encouraged to create their own IC for their nodes.

HACKING THE MATRIX

There are three main ways for you to misbehave in the Matrix. The first is by hacking, whereby you create unauthorized accounts for yourself on other nodes. The second is by spoofing, which is the process of sending orders to devices while pretending to be an authorized user. Finally, there is cybercombat, where you directly confront IC and other users (usually spiders or security hackers) and impose your will with virtual (and sometimes real) violence.

A hacker's bag of tricks includes numerous options beyond those listed here. While none are essential to play the game, advanced tricks are listed in the *Hacker's Handbook* chapter of *Unwired*.

HACKING

The easiest way to get access to a node is to have permission. This does not necessarily have to be your permission; you can get passcodes, passkeys, or other authorization from legitimate users of the node. This can be done by social engineering, intimidation, theft, or any other means at your disposal. Most of the time, a hacker is at a loss for a certified way into a node, and must resort to hacking.

The goal of hacking into a node is to create your own account on the target node. In order to hack a node, you must either be within mutual Signal range of the target node's device or have an open subscription with the node through the Matrix.

There are two ways to hack a node. Hacking on the fly is fast, but has a high risk of detection. Cautiously probing the target node for vulnerabilities is much slower, but entails far less risk.

HACKING ON THE FLY

On the streets or during a run, you will undoubtedly encounter situations where you need to hack into something without any sort of preparation. In circumstances like this, you pull out all of your hacker tricks and tools and do your best to quickly find an exploit that will get you in. Ideally, this will be without alerting the node's security, but if you are ready for a fight you simply may not care if you trigger an alarm. Hacking on the fly is brute-force hacking: success is more important than subtlety or finesse.

Hacking on the fly is an Hacking + Exploit (target's Firewall, Complex Action) Extended Test. Reaching the threshold will get you a user account on the node. If you want a security account, increase the threshold by +3, for an admin account increase it by +6. When you beat the threshold and gain the account, you are automatically logged onto the node with that level of access, and do not need to spend a Log On action (unless you log off).

Such brute force hacks can attract attention. Each time you take a Hack on the Fly action, the target node makes a free roll on an Analyze + Firewall (hacker's Stealth) Extended Test. If the node detects you an alert is triggered, even if you have succeeded in your attempt (*Alerts,* p. 238).

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example

Rootkit has snuck into the bathroom of a biotech company and needs to get control of the building's node to let the rest of his team into the building. Speed is key, so he starts hacking on the fly. He wants security access to gain control of the door locks, so the gamemaster adds three to the threshold (which is 4, the node's Firewall attribute, but she keeps it a secret for now). Rootkit rolls his Hacking of 5 + Exploit of 5, plus 2 because he is using hot sim, for a total dice pool of 12. He rolls and gets 4 hits; he's not in yet. In response, the node rolls its Firewall 4 + Rating 3 Analyze program it is running, getting 2 hits; not enough to reach Rootkit's Stealth rating of 5.

In his next action phase, Rootkit continues his hack, rolling and getting 3 hits this time. That is just enough to get him in, and he automatically logs on to the node with a shiny new security account.

But wait! The node still has one last chance to detect his intrusion. It rolls and gets 2 hits, still not enough to detect the hacker. Rootkit opens the doors for his team and starts poking around the node.

PROBING THE TARGET

If you have the time to properly case your target, your hacking attempt is more likely to be successful and unnoticed. Using this method, you discreetly probe your target over an extended time frame, identifying system flaws that can be exploited for access.

Probing is a Hacking + Exploit Extended Test with a threshold equal to the target's System + Firewall. The interval of the test is 1 hour if done in VR, 1 day if done by AR. Once you reach the threshold, you have found a crack in the system's defenses that you can exploit to gain access. You do not automatically gain access; you have found the chink in the armor, but have not used it yet. These exploits do not remain forever, and can be removed if found by the node's security or if the node is rebooted. As long as it remains in the node, you may use a Log On action to use your hacked account. This process grants you a user account. If you want a security account, increase the threshold by +3; for an admin account increase it by +6.

The target node gets one free Analyze + Firewall (hacker's Stealth) Test when you first log on with the hacked account. If the node detects you, an alert is triggered (*Alerts,* p. 238).

GLITCHES WHILE HACKING

There are a number of possible results of glitches while hacking a node. You may need to start over, or the node may be prepared for your exploit attempt (receiving a bonus on its Analyze + Firewall test), or you may automatically trigger an alert when you reach the threshold of the Extended Test. This is not an exhaustive list; the gamemaster uses her discretion when assigning the consequences of a glitch.

SPOOFING

When hacking is too slow, or you only need to send a single command to a device, then spoofing is your weapon of choice. Spoofing a node or device sends a forged command, ostensibly from an authorized user, to the target.

The target of a spoof attempt must either have a Pilot rating or be a peripheral device. Most often you will spoof a drone or an agent, but you may also use spoof to do things like unlock doors, get free cab rides, and make the McHugh's autocooker prepare your soyburger exactly the way you like it.

Before you can spoof, you must have an access ID from which the target accepts commands. This can be done by finding an authorized user in the Matrix and making a Matrix Perception test on her icon to get her access ID. You can also use the Capture Wireless Traffic action to find legitimate orders and then Trace the communication back to its source, which will net you the access ID.

To spoof a target, choose a command (per the Issue Command action, p. 229) and make an an Opposed Test between your Hacking + Spoof and the target's Pilot + Firewall or System + Firewall for peripheral devices (usually Device Rating x 2). There is a –3 dice pool modifier if the command requires a security account and a –6 dice pool modifier if it requires an admin account. If you succeed, the target accepts and executes the command. If you fail (or tie), the device or agent simply discards the command as a bad packet; no alert is issued.

Each Spoof Command action applies only to a single command; multiple commands require multiple Spoof Command attempts.

example

Clockwork's team would be okay if it weren't for the gal with the heavy machine gun. She has them pinned down in the jungle, unable to move. He needs to do something, and quick! He already has the soldier's access ID, so all he needs to do is spoof an appropriate command to her weapon. Clockwork signals his team to get ready and sends the machine gun a spoofed command.

Clockwork rolls his Hacking 4 plus his Spoof 5 program. The weapon has a Device Rating of 4, and rolls 8 dice in the Opposed Test. Clockwork gets 4 hits, while the machine gun gets 3. It obeys his command to eject its ammo box and the soldier is left with an empty weapon as the hacker's teammates charge.

CYBERCOMBAT

Sometimes it pays to be subtle. The rest of the time, you have to resort to brute force. Cybercombat follows the same procedure as other combat. It occurs in real time, and follows the same three-second Combat Turn as combat in the physical and astral worlds.

MATRIX INITIATIVE

Initiative in Matrix combat and all actions in the Matrix are concurrent with other actions in the physical and astral planes.

AUGMENTED INITIATIVE

In augmented reality, you're acting at regular meat-body speeds. Use your physical Initiative and Initiative Passes as normal (*Initiative,* p. 144). You can choose to interact either with the physical world or the augmented world (the Matrix) with each action, or split Simple or Free Actions between the two.

VIRTUAL INITIATIVE

If you're operating in cold sim virtual reality, your Matrix Initiative equals your commlink's Response + your Intuition; you also get an extra Initiative Pass (two total). If you're running with hot sim, your Matrix Initiative equals your commlink's Response + your Intuition + 1, and you get two extra Initiative Passes (three total).

Though Matrix Initiative is concurrent with physical Initiative, any actions you take using your Matrix Initiative can only affect other things in the Matrix (unless you are interacting with the physical world, as when rigging or controlling a device). If you want to interact with the physical world rather than the VR Matrix, you need to either go offline or concentrate on your meat body and spend a turn using physical Initiative (not forgetting the –6 dice pool modifier for physical actions in VR).

AGENT, IC, AND SPRITE INITIATIVE

Agents, IC, and sprites have an Initiative equal to Pilot + Response. Because they act at digital speeds, they receive two extra Initiative Passes (three total).

MATRIX ATTACKS

Icons assault each other in cybercombat by performing the Matrix Attack action with an offensive program, such as Attack, Black Hammer, or Blackout. To attack another icon, make an Opposed Test.

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Hackers attack using Cybercombat skill + the rating of the program they are using. Agents, IC, and sprites attack using their rating + the offensive program rating. The defending icon rolls Response + Firewall.

If the attacker scores more hits, the attack succeeds—note the net hits. Otherwise the attack fails.

MATRIX FULL DEFENSE

You can go on full defense, as with regular combat (*Full Defense,* p. 160), either as a Complex Action or as an interrupt action. When defending with Matrix Full Defense, add your Hacking skill to the defense roll. IC, agents, and sprites add their rating when they go on full defense.

MATRIX DAMAGE

The base Matrix damage inflicted by an offensive program is equal to its rating in boxes. So an Attack 4 program has a base Damage Value of 4. Net hits scored on the attack test are added to the DV. Note that Attack programs inflict Matrix damage to the target icon. Black IC programs attack users through their simsense link, so they inflict damage directly to the user's Stun or Physical Condition Monitor. Black IC programs also have other effects, noted below.

DAMAGE RESISTANCE

Matrix damage to an icon from an Attack program is resisted with a System + Armor program Test. Damage from a Black IC attack is resisted with Willpower + Biofeedback Filter. Deduct each hit scored on this test from the modified Damage Value; any DV left over is applied to the target's appropriate Condition Monitor. Negative modifiers from damage do not apply to damage resistance tests.

MATRIX CONDITION MONITOR

The Matrix Condition Monitor measures the amount of Matrix damage an icon can take. It has a number of boxes equal to 8 + (System ÷ 2, rounded up). Technomancers do not have a Matrix Condition Monitor.

An icon crashes when all the boxes on its Matrix Condition Monitor are filled. If your persona icon crashes, you are immediately disconnected from the Matrix, as with the Jack Out action (p. 229). If you were operating in VR, you suffer dumpshock when this happens.

DUMPSHOCK

Anyone who is dumped from the Matrix while in VR suffers a nasty system shock, called dumpshock. The Damage Value for dumpshock is 5S for cold sim users, 5P for hot sim users. Resist dumpshock damage with Willpower + Biofeedback Filter rating. You also suffer disorientation in addition to the damage: you suffer a –2 dice pool modifier on all actions for (10 – your Willpower) minutes.

BLACK IC ATTACKS

Black IC programs like Black Hammer and Blackout create dangerous biofeedback at BTL overdose intensity to VR users. In order to maximize the effect, they also subvert the sim interface and jam the connection open, making it impossible for the user to log off or switch interface modes, difficult to jack out, and easier to trace.

Once Black IC is used to make a successful attack on the target (even if the hit does no damage), his connection is jammed open and he cannot log off that node until the Black IC is crashed. Any attempt by the user to jack out takes a Complex Action. In addition, the user must engage the program in an Opposed Test between the user's Willpower + Biofeedback Filter and the Black IC rating + Response. If the Black IC ties or scores more hits, it prevents the user from jacking out. Users who jack out suffer dumpshock.

COMBAT SUMMARY

ATTACK:	
Persona	Cybercombat + offensive program
Agent, IC, sprite	Rating + offensive program
DEFENSE:	Response + Firewall
Full Defense	+ Hacking (persona) or rating (agents, IC, sprites)
DAMAGE VALUE:	Offensive program + net hits
DAMAGE RESISTANCE:	
Attack	System + Armor, hits reduce damage
Blackout/Black Hammer	Willpower + Biofeedback Filter, hits reduce damage

If Black IC knocks a user unconscious, it keeps the connection open. At this point, the system security may leisurely trace the user's connection. It is common practice to delete any data the hacker may have stolen off his commlink, or send a security hacker to search the victim's node for evidence.

Damage from Blackout will not overflow into the Physical Condition Monitor; it stops inflicting damage after rendering the target unconscious. Black Hammer overflows the Condition Monitor just like other damage. Overflow Physical damage represents increased levels of brain damage. At the gamemaster's discretion, if the user survives the experience, he may suffer neurological damage that produces memory lapses, hallucinations, tremors, phantom pain, migraines, or similar conditions.

SIMULTANEOUS COMBAT IN MULTIPLE NODES

It is possible that a hacker who is accessing multiple nodes simultaneously may come under attack in different nodes at once. In this case, the hacker's Initiative applies to all concurrent combats. The hacker can also only focus his attention on one combat at a time, and must designate which at the start of each Initiative Pass. For the rest of the pass, he cannot defend against attacks made against his persona in the other combat(s). If he goes on full defense, those bonuses only apply to the combat he is focused on at the time. Any Matrix damage inflicted in one combat affects his persona in all combats.

example

Slamm-0! has been cornered by an IC program. He attacks first, using his Cybercombat 4 + Attack program 4 (8 dice), getting 3 hits. The IC rolls its Response 5 + Firewall 4, but gets only 1 hit. Slamm-0! inflicts 6 DV (4 from the program plus 2 net hits) on the IC. The IC makes a resistance test rolling only its Rating 4 (it is not running an Armor program). It gets 1 hit, enough to reduce the damage to 5 boxes. The IC has 10 boxes on its Matrix Condition Monitor, so it's halfway to being finished, and now suffers from a –1 Wound modifier.

The IC strikes back with a Blackout program, rolling Rating 4 + Blackout 4 (7 dice with the wound penalty). The IC gets lucky this time, scoring 4 hits. Rolling his Response 5 + Firewall 3 (8 dice), Slamm-0! only gets 3 hits, so the Black IC gets through.

Slamm-0! is facing 5S DV from the Blackout (4 from the program plus 1 net hit), resisted with his Willpower 3 alone (he is not running with a Biofeedback Filter program … oops). He rolls 1 hit, reducing his damage to 4 Stun boxes. The Black IC also jams open his connection, preventing Slamm-0! from logging off.

On his next action, Slamm-0! tries to jack out. An Opposed Test is made between the IC's Blackout 4 + Response 3 and Slamm-0!'s Willpower 3. Not surprisingly, the IC wins, preventing Slamm-0! from pulling the plug. If he doesn't beat the IC in direct combat, he's toast. His icon squares its cartoony shoulders and prepares for more punishment.

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SECURITY RESPONSE

Any node worth hacking more than likely has its own security. The Firewall of a node is merely a first defense, like the walls of a warehouse. Effective security is more than just a wall and a lock on the door, and the same goes for nodes.

NODE SECURITY

Just because you have an account on a node does not mean you are free to run amok. There are plenty of dangers awaiting a hacker in a secure node, including but not limited to spiders, IC, and other defenses.

SPIDERS

A spider is a security hacker who protects the node, the physical facility to which the node belongs, or both. High-security systems will employ spiders to monitor their networks and nodes and watch for signs of intrusion. The gamemaster decides if a node deserves this kind of overwatch, as well as their numbers, abilities, and alertness.

PATROLLING IC

Secure systems might employ IC (p. 237) to wander a node, scan users, and otherwise guard against interlopers, especially since IC is far less expensive than hiring a spider. IC may be loaded with an Analyze or Track program and instructed to randomly check users to ensure they are legitimate. Patrolling IC that discovers a hacker will put the system on alert and may attack if carrying any offensive programs.

OTHER DEFENSES

Nodes are typically equipped with other internal defenses to guard against unwanted snoopers. These include but are not limited to encrypted files (p. 229), secret nodes, data bombs (p. 233), red herring files, and anything else the gamemaster devises. In some cases, IC programs may be encrypted along with sensitive files, so that when the files are decrypted, the IC will verify the user's identity and attack or destroy the file if they are not authorized.

Sometimes the hacker is her own worst enemy. A hacker who rolls a glitch while intruding on a node has, at the gamemaster's discretion, inadvertently given away her presence to the system's firewall. The node may send IC or a spider to investigate, or may immediately go on alert and call out the cyberdogs.

More Matrix security techniques and sample secure nodes and systems can be found in *System Security,* p. 60, *Unwired.*

ALERTS

If a node is aware that it has been hacked, it will immediately go on alert and initiate various countermeasures. These include launching IC, terminating connections, and—as an extreme measure—initiating a shutdown and rebooting. This alert action happens immediately upon the alert being issued.

TYPES OF ALERTS

There are two types of active alerts in a Matrix node. A *general alert* applies to the entire node, and occurs when an alert is issued by a user on suspicion of intrusion, without knowing who or what is actually exploiting the node. A *restricted alert* is more common, and is directed at a single icon or group of icons. Spiders try to use restricted alerts as much as possible, because they offer a bonus for the node against the target. A general alert may become a restricted alert when the spiders or IC find their intruder.

Generally speaking, alerts caused by the Firewall finding a hacking user or by discovery of the hacker by IC or an agent are restricted alerts, and those caused by glitches or discovery of hacked data or devices are general alerts.

ALERT RESPONSE

A node on alert status has verified an intrusion or other unauthorized activity. Most nodes are programmed to automatically alert security personnel or the owner/user of the device when an alert is triggered. If the node contains security hackers (or if there are any on call), they will be alerted and will come looking for the interloper.

A node on a restricted alert receives a Firewall bonus of +4 against the intruder that triggered the alert. This applies to all tests made by or against the node's Firewall. General alerts do not convey a bonus, but still notify security personnel and take other actions as configured in the node.

The node may also do one of the following, either as chosen by the gamemaster or randomly determined on the Random Alert Response Table, below.

LAUNCH IC PROGRAM

Once an alert is triggered, the node with this response will launch one or more IC programs to attack or interfere with the intruder. The gamemaster determines which programs the IC has loaded, and in what order it uses them. Secure corporate systems will have an entire library of IC to throw at hackers, whereas some goon's cyberarm is only likely to have a single defensive program (if any). If the intruder has been successfully traced, the node may even send IC to launch its own hacking attempts on the intruder's system.

TERMINATE CONNECTION

Once an intruder is identified and a restricted alert issued, a node with this response attempts to sever the hacker's connection by shutting down the port through which he is accessing the node. In order to sever a connection, the node immediately makes a Firewall + System (hacker's Exploit rating, Combat Turn) Extended Test. The system adds a dice pool modifier of +1 for each IC launched following the alert. The hacker's Exploit rating is modified by +2 if he's using a security account, or +4 if he's using an admin account. If the hacker used a passcode and legitimate account to log on, rather than hacking his way in with an exploit program, then the Exploit program does not apply to the test. If the node achieves more hits, it disconnects the hacker. The hacker can attempt to log back on, but the node will be on alert (and may have closed down all outside connections).

SYSTEM REBOOT

As a last resort, many nodes will simply reset their associated device in order to purge an intruder before he wreaks too much havoc. Shutting down and rebooting takes a System + Response (10, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. Anyone accessing the node when it shuts down is logged off, open files are saved, and all active programs are deactivated. The rebooting device has no node until it has completely rebooted.

RANDOM ALERT RESPONSE

1D6 ROLL	RESPONSE
1	Launch IC loaded with Track
2	Launch IC loaded with Attack
3	Launch IC loaded with Blackout or Black Hammer
4	Scramble Spider
5	Terminate Connection
6	Reboot System

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TECHNOMANCERS

The neural pathways and brain chemistry of technomancers are such that they can send, receive, and interpret wireless signals, giving them instant access to the wireless Matrix, no electronics or cyberware required. Though scientists and even magicians are at a loss to explain the exact mechanics of this organic wireless link, the technomancers themselves have no complaints that they are constantly in tune with the Matrix, with the buzz of the dataflow always whispering in their ears. Perhaps significantly, technomancers who are removed from this digital background hum tend to get grumpy and agitated.

To be a technomancer, a character must purchase the Technomancer quality (p. 93) at character creation.

RESONANCE

Resonance is the term technomancers use to describe the ebb and flow of data, and the mystical (or at least mysterious) energy they perceive in the Matrix. Technomancers have a special attribute called Resonance that indicates their capability to access and manipulate the Matrix with their minds alone. A technomancer's Resonance attribute affects all of his Resonance abilities, including his living persona, complex forms, etc.

IMPLANTS AND RESONANCE

As with Magic, cyberware and bioware limit Resonance. To determine the severity of this impediment, take any reductions from Essence due to cyberware and/or bioware implants (p. 68) and round up to the nearest whole number. This amount is deducted from the technomancer's Resonance.

THE LIVING PERSONA

Technomancers have their own version of the persona, known as the *living persona.* It is essentially an organic commlink and sim module in the technomancer's head. This living persona has attributes just like a regular persona, each based on the technomancer's personal attributes and Resonance.

The Living Persona Table defines the ratings for a technomancer's living persona. None of the attributes of this persona may exceed a technomancer's Resonance rating (so a technomancer with Resonance 3 and Willpower 5 has a living persona Firewall of 3, not 5). When technomancers immerse themselves in full VR, they are always considered to be running with hot sim (p. 226); the speed bonus for hot sim is already calculated into their Response and Initiative.

The living persona has no form of organic storage memory whatsoever. If a technomancer wants to download a file, he needs to mentally transfer it to a physical storage device.

TECHNOMANCERS AND CONDITION MONITORS

Since a technomancer's Living Persona is generated by his brain, technomancers do not have a separate Matrix Condition Monitor. Instead, they use their own Stun and Physical Condition Monitors. This means that any damage a technomancer takes in the real world will impede his Matrix abilities, and vice versa. Matrix damage is treated as Stun damage to a technomancer. If a technomancer is knocked unconscious, his Living Persona crashes.

TECHNOMANCER SKILLS

Aside from the Resonance skills that technomancers use to handle sprites (p. 240), technomancers use the same skills common to hackers: Computer, Cybercombat, Data Search, Electronic Warfare, Hacking, Hardware, and Software. The way technomancers use these skills, however, is vastly different from the way non-technomancers use them. Technomancers exercise these skills through mental gymnastics and an intuitive feel for the functioning of the machine world; they do not learn to use electronics so much as they learn to make devices and software do what they want.

As a result, the technomancer versions of these skills are fundamentally different from the standard versions. In game terms, technomancers may never teach these skills to non-technomancers, nor are the technomancer skill versions available as skillsoft. Technomancers may learn the "normal" versions of these skills separately (or use normal skillsoft), but they often find the normal way of doing things to be hopelessly clumsy and backward.

MATRIX PERCEPTION

Due to their resonance with the ebb and flow of data in the Matrix, technomancers receive a +2 dice pool bonus on all Matrix Perception tests.

LIVING PERSONA TABLE

PERSONA ATTRIBUTES	RATING
Firewall	Willpower
Response	Intuition (+1 in full VR)
Signal	Resonance ÷ 2, round up
System	Logic
OTHER RATINGS	**RATING**
Biofeedback Filter	Charisma
VR Matrix Initiative	(Intuition x 2) + 1
VR Matrix Initiative Passes	3

COMPLEX FORMS

Technomancers don't use programs the way hackers do (nothing prevents them from picking up a commlink and going to town if they want that "retro" experience, but few do). Instead, they learn how to manipulate the digital nature of the Matrix with *complex forms,* mental algorithms they create to overcome given obstacles.

Technomancers must learn how to use their complex forms, through meditation, introspection, and practice. During character creation, technomancers pay Build Points to start with complex forms already learned. Afterward, technomancers learn additional complex forms by paying Karma (p. 269).

For simplicity, complex forms are identified by the programs their functions mimic. For each program there is an equivalent complex form, with the exception of Biofeedback Filter, which is part of the living persona. Some programs have different effects when used as a complex form, which are noted in the program's description. Agents, IC, and autosofts may not be learned or used by technomancers.

Any number of a technomancer's complex forms can be used without affecting Response; all of a technomancer's complex forms are considered running unless specifically "deactivated" by the technomancer.

Complex forms act like programs, but they are not programs. They cannot be targeted by actions that only affect programs. Characters without a Resonance attribute cannot use complex forms.

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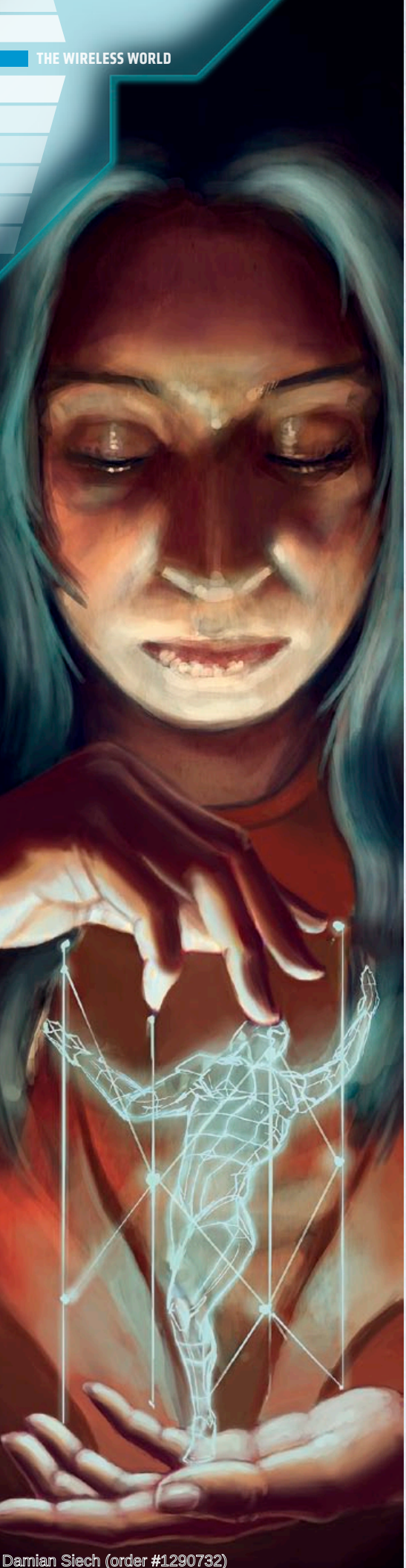

COMPLEX FORM RATINGS

Complex forms have ratings just as programs do, purchased during character creation or bought or improved with Karma during game play. A complex form's base rating may not exceed the technomancer's Resonance.

LEARNING COMPLEX FORMS

Technomancers must learn new complex forms from either another technomancer or a sprite. The cost to learn from a technomancer is usually his Instruction skill x 1,000¥, though deals can be made to trade for favors or other goods. To learn from a sprite, the sprite must be registered, and teaching costs one Aid Study task (p. 241).

The technomancer must succeed in an Intuition + Resonance (5, 1 day) Extended Test. Instructors can make an Instruction Test (p. 134) each day to add extra dice to the learning test. If successful, the technomancer spends 2 Karma and learns the complex form at rating 1; if the test fails, no Karma is spent, but neither is the complex form learned.

The test to improve an existing complex form by 1 point is an Intuition + Resonance (new level x 2, 1 week) Extended Test. An instructor is not necessary to improve a complex form, but one may assist as with learning a new complex form.

THREADING

Technomancers have the ability to improvise Complex Forms that they do not know on the fly, or increase the rating of a complex form they do know. This process is known as *threading*. To thread a complex form, the technomancer makes a Software + Resonance Test. Each hit scored on the test can be used to increase the rating of a complex form by one; if the complex form is created from scratch, start at Rating 0. The technomancer can choose to discard some of the hits he scores. No threaded complex form can have a rating greater than twice the technomancer's Resonance.

Threaded complex forms must be sustained (similar to how magicians sustain spells). Sustaining requires effort on the technomancer's part, so he suffers a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests for each sustained complex form. This modifier does not apply to use of the threaded complex form, but it does apply to all other actions the technomancer makes.

Threading is an exhausting process, and causes Fading (see p. 243).

SPRITES

Technomancers also have the ability to create semi-autonomous entities out of the fabric of the Matrix, digital creatures that answer to the technomancer's beck and call. These *sprites* are viewed as pets or unusual virtual friends by some technomancers, while others view them as spirits of the machine. Hackers and other Matrix specialists are at a loss to explain the true nature of these constructs; to most analyses they seem to be unusual and complex programs that form out of nothing. Sprite icons range from the cute and animated to bizarre and esoteric designs.

In game terms, sprites are very similar to agents (p. 234). Each sprite has a rating that is equivalent to the Pilot rating of an agent and determines its other Matrix attributes. A sprite's Matrix attributes are independent of the attributes of any node in which it is running; it runs on other, inexplicable resources.

COMPILING SPRITES

To create (or some would say call) a sprite, the technomancer first chooses the type of sprite (*Types of Sprites,* p. 242) and the rating he wants for the sprite. He performs a Compile Sprite action, making an Opposed Test between his Compiling + Resonance and the sprite's rating. Each net hit scored by the technomancer allows him to demand one task from the sprite.

This process brings an unregistered sprite to the technomancer. A technomancer can only have one unregistered sprite in his service at a time. If he wants more, he needs to *register* the sprite for longer service (p. 241). Compiling a sprite is a draining task; technomancers suffer the effects of Fading (p. 243) each time they compile one.

SPRITE TASKS

Sprites can be asked to undertake jobs referred to as *tasks.* A task is a continuous service the technomancer asks, cajoles, or demands from the sprite. The number of tasks owed by the sprite depends on the number of net hits gained by the technomancer on his Compiling Test.

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Sprites will perform the tasks they owe for up to 8 hours or until they complete all owed tasks. After 8 hours, sprites fade away to static (some say they return to the Resonance), no matter how many tasks they still owe. The only way to keep a sprite longer is to register it.

Sprites will only take tasks from the technomancer who compiled them, unless another technomancer spoofs an order (*Spoof Command,* p. 232). Sprites are not vulnerable to spoofed orders from hackers; hackers simply can't imprint their orders with Resonance like technomancers can. Like agents, a sprite's datatrail also connects back to the technomancer's datatrail.

Continuous use of a specific power, whether on a single target or a group, counts as only one task. If the parameters of a task are changed, another task is used. Engaging opponents in a single node in cybercombat only counts as one task, regardless of the number of foes involved.

Sprites must remain with the technomancer. Sprites can be temporarily dismissed at any time and called back at a later point (within that 8-hour period); both requiring a Simple Action. Sprites can only access other nodes if they are accompanying or called by the technomancer, or if they are sent on a *remote task.*

REMOTE TASKS

Sprites can be instructed to undertake a remote task in another node, sent to operate away from the technomancer. The sprite can only access public nodes or private nodes for which it has the passcodes or that it can hack with an Exploit complex form. Remote tasks forfeit any further tasks the sprite owes.

SPRITE-TECHNOMANCER LINK

Technomancers maintain a mental link with their sprites as long as they remain online. This link allows them to communicate through the Matrix and send text, images, files, etc. For this reason, a technomancer will know if a sprite is destroyed, as the mental link will cease to function.

If a technomancer loses his connection to the Matrix, he loses contact with his sprites. In this case, the sprites continue to operate. If the technomancer comes back online, he must succeed in a Resonance + Intuition (3) Test to regain the mental link to the sprite.

REGISTERING SPRITES

Registering is the method of compelling long-term tasks from a sprite. To register a sprite, the technomancer must enter into an uninterrupted VR "meditation" session with the sprite, disconnecting himself from the rest of the Matrix. Registering requires a number of hours equal to the rating of the sprite, during which time the sprite remains even after eight hours. At the end of the procedure, the technomancer makes an Opposed Test pitting his Registering + Resonance against the sprite's rating x 2. The technomancer needs at least one net hit to register the sprite; additional net hits are added to the number of tasks the sprite owes. A registered sprite will not fade away after 8 hours, but will remain available to the technomancer until all of its tasks are used. A technomancer may have a number of registered sprites equal to his Charisma. Any attempt to register a sprite beyond this maximum automatically fails.

Registered sprites do not need to remain in the technomancer's presence; they may be placed on standby, fading away into the Resonance until the technomancer calls them back again (taking a Simple Action for each).

Registered sprites may be a drain on the technomancer's mental resources, if the gamemaster chooses, in the same way that bound spirits might affect a magician (*Bound Spirits,* p. 187).

Each 8 hour period of continuous use of a power uses up one task.

In addition to the standard tasks for which a sprite can be used, registered sprites can perform the following tasks:

Remote Tasks: Registered sprites conduct remote tasks just like unregistered sprites, but the technomancer does not lose any further owed tasks and the sprite does not dissipate after 8 hours and so can continue on for some time. A registered sprite that still owes tasks will go on standby when it finishes its remote task, unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Loaned Tasks: A registered sprite can be ordered to obey the orders of another character (technomancer or not). The technomancer effectively grants one or more of the owed tasks to the other character. Naturally, a non-technomancer cannot use a sprite to learn, thread, or sustain complex forms, but any other task may be demanded from the sprite. Sprites loaned out to others will still obey the technomancer over the other character.

Assist Operation: A registered sprite can add its rating to any single complex form used by the technomancer. This assistance lasts for a maximum number of Combat Turns equal to the sprite's rating; a Rating 3 sprite, for example, can boost the rating of the technomancer's Armor complex form by 3, for a maximum of 3 Combat Turns per task.

Sustain Complex Form: Any complex form threaded by a technomancer may be sustained by a registered sprite instead, so that the technomancer does not suffer the –2 sustaining modifier. One task is used up for each period equal to the sprite's rating in Combat Turns that it sustains the complex form. A Rating 4 sprite that owes two tasks, for example, can only sustain a threaded complex form for 8 Combat Turns. The technomancer can take over sustaining the complex form as the sprite finishes this task (or at any time). If the sprite is destroyed (as in cybercombat or by being decompiled), the sustained complex form ends.

Aid Study: Registered sprites can provide extra dice to help the technomancer learn new complex forms at the cost of one task. The sprite adds its rating in dice to the Extended Learning Test (p. 134).

RE-REGISTERING

A technomancer can re-register a registered sprite, repeating the procedure in order to obtain additional tasks from the sprite. The process is the same, with each hit adding another owed task.

DECOMPILING SPRITES

A technomancer can attempt to decompile a sprite (whether his or not), converting it back to the bits and bytes from which it was formed. Decompiling is an Opposed Test. The technomancer rolls Resonance + Decompiling versus the targets sprite's rating (plus its compiler's Resonance if registered). If the decompiling technomancer wins, reduce the tasks owed by the sprite (including those it is currently completing) by 1 per net hit. If the sprite's tasks are reduced to 0, it will dissipate on its next action. Any technomancer on hand may attempt to compile it again before it leaves, bringing it back under their control.

Whether he wins or loses, the decompiling technomancer must resist Fading as if he had compiled the sprite.

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TYPES OF SPRITES

Sprites are sentient Matrix entities that come in several different forms. Each sprite has the powers below as appropriate to its type. A sprite has one optional complex form for every 3 full rating points, chosen by the technomancer when the sprite is compiled. All skills and complex forms are possessed at a rating equal to the sprite's rating.

Technomancers may compile any of the five types of sprites noted below.

COURIER SPRITE

These sprites are messengers and trackers, good for securely conveying important data through the Matrix.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP	Edge
R	R + 1	R + 1	R x 3	3	R
Skills: Computer, Data Search, Hacking					
Complex Forms: Analyze, Edit, Encrypt, Stealth, Track					
Powers: Cookie, Hash					
Optional CFs: Browse, Command, Decrypt, Exploit, Scan					

CRACK SPRITE

Crack sprites are masters at finding programming flaws and exploits. They are useful as hacking aids.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP	Edge
R	R + 1	R	R x 3	3	R
Skills: Computer, Electronic Warfare, Hacking					
Complex Forms: Analyze, Exploit, Stealth					
Powers: Suppression					
Optional CFs: Decrypt, Defuse, Edit, Scan, Spoof					

DATA SPRITE

Data sprites excel at finding and manipulating information. They make excellent searchbots and librarians.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP	Edge
R	R	R – 2	R x 2	3	R
Skills: Computer, Data Search, Electronic Warfare					
Complex Forms: Analyze, Browse, Edit, Decrypt					
Powers: Steganography, Watermark					
Optional CFs: Defuse, Encrypt, Sniffer, Stealth, any linguasoft (p. 330)					

FAULT SPRITE

Fault sprites are designed to inject code errors and cause programs to fail.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP	Edge
R	R + 2	R + 1	R x 3	3	R
Skills: Computer, Cybercombat, Hacking					
Complex Forms: Analyze, Armor, Attack, Stealth					
Powers: Electron Storm					
Optional CFs: Black Hammer, Blackout, Exploit, Medic					

MACHINE SPRITE

Machine sprites are adept at manipulating devices. Of all sprites, they are the most likely to actually interact with the physical world via a device.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP	Edge
R	R	R + 2	R x 2	3	R
Skills: Computer, Electronic Warfare, Hardware					
Complex Forms: Analyze, Command					
Powers: Diagnostics, Gremlins, Stability					
Optional CFs: Decrypt, Edit, Medic, any autosoft (p. 246)					

SPRITE POWERS

The following powers are available only to sprites. Each power is specific to a type of sprite, as listed in the sprite description.

COOKIE

A sprite uses its cookie power to "tag" a target icon with a hidden piece of code that can be used to track the icon's Matrix activities. The sprite must successfully beat the target in an Opposed Test between the sprite's rating x 2 vs. the target's Firewall + Stealth. If the sprite succeeds, the cookie code is embedded in the icon and will log every place the icon goes and everything the icon does, for example each node the icon accesses, the details of any communications the icon engages in (who with and when, but not the actual contents), any programs the icon launches/interacts with, etc. Use the net hits to benchmark the depth of the data the cookie accumulates (1 hit providing a bare outline, 4 or more a detailed report). The cookie will end at a period pre-determined by the sprite when it is placed, immediately transferring the accumulated data to the sprite (who may then turn it over to the technomancer).

Cookies may be detected with a Matrix Perception (4) Test and removed with a Computer + Edit (2) Test (with or without Resonance) once identified.

DIAGNOSTICS

The Diagnostics power allows the sprite to evaluate the inner workings of an electronic device. The sprite must be present in the node of the device in question. The sprite can then assist someone using or repairing the device with a Teamwork Test. Make a sprite rating x 2 test; each hit adds 1 die to the character's test to use or repair the item. The maximum dice bonus the character can recieve from the teamwork test is equal to that character's skill.

ELECTRON STORM

This attack allows the sprite to engulf a target icon in a sustained barrage of corrupting signals. When the sprite successfully hits the target in cybercombat, it swallows the target in a hail of digital pulses. With the first attack and on each of the sprite's action phases it inflicts (rating) DV Matrix damage with an AP of –2, resisted as normal. While engulfed, the target suffers a –2 dice pool modifier on all Matrix actions. The target may break free of the electron storm by taking a Complex Action and beating the sprite in an Opposed Response x 2 Test.

GREMLINS

This power causes a device to mysteriously malfunction, or operate in some (detrimental) manner outside of its usual parameters. The sprite must be in the device's node, or in another node to which the device is subscribed. Make an Opposed Test between the sprite's rating x 2 and

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the device's System + Firewall. If the sprite succeeds, the device suffers a glitch (p. 62). The gamemaster chooses a malfunction appropriate to the device and situation, such as a jammed control, a looped signal, or a faulty reading. If the sprite scores 4 net hits, treat it as a critical glitch—the device crashes, burns out, or jolts its user with an electrical shock.

If used against a drone or vehicle, this power can force the driver to make a Crash Test. The sprite's rating serves as a negative dice pool modifier to the test.

HASH

The Hash power allows the sprite to temporarily encrypt a file with a unique Resonance algorithm, in such a way that only the sprite can decrypt it. The sprite must remain with the hashed file; if it leaves, the file reverts to normal. If the sprite is destroyed, the hashed file is permanently corrupted and becomes worthless.

STEGANOGRAPHY

The sprite can conceal a file (or piece of data) within another file in such a way as to make it invisible to searches and data mining. Data obfuscated this way is often hidden inside a file of seemingly irrelevant information.

Concealed files cannot be found by a standard data search. The only way to find the hidden file is with a Matrix Perception (4) Test; even the sprite must make this test in order to find and extract the file.

STABILITY

A sprite can use this power on the node it is in, or on any particular device, program, or icon. Stability prevents normal malfunctions or accidents from afflicting the target (including both standard glitches and those induced by the Gremlins or Accident powers). Stability also reduces a critical glitch to a standard glitch.

SUPPRESSION

The sprite has an innate ability to confuse firewalls that detect the sprite engaging in illegitimate activity. Any time the sprite triggers an alert (p. 238), the alert is delayed for (rating ÷ 2, round up) Combat Turns.

WATERMARK

The sprite can "tag" an icon or node with an invisible marking that only Resonance-driven entities can see, just like a Matrix signature. This allows the sprite to secretly leave messages within the Matrix or otherwise mark Matrix objects. A sprite can "overwrite" a watermark with a new one.

MATRIX SIGNATURES

Any uses of Resonance abilities leave a Matrix signature on anything they affect, including the node in which they are performed. This signature is only detectable by other Resonance beings (technomancers and sprites) with a Matrix Perception (3) Test. This Matrix signature is a digital "fingerprint" of the technomancer or sprite that created it. Signatures last for a number of hours equal to the rating of the attribute used (a technomancer's complex form rating or Resonance, or a sprite's rating). A signature can be recognized if seen again (perhaps requiring a memory test, p. 139). With five or more hits, the technomancer or sprite also gets an impression of what complex form or type of spirit created the signature.

A technomancer or sprite may take a number of Complex Actions equal to the rating of a Matrix signature to erase it completely.

FADING

Fading is the mental stress that occurs when a technomancer pushes his abilities. It happens when he threads a complex form (p. 239) or compiles, decompiles, or registers a sprite (p. 241). In game terms, Fading is very similar to the Drain that magicians suffer for their magical activities. Fading is Stun damage unless otherwise noted. The technomancer makes a Fading Resistance Test using Willpower + Resonance. Each hit scored reduces the damage by 1 box.

For threading, the Fading DV equals the hits used for rating points. If the final rating of the threaded complex form exceeds the technomancer's Resonance, the damage is Physical rather than Stun.

For compiling, decompiling, or registering a sprite, the Fading DV equals twice the hits (not net hits) generated by the sprite on the Opposed Test. This applies whether the attempt is successful or not. If the sprite's rating is greater than the technomancer's Resonance, the damage is Physical rather than Stun.

example

Netcat threaded a complex form, scoring 4 hits and raising it from 4 to 8. Netcat's Resonance is 5, so she faces Fading equal to 4P. She rolls her Willpower 4 + Resonance 5 (9 dice) and gets 3 hits, so she takes 1 box of Physical damage.

SUBMERSION

Submersion strengthens the link between the technomancer and the Resonance. Similar to an Awakened character's initiation, submersion is a very personalized and ego-wrenching experience, a process of growth and awareness, a chance for the technomancer to better attune himself to the machine world. Submersion grants the technomancer greater abilities known as echoes, grants access to the mysterious Resonance realms hidden within the Matrix, and allows him to raise his Resonance attribute beyond its natural maximum of 6.

Submersion is measured in grades, beginning with Grade 1 and increasing. Submersion has a Karma cost equal to 10 + (Grade x 3). A technomancer's grade cannot exceed his Resonance attribute; if Resonance is ever reduced below the submersion grade, that level of submersion is lost.

INCREASED RESONANCE

A technomancer's natural maximum for the Resonance attribute is 6 + his grade of initiation. He will still have to pay normally to increase his Resonance attribute.

ACCESS TO THE RESONANCE REALMS

Upon the technomancer's first submersion, he finds his way to the secret resonance realms tucked away in the folds and corners of the Matrix. Steeped in rumor and speculation, these realms are known only to submersed technomancers—and perhaps sprites and other creatures of computer consciousness. Though they are accessed by secret pathways within the Matrix, in truth no one is sure exactly where these realms lie. More information can be found on p. 172, *Unwired*.

ECHOES

A technomancer can choose one of the following echoes at each grade of submersion (including the first). Unless otherwise noted, no power may be chosen more than once.

- **Firewall Upgrade:** The Firewall rating of the technomancer's living persona increases by 1. This echo may be taken more than once (at different grades), up to 3 times.
- **NeuroFilter:** The Biofeedback Filter rating of the technomancer's living persona increases by 1. This echo may be taken more than once (at different grades), up to 3 times.

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- **Overclocking:** The technomancer accelerates his living persona's system clock, allowing him to act more quickly within the Matrix. This grants the technomancer + 1 to his Response (also increasing his Matrix Initiative), and grants him an additional Initiative Pass while operating in full-sim VR.
- **Resonance Link:** This echo establishes a low-level, one-way empathic link with another technomancer of the character's choice. As long as both characters are meshed, the technomancer can discern the dominant mood and emotions of the linked companion. He knows whenever the linked companion is under attack or duress, feeling pain, or otherwise endangered online. The resonance link works in only one direction (the linked companion does not receive empathic signals), but two technomancers may both take the echo with each other in mind to create a "two-way" link.
- **System Upgrade:** The System rating of the technomancer's living persona increases by 1. This echo may be taken more than once (at different grades), up to 3 times.

RIGGING

Hackers (and technomancers) who focus on rigging drones and vehicles tend to favor different gear and programs than regular system hackers. Riggers do not need to focus on tweaking their commlink into a hacking machine *par excellence,* though good Matrix attributes are useful both offensively and defensively. Riggers also tend to concentrate less on hacking utilities, preferring instead to focus on a good Signal strength and good Scan, Command, Encrypt, and Sniffer programs, and of course, plenty of drones with amped Matrix attributes of their own. For skills, riggers tend to stress Hacking and Software less than Electronic Warfare, Hardware, and various Pilot and Mechanic skills.

DRONES

Nearly any kind of vehicle—matchbox-sized cars, miniature rotorcraft, ground patrol vehicles the size of a large dog, even modified sports cars—may serve as drones. The key difference that sets drones apart from ordinary vehicles is that they are intended to be independent units, either acting autonomously or controlled remotely by the rigger. The rules in this section apply to drones as well as any device controlled by a user (e.g., vehicles, security systems, and even coffee makers).

Drones (and only drones) are incapable of carrying passengers and are instead fitted with an integral rigger adaptation (p. 348). Passenger vehicles or larger passenger drones do not, but can have the equipment installed, as can other devices. Rigger adaptation allows anyone in VR to *jump in* to a rigger-adapted device and offers bonuses to any rigger with an implanted control rig (p. 338).

Drones are devices, and like all devices each has its own node in the Matrix. Some forms of control and rigging actions (p. 245) require you to be subscribed to this node in order to function, and some do not; this will be specified in the description of the control method or action.

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PILOT PROGRAMS

Drones, vehicles, and some other (semi-)autonomous devices have a special System program called a *Pilot program*. Similar to an agent's Pilot program, Pilot programs are a special type of OS featuring semi-autonomous decision-making algorithms and special programming specific to the device on which it is installed. Pilot is for devices that must be able to assess situations, make decisions, adapt, and possibly even function independently of a user, sometimes for extended periods. The higher the Pilot rating, the "smarter" it is.

A Pilot program is basically a System program with extra features, and so is used whenever the drone's System rating would be. It also stands for a drone's "Mental attributes" when called for (usually Intuition and Logic, and sometimes Willpower).

Pilots are not bright, and are often called "dog-brains," a term that reflects their intelligence level. When faced with an unexpected or novel situation, a drone makes a Pilot + Response Test with a threshold set by the gamemaster to see if its "common sense" prevails.

DRONE PERCEPTION

When observing its (physical) surroundings, a drone uses its Sensor rating (plus the rating of its Clearsight autosoft, if it is running one). When a rigger perceives the world through a drone's "eyes," he uses his Perception skill and the drone's Sensor rating rather than his own Intuition for the dice pool.

DRONE INITIATIVE

Like any program, the drone's Pilot acts at digital speeds. Drone Initiative equals Pilot rating + Response, and they receive two extra Initiative Passes (three total). When a rigger has jumped into the drone, it acts on the rigger's Initiative instead. If a rigger jumps out of a drone, it acts with the same Initiative Score for the remainder of the Combat Turn.

CONTROLLING DRONES

There are three ways to control a drone, vehicle, or other device. You may send it commands using plain language and letting its Pilot program execute the instructions; commands are usually sent via the Matrix, but they may also be verbal, by hand signal, etc. You may instead directly control the device with the Command program, overriding its Pilot and moving it around by remote control. You may also use VR to jump in, which allows you to *be* the device through simsense and direct communication with your senses and motor cortex.

ISSUING COMMANDS

You give a short command to the drone or other device with the Issuing Command action (p. 245). The drone attempts to execute those orders autonomously on its own action phase. You need to be able to communicate with the drone, via the Matrix for example, but do not need to be subscribed to the drone.

As a general rule, the gamemaster can assume that the sophisticated robotic brain of a drone understands any commands that are issued to it, as long as these commands are within the device's usual range of function. An MCT-Nissan Roto-drone, for example, will understand commands regarding flight paths, tracking targets, using sensors, and so forth. If ordered to bump a ganger off his motorbike or stop a rampaging spirit, however, the Pilot will likely fail to understand. Pilots are computer programs, and so take their commands literally—sometimes too literally. If the gamemaster feels that a command falls within a gray area or is simply too convoluted, he can roll a secret Pilot + Response Test for the Pilot to see how well it comprehends the order, basing the threshold on an appropriate difficulty level.

An autosoft can be used to expand the definition of a drone's "function" in terms of what commands it can understand. For example, a welding drone would normally be confused by orders to use its torch to attack a target, but the same drone running a Targeting (Welding Torch) program would have no trouble comprehending the command.

REMOTE CONTROL

You control a device by running the Command program. You may control only one drone at a time, and must have an active subscription to that drone. You use your Command rating in place of the attribute for the dice pool for any action you take (except for Perception Tests, which use the drone's Sensor rating in place of your Perception).

When using this method, you use a set of "controls" that exist in either AR or VR (as appropriate). This method of control is a Matrix action. Controlling a drone is a Complex Action, even if the drone would be performing a Simple Action such as firing a semi-automatic weapon or using the Take Aim action.

Unless already executing an ongoing action on the rigger's behalf, a remote controlled drone acts only when it receives commands (ie. on the rigger's action).

JUMPING IN

You "jump into" a drone via full VR. This requires a subscription to the drone, vehicle, or device and takes a Simple Action. When jumped in, the rigger essentially "becomes" the drone, perceiving through its sensors and operating it as if it were his own body. A rigger who has jumped into a drone can issue commands to other drones, but cannot control them remotely.

A drone controlled in this manner acts on the rigger's Initiative—the rigger and the drone are treated as a single unit. Any tests are made using the rigger's skills and the drone's attributes (substituting Response for Agility and Reaction and Sensor for Intuition).

Hot sim benefits the rigger as much as the hacker. All actions by a rigger who has jumped into a drone (or other device) are considered Matrix actions, and receive the benefit of the +2 bonus due to hot sim VR use. This advantage cuts both ways: when a jump-piloted drone takes damage, the rigger operating with hot sim also suffers biofeed-

BEING THE MACHINE

When you jump into a drone, you become the drone. You see with the drone's sensors and move as its body. You can feel the road cruising beneath you or the air whistling around you. Your sense of balance and grace is applied to the drone, and together you become something greater than the fusion of man and machine.

In hot sim, the experience is even more intense. Data that would normally have been translated as something visual or auditory becomes gut instinct and intuitive feelings. Your every thought is translated to the drone, giving the you-drone an unmatchable precision. Drones under hot-sim jumped-in control have been described as fluid and even expressive.

Anyone can use VR to jump into a drone. A sim module communicates the appropriate information to the user's brain, but being jumped in is a complicated matter. Sensory input is easy enough to translate, but the machine must decipher movement and positioning signals and apply them to a motor cortex that has had a lifetime of practice with a biological body. For this, a control rig is far more efficient, reflected in the +2 bonus a rigger receives for doing just about anything while jumped into a device.

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back through his motor cortex. In hot sim, each time the drone suffers damage, the rigger must also resist half that amount (round up) in Stun damage with a Willpower + Biofeedback Filter Test; if the drone is destroyed, the rigger is dumped from the Matrix (as with jacking out) and immediately suffers the effects of dumpshock (p. 237).

RIGGING SECURITY SYSTEMS AND OTHER DEVICES

It is possible for non-drones, such as security devices like cameras, maglock doors, tripwires, gun emplacements, or sensors, to have a rigger adaptation installed. This allows riggers to jump into the devices and control them as he would a drone. In many buildings, all security devices are subscribed to a central node on which a spider can jump into the entire security system. Security riggers feel the opening of doors as light touches on their skin, the tripping of alarm sensors as a buzz in their fingers or an itch, and the building's alarm literally goes off in their heads.

AUTOSOFT PROGRAMS

Autosofts are specialized programs that assist Pilot programs in undertaking tasks that their basic Pilot programming does not cover. Just because you've added a machine gun to a recon drone, for example, does not mean that the drone knows how to identify, acquire, and shoot at targets. Autosofts expand or improve a drone's capabilities and adds the autosoft's functionality to its own, which allows it to correctly interpret a greater range of commands. In essence, autosofts provide drones with specific skills so that they may make the appropriate skill tests. The following are the basic autosofts available; more autosofts are available on p. 112, *Unwired*.

CLEARSIGHT

Clearsight autosofts improve the Pilot's cognitive abilities, allowing it to better analyze and judge sensory input. A drone with this autosoft rolls Sensor + Clearsight when perceiving the world around it.

DEFENSE

This program enables the drone to identify, guard against, and even dodge physical attacks made against it. A drone equipped with a Defense autosoft can parry against melee attacks (using Defense + Pilot) and use full defense (p. 160) against an incoming attack.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

This provides the drone with an in-depth knowledge of radio communications and the use of electronic warfare against them. A Pilot with this autosoft can intercept, decrypt, jam signals, and take on other actions made possible by the Electronic Warfare skill (p. 227).

MANEUVER (VEHICLE TYPE)

This is actually a family of autosofts, each for a specific type of vehicle (e.g., ground vehicles, anthroform vehicles, etc.). Maneuver autosofts are equivalent to vehicle skills. They help a Pilot maneuver its vehicle. They contain a comprehensive guide to a drone's particular specs, allowing the Pilot to achieve optimal performance and control the vehicle to the limits of its capabilities. A drone with this autosoft uses Pilot + Maneuver for Vehicle Tests (p. 168).

TARGETING (SPECIFIC WEAPON)

Each Targeting autosoft mimics a particular weapon attack skill, such as Targeting (Pistols) or Targeting (Longarms). This program gives the drone "knowledge" about the use of the appropriate weapon. A drone uses Pilot + Targeting for attacks.

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

The rigger tends to work with multiple drones by the seat of her pants: jumping into one here, sending groups there, managing a fluid situation with disperse assets. To do this effectively, she needs to be able to communicate with her drones. The airwaves are vital to the rigger, and control of them can mean the difference between victory and an impromptu scrapyard.

SIGNAL RANGE

You can connect to your drones anywhere in the Matrix, but it is much safer if you can make a direct link with it. This means that your drones must remain within mutual Signal range of yourself and possibly one another if you are using a tacnet. A high Signal rating also makes your devices less susceptible to jamming.

SCANNING AND SNIFFING

You cannot affect a node you cannot find. In electronic warfare, it is imperative that you know what devices are in the area and what their capabilities are. Once the jammer is activated, you might not be able to find it again. Capturing wireless traffic (p. 229) is another good way to find out what devices are in the vicinity; by analyzing the traffic, you can deduce what nodes are linked together and what their controller wants them to do.

ECM AND ECCM

One of the easiest ways to control the radio frequencies of an operational zone is through the use of jamming. Jammers can be configured to allow your signals through while blocking others. The more powerful the jamming device, the better.

Electronic counter-countermeasures, or ECCM, can be used to filter out the jamming and allow your devices to be used again. Of course, ECCM is a program, and your drones suffer when they run too many programs at once. If you find yourself pressed for processor space, another form of electronic counter-countermeasures is to disable the jamming device. This can be done physically by destroying or damaging the jammer, or virtually by hacking or spoofing the device.

ENCRYPTION

One way to protect your communications is by encrypting it. This will only delay an attacker, but might delay him long enough.

HACKING AND SPOOFING

Another way to fight a rigger is to take control of her drones. Hacking a drone can give you full control over it. The drawback to hacking is that it takes time. Spoofing is faster, but limited in what you can do. Spoofing also requires that you have the rigger's access ID, which may necessitate the Track program if she is in a remote location. Still, a single command, such as "unload your weapon" or "reboot" can take a drone out of a fight.

Such hijacking attempts against your drones can be foiled by jumping into a device. A jumped-in rigger overrides any other control of the drone, including by its Pilot.

OTHER OPTIONS

This book offers basic rules for conducting electronic warfare, but *Shadowrun* offers more options for the electromagnetic battlefield, listed under Electronic Warfare References.

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COMMON RIGGER/DRONE TESTS

ACTION	JUMPED-IN RIGGER DICE POOL	AUTONOMOUS DRONE DICE POOL	REMOTE-CONTROLLED DICE POOL
Initiative	as rigger	Pilot + Response	as rigger
Attack	Sensor + Gunnery	Pilot + Targeting	Command + Gunnery
Melee Defense	Response + Melee skill	Pilot + Defense	Command + Melee skill
Ranged Defense	Response	Response	Command
Full Defense	as above + Dodge	as above + Defense	as above + Dodge
Damage Resistance	Body + Armor	Body + Armor	Body + Armor
Infiltration	Response + Infiltration	Pilot + Covert Ops	Command + Infiltration
Maneuvering	Response + Vehicle skill	Pilot + Maneuver	Command + Vehicle skill
Perception	Sensor + Perception	Sensor + Clearsight	Sensor + Perception

ELECTRONIC WARFARE REFERENCES

Amplification	p. 145, *Unwired*
Directional Antenna	p. 199, *Unwired*
EMP	p. 105, *Unwired*
EMP Grenade	p. 57, *Arsenal*
E-Sensing	p. 146, *Unwired*
Expendable Jammer	p. 57, *Arsenal*
Fiberoptic Cable	p. 199, *Unwired*
Hardening	p. 58, *Arsenal*
HERF Gun	p. 57, *Arsenal*
Jamming on the Fly	p. 105, *Unwired*
Laser Link	p. 199, *Unwired*
Living ECM	p. 146, *Unwired*
Mesh Tags	p. 199, *Unwired*
Microwave Link	p. 199, *Unwired*
Nonstandard Wireless Link	p. 196, *Unwired*
Repeater Drone	p. 198, *Unwired*
Skinlink	p. 147, *Unwired*
Skinweb Array	p. 200, *Unwired*
Smart Jammer	p. 58, *Arsenal*
Tactical Software	p. 124, *Unwired*

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH RIGGING

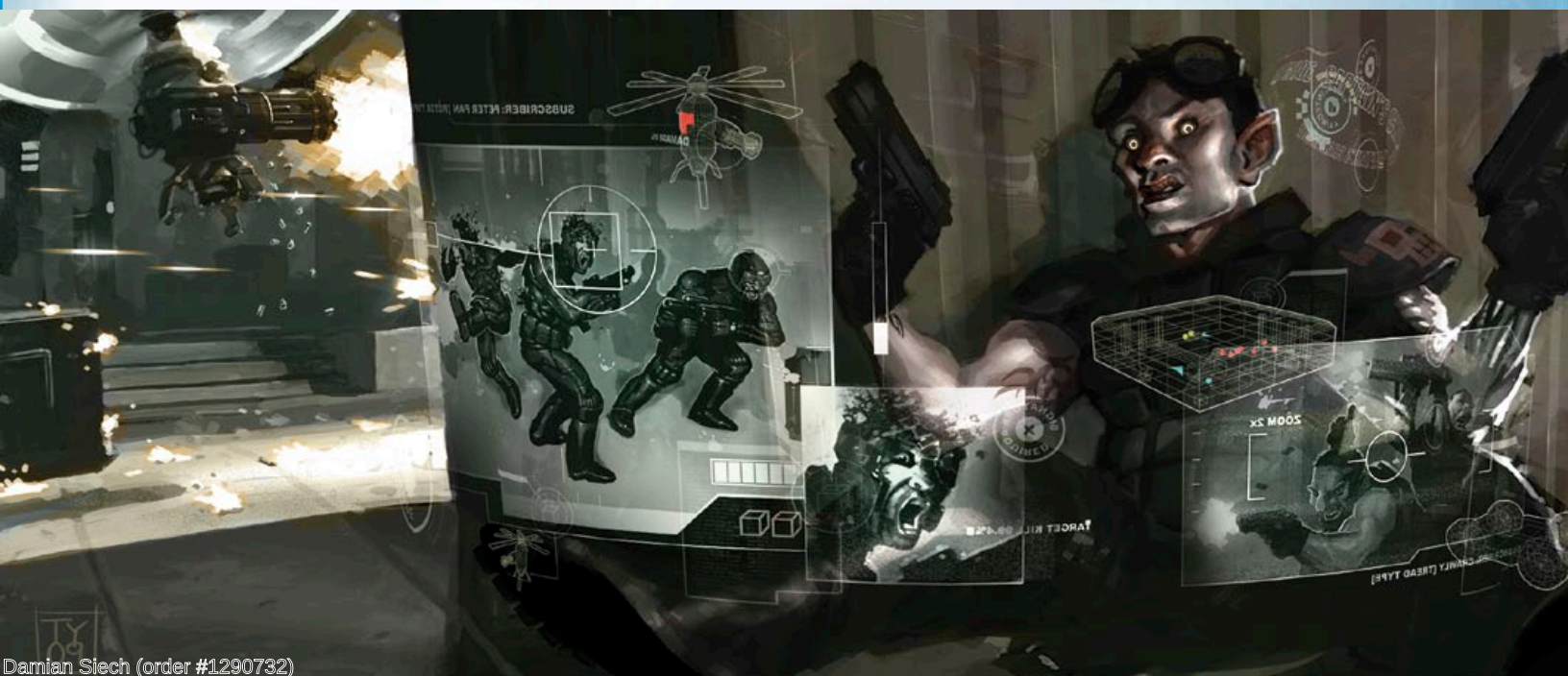
Keeping track of what dice pools you should be using when attempting something while rigging can be daunting given the variety of control options available.

Generally the chosen method of control and whether or not it is a human at the helm or the drone's Pilot is what determines the basic dice pools involved. The handy Common Rigger/Drone Tests Table describes the most common dice pools used in a number of typical rigging and piloting actions, whether the vehicle is being controlled by its Pilot software, a "jumped in" rigger, or it is being remote controlled.

All such rigging dice pools are subject, as always, to appropriate modifiers, which are in turn described in the preceding rules and relevant sections of other chapters. Notably *Vehicle Combat* (p. 157), in the *Combat* chapter, describes the various threshold and dice pool modifiers that apply to piloting and maneuvering, attack and defense, as well as basic sensor and targeting tests for both unaugmented drivers and riggers. Of particular importance are the Vehicle Test Threshold Table (p. 168) and the Terrain Test Table (p. 169).

Information on specific sensors, their use, and the tests involved, can be found in the *Street Gear* chapter (p. 333).

Additional rigger tricks are introduced in *Unwired,* the advanced Matrix book and the vehicle customization rules in the gear book *Arsenal* open up even more options and gimmicks for rigger characters to explore.



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HAT TRICK

I take another drag on the cancer stick and check my email. It's been a week since I've seen any work, and I'm running low on nuyen. Lilly, my girlfriend, gets annoyed when I sponge off her tips from the bar. Another week without a job, and she's going to kill me.

My Hermes Ikon throws up messages on my AR display, mostly bills and junk mail from my fake SIN. I pull a credstick from my pocket and wave it like a black wand over the commlink. I stare at the flashing 35¥ and try to work out how many caffeinated drinks and soygurts I can eke out of it. Not many.

"Barry? There's a message for you," says a feminine, Asian face projecting from my commlink. It takes me a moment to recognize the new agent program I installed at my office. I'm used to being called Fedora. Stupid agent. I leave myself a reminder to adjust the program.

"What's the message?"

"Mrs. Boggard wants to see you tomorrow, 10 A.M., at her house."

"What's the job?"

The agent offers its programmed-personality response, scrunching its face and asking, "What am I, your secretary?" I make another note about adjusting it.

"Fine, confirm the appointment."

It's late, so I grab a bottle of beer on the way to my office. I call it my office because it's a commercial suite on the edge of Puyallup, but it's also where I hang my hat, heat my soy, and wash my socks. Maybe it's not the best location, but at least no one bothers me there.

"Hey Fedora, late night?" says a gravelly voice.

I look up from locking the doors of my POS 5000. It's only Gears, an ork squatter at my building. Sort of the night watchman, too. Between him and the local turf gang, I don't have to invest much in security. Gears helped fix my soy machine, and he got my POS to pass DMV regulations. Smart guy. I guess he just doesn't want to work in a cubicle. "Hey, Gears. Anything new?"

"Oh ..." he mumbles, looking into the drone cart following behind him. He probably built it himself. "I got a few optical sensors and a liter of fuel. You rich yet?"

"Not yet. I'll tell you when I am. 'Night, Gears." I head upstairs to my office. Gears disappears into the parking garage, where he presumably has some nest of broken drones.

I open the maglock to my office and the lights come on automatically. It's a depressing sight. There's a desk cluttered with surveillance equipment and other tools of my trade. There's a futon couch piled with laundry. Cabinet

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by Adam Large

shelves make a kitchen. A commode in the closet makes a bathroom. Not the sort of place to impress a girlfriend.

▼

It rains the next morning. The acrid smell of acid eating away at the street litter does more to wake me up than my imitation coffee. Walking to the car, I find everything still intact. I bring up my office agent to tell the car the destination. The car accelerates from the office on autopilot while I catch a few more Zs. I love autopilot.

The car pulls up to the curb in Everett. I'm dimly aware of the rain pattering against the windshield and the autopilot's quiet announcement, "We have arrived." Of course I ignore it, so it repeats, "We have arrived." Moments pass before a light blinks on the dashboard, "Initiating level 1 wake-up call."

The electric shock in my ass and the rap blaring in my commlink do the trick. The autopilot repeats its announcement. It sounds smug. I rub my backside and wonder why I ever let Gears talk me into configuring my car that way. I hate autopilot.

My focus moves to the house. It's a higher class of home than I'm usually invited to, and I'm surprised that the community rent-a-cops let my cheap-ass car devalue the neighborhood.

I walk up to the gate and press the buzzer. The gate interrogates my commlink, "State your business."

"It's Detective Durant; I'm expected."

The gate opens and I walk briskly up to the house. A sharply dressed elf greets me at the door. "Mr. Durant, please come this way."

We walk down the hall to a conservatory. Rain splashes against the windows outside, and water streaming over the panes distorts the view of the garden. A stunning blonde in a white dress waits in a chair, watching the rain. She motions me to be seated. I sit.

"Mrs. Boggard?" I break the silence.

"Thanks for coming." She smiles weakly, but politely. "The police have already closed their investigation, but I'm not satisfied."

"Start from the beginning."

She still hasn't looked at me. "Three days ago, my husband had a nightmare about being chased. He couldn't sleep after that, so he retired to his study. I found him there in the morning, dead."

"What did the police say?"

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"The Lone Star detective said it was a heart attack. I don't believe it. I didn't tell the police this, but Humphrey had a statue on his desk. It's missing."

"Why didn't you tell the police?"

"Because he didn't buy it—not legally. It was something he acquired just before he died, on a business trip to L.A. He said it was a private purchase, but I know he got it on the black market."

"Describe the statue?"

"A falcon made of jade, maybe thirty centimeters tall."

"Are you putting me on?" My voice sounds harsh and unprofessional, even to me, but it gets her attention. She gapes at me. I elaborate, "Humphrey Boggard? A falcon statue? *Casablanca,* right? I watch late-night trids."

"I'm not joking, Mr. Durant." Her voice shakes with anger, or grief, or both. "I believe my husband was murdered for that statue, and that whoever killed him still has it. Please find them for me."

I give her a long, hard stare, and name a price. She accepts it.

The elf butler shows me out into the rain again, after transferring images of Boggard and the falcon statue to my commlink. The Case of Mr. Boggard's Jade Falcon ... I keep thinking that this must be an elaborate practical joke, but the money's real enough. Why not play along.

My first stop is a troll street dealer called Nix. He's a part-time fixer for me. If anyone's been asking about a jade falcon or Mr. Boggard, Nix should know about it. I tell the autopilot to head for Nix's alley downtown. While it drives, I work some other networks.

I wish I knew someone—anyone—in L.A., but I have to settle for the next best thing: I log on to the Matrix and hack my way through several encrypted nodes to the ShadowSEA, figuring there's at least a chance that someone on the underground network knows something useful. Maybe Boggard paid some runner to bring it through customs. I post my query and hope for the best.

My car parks at a metered spot near Nix's alley. I get out and walk through downtown Seattle. There aren't many people out in this weather, and the few that are keep to themselves, hurrying through the rain. The smog and other generated oxides aggravate the sinuses, encouraging people to stay indoors with artificial air and augmented weather programs. While they deny reality, I just upgrade with a few filters.

I round a corner and enter an alley bazaar. Tents made of plastic sheeting and duct tape keep the goods dry, while street vendors hawk their wares to soggy bargain-hunters. I catch the eye of a grizzled man behind a folding table, interrupting his negotiations with a cybered dwarf. He winks at me and holds up a hand in front of his customer, "Excuse me a second. Hey Fed, looking for work?"

"Not this time, Mac. I just have some questions. Is he in?"

"Sure. I hope your cred is good. I've heard you've been luggage to Lilly lately."

"Fuck you, Mac."

Mac just laughs and a concealed door opens behind him. I walk on through.

The dimly lit room on the other side smells like burnt plastic, but it's dry and—after the door shuts out the street noise—quiet. Crates are stacked around the walls, some of them open and full of the goods that Mac is pushing outside. A misshapen troll sits on an oversize, overstuffed armchair in the middle of the room. Black hair flows over his shoulders in oily curls.

"So, Fed," Nix says in a deep bass voice as he switches off his commlink, effectively ending whatever AR program he'd been running, "What are you looking for?"

"I have a client looking for a statue of a falcon, made of jade. I'm wondering whether anyone else might be looking to buy or sell it."

"Ah, you're lucky, Fed. I did hear something about that. No need for payment," he interrupts me reaching for my credstick. "Just come by next week. I need some muscle for a job."

Nix's grin makes me uneasy, but he knows what I'm good at. He means smart muscle that will shoot second, not first. "Sure, Nix."

"Some razorboy was trying to pawn the thing. Sounded like a bad B&E job. Check with Darius; he deals with more eccentric stuff like that."

Nix's intel more or less confirms my assumption that someone would be selling the thing. As a possible buyer, Darius would have been next on my list. "What about that razorboy? Do you know who he is, where he hangs out?"

"Not really. Try the Hard Night bar; that's where he tried to sell it to me. Some people have no etiquette."

"Thanks, Nix."

The door opens up behind me, admitting the noise of drizzle and haggling. "See you around, Fedora." Nix waves me off. I walk back to my car.

I decide to try the bar first, mostly because it's closer. The Hard Night is a good spot for cheap food and drink, but its seedy clientele is a little sparse in the early afternoon. I flash pictures to the bartender and waiters, hoping someone will give the anonymous razorboy a name. No such luck. I sit at the bar, order a soyburger from the AR menu, and log on to ShadowSEA to check for answers to my query. That's probably why I didn't sense the shadow looming behind me.

"I know that hat. Now where did I see it ..."

I curse silently, realizing that my commlink has been in Active mode since Everett. I spin around and come face-to-face with Trent, the "family enforcer," and a couple of his augmented goons. Just the thing to deal with before lunch. There are years of bad blood between Trent and me. I've given him the short end of the stick more than once, both as a runner and as a P.I.

"Now I remember," Trent continues. "It was on the head of an asshole who did a drive-by on me with a car door."

I can't help but smile at that memory. One of my last jobs, helping out with an extraction. Opening the car door into Trent's face on the way out made it all worthwhile. "Hey, Trent," I reply innocently. "How's biz?"

"You know, I had to have three teeth regrown after that. They still ache when it rains. Guess what—it's raining."

"Just doing a job; you know how it is."

"Sure," Trent smiles. "This doesn't reflect your relationship with the Don. I just owe you one." A baton snaps open in his hand and he takes a swing. I dodge, and it smashes down on the bar, sending soynuts flying. Unfortunately I move right into the fist of one of the goons. My ears ring as I hit the floor. I regain my senses just quickly enough to avoid a swinging bar stool. I kick someone's knee, breaking his cap and brining his face down to my level for a quick jab to the nose.

My instincts tell me to pull my gun, but that would make things worse for my reputation. Instead, I roll to my feet, absorbing a kick from goon number two and turning it into momentum for an elbow into Trent. As he staggers backward, I step through him and run for the door. Adrenaline numbs the pain as I call my car. Its door opens for me, and I dive into the front seat. "Darius's Bookstore, now!"

The car speeds off, leaving Trent and his goons limping in the rain.

Darius's bookstore is just outside Bellevue, where the upper class can afford the real thing—leather and paper, new and old. Darius has a thing for

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

the antique and unique. Darius also deals with twitchy-fingered stuff. I go to him when I have questions about anything magic-related.

So I park in a side alley and walk past the overpriced coffee shop without picking up any joe—not at ten nuyen a cup—before going into the bookstore. A simple bell chimes as I enter the two-story shop. Books of all kinds are stacked on the first floor. The place smells like leather and incense. Seeing no one, I head for the stairs to the second floor. This is usually off-limits to patrons, but I'm not just anyone.

"Can I help—ah Fed, good to see you," says a voice above me.

I reach the top of the stairs. Darius is wearing long indigo robes with nanite-embedded stars that actually twinkle. "Hey, Darius. How are things in the magic business?"

"Nothing new, still trying to work out a deal in Australia. What are you up to this afternoon?" He looks me over. "You look like you went a few rounds. Who did you piss off?"

"Just ran into some family acquaintances over lunch. I came by to ask you about a jade falcon. It was stolen from my client's house, and I was wondering if someone tried to sell it to you?" I show him a few images on my commlink display.

"Yes, a boy brought it in yesterday. I don't remember his name. I offered him a hundred for it. It was an unusual piece, but one I thought could resell with no questions asked. When he wanted more, I asked him to show me the paperwork." Darius's eyes shone. "He was thinking about it when he got a call from another buyer."

"Did he say who?"

"Almost as good. Before he left, he boasted about meeting a buyer in the Puyallup Barrens. He said that by this time tomorrow—that would be today—I'd be sorry I hadn't offered him more."

"Do you have a picture of this guy?"

"Sure, let me look at the security footage; one moment."

As Darius goes through the security logs, I remember that I still haven't checked in with ShadowSEA. I finish logging on and find a gold mine of information waiting for me. First, a well-known artificer was murdered in CalFree just over a week ago. Second, the artificer's last commission was a jade falcon. Third, Mr. Boggard used some shadowy connections to bring something home from L.A. And finally, I'm not the only one who's been asking about it. I log out, and begin wondering whether I'm in over my head.

Darius returns, "I have a pretty good image. Hey Fed, what's up?"

"I think this jade falcon business is more complicated than I thought. There are other interested parties."

"You think this guy is walking into a trap?"

"I think you're lucky he passed on your hundred."

Darius nods and looks worried. "You should take Eddie with you."

"Eddie? He's back?"

"He finished his B.S. in Thaumaturgy. Now he thinks he knows it all, and he's trying to make improvements around here. Mostly he's just being a pain in the ass."

"Cool! I'd appreciate his help."

Darius turns around and shouts for Eddie in a deep, magically amplified voice. My ears are still ringing when a tall, well-dressed young man with shaggy black hair emerges from the back room. I remember Eddie as a child from the streets, before Darius and a few others started looking after him.

"Dude, can't you just use the commlink like everybody else?" Eddie sees me and smiles, "Hey Fed! Long time no see."

I give him a hug, "Eddie, I'm going to need some help. You up for a little work?"

"Hell yeah! Darius has me cataloging books and stuff. Won't let me show him any of the new tricks I learned in college."

"Great. I'm going to make a few calls. We're heading to the barrens."

Eddie changes into clothes with more ballistic fibers and fewer designer labels while I call up a few friends in the turf gang. I send them Darius's security footage, and a few instructions.

We're crossing into Puyallup in my car when I get a message back: Your guy just went into the Omni. You owe me a six-pack. Leave it with Gears.

Eddie and I approach the abandoned theater on foot, splashing through ankle-deep rainwater. Of course the storm sewers are stopped up. The lobby door of the old theatre is boarded up, but not locked. I look inside, carefully. I can't see anyone, but I hear voices farther in. Angry voices. I draw my gun, and we move in. We're just in time to see my suspect collapse at the feet of two other men, one of whom is holding the falcon.

Not knowing what else to do, I level my gun and yell "Freeze!"

Both men turn to look at me. Something passes subvocally between them, and the jade falcon begins to glow. In the empty space between us, an eerie, unnatural green light swirls and solidifies into a hideous spirit creature. It snarls and charges, and my gun barks loudly in my hand as I fire uselessly at it. Barely a meter in front of me, it smashes into an invisible wall.

"Nasty looking sucker." Eddie comments behind me, his voice betraying the strain of maintaining the astral barrier. If not for him, I'd be spirit chow. I look past the beast, and the men have already fled, leaving the statue behind. Damn.

The spirit backs away from the barrier and belches a noxious cloud, which billows around and gags us both. It hurls itself again at the invisible wall, shrieking and snarling. Between coughing fits, Eddie gasps, "Shoot the statue!"

He doesn't have to tell me twice. I drop to one knee and fire past the beast, emptying my weapon into the jade falcon. The spirit twitches and screams with every round, as if it could feel each one. The statue shatters, blasted apart by the bullets, and the spirit dissolves into smoke. I still feel like coughing up a lung, but I manage to ask, "What the hell, Eddie?"

"I don't know, but it's banished."

I get up and walk to the body of the razorboy. He's dead. No visible injuries. Probably look like a heart attack to Doc Wagon. I collect the pieces of the statue and we drive back to the bookstore to see if Darius can make sense of it.

"Not much, I'm afraid. There was magic in it, but you're too good a shot. There aren't any fragments large enough to hold its original aura. I'll buy the pieces off of you for 75. They might make interesting telesma."

I take the cash for the pieces, then I take a drive to figure out what to tell Mrs. Boggard. Maybe the falcon was some kind of weapon; a magical time bomb. I doubt Mr. Boggard was the intended target; he must have got hold of it by chance. Or why would those men want it back? On that score, who were they? What was their game?

Not my problem, I decide. I call Mrs. Boggard and tell her what I know. I show her the body of her husband's killer. She thanks me and pays me a bonus.

▼

That evening I'm at another bar, smoking a cancer stick and checking my email. The waitress gives me an annoyed look, "What do you want, Barry?"

I smile at her, "Give me a house special, Lilly. And here's something for your trouble." I slide a credstick into her pocket. She smiles back, playfully.

Just another rainy day in Seattle.

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Running the shadows isn't only about firefights, magic, hacking, and big fireballs—well, okay, the fireballs make it fun. It's not enough to steal prototypes and information, extract personnel from unwilling hosts, plant evidence, or maybe blow up research laboratories—there are other issues to contend with as well. Health and healing, for example, can spell the difference between a living but hurt shadowrunner and a dead one. Then there is the dangerous allure of recreational and combat drugs, or keeping oneself protected from the next generation nerve gas a target corporation may be waiting to spring on infiltrators in their security system. Even if your character successfully navigates these issues, what is her reputation like? What kind of lifestyle does she lead? What are her goals; what skills or abilities does she want to improve herself in? Gamemasters may want to be aware of these issues as well, and find some advice for running their games. This section covers these and other loose ends that are just as important to making a shadowrun enjoyable.

RUNNING THE SHADOWS

HEALTH

In the world of *Shadowrun,* health plays an important role in a character's ability to continue doing the jobs, legal and illegal, that she does best. This spans from healing the wounds taken in a firefight to recovering from nerve gas inhalation, and even to the kind of damage a character can do to herself through recreational drug use and abuse. What kind of damage, how bad an injury is, and how much it affects the character varies greatly depending on the situation.

The various types of damage and condition monitors are discussed in the *Combat* chapter, p. 144; healing this damage is covered below.

HEALING

Stun and Physical damage both heal naturally, though at different rates. Medical attention can help hasten the process. In both cases, healing is handled as an Extended Test.

STUN DAMAGE

Make a Body + Willpower (1 hour) Extended Test. The character must rest for the entire hour for it to count (forced naps and unconsciousness also count). Each hit heals 1 box of Stun damage.

example

Fatima, a mage, is jumped by Humanis goons and badly beaten, sustaining 8 boxes of Stun damage (ouch). She decides to rest for an hour at a nearby friend's telesma shop. Her player rolls 4 (Body) + 5 (Willpower), and gets three hits. Three boxes of Stun damage are healed, leaving her with five yet to heal. She's not in the greatest shape, but she should be able to stumble home to finish healing.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE

Make a Body x 2 (1 day) Extended Test. The character must rest for the entire day for it to count (forced naps and unconsciousness also count). Each hit heals 1 box of Physical damage.

Physical damage cannot be healed through rest if the character has Stun damage; the Stun damage must be healed first.

GLITCHES AND HEALING

A glitch on a healing test (Stun or Physical) doubles the resting time (the damage is still healed—it just takes longer). A critical glitch *increases* the damage by 1D3 (1D6 ÷ 2) boxes in addition to doubling the resting time.

USING FIRST AID

Characters with the First Aid skill may immediately help reduce the trauma of wounds (Stun or Physical). First Aid may only be applied within 12 hours of when the damage was taken. Roll a First Aid + Logic (2) Test, applying appropriate situational modifiers. (Characters using First Aid on themselves must apply their wound modifiers to the test.) Using the First Aid skill is a Complex Action, and takes a number of Combat Turns equal to the amount of damage the character is attempting to heal. Each net hit over the threshold reduces 1 box of damage.

A critical glitch on a First Aid Test increases the damage by 1D3 boxes; time is increased accordingly.

The maximum damage healable with the First Aid skill is equal to the skill's rating. First Aid may only be applied to a character once (for that set of wounds), and it may not be applied if the character has been magically healed.

First Aid may also be used to simply diagnose a character's health, the extent of wounds taken, or the effect of other ailments. The gamemaster sets the threshold as appropriate to the character's health or affliction, and awards information appropriate to the net hits scored.

example

Later in the week, Fatima is hit with 4 boxes of Physical damage (gunshot wound) in the course of evading the law. It looks like she may need to lay low for a few days to heal. After the first day of rest, her player rolls a healing test and gets 2 hits—but glitches! Fatima can heal 2 boxes of the damage, but it'll take an extra day of rest first.

On the other hand, if Rosy finds Fatima within 12 hours of originally receiving the wound, she may use the First Aid skill to treat her ork friend. Applying first aid to a wound of 4 damage boxes takes 4 Combat Turns. Rosy rolls her First Aid + Logic and scores 3 hits; she's got 1 net hit over the threshold. This reduces Fatima's damage down to 3 boxes.

SLOWER HEALING

The default rules opt for fast recovery times from injury in the interest of getting characters back in the game. If, however, your group prefers a more realistic approach, the following options are also available. Note that either will result in characters being down for much longer periods of time and makes timely intervention with first aid and magical healing into a major concern rather than a short-term benefit.

- Apply the character's standard damage modifiers for his current wound level to the Stun and Physical Damage Healing Tests (p. 253). If the character's dice pool is reduced to zero, he is unable to heal without medical assistance (see *Using Medicine*, p. 253, and *Medkits and Autodocs*, p. 253).
- Roll only Body rather than Body x 2 for Physical Damage Healing Tests (p. 253).

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HEALING MODIFIERS TABLE	
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Conditions	
Good (sterilized med facility)	+0
Average (indoors)	–1
Poor (street or wilderness)	–2
Bad (combat, bad weather, swamp)	–3
Terrible (fire, severe storm)	–4
No medical supplies/medkit	–3
Medkit/autodoc	+rating
Applying medical care remotely through medkit/autodoc	–2
Assistance	+1 per skilled assistant (max +3)
Uncooperative patient	–2
Patient is magician, adept, or technomancer	–2
Patient has implants	–1 per 2 points of lost Essence

USING MEDICINE

Characters with the Medicine skill may help speed the healing process. Medicine is not meant to be applied in combat situations (First Aid applies to medical help in combat). The character makes a Medicine + Logic Test; apply appropriate situational modifiers, including wound modifiers if a character is applying the Medicine skill to her own wounds. Each hit provides +1 die to any subsequent healing tests the character makes for healing through rest, as noted on p. 252.

A glitch doubles the character's healing time. A critical glitch not only doubles the healing time, but increases damage by 1D3 boxes.

Medicine may only be applied once to each set of wounds, but it may be applied even if First Aid and/or magical healing have already been used. Additional damage taken afterward counts as a new set of wounds.

Medicine may be used to diagnose a character's health in the same manner as First Aid.

MEDKITS AND AUTODOCS

The capabilities of modern medkits (p. 337) and autodoc drones (p. 350) rival those of trained paramedics. They can serve as a valuable aid to a medtech's diagnoses or applied healing, or they can simply be hooked up to the patient and set to apply medical care automatically.

If a trained medtech uses a medkit/autodoc when healing a character, she receives a dice pool modifier equal to the device's First Aid or Medicine autosoft rating. If the character is untrained, she can still make the test using her own attribute and the device's rating in place of her skill. If the device is hooked up to a patient and left unattended, simply roll the device's rating for any tests. Note that medkits and autodocs can be accessed and controlled remotely via the Matrix/wireless link.

MAGICAL HEALING

The Heal spell can be used to repair physical injuries. Each hit from the Spellcasting Test heals one box of Physical damage (up to a maximum equal to the spell's Force). See *Heal,* p. 208. Note that sorcery cannot heal damage resulting from magical Drain.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE OVERFLOW

Characters who exceed their Physical Condition Monitor and enter into overflow damage (see *Exceeding the Condition Monitor,* p. 163) are at risk of dying if they do not receive prompt medical attention.

STABILIZATION

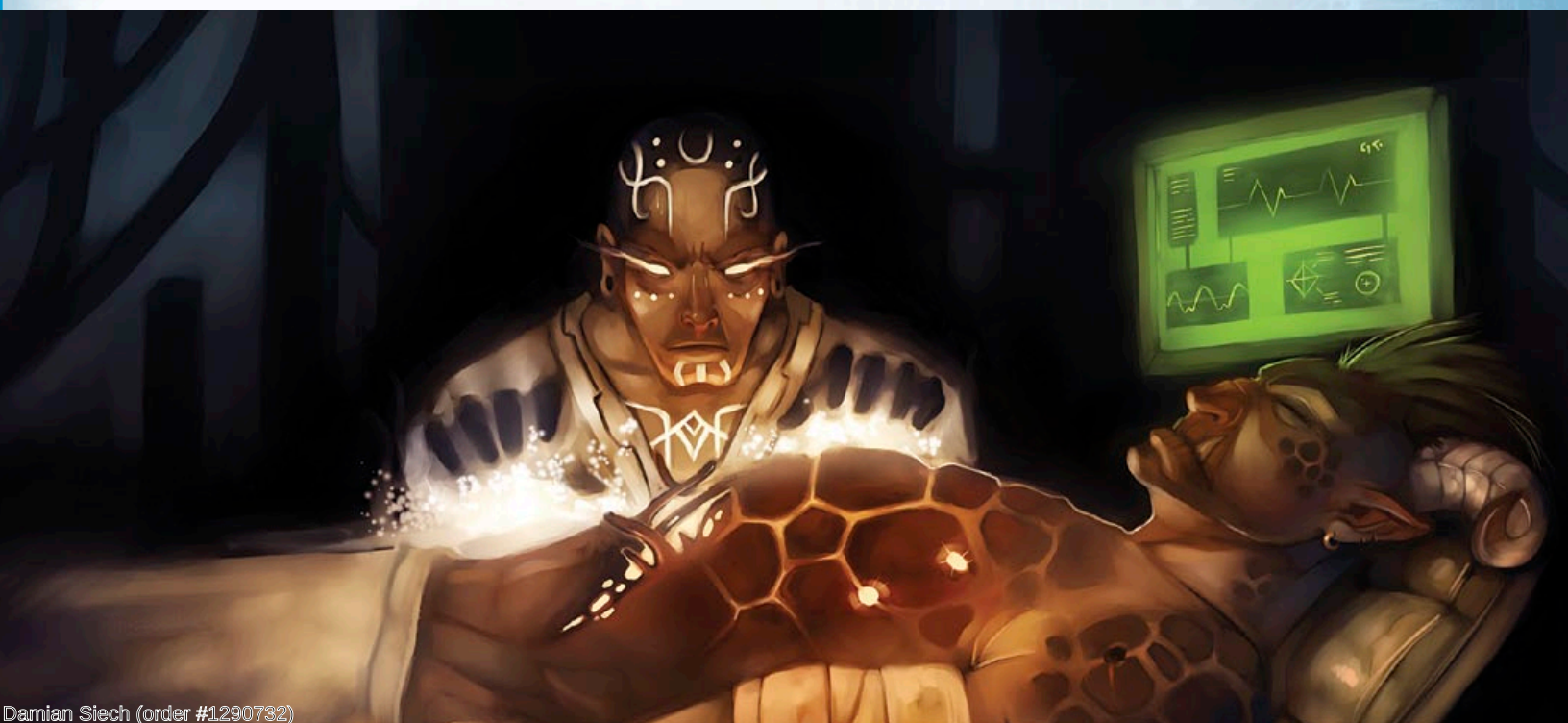
If the character's condition is not stabilized, she will take an additional box of damage every (Body) Combat Turns for blood loss, shock, and other things that affect a body on the brink of death.

In order to stabilize a wounded character, a First Aid + Logic (2) Test or Medicine + Logic (2) Test must be made (situational modifiers apply). Medkits and autodocs may be used to stabilize a character as well. If successful, the wounded patient stabilizes and no longer takes automatic additional damage.

If the stabilization fails, the character continues to take damage until she dies. Additional stabilization tests may be made, at a cumulative –2 dice pool modifier per test.

The Stabilize spell (p. 208) may also be used to stabilize a character.

Once a character has been stabilized, First Aid, Medicine and/or magical healing may be applied as normally.



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TOXINS

Spurs, spirits, spells, fists, bullets, and katanas aren't the only things that can hurt characters in *Shadowrun*. Toxins (knockout drugs and poisons) are perennial favorites when it comes to severely messing up or otherwise incapacitating your target.

TOXIN ATTRIBUTES

Each substance has several game mechanic ratings.

VECTOR

Vector is the method in which the toxin can be applied.

Contact toxins (in liquid or gas form) must be applied to the target's skin. If coated on a weapon, they may be applied with a successful melee attack (whether or not they cause damage). A chemical seal (p. 327) offers complete protection unless breached (by an attack causing damage), while chemical protection (p. 327) gives a bonus equal to its rating to the Toxin Resistance Test.

Ingestion toxins must be eaten by the victim. They generally take longer to have an effect. Digestive expansion bioware (p. 345) gives a bonus of +2 to the Toxin Resistance Test against ingested substances.

Inhalation toxins must be inhaled by the target and are applied as an aerosol spray or gas. A target wearing a gas mask, chemical seal, or using an activated cyberware internal air tank (p. 342) is immune to its effects. Chemical protection gives a bonus equal to its rating to the Toxin Resistance Test.

Injection toxins must be injected into the target's bloodstream. Similar to contact toxins, they may be used to coat a bladed (not blunt) melee weapon and applied with a successful damage-causing melee attack.

SPEED

Speed determines how soon after exposure the victim suffers the toxin's Effect. Toxin effects are always applied at the end of a Combat Turn.

Immediate means the Effect is applied at the end of the Combat Turn the victim is exposed to the toxin.

1 Combat Turn means the Effect is applied at the end of the *next* Combat Turn, and so on.

POWER

The Power of a toxin represents its potency. In most cases, Power represents the DV (Stun or Physical) inflicted by the substance, as noted under *Effect.* This damage is reduced with a Toxin Resistance Test (see below); if the damage is reduced to 0, no other effects apply unless specifically noted.

In the case of toxins that do not inflict actual damage, Power is still used to determine if other effects apply; if the Toxin Resistance Test fails to reduce the Power to 0 (just like DV), then other effects apply.

TOXIN PROTECTION TABLE

GEAR	PROTECTS AGAINST	PROTECTION
Chemical Seal	Contact, Inhalation	Immunity
Chemical Protection	Contact, Inhalation	+Rating
Digestive Expansion	Ingestion	+2
Dwarf Natural Resistance	All toxins, diseases	+2
Gas Mask	Inhalation	Immunity
Internal Air Tank	Inhalation	Immunity
Pathogenic Defense	Diseases	+Rating
Respirator	Inhalation	+Rating
Toxin Extractor	All toxins	+Rating
Tracheal Filter	Inhalation	+Rating

EFFECT

The Effect determines what happens to a character exposed to the toxin. Many toxins simply cause damage; in this case, the Effect supplies the base Damage Value. Once damage has been inflicted, it is treated just like any other injury; antidotes and similar protections only work as a defense when taken *before* the toxin's effect kicks in.

Some substances cause other effects, such as nausea or paralysis, which are listed in their description. Unless otherwise noted, these effects occur unless the toxin's Power is reduced to 0 by the Toxin Resistance Test.

Disorientation: The target suffers a –2 dice pool modifier to all actions due to confusion and disorientation for 10 minutes.

Nausea: Nausea is a catch-all term that covers pain, panic, vomiting, double vision, and other toxin effects. If the Power of an attack after the Toxin Resistance Test exceeds the target's Willpower, she is incapacitated (unable to take any actions) with vomiting and dizziness for 3 Combat Turns. Whether or not a character is incapacitated, nausea doubles all of a character's wound modifiers for 10 minutes. A nauseated character with 3 boxes of damage (a –1 wound modifier), for example, suffers –2 dice on all tests instead.

Paralysis: This toxin blocks the body's neuromuscular signals, rendering the target unable to move. If the Power of an attack after the Toxin Resistance Test exceeds the target's Reaction, the target is paralyzed and unable to take physical actions for 1 hour. Even if the target is not paralyzed, she will suffer a –2 dice pool modifier for the next hour.

PENETRATION

Similar to Armor Penetration for weapons, a toxin's Penetration rating affects the rating of any protective system used to defend against it.

USING TOXIC SUBSTANCES

When a toxic substance is applied, note its Speed to determine when it will take effect. At the end of the appropriate Combat Turn, a resistance test is made to see if the substance actually infiltrates the victim's biosystem and impacts her health.

TOXIN RESISTANCE TEST

The victim makes a resistance test using Body + the rating of any protective systems or gear. Every hit reduces the toxin's Power by 1 point. If the Power is reduced to zero, the toxic substance takes no effect; otherwise apply the Effect depending on the remaining power level.

If a contact-vector toxin was applied with a melee attack, the character receives her Impact armor bonus as well.

example

Twitch is trapped in a cloud of CS/Tear Gas with Power 5. The gas has a Speed of 1, which fortunately gives him enough time to put on his gas mask. The mask won't protect him against the original lungful of gas he took in, however, so at the end of the following turn he rolls a Toxin Resistance Test with a dice pool of 11 (Body 4, Chemical Protection 3, Toxin Extractor 4), scoring 3 hits. This reduces the Power of the gas to 2 (5 – 3). Under the Effects listing for CS gas, it says that the toxin inflicts Stun damage and disorientation, so Twitch takes 2 boxes of Stun Damage and suffers a disorientation modifier of –2 for the next 200 Combat Turns (10 minutes).

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CONCENTRATION

If a toxin is applied at concentrated levels (more than a single dose), the gamemaster may increase the Power of the toxin as he feels appropriate, as well as increasing the damage it causes or its other effects by an appropriate amount.

Likewise, if a character remains in contact with a toxin over an extended period, such as being caught in a gas-filled room for several minutes, she may receive an additional dose and suffer stronger effects (or have to resist the toxin again). When the toxin's Speed period has elapsed again, apply additional concentration effects as appropriate or call for another resistance test.

ANTIDOTES

In order to provide protection, antidotes must be taken before a toxin's effects kick in. An antidote taken afterwards will not diminish the damage caused by the toxin, but may reduce the toxin's other effects.

Characters with the appropriate medical equipment may synthesize antidotes to a toxin with an appropriate Medicine Test. The gamemaster should set the threshold as appropriate to the rarity and complexity of the toxin. Note that some toxins simply have no effective antidote—particularly neurotoxins.

If a victim has suffered Physical damage overflow from a toxin, then application of the appropriate antidote will automatically stabilize her.

SAMPLE TOXINS

The following are just a few of the chemical weapons and toxins that shadowrunners might encounter.

CS/TEAR GAS

Vector: Contact, Inhalation
Speed: 1 Combat Turn
Penetration: 0
Power: 5
Effect: Disorientation, Nausea, Stun Damage

Commonly referred to as tear gas, CS gas is an irritant that affects the skin, eyes, and mucus membranes, causing them to burn and water. It also stimulates a physiological panic response: increased heart rate, shortness of breath, and so forth. Washing thoroughly with soap and water can remove CS from the victim's skin, thus ending the duration of the nausea prematurely. CS gas becomes inert after 2 minutes of contact with the air.

GAMMA-SCOPOLAMINE

Vector: Injection
Speed: Immediate
Penetration: 0
Power: 8
Effect: Paralysis, Truth Serum (see Description).

This neuromuscular blocking agent renders a target unable to move. It is derived from the natural toxin found in *Atropa Belladonna*, commonly known as nightshade. Gamma-scopolamine takes effect immediately, causing dizziness, dilation of the pupils, speech loss, delirium, and paralysis. The full effects last for one hour. After the hour has passed, the residue remaining in the body acts as a "truth serum" for an additional hour. Reduce the target's Willpower by 3 (to a minimum of 1) for the duration of the chemical's effect.

NARCOJECT

Vector: Injection
Speed: Immediate
Penetration: 0
Power: 10
Effect: Stun Damage

A common knockout drug, narcoject is often used with dart guns. It has no side effects.

NAUSEA GAS

Vector: Inhalation
Speed: 3 Combat Turns
Penetration: 0
Power: 6
Effect: Disorientation, Nausea

Used as a riot control agent, this gas causes nausea and a crippling need to vomit. Nausea gas becomes inert after 2 minutes of contact with the air.

NEURO-STUN

Vector: Contact, Inhalation
Speed: 1 Combat Turn
Penetration: 0
Power: 10
Effect: Disorientation, Stun Damage

This colorless and odorless knockout gas is used for emergency-containment conditions. Neuro-Stun comes in different concentrations. Some become inert after only 10 minutes of contact with the air; others become inert after only 1 minute. Wind and other environmental conditions may disperse the gas more quickly.

PEPPER PUNCH

Vector: Contact, Inhalation
Speed: 1 Combat Turn
Penetration: 0
Power: 7
Effect: Nausea, Stun Damage

Pepper punch uses oreocapsicum, derived from hot peppers, as an active ingredient. It is mixed with other irritants, such as CS gas, and deployed as a gas, liquid, or foam spray. Liquids and foams may incorporate ultraviolet dyes or even RFID tags (p. 329) so that the target may be identified later. A victim dosed with pepper punch feels an intense burning on any affected skin, and her eyes and nose will water. Eyes that are sprayed will burn fiercely and the victim will have difficulty seeing. The throat and nasal passage will be irritated, making breathing difficult.

SEVEN-7

Vector: Contact, Inhalation
Speed: 1 Combat Turn
Penetration: –2
Power: 8
Effect: Damage, Disorientation, Nausea

This colorless and odorless cutting-edge war gas was developed by Mitsuhama specifically to bypass chemical protection measures. In addition to Physical damage, Seven-7 causes cramping, nausea and double vision to victims. Seven-7 oxidizes and becomes inert after 10 minutes of exposure to air.

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SLEEP DEPRIVATION

Vector: See below
Speed: 6 hours (see below)
Penetration: 0
Power: 3
Effect: Fatigue/Stun Damage, Unconsciousness

Going without sleep for more than 24 continuous hours has a detrimental effect on the health and mental cohesion of metahumans. While certain augmentations, magical powers, and drugs can prolong the period of useful wakefulness, no one can go without sleep indefinitely. For every six hours that pass after the initial 24 hours of wakefulness, characters must make a Body + Willpower (Power) Test to stay awake; every subsequent test raises the Power by 1. If a character passes the test, they take one box of unresisted Fatigue Damage. If the character fails the test they fall unconscious for (6 + Power) hours, after which all Fatigue damage is healed and the Power of the sleep deprivation reverts to 3. Characters woken before this time has completely elapsed suffer Disorientation and continue to take Sleep Deprivation Test with the Power increasing as normal.

Characters with the sleep regulator implant (p. 347) or an equivalent adept power may double the period of time they may operate (48 hours) before taking tests for sleep deprivation. Stimulant drugs such as long haul (p. 258) obviate the need for sleep deprivation tests during the drugs duration, but the Power continues to increase at a rate of +1 every six hours.

At the gamemaster's discretion, inability of a character to sleep properly over a period of days or weeks may also lead to sleep deprivation.

DRUGS AND BRAINBENDERS

In *Shadowrun*, the recreational drugs and narcotics of the past have lost popularity in the face of new electronic Better-Than-Life (BTL) chips and similar enhanced-sense and altered-personality programs and devices. Though trip-chips are less harsh on one's body than narcotics, they tend to be extremely addictive, to the point where users waste away their health and lives engaging in electronic fantasies. To revive their flagging sales in the face of this competition, drug cartels have responded with a wave of genegineered smart drugs and narcotics enhanced with the magical properties of Awakened flora.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse, whether in the form of chips, drugs, or alcohol, is an accepted part of reality on the streets and in the corporate enclaves. Most are taken for recreational use and escapism, though mood-adjusters and performance enhancers see common use by corporate workers, athletes, and even shadowrunners looking to gain an edge. The risk of addiction is omnipresent, however, as well as the dangers of side effects and additional long-term debilitating effects that can outweigh the short-term enhancements.

Ultimately, substance abuse and addiction should be handled in roleplaying terms. A character's temptations and struggles to overcome an addiction should be integrated into the character's portrayal and actions. The gamemaster should allow the player to ultimately decide the character's choices and fate in these matters, but he should also of course supply opportunities for dramatic scenes and crises, such as being tempted by an old junkie friend, finding that old hidden stash, suddenly being unable to acquire a fix, finding the corpse of a friend who overdosed, or getting captured or jailed and forced to go cold turkey.

Characters may start the game with the Addiction negative quality (p. 93) or gain it through gameplay at the gamemaster's discretion. This is intended to allow the gamemaster to determine how common substance abuse is in his game, if it is even a factor to begin with. Basic information on drug types most commonly seen in the world of *Shadowrun,* including roleplaying advice for each, are provided below.

ADDICTION TESTS

The gamemaster can choose on occasion to call for an Addiction Test to determine if a character gets hooked on a drug. Addiction Tests should not be called for each time a character uses a drug (unless it's something that is powerfully addictive), but should only be used after repeated/habitual use, a particularly brutal bender, or exposure to strong concentrations of the drug in a short period of time. The gamemaster can also do away with Addiction Tests and simply determine if, when, and at what severity a character acquires an addiction based upon the character's roleplaying actions.

Addiction can be physical, mental, or both. Mental dependence usually stems from the emotional gratification, euphoria, and escapism derived from use of a drug. Physical addiction results from the body's dependence on the substance for its continued "survival." Some drugs can confer both types of addiction, and are typically among the more difficult to kick (assuming the character even wants to).

Mental addiction should be resisted with a Willpower + Logic Test and physical addiction resisted with a Body + Willpower Test. The threshold for this test is determined by the gamemaster, as appropriate to the potency of the substance (see the Addiction Threshold Table for some examples). If the character doesn't get enough hits to achieve the drug's threshold, she fails and is addicted.

Glitches: A glitch result indicates addiction is resisted, but the character suffers a bad experience with the drug (a bad trip, nasty side effects, or something similar). A critical glitch means addiction occurs *and* the character develops an increased tolerance to the substance.

ROLEPLAYING ADDICTION

Characters can handle addiction in different ways, depending on their Addiction level (p. 93).

Those with a **Mild** addiction are more social or habitual users. They will have a craving "now and then," and will unhesitatingly indulge in their drug of choice, seeing no reason not to. Many will not recognize that they even have a problem, though any attempts to "cut back" or go "cold turkey" will be problematic. While the addiction could get worse, at this stage it's manageable.

Characters who have a **Moderate** addiction have developed tolerances and stronger cravings, so they may use more frequently, take stronger dosages, or move on to a harder substance. By this time, the problem is more noticeable even if a character attempts to hide it or deny it. She may experience (additional) repercussions from her habitual use, display increased mood swings or unreliability, and may begin to have financial difficulties due to increased spending on her habit.

Characters with a **Severe** addiction are more like the junkies many think about when given the term "addict"—out of control, strung out, continually needing a fix, borrowing money to finance their habit, and so forth. Some may become desperate and resort to more theft (if the character is a shadowrunner already, she may already be doing this), gambling, borrowing money from unreliable or loan shark services, and anything else the player and gamemaster can think of. How bad this gets is left up to the player and gamemaster, keeping in mind that if or when a character bottoms out, she could die or be inspired to quit.

Burnout characters are on their way down, and it's not pretty. These are characters with long-term Severe addictions who are now

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ADDICTION THRESHOLD	
SAMPLE SUBSTANCE	THRESHOLD
Hallucinogenics, Dreamchip BTLs	1
Stimulants, Moodchip and Personafix BTLs	2
Narcotics, Tripchip BTLs	3

exhibiting physical and mental side effects from continual substance abuse. Characters who continue in this state for long will continue to suffer deteriorating health effects determined by the gamemaster. Such effects may include:

- Lost Essence.
- Attribute loss (Mental or Physical); this will also affect a character's natural attribute maximums.
- Psychological problems such as flashbacks, blackouts, drastic and violent mood swings, paranoia, schizophrenia, amnesia, and so on.
- Physiological health issues as appropriate to the substance, including such fun things as as abcesses, incontinence, a weak immune system (p. 96), lower pain tolerance (p. 95), slurred speech, and so on.
- Stun damage that cannot be healed.

GETTING A FIX

Once addicted, users need a dosage, or fix, on a regular basis, as appropriate to the severity of the addiction (*Addiction*, p. 93). If a character wants to resist cravings, make an Addiction Test as noted above, applying modifiers as appropriate to the addiction level. If the character does not resist the cravings, she must immediately get a fix or go into withdrawal.

WITHDRAWAL AND STAYING CLEAN

Withdrawal, whether voluntary or forced, can be difficult. During the withdrawal period, the character can suffer a range of adverse effects, as determined by the gamemaster. Effects may include: appetite loss, cramps, cravings, delusions, depression, emotional instability, insomnia, irritability, nausea, shaking, sweating, and worse. The gamemaster may decide to impose a dice pool modifier to all of the character's actions equal to the drug's Addiction Threshold for the duration of the withdrawal period.

Once the character has beaten addiction, she should rest to allow herself to heal and bounce back; it's not easy kicking a habit. Even after withdrawal and recovery, though, cravings may still linger. How the character deals with it should be discussed between player and gamemaster. The body may no longer need the drug, but the mind still craves its presence.

OVERDOSING

Extreme amounts of anything can kill a metahuman. The exact point at which "a lot" becomes "too much" and causes toxicity varies, depending on the substance in question. It is the gamemaster's call to decide when this point is reached and when to start applying additional damage to the character. As a general guideline, inflict an extra box of damage every (Body) doses.

DRUGS

Drugs include everything from synthahol to performance enhancers to common street drugs. If a character gets high on street drugs, roleplaying should be encouraged. Most people on drugs change dramatically. They may become less inhibited, euphorically happy, sexually aroused, paranoid, hyper-aware, mellow and incoherent, or enter a berserk, psychotic rage.

BLISS

Duration: (6 – Body) hours, minimum 1 hour
Effect: –1 Reaction, +1 to all thresholds, Pain Resistance 3

A tranquilizing narcotic, bliss is an opiate synthesized from poppy plants. In addition to other effects, bliss provides pain resistance equal to three levels of the High Pain Tolerance quality (p. 91).

Bliss was given its name due to the sensation its users feel. Some may describe it as floating on clouds, dulling the senses to everything but feelings of pleasure and happiness. Players attempting to roleplay a bliss user may want to focus on the escapist angle, using the drug to block out the rest of a chaotic or unsatisfying world.

CRAM

Duration: (12 – Body) hours, minimum 1 hour
Effect: +1 Reaction, +1 Initiative Pass

The most recent amphetamine to make the rounds, cram is an energizer drug designed to give the user an energy boost. When this effect wears off, users crash and suffer 6 Stun damage (unresisted) for an equivalent duration.

Cram users, while on the drug, may appear hyper-alert, possibly to the point of paranoia. They are quick to react, often doing so without thinking first. Jitteriness, fidgeting, or emotional or irrational outbursts may be common. Characters may decide to use cram if they cannot afford cyberware or bioware, or if they are looking for a little edge against potential opponents.

DEEPWEED

Duration: (6 – Body) hours, minimum 1 hour
Effects: +1 Willpower, forces Awakened characters to astrally perceive

Also known as "bad karma," this substance is derived by Caribbean houngans from an Awakened form of kelp. Naturally laden with nicotine and THC, deepweed is especially enticing to the Awakened and is sometimes used to dose targets for possession. It is ingested or inhaled.

Deepweed forces any magically active user to astrally perceive, even if the user is an adept without astral perception ability. Once its effects have worn off, deepweed users may suffer a –1 to all dice pool modifiers for an equal duration.

Deepweed users say that the drug is relaxing and opens the mind. While it may be so, there are still dangers inherent in forced astral perception, such as attracting unwanted attention. Roleplaying the effects of deepweed may mean portraying someone who seems not completely "present"—she isn't.

JAZZ

Duration: 10 x 1D6 minutes.
Effect: +1 Reaction, +1 Initiative Pass

Developed by Lone Star's R&D Division, jazz was designed to better the odds for run-of-the-mill law-enforcement officers who run up against augmented street samurai. It's usually taken from a single-dose inhaler (or "popper").

When jazz wears off, the user crashes and is flooded with despondent and miserable emotions, suffering the effects of Disorientation (p. 254).

If cram is bad for hyperactivity and feelings of paranoia, jazz is worse. Roleplaying a jazz user means turning it up a notch, and portraying someone with too much energy to burn.

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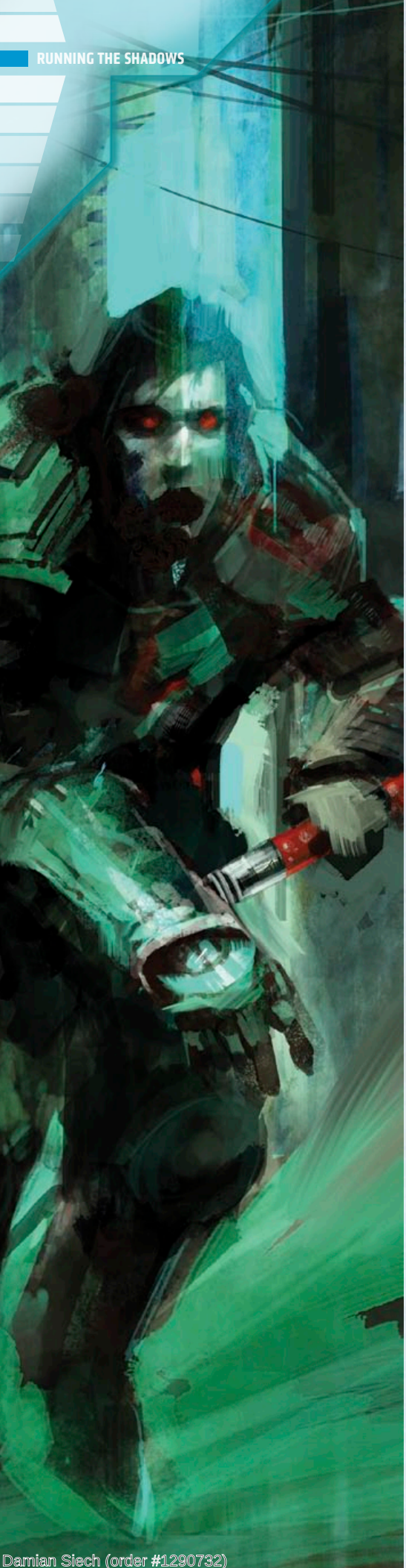

KAMIKAZE

Duration: 10 x 1D6 minutes

Effect: +1 Body, +1 Agility, +2 Strength, +1 Willpower, +1 Initiative Pass, High Pain Tolerance 3

Kamikaze is a tailored combat drug. In addition to other effects, it provides the High Pain Tolerance quality at Rating 3. When kamikaze wears off, the user crashes and suffers –1 Reaction and –1 Willpower for 10 x 1D6 minutes. She also suffers 6S damage (not resisted).

The repeated use of kamikaze has a destructive effect on the user's metabolism. Large doses can cause excitement, tremors, momentary euphoria, and dilated pupils. Excess doses (bordering on overdose level) cause anxiety, hallucinations, and uncontrolled muscular movements. Even higher dosages lead to death. Kamikaze users are near-crazed, filled with a feeling of imperviousness and invincibility, exhibiting almost no regard for their own well-being.

LONG HAUL

Duration: 4 days

Effect: Alleviates need for sleep

A combination of synthesized hormones and other brain-regulating chemicals, long haul stimulates the brain and keeps the user awake, obviating the need for sleep. A character dosed on long haul can remain awake for four days—without incurring any modifiers from fatigue or weariness. After this time, however, the user immediately passes out and sleeps soundly for 8D6 hours. If the character is kept awake during this period, she suffers from disorientation (p. 254) as she is afflicted with hallucinations and an inability to concentrate.

If a second dose of long haul is taken after the first has worn off, the character can stay awake an additional 1D6 ÷ 2 days. After that period, she suffers 10S damage (unresisted) and must crash as detailed above. Long haul cannot keep a character awake past this point, no matter how many additional doses are administered.

NITRO

Duration: 10 x 1D6 minutes

Effect: +2 Strength, +2 Willpower, +2 Perception, High Pain Tolerance 6

A combination of potent drugs, including novacoke and several other narcotics and stimulants, nitro's effects can easily kill a user. It is favored by troll gangers.

In addition to other effects, nitro temporarily applies pain resistance equal to Rating 6 of the High Pain Tolerance quality (p. 91). After the drug's effects wear off, the subject suffers 9S damage (unresisted).

Nitro users feel infused with energy, suffer a diminished attention span, and talk incessantly (even to themselves).

NOVACOKE

Duration: (10 – Body) hours, minimum of 1 hour

Effect: +1 Reaction, +1 Charisma, +1 Perception, High Pain Tolerance 1

A stimulant derived from coca plants, novacoke is a highly addictive social drug. In addition to other effects, users also gain pain resistance equivalent to Rating 1 of the High Pain Tolerance quality (p. 91). After the drug wears off, Charisma is reduced to 1 and Willpower is reduced by half (round down) for an equivalent duration.

PSYCHE

Duration: (12 – Body) hours, minimum of 1 hour

Effect: +1 Intuition, +1 Logic

This designer drug, allegedly produced by MCT, is especially prized by magicians and technomancers, as the drug stimulates their brain into hyperactivity. In addition to the effects noted above, Awakened users also only suffer a –1 dice pool modifier for each sustained spell (rather than the standard –2).

Psyche users are simultaneously hyper-aware and detached, easily absorbed by detail and obsessive about certain facts or problems.

ZEN

Duration: 10 x 1D6 minutes

Effect: –2 Reaction, +1 Willpower, –1 physical action dice pool modifier

A psychedelic hallucinogen, zen is popular among those looking to escape reality or seeking trance-like states.

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BETTER-THAN-LIFE

Better-Than-Life programs have been the technological drug-of-choice since the 2050s. Highly addictive, these simsense programs produce high-amplitude simsense outputs that directly stimulate the response centers in the limbic area, or "pleasure center," of the brain. Because the peak controls are cut out of a BTL, the sensation is significantly more intense and addictive than that of a standard sim.

Because BTL is highly addictive, many users loop themselves into continuous playback. Extended use can result in numerous unpleasant side effects, including catatonia, disassociative identity disorder, amnesia, flashbacks, mania, synaesthesia (sensory crossover where sight becomes smell, taste becomes touch, etc.), and even death. Most BTL users die from accidents while under the influence, or from malnutrition, dehydration, or suicide.

In the old days, before the wireless technology could handle full simsense signals, BTL was primarily distributed in hardcopy chip format. By 2070, however, many BTL dealers operate exclusively online through mobile and highly-protected and secure servers, offering BTL exclusively as a direct simsense download.

BTL CHIPS

Better-Than-Life chips are known by a wide array of street names: beetles, playback, zombie chips, mindbenders, trancers, and tripchips, to name just a few. Despite the availability of BTL downloads, chips are still popular among extremely poor and low-tech users. Some dealers also prefer the hands-on tech, or having direct interactions with their client base.

BTL chips come in two playback formats. "Dreamdeck" chips require an old-fashioned simsense deck (a simsense module designed just to play hardcopy simchips) that has been modified to produce BTL signals (easy to do). These are harder to come by as they are not in common use anymore. The second format, which is much easier to get, is the "direct input" chip. These more complex chips contain all the necessary electronics, so a user merely needs to slot the chip directly into an old-fashioned chipjack or datajack (no simdeck required).

Both are designed to burn out after one use, to keep the users coming back for more. This one-shot, self-erasing feature can be bypassed with a Hardware (10, 1 hour) Extended Test.

BTL DOWNLOADS

One-shot BTL programs that are downloaded also have many street names: lifelines, beams, zaps, e-beetles, bolts, and more. To experience BTL downloads, the user's commlink must have a sim module that has been modified. These programs erase themselves after one use.

DREAMCHIPS

Dreamchips are standard simsense recordings modified to produce BTL output. This can be a standard studio-produced simsense storyline turned into a BTL fantasy, or a more personal street recording that offers an intense glimpse into someone's life. Popular themes are heroic fantasies, recorded crimes, and pornography, with hardcore violence and snuff chips for the most jaded appetites.

MOODCHIPS

These BTLs focus on the emotive track, inducing an extended episode of emotional sensations. Themes can range from euphoria to sexual urges to aggressive tendencies, and to dark feelings such as terror and hate. Street names tend to reflect the nature of the experience, modified by a color: Blue Passion, Red Meanie, Cool White, and so on.

After the chip's program has run its course, the user crashes, usually feeling the opposite emotion of the BTL for an hour or two. Users of Sunshine chips, for example, will be despondent and depressed when they crash. Moodchips are the most common BTLs on the street. The RAS override feature is frequently disabled so that users can move around freely under the influence of the chip.

PERSONAFIX

Personafixes, also called p-fixes, are the strangest and most dangerous BTLs. A combination of simsense and skillsoft technology modifies the basic personality responses of the user, installing the mnemonic routines of certain behavior patterns. While under the chip's influence, the user becomes a different person. Popular chips are based off of historical figures or pop culture icons, though there is also a small market for animals. "Workers" in bunraku ("puppet") sex parlors are fitted with personafix BTLs, sometimes combined with data filter cyberware to protect a client's anonymity. The RAS override feature is frequently disabled so that users can move around freely under the influence of the chip.

TRIPCHIPS

Like moodchips, tripchip BTLs primarily produce sensory output, flooding the user with interesting visual, auditory, tactile, taste, and olfactory sensations. These can be simple effects, or they can be advanced sensations such as simulating being underwater. The latest craze is deliberately induced synaesthesia with jacked up sensory levels and the RAS override disabled, allowing users to experience their surroundings in an entirely new way.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

By the 2070s, security is a ubiquitous presence and concern. Everyone, from corporations to the average person, has a measure of security surrounding buildings, communications, and other items of interest to them. Invariably, characters will come across security (physical, technical, wireless, magical, and so on) within a game; gamemasters are encouraged to come up with realistic systems that are challenging and fun for them to work with.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

Physical security provides a base level of protection that is often augmented with other types in order to prevent intrusion. If security can keep potential criminals from even entering or obtaining what it is they want in the first place, it can save a lot of time, energy, and money on other measures.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping, sometimes an overlooked component of physical security, can help provide obstacles or barriers to approach. This includes everything from the placement of trees and shrubs, to working with the surrounding land or creating hills, gullies and lakes. The idea is to make it difficult for unauthorized personnel to enter the grounds without being spotted, trapped, intercepted, or maybe even killed. Landscaping may also be designed to prevent an intruder (or "protected" personnel) from escaping easily, so that security personnel can easily catch and detain them if alerted to their presence.

Trees, dense brush, and hedges can provide cover for sensors, wires, cameras, tiger pits, secret entrances or exits, or automated gun systems. Along with ponds and lakes, they can also provide natural barriers. These features are not usually planted adjacent to buildings themselves,

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so as not to provide cover or entry assistance for intruders (such as a tall tree allowing for entry into a second or third story window). Dense brush and ground cover are also difficult for an intruder to bypass without creating noise (apply an appropriate modifier to a character's Infiltration Tests), and may be coupled with acoustic sensors.

Some corporations also experiment with using Awakened plant life as security (see *Magical Security*, p. 264) to supplement or even supplant the need for roaming guards or critters.

BARRIERS

Barriers include fences, walls, and other obstructions that serve as a deterrent to keep people and animals out, prevent intruders from escaping, or deter surveillance or terrorist attacks (like car bombs). These can be strewn about the perimeter, set along restricted roadways, or integrated into a building's internal or outer security. They may be supplemented with various sensors, cameras, gun turrets, or scanners (see *Technical Security*, p. 261). Rules for climbing over barriers can be found on p. 132.

Wooden, stone, chain-link, and electrified fences are most likely set around the perimeter and may feature barbed wire, concertina wire, or even monowire along the top. Climbing past fencetop wiring requires a Climbing + Agility (3) Test; if the character fails, she takes damage. See the Fencing Table for the thresholds needed to spot an electrified fence (as separate from a regular fence) or monowire with a Perception Test, as well as the damages these defensive features cause to someone that fails to bypass them. Damage is resisted with Impact armor. Note that protective mats may be thrown over barbed/concertina wire or electric fencing to climb over them without damage.

Walls come in all sorts of compositions—usually brick, stone, plasticrete, concrete, or drywall—and may be specifically intended to protect against explosions or penetration. For details on attacking through or bypassing walls, see *Barriers,* p. 166. Plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems are often found within walls, and can increase the wall's Armor rating.

WIRES

Wire might also be strung along the ground, sometimes hidden by foliage, or set up like a fence, wrapped around or through poles and stakes. This makes it more difficult to spot, and thus more dangerous to anyone unfamiliar with the territory. Characters that fail to spot the wire with a Perception Test (see the Fencing Table) run into it and take damage.

LIGHTING

Good indoor and outdoor lighting can be a further deterrent to intrusion, as it raises the chances for security to spot unauthorized personnel. Lights are usually controlled via wi-fi to activate at predetermined times (like outdoor lights, which are only needed at night) or events (like when a sensor detects movement in its area; see *Sensors,* p. 333).

FENCING TABLE

WIRE	THRESHOLD	DAMAGE
Barbed	1	4P
Concertina	1	5P
Monowire	3	8P
Electrified	2	5S (*Electricity Damage,* p. 163)

Indoor lighting can either be manually controlled with a regular on/off switch, or programmed to respond to motion or daily activity (such as the start of the business day). Most switches can be subverted with a Hardware + Logic (5, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test.

Most lighting is incandescent, fluorescent, or white light halogen-quartz, though occasionally gas-discharge may be used for high-wattage exterior lighting (taking 5 minutes to warm up).

Active Infrared: Unobtrusive security lighting for augmented vision and sensors. Apply the Partial Light modifier (p. 136) to any characters without low-light or thermographic vision.

Ultraviolet: Forensic and security lighting, used for catching dye-marked trespassers or locating fingerprints and other biological evidence. Ultraviolet lights emit light in both the ultraviolet and blue end of the visible light spectrum. When exposed to high levels of the light for several minutes or more, characters can suffer from glare (p. 136) if not wearing amber-tinted eyewear or some form of flare compensation. They may also suffer from burns on unprotected skin as determined by the gamemaster (3P suggested).

DOORS AND WINDOWS

Doors and windows are common entrance and egress points not only for normal use, but for breaking-and-entering. Doors follow the standard rules for barriers (p. 166), and are typically augmented with locks (p. 262), alarms, and/or sensors (p. 261).

Windows tend to be polarized in 2070 (preventing an outside spellcaster from targeting anything inside), though their tinting is often voice- or wireless-controlled. Transparent concrete is also used, providing all the lighting of glass with the barrier value of a concrete wall.

HVAC

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are an often-overlooked part of security design. Industrial HVAC systems may use ductwork large enough for a metahuman to fit inside (though orks and trolls simply might not fit). Crawling through ductwork is a laborious process, with a typical movement rate of 1 meter per Combat Turn. Characters may often encounter fan units in the ducting, which require a Hardware + Logic (2) Test to disable. Fans might also be alarmed in the same manner as doors and windows. If a character sticks her hand, falls, or is otherwise forced into a working fan, that character will suffer 3P damage from ductwork fans and 6P from main fans.

Some facilities employ an air duct "cooking system" that scorches passing air with UV light, killing most airborne pathogens and preventing their spread through the facility. These UV furnaces pose no hazard to metahumans that pass through, and they can be disabled with a Hardware + Logic (2) Test.

PERSONNEL

Personnel include security guards, mages, and hackers/riggers (spiders). Depending on the site, these may be rent-a-cops armed with nonlethal weaponry, experienced private security contractors like Lone Star or Knight Errant with the right to employ lethal force in self defense, or a corp's own private militarized sec forces with anything-goes extra-territoriality on their side. They are charged with maintaining a presence (physical, wireless, or astral), patrolling, and personally ensuring that everything—building, inventory, and residents/visitors/employees—remain safe and secure. They are trained to respond to intrusions and threats according to a pre-established response plan, which may range from "lockdown and call the cops" to "lockdown, call in backup,

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scramble a highly-armed threat response squad, and blast anything that moves." Smart shadowrunners would do well to attempt to learn their standard operating procedures in order to avoid them or neutralize them, as necessary. Examples of how to handle security at differing threat levels can be found in the *Friends and Foes* chapter, p. 280.

Security magicians tend to be rare, and are only typically found on site at important secure sites; bound spirits (p. 187) are more commonly employed, with orders to alert/obey on-site security. Private contractors that offer magical security typically have magicians that astrally patrol a selection of sites and respond to alarms with spirit backup.

Spiders (security hackers/riggers) are more common, and may serve as the focal point for a site's security operations—though not always from on-site. They typically field an assortment of sensors and drones.

Guard animals are sometimes used, including paranormal watch critters and normal guard dogs, sometimes augmented with cyberware or bioware. Guard critters are usually only used in remote or restricted areas (within facilities, where the critters cannot escape), and safeguards are used to disable or track the critters should they get out of control.

TECHNICAL SECURITY

Technical security includes **alarms, sensors, scanners, locks,** and **automated systems.** Anyone truly concerned about security—from Mom and Pop stores wanting a simple alarm, to AAA megacorps outfitted with all of the above—will incorporate some form of sensors, locks, and more.

Hacking Devices: Technical devices are never foolproof, of course, and can be fooled or subverted, either by hacking into them (via wired Matrix or wireless network if they feature wi-fi connectivity) or by manual manipulation. The rules for hacking are detailed in *The Wireless World,* p. 216.

Unless otherwise noted, manually manipulating a device typically requires a Hardware + Logic (Device rating x 2, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test—the character also needs a hardware tool kit (p. 332); apply modifiers as appropriate from the Build/Repair Table, p. 138. The gamemaster should feel free to adjust the threshold and interval for this test as he feels appropriate for the device or situation.

ALARMS

Alarms, a form of passive security, are one of the most basic elements of a technical-based security system. Alarms serve to alert guards, security hackers/riggers, or remote monitoring services that something is amiss and must be dealt with. Alarms may be silent, alerting only the security or police in order to catch intruders unaware, or they may go off as flashing lights and loud warning klaxons that resound throughout the building. Individual components of a security system may be alarmed, like a fire door that triggers a warning bell when opened.

Many alarms, particularly on doors and windows, are based on electrical circuits. While closed, the circuit is complete and no alarm will sound. If the door or window is opened, however, the circuit is broken, triggering the alarm. Windows may have alarm circuits wired into the glass, so if the glass is broken an alarm goes off. To bypass such alarms, the circuit's electrical contacts must be fooled while the door/window is open. This requires a Hardware + Logic (5, 1 minute) Test, though depending on the design it may be more difficult.

Capacitance wire, or **proximity wire,** detects the electrical charge of a metahuman body (or animal) within 2 meters. It is often used around a building's perimeter fencing, on secure entranceways, or on special objects, and either triggers a regular alarm or switches on security cameras and other measures. For redundancy, it might be used in conjunction with motion sensors (p. 261).

TRIP BEAMS

Trip beams are used as perimeter alarms or across entranceways. Trip beams consist of lasers that emit visible or infrared light, mirrors, and laser detectors. If the beam of light is interrupted (by someone or something passing through it), the alarm goes off. These systems can be very complex and sometimes labyrinthine, requiring anywhere from several to twenty or more mirrors and reflectors in order to aim the light beam where desired. Noticing a trip beam requires a Perception + Intuition (2) Test for visible beams, or a threshold of 3 for infrared beams. Laser beams are more noticeable in smoke or if an aerosol spray is used (though this might trigger some sensitive systems in environmentally-controlled areas), so apply a +2 dice pool modifier to the Perception Test in those conditions.

Squeezing past a trip beam maze requires an Agility + Reaction Test against a gamemaster-determined threshold. Trip beams may also be fooled by simultaneously lining up proxy laser emitters of the proper wattage into each detector on the system, requiring a similar Agility + Reaction Test. A calibrated system of mirrors may also be used to rearrange the trip beam pattern so that someone can pass through.

PRESSURE PADS

Pressure pads complement any indoor security in areas that are restrictive or off-limits to unauthorized personnel (particularly as at night, when no one should be about). These are weight-triggered sensors that will react to any amount of weight, or when there is too much weight beyond a pre-programmed amount (where the maximum allowable weight is five or ten pounds heavier than the heaviest authorized individual). A **pressure mesh** works similarly, but is largely for outdoor use and installed in the ground, and is less sensitive than pads. Noticing pressure mesh or pads is very difficult, requiring a Perception Test threshold of 3 for pads and 4 for mesh. If a character steps on a pad, however, it is more apparent (reduce the threshold by 2)—but by then it is usually too late. After a character steps onto the mesh or pad, however, a second Perception test should be rolled: Threshold 1 for pads and Threshold 3 for mesh. If successful, the character can attempt to remove the pressure before it exceeds the device's weight allowance. This is very difficult, requiring a Reaction + Intuition (3) Test, with the character's Body serving as a negative dice pool modifier.

SENSORS

Sensors are a form of passive security, waiting for a particular kind of input before sending an alarm signal. As long as this input never arrives, they remain silent.

Motion sensors pick up on movement. They transmit an ultrasonic field, and react to changes in that field when anything enters it. Intruders may detect the ultrasonic field by using an ultrasound sensor set to passive mode within 5 meters. Defeating a motion sensor requires that characters move very slowly through the field, one half-meter per Combat Turn, and succeeding in an Infiltration + Agility (3) Test. Characters amped for speed may find it difficult to maneuver in this way; apply a negative dice pool modifier equal to their extra Initiative Passes.

Sound detectors and **vibration detectors** utilize sensitive microphones to pick up sounds/vibrations. They can be programmed with pattern recognition algorithms to ignore some sounds/vibrations, but

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will easily pick up everything else not fitting within those parameters. Characters attempting to sneak by a known sound detector must succeed at an Infiltration + Agility (3) Test (Silence or Stealth spells can also be used). Some sound detectors maybe programmed to only trigger an alert when certain sounds are detected, such as gunshots (perhaps even triangulating the sound's origin with multiple detectors).

Security cameras fill a broad spectrum, from the standard visual type to low-light, infrared, and ultraviolet cameras or sensors. Cameras help security personnel maintain a secondary eye on every significant area of traffic when guards are patrolling, and maintain watch when personnel are not in physical or astral proximity.

Infrared, also known as **thermographic,** picks up on body heat signatures (but may be fooled with an improved Invisibility spell). One security trick is to use surfaces that are reflective on the infrared spectrum on corner areas, so that thermographic cameras can detect intruders from around corners where the cameras themselves cannot be normally seen.

Low-light sensors amplify the ambient light in order to produce an image in darkened spots (making the camera harder to spot), but may be overpowered with bright light. Shadowrunners may take advantage of this with flash-bang grenades (p. 324).

How well any of these cameras or sensors may be spotted will depend partially on how well they are hidden. Typical cameras on fixed or pivoting mounts can be easily seen if characters are looking for them. Smaller micro-cameras have a threshold of 3 to be spotted with a Perception Test. If the camera is hidden, modify the Threshold to spot the camera as per the Perception Tests Table (p. 136), applying any appropriate modifiers to the test.

SCANNERS

Scanners are active security measures; their job is to search for anything amiss, instead of waiting for a trigger.

Olfactory scanners, also known as **chemical detection systems** or **chemsniffers,** analyze molecules in the air for nitrogen-rich particles like those given off in explosives or firearm ammunition. To detect explosives or ammunition, roll a dice pool equal to the chemsniffer's rating against a threshold 2 (3 if the explosives/ammo are hermetically sealed). Apply modifiers as noted on the Chemical Detection Modifiers table.

Olfactory scanners can also be used as **pheromone scanners** to detect the pheromones that metahuman bodies release into the air. These are uncommon, but can be useful for detecting individuals who have otherwise effectively concealed themselves via technological or magical means from regular security devices. Pheromone scanners are sophisticated enough to tell the difference between a metahuman and an animal and can also pinpoint gender, but are otherwise not advanced enough to single out an individual. In order to pick up the scent, the scanner rolls its Device rating against a threshold of 3 (2 for characters with tailored pheromone bioware). The scanner's dice pool is further modified as noted on the Pheromone Scanner Table.

It's a given that shadowrunners and other criminals will, at some point, need to smuggle weaponry into a building and past security checkpoints. **Magnetic anomaly detectors (MADs)** detect metallic substances for the purpose of finding concealed weaponry. (Naturally, MADs do not work against non-metallic substances like wood, stone or plastic.) To determine if the detector finds a weapon, make a test using the device's rating as the dice pool; a single hit will detect any ferrous-metal weapons or objects (guns, knives, etc).

CHEMICAL DETECTION MODIFIERS TABLE

SITUATION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Every 10 rounds of ammunition	+1
Every grenade	+1
Every 30 grams of standard (non-plastique) explosive	+1
Every 100 grams of plastique	+1
Explosives/ammo contained in plastic	–1

CYBERWARE SCANNER TABLE

ITEM	THRESHOLD
Standard cyberware, weapon	1
Alphaware, other items	2
Betaware	3
Deltaware	4
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIERS**
2 or more implants/items	+1
4 or more implants/items	+2
6+ implants/items	+3

PHEROMONE SCANNER TABLE

CONDITION	DICE POOL MODIFIER
Character exertion (lifting, running, fighting)	+2
Menstruating (females only)	+2

Millimeter wave detection systems, also known as **cyberware scanners,** process video taken in the millimeter wave spectrum to identify the energy signature of cyberware and concealed items (specifically weapons) on a person. These devices can "see through" thick layers of clothing and other concealment to identify items from a distance of 15 meters away. To determine if the detector scans cyberware or a prohibited item, roll the Device rating and compare the hits scored to the thresholds given on the Cyberware Scanner Table. Millimeter wave scans can detect any non-biological item by its shape and composition, assuming the item is listed in the device's database. If the threshold is reached, the scanner detects the item/implant and notes its general locations and type; additional hits provide more detail (function, model, grade, etc.).

LOCKS

Nearly everything with any worth will be locked away.

Key locks are the simplest kind, involving the use of tumblers and metal keys or combination code dials to open doors instead of cards or some other device. They are also not in very common use due to reliance on more sophisticated means of security, but some places (like private safes or low-end businesses) may still use them out of nostalgia, because they can't afford better, or because rarity equates better security. Defeating a key lock requires a Locksmith + Agility (variable, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test, with threshold determined by the quality of the lock. Autopickers (p. 335) add their rating in dice to this test; their rating may also be used in place of Lockpicking skill.

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Transponder-embedded keys contain a calibrated resistor that completes a circuit in the lock. In order to pick such a lock by hand, an electronics kit is needed to generate the appropriate electrical characteristics. This requires a successful Hardware + Logic (Lock Rating, 1 minute) Test at the same time the lock is picked. If the same character is picking the lock and calibrating the electrical feed, apply a –2 dice pool modifier to both tests.

MAGLOCKS

Powered magnetic locks are widespread in 2070, and come in a wide range of sophistication. Maglock "keys" can be physical (keypad, swipe card, proximity card, memory string), biometric (see below), or any combination thereof. Maglocks are often accessible via the local network (wired or wireless) and may be monitored by a security hacker/rigger. Maglock systems often log all usages, keeping track of the time, date, and identity of each user.

The first step to bypassing a maglock is to remove the case and access the maglock's electronic "guts." This requires a successful Hardware + Logic (Maglock rating x 2, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. If all else fails, the case can be smashed or shot off; treat the case as if it has a Barrier rating equal to the maglock rating. Overzealous attempts to break the case may harm the electronics inside. Reassembling the case afterwards requires the same test.

Some maglock systems come equipped with **anti-tamper systems,** rated between 1 and 4. In order to bypass the anti-tamper circuits, an additional Hardware + Logic (anti-tamper system rating) Test must be made. If this fails, an alarm is triggered.

Keypads utilize an access code (often different access codes for different users). Unless the code is known, defeating a keypad requires rewiring the internal electronics. This means cracking open the case (see above) and then rewiring the circuits—another Hardware + Logic (Maglock rating x 2, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. A maglock sequencer (see p. 335) may also be used instead; make an Opposed Test between the sequencer and maglock ratings. If the sequencer wins, the maglock opens. (Note that the case must still be opened for a sequencer to be applied.)

Cardreaders verify the authenticity of swipe cards or RFID proximity cards. They can be defeated using the same method as for keypads—by removing the case and tampering with the works. Maglock passkeys (p. 335) may also be used to defeat cardreaders, and don't require breaking the case open. If a valid keycard is acquired, it can be copied with a keycard copier (p. 335) in order to create a forged keycard. Make an Opposed Test between the passkey/forged keycard rating and the maglock rating. If the passkey/forged keycard wins, the maglock opens.

BIOMETRICS

Biometric systems work by measuring a "print" (finger, retinal, voice, etc.) from the user and checking the measured print for matches in a database of authorized prints. This means biometric scanners almost always have a local network connection (wired or wireless). Because the print-matching takes place in a remote database, biometric scanners tend to be harder to bypass. If the characters can access the database (whether by hacking or other means), they can modify it to include their own print records as authorized personnel. This is a risky route, however, as the system will retain their records and log what they accessed (unless those records are also modified later).

Print scanners scan fingerprints, palm prints, retinal prints, or even the pattern of blood vessels in the face or palm. One method to defeat a print scanner is to coerce an authorized user to apply their

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prints. Alternately, a synthetic print glove-like membrane (a "sleeve") can be manufactured for fingerprints and thumbprints with a cellular glove molder (an authorized print is necessary to copy from, see p. 335). Retinal prints may also be duplicated with the retinal duplication cybereye accessory (p. 340). If a fake print is used, make an Opposed Test between the duplicate and the maglock rating; if the fake wins, the maglock accepts it.

Voice recognition systems require a vocal response from an approved user's voice, usually within a certain amount of time. If the response is not given within the time limit, or someone not approved answers, the system sounds an alarm. Characters can only defeat voice recognition systems by "speaking" with the voice of an approved user—by using a recording, some other simulation, or the real voice. Voice modulator cyberware (see p. 339) can also be used. An Opposed Test must be made between the voice recognition system and the equipment used to bypass it; whichever generates more hits, wins.

Breath, cellular and DNA scanners collect a sample of the user's cells, either off the finger/palm, via hair suction, through exhaled particles, or something similar, and analyze the genetic material. In order to fool such a system, you need a sample of the correct genetic material, preserved in a specially formulated enzyme bath. The enzyme bath can be synthesized in a chemistry shop with a Chemistry + Logic (5, 1 hour) Extended Test.

Facial recognition scanners use imaging lasers, thermographic, and/or ultrasonic waves to map a person's face. These are one of the least intrusive, but also least accurate, of biometric recognition systems. Facial recognition systems are useful not just for letting authorized people in, but also for identifying unwanted people and keeping them out. Prosthetic makeup and biosculpting can be used with varying degrees of effectiveness against facial recognition; make an Opposed Test pitting Disguise + Intuition against the Device rating. Apply a +2 modifier to the character if the system is picking the disguised character out of a crowd.

AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

Automated security systems provide an immediate, automatic response to tripped alarms.

Automated gun systems are simply weapon-mounted drones placed in fixed locations (usually with a 180-degree firing arc) or on slide-mounted track systems. These systems are typically loaded with basic sensors and Targeting autosofts and follow all the standard rules for drones (see p. 244).

Containment systems entail a kind of trap mechanism: when an alarm is triggered, shutters drop down over windows, doors shut and lock, and sliding walls or gates may be activated. They may also include laser or monowire mazes and radio jamming. The objective is to detain intruders within a confined area, after which they may either be removed or "neutralized."

Gas delivery systems can be insidious, dispersing gas in a potentially undetectable manner. Dispersal systems can fill an area of 30 cubic meters in one Combat Turn. The gamemaster determines how far and how quickly a gas spreads. The gamemaster may secretly conduct Perception Tests to see if any characters detect the gas, basing the threshold on the noticeability of the gas used (many gases are colorless and odorless). Characters equipped with an olfactory scanner (see p. 334) may be alerted by their gear. See p. 255 for details on various gases and how they will affect characters.

Marking systems are designed to tag intruders with a discreet marking so that they can be later identified if captured. Marking methods include ultraviolet dye, RFID tags, DNA-encoded material, or even nanite tags. The markers are typically sprayed unobtrusively over exitways and other traffic areas.

MAGICAL SECURITY

There are a number of methods used to keep astral intruders out, the most common of which are bound patrolling spirits and astral barriers such as wards (see p. 194). Various dual-natured paranormal critters are often used as watch animals, as they can detect and attack astral as well as mundane targets. Respectable security companies train their guards to detect the "shivers" that mundanes sometimes feel when an astral form passes through them (see p. 193).

Some sites with security magicians on hand utilize the Mage Sight fiberoptic system (see p. 332).

BIOFIBER

Biofiber is a form of bio-engineered plant life similar to wood, grown in large, flat sheets. Biofiber is naturally dual natured, existing on the astral and physical planes simultaneously. So long as the biofiber is kept alive (using complex nutrients), it functions as a barrier against astral forms, just like a physical wall. The biofiber has a Force rating like any other astral barrier and functions in the same manner (see p. 194). Biofiber sheets are placed inside the walls of high-security areas, provided with nutrients and carefully monitored. Destroying the astral barrier kills the biofiber. Biofiber is notoriously sensitive and difficult to maintain. It is available in a maximum Force Rating of 10.

MATRIX SECURITY

Most businesses utilize wireless networks for convenience. To protect these networks from intrusion, however, they are often encrypted and operated in hidden mode, set to only interact with specified devices. Others operate with an extremely low Signal rating, so that you must be well within corporate grounds to access the network. High-security systems will avoid wireless altogether, sticking to an internal wired network that is either completely isolated from the Matrix, or linked via secure gateway networks, perhaps through carefully timed and temporary connections. In order to access such systems, a hacker must usually break in and acquire a physical jackpoint connection. Individual systems will be guarded by IC and security hackers, as well as other measures like data bombs and encrypted files (see *Node Security,* p.240).

WI-FI NEGATION

Wi-fi-inhibiting paint and wallpaper are commonly used to prevent an internal wireless network from leaking outside of a building—and to prevent intruders from extending their own networks inside. Wi-fi negation schemes are treated like jammers (p. 329); any Signal rating less than the negating system's rating cannot extend past the boundary.

WI-FI DETECTION

Many security networks—especially those monitored by spiders—automatically scan local wireless networks within range for signs of unusual activity. These networks will take note of new networks, perhaps even intercepting the signal to monitor or sniff out illicit activity. Security may even triangulate a network using multiple signals to determine if the network is originating from within its own boundaries. For this reason smart shadowrunners operate in hidden mode while on runs. For more details on detecting networks, see p. 229.

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REPUTATION

Reputation can be a tricky beast. A solid street rep can do a lot to bolster a runner's career, convince contacts to do a favor and get her out of tense situations without trouble. On the other hand, too much notoriety and the runners will have a hard time finding work, earning trust or intimidating opponents. Likewise, if a runner's rep stretches out of the shadows and into the public sphere, she'll find that other shadow denizens are avoiding her like the plague while the heat breathes down her neck.

Reputation breaks down into three factors: **Street Cred, Notoriety,** and **Public Awareness.** Each of these should be tracked as a separate score by the gamemaster, or noted on the character's record sheet.

STREET CRED

Street Cred represents a character's lifetime accomplishments in the shadows. The longer she's been around, the more he's done and seen, the more respect she'll get from her peers.

Street Cred is based on a character's total earned Karma (see *Karma,* p. 269), divided by 10 and rounded normally. A character who has earned 35 Karma in the course of a game will have a Street Cred of 4 (35 ÷ 10 = 3.5, rounded up to 4).

At the gamemaster's discretion, additional points may be added to a character's Street Cred for any epic adventures, stunning victories, unbelievable escapes, or similar eyebrow-raising accomplishments.

STREET CRED USES

Street Cred applies as a dice pool bonus to any applicable Social Skill Test in which the character's reputation is known and is a factor. For example, a fixer with a Street Cred of 3 would receive a +3 dice pool modifier when making an Intimidation Test. Note that this modifier only applies when the character is dealing with people who are aware of her reputation. This also means that a character masquerading as someone else with a substantial Street Cred could use the impersonated character's Street Cred rating when dealing with others, if the gamemaster wishes to allow it.

The Street Cred dice bonus can never exceed the character's Charisma.

NOTORIETY

A character's Notoriety reflects the negative side of her reputation—how difficult she is to get along with, how stubborn she is, how many stupid mistakes she's made and failures she's had. Notoriety can also reflect callousness, untrustworthiness, and any evil aspects to a character's personality that might spur others to steer clear of her.

Each character starts off with a Notoriety of 0—people have a neutral opinion of her. Modify this according to the following qualities possessed by the character (plus one point per negative quality, minus one point per positive quality):

Positive Qualities: Blandness, First Impression, Lucky

Negative Qualities: Addiction, Bad Luck, Combat Paralysis, Elf Poser, Gremlins, Incompetent, Infirm, Ork Poser, Scorched, SINner (criminal SIN only), Spirit Bane, Uncouth, Uneducated

GAINING NOTORIETY

The gamemaster awards additional Notoriety points for appropriate actions or circumstances. Here are some examples of things that may earn a character additional Notoriety points:

- Failing or refusing to finish a run.
- Insulting or otherwise pissing off a Mr. Johnson.
- Picking a fight and losing.
- Incredibly obnoxious or callous behavior. ("Forget returning that orphanage's money. Let the brats starve.")
- Getting arrested.
- Betrayal.
- Killing an innocent person.
- Earning a powerful enemy or contract on her life.
- Working for a dragon.
- Exceptional bad luck.

Note that a character should never earn a Notoriety point for something he's already earned a Notoriety point for, unless he has somehow gone about it in an innovative way.

Characters can reduce their Notoriety by permanently sacrificing some of their Street Cred. For every 2 points of Street Cred burned, Notoriety can be reduced by 1.

NOTORIETY APPLICATIONS

Depending on the situation, Notoriety serves as a modifier to the character's Street Cred. If a character is trying to earn someone's trust or otherwise win them over, subtract Notoriety from Street Cred before applying the Street Cred dice pool modifier to Social Skill Tests. (Note that Street Cred cannot be reduced below 0.)

In situations that involve intimidation or fear, Notoriety is added as a bonus to the character's Street Cred instead. A troll ganger with Street Cred 2 and Notoriety 4 has an effective +6 dice pool bonus for intimidating her minions.

Like Street Cred, Notoriety is only effective when applied to people who would know of the character's notorious rep.

Note that gamemasters can use the threat of Notoriety to reduce the amount of out-of-character amoral behavior, gun-bunny hijinks, and outrageous body counts in their games. Highly notorious characters are also more likely to be targeted by police, revenge-seekers, or young hotshots looking to make a rep for themselves.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public Awareness measures how much the character appears on the radar of the media, authorities, and public at large. The stronger a character's rep grows in the shadows, the more likely it is that people outside the shadows will know of her as well.

Public Awareness is the sum of a runner's Street Cred and her Notoriety, divided by 3 and rounded down. Public Awareness can never go below 0—a nobody is still a nobody, in or out of the shadows. For example, a very successful street samurai with a Street Cred of 7 and Notoriety of 2 would have a Public Awareness score of 3 (7 + 2 = 9; 9 ÷ 3 = 3). At the gamemaster's discretion, any exceptional efforts the character has made to keep her profile low and activities secret can be used to reduce this score. Likewise, if anything the character does is intentionally or inadvertently splashed on the news, the gamemaster should increase the score accordingly.

A character whose Public Awareness is 3+ is well known among those who keep an eye on the shadows; the name of a character with a Public Awareness of 10+ is a household word, and may even have sim or trid characters based on her legendary exploits.

PUBLIC AWARENESS APPLICATIONS

Public Awareness serves as a dice pool bonus for any appropriate Knowledge Skill Tests to determine if a character from outside of the shadows has heard of the shadowrunner, and what they might know of the runner's history and rep. If a character is aware of the runner's rep, then the rules for the runner's Street Cred and Notoriety apply.

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While Public Awareness may help you score that novel contract based on your shadowrunning memoirs, it will mostly act as a detriment to your shadowrunning career. If your Public Awareness is 3 or higher, you can expect police and security agencies to have a dossier on your activities, and you may even be singled out as an example for capture/prosecution/elimination. Likewise, potential Johnsons and even other runners might consider you too high-profile to work with.

IDENTIFICATION, PLEASE

Identity is something that shadowrunners take very seriously—especially when it comes to their real ones. Thanks to the modern Matrix and advances in data storage and data mining, it's easy to track people by their names, SINs, credit transfers, and even the physical movements of their commlink if you know what you're doing. As most shadowrunners value their privacy, they tend to take anonymity to an extreme.

WHAT'S IN A SIN?

The UCAS introduced System Identification Numbers (SINs) in 2036, requiring the registration of every UCAS citizen. Individuals residing in the UCAS without a SIN are considered "probationary citizens," which means they are not allowed to vote and have few to no civil rights. Nowadays, SINs are legally registered at birth—assuming the birth is legally recorded. Many births still happen outside of normal channels—especially in poor or barrens areas.

Not every nation in the world uses SINs—most do, but they may name them differently (for game purposes, however, we use SIN as the default term). The GSINR (the Global SIN Registry, a fully-funded project of the Corporate Court) is the regulatory body that sets the worldwide standards for how SINs are used and assigned—and also what data is correlated with them. Extraterritorial corporations are required to adhere to these protocols by corporate law, issuing corporate SINs to track and register their employees/citizens. National and corporate SIN registries are required to share their data with the GSINR, but otherwise they keep the data confidential, only making it available to law enforcement and other appropriate agencies. Though rare, dual citizenship (such as UCAS/Ares) is possible; in such cases, you would have two separate SINs. Some corporations and nations, however, will revoke your citizenship if you become a citizen of another country or corporation.

The Crash of '64 destroyed thousands if not millions of identity records, creating a surge in the SINless population. In response, many governments staged "SIN amnesty programs" and allowed the SINless to (re-)register, no questions asked—which many took advantage of to start new lives. Others, however, preferred that their pasts were gone, and took the opportunity to stay in the shadows. The truth is, many people have valid concerns (and not so rational paranoia) about how SINs are used and how their lives are monitored and tracked by governments and megacorps, and so prefer to stay outside of the system—or at least to use a false ID whenever possible.

It is possible to register with the UCAS government and obtain a SIN, but to do so one must prove that they are a solid, upstanding citizen and that the UCAS has something to gain by admitting them. For most SINless members of the sprawl, this is not a viable option.

The actual numbers that compose a SIN are generated by a complex formula from several pieces of personal data. What this means is that law enforcement officials can determine your birthdate, state or country of origin, citizenship, and initials from your SIN.

As shadowrunners are denizens of the underworld, it is assumed that they are SINless by default, unless they start off with the SINner negative quality (p. 95).

SINLESS CONSEQUENCES

If a SINless person is arrested, several things can happen. It is not uncommon for the SINless to be horribly abused, locked away, or "disappeared," as they have no rights to speak of and no datatrail to even prove they exist. Most SINless arrestees, however, are issued a "criminal SIN"—which they are then stuck with for the rest of their lives. That SIN is now archived in multiple law-enforcement databases and indexed with their photograph, biometric prints, DNA records, and tissue sample.

If you lack a SIN, many activities that normal citizens take for granted become impossible for you. For example, you need a SIN to get a legal job, open a bank account, own property, go to school, rent an apartment, establish utility services, and so forth. Most importantly, a SIN is now required for any form of legal travel—including just buying a bus ticket. Even those with criminal SINs will find it difficult to perform many of these activities without red tape and hassle. When an individual with a SIN dies, the SIN is tagged to indicate that it belongs to a deceased individual, and is then deactivated (but otherwise kept on file).

COMMLINKS, CREDSTICKS, AND ID

It used to be that one's SIN and other forms of identification were all stored on credsticks, pen-sized tubes that served simultaneously as ID and credit card. Since the Matrix went wireless, however, all of this information was transferred to the commlink, and credsticks only survive as certified but relatively anonymous means of payment. In addition, all of a person's credentials and necessary personal data (licenses, credit history, health insurance, cred accounts, etc.) are stored in encrypted form on her commlink (with a default Encryption rating of 5). For privacy reasons, this information is usually not broadcast as part of their personal profile for social networking, though some high-security areas may require that key information (particularly name and SIN) be broadcast.

These personal details can also be transmitted (again in encrypted format) on an as-needed basis, as authorized by the user. For example, a store may ask for your cred account information (and possibly credit history or even licensing if you're buying restricted goods), a hospital will ask for your medical records and insurance, while a security checkpoint might demand your SIN, passport, and criminal record. For security purposes, such data can also be transmitted at a lower Signal rating, via a short-range, line-of-sight infrared beam connection, or by physically linking the commlink to a terminal and transmitting by fiberoptic cable.

ONLINE ACCOUNTS

The commlink is also used to keep track of an individual's bank accounts. To spend cred, you subscribe to your bank's online network and authorize transactions or simply authorize automatic deductions in appropriate situations. Since most transactions occur in real time, it's very difficult to overdraw one's account, but it can still happen if you don't keep track of automatic deductions.

The problem with most bank accounts, however, is that they require a SIN and they keep transaction records, meaning that all of your purchases create a datatrail. Naturally, however, enterprising capitalists and criminal institutions have risen to the challenge. Numerous "offshore" banks provide secure accounts to legitimate users, but unlike standard banks they keep their customer information private, do not share transaction data, and do not report to government authorities. Likewise, many criminal syndicates have their own black credit insti-

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CERTIFIED CREDSTICK TABLE	
CREDSTICK TYPE	MAXIMUM FUNDS
Standard	5,000¥
Silver	20,000¥
Gold	100,000¥
Platinum	500,000¥
Ebony	1,000,000¥

tutions online, providing accounts to anyone who pays the exorbitant fees, no questions asked, and even offering lines of credit (just beware the legbreakers if you're overdue).

CERTIFIED CREDSTICKS

The most common method of handling payment in the shadows is via certified credstick. Similar to a cash or bearer bond, a certified credstick is not registered to a specific person and is worth the amount of credit encoded on it. It requires no identification to use, and can't be used as ID. The financial institutions that issue them encode them with raw funds so that anyone can use them—not just the person to whom it was originally issued. Banks usually charge a small percentage to create a certified credstick.

Certified credsticks are a popular form of payment among those who wish to retain a semblance of anonymity. Because of this, there are still plenty of businesses that will accept certified credsticks for payment purposes, though higher-classed establishments may give the holder funny looks.

Banks issue certified credsticks in certain colors to generally indicate the limit of funds they carry; there is no limit on transaction amounts, however, except to the limit of what the credstick carries (see the Certified Credstick Table).

FAKE ID

In 2072, faking an ID—whether a SIN, medical record, restricted-item license, credit history, or the whole shebang—is a monumental task. Thanks to the modern Matrix, ID verification is handled by simultaneously accessing, cross-referencing, and double-verifying multiple databank records though a dozen or more channels. This means that falsifying an identity involves a massive amount of electronic manipulation and false data propagation. An average Joe has no hope of creating a usable false ID. Only an extremely well-connected expert (such as an exceptionally good hacker or professional forger) possesses the resources to pull off a scam of these proportions. In fact, entire shadow organizations exist solely for the purpose of creating false identities. Normally based in one of the world's data havens, these organizations maintain contact with the "real world" only through secret channels.

Though it is possible that a clever hacker might supplement a fake ID by inserting key supporting data into the proper records at the right time—like adding a memo from the boss about how a maintenance team was called in for unscheduled repairs to a security guard's shift notices—these efforts should be temporary at best and easily defeated with a bit of verification.

The best way to acquire fake ID is to simply buy it from a vendor with established connections. Thankfully the market for disposable identities is quite competitive, and many ID forgers are still exploiting the loopholes, backdoors, and other bounty they experienced as a result of the Crash of '64, so acquiring a fake ID or three is within a shadowrunner's price range. See *IDs and Credsticks,* p. 331, for prices and availability.

USING A FORGED ID

Whenever a character uses her fake identity to pass an ID check (whether for buying a dress or crossing a border), she must make an Opposed Test pitting her fake ID's rating against the rating of the verification system. The side achieving the most successes wins. If both sides achieve the same number of successes, the verifying system instructs the operator to further "interrogate" the individual offering the ID. The operator's display screen will then flash a series of questions based on the bearer's history that the bearer must answer correctly. If the individual using that ID answers any question incorrectly, the verifier rejects the ID.

LIFESTYLES

Even though it may sometimes seem that many *Shadowrun* characters live in a bar or a rundown squat, each character actually has a unique lifestyle. Lifestyle measures the quality of a character's daily life and her living expenses, including shelter, food, entertainment, clothing and so on. It does not cover technical resources, weapons, magical equipment, professional hirelings, or other major but not personal items. The player and the gamemaster can also decide on other interesting details of the character's lifestyle, with almost infinite variations. For example, a character might live in an abandoned building, but install enough conveniences in it to qualify as having a Luxury lifestyle. Keeping all those gadgets running, buying security, maintaining water supplies, and keeping a low profile will cost her as much as a mansion in a ritzy neighborhood.

Players can choose from one of six lifestyles: Luxury, High, Middle, Low, Squatter, or Streets. They may also temporarily find themselves saddled with the Hospitalized lifestyle (see below). A character living a Middle or higher lifestyle can support guests at a rate of 10 percent above her own cost of living per guest. A host can also keep a guest at a lower lifestyle than her own by paying 10 percent of the cost of the guest's lifestyle.

Characters may only buy one lifestyle. This lifestyle truly reflects the runner's standard living circumstances. Additional living amenities such as hotel stays, workshops, safehouses, and so on are handled as separate costs. Likewise, while lifestyle accounts for the costs of maintaining a vehicle (or paying for other methods of transportation), it does not account for the cost of a vehicle itself—that must be purchased separately.

LUXURY

This lifestyle offers the best of everything: ritzy digs, lots of high-tech toys, the best food and drink, you name it. The character has a household staff, maid service, or sophisticated drones to do the chores. She gets by in her massive mansion, snazzy condo, or the penthouse suite in a top hotel. Home security is top-of-the-line, with well-trained guards, astral security, and quick response times. Her home entertainment system is better than that in public theaters and accessible from anywhere in the home. She's on the VIP list at several exclusive restaurants and clubs, both real and virtual. This is the life for the high-stakes winners in the world of *Shadowrun:* high-level executives, government big shots, Yakuza bigwigs, and the few shadowrunners who pull off the big scores (and live to spend their pay).

Cost: 100,000¥ a month and up!

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HIGH

A High lifestyle offers a roomy house or condo, good food, and the technology that makes life easy. The character may not have the same perks as the really big boys, but neither does she have as many people gunning for her. Her home is in a secure zone or protected by good, solid bribes to the local police contractor and gang boss. She has a housekeeping service or enough tech to take care of most chores. This is the life for the well-to-do on either side of the law: mid-level managers, senior Mob bosses, and the like.

Cost: 10,000¥ a month

MIDDLE

The Middle lifestyle offers a nice house or condo with lots of comforts. Characters with this lifestyle sometimes eat nutrisoy as well as higher-priced natural food, but at least the autocook has a full suite of flavor faucets. This is the lifestyle of ordinary successful wage-earners or criminals.

Cost: 5,000¥ a month

LOW

With this lifestyle, the character has an apartment, and nobody is likely to bother her much if she keeps the door bolted. She can count on regular meals; the nutrisoy may not taste great, but at least it's hot. Power and water are available during assigned rationing periods. Security depends on how regular the payments to the local street gang are. Factory workers, petty crooks, and other folks stuck in a rut, just starting out, or down on their luck tend to have Low lifestyles.

Cost: 2,000¥ a month

SQUATTER

Life stinks for the squatter, and most of the time so does the character. She eats low-grade nutrisoy and yeast, adding flavors with an eyedropper. Her home is a squatted building, perhaps fixed up a bit, possibly even converted into barracks or divided into closet-sized rooms and shared with other squatters. Or maybe she just rents a coffin-sized sleep tank by the night. The only thing worse than the Squatter lifestyle is living on the streets.

Cost: 500¥ a month

STREETS

The character lives on the streets—or in the sewers, steam tunnels, condemned buildings, or whatever temporary flop she can get. Food is wherever the character finds it, bathing is a thing of the past, and the character's only security is what she creates for herself. This lifestyle is the bottom of the ladder, inhabited by down-and-outers of all stripes.

Cost: Hey pal, life ain't all bad. It's free.

HOSPITALIZED

This special lifestyle applies only when a character is sick or injured. The character is confined to a hospital: a real one, a clinic equipped as a hospital or a private location with the necessary equipment. Characters cannot own this lifestyle. They only pay for it until they get well or go broke, whichever comes first.

Cost: 500¥ a day for basic care, 1,000¥ a day for intensive care

KEEPING UP THE PAYMENTS

Characters must shell out nuyen each month to keep up a lifestyle. If they miss a payment, they may end up in debt and living a lower lifestyle.

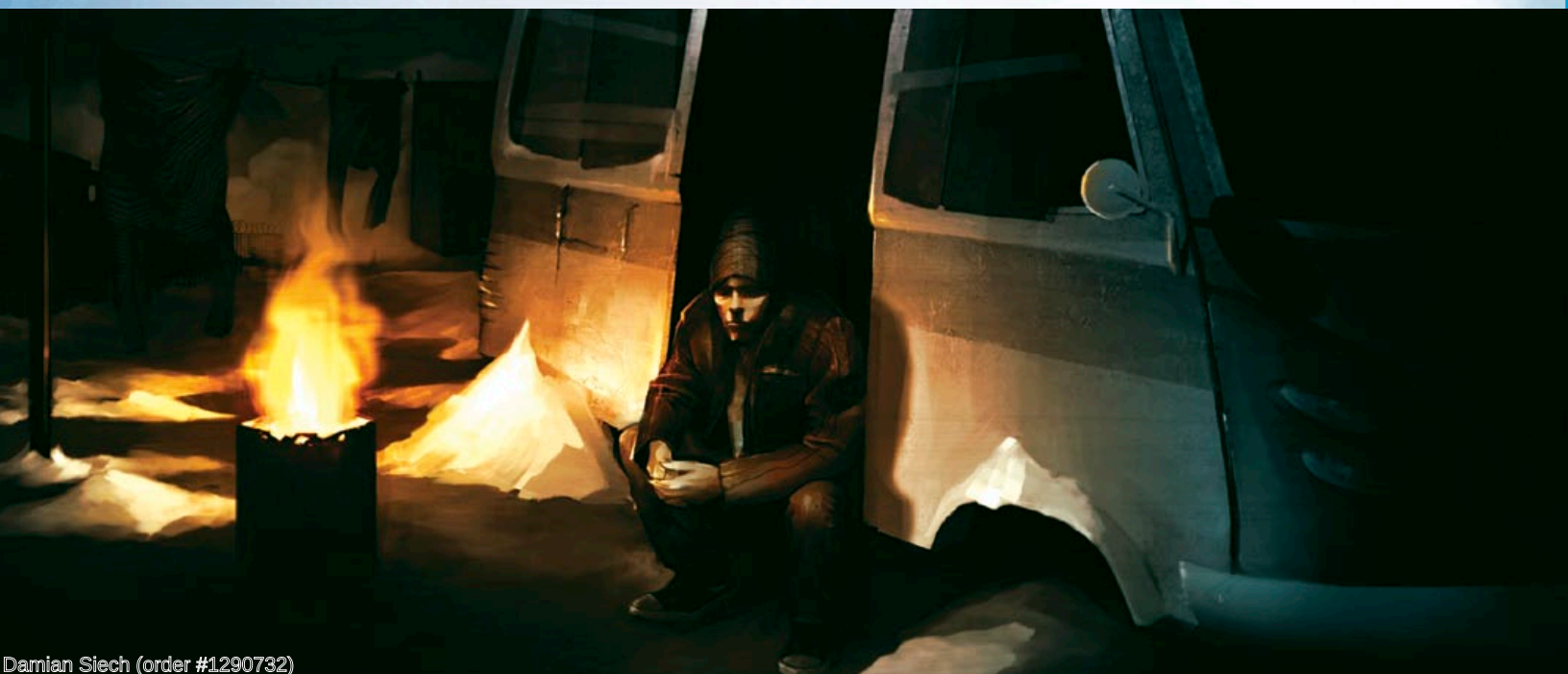
Each month that a character misses a payment, roll 1 die. If the result is greater than the number of consecutive months of payments missed, no sweat. The character's credit (which is part of the cost of the lifestyle) absorbs the missed payment. If she makes the next payment, everything is fine.

If the die roll result is less than or equal to the number of missed payments, the character is in trouble. Her lifestyle gets downgraded one level, which means being evicted from her former home, having some of her tech repossessed, having to hock some clothes, and so on.

The character is also in debt, and owes somebody one month's cost of her former lifestyle. If the character is mostly legit, he's in debt to a credit company. If the character is a criminal or shadowrunner or is living a lifestyle lower than Middle, being in debt may mean that she has defaulted on less formal financial obligations. This situation can lead to earnest discussions with large persons on the subject of debt management. After the character gets out of the hospital, she can pay back the loan. If not, there's always a good market for fresh body parts and used cyberware. "Taking it out of your hide" has a whole new meaning in the year 2070.

BUYING A LIFESTYLE

A character can permanently buy a given lifestyle by making a payment equal to 100 months' upkeep. For example, ten million nuyen buys a permanent life of luxury. This sum represents investments, trust funds, and so on that take care of payments.



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Nothing in life is certain, however. A character can lose a permanent lifestyle through an enemy's action or through sheer bad luck. A hacker can rip investments to shreds, or enemies can blow real estate holdings into scrap. These things depend on how the character's story unfolds, not on how much is her bank account at the time.

If a player wishes, her character can sell a permanent lifestyle of Middle or better. If the character has a couple of months to broker a legitimate deal, roll 2D6. Multiply the result by 10 percent to determine how much of the purchase price the character gets paid for her "property." If the character doesn't have the SINner quality (see p. 95), roll only 1D6. Also roll 1D6 if the character must dump her home and possessions fast or through an agent because she is on the run.

TEAM LIFESTYLES

If a team is particularly tight-knit and lives together (or if a few members of a team want to shack up), they can buy a joint team lifestyle. The cost is an extra 10% per extra person.

If the team is purchasing a Low Lifestyle or higher, one member of the team will have to be the tenant of record. This is the one stuck with the debt if the team doesn't keep up payments.

KARMA

In *Shadowrun*, Karma measures the experience characters gain as they go out on an adventure. They don't get Karma for doing laundry (unless the laundromat is in the middle of a toxic spirit's domain, perhaps). Characters use Karma to improve attributes, skills, and special abilities (see *Character Improvement,* below).

At the end of an adventure, the gamemaster awards Karma to each character, based on how they performed. (Note that an adventure is not necessarily a single playing session. Intricate or involved adventures may last more than one session.) Characters who made substantial contributions to the adventure, as well as players who help make a game session enjoyable, tend to receive more Karma.

AWARDING KARMA

Characters earn 1 Karma Point for surviving an adventure and 1 additional point if they fulfill the large majority (at least two-thirds) of their objectives. If an adventure is particularly challenging, they may receive an extra point, for valor above and beyond the call of duty. This award is applied equally to all characters that can walk away from the run at the end.

Additionally, individual characters may earn additional rewards for being particularly brave or smart, especially if the adventure's outcome hinged on their bravery or plan. Likewise, players can earn Karma awards for their characters for good roleplaying, well-timed humor, impressive drama, and just making the overall session fun and enjoyable.

As a general rule of thumb, characters should be earning an average of 4–5 Karma per adventure, and no more than 10 Karma. If Karma awards are too small, players will become frustrated at the slow advancement of their characters. Likewise, if Karma awards are too high, players will become bored as success comes too easily.

Good Roleplaying: Award 1 Karma to players who stayed mostly in character. Excellent roleplaying may merit 2 Karma points. The standards depend on the play style of the gamemaster and the group, but be flexible. *Shadowrun* is about having fun, not a course in method acting.

Guts: Brave fighters (especially if they're effective) get a point of Karma for their valor, two if they're particularly heroic. This shouldn't be an excuse for stupidity, though; valor is about risking life and limb when no other option is viable. Feel free to withhold this award for stupidly heedless bravery. (Life is tough; it's even tougher if you're stupid.) Characters who have the Guts positive quality may need to work harder to obtain this award.

Smarts: Players whose characters come up with a clever strategy, solve a puzzling clue, or pull off a good scam should get 1 point of Karma (maybe more, if the scheme was particularly dastardly). This award also applies to characters who know when it's smart enough to surrender or run.

Motivation: Players whose characters really drive the story forward, or who are continuously motivated to get to the bottom of the story, may be deserving of a point or two of Karma. Characters who start subplots on their own accord, rather than waiting for the gamemaster to instigate them, are particularly deserving. Initiative is more than just a character attribute, after all.

Right Place and Time: Characters in the right place, with the right skill for the job, should get 1 point of Karma. However, don't award Karma just for good dice rolls. To qualify for this award, a character should have a vital skill and know when to use it—when the moment presents itself, not in advance. It's one thing to know prior to a run that Lockpicking is needed to get into a secure area and buying a Lockpicking skillsoft on that anticipation. It's another thing to be trapped in a dead-end alley with the bad guys closing in, spotting an old doorway by chance, and then picking the lock to let the team escape. The latter is what this award is for.

Humor and Drama: A player who paralyzes the entire group with laughter, all the while acting in character, deserves 1 Karma Point. Likewise, if a player acting in character impresses the group with a particular piece of high drama (or melodrama), that also merits a point of Karma. We're all in this for fun, after all.

KARMA AWARDS

SITUATION	KARMA
Character survived the adventure	1
Character fulfilled most (2/3) objectives	1
Adventure was extra challenging	1
Character was particularly brave or smart	1 or 2
Good roleplaying	1 or 2
Character pushed the storyline forward	1
Character had the right skills at the right place and time	1
Player impressed group with humor or drama	1 or 2

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Players use Karma between adventures to improve attributes and skills, as well as to initiate/submerse and buy spells or complex forms.

Advancement takes place in the interim game time between sessions, sometimes called down time. Characters may not spend Karma to improve skills, attributes, or abilities in the middle of an adventure. Additionally, some advancements may be limited to occurring only once per down time; if the character wants to advance again, she will have to wait until after the end of the next adventure.

Learning Time: It is recommended that a character only be allowed to learn one new skill (or specialization, spell, or complex form)

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between adventures; the character cannot simultaneously improve any existing skills, attributes, etc. during this time. A character can be allowed to improve as many skills, attributes, etc. between adventures as she has Karma, assuming the gamemaster feels the improvement is warranted (a character who hasn't touched a gun in months should be made to practice a bit before improving Pistols skill)—but each can only be improved once. If the time frame between adventures is longer than one month, gamemasters may increase these allowances as appropriate.

IMPROVING SKILLS AND SKILL GROUPS

In between adventures, players can learn new skills, improve existing ones, or master specializations. Each option costs a certain amount of Karma, and certain limitations apply as to how much a character can improve between sessions.

To learn or improve a skill or skill group, the character must succeed in an Extended Intuition + skill Test, with a threshold equal to the new skill rating x 2 and an interval of 1 week (1 month for skill groups). A teacher can add bonus dice to this test (see *Using Instruction*, p. 134).

NEW SKILLS

A character can learn a new Active Skill or skill group she doesn't currently possess. The cost is 4 Karma for a skill and 10 Karma for a skill group, which gives the character the new skill (or skill group) at Rating 1. The cost to learn new Knowledge/Language skills is half that of Active skills: 2 Karma.

IMPROVING EXISTING SKILLS

Characters may also improve an existing Active skill or skill group by 1. The cost for improving a skill is the character's next skill rating x 2. For example, if a character wants to improve her Pistols from 4 to 5, the cost is 5 x 2, or 10 Karma. The cost for improving a skill group is the improved rating x 5. For example, improving the Firearms skill group from 4 to 5 is 5 x 5, or 25 Karma.

Improving a Knowledge or Language skill is half the cost of improving an Active skill: the Karma cost equals the improved skill rating.

Characters can only improve skills or skill groups to a maximum of 6, unless they already possess the Aptitude quality for a skill. (Sorry, you can't acquire Aptitude at the same time you try to improve above the maximum.) If a character raises a skill above 6 through Aptitude, the Karma cost doubles.

Skill Groups: If a character improves any skill in a skill group individually instead of improving the group, the remaining skills are treated as individual skills with individual levels from that point—in other words, the skill group no longer exists.

BUYING SPECIALIZATIONS

Characters may also acquire a specialization to an existing Active Skill or Knowledge Skill that they currently possess. (You cannot specialize on a new skill you're currently learning.) Acquiring a Specialization costs 2 Karma. A character may only know one specialization per skill, and specializations may not be applied to skill groups.

A character that wants to change her specialization in a particular skill may do so at the gamemaster's discretion. In this case, the character pays 2 Karma to learn the new specialization and immediately loses the old one.

CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

IMPROVEMENT	KARMA COST
New Specialization	2
New Knowledge/Language skill	2
New Active skill	4
New Active skill group	10
Improving a Knowledge/Language skill by 1	New rating
Improving an Active skill by 1	New rating x 2
Improving an Active skill group by 1	New rating x 5
Improving an attribute by 1	New rating x 5
New positive quality	BP Cost x 2
Removing a negative quality	BP Bonus x 2
New spell	5
New complex form	2
Improving a complex form by 1	New rating

IMPROVING ATTRIBUTES

A character can increase Physical or Mental Attributes, Magic, Resonance, or Edge by 1 point at a time. The cost of improving a natural attribute rating is the new rating x 5. For example, if a character wants to improve her Agility from 4 to 5, the cost is 5 x 5, or 25 Karma.

Characters can only improve Physical and Mental attributes up to their natural metatype maximum (6 plus metatype attribute modifiers), unless they possess the Exceptional Attribute quality for that attribute (see p. 91). Magic or Resonance may only be improved up to 6 plus the character's initiation/submersion grade.

Raising a natural attribute may raise the augmented attribute value, up to the augmented attribute maximum (natural maximum x 1.5).

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Karma may also be spent to buy new positive qualities, remove old negative qualities, and learn spells and complex forms, as noted below. Awakened characters use Karma for initiation (p. 198) and bonding foci (p. 199), just as technomancers may use Karma for submersion (p. 243).

POSITIVE QUALITIES

If the gamemaster chooses, he can "award" a character with a new positive quality. This should only be done if the quality is appropriate to the character and her recent developments—the character must have worked hard or changed in some way that fits the awarded quality. Some qualities represent a major change, so there should be a good reason for why the character has transformed that way. Players will undoubtedly lobby their gamemasters to "award" them with qualities, but the gamemaster should only award them rarely and after significant effort/events; the gamemaster could even craft an adventure to dramatize the change.

The quality does not come for free, however—the character must pay for the quality at a cost equal to twice the quality's BP cost. If the character does not have the Karma to pay for the quality, any new Karma she earns immediately goes to pay off the quality cost; the character may not spend Karma on anything else until it the quality is paid in full.

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Note that some qualities might also be considered innate—not something a character could ever learn—and so should not be awarded (ambidexterity, for example). The Adept, Magician, Mystic Adept, and Technomancer qualities may not be awarded; they may only be obtained during character creation.

Note that if a gamemaster ever decides that a positive quality is no longer appropriate for a character, that quality may be permanently removed. The character is not "reimbursed" in any way for the lost points.

NEGATIVE QUALITIES

If the gamemaster approves, a character can work off a negative quality by undertaking severe changes as appropriate to the quality. For example, a character with an Addiction quality must work hard to kick the habit, resisting the temptation to relapse for a significant period (chosen by the gamemaster). If the gamemaster feels that a character has made the necessary changes to shrug off a negative quality, he can allow that character to pay twice the quality's BP cost to remove it.

LEARNING SPELLS

Magicians and mystic adepts may use Karma to learn new spells. Learning a spell costs 5 Karma. See *Learning Spells,* p. 182.

LEARNING COMPLEX FORMS

Technomancers may use Karma to learn new complex forms. Learning a new complex form, or improving an existing one, costs the same as learning/improving a Knowledge skill: 2 Karma for a new complex form, Karma equal to the improved rating for an improved complex form. See *Learning Complex Forms,* p. 240.

GAMEMASTER ADVICE

Shadowrun takes place in an exciting, dangerous time with plenty of opportunity for adventure. Whether stealing data from some megacorp's top-secret database, providing security for a visiting dignitary when the drek hits the fan, or busting a valuable researcher out of a high-security corp enclave, the player characters are the heroes—or more likely, the *antiheroes.* The adventures a gamemaster creates should challenge the players' wits more than their guns, and the gamemaster should reward good roleplaying as much or more than lucky dice-rolling.

When getting a group of players together, the gamemaster ought to learn something of their interests or else his adventures are likely to flop. One of the most important things to consider in planning the mission is to invent one that the players would really like to tackle. But don't expect a lot at first. The players probably know less about the ways of the game universe than the gamemaster, and may have only vague ideas about what they want to do. They might want to make money, take on a corrupt corp, get involved with organized crime, and so on. Once they get a few runs under their belts and their characters' life stories take some shape, the players' goals and ideas will become more defined. They may want to hunt down a particular enemy, find a lost love, avenge themselves on a corporation that did them dirty, or find a specific magical treasure from Dunkelzahn's hoard, to give just a few examples. The gamemaster can and should build these ideas and suggestions into major themes in his adventures.

Encourage the players to write out their characters' histories, including background on family, friends, and previous employment. The gamemaster can then draw on those histories to develop adventures that get everyone involved.

BE INFORMED!

Even the simplest, most straightforward game has many elements that the gamemaster must keep in mind: NPCs, the major events of a campaign, the flow of the adventure, and all the other little details that make the game world come alive for the players. Consequently, organizing all of your information for a particular game—and keeping it organized throughout the game—is probably the most important step for keeping track of everything. Maintain a running list of the major characters, including a few notes about each character's appearance and personality. Keep a list of the major events in your campaign. You might even want to keep detailed maps, character statistics, and other references on hand.

Creating detailed notes of the events of each game session can also help you keep important information straight. Review your notes at the start of each session to refresh your memory. Also, listen to what the players say; they might note important points that you didn't write down. They might also see the events of the game differently than you do, and having their perspective can help you keep your campaign interesting for your players.

BE KNOWLEDGEABLE!

A gamemaster should be familiar with the whole game. That doesn't mean memorizing the rulebook, just being familiar with the basic rules and knowing where to find other rules quickly when needed.

Gamemaster screens and notes offer two excellent ways to keep information on often-used rules close at hand. Keep a written outline of the adventure handy for quick reference when necessary. Experienced gamemasters usually improvise more, but those just starting out will usually find it best to think through the adventures in advance and to keep them relatively simple.

BE FAIR!

The gamemaster and players should both work together to create a good story, which means that gamemasters should always strive to play fair when ruling for or against the players. Don't make things too easy for the player characters, but don't needlessly penalize them, either. In general, stick to the rules. If you or your players hate one of them, feel free to change it—but make sure everyone understands and agrees with the way the new rule works. If you decide to use an optional or variant rule, make sure you apply it in every appropriate situation. Keep special cases and exceptions to a minimum.

Also, remember that NPCs are not omniscient; they should not know everything the gamemaster knows, such as the player characters' skills, weapons, spells, and so on. The gamemaster controls the NPCs, but should not allow them to act or plan based on knowledge that would not reasonably be available to them.

BE REALISTIC!

Like the player characters, the NPCs played by the gamemaster are people, with individual fears, needs, hopes, and desires. By giving them life, the gamemaster can make the stories that come out of the game more memorable for everybody involved. Give your NPCs personalities, motives, likes, and dislikes. For example, maybe the heartless corporate Johnson who's planning on double-crossing the player characters has a soft spot for kids because he grew up as an orphan in the Seattle Barrens. Or the toxic shaman your player characters are facing has a grudge against a particular person that warped him, rather than simply hating humanity.

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Critters should likewise act out of realistic motives. Most animals do not kill for no reason or for pleasure. They fight out of necessity—out of hunger, or pain, or to protect their young. Keep in mind also that wild animals live wherever they can find food and shelter—so your player characters shouldn't run into a pack of hell hounds in the Barrens unless someone put them there.

BE FLEXIBLE!

If a player wants to do something not explicitly covered in the rules, don't just refuse on principle. You can always find a skill or attribute rating of some kind that the player can use for a test. Tell the player what skill or attribute applies to the situation and whether her chances of pulling off the intended action are good, indifferent or terrible.

If your group creates a new rule to cover a special situation during a game, decide later what to do with it. The middle of a shadowrun is no place to discuss the fine points of game mechanics. (The rule might become a new "house rule" that will always apply in future, or a one-shot solution you may or may not use again.)

More generally, most players are good at coming up with new and innovative ways to wreck a gamemaster's carefully laid-out adventure plans. When that happens, the gamemaster has two choices: resisting the players' direction or going along with it. The latter is by far the better choice; players forced into situations they are trying to avoid are likely to have less fun, and may even end up resenting the gamemaster for not letting them play out the adventure their way. A gamemaster who can adjust his own plans to account for the players' unexpected actions not only lets the players tell the story, but may also gain inspiration for future events and plot lines.

BE TOUGH!

Challenge the players. If they don't sweat for every Karma point and nuyen they earned, then you're not pushing them hard enough. *Shadowrun* is an adventure game and the players are the "stars" of the adventure, so their characters should face dangerous opponents and survive harrowing escapes in order to achieve their goals. That top-secret corporate research lab is likely to be guarded by a force a lot more lethal than two goons armed with baseball bats, and the local Yakuza boss won't keep his organization's main database on a home computer.

The Professional rating and prime runner systems (see p. 281 and p. 284) are excellent ways to fine-tune the threat that a given opponent poses to player characters. For gamemasters just starting out, keep in mind that on a really rough run, the player characters should ideally win only by the skin of their teeth, if at all.

BE KIND!

Technically, a gamemaster has incredible power over the player characters. He can throw enormous risks at them until their luck runs out and they fail a test, resulting in serious injury or even death. But only cheap bullies do that. Gamemasters who measure their success in trashed character sheets soon find themselves without players.

When player characters get in over their heads, remember that bad guys like to take prisoners. Prisoners can be made to talk or used as hostages. Prisoners can also pay ransom. Most important, prisoners have a chance to escape and live to fight another day.

Sometimes, the gamemaster has to cheat to keep characters alive. If a player makes an unlucky dice roll or an NPC gets off a lucky shot, the character doesn't have to die. Instead, the gamemaster can fudge the dice roll to keep the character alive. Knock the character out, or stick him in the hospital. Don't let a well-developed character die just because the player rolled only 2 hits when the character needed 3. The gamemaster can and should decide that she stays alive long enough to get to a hospital.

The same goes for good NPCs. If the villain the gamemaster spent hours designing gets hit by a lucky shot, her body can always be buried under a collapsing building or suffer some other disaster that "no one could possibly survive." A few months later, the villain can show up, held together by glue and cyberware, ready for revenge against the player characters.

Don't let your characters off easy all of the time, though. There should be a real risk of death now and then—don't be afraid to kill a character off if they asked for it, or if their time has simply come. It will make the others realize how close their own characters are to an unplanned horizontal retirement, and thus heighten the drama and tension.

Being kind also means listening to what your players want out of the game and trying to include their interests in the story. If they want to explore the metaplanes, play special forces characters, or create their own gang in East L.A., let them.

CREATING AN ADVENTURE

Shadowrun offers lots of adventures to play and lots of ways to play them. This section provides suggestions for creating satisfying adventures, though gamemasters will find that experience is ultimately the best teacher.

The main elements of a well-written adventure include the premise, an objective, motivations, opposition and complications.

PREMISE

The premise is the basic plot that gets things going before the player characters get involved. It describes the scale of the adventure, creates the setting and hints at the adventure's theme. The player characters enter the adventure once the premise has been set.

The *scale* of the adventure is the size of the story. In a large-scale adventure, the runners might take on a worldwide conspiracy, while a small-scale adventure might involve taking on a single individual in one city. The *setting* is where the main action will take place—one or more locations, such as the city of Seattle or a small town in the northern California Free State—and a milieu. A setting's milieu is its immediate surroundings and environment. For example, the milieu of a run that revolves around efforts to steal a protoype commlink might be filled with lots of Matrix hardware, plenty of hacking, and so on.

For examples of premises and how they work, look at any published *Shadowrun* adventure. Sourcebooks, supplements, and the Shadowrun website (shadowrun4.com) also provide plenty of information for creating adventure and campaign premises.

OBJECTIVES

In addition to the player characters' survival (a goal in any adventure), each adventure has an objective that the player characters are trying to achieve: finding the lost gizmo, rescuing the kidnap victim, stealing some important data, killing or capturing a target, and so on. At first, the real objective may not be obvious. A shadowrunning team may believe they were pulling a datasteal on a corporate system to get the nuyen to pay off their bookie, until they find the file that outlines the plan to clear out a tribal holding so that the corp can build a plant on the land. If one of the player characters happens to belong to that tribe, the team gets a new objective: foil the corp's plan.

Achieving an adventure's objectives earns Karma for the player characters, and so they must have a real chance to fulfill them. When writing an adventure, keep track of the objectives; let your player characters find clues or be given assignments that will reveal them.

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MOTIVATIONS

Player characters in *Shadowrun* behave like real people, and are unlikely to get involved in anything potentially dangerous unless they have a clear motivation for doing so. The motive can be as simple as needing the money, or as complex as taking on a structure hit against Aztechnology because an Aztech goon squad geeked a runner's best buddy five years ago and the runner swore to pay the corp back someday. The more information the gamemaster gets from players about their characters' lives, beliefs and psychology, the more material he has to build motivation into the adventures. As the players get deeper into the game, their characters will acquire friends, enemies, obligations and quirks that can also provide motivation ... especially for adventures that involve extreme personal risk.

If the gamemaster has an adventure all worked out and the player characters decide to take a pass on it after listening to their Johnson's pitch, the gamemaster should talk to the players about why they don't want to tackle the adventure. If the problem is too little reward, push the fees up. Some characters might want payment in kind rather than credit: magicians want teachers or supplies, hackers want high-end commlinks and programs, samurai like access to new hardware, and so on. Everybody likes information, so maybe Mr. Johnson can come up with the passcodes to a certain network ... ?

If the premise of the adventure bores the players silly, it may be better to simply scrap it in favor of a bull session on the kinds of things the players want their characters to do.

OPPOSITION

Every adventure needs one or more "bad guys" that the team must defeat in order to achieve their objectives, and *Shadowrun* contains a broad range of choices. The opposition can be anyone from individuals the runners know to vast, largely anonymous organizations like the megacorps.

When possible, shadowrunners tackle big targets obliquely, rather than risk getting smeared by openly challenging the opposition to come out and fight. Big organizations tend to be bureaucratic nightmares, riddled with insider politics and slow to react. Shadowrunners can dance around this type of giant, stinging it instead of going head-to-head. Often, large-scale opposition comes down to an individual who runs a piece of the organization rather than the whole show. If the team defeats that individual, the larger organization generally throws the poor sap to the wolves. If the organization later takes revenge on the runners, it does so either because they did it disproportionate harm (they stole the new prototype gizmo and trashed all the research data, thereby costing the corp a fortune) or because higher-ups feel it necessary to make an example of the runners (nobody messes with the Yakuza and lives to talk about it).

Opposition can also come from individuals or from small groups more on a level with the shadowrunning team. This type of opposition can get personal very quickly. A good enemy is a valuable resource in writing future adventures. Depending on how seriously the shadowrunners work him over, such a foe may want to waste the team for no other reason than payback. Adventures can then become a series of duels between the player characters and their enemy, building up to a final showdown.

Don't settle for one-dimensional villains. The antagonist is the main source of conflict and drama in the adventure, and so NPCs who are full-fledged characters with personalities and motives can act in unexpected ways that enrich the story for everyone. Also, keep in mind that NPCs represent only one kind of *Shadowrun* opponent. Anything that acts as an obstacle to the player characters or threatens them can serve as opposition—critters, highly sophisticated security systems, a hostile Awakened wilderness, and so on. Using such non-traditional opponents offers players and gamemasters a chance to stretch their skills, abilities and imaginations.

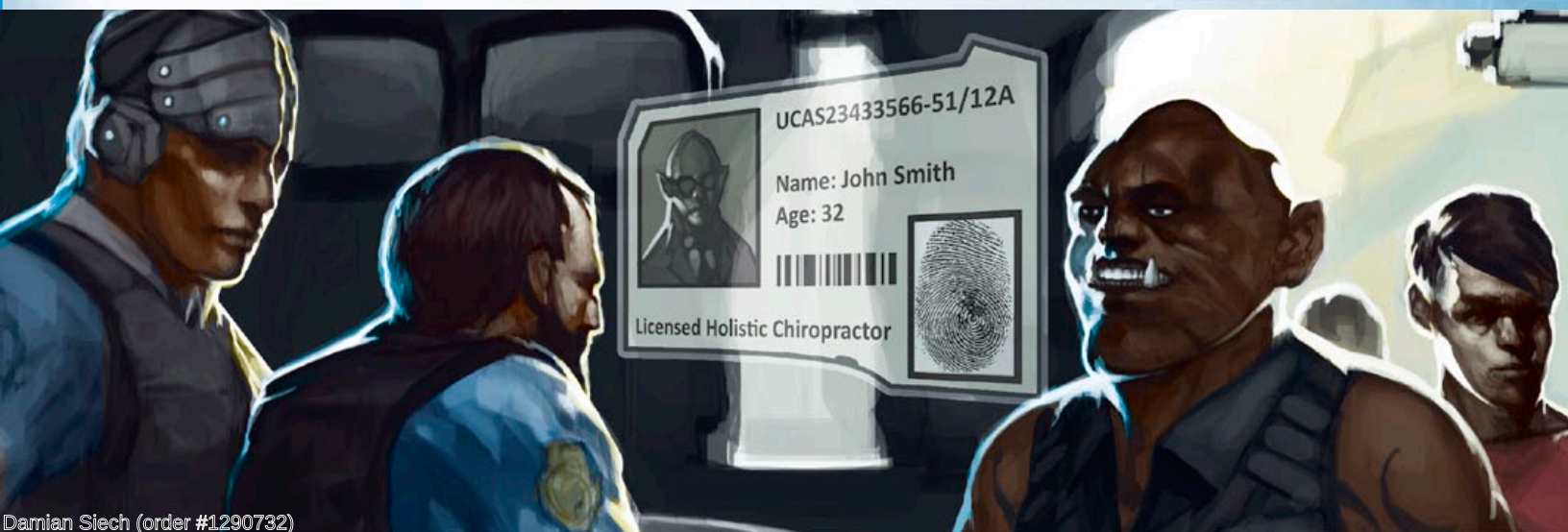
The following entries offer a few suggestions for potential opposition.

Corporations: The corporations of the 2070s—from giants like Ares Macrotechnology to mom-and-pop shops looking to move up the corporate food chain—offer plenty of niches for ruthless individuals willing to use any means necessary to advance their plans, whether helping the corporate bottom line or feathering their own nests. With the recent shift in the status quo following the Crash of '64, business has become more cutthroat than ever. Consequently, corporations are less willing than they might have been in the past to let shadowrunners screw with them and walk away.

Corps are nominally sensitive to public opinion and government oversight; after all, boycotts, lawsuits, and investigations are bad for business. If the characters run up against a corporate executive and trash her illegal scheme, the parent company is likely to piously disclaim any knowledge of the criminal's actions.

Organized Crime: Crime is a growth industry in the 2070s, and the underworld is a rich source of enemies: the Yakuza, the Mafia, the Vory, the Triads, smugglers and pirates. All of these organized crime groups prey on innocent people, not-so-innocent people, and on one another. Shadowrunners affiliated with any of these groups, whether formally or not, may find themselves doing Mob business or getting caught in the middle of a large-scale turf war.

Tackling any criminal organization can be deadly because such groups can move quickly and decisively. On the other hand, characters can exploit the underworld's frequent power struggles, and the samurai-like code of so many Mobs can also work to the shadowrunners' advantage. If they play by the rules and their opponent does not,



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their foe's own fellow criminals may help the characters triumph over their enemy.

Government/Military Organizations: In the chaotic politics of the Sixth World, government can be an enemy or an ally. Governments are big and powerful, but clumsy when trying to swat a mosquito-sized enemy. A typical government enemy is an intelligence organization or a bureaucratic office. If such an enemy is operating covertly or illegally, then the characters can defeat it through exposure; the government will disclaim all knowledge of its minions' activities and leave them to twist slowly in the wind.

Most governments can also call on military resources that almost no one else can match, including entire divisions of soldiers, novahot tech toys and major mojo. On a smaller scale, almost every modern military contains Special Forces: Tir Tairngire's Ghosts, the Sioux Nation's Wildcats, Navy SEALs and so on. Such forces are usually called in to handle seriously weird magical phenomena or other problems too major and too sensitive to be entrusted to anyone else. They tend to be extremely well-equipped and armed with the very latest in personal weapons, and they are very good at what they do.

Police: The cops can be with you or against you—more often the latter. The typical law enforcement contractors in *Shadowrun* are stretched thin trying to keep the people they're paid to protect from going under in a wave of crime. Widespread corruption often leaves the clean cops powerless; a crooked officer whose schemes cross the team's trail makes an extremely plausible opponent. Straight or crooked, most law-enforcement types share a natural, mutual hostility with shadowrunners, who by definition break the law on every run they pull.

Politicians and Rads: Politics is a dirty business, and shadowruns can get messy when they are politically motivated. To offer just one possibility, a would-be governor who is the target of a dirty-tricks campaign conducted by the player characters may well hire shadowrunners of her own to oppose them. And if she wins the election, such an opponent might easily turn her personal security against the runners who crossed her.

Radical activist groups ("rads")—along with their front groups or their hidden masters—also make good opponents. Most of them are riddled with internal politics and extremely sensitive to bad publicity. They rarely have crack mercenaries on call, but their members are often fanatics and thugs, and depending on their individual backgrounds, may have excellent combat training. Typical rad opposition includes local chapters or splinter groups with agendas that include blackmail, assassination, terrorism, and the like.

Gangs: *Shadowrun* gangs run the gamut from mutual-protection groups of friends to street punks who prostitute for money to RV-equipped go-gangs that terrorize the highways to syndicates of hardened criminals with drugs, guns, and connections. If the player characters are members of an opposing gang, or even if they just stumble onto a gang's turf, they are likely to become targets. The level of opposition depends on the gang's size and the individual abilities of its members, offering the gamemaster considerable freedom to adjust it to suit the storyline.

International Opponents: Megacorporations may have usurped much of the power once wielded by national governments, but that hasn't lowered the stakes of geopolitics or reduced the number of spies, wheeler-dealers, and terrorists running around. The CIA, Interpol, the successors of the KGB, international fixers, arms dealers, and general troublemakers are just a few of the international opponents that can turn up in an adventure.

COMPLICATIONS

If all shadowruns were as simple as gathering allies and blasting the opposition, they wouldn't be very exciting for long. Complications are the unexpected twists and turns that help keep things interesting and keep the players on their toes. A complication can be as simple as a piece of equipment failing at precisely the wrong moment or as complex as the adventure's objective turning out to be something radically different than what the player characters originally believed. For example, the runners may be hired to perform a simple burglary, only to discover that the item they've stolen belongs to a dragon's treasure hoard.

Complications provide the perfect vehicle for the classic *Shadowrun* double-cross, as the events of the adventure make it clear to the characters that their Johnson didn't tell them the whole truth. A Johnson might lie about what corp he's from, set the runners up to be killed, pay them in traceable "screamer" technology that transmits their locations to the cops, and so on. These plot devices inject the unpredictability of real life into adventures and provide the intrigue that is one of *Shadowrun's* distinguishing characteristics. Like everything else in the game, however, use complications judiciously. Throwing too many complications at players may make them feel as if they have less and less control over their characters' lives, and can make the game frustrating rather than enjoyably complex.

ADDING COLOR

An adventure should engage the imagination, which is what roleplaying is all about. Players need to see the scenery, hear the gunshots, feel the sweat trickling down their necks. Some players will do most of the work. Others will make the gamemaster want to tear his hair out because they refuse to play along. Most will fall in the middle.

The best advice for gamemasters is, "Show, don't tell." Rather than reciting descriptions in a monotone, overact. Ham it up. Make the setting and situation as vivid as possible in your players' minds.

If possible, use some kind of display with miniatures to show players the territory. It's much easier to draw a wall with a door in it than to try to explain a building's layout verbally. This kind of display also avoids arguments as to who is standing in the line of fire, where the grenade goes when someone tosses it, and so on. (See *Tips For Less Stressful Shadowruns,* p. 275.)

Consider using other props as well. When the team taps into a datafile containing a fiendish corporate plan, don't just read it to them. Write one up before the adventure and hand it to them. Such props speed up game play and add color.

Make your NPCs as colorful as possible. Try acting in character when playing NPCs, complete with funny voices. Steal wholeheartedly from comic books, movies, TV, and fiction. If you want to play a fixer like Groucho Marx, go ahead. If, on the other hand, this kind of play-acting doesn't suit the group, don't bother with it.

Color should come from the player characters as well. Use subplots to help players flesh out their characters and advance their life stories when they're not in a firefight or hacking into the Matrix. An adventure should be about more than getting loot and earning Karma. Do the characters have love lives? If not, do they want them? Who are their friends? How do they spend their time? Try to spend at least part of each adventure developing these details, because not only can they provide rich plot hooks, but these are essentially the reasons that keep a character going when all else is lost or failing.

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PREP TIME

Players and gamemasters will need time to get ready for the run. Most players will want to do a lot of preparation before taking on anything they think is tough. They may want to scope the place out, check on the principal opposition's background, look for subordinates to suborn, etc. They can spend a whole game session getting ready. Don't let them. Instead, give them a set amount of time by which their characters must accomplish the preliminaries. Let them accomplish some things, but don't let them putter around endlessly or cover absolutely all the bases. If the clock is ticking, let them know. And if they're not moving fast enough, turn up the heat.

To keep things moving, have some of the preliminary info available for them. Pass it on through a contact or their fixer. If they want to double-check or do their own snooping, compress the time it takes. If the hacker wants to hunt around, have the player make a single dice roll and use the number of hits to decide how much info she finds. If one of the team wants to get friendly with somebody in the target organization, or monitor activities to learn schedules and procedures, let the player make one dice roll using an appropriate skill + attribute. Weigh the number of hits rolled and how little time is left before you give them the information they want, and make sure that it is at least partly accurate. ("You're pretty sure the wage slave thinks you're okay," or "They've changed the passcodes at two o'clock for three of the past four days. The other time, they changed at three o'clock and they had a fire drill that day.") After all, the characters are still only guessing that what they've seen or learned actually represents standard conditions. If they want special gear, let them put the word out—but you decide whether or not the stuff is available by the time the curtain rises.

INTEGRATING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Few gaming groups are willing to start a new campaign just to add a new player or player character. Every time a new player wants to join the game, however, or a new player character needs to join the team because a former character retired or died or because the team is lacking a necessary skill, the group must find a way to successfully integrate new characters into the existing shadowrunning team.

Using the team's contacts is perhaps the simplest way to introduce a new character to a group. A contact may introduce a new character at virtually any time and place. Following the contact's introduction of a new character or in place of it, a team might hold a "trial run" to test prospective team members. Gamemasters can easily fill such runs with interesting and fun surprises, because the prospective member and the team will be unfamiliar with each other's skills, abilities, work methods, personalities, and so on.

Finally, a chance encounter may bring a new character and a group together. Gamemasters can use nearly any element already present in their campaigns to get a new player onto an existing shadowrunning team.

KEEPING SECRETS

Plenty of situations in *Shadowrun* benefit from a little secrecy. Sometimes, simply announcing a threshold number gives the players an important piece of information that they shouldn't know. One alternative is to have a player roll the dice and count the hits. Then the gamemaster figures out the level of success and relates what happens.

Occasionally, just asking for a die roll can give away information. For example, if the gamemaster only asks for a Perception Test when the characters are about to enter a trap or ambush, the players won't stay guessing for long. The gamemaster should keep the character's Perception Test dice pools noted down so that he can make rolls for the characters in secret. To keep things entertainingly mysterious, occasionally ask all the characters to roll dice for no reason at all: provide an imaginary threshold number or just ask for their die roll results. (Remember paranoia keeps those shadowrunners on their toes.)

Be careful not to give away the importance of a person or thing by describing it in overly detailed terms. A wealth of detail implies that the gamemaster spent a lot of time designing him, her or it. For example, when the team is meeting three NPCs—one of whom is the villain, while the other two are just his goons—the gamemaster should not say something like, "You meet three suits from the corporation. The guy on the left is wearing a fancy outfit and smells of a distinctive cologne, with an opal ring on his left pinkie and obvious cyberware mods that make him a deadly fighter. The other two? Oh, uh, they're just grunts." Instead, describe all three in detail (keeping the players guessing as to which one they should watch) or introduce all three as "typical suits." Either way, your description gives away nothing.

TIPS FOR LESS STRESSFUL SHADOWRUNS

The gamemaster can use the following tips to keep track of the zillion and one things that go into an adventure, from story lines to NPCs to running gunfights.

MAPS AND DISPLAYS

Maps and other visual aids are extremely useful, sometimes essential. A map of the city where the campaign is set, even if it's just a sketch with shapes showing neighborhoods, is one of the most helpful tools a gamemaster can have. Try using two: one to show the city that everyone knows (share this with the players) and another that shows the locations of all those secret places (keep this one). As the team discovers these locations, they can add them to the "public" map. The gamemaster can also take an ordinary street map and use it for adventures. Use colored pens to indicate the neighborhoods and other areas. A card file, notebook, or database program can be used to keep a list of useful or interesting addresses.

Maps of smaller places (buildings, sewers, neighborhoods, and so on) are also important. Draw them, use maps of real places, or borrow them from game adventures. Don't be afraid to re-use them, either—many real buildings have very similar floorplans.

The gamemaster can also draw displays on a big pad of paper, or use the various plastic mats made for gamers, with hexagonal or square grids. For figures, 25 mm-scale metal miniatures pack a lot of atmospheric detail and are small enough not to need an auditorium for a firefight.

NPC FILES

A file of major NPCs is a great help. Use a card file, a notebook, or a computer database to store profiles on contacts, family members, lovers, important specialists (magicians, doctors, lawyers), the local police commander, or any other NPC likely to be used in adventures again and again. Easy access to the file can help keep the game moving.

Also prepare some stock NPC profiles (wagemages, corporate thugs, gang members, and so on) for quick reference. If the profiles published by Catalyst keep showing up again and again, players are eventually going to be familiar with the bad guys' stats. Creating your own profiles can help you keep your players guessing about the opposition they face.

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WHAT GOES AROUND

by Christopher Maley

Detective Bill Takahashi of the Lone Star Department of Organized Crime stepped out of his vehicle into the chilly Seattle rain. He took a second to scan the scene before plunging into the throng of emergency personnel around him. There were two dozen Lone Star vehicles, including the vans of the crime scene techs. His AR view was full of status reports and the rapid exchange of messages found at any major crime scene. Above, four patrol drones futilely tried to keep the masses of media drones away. Acrid smoke still hung in the air, trapped by the surrounding corporate monoliths. The charred remains of what used to be the Lucky 88 club still smoldered in the chilly morning air. What he noticed the most, however, was the stench. He focused his attention on the one that worried him the most, the sickly-sweet smell of burnt metahuman flesh. *Too fucking early to deal with this shit*, he thought to himself irritably. After taking in the scene, he began looking for his partner.

Detective Juan Hernandez had already noticed him, and was heading his way. The swarthy Hispanic man always looked serious, but his countenance was even graver than normal. The detective wore a heavy overcoat just like his partner, along with an old-fashioned but practical fedora to cover his head from the rain. Each hand held a styrofoam cup filled with steaming soykaf. When he reached Takahashi, he offered him one.

The detective took the proffered cup, his rotten mood somewhat alleviated. He sipped and grimaced. "Damn, Juan. Why do you always get such shitty coffee? I thought you Colombians knew all about the stuff."

Detective Hernandez cracked a half-smile at the old joke. "I'm Aztlaner, you asshole. Besides, I though you Nips only drank tea."

Detective Takahashi completed the ritual by flipping off his partner. The jibe had stopped taking the edge off long ago, but he appreciated it all the same. He drank again and watched two EMTs wheel a severely burnt man to one of the waiting ambulances.

"What the hell went down here, Juan?" he asked.

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COMES AROUND

"The place is a war zone," Detective Hernandez replied. "Around midnight someone called 911, saying the Lucky 88 was on fire. Emergency personnel responded and found an inferno and a whole bunch of bodies. Several witnesses on the scene said they heard automatic gunfire before the blaze started in earnest."

"How many bodies?"

Hernandez shrugged. "Preliminary estimate is eighty."

Detective Takahashi slowly shook his head. "War zone is right. What do we have so far?"

"I'll show you."

Detective Hernandez went down a side street leading to the rear of the burnt-out structure. Behind the club was a narrow alley and a grassy embankment leading up to Highway 5. There were still quite a few bodies to be removed. Most had been covered with tarps.

Detective Hernandez went to one in particular. Squatting, he lifted the tarp, revealing a headless corpse dressed in black and wearing armor. "They found this guy's head in the grass over there." Hernandez pointed to a spot on the embankment that had been marked with an orange flag. "Not exactly sure how it got there, but it looked sliced off. This is why we're here."

Hernandez rolled the sleeve back on the corpse's right arm. The skin was covered with an intricate tattoo of an eastern dragon that appeared to climb up the arm to the shoulder. Detective Takahashi knelt down to the body and studied the ink, his stomach clenching at the familiar sight. *Oh, shit. This could be bad*.

"Watada-Rengo. Did you find any others?" he asked, his voice steady despite the burning in his stomach.

"Yeah," Hernandez responded. "At least three in front of the building and two in the alley here. All of them tattooed."

"What a total clusterfuck," Detective Takahashi frowned at the dead Yak's body.

"I know what you mean," Hernandez agreed. "I've never seen a body count this high."

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That's not what I meant, Takahashi thought.

Detective Hernandez stood up and looked back at the charred remains of the club. "All this evidence will take weeks to sort through."

Detective Takahashi gulped down the last of his soykaf. "I need another. I'll be right back." He headed back to his car, and once inside took out the nonstandard-issue commlink from his pocket and switched it on. It automatically subscribed to his AR glasses, overriding the stream of data coming in from the crime scene. He made a call. The icon of a stern-looking Japanese man answered, the resolution so high it was indistinguishable from the real man.

"Ichibara-san. I am sorry to call you at such an early hour."

"I was waiting for your call. I have already heard rumors that the Watada-Rengo was involved in an attack on the Lucky 88 club earlier tonight. The rumors are false."

"Please forgive my impertinence, Ichibara-san, but there are several bodies that bear the tattoos of the Watada-Rengo clan. The evidence is clear."

Ichibara dismissed the allegation with the wave of a hand. "Forgeries."

"Forgeries, Ichibara-san? That seems rather too … elaborate."

"I assure you, Detective Takahashi, that we had nothing to do with it. My word should be all of the evidence you need. However, there are others, who do not have our best interests at heart, who may think otherwise. As such, it is important that you dispose of this so-called evidence." The stern Japanese man leaned forward and speared the detective with an icy glare. "Do not fail me in this, Detective Takahashi, or else it will be time to collect the remainder of your debt. You have been such a good friend. I am sure I can count on you."

"Hai, Ichibara-san. I understand."

"Good." The middle-aged Japanese man closed the connection before Detective Takahashi could respond.

"Fuck, fuck, fuck!" Takahashi yelled, pounding his hands on the steering wheel. He felt the sharp pains of a migraine forming. "What am I going to do? How am I supposed to make five bodies disappear?" he asked himself.

He briefly considered asking his partner to help him, but just as quickly dismissed the idea. Juan Hernandez was way too straitlaced to get him out of this jam. But Mitch James at the morgue owed him. Takahashi knew he was hooked on tempo, and not only was he keeping James' secret, he'd also managed to slip some "evidence" out of the latest drug bust. For the promise of more of the drug, James would make sure the bodies were "accidentally" cremated prior to the autopsy.

Takahashi made the call, but instead of James' thin face, a cool blond woman answered.

"Lone Star Morgue. Patten speaking," she said.

"I need Doctor James," Takahashi replied.

"James is out. Medical leave," she said, eyeing him. "I'm head Doc until he's back. Whatcha need, detective?"

Takahashi smiled, although he felt the migraine tightening like a steel band across his forehead. "Nothing. It'll wait." He disconnected. Panicking, he quickly made a second call on his commlink. He hated to do it, but he knew that he was going to need some "independent" assistance with this particular matter, and he had a snitch who could set it up for him.

The image of a Japanese emo-boi filled Tashima's AR display. The emo-boi's electric blue mohawk and neon nano-tats glowed as if lit by blacklight, and his petulant features turned into a frown when he realized who was calling him. "Takahashi," the emo-boi said. "What the fuck! It's like four in the fucking morning!"

"Youhei, nice to see you too!" Takahashi said with mock friendliness. "I was sitting here all alone thinking 'What's my friend Youhei up to?' so I thought I'd give you a call."

"You're not my friend, pig!"

"Really? Then why did I hide the gun that killed that Mafia soldier? The gun with your fingerprints on it? Isn't that something a friend would do?" Takahashi asked.

Youhei sighed, knowing where this was going. "What do you want?"

"A referral. I need to get in touch with some independent contractors."

"In exchange for what?" Youhei asked.

"In exchange for me not turning that gun over to an interested party," Takahashi replied.

Youhei smirked. "You think I can't hack the Star and get that gun lost in the system?"

"Who said anything about turning it over to the Star?"

Youhei gulped. "Oh. Right. But, these guys don't come cheap. What do you have to pay them with anyway? The way I hear it you're so in hock to the Watada-Rengo your grandchildren's grandchildren will still be paying them back."

"I'll worry about that. You just make the call."

"Fine." Youhei suddenly grinned, then quickly covered it up. "I know just the right people, Detective. Keep your 'link on, they'll be calling shortly."

The next few hours were agony for the detective. Finally, his 'link chirped. "Tak … er … Mr. Johnson." He answered.

The icon of a black-haired elf looked out at him. "Ah, Mr. Johnson. A pleasure to meet you. You may call me Rush."

"Rush," Takahashi said flatly. *These criminals and their funny little names*, he thought to himself.

The elf glared at Takahashi with pitiless, ice-blue eyes.

Takahashi cleared his throat. "Well, Rush, let's get down to business. I need something to go missing from the downtown Lone Star morgue. Well, five somethings actually."

"I see," the elf replied. "And how quickly do you need these five items to go missing?"

"As soon as possible."

The elf gave him a cold smile. "I see. Lucky for you, Mr. Johnson, *making things go missing is our specialty.* With such a short timeline, however, it will cost you."

"I'm aware the your services will be at a premium. I don't have much nuyen, but I do have a lot of … access. You see, I'm a—"

"I know who you are, Detective Takahashi," the elf interrupted. Takahashi's heart sank as his control slipped away. "Also lucky for you," the elf continued, "We are not looking to be paid in nuyen."

"What do you want?" Takahashi asked.

"I want you to be my new best friend. If I need something lost, I will call you. If I need something found, I will call you. If I need a get out of jail free card, I will call you."

Takahashi's stomach roiled at the realization of what he had gotten himself into. "Look," he said, "Maybe we should just forget the whole thing."

Rush smirked. "Detective Takahashi, I'll let you in on a little secret. This whole conversation is being recorded. It would be a very simple thing for your superior officer to have a video file from an anonymous source in his inbox when he logs on to his computer this morning. Have I made myself clear?"

Takahashi could only nod.

"Good. Now tell me about these five items."

"Five bodies, all with distinctive Yakuza tattoos on their arms and backs. They are suspected—"

The elf held up his hand, stopping the detective in mid-sentence. "That's all I need to know," he said. "Your problem will be solved by sundown." The elf gave Takahashi another cold smile. "I will be in touch, Detective."

As the sun set, Detective Takahashi emptied the remaining contents of his stomach into the toilet of his one-bedroom apartment. He couldn't keep vari-

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ous doomsday scenarios out of his head. A Watada-Rengo hit squad was on their way over to kill him. The shadowrunner Rush had sold him out and a Lone Star Fast Response Team was heading his way right now. All five bodies had already been processed, and the news was broadcasting stories of how the Watada-Rengo was responsible for more than eighty deaths. All of these scenarios contributed to Takahashi's sour stomach.

His commlink chirped as he received an incoming call. Takahashi put on his AR glasses and answered. "Takahashi," he answered with more energy than he felt. The dark-haired elf filled his field of vision.

"Detective Takahashi. I've got good news and bad news," the elf said.

"What's the good news?" Takahashi asked.

"The good news is we've acquired those five items that we discussed. They are now riding around greater Seattle in an ice cream truck."

"And the bad news?"

"The bad news," Rush answered, "Is that one of the members of my team got careless and left something behind."

"Shit! What did he leave?" Takahashi asked frantically.

"A Barrett sniper rifle," the elf replied.

"Where did he leave it?"

"In the trunk of a Ford Americar in downtown Everett."

"What?" Takahashi said, completely confused. "How did he leave it there? That's all the way … Oh … Oh, hell no!"

Rush gave Takahashi a look a predator gives its prey. "Detective Takahashi, I'm afraid the same team member who left the sniper rifle in Everett is the one driving the ice cream truck. He really is careless, and he gets lost so easily. And do you know what he does when he gets lost? He goes right back to where he started from."

Takahashi put his head in his hands. He was so close to getting this situation resolved and now he had to go retrieve a sniper rifle from Everett. "What am I supposed to do when I get it?" he asked despondently.

"Just give me a call."

"I'll get you the rifle, but then we're through, right?"

The elf gave Takahashi another cold smile. "Of course."

Detective Takahashi didn't say anything as the elf disconnected. His heart was pounding, his stomach rolling, as he drove to Everett. He expected to hear sirens at any moment, or the tell-tale thump, thump, thump of a Lone Star FRT helicopter. Instead, he went to the car, which miraculously unlocked upon his arrival, and took the case from the trunk. No muss, no fuss.

Takahashi put the case holding the rifle in the trunk of his car, then dialed the contact number Rush had given him. Rush answered immediately.

"Detective Takahashi, were you successful?"

Takahashi grunted in affirmation. "Where do you want it?"

"Regarding the delivery point, I'm transferring a file now," Rush answered.

Takahashi focused on the appropriate icon in his field of vision and opened the file Rush had sent him. Expecting to see an address or a map, he instead got a picture of a Native American looking ork woman with long, straight brown hair. "What is this?" he asked the elf.

"Your target."

Takahashi felt his bowels turn to ice water. "Target? Oh, fuck no! I am not a killer!"

Rush gave Takahashi another glacial smile. "Really? Perhaps you do not recall, Detective Takahashi, a certain incident that occurred about four years ago while you were working undercover? The way I hear it, you were in so deep that you didn't know which way was up. You shot a 15 year-old snitch just to keep your cover. Knowing you were fucked, you turned to the very people you were investigating for their help in getting you out of the jam. Your debt to the Watada-Rengo, it seems, is not entirely a monetary one."

Takahashi bent over, putting his hands on his knees to fight the nausea threatening to overwhelming him. "How did you know that?" he whispered.

"My friend has a way of finding things that other people had thought lost. Now, back to the matter at hand," the elf continued. "Tomorrow morning at 9:00 A.M. your target is the keynote speaker at a rally of Mothers of Metahumans. There will be a counter-rally by the Humanis Policlub. As a result there will be a significant police presence in order to keep things civil. You should have no problem flashing your badge and getting past the police line. The MOM rally is taking place at the intersection of Colby and Wall in downtown Everett. The speaker's podium is catercorner from North Sound Savings and Loan. You will have a clear shot from the nearby Monte Cristo Hotel. Room 312 has already been reserved for you. The room, not coincidentally, has a clear view of the intersection."

"I won't do it." Takahashi said meekly.

"Oh? Have you forgotten the consequences? Your career would be over, and your life would be measured in hours when the Watada-Rengo found out you had failed them. Why sacrifice everything you have for some woman you don't know? You—the consummate self-preservationist."

Takahashi's mind was racing. "I don't know how to assemble the rifle."

"I have already forwarded instructions to your 'link," Rush replied.

"I've never shot a sniper rifle before," Takahashi tried.

"My friend has a … program she can put in the weapon's smartlink system to assist you with the shot," the elf countered.

"There will be widespread panic! With the Humanis Policlub there, there might even be riots!"

"I'm counting on it. If you were a member of MOM and the ork keynote speaker was shot, wouldn't you naturally assume that those Humanis scum a block away were responsible?"

"But—"

"Detective Takahashi, I have thought of every contingency. Tomorrow morning you will kill Janet Travers, or your career and life are over."

Takahashi loathed himself at that moment. Loathed the fact that he was capable of taking an innocent life to save his own ass. He could tell Rush to go fuck himself. He could promise to kill Janet Travers, but instead run like hell as far away from here as possible. Yet he knew he wouldn't. He was defeated. "Okay," he said softly.

Rush smirked. "Good dog. Call me when the job is done." With that the elf disconnected the call.

Barely twenty-four hours had passed since Detective Takahashi had been called to the crime scene in the International District. He had not slept a minute since then, and felt hollow inside. He had accepted his fate like a man sentenced to death row.

Takahashi watched from room 312 of the Monte Cristo hotel as a troll woman introduced Janet Travers to the crowd. Travers walked up to the speaker's podium accompanied by applause. As she thanked the troll woman who had introduced her, Takahashi set the sights of the sniper rifle. Rush was right; it had been easy to assemble.

He looked down the sights, seeing the virtual crosshairs generated by his smartlink settle on the forehead of the ork speaker. He could see the sign for the North Sound Savings and Loan bank in his field of vision behind the speaker. Takahashi suddenly realized why Rush had asked him to kill Janet Travers. Making things go missing is our specialty.

Takahashi had never felt so pathetic as he did at that moment. Friends. Foes. He couldn't even tell the difference anymore; it was all the same. Using someone, being used. He felt a wave of despair wash over him. *How could I have fallen so far, so fast? I have no choice*, he told himself. *Not if I want to continue living.*

Tears of shame streaming down his face, Takahashi squeezed the trigger.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

Your characters don't exist in a vacuum. In their daily struggle to survive the shadows of the sprawl, they will meet and interact with many others. Some will want to help the characters, others may want to harm them, while others yet may be out to manipulate them. And some aren't even metahuman to begin with ...

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first deals with *non-player characters* (NPCs), the characters that populate the Sixth World and interact with the player characters during the course of their adventures. The second section presents critters, non-metahuman beings, and spirits.

FRIENDS AND FOES

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS (NPCS)

Non-player characters are people other than the player characters (PCs). These include everyone from Ares CEO Damien Knight to Renraku's elite Red Samurai to your character's life-long buddy to the squatter in the next alley over. The gamemaster assumes the role of all NPCs in all their encounters with the PCs.

In the majority of cases, interactions between PCs and NPCs will depend on the roleplaying of both the players and the gamemaster—that's the fun of playing Shadowrun, after all. There will be situations, however, where roleplaying alone can't resolve encounters. The following sections provide guidelines for gamemasters resolving instances where NPCs might need to be fleshed out.

Ultimately, individual NPCs are tailored by the gamemaster to fit the needs of the adventure or campaign he is running and the role he intends them to play in the story. While the gamemaster is free to give NPCs any stats he deems necessary, he should strive to make them consistent with the tone of the game and to take into consideration the challenge or assistance NPCs are intended to offer player characters when devising their stats.

The following sections offer guidelines for running NPCs as *grunts* (groups of adversaries with similar statistics for ease of combat resolution), *prime runners* (major characters), and *contacts* (the people the player characters know who can help them through the course of the game). These categories are not all-inclusive and are in fact simply guidelines to facilitate the gamemaster's management of NPCs.

If the gamemaster wants to build an NPC that fits none of these labels, he should not feel obliged to shoehorn the character into these rules. In fact, many NPCs in published *Shadowrun* adventures will not qualify as grunts, prime runners, or contacts, but are instead incidental characters designed to fulfill a specific role or function.

GRUNTS

Player characters will inevitably end up dealing with groups of similar NPCs: go-gangers, security guards, radical political extremists, special forces squads, and so on. Rather than treating them as multiple individuals, gamemasters might find it easier to handle them collectively as a group. NPCs that can be grouped together this way are known as grunts. To use a movie analogy, these are the extras and henchmen in an action film—though they are no less dangerous for playing a small role, as combat in *Shadowrun* is quite lethal.

Because individuals in such groups are very similar to one another, grunts are presented as having practically identical game statistics. Use one set of attributes and skills to represent each individual grunt in the group. You can also assume grunts are similarly equipped with the same weapons and equipment, though a few specialists may be carrying something extra (such as the one ganger who's packing a pistol, or the corporate hit squad member who's lugging the gyro-mounted MMG)—note these special cases. Specialists may also be loaded with a particular implant that the other grunts don't have. Specialists are useful for keeping the player characters off guard (else they assume all grunts are the same), but for bookkeeping you may want to limit the specialists to one or two per group, with minimum differences between them and the others.

During combat, the gamemaster should make one single Initiative Test for the entire group of grunts (augmented specialists may make their own Initiative Tests, if the gamemaster so chooses). The result applies to all grunts, but injury modifiers may cause some grunts to act slower than their comrades.

To differentiate further between different groups of grunts and keep their players guessing, gamemasters may want to apply different Specializations to various basic skills.

CONDITION MONITORS

To simplify matters for the gamemaster, grunts only possess one Condition Monitor that tracks both Physical and Stun damage. The number of boxes on the Condition Monitor is equal to 8 plus half of either Body or Willpower (whichever is higher), rounded up. As grunts take Physical and Stun Damage, record both on the Condition Monitor; when a grunt's Condition Monitor is filled, he is knocked out for the remainder of combat. Do not track overflow damage.

If it's necessary to determine whether a grunt is alive or dead at the end of combat (for interrogation, for example), make note of the type of attack that knocked out the grunt. If it was Stun damage, or net Physical damage less than the grunt's Body Attribute, he survives. If the final attack inflicted Physical damage greater than the grunt's Body, then he dies.

NPC AND CRITTER STATS

ABBREVIATION	ATTRIBUTE
B	Body
A	Agility
R	Reaction
S	Strength
C	Charisma
I	Intuition
L	Logic
W	Willpower
Edg	Edge
Ess	Essence
M	Magic
Init	Initiative
IP	Initiative Passes
CM	Condition Monitor
F	Force

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PROFESSIONAL RATING

Not all groups are created equal. Sometimes the characters will run into a cowardly pack of gangers who flee at the first sign of serious resistance. Other times, the characters will find themselves facing elite special forces who outclass them in every respect, hands down. A special group rating, known as the Professional rating, measures the group's level of class.

A group's Professional rating reflects the relative professionalism, discipline, and overall experience of a group. It also serves as a dice pool modifier for resisting Social Skill Tests made against the group. The Professional rating also determines the Group Edge (see below) available to grunts.

The following list of ranges provides some guidelines for assigning Professional rating to a group:

Untrained (Professional Rating 0): The grunts in this group are untrained and unfamiliar with combat situations. They tend to react clumsily, slowly, and without a plan. If more than a quarter of the group members are removed from the combat, the group will flee in panic. Examples: Street mobs, rent-a-cops.

Semi-trained (Professional Ratings 1–2): These grunts are semi-trained and have some combat experience. They will remain in a fight until the situation is obviously no longer going their way. They tend to act deliberately and with a plan but don't have the cool head of a true professional. If more than half the group members are knocked out of combat, the group will stop fighting and run. Examples: Street gangs, cops, security guards, insurgents.

Trained (Professional Ratings 3–4): Grunts in this group are trained in combat and generally know what they're doing. They aren't stupid and don't take foolish chances. If more than three-quarters of the group are disabled, the group will withdraw. Examples: bodyguards, mercenaries, combat veterans, experienced cops.

Elite (Professional Ratings 5–6): These are professionals who live for combat. They will fight to the bitter end, or until mission parameters dictate otherwise. Examples: SWAT teams, special forces, fanatics.

GROUP EDGE

Unlike normal characters, grunts don't have individual Edge attributes, but rather share a common pool of Edge. This makes it easier for the gamemaster, who doesn't have to keep track of individual expenditures. The gamemaster spends Edge for any grunt in the group from this Group Edge pool.

Group Edge equals a group's Professional rating. Since grunts are generally only involved in an adventure for a limited period, they have less Edge available to them overall. Gamemasters should take care that grunts only use Edge on actions that are important to their goals. If a group of grunts plays a recurring role in an adventure or campaign, increase their Group Edge accordingly.

Gamemasters can, of course, adjust Group Edge as they see fit, according to the toughness of an encounter. Likewise, the gamemaster determines if and when a Group Edge pool refreshes (though it should not refresh more often than player character Edge).

LIEUTENANTS

Occasionally, a more competent or powerful individual may lead a group of grunts. For example, a war shaman may lead a squad of tribal soldiers. This leader is called the *lieutenant*.

A lieutenant is a semi-grunt, more powerful than the others but still nevertheless a part of the group. A group will generally only have one lieutenant. Lieutenants do not share the same set of attributes and skills as the other grunts, but rather have their own individual sets. Since they are more powerful and competent than their followers, lieutenants' total (summed) attributes should be higher than the total for the individual grunts by at least 4. Likewise, the sum total of all a lieutenant's Active skills should be higher than the other grunts by at least 4.

Lieutenants draw from a grunt group's collective Edge, but they make their own individual Initiative Tests. If a lieutenant and his group of grunts both have the same Initiative results, the lieutenant always goes first.

Like grunts, lieutenants also possess one Condition Monitor that tracks both Physical and Stun Damage. Lieutenants are generally tougher than grunts, however, in absorbing damage; a lieutenant only dies if the final attack deals Physical damage greater than the lieutenant's Body x 1.5.

In combat, lieutenants who possess the Leadership skill may use it to issue orders and restore morale. This requires a simple Leadership Success Test and takes a Complex Action. If it succeeds, the grunts' Professional rating (and consequently Group Edge) is increased by one step for the remainder of that combat.

SAMPLE GRUNTS

The following sample grunts represent groups that shadowrunners are likely to run into. Each entry includes a brief description of the group and game statistics for each grunt. Descriptions and game statistics are also included for lieutenants, but gamemasters should be aware that they don't have to include a lieutenant with every encounter with the grunt group. Note that lieutenant stats can also be used for an "elite" squad of such grunts.

CORPORATE SECURITY UNIT (PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

Security guards are a corporation's first line of defense against hostile intruders. Though extraterritoriality allows the corps to use deadly force in defense, economics and public relations usually restrain them from arming their guards to the teeth. Security guards receive just enough training and equipment to respond to incidental street violence. In the event of a breach by shadowrunners, security guards are trained to pin them in place long enough for heavier reinforcements to arrive.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	6	7	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Athletics Skill group 3, Automatics 3, Dodge 3, Pistols 3, Close Combat Skill group 3

Quality: Home Ground (Corporate facility)

Gear: Armor Vest, Fichetti Security 600, HK 227-X, stun baton, Commlink (Device Rating 4)

PLAYING GRUNTS

Gamemasters should keep in mind that while the rules for grunts streamline various aspects of NPC management to accelerate combat resolution, grunts remain individuals who share the dangerous streets of 2072 with the player characters.

The grunts that are likely to engage in combat are aware of just how lethal a firefight is and will act accordingly. While not all grunts are trained fighters, most will understand and use basic tactics such as taking cover, holding actions until a target is visible, using suppressing fire to restrict an area, flanking a hardened position, using grenades to soften a target, and so on.

Ultimately, it is the gamemaster's job to ensure that grunts represent a suitable challenge for his player group, and the best way to do this is to ensure they act with basic tactical awareness. In *Shadowrun*, a stand-up, high noon duel at 20 paces in the middle of the high street (i.e., a no-modifier situation) is exceedingly rare.

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CorpSec Lieutenant: Security garrisons for particularly important corporate facilities may be assigned a wagemage to provide magical oversight. Because magic is still a scarce resource, security detail is usually an assignment to be pulled in addition to a mage's normal work duties. Full-time security mages are rare except at the most sensitive of installations.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	6	3	7	1

Astral Initiative/IP: 8/3

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10 (includes +1 box for cyberarm)

Skills: Assensing 3, Astral Combat 4, Conjuring Skill group 3, Leadership 2, Pistols 2, Sorcery Skill group 4

Gear: Armor Vest, Fichetti Security 600, Magesight googles, Spellcasting Focus (rating 2), Commlink (Device Rating 4)

Spells: Detect Life, Light, Physical Barrier, Powerbolt, Silence, Stunball

HALLOWEENERS STREET GANG (PROFESSIONAL RATING 1)

One of Seattle's more colorful street gangs, the Halloweeners have developed a reputation for always coming back from the dead. Despite brushes with extinction at the hands of various street players, one or two Halloweeners always manage to survive and rebuild the gang from new recruits. This time is no exception, as the Halloweeners have managed to rebuild themselves over the course of 2070, following their slaughter at the hands of the elven Ancients go-gang the previous year. Though still weak from reconstruction, the Halloweeners have long memories, and one day they'll have their payback against the Ancients.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	3	3	2	3	2	2	5.8	6	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Close Combat Skilll group 3, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 2, Pistols or Automatics 2

Quality: Toughness

Augmentations: Hand Razors

Gear: Ares Predator or Steyr TMP, armor vest, Commlink (Device Rating 2), knife, 1 dose of Cram or Jazz

Halloweeners Lieutenant: New gang members look up with awe at the survivors of the Ancients massacre, called Ragers amongst the Halloweener ranks. The Ragers carry a torch for their fallen comrades, in the literal sense of the word: Ragers are pyromaniacs one and all, and they wield some sort of flame weapon in combat, typically a Molotov cocktail.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	4.7	7	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 4, Intimidation 4, Pistols (Remington Roomsweeper) 3 (+2), Thrown Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat (Cyberspurs) 3 (+2)

Augmentations: Dermal Plating 2, Retractable Spur

Gear: Commlink (Device Rating 2), Molotov cocktail (4P Fire damage), Remington Roomsweeper, 1 dose of Cram or Jazz

HUMANIS POLICLUB GOON SQUAD (PROFESSIONAL RATING 0)

Despite its agenda of hate, the Humanis Policlub has managed to garner some degree of respect in otherwise race-tolerant nations of the world. Though its leadership works carefully to spin its image of nonviolent political and social advocacy, Humanis nevertheless employs squads of goons to rough up and intimidate unsuspecting metahumans unlucky enough to cross their path. Much as they enjoy thrashing their victims, these boot-stompers are no match for an experienced fighter and will flee in the face of any serious resistance.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	2	2	4	1	2	1	2	6	4	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Clubs 2, Intimidation 2, Unarmed Combat 2

Gear: Clubs, Commlink (Device Rating 2), knives

Humanis Lieutenant: Whenever the local chapter needs more than just random violence, they will often assign one of their small group leaders to provide a little bit of focus. Small group leaders have been with Humanis for a couple of years and have been in their share of scraps with policlub enemies, such as the Sons of Sauron or the Ancients. Nevertheless the small group leader is still a part-time thug, no match for even a rookie shadowrunner.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	4	2	3	2	2	6	6	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Humanis Policlub (Street Knowledge) 2, Clubs 3, Intimidation 3, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 2

Gear: Colt America L36, Commlink (Device Rating 2), knife

LONE STAR POLICE SQUAD MEMBER (PROFESSIONAL RATING 3)

In the corporate world of *Shadowrun*, even basic public functions such as law enforcement have been privatized to corporate contractors. The best known of these is Lone Star Security Services, which holds the public law enforcement contract for Seattle and many other major sprawls. Next to corporate security, a Lone Star patrol squad member is a shadowrunner's most common adversary.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	6	8	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Skills: Clubs 3, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 3, Perception 2, Pistols 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Gear: Armor Jacket, Colt America L36, Defiance EX Shocker, Stun Baton, 2 doses of Jazz, Commlink (Device Rating 3),

Lone Star Lieutenant: Lone Star police sergeants are grizzled veterans. After working the beat for many years, many sergeants develop an instinctive feel for the streets. Some have even acquired cyberware, to replace limbs lost in the line of duty, or to give them that extra edge in the arms race against the street punks.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	4 [5]	4 (6)	3	4	5	3	4	4.3	9 (11)	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Skills: Close Combat Skill group 4, Infiltration 2, Intimidation 3, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 4, Leadership 3, Perception 3, Pistols 4

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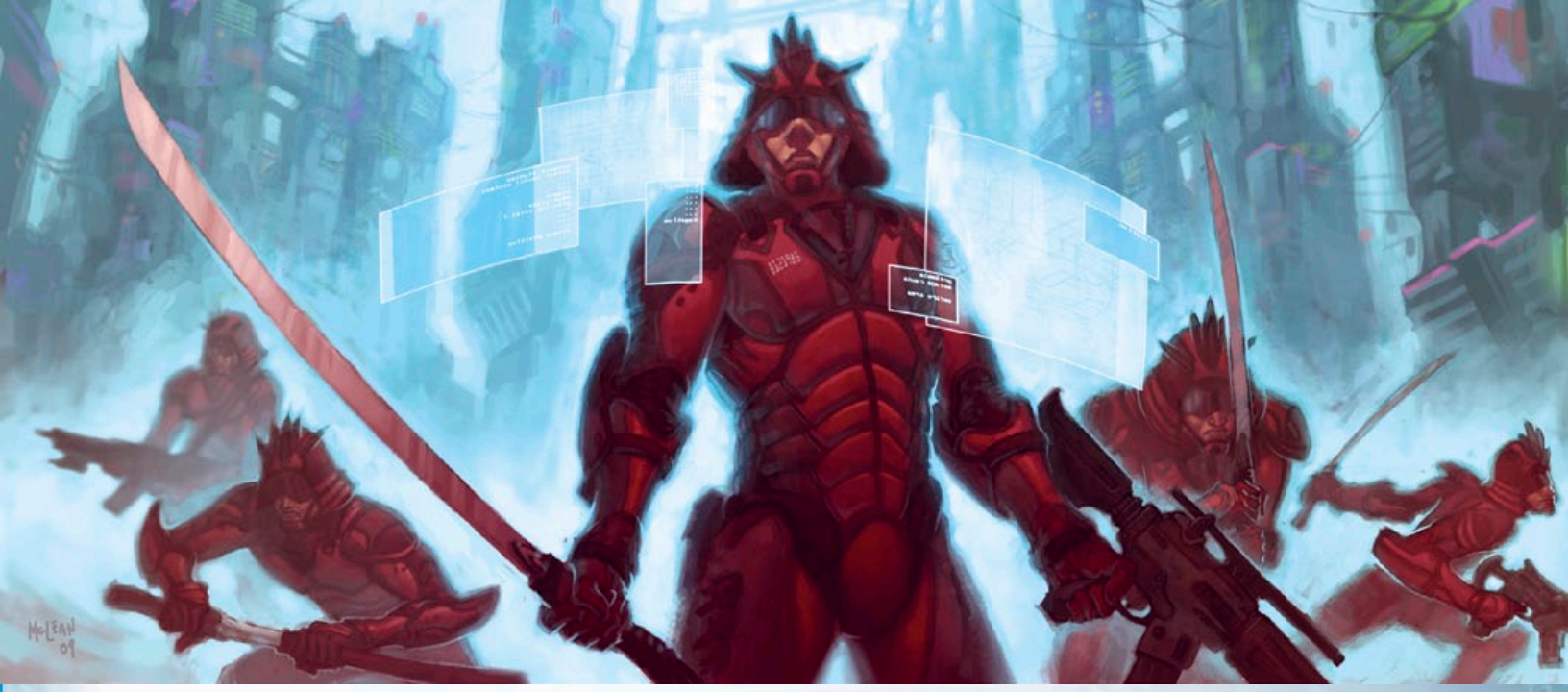

Augmentations: Reaction Enhancers (Rating 2), Cyberarm (w/ Agility 5, Armor: 4), Smartlink (Retinal Modification)

Gear: Armor Jacket, Colt Manhunter with Smartlink, Defiance EX Shocker, Stun Baton, 1 dose of Jazz, Commlink (Device Rating 4)

RED SAMURAI DETACHMENT (PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

The Red Samurai are the elite paramilitary forces belonging to the megacorporation Renraku. They are fiercely loyal to the company and boast a fearsome reputation, every shred of which they have earned. If a shadowrunner finds himself facing the Red Samurai, then he knows he is in deep, deep trouble.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
5	5 (7)	5 (7)	4 (6)	3	3	3	4	2.05	8 (10)	3

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Skills: Athletics Skill group 3 (6), Etiquette (Corporate) 3, Firearms Skill group 5, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Close Combat Skill group 4

Augmentations: Cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ Flare Compensation, Low-light Smartlink], Muscle Augmentation and Toner (Rating 2), Synthacardium (Rating 3), Wired Reflexes (Rating 2)

Gear: FN HAR Assault Rifle, Katana, Full Body Armor and helmet, Commlink (Device Rating 4)

Red Samurai Lieutenant: Like many megacorporations, Renraku employs company men, professional troubleshooters, and field agents who lead special missions for the megacorp. In some ways, company men are corporate shadowrunners, except they are too valuable to be wasted as a deniable asset.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	6 (8)	5 (7)	4 (6)	4	5	4	5	1.9	10 (12)	3

Matrix Initiative: 10

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Skills: Athletics Skill group 4, Cracking Skill group 3, Data Search 2, Electronics group 3, Demolitions 3, Dodge 4, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Firearms Skill group 5, Leadership 3, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Close Combat Skill group 4

Augmentations: Datajack, Cybereyes [Rating 3, w/ Flare Compensation, Low-light Smartlink], Muscle Augmentation and Toner (Rating 3), Wired Reflexes (Rating 2)

Gear: FN HAR Assault Rifle, Katana, Full Body Armor and helmet, Commlink (Device Rating 5)

Programs: Analyze 4, Attack 3, Browse 3, Exploit 3, Scan 3, Stealth 4

TIR GHOSTS (PROFESSIONAL RATING 6)

There's a reason the special forces of the elven nation of Tir Tairngire are called Ghosts: they are the masters of covert operations and have broken into some of the most secure areas on the planet undetected. Most of the time their targets won't know what hit them until it's too late, but in a fair fight they aren't always that much better than most augmented combat veterans.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	6 (8)	5 (7)	4 (6)	5	6	4	5	3.90	11 (13)	3

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11

Skills: Athletics Skill group 4 (7), Demolitions 4, Dodge 4, Firearms Skill group 5, Perception 4, Stealth Skill group 6, Close Combat Skill group 4

Augmentations: Muscle Augmentation and Toner (Rating 2), Synthacardium (Rating 3), Synaptic Boosters (Rating 2)

Gear: Full Body Armor, Grapple Gun, HK 227-X, Contact lenses [w/ Flare Compensation, Smartlink], Smoke Grenades (2), Thermographic Smoke Grenades (2), Commlink (Device Rating 5)

Notes: Tir Ghosts are all elves and have the racial Low-Light Vision ability.

Tir Ghost Lieutenant: No commando team in the world of augmented reality would be complete without a combat hacker. Just as Ghosts are adept in infiltrating physically secure facilities, combat hackers are experts at breaking into secure computer networks. Nevertheless, combat hackers are equally skilled in fighting in the real world, so as not to be a liability to the team.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	6 (8)	5 (7)	4 (6)	5	6	5	6	4.1	11 (13)	3

Matrix Initiative: 12

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Condition Monitor Boxes: 11	
Skills: Athletics Skill group 3 (6), Dodge 4, Electronics Skill group 5, Firearms Skill group 5, Leadership 4, Perception 5, Stealth Skill group 6, Close Combat Skill group 5	
Augmentations: Implanted Commlink (Device Rating 5), Muscle Augmentation and Toner (Rating 2), Synthacardium (Rating 3), Synaptic Boosters (Rating 2)	
Gear: HK 227-X, Full Body Armor, Contact lenses [w/ Flare Compensation, Smartlink]	
Programs: Analyze 4, Armor 5, Blackout 4, Browse 3, Exploit 5, Scan 3, Stealth 4, Track 4	

TRIAD POSSE (PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

Of all the organized crime syndicates in the world, the Chinese Triad mobs have adapted best to the Sixth World, employing magic frequently in their criminal operations. Shadowrunners may cross paths with posses of Triad soldiers if their runs step into the worlds of organized crime or magic. The Triads are big believers in numerology, and posses of Triad soldiers that shadowrunners encounter in the street will number in groups of two, three, eight, or nine. Likewise, Triad posses will studiously avoid congregating in groups of four and five, as these are considered unlucky numbers in Triad numerology.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	5	4	3	3	4	3	4	6	8	1
Condition Monitor Boxes: 10										
Skills: Blades 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Firearms Skill group 4, Unarmed Combat 3										
Gear: Ceska Black Scorpion, Lined Coat, Knife or Sword, Commlink (Device Rating 3)										

Triad Lieutenant: Many Triads count adepts among their ranks. Magic is an integral part of Triad operations and practices, whereas cyberware is shunned. Triad adepts fill the role that street samurai occupy in other syndicates, exercising their well-honed martial arts skills and magically enhanced abilities as enforcers and field commanders.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	M	Init	IP
4	6	5 (6)	5	3	4	3	3	6	4	9 (10)	2
Condition Monitor Boxes: 10											
Skills: Athletics Skill group 3, Close Combat group 5, Con 3, Dodge 4, Feng Shui (Academic Knowledge) 4, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Pistols 3											
Qualities: Adept, Toughness											
Gear: Remington Roomsweeper, Lined Coat, Commlink (Device Rating 4), Weapon Focus 1 (sword)											
Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Critical Strike 2, Great Leap 2, Improved Reflexes 1, Killing Hands											

PRIME RUNNERS

Every once in a while, player characters will encounter a memorable NPC who is their match, or better. These individuals may have recurring roles in a campaign or they might be making a one-off appearance. These special characters are called prime runners, though the term applies to any major "named" character.

Prime runners are signature characters that appear over the course of an adventure or a campaign, and need not be, despite the name, runners themselves. Falling back on a movie analogy, prime runners are the supporting cast of the film the characters are starring in; the equivalent of the evil mastermind, the mastermind's chief henchman, or the femme fatale.

Most prime runners oppose the characters as chief antagonists, but some may be neutral, helping or harming the PCs according to their own personal agenda, and occasionally some may even be friendly.

CREATING A PRIME RUNNER

A prime runner is a unique individual, as unique as the player characters. As such, they should be built using the Build Point System (see *Building a Shadowrunner*, p. 80). The total number of Build Points used to build a prime runner depends on the character's strength relative to the player characters: Inferior, Equal, Superior, or Superhuman. Depending on the strength level, the BP total used to build the prime runner will be a certain percentage of the average BP total of all characters (see the Prime Runner Creation and Advancement Table).

FLESHING OUT PRIME RUNNERS AND CONTACTS

FLESHING OUT PRIME RUNNERS

NPCs designed under the primer runner guidelines are intended to be fully "fleshed out" and memorable characters, the supporting cast of adversaries, rivals, and sometime allies to the player characters during an unfolding adventure or campaign. Often the best way to ensure these characters make a dramatic and lasting impression is to ensure they are more than two-dimensional cutouts, by giving them not only their own agendas and personal outlooks, but mannerisms and quirks. Another interesting way of providing depth to these NPCs is by providing visual cues of what the character wears, how he looks and carries himself, and also by personalizing his gear and clothing.

The gamemaster may want to write up a small profile on each such recurring NPC with details on his personality, quirks, and agenda for future reference.

FLESHING OUT CONTACTS

Making contacts into fully realized characters is the key to getting the most from them. Contacts share many elements in common with prime runners (below) and these too act as a recurring supporting cast during the course of the player character's adventures. Much of the advice for bringing prime runners to life is equally valid with regards to contacts.

However, the major difference lies in the fact that contacts are always, to some extent or another, a character's allies and friends. As such the gamemaster and player should collaborate in developing a background and the nature of the relationship between the character and the contact.

Deciding what a contact does when he's not helping out the character is a good place to start. Giving each contact a catch-phrase archetype title—such as Street Doc, Combat Mage, Mercenary, Detective, and so on—can help make the contact a distinct personality. With a little more effort, a contact can become a unique person.

For example, say Joe the Bartender spends his evenings tending bar, but what does he do in his spare time? Maybe he's an avid Urban Brawl fan, and he's got a game on the trid when a runner calls. Maybe he's having trouble with the wife, or his business isn't going too well. Maybe his daughter is getting mixed up with the wrong crowd: gangs, BTLs, or the like. All these things affect how Joe reacts to a runner's inquiries and might even serve as a springboard for a shadowrun.

A contact might also turn the tables and ask a runner for a favor—after all, this relationship goes both ways. Find a way to make it clear that contacts have lives of their own. They don't just sit around and wait for runners to call.

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PRIME RUNNER CREATION AND ADVANCEMENT TABLE		
PRIME RUNNER LEVEL	**BP CREATION**	**ADVANCEMENT**
Inferior	80–90 percent of average PC total	80 percent of average Karma award
Equal	90–110 percent of average PC total	100 percent of average Karma award
Superior	110–150 percent of average PC total	125 percent of average Karma award
Superhuman	150–250 percent of average PC total	200 percent of average Karma award

Inferior: These prime runners are less powerful than the PCs. Inferior prime runners may be overmatched by PCs in a stand-up fight, but they often have influential contacts or powerful friends who can make the PCs' lives miserable.

Equal: Prime runners who are the Equal of the PCs are their peers. Many of them will be shadowrunners like the PCs, but some may be company men, government agents, or syndicate enforcers.

Superior: A Superior prime runner can outmatch any PC on a one-to-one basis, but the PCs working together as a team should be able to overcome him. Superior prime runners are not bound by any special constraints on skills or gear that apply to starting characters.

Superhuman: Some prime runners are so powerful that they can take on the entire PC group single-handedly and win. Like Superior prime runners, they are not bound by the constraints that apply to starting player characters. In general, player characters should encounter Superhuman prime runners very rarely; such characters are usually masterminds manipulating events behind the scenes.

PRIME RUNNER ADVANCEMENT

Many prime runners are tied to the adventure in which they appear and do not return after the adventure is over. Particularly memorable prime runners, however, may be too good to throw away and may reappear again to aid, challenge, or obstruct the PCs several adventures later. Since the PCs should be accumulating Karma and advancing their attributes, skills, and resources, so will recurring prime runners—this lets them continue to remain a challenge to the player characters.

If the gamemaster decides that she wants to retain a prime runner to appear in a later adventure, she should keep track of the average individual Karma award for each adventure that took place since the prime runner appeared (including the one featuring the prime runner). Depending on the prime runner's strength, multiply the average Karma award by a percentage (see the Prime Runner Creation and Advancement Table). The result is the number of Karma points available for improving and advancing the prime runner. Gamemasters spend these Karma points the same way that players do for character advancement (see p. 269).

THE HAND OF GOD

A prime runner is one of the key features of a campaign, one thing that makes an adventure memorable, so a gamemaster might find it frustrating if the player characters gun him down prematurely. (Especially if it's a prime runner the gamemaster intends to use over and over again.)

In general, if you as the gamemaster aren't ready for a prime runner to die yet, you should exploit any opportunity to cast doubt on the certainty of doom. For example, if the prime runner is about to die from an explosion, the explosion should collapse the ceiling and prevent the characters from actually seeing the prime runner meet his fate. Likewise, if a prime runner is shot with a killing attack, he falls into a canyon or hole that the PCs can't get into. As the old movie trope goes, if the heroes can't find the body, then the villain isn't necessarily dead.

Sometimes, however, a prime runner may get caught in a situation where he can't help dying in the open. In this case the gamemaster can invoke the Hand of God to bail out the prime runner. To use the Hand of God, the gamemaster permanently burns all remaining Edge for the prime runner. The prime runner may appear to be dead, but in reality he is clinging to life by the barest of threads. As soon as the players' attention shifts away to other things, the prime runner will recover enough to claw his way out. Nevertheless, the situation will have left some sort of permanent mark, like a scar that never fully heals, loss in one or more attributes, or even a negative quality. (Points generated from a negative quality or attribute loss may be used to recover some of the Edge burned.)

CONTACTS

There's an old saying that rings very true on the streets: "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Contacts are those people who the player characters know.

Contacts are NPCs who serve as sources of valuable information, goods, and services, as well as making the *Shadowrun* world a fuller, more colorful place to play. Contacts are often the best (and sometimes the only) way a runner can find out just what kind of drek he's gotten into. The following describes how to get the most from contacts—how to use them in the game, flesh them out, and maximize the roleplaying opportunities they represent for your players.

CONTACTS BY THE NUMBERS

Since player characters interact with them on a regular basis, contacts should be fully developed NPCs, with a complete profile of attributes and skills. You can quickly jot down basic stats for them on the fly, or you can go the full mile and create each contact using the Build Point System, considering them to be Inferior or Equal NPCs. Rather than assigning Resources (except for cyberware and bioware), you can simply assume that contacts have the necessary gear and lifestyle to fulfill their role. A Lone Star beat cop contact is going to have body armor, a pistol, and basic cop gear, for example, while a hacker contact would have an assortment of commlink upgrades and hacking programs available.

Contacts possess two ratings that determine how useful they are: Loyalty and Connection.

CONNECTION RATING

Connection measures how influential the contact is. The higher a contact's Connection rating, the more people he knows and the more personal pull he has. Connection normally ranges on a scale of 1 to 6. The Connection Rating Table provides a description of how the various Connection Ratings should be portrayed.

LOYALTY RATING

Loyalty determines how much the character can rely on the contact. Some contacts aren't willing to do anything more than they're paid for, and will have no qualms selling the character out if someone flashes them enough cred. Others will be actual friends, willing to provide

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CONNECTION RATING TABLE

RATING	DESCRIPTION
1	Knows very few people and has practically no social influence. Many are useful only for their Knowledge skills. Examples: squatter, manual laborer, academic graduate assistant.
2	Knows some people but doesn't have a lot of personal pull. Examples: gang member, bartender, mechanic, mob soldier, corner hustler, corporate wageslave.
3	Meets people on a regular basis and has some personal pull. Examples: beat cop, private investigator, street doc, corporate secretary, club owner, street-level fixer or fence.
4	Knows many people or may be in a leadership position. Examples: gang boss, mob lieutenant, police detective or sergeant, corporate middle manager, low-level Mr. Johnson, fixer or fence with regional ties.
5	Knows lots of people over a larger area, or holds a senior leadership position: police captain, corporate division manager, high-level Mr. Johnson, fixer or fence with national ties.
6	Well-connected individual who knows people all over the world, or holds a key executive position. Examples: mob boss, corporate executive, Mr. Johnson or fixer or fence with international ties.

LOYALTY RATING TABLE

RATING	DESCRIPTION
1	**Just Biz.** The character and contact have a purely mercenary relationship. Interactions are based solely on economics. They may not even like each other, and will not offer any sort of preferential treatment.
2	**Regular.** The relationship is still all business, but contact at least treats the character with a modicum of respect, like regulars or favored clients.
3	**Acquaintance.** A friendly relationship exists between character and contact, though it would be a stretch to call it a friendship. The contact is willing to be inconvenienced in small ways for the character, but will not take a fall for her.
4	**Buddy.** A friendship or solid level of mutual respect exists. The contact would be willing to go out of his way for the character if necessary.
5	**Got Your Back.** The contact and character have an established relationship and level of trust. The contact will back the character even in risky situations.
6	**Friend For Life.** The contact will do whatever he can for the character, even if it means putting his own life on the line.

favors, cover for the character, and stick out their necks a little—though not too far. Still others are hardcore pals who have the character's back; they will take any risks and go down to the line if necessary. The Loyalty Rating Table (above) details how various Loyalty ratings should be handled.

The Loyalty rating is usually applied as bonus dice whenever the character is negotiating with the contact. It may also serve as modifier or threshold whenever a third party attempts to squeeze information about the runners out of the contact.

USING CONTACTS

The value of a contact lies in what he can do for the player character. In general, player characters can use contacts in one of four major ways: legwork, networking, swag, and favors.

AVAILABILITY

Before a character can obtain a contact's help, he has to get in touch with the contact first; they don't just sit around waiting for someone to call and ask for favors. A contact's availability should first and foremost depend on the gamemaster's plans for the adventure at hand. If the contact might be able to help the character get a hold of some piece of information or gear that the gamemaster doesn't want the players to get a hold of yet, or if the characters are pursuing a false lead that will take them nowhere, then the contact is too busy to help right now (but you can leave a message at the tone). On the other hand, if the contact holds the secret to a clue that the characters are missing, but they haven't tried reaching the contact yet, maybe the contact calls up with business of his own, or just to chat—and in the process, helps the characters out.

If the gamemaster is playing it by ear, and doesn't care either way about the contact's involvement, then simply roll 1D6. The contact is available if the result equals or exceeds the contact's Connection rating—after all, the more connected the contact is, the less time he has available. Keep in mind that other factors may affect a contact's availability, such as the character/contact being hunted or under investigation, favors owed, how the character treated the contact last time, etc.

LEGWORK

Legwork is the primary function of most *Shadowrun* contacts. In a typical adventure, legwork means following up on or discovering clues by investigating people, places, and situations. Contacts provide one of the best ways for runners to get the information they need. Most published adventures include a Legwork section that contains success tables listing information available to the runners from these sources.

When a character asks a contact for information, there is a chance that the contact may already know the answer. Make a skill test using any of the contact's appropriate Knowledge skills + linked attribute to determine if the contact knows and exactly what he knows.

If the test is successful and the contact knows something, then the gamemaster will have to determine if the contact is willing to share that information. Generally contacts will readily share information if it's inconsequential to them and they wouldn't be hurt if word got out. If the contact knows something that he was asked to keep confidential, or if he thought he would be hurt if the wrong people learned he knew it, he will be reluctant to share it. In this case, a Negotiation Test will be necessary to get the contact to divulge what he knows; apply the contact's Loyalty rating as extra dice to this test.

If the contact does not know, then he can ask around and find out the answer. Make a Charisma + Connection Extended Test with an interval of 1 hour. The gamemaster may choose to use an appropriate Knowledge Skill in place of Charisma. The threshold is based on the gamemaster-determined difficulty of the question/information sought, as noted on the Extended Test Difficulties table (p. 64). The gamemaster should apply any modifiers she feels are appropriate, especially if the information sought is outside of the contact's normal sphere of influence/knowledge.

example

Locke is trying to figure out what the mysterious liquid contents of a bottle are. Not having any chemists in his rolodex, he calls up his talismonger contact, figuring that's a good place to start. The talismonger happens to know Botany, so the gamemaster makes a Botany Test to determine that the liquid is likely synthetic and not derived from plants. Locke asked the talismonger if he can find out more, so the gamemaster

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makes an Extended Test using the 'monger's Charisma 4 + Connection 2, with a gamemaster-determined threshold of 10 (just over average difficulty). After 5 rolls (5 hours), the talismonger calls Locke back—he had an alchemist friend analyze the liquid, and it's a nasty synthetic poison! Locke has his answer, but now he owes both his talismonger and the alchemist a favor …

NETWORKING

Sometimes the characters will need to meet with important people they don't know to obtain their cooperation. For example, the characters may want to persuade a gang boss to help them eradicate an enemy gang, or they might want to trade some paydata on one megacorp to a rival megacorp, to persuade the rival to stop hunting them down. If the characters don't know the right people, or if they can't go directly to the right people, then they will need contacts to serve as go-betweens.

If a character asks a contact to network on his behalf, first determine if there is any risk to the contact in making inquiries (for example, asking for an audience with the great dragon Ghostwalker may result in the contact getting eaten if the request is handled wrong). The character may have to succeed in a Negotiation Test if necessary. If the contact agrees to ask around, then make a Connection + Charisma Test with a threshold equal to the relative importance of the target NPC (use the Connection Rating Table, p. 286, as a guide). Apply any social modifiers based on the relationship between the characters and the target NPC.

If successful, the contact has successfully interfaced with the desired person and has arranged a meeting (either face-to-face or via Matrix). If timing is critical, the gamemaster should use her best judgment or say 2 x 2D6 hours. Once a meeting has been arranged, it's up to the characters to impress or intimidate the target NPC. At that point the contact drops out of the picture, but if the meeting goes spectacularly well or spectacularly badly, it may spill back upon the contact.

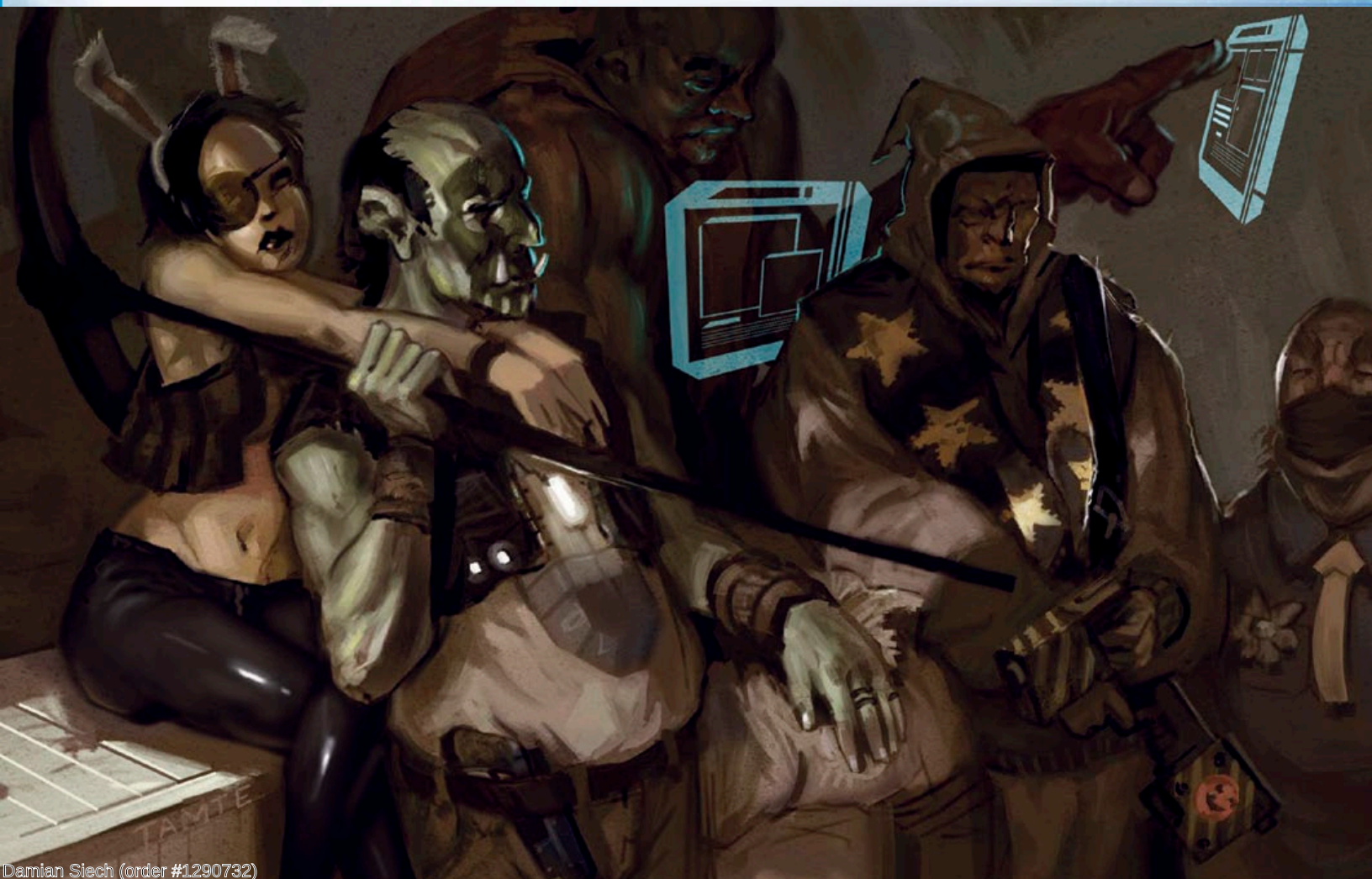
If the contact cannot arrange a direct meeting, the contact can instead network with an intermediary closer to the NPC. In most cases it will be easier to arrange this kind of meeting, which the characters can use to persuade the intermediary to network on their behalf. Perhaps the characters can work their way up a chain of middlemen to eventually score the audience they desire.

SWAG

Swag is related to networking, except that the characters are going through the contact to find someone willing to buy or sell goods. By using his connections, a contact can find more potential parties willing to trade for swag.

If a contact looks for a trader on behalf of a player character, follow the procedure for the Availability or Fencing Test as normal, using the contact's Charisma and Negotiation instead of the player character's (see *Availability & Buying Gear*, p. 312). The contact's Connection rating is added as extra dice on this test. If the player character is willing to spend more or reduce the selling price to sweeten the deal, this must be told to the contact in advance.

Such help comes with a price, so to speak. A contact will charge a "finder's fee" for his assistance, a commission equal to the contact's Connection rating times five percent. This fee is in addition to the normal cost of the item and must be paid prior to the trade. If the player character reneges on payment, the deal's off (and the character may have some serious fence-mending to do). Once the contact has been compensated for his time and trouble, the contact arranges for a meeting time and place for the swap to go down.



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FAVOR RATING TABLE	
RATING	**DESCRIPTION**
1	**Minor.** Deliver a message to someone. Provide access to a low-level restricted security area (airport boarding area, police station).
2	**Low Risk.** Loan use of specialized equipment (up to 5,000¥ in value). Corporate action requiring the signature of a first-line supervisor.
3	**Medium.** Provide access to a mid-level restricted security area (standard corporate research lab).
4	**Moderate Risk.** Loan use of specialized equipment (up to 50,000¥ in value). Corporate requisition requiring the signature of a middle manager.
5	**Serious.** Provide access to a high-level security area (FBI offices, AA megacorporate headquarters, AAA regional headquarters).
6	**Major Risk.** Loan use of specialized equipment (up to 500,000¥ in value). Corporate requisition requiring the signature of a senior manager or junior executive.

FAVORS

Favor covers all other types of assistance a contact can give, from fixing a shot-up vehicle, to on-the-spot first aid, to giving a character a crash pad to hide out in. Any sort of direct help by a contact generally counts as a favor.

There are two types of favors that can apply to contacts: business services and personal assistance. Business services cover anything that a character could obtain from a complete stranger, such as equipment repair or medical treatment (nothing personal, just business). Usually a character will go to a contact for a business service because the character wants to keep the transaction "under the table" without the authorities (or other unwanted individuals) finding out. A contact will charge the standard rate for any services rendered, though the character may try to haggle for a "friendship discount." If this happens, make a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test, adding the contact's Loyalty rating to the character's dice pool, with each net hit on either side raising or lowering the fee by 10 percent, as appropriate.

Personal assistance is more nebulous and covers all sorts of assistance that isn't paid for with cash. Usually it will be up to roleplaying and the gamemaster's judgment to determine whether or not a contact is willing (or able) to render personal assistance. Sometimes, however, more formal guidance may be needed.

To help determine how big a personal favor the player character is asking, gamemasters may consult the Favor Rating Table. Favor ratings range from 1 to 6; the higher the number, the larger the commitment and risk the contact is taking. Contacts will normally agree to personal assistance with a Favor rating equal to or less than their Loyalty rating. If the Favor rating exceeds the contact's Loyalty rating, the character will need to convince the contact with a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test.

If a player character resorts to a Negotiation Test to obtain the contact's cooperation, the character will owe the contact a favor (or even several) in the future. How the favor is repaid depends on the gamemaster, but it should be at least equal in Favor rating, perhaps reduced by one per net hit scored on the Negotiation Test. Of course, a gamemaster can use a favor owed as a plot hook opportunity for a new adventure (see *Favor for a Friend*, p. 289).

GLITCHES ON CONTACT-RELATED TESTS

If a character glitches when dealing with a contact, or if the contact glitches while doing something for the character, the gamemaster has several options. If the contact was conducting legwork, he may simply get a few facts wrong, so his recollection will be inaccurate. If the contact was acquiring swag, he may end up with something used, or a model other than what was specifically asked for that has a few "bugs." Otherwise, a glitch likely means that a third party has gotten wind of what's going on. The walls have ears, and this is especially true in the shadows, where information is a hot commodity. The gamemaster determines if the runners are aware they have an information leak so they can do something about it; or if they find out the hard way when their faces appear on the evening news or some unexpected guests crash their meeting.

On a critical glitch, something has gone drastically wrong. The information provided by the contact is completely untrue, the trading partner will attempt a doublecross, or something wrong was said to one of the involved NPCs and he has taken offense. Alternately, word about the character's doings may leak out to the worst possible people—the character's hated rivals, the assassin on their trail, or gung-ho authorities looking to make the world safer by splattering some street scum all over the pavement.

PLAYING CONTACTS

The rules for contacts should make playing contacts as much fun for gamemasters as playing characters is for the players. But so far we've only scratched the surface of the possibilities such NPCs represent.

Gamemasters can make their contacts fully realized characters by generating biographies for each contact. When contacts become more well-rounded people, gamemasters can find multiple uses for these characters: instructors, enemies, competitors, dupes, moles, traitors, secret agents, godparents—and any of these roles can provide the starting point for an adventure or campaign.

As a twist on the usual role of contacts in a game, some contacts may seek out the player characters in search of information. In some circumstances, contacts may compete with player characters to obtain data or resources, a situation that can quickly develop into bidding or information wars as contacts play the characters off other NPCs or manipulate events to their own advantage. Other contacts may be pressured by outside individuals, groups, or other mysterious forces not to cooperate with player characters (known as "hanging them out to dry"), or even to mislead them. Contacts may also be less than cooperative for their own reasons.

Still other contacts can serve as ordinary "men on the street"—sources of rumors, misinformation, and apparently useless information. A casual contact who tells the runners what they want to know, and then goes on to chat about recent weird happenings, an obscure news item, a disturbing recurring dream, a problem his wife is having at work, or a general decline in the quality of the soyshakes at the local Stuffer Shack, can provide excellent methods of introducing clues about future events into the campaign, without restricting the players' desire to control their characters' destinies.

Finally, by providing contacts with specialized knowledge, secret histories, unexpected acquaintances, or avenues of information the player wouldn't suspect, gamemasters can make contacts surprisingly multidimensional or disappointingly narrow in their knowledge, according to the game's demands. Asking a talismonger to obtain a gun may be a useless request, but asking your Thursday afternoon chess partner at the local soykaf shop for the home address of a high-ranking Knight Errant official might lead to a big and unexpected payoff.

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FAVOR FOR A FRIEND

Many adventures contain at least one instance in which someone asks a runner to perform a "favor for a friend." The favor-for-a-friend job transcends the normal "work for nuyen" shadowrun and allows gamemasters to inject unexpected plot twists or introduce new levels of conflict into their campaigns.

Favors requested by contacts also allow player characters to choose their own runs, rather than passively waiting for Mr. Johnson to come along and offer them one. Pursuing a favor to a contact or friend allows runners to explore their personal interests and more importantly allows characters to take on opponents and obstacles with the confidence that the job is not planned as a setup—though it may become a trap somewhere along the way.

In general, as a contact becomes more valuable and helpful, he is more likely to ask the player character to do him a favor in return for previous help. Naturally, the more useful the contact, the more dangerous and troublesome that favor should be.

SAMPLE CONTACTS

The following sample contacts represent the people that shadowrunners of all experience levels are likely to have the most dealings with and find the most useful. Each entry includes a thumbnail sketch of the contact, what uses the contact serves, places the players might meet the contact, similar contacts, and game statistics.

BARTENDER

Uses: Information, additional contacts, back rooms for private meets
Places to Meet: Any bar/nightclub
Similar Contacts: Bar/nightclub owner, bouncer, waitress, stripper

Aside from drinks, information is the bartender's stock in trade. If you're new in town (or even in the neighborhood) and looking for information, you could do worse than to drop into the local bar, buy a few drinks, and talk to the guy or girl doing the pouring. Bartenders act as confidant, sounding board, and cut-rate psychologist for anybody who ponies up the cost of a drink or three, which means the ones worth their salt know at least a little something about everybody who's warmed one of their barstools. They're usually up on which regulars haven't been in for awhile, the juicy dirt on the area rumor mill, who's having trouble with spouses, kids, or business associates—and if you're *really* lucky, she might even have some even more useful paydata that some drunk has let slip and forgotten about in his haze of inebriation. She can also turn area newbies on to the locations of some important people and services, like the street doc who won't cut you up and sell you to the organleggers, the talismonger who won't cheat you on magical gear, or the gun dealer who might have that new model your usual dealer doesn't stock.

Don't expect the bartender to just spill her customers' guts to any slot who sits down, though—bartenders are also known for their discretion, and you usually have to persuade her that you've got a good reason for needing to know what she's got to tell. Slipping her some cred or buying a round of drinks for the room will go a long way toward moving you up on her long list of friends.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	2	6	5	1

Active Skills: Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 3, Longarms 1 (Shotguns +2), Negotiation 3, Unarmed Combat 2

Knowledge Skills: Alcohol 5, Media Stars 3, Sports 5, Street Rumors 5, Trivia 4

BEAT COP

Uses: Information, additional contacts, gear
Places to Meet: The streets of his beat, coffee shops
Similar Contacts: Detective, snitch, undercover cop, rent-a-cop

The beat cop's been pounding the pavement for a long time, and what he doesn't know about the area he patrols isn't worth knowing. He's got the skinny on the local gangs, newcomers to the area, long-time residents, suspicious activities, drug and BTL dens, and any other nefarious doings going down. If he doesn't know something now, he'll know it soon, since he maintains a good network of contacts and snitches who let him in on any new developments. If you get on his good side, he might just share some of it with you.

Beat cops vary in their particulars: some of them patrol on foot, some in cars, and others still on motorcycles, bikes, or even (rarely) horseback. Some of them are straight arrows while others are as crooked as a dog's hind leg and will sell their grandmothers for enough cred. The trick to a successful relationship with a beat cop is to find out what motivates him—keeping order on his beat, making a little extra cred on the side, cleaning up (or aiding) the local gang—and help him get it. In exchange, he can be a wealth of information about local goings-on, put you in touch with people who can help you out, and sometimes even fix it so evidence "falls out of the police car" where you can get your hands on it.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	4	3	2	3	2	3	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Clubs 3, Etiquette 3 (Street +2), Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Perception 3, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Knowledge Skills: Crime Syndicates 3, Illegal Goods 3, Local Gangs 4, Police Procedures 4, Street Rumors 3

BLOGGER

Uses: Information, additional contacts
Places to Meet: Matrix
Similar Contacts: Infobroker, journalist, pirate radio operator, trid reporter

If you're looking for somebody who's clued in to the latest developments of his chosen topic of interest, the blogger is a good person to know. Spending most of his time in the Matrix tracking down facts and swapping newsbites with fellow bloggers all over the world, he's got the latest info, rumors, and updates at his fingertips. If he doesn't know, give him an hour or two to put out feelers and he can almost always get you what you need.

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Bloggers (the useful ones, anyway) usually focus on a particular field of interest—politics, sports, megacorps, magic, and so on, and many of them narrow their focus even more tightly (for example, conservative politics, Mitsuhama, or the Seattle Mariners). Planning a run on a megacorp and need the latest word on the street? Corp-focused blogs are often treasure troves of information, both in data and in hooking you up with other bloggers who might have even more interesting tidbits. Keep in mind, though, that the more sensitive the subject of the blog, the more likely it's being monitored by the very people you're trying to score info about.

Bloggers love information and will gladly swap data with you if you've got something they want. Since bloggers have a running rivalry with "legitimate" journalists, they're always looking for a new way to upstage the corporate media.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	2	3	2	4	4	3	2	2	6	7	1

Active Skills: Computer 4, Data Search 5, Etiquette 2 (Matrix +2), Hacking 2, Hardware 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3

Knowledge Skills: Chosen Specialty Topic 5, Matrix Rumors 4, Matrix Sites 4, Memes 3

FIXER

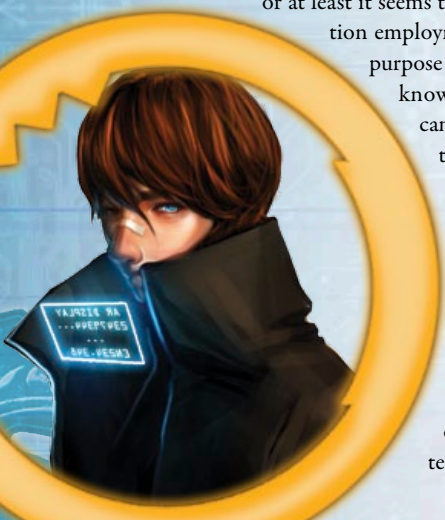
Uses: Jobs and cred, information, gear, additional contacts

Places to Meet: Wherever the fixer wants: typical places include local bars or clubs, coffee shops, street corners where surveillance is next to impossible

Similar Contacts: Fence, loan shark, Mr. Johnson

Quite simply, the fixer is a shadowrunner's most important contact. Like a spider at the center of a web radiating out in all directions, the fixer's got the connections, the hookups, and the rep to make or break a runner's career. Whatever you need, he can get it for you: jobs, guns, info, wheels—you name it, and he'll come up with it sooner or later. For a price, of course. In the shadows, nothing's free.

Fixers live and die by their connections. They know everybody, or at least it seems that way. Think of the fixer as a combination employment agency, procurement firm, and all-purpose fence: they earn their keep by what they know, who they know, and how well they can broker deals between people who need things and the people who provide those things. When a corporate Mr. Johnson needs somebody to steal a rival's prototype or "persuade" their head scientist that she'd be happier elsewhere, he calls a fixer to find the best team for the job. When a street samurai has some hot swag he needs to unload in a hurry, the fixer's the go-to guy who can use his connections to get the best price. When a team needs some special expertise that they don't normally possess (say, a hacker to get them past a corp's security system), a quick call to the fixer gets them what they need.



One thing fixers aren't, though, is cheap. They get their cut one way or another for every transaction—a percentage of your payment for a run, a little off the top for every piece of gear they fence—and the better the fixer, the higher the cut's going to be. Get on his good side and he might just give you a discount. It's wise to do that anyway: a fixer's good side is a very good place to be, and if you end up on his bad side—well, you didn't really want to work in this town again, did you?

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	2	5	5	3	4	3	6	8	1

Active Skills: Computer 3, Data Search 4, Dodge 2, Etiquette 4 (Street +2), Negotiation 5, Perception 3, Pistols 3

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Rumors 4, Fences 4, Gear Values 6, Shadowrunner Teams 4

MAFIA CONSIGLIERI

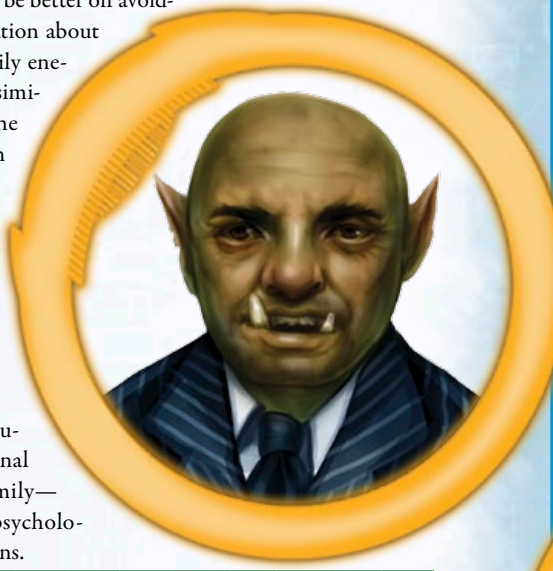
Uses: Information, additional contacts

Places to Meet: Restaurants, casinos, bars

Similar Contacts: Yakuza *wakagashira*, Triad Incense Master

If your business takes you to a place where you need the ear of a Mafia don, a good person to start with is his *consiglieri,* or counselor. Often "the power behind the throne" in a family, he occupies a unique position—not technically a member, but privy to many of the organization's inner secrets by virtue of being the trusted advisor to its most senior people. The consiglieri often has access to information and insights into the family's business, plans, and even its psychology.

As you might guess, though, the consiglieri will not give up these confidences lightly—his life could very well be forfeit if the don or his lieutenants got wind that he was sharing secrets outside the family. You'll need to offer him something valuable, such as help with a problem the family might be better off avoiding directly, information about the activities of family enemies, or something similar. Of course, if the consiglieri has grown disillusioned with his don and his role in the family, he might just slip you some good intel in exchange for more time-honored incentives (like nuyen).



Consiglieris usually hold a traditional job outside the family—many are lawyers, psychologists, or even magicians.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	2	5	5	3	4	3	6	8	1

Active Skills: Computer 2, Data Search 2, Etiquette 3 (Mob +2), Instruction 4, Leadership 3, Negotiation 3, Perception 3, Pistols 1

Knowledge Skills: Business 3, Law 4, Local Politics 3, Mob Politics 5, Police Procedures 2, Psychology 4

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MECHANIC

Uses: Repair services, used wheels, and other vehicles

Places to Meet: Local garage, gas station, automobile chop shop, used-car lot, aircraft hangar

Similar Contacts: Tech Wizard

If you live and die by your vehicles, the mechanic is somebody you can't afford to be without. A wizard with anything that drives, flies, or floats, she can fix it when it's broken and customize it to do things nobody reading its original specs would suspect it was capable of. Give her enough time and enough cred and she can get even the worst junkyard-fodder up and running again, though keep in mind that the truly hopeless cases are going to cost you extra—in some cases a lot extra.

In addition to keeping your existing ride happy and fixing it when it's broken, the mechanic can also find you a new one. Whether it's cheap wheels, a replacement for that drone that got shot down in last week's run, or that tricked-out luxury sports car you've had your eye on, she can probably get her hands on it for you.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	6	6	1

Active Skills: Aeronautics Mechanic 4, Automotive Mechanic 5, Computer 2, Gunnery 2, Hardware 4, Industrial Mechanic 2, Pilot Groundcraft 3

Knowledge Skills: Chop Shops 4, Combat Biking 5, Vehicles 4

MR. JOHNSON

Uses: Shadowruns, job-related information, additional contacts

Places to Meet: Just about anywhere the Johnson wants; typical spots include secluded tables or private rooms in restaurants or clubs, or places with a crowd to blend into (parks, zoos, museums, and so on)

Similar Contacts: Company man, fixer, government agent, or any other potential employer of shadowrunners

Mr. Johnson is the grease that keeps the shadowrunning machine running. As the intermediary between the corp executives, government agencies, and such and the shadowy world of the streets, he's the one who starts the ball in motion. Without Mr. Johnson, there can be no shadowruns, because the corps and other employers won't get their hands dirty directly—that's why they call shadowrunners "deniable assets," after all.

Mr. Johnson runs the meet, does the hiring, and pays the cred for the job. He's your first source of information about what needs to be done—the layout of the place you're breaking into, the habits of the person you're supposed to extract, how often you'll be hassled by security patrols—and he's a good person to talk to when you need specialized gear, passcodes, or identification to complete your job.

He's been around a long time, and he knows the score in the shadows. His connections, while perhaps not as wide as the Fixer's, run deep in the corporate world, and he has a long memory. Play straight with him and chances are he'll play straight with you (sure, you can't *bank* on that, but if you can't take a little uncertainty in your life, what are you doing running the shadows?). Doublecross him or screw him over, and you can count on his retribution—maybe not right away, but Mr. Johnson can't afford to let the word get out that he can't control his assets. Smart runners learn fast to stay on his good side.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	3	3	2	5	5	4	4	3	6	8	1

Active Skills: Computer 4, Con 4, Data Search 3, Etiquette 4 (Corporate +2), Intimidation 2, Negotiation 5, Perception 3, Pistols 3

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Finances 3, Corporate Rumors 6, Psychology 5, SOTA Technology 3

STREET DOC

Uses: Medical care, information, additional contacts, gear (drugs)

Places to Meet: Local clinic, body shop

Similar Contacts: EMT, Ambulance driver, street mage/shaman

It's not always convenient to visit the local emergency room when you get shot up on a run, and if you haven't been keeping up on your DocWagon contract payments, a street doc can mean the difference between seeing another day and becoming some ghoul's next meal. Operating out of local neighborhood clinics and body shops, street docs don't ask too many questions about who they're treating and why, and often they don't charge you an arm and a leg (literally *or* figuratively) for their services. On the other hand, not all of them are technically *doctors,* either—you might be trusting your life to a medical-school dropout, ex-combat medic, or nurse—but as they say, you pays your nuyen and you takes your chances. Still, when you're bleeding from that sucking chest wound and too hot to risk legitimate medical care, the street doc might just be the best friend you have.

In addition to patching up wounds and handing out drugs (legal and otherwise), many street docs also maintain a thriving business installing cyberware—usually used, often salvaged from runners who weren't as lucky as you. Sometimes you can get a very good deal this way, but as always, caveat emptor. It pays to get to know your street doc and keep him happy, not only because he'll treat you better and cheaper that way, but also because it's never a good idea to piss off a guy who deals with you when you're unconscious. The organleggers pay very well for spare parts these days ...

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	3	2	3	4	5	3	3	6	7	1

Active Skills: Cybertechnology 5, First Aid 4, Medicine 5, Negotiation 2, Perception 3

Knowledge Skills: Biology 4, Medical Advances 3, Organleggers 2, Psychology 2, Smugglers 2

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TALISMONGER

Uses: Magical items, magic-related information, additional contacts
Places to Meet: Talismonger's shop, medicine lodge, occult library, coffee shop
Similar Contacts: Fixer, Street mage/shaman, corporate wagemage

Every magical type should know (and befriend, if he's smart) at least one talismonger. Your one-stop shop for all things arcane and mystical, she can provide you with magical foci, fetishes, ritual goods, and just about everything else that's of interest to the Awakened among us. Since almost everybody in the area with magical talent passes through her shop sooner or later, she's also a great source for information about what's going down in the Awakened community.

Many talismongers are also enchanters, which means that not only can they sell you existing magical goodies, they can do custom work, crafting your gear to your exact requirements. If you'd rather do the job yourself, she can sell you the raw materials. She's also a good person to have around when you need to know whether that "ancient mystical talisman" you boosted from the corp exec's apartment is the real deal or just a cheap trinket mass-produced in some magical sweatshop in the Far East. On top of all that, if you need the services of a good shaman or mage for your next run, she can put you in contact with somebody who's got the skills you're looking for.

Talismongers make good friends and bad enemies. Treat her well and you've got a valuable ally—treat her badly and your latest wiz power focus might fizzle out right when you're counting on it most.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	6	4	7	1

Active Skills: Assensing 4, Conjuring Skill group 4, Etiquette 3 (Magical +2), Negotiation 4, Perception 2, Sorcery Skill group 4

Knowledge Skills: Magical Background 3, Magical Goods Value 6, Metalworking 4, Woodworking 4

CRITTERS

Humanity was not the only race affected by the Awakening. Just as the return of magic created metahuman races, it also affected many normal plants and animals, bringing to life many fantastic creatures previously only witnessed in fairy tales. In some cases, the effects of pollution and genetic experimentation twisted the transformation, resulting in monstrosities never before imagined. Furthermore, magic opened gateways to other planes, allowing spirits and other phantasmic creatures to cross the astral plane into our world; some come at the call of the magician who summoned them, but others come of their own will, for purposes of their own counsel.

Critters refer in general to all non-human creatures that characters may encounter. Some are completely non-magical but are still dangerous even without magic, like lions and tigers and bears (Oh my!). Others, like sasquatches and dragons, are sentient and just as intelligent as metahumans (or sometimes more). Some are spirits residing primarily in the astral plane, though they can materialize to affect the physical world.

Critters are always played as NPCs. Gamemasters can choose to use the rules for grunts for groups of critters, especially those that operate in a pack or swarm. A gamemaster can also create prime runner critters, to reflect showcase critters that will feature prominently in an adventure or campaign. Prime runner critters are best when limited to sentient paracritters, such as dragons, sasquatches, or vampires, but the gamemaster is free to tag any unique critter as a prime runner if it fits his game.

ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS

Like normal characters, critters possess a complete set of attributes. Since critters can range in size from a devil rat to a great dragon, critter attributes can vary widely. In some cases, a critter's capability in an attribute may be so small that it has a rating of zero. If a critter has an attribute of zero, it does not add dice for the linked attribute for any tests, and it cannot default to that attribute. (Of course, if the critter has a linked skill, it can still use it normally.)

A gamemaster may choose to alter attributes up or down, to reflect individual critters that are stronger or weaker than the norm for their species (for example, alpha males or runts). Attributes may be adjusted up to three points in either direction. No attribute may be reduced below zero.

Critters also possess skills, just like characters. In this case, skills represent the creature's natural instinctive knowledge and innate ability. Natural predators, such as lions and wolves, will possess the Unarmed Combat skill, for example. As with attributes, gamemasters may adjust skills up or down for particularly capable or inept critters, up to three points in either direction. No skill may be reduced below zero. If a critter does not possess a skill, it is considered Unaware in that skill (see p. 119).

Most Awakened critters possess a Magic attribute, indicating the critter's innate magical potential. This does not, however, give them the ability to cast spells, conjure spirits, or astrally perceive/project, unless they have the Magician quality.

MOVEMENT

Not all critters move at the same speed as humans, and some can move at different speeds by different methods, such as flying or swimming. Each critter has a movement rate that specifies how fast a creature moves in meters per Combat Turn, and the method of movement. The first listed rate is for standard movement (the equivalent of walking), the second for fast movement (the equivalent of running).

Flight: Critters capable of flight may possess a special Flight skill. This skill measures how well the creature can fly and is used the same way as the Running or Swimming skills are used for movement.

POWERS

Powers are special abilities that critters possess as part of their physiology. Some powers are natural in nature, such as claws or armor. Others, such as Concealment or Engulf, are magical.

The game mechanics given for the powers below are not intended as hard and fast rules, but as guidelines for the gamemaster. Players should never be absolutely certain of the capabilities of a critter, particularly Awakened ones. There is always a chance that a power may work slightly differently for one particular paracritter, especially one designated as a prime runner critter. Uncertainty is a wonderful dramatic tool.

Note that in order for a creature to use a power against a target, they must share the same "state:" astral or physical. Astral forms cannot affect physical targets, and vice versa (see *The Astral World*, p. 191). Astral critters that materialize can affect physical targets, however, just as dual natured critters can interact with both the physical and astral planes equally effectively.

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Each power lists the power's name, type, the action required to use it, and the power's range. A description of the power and its effects follows.

Type: Powers may be either mana (M) or physical (P), just like spells (see p. 203). Mana powers do not affect nonliving targets, whereas physical powers cannot be used in astral space or affect astral forms.

Actions: Powers require either a Complex Action or Simple Action to activate, or they Automatically ("Auto") function at all times with no attention from the critter. Auto actions require no action to activate, as they are always on.

Range: Powers may have a range of Line of Sight (LOS), Touch, or Self (indicating the power affects only the critter itself). The Line of Sight rules for spellcasting also apply for critter powers. Unless otherwise noted, a power may only be used on one target at a time.

Duration: Powers have a duration that indicates how long the effect lasts: Always, Instant, Sustained, Permanent, or Special.

Powers that are always in effect (have an Action of Automatic) have a duration of *Always,* as they are constantly "on."

Instant powers take effect and vanish in the same action, though they may have lasting effects (damage, for example).

Sustained powers may be maintained over time at no effort or cost. Because these powers are innate, the critter is not subject to any strain or modifiers for keeping the effect going. Even taking damage will not disrupt these powers' ability to sustain. Also, line of sight does not have to be maintained after the power takes hold of its target. Critters may sustain a number of powers equal to their Magic at one time.

Permanent powers must be maintained for a specific period of time before the effects become permanent, as noted in the power's description.

Other powers may have a *Special* duration, meaning that the duration of the effect depends upon other factors, as noted in the description.

ACCIDENT

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Instant**

This power allows the being to cause a seemingly normal accident to occur. The exact nature of the accident is up to the gamemaster, based on the circumstances and surrounding environment.

When a character is targeted with the Accident power, make an Opposed Test between the critter's Magic + Willpower and the character's Reaction + Intuition. If the critter wins, the character suffers an accident determined by the gamemaster. Possibilities include: he trips, gets a mouthful of leaves, bangs his knee painfully, drops something, or suffers a brain fart and ejects the clip out of his gun. Accident isn't dangerous in itself, but the environment can make it so. Tripping on a narrow mountain ledge, for example, can be most unfortunate. If the critter scored 4+ net successes, treat the accident as a critical glitch—the accident is not just a fumble, it's a major mishap.

If a critter uses Accident against a vehicle, it can force the driver to make a Crash Test. The critter's Magic attribute serves as a negative dice pool modifier to the test.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Type: **M** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

Some beings can mentally manipulate particular types of mundane animals. This power allows the being to direct the behavior of an animal or group of animals. This behavior must fall within what is normal for the animal. For example, a controlled monkey could not drive a car, but it could be ordered to climb a tree and retrieve something, attack, sit quietly, or follow someone. Animals may not be commanded if they leave line of sight, but they will continue to fulfill any orders they were given. The being may control a number of small animals (cats, rats, etc.) equal to its Charisma x 5, or a number of larger animals (wolves, lions, bears, etc.) equal to its Charisma. This power may not be used on any critter with the Sapience power or a Magic attribute.

ARMOR

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

The critter has an extremely tough hide that offers some protection from attacks. A critter with this power has a natural Armor rating that is cumulative with any external armor worn. Critter armor is divided into Ballistic and Impact components, the same as character armor.

ASTRAL FORM

Type: **M** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

A critter with the Astral Form power exists in the astral plane only. It cannot be damaged by physical attacks or physical spells; only astral attacks or mana spells may hurt an astral critter. Likewise, an astral critter cannot affect other creatures in the material world, only dual natured creatures or astrally perceiving characters.

Critters with this power may manifest on the physical plane in the same way as astrally projecting magicians can (see p. 192).

BINDING

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Instant**

The critter can make its victim "stick" to any surface he is touching (or to the being itself). The victim may attempt to break free with a Complex Action, rolling Strength + Body against the critter's Magic + Willpower. If the victim prevails, he has escaped.

COMPULSION

Type: **M** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

A being with the Compulsion power can compel a target to perform a specific action (generally, each creature can compel only one type of action). To use this power, the critter must beat the target in an opposed Test between its Magic + Charisma versus the target's Willpower + Charisma. If the victim loses, he must immediately follow through with the compelled action. Compulsion cannot compel a target's future actions.

CONCEALMENT

Type: **P** • Action: **Simple** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

This power refers to a critter's ability to mystically hide itself or others, or alternatively to hide something that people are looking for. Concealment subtracts a number of dice equal to the critter's Magic from any Perception Tests to locate the concealed subject. Concealment can be used on a number of targets simultaneously equal to the critter's Magic; concealed subjects can see each other if the critter allows it. Concealment also allows dual natured critters to conceal themselves and others from astral detection.

CONFUSION

Type: **M** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The Confusion power allows a critter to befuddle a victim, so that the target is unable to make decisions, loses his sense of direction, can't remember what he was doing, and so on. The critter makes a Magic + Willpower Opposed Test versus the target's Willpower. The nets hits scored by the critter serve as a dice pool modifier to any action the character takes.

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CORROSIVE SPIT

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Special**

This creature spits corrosive saliva at opponents with range increments of (Body) meters. Treat this as a standard ranged combat attack, using the critter's Exotic Ranged Weapon skill + Agility. The saliva causes Acid damage (see p. 163) with DV equal to Magic, and is resisted with half Impact armor (round up).

DUAL NATURED

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

A critter that is dual natured is active in the astral plane and can affect astral beings as well as physical ones. Dual natured creatures have the ability to perceive and interact with the astral plane similar to characters using astral perception (see *Astral Perception*, p. 191). However, innate dual nature is different from astral perception in that dual natured critters can always sense both the physical and astral worlds without having to shift back and forth. Their minds process a composite of astral impressions and normal physical senses; consequently, dual natured critters do not suffer the –2 dice pool modifier for interacting with the physical world while astrally perceiving.

ELEMENTAL ATTACK

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Instant**

A critter with Elemental Attack can release a projected blast of damaging or negative energy, be it flame, intense cold, electricity, water, and so on. The power is treated as a ranged attack (see *Ranged Combat*, p. 150) using the critter's Exotic Ranged Weapon + Agility to attack. The attack's DV equals the critter's Magic and is treated as Cold, Electricity, or Fire damage (see p. 164) as appropriate to the attack. Such attacks are resisted with half Impact armor. The type of elemental attack used by a spirit is appropriate to their element and chosen at the time of its summoning; once chosen, it cannot be changed.

ENERGY AURA

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

A critter with Energy Aura continuously radiates an aura of damaging or negative energy, be it flame, intense cold, electricity, or something similar. Melee attacks made by the critter gain an additional +4 modifier to the Damage Value. Additionally, treat the damage as Cold, Electricity, or Fire damage (see p. 164), as appropriate to the aura. Such attacks are resisted with half Impact armor.

Any successful attack against a critter with Energy Aura means the attacker also takes damage from the attack. The attacker must make a Damage Resistance Test against a Damage Value equal to the critter's Magic. Impact armor protects with half its value.

ENGULF

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Touch** • Duration: **Sustained**

The Engulf power gives a critter the ability to draw victims into itself or the terrain it controls, thus smothering the victim. Treat Engulf as a melee attack. If the attack succeeds, it inflicts damage (see below) and the critter engulfs the victim in its grasp. Every time the critter's Action Phase comes up, the critter automatically inflicts damage with a base DV equal to its Magic attribute. Net hits on the melee attack increase the DV of this damage. The victim resists this damage normally with a Damage Resistance Test, using Body + half Impact armor (round up) unless otherwise noted.

Engulfed victims may not move. During the victim's Action Phase, the victim may attempt to escape. Make an Opposed Test, rolling the victim's Strength + Body against the critter's Magic + Body. If the victim prevails, then he has escaped and takes no more damage from the attack.

The secondary effects of some engulfing attacks are described as follows:

Fire Engulf: The victim resists Fire damage (see p. 164).

Water Engulf: The victim resists Stun damage. This is rougher than normal drowning, because the critter is capable of exerting great pressure on the victim. Victims who pass out from Stun damage continue to take damage after falling unconscious, with the Stun damage overflowing into Physical damage as normal.

Air Engulf: The victim resists Stun as if from an inhalation-vector toxin attack (see p. 254). Armor does not protect against this attack, but other protective gear might (see the Toxin Protection table, p. 254). If the victim passes out from Stun damage, he will continue to take damage, with the Stun damage overflowing into Physical damage as normal.

Earth Engulf: The victim resists Physical damage.

ENHANCED SENSES

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

Enhanced Senses covers any improved or augmented senses beyond the normal human range of awareness. This includes low-light and thermographic vision, improved hearing and smell, heat-sensing organs, natural sonar, and so on.

ESSENCE DRAIN

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Touch** • Duration: **Permanent**

The Essence Drain power allows a being to drain the Essence from another character, adding drained Essence to the critter's own. Essence Drain can only target physical sentient beings (characters and non-astral critters with the Sentience power).

The critter cannot drain from a resisting victim; the victim must either participate willingly, or be subdued into helplessness (restrained, paralyzed, knocked unconscious, mentally controlled, etc.). Essence transfer only occurs in the presence of strong emotion. This can be a lover's passion, the terror of an unwilling victim, or the rage of a defeated enemy, for example. The emotions must be strong, and they must be focused personally on the critter using the power. Sometimes the transfer of a token amount of physical material takes place, such as blood for a vampire or flesh for a wendigo, though this usually serves to enhance the passion or terror of the moment.

Draining a point of Essence takes a Charisma + Magic (10 – target's Essence, 1 minute) Extended Test. If the critter is disturbed or interrupted before this test ends, the Essence point is not drained. The critter may drain as many points of Essence as it currently possesses, with a minimum of 1 point. A critter can only increase its Essence to twice its natural maximum.

Lost Essence will affect a character's Magic or Resonance rating, as noted on p. 68. If a character's Essence is drained to 0, the character dies.

The psychic stimulus of the act of draining has a side effect of creating ecstasy in the victim. A victim being drained must make a Willpower (2) Test. Failure indicates addiction, causing the subject to seek out the creature for another "rush." Treat this as a Mild Addiction negative quality (see p. 93). This will, of course, lead to a rapid loss of Essence and eventual death if the character is not restrained or does not "kick the habit."

If pressed, a critter that has drained Essence within the past hour can siphon the stolen life force into other attributes, including (and often especially) Magic. Every 2 points of drained Essence temporarily

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boosts one Physical or Mental attribute, or Magic, by +1. Only one attribute may be boosted at any time. This attribute boosts wears off after 12 hours, and half the Essence points used to fuel the boost are lost.

FEAR

Type: **M** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Special**

The Fear power gives a being the power to fill its victims with overwhelming terror. The victim will race in panic for the nearest point of apparent safety and will not stop until he is out of sight and a safe distance away. The critter makes a Willpower + Magic Opposed Test against the target's Willpower. The terror lasts for 1 Combat Turn per net hit scored by the critter. Even after that point, the target must succeed in a Willpower + Charisma (critter's net hits) Test to return or face the critter again.

GUARD

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The Guard power gives the critter the ability to prevent normal environmental accidents and hazards (both natural and those induced by the Accident power), such as preventing someone from succumbing to heatstroke or saving someone from drowning. The Guard power can also be used to prevent a glitch from occurring. Guard may be used on a number of characters at once equal to the critter's Magic attribute.

HARDENED ARMOR

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

Hardened Armor is even tougher than normal armor. If the modified Damage Value of an attack does not exceed the Armor rating (modified by Armor Penetration), then it bounces harmlessly off the critter; don't even bother to make a Damage Resistance Test. Otherwise, Hardened Armor provides both Ballistic and Impact armor equal to its rating.

IMMUNITY

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

A critter with Immunity has an enhanced resistance to a certain type of attack or affliction. The critter gains an "Armor rating" equal to twice its Magic against that damage. This Immunity Armor is treated as "hardened" protection (see *Hardened Armor* above), meaning that if the Damage Value does not exceed the Armor, then the attack automatically does no damage. Additionally, this "armor rating" is added to the damage resistance test as normal armor.

Immunity to Age: Some beings possess immunity to aging. These beings neither age nor suffer the effects of aging.

Immunity to Normal Weapons: This immunity applies to all weapons that are not magical (weapon foci, spells, adept or critter powers). If the critter has the Allergy weakness, then the Immunity does not apply against non-magical attacks made using the allergen.

INFECTION

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Touch** • Duration: **Permanent**

The Infection power allows a critter with Essence Drain to infect any suitable creature it has drained to 0 Essence with the strain of the HMHVV virus it is carrying. To see if a victim is infected, make an Opposed Test, rolling the critter's Magic + Charisma against the victim's Body + Willpower. If the critter wins, the victim is infected. The victim enters into a state of near-death, as the infection initiates physical, mental, and spiritual transformation. Within 24 hours the newly created critter revives at 1 Essence and must immediately drain Essence from another being.

Player characters transformed through the Infection power automatically become NPCs upon their "death" and are controlled by the gamemaster from that point forward.

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INFLUENCE

Type: **M** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Instant**

The Influence power allows a being to insinuate suggestions into a target's mind, predisposing that person to some form of action, reaction, or emotion. Make an Opposed Test between the being's Magic + Charisma and the target's Willpower. If successful, the target will carry out the suggestion. If confronted with the wrongness of the suggestion, the subject can make a Willpower Test to overcome it as described under *Mental Manipulations,* p. 210.

INNATE SPELL

Type: **A** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **See Spell** • Duration: **per spell**

A creature with the Innate Spell power has the instinctive ability to cast one spell. The critter must possess the Spellcasting skill in order to use the power effectively. Innate Spells cast by a critter are the same as those cast by magicians, and magicians can use Counterspelling against them as normal. Innate spells produce Drain as normal. Critters and Spirits resist Drain with either Intuition or Charisma (at the gamemaster's discretion). Innate spells cause Drain as normal.

MATERIALIZATION

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Sustained**

Certain astral critters are capable of projecting themselves into the material world, thus allowing them to interact with physical beings. When materialized, critters may affect physical targets. Additionally, materialized critters gain Immunity to Normal Weapons.

MIMICRY

Type: **P** • Action: **Simple** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The Mimicry power allows a creature to imitate a wide variety of sounds, including speech and the hunting calls of other creatures. The Perception Test threshold to determine that the sound is false equals the hits scored by the critter with a Charisma + Magic Test.

MIST FORM

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Sustained**

The being can use the Mist Form power to magically transform its body into mist. The mist has a Movement rate of 5 meters per Combat Turn and can pass through any crack or crevice that is not airtight. Systems that are proof against gases, bacteria, or viral infiltration will stop a being in mist form. While in mist form, the being has Immunity to Normal Weapons but is vulnerable to strong winds, which may push/disrupt the mist and disorient the being. If the being is exposed to a substance to which it is allergic, it is immediately forced back into its normal form. Shifting in or out of mist form requires a Complex Action.

MOVEMENT

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The critter may increase or decrease the subject's movement rate within the terrain it controls. Multiply or divide the target's movement rate by the spirit or critter's Magic.

This power has its limits. If the Body of the target exceeds the critter's Magic, reduce the Movement multiplier by half. If the Body of the target exceeds Magic x 2 then Movement has no effect.

MYSTIC ARMOR

Type: **M** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

Critters with Mystic Armor have natural protection from astral attacks. Apply the critter's Mystic Armor rating against any astral attacks that strike it. Some critters may also have hardened Mystic Armor (if they also have the Hardened Armor power).

NATURAL WEAPON

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Touch** • Duration: **Instant**

The critter possesses some natural form of weaponry capable of inflicting Physical damage, such as claws, sharp teeth, or a stinger. The description of this power describes the nature of the attack, as well as its Damage Value and Armor Penetration modifiers where applicable. Natural weapons may be either melee weapons or ranged weapons, and critters follow the standard rules of combat when using them. Critters use the Unarmed Combat skill to attack with natural melee weapons, and the Exotic Ranged attack skill to attack with natural ranged weapons.

Critters without a Natural Weapon may still make an unarmed attack. As with regular characters, the Damage Value is (STR ÷ 2)S.

If the critter is dual natured, Natural Weapon may be used with the normal Unarmed Combat skill and physical Damage Value to perform attacks against astral opponents (within reach).

NOXIOUS BREATH

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **special** • Duration: **Instant**

The critter can project a nauseating stench to incapacitate victims. Treat it as an inhalation vector toxin attack (Speed: Immediate, Power: critter's Magic, Effect: Stun damage, nausea; see p. 254). Armor does not help resist this damage, but respiratory protection will (see the Toxin Protection table, p. 254). This blast of breath extends in a cone out to (Body) meters, and can catch up to two targets who are within one meter of each other

PARALYZING HOWL

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Special** • Duration: **Special**

This power affects everyone (friend or foe) able to hear it. The creature makes an Opposed Test using its Magic + Charisma against the target's Willpower. Apply a dice pool modifier against the critter equal to the rating of any sound dampening devices or hits scored by Hush/Silence spells. If the critter wins, each net hit reduces the target's Reaction for (Magic) minutes (this also affects Initiative). If Reaction is reduced to 0, the character is paralyzed and cannot move (except to breathe). After the paralysis ends, Reaction returns at the rate of 1 point per minute.

PSYCHOKINESIS

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The being with the Psychokinesis power can generate psychokinetic energy with a Strength and Agility equal to the hits scored on a Magic + Willpower Test, similar to the Magic Fingers spell (p. 221).

REGENERATION

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

A critter with Regeneration rapidly heals any damage. At the end of a Combat Turn, make a Magic + Body Test. Each hit regenerates 1 point of Physical or Stun damage. If a critter has already taken enough damage to enter into Physical damage overflow, the critter is not considered dead until it has had a chance to make a Regeneration Test. After a critter has made a Regeneration Test, if the damage overflow is still greater than the critter's Body attribute, then the critter is dead.

Certain types of damage cannot be regenerated from this power. Damage to the brain or spinal cord (for example, from a called shot

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to the head) cannot be healed this way. Likewise, magical damage from weapon foci, combat spells, critter/adept powers, or other magic may not be healed through Regeneration. If the critter has an Allergy, the critter cannot regenerate damage until the allergen's presence is removed.

SEARCH

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **Special** • Duration: **Special**

The being may seek any person, place, or object. To find the target, the creature makes a Magic + Intuition (5, 10 minutes) Extended Test. Apply the dice pool modifiers from the Search Modifiers Table. The critter must have seen what it is searching for before; spirits may search out anything that their summoner provides them with a mental image of.

Critters with the Astral Form power may use Search in astral space and do not have to materialize while searching.

SEARCH MODIFIERS TABLE

SITUATION	THRESHOLD MODIFIERS
Target is more than a kilometer away	+kilometers
Target is a nonliving object or place	+5
SITUATION	**DICE POOL MODIFIER**
Target hidden by Concealment power	–concealer's Magic
Target hidden behind mana barrier	–barrier's Force

SAPIENCE

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Self** • Duration: **Always**

Critters with the Sapience power are self-aware, with a choice-making consciousness. Sapient critters are considered Untrained (see p. 119) in any skills they do not possess and can default normally. Sapient critters are also capable of learning new skills.

While most sapient critters are mundane, some in their species are capable of Awakening and possessing a Magic attribute. Awakened sapient critters are capable of all magical tasks and follow the same rules for magic as normal characters. It has yet to be seen whether sapient critters can become technomancers.

VENOM

Type: **P** • Action: **Auto** • Range: **Touch** • Duration: **Instant**

The critter secretes a natural venom that is poisonous to characters and other critters. Treat it as toxin (see p. 254) with the following attributes: Vector: injection, Speed: 1 Combat Turn, Power: 6, Effect: Physical damage. Note that some critters may have toxins with different attributes, as noted in their individual descriptions.

WEATHER CONTROL

Type: **P** • Action: **Complex** • Range: **LOS** • Duration: **Sustained**

The Weather Control power allows a creature to manipulate certain weather conditions. The desired weather must be possible in the environment where the power is used (no blizzards in Death Valley or heat waves in Iceland, for example). The weather condition builds over time, reaching a peak when the critter completes a

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Magic + Willpower (10, 30 minutes) Extended Test. The creature only "summons" the desired weather; it does not control it. For example, a creature that summons a thunderstorm cannot direct where the lightning bolts may strike.

WEAKNESSES

Even as the Awakening bestowed new powers on certain critters, it also bestowed new vulnerabilities that can be exploited. This is nature's way of leveling the playing field in the ongoing struggle between society and the wilderness. Listed below are possible weaknesses that some critters may have.

ALLERGY

Many critters suffer from an allergy to one or more substances or conditions. A critter with an Allergy suffers discomfort or damage when touched by the allergen. This weakness is rated similarly to the Allergy negative quality (p. 94).

DIETARY REQUIREMENT

The critter must consume a certain type of unique substance at a regular interval to sustain its life. This substance can vary, but it must be unusual and exotic. Examples include gold, metahuman flesh, orichalcum, or toxic waste. How much and how often varies from critter to critter. Without the specified requirement in its diet, the critter eventually sickens and dies.

ESSENCE LOSS

Critters with Essence Loss have no actual Essence of their own and must drain Essence from others in order to survive. Beings with Essence Loss lose 1 point of Essence every lunar cycle (1 month). As Essence decreases, Magic may also be affected (see p. 68).

If a creature is reduced to 0 Essence, it will die in (Body + Willpower) days if it does not replenish itself. A creature in this state is extremely dangerous—a starved predator that hunts for fresh Essence with mindless ferocity.

REDUCED SENSES

Any or all of the critter's five basic senses may be limited in effectiveness. Typically reduced senses function at half-normal range or effectiveness, but a critter can be handicapped further, even to the point of complete absence of that sense.

UNEDUCATED

While sapient critters are capable of interacting with society, not all sapient critters are sophisticated enough to adapt into a high-tech society. Some, such as the naga and the merrow, still live under very primitive standards and have not evolved to the level of metahumanity. The Uneducated weakness reflects this, and this weakness behaves in the same manner as the Uneducated negative quality (see p. 96).

CRITTER COMBAT

Critters fight in combat the same as normal characters do, rolling attribute + attack skill, and all combat rules apply equally for critters and characters. If a critter is attempting to perform an action for which it does not possess a skill, apply the rules for defaulting as appropriate.

Normally, critters without any combat skills will attempt to flee unless backed into the proverbial corner, at which point they will fight until another window of escape opportunity opens up. Natural predators (critters possessing a combat skill) will usually initiate combat if they feel they have the advantage; otherwise they will fight only in self-defense, withdrawing at the first opportunity. If a predator is backed into a corner, however, it will initiate an all-out attack until either it or its foe is dead.

ORDINARY CRITTERS

Like metahumans, the large majority of the animal kingdom remains unaffected by the Awakening. Listed below are some mundane critters that shadowrunners are likely to encounter.

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DOG

Still regarded as man's best friend, domesticated canines fulfill a regular role in society, particularly in security situations, where their enhanced smell and natural predatory instincts can serve them well. The statistics listed below represent an above-average to large dog typically encountered by runners as opposition (for example, German shepherds, rottweilers, and Doberman pinschers).

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	6	6	1

Movement: 10/45

Skills: Intimidation 2, Perception 2, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: DV 2P, AP 0)

GREAT CAT

The term "great cat" refers to any large wild cat around the world, including lions, tigers, panthers, and pumas.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
6	5	4	5	3	3	2	3	4	6	7	2

Movement: 10/60

Skills: Infiltration 3, Perception 2, Tracking 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: DV 5P, AP 0)

HORSE

Whether as mounts, beasts of burden, or even companions, equines in all their varieties rival dogs as mankind's favorite domesticated quadrupeds. In recent years increasing numbers of wild equines can be found in free roaming herds.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
8	5	5	8	3	3	1	2	2	6	8	1

Movement: 20/100

Skills: Running 3

SHARK

While considered the most feared predators of the oceans, most sharks aren't aggressive and will back down from a legitimate threat. The smallest sign of weakness or the faintest smell of blood in the water, however, will drive sharks into a killing frenzy. The following statistics are common for bull sharks; tiger and great white sharks are much larger and deadlier.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	5	5	3	1	4	1	2	2	6	9	1

Movement: 20/60 (swimming)

Skills: Perception 2, Swimming 4, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 5P, AP 0)

WOLF

Though rarely seen in the sprawl, wolf packs still roam the wild, particularly in the Native American Nations of the Pacific Northwest. Wolves hunt in packs of two to six, usually led by a stronger and tougher alpha male. In many cases, the alpha male may in fact be a wolf shapeshifter!

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	6	6	2

Movement: 10/50

Skills: Infiltration 2, Perception 2, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: DV 2P, AP 0)

PARACRITTERS

The following list describes some of the Awakened animals that roam the Sixth World. Many are the Awakened or goblinized variant of ordinary animals, while some are metahumans that have been transformed by the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV). The origin of some other species are mysteries that have yet to be explained.

BARGHEST

The barghest resembles an oversized mastiff, either pure white or pure black. Its short fur lies flat on its body, creating the impression that its hide is naked, and spines protrude the length of its back. Its eyes shine red, and its teeth glow slightly in the dark because of luminescent bacteria in its saliva. It hunts alone or in pairs during breeding season; at other times it hunts in packs of twelve or more. Various corps have attempted to domesticate the barghest as a guard animal, but results so far have been hit-or-miss.

Natural Habitat: North America and northern Europe, with particular concentration in the northern British Isles. Barghests have also been spotted in urbanized areas that were formerly part of the British Empire, such as Australia, Hong Kong, and Nairobi.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
7	5	6	5	3	3	1	3	4	6	4	9	2

Movement: 15/50

Skills: Intimidation 4, Perception 3, Tracking 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Sonar), Fear, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 5P, AP 0), Paralyzing Howl

DEVIL RAT

Completely hairless, the nocturnal devil rat grows up to a meter in length (including tail) and weighs as much as 4 kilograms. Hunting in packs of up to thirty individuals, their prolific breeding rate, combined with their innate immunity to most poisons, makes exterminating them nearly impossible.

Natural Habitat: Urban areas worldwide.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
2	5	5	1	5	5	2	3	2	6	3	10	1

Movement: 2/10

Skills: Climbing 3, Dodge 3, Infiltration 4, Perception 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Animal Control (Ordinary Rats), Concealment (Self Only), Immunity (Toxins), Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 1P, AP 0, –1 Reach)

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

GHOUL

Ghouls are metahumans infected with the Krieger strain of the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV). The virus causes the victim to lose all body hair. The skin becomes a rough, scabrous hide, and the fingers elongate, with the nails hardening into claws.

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Teeth become sharper and more pronounced, while the eyes develop a white film of cataracts. The transformation destroys the victim's intellect in some cases, but many ghouls remain quite intelligent.

Ghouls feed on the necrotized flesh of metahumans, along with that of other animals. They tend to hunt in packs of anywhere from six to twenty. They live in isolated areas apart from humans and metahumans, but close enough for them to feed on the dead. Graveyards, mortuaries, and illegal chop shops are common ghoul haunts.

Natural Habitat: Settled areas worldwide.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
7	3	5	6	1	4	2	5	3	5	1	9	1

Movement: As metatype

Skills: Assensing 2, Infiltration 4, Perception 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws: DV 4P, AP 0), Sapience

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Reduced Senses (Blind)

Notes: Statistics given are for a standard human ghoul; apply metatype attribute modifiers as appropriate. Some ghouls may have the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities.

HELL HOUND

The hell hound is a coal-black dog with red-rimmed eyes, standing 0.9 meters at the shoulder and weighing more than 100 kilograms. An efficient predator, the hell hound hunts in well-coordinated packs, but rarely takes on anything larger than itself, and uses its ability to breathe fire against significant threats.

Natural Habitat: Primarily woodland areas of North America, but also anywhere domesticated dogs are present.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
4	4	5	4	3	4	2	3	3	6	3	9	3

Movement: 15/50

Skills: Exotic Ranged Weapon 4, Infiltration 4, Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Tracking 5, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Dual Natured, Elemental Attack (Fire), Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell), Fear, Immunity to Fire, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 4P, AP 0)

MERROW

With its humanoid upper body, tapering torso, and slender but strong tail, the merrow vaguely resembles the mermaids of classic fairy tales. Its long forelimbs end in three-fingered hands with opposable thumbs. A long mane covers its neck, and a series of extended spinal vertebrae runs the length of the torso. Despite the dermal bone that armors its lower body, the merrow's tail is remarkably flexible. Merrow are known to use simple tools, and many parazoologists believe them to have metahuman levels of intelligence.

Natural Habitat: Saltwater seas and oceans worldwide, with significant colonies living around the North Sea and Celtic Sea, the Great Barrier Reef, and the Sargasso Sea offshore from Bermuda.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
5	3	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	6	1	10	1

Movement: 15/45 (swimming)

Skills: Assensing 3, Dodge 3, Perception 2, Swimming 4, Unarmed Combat 2

Powers: Dual Natured, Sapience

Weaknesses: Uneducated

Notes: Some merrow may have the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities

NAGA

The naga is a large serpent 10 meters long, but with an enlarged, blunt head. Coloration varies but is almost always a multicolored pattern that fades toward the pale underbelly. Naga become inactive in periods of extreme heat or cold. They eat small mammals and live in rocky crevices or human-built structures. Normally solitary, nagas may be found in groups of up to two dozen. The longest-lived specimen in captivity is 32 years old.

Nagas are far more intelligent than most reptiles. They can learn various behaviors ranging from verbal and somatic cues to sophisticated activities in a very short time. Many paranaturalist and Awakened-rights groups maintain that nagas are sentient. Their ability to cast spells tends to support this claim. Highly territorial, nagas are frequently used as guards in security details.

Natural Habitat: The Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
5	2	4	6	4	4	3	3	4	6	4	8	1

Movement: 5/20

Skills: Assensing 4, Climbing 2, Perception 4, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Armor (2/3), Dual Natured, Guard, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 5P, AP 0), Sapience, Venom

Weaknesses: Uneducated

Notes: Some nagas may have the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities.

SASQUATCH

This gigantic humanoid stands almost 3 meters tall, yet weighs only 300 kilograms. Sasquatches are typically covered with black or dark brown body hair, but older sasquatches have silver-tipped fur. Curious and peaceful by nature, sasquatches fight only when attacked. The United Nations officially recognized sasquatches as a sentient species in 2042, and since then several sasquatches have migrated to the cities, where their gift of sound mimicry allows them to make a lucrative living in the entertainment industry.

Natural Habitat: Mountainous and evergreen regions in the northern reaches of both North America and Asia. Sasquatches can also be found in the Himalayan mountain ranges.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
8	3	3	7	3	3	3	2	4	6	3	6	1

Movement: 15/35

Skills: Assensing 3, Animal Calls (Professional Knowledge) 5, Artisan 4, Athletics Skill group 2, Infiltration 3, Perception 4

Powers: Dual Natured, Mimicry, Sapience

Notes: Sasquatch have +1 Reach. Some sasquatch may have the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities

THUNDERBIRD

A day creature, the thunderbird resembles a red-brown eagle, but with a wingspan around 3 meters. Able to generate and project a lightning blast, the thunderbird relishes the static-charged air of electrical storms.

Natural Habitat: North America and northern Asia.

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B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	3	6	3	1	5	1	3	2	6	4	11	1

Movement: 25/40

Skills: Flight 3, Perception 4, Spellcasting 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Dual Natured, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Innate Spell (Lightning Bolt), Natural Weapon (Bite/Claw: DV 5P, AP 0), Weather Control (Electrical Storms)

VAMPIRE

Vampires are humans infected with HMHVV. Vampires prey on sentient beings, absorbing the life essence of their victims along with the victim's blood. More conscientious than other infected metahumans, vampires are able to restrain their hunger. Some vampires refuse to drain from an unwilling subject, while others revel in their role as predators and killers. Vampires become sick within the hour if they consume anything but blood, and they have particularly bad reactions to alcohol (treat as *Nausea,* p. 254).

Many vampires display magical ability, and the transformation sometimes unlocks hidden magical potential. Such vampires are capable of learning and using magic just like a human. Vampire sorcerers are most likely the source of some legendary vampiric powers, such as the ability to change into animals or to mesmerize victims.

Natural Habitat: Habitated areas worldwide.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
3	5	5	3	5	4	3	4	3	2D6 – 1	3	9	2

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Shadowing 4, Unarmed Combat 3

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Smell, Thermographic Vision), Essence Drain, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Toxins), Infection, Mist Form, Natural Weapon (Bite: DV 2P, AP 0, –1 Reach), Regeneration, Sapience.

Weaknesses: Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Allergy (Wood, Severe), Dietary Requirement (Blood), Essence Loss

Notes: Some vampires may have the Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept qualities. Vampires have less buoyancy than metahumans (–4 dice pool modifier to all swimming-related tests). Vampires also have an additional weakness of Induced Dormancy (Lack of Air). If a vampire is cut off from air for more than (Essence) minutes, it falls unconscious indefinitely. However, if the vampire is again exposed to air, it regains consciousness within a minute.

WENDIGO

A wendigo is an ork infected with HMHVV. It appears as a white-furred humanoid standing about 2.3 meters tall. The nails of its hands have hardened into claw-like weapons, and the canine teeth are very pronounced on both the lower and upper jaws.

Wendigos feed on the flesh of humans and metahumans, from which they also derive psychic sustenance. Typically they induce victims to participate in a cannibalistic feast. This creates an apparent psychological dependence in the victim, who then helps the wendigo in spreading its habit, thus creating a secret society of cannibals. The members of

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the groups are unaware that they ultimately will become meals for the wendigo, which seems to prefer the Essence of such corrupted spirits.

Wendigos are all Awakened and use their magical skills to enhance their hunting. Some wendigos use illusion magic to disguise themselves and walk unseen among their prey.

Natural Habitat: Forested and urban areas worldwide.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
6	2	3	5	4	3	3	3	3	2D6 – 1	3	6	2

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Assensing 2, Astral Combat 2, Conjuring Skill group 2, Infiltration 3, Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Sorcery Skill group 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell, Visual Acuity), Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Poison), Infection, Influence, Natural Weapon (Bite/Claw: DV 5P, AP 0), Regeneration

Weaknesses: Allergy (Ferrous Metals, Moderate), Allergy (Sunlight, Moderate), Dietary Requirement (Metahuman Flesh), Essence Loss

Notes: All wendigo have the Magician quality (p. 91)

SPIRITS

Spirits are sentient denizens of the astral plane. The spirits described below may be summoned by magicians (see *Conjuring,* p. 186). The Physical attributes listed below are used when a spirit Materializes in the physical plane; the minimum attribute is always 1. On the astral plane, spirits use Force for all attributes.

In addition to their standard Powers, each spirit also has one Optional Power for every 3 full points of Force. A magician selects what Optional Power(s) he wishes a summoned spirit to possess as he summons it. The Optional Powers possessed by a spirit may not be changed later.

Spirit skills: A spirit's skills are equal to its Force rating.

SPIRITS OF AIR

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F–2	F+3	F+4	F–3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+3	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 15/75 (flight)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Flight, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Concealment, Confusion, Engulf, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search

Optional Powers: Elemental Attack, Energy Aura, Fear, Guard, Noxious Breath, Psychokinesis

SPIRITS OF BEASTS

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F+2	F+1	F+2	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+2	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 10/45

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control, Astral Form, Enhanced Senses (Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Smell), Fear, Materialization, Movement, Sapience

Optional Powers: Concealment, Confusion, Guard, Natural Weapon (DV = Force Physical damage, AP 0), Noxious Breath, Search, Venom

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SPIRITS OF EARTH

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F+4	F–2	F+2	F+4	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+2	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Astral Form, Binding, Guard, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search

Optional Powers: Concealment, Confusion, Engulf, Elemental Attack, Fear

SPIRITS OF FIRE

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F+1	F+2	F+3	F–2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+3	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 15/40 (flight)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Flight, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Confusion, Elemental Attack, Energy Aura, Engulf, Materialization, Sapience

Optional Powers: Fear, Guard, Noxious Breath, Search

Weaknesses: Allergy (Water, Severe)

SPIRITS OF MAN

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F+1	F	F+2	F–2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+2	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 10/25

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Concealment, Confusion, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light, Thermographic Vision), Guard, Influence, Materialization, Sapience, Search.

Optional Powers: Fear, Innate Spell (any one spell known by the summoner, Force is limited to the spirit's Magic), Movement, Psychokinesis

SPIRITS OF WATER

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
F+2	F	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	(Fx2)+2	2

Astral INIT/IP: F x 2, 3

Movement: 10/25 (30/75 swimming)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Dodge, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Astral Form, Concealment, Confusion, Engulf, Materialization, Movement, Sapience, Search

Optional Powers: Accident, Binding, Elemental Attack, Energy Aura, Guard, Weather Control

Weaknesses: Allergy (Fire, Severe)

WATCHER SPIRITS

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	3

Skills: Assensing 1, Astral Combat 1, Dodge 1

Powers: Astral Form, Search

Note: Watcher spirits only exist on the astral plane (though they may manifest on the physical). Their Force is always 1.

DRACOFORMS

Dracoforms refer to the various types of dragons found around the world. These are large saurian creatures of tremendous intelligence, and they match or exceed the mythological legends of the areas of the world where they reside. What little is known about them comes from interviews with the late great dragon Dunkelzahn. Most dragons are solitary creatures, avoiding unnecessary contact with other races, but of late several dragons have taken more public roles in the Sixth World.

Because of their unique natures, dragons should *always* be considered Prime Runner characters (see p. 284), and generally rate as Superhuman Prime Runners, or even higher. All dragons of a certain type have the innate powers listed for their species. Additionally, some dragons may have further individual powers (listed as such in the description), though these are not universal throughout each type.

COMMON POWERS

Dragons are all capable and powerful magicians and practice their own tradition beyond anything mere metahumanity has achieved. They also have a power unique to their kind, called Dragonspeech.

Dragonspeech: Dragons are incapable of vocal speech, but they are able to communicate telepathically with other beings in their line of sight through Dragonspeech. This telepathic communication, or dragonspeech, can't be picked up by microphones or technology, so dragons wishing to communicate through modern technology must employ a human or metahuman as "translator."

Skills: Assensing 8, Conjuring Skill group 6, Exotic Ranged Weapon 6, Flight 6 (Swimming 6 for leviathans), Perception 6, Sorcery Skill group 8, Unarmed Combat 6

Innate Powers: Dragonspeech, Dual Natured, Elemental Attack (usually Fire), Enhanced Senses (Enhanced Smell, Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision, Wide-Band Hearing), Hardened Armor 8, Mystic Armor 8, Natural Weapon (Bite/Claws: DV 10P, AP –2), Sapience

Individual Powers: Animal Control, Compulsion, Corrosive Saliva, Fear, Influence, Noxious Breath, Venom.

Notes: All dragons have the Magician quality and know most spells. They also have +2 Reach.

EASTERN DRAGONS

Eastern dragons are native to Asia. An eastern dragon's head and body measure about 15 meters in length. Its height at the shoulders is 2 meters. Its tail is an additional 15 meters long. It has a serpentine shape, with a broad, low head adorned with a fringe of whiskers along the chin and rear portions of the skull. Multiple pairs of horns rise from behind the eyes, and a pair of barbules descends from beneath the pronounced nasal region.

Scaly armor covers the body, neck, and tail, which are surmounted by a ridge of membrane-connected spines. The highly dexterous paws

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are four-fingered (though some variants may possess three or five fingers per paw), with each digit ending in a large claw. The most common pattern of eastern dragon coloration is iridescent green with golden whiskers and belly scutes, but various other color patterns have appeared.

Sirrush: The sirrush, indigenous to Asia Minor, appears similar to the eastern dragon. However, its limbs are longer and its tail shorter. Its head is narrower and deeper, and it lacks whiskers and barbules. The digits of the sirrush's hind paws are all forward facing and show limited dexterity. Its scales tend to be less colorful, more often in earth tones of brown, gray, gold, and terra cotta. In terms of game statistics, though, a sirrush is essentially identical to an eastern dragon.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
14	8	8	35	9	8	10	8	6	6+1D6	ESS	16	2
Movement: 15/50 (30/100 flight)												

FEATHERED SERPENTS

Feathered serpents are native to South and Central America, as well as Africa. A feathered serpent is a long-bodied dracoform with one pair of wings and one pair of limbs. Most feathered serpents are 20 meters in length from head to tail and have a wingspan of 15 meters. Their contour feathers and prominent feathered ruff are often a dazzling rainbow of colors. Membranes stretch between the extended finger bones of their large wings. Behind the wings is a pair of limbs that end in paws. These paws have five digits, one of which is an opposable thumb, giving it sufficient dexterity to manipulate objects. Many specimens have a tail spine connected to a venom sac, or similarly equipped fangs.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
12	4	8	30	8	8	8	8	6	6+1D6	ESS	16	2
Movement: 15/50 (30/100 flight)												

LEVIATHANS

Leviathans, or sea dragons, are found in deep salt-water habitats. A leviathan's serpentine head and body measure approximately 25 meters in length. It has four stubby limbs equipped with powerful webbed claws. Though they have opposable thumbs on their forelimbs, leviathans have poor manual dexterity. Slow and clumsy on land, a sea dragon is capable of swimming swiftly and gracefully using the movement of its body and limbs. Leviathans are capable of breathing both water and air, though no leviathan has ever been seen on land. The long, flat head is equipped with powerful jaws, as well as a strip of long kelp-like hair running down its dorsal ridge. Leviathan scales are small and fine, compared to their land-dwelling brethren, usually an iridescent blue-green in color, lighter toward the belly and slightly darker toward the spine.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
13	4	8	35	8	8	8	8	6	6+1D6	ESS	16	2
Movement: 15/30 (30/75 swimming)												

WESTERN DRAGONS

Western dragons are native to Europe and some parts of western Asia. A western dragon's head and body are 20 meters long. It stands 3 meters at shoulder height, its tail is 17 meters long, and its wingspan is 30 meters. The western dragon has four limbs and a pair of wings. Its horned head is mounted at the end of a long neck. Only its forepaws exhibit opposable digits, with the hind paws adapted into feet. Dorsal spines and/or membranes may be present. The western dragon is usually a single color, though darker along the spine and with a pale belly. Some specimens have dermal armor formed of bony plates, in addition to the normal heavy scales.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init	IP
15	7	8	40	8	8	8	8	6	6+1D6	ESS	16	2
Movement: 15/40 (30/60 flight)												

GREAT DRAGONS

Great dragons are extremely large specimens, often up to 50 percent larger than typical dragons in dimensions and measurements. All species of dragons have great dragons among them. Size is usually the best indicator of a great dragon, but it is not entirely reliable. All great dragons are highly intelligent, being conversant in at least one human language, and often many. They are also magicians of great power.

Great dragons are major power players and far removed from the petty affairs of the streets. The statistics provided below are merely suggested values if a gamemaster is pressed for numbers; as a general rule, great dragons should always be far superior to any player character, no matter how high the character's attributes or skills may be.

In addition to all the innate and individual powers of their species, great dragons also possess two additional powers: Metahuman Form and Twist Fate. These are described as follows:

Metahuman Form: Great dragons (and only great dragons) acquire the power of Metahuman Form. With a Complex Action, the dragon can assume a metahuman form of its choice, with physical abilities equal to those of a normal metahuman of the chosen race. Great dragons tend to be reluctant to assume metahuman form, because it leaves them somewhat vulnerable (compared to their powerful natural form). Dragons usually have various magical defenses in place to protect them in metahuman form, so that a surprise attack doesn't destroy them before they can resume their true form. Returning to true form is also a Complex Action.

Lesser dragons are capable of using magic to assume metahuman forms, but it is not an innate ability. (This means that the magic must be sustained, maintained by a sustaining focus, or something similar.)

Twist Fate: Great dragons have the innate magical power to influence the whims of fate with nothing more than their tremendous willpower. This power gives great dragons some influence over the use of Edge. In addition to the normal uses of Edge, great dragons can use Twist Fate for the following effects:

- The great dragon may spend a point of Edge to negate the use of Edge by any other creature it can see. The effects of the Edge point are canceled, but the point is still expended. Using Edge this way is a Free Action. Dragons cannot negate the permanent burning of Edge.
- The great dragon can spend a point from its Edge to immediately force a creature in its line of sight to re-roll any dice that score a hit. Failed dice are not re-rolled. The target keeps the new result. This is a Simple Action for the dragon. The target may spend a point of Edge to resist this effect.
- Finally, a great dragon using Twist Fate can take points from its own Edge and give them to other characters in the dragon's line of sight. This can even increase a recipient's Edge above its normal full level, but these additional Edge points do not refresh. (In other words, use them or lose them.) Once expended, these points return to the dragon that granted them.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	M	Init
+10	+3	+3	+10	+5	+5	+5	+5	6	12	12	+8
Movement: x 1.5											
Skills: Conjuring 8, Flight 6, Sorcery 12											
Additional Innate Powers: Hardened Armor (+12), Metahuman Form, Mystic Armor (+12), Twist Fate											

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NIGHT SHIFT

by John Helfers

What's worse than a troll in your face? I mused as a two-plus meter tall, horned nightmare loomed over me, his hot breath redolent of the latest Stuffer Shack special. *Oh, yeah—a troll with a badge.*

Sergeant Taggert managed to squeeze his 375 kilos into the standard Lone Star officer's uniform somehow, although I bet if he inhaled too hard, I'd see more of him than I ever wanted to. His large, red-rimmed eyes glanced around at my store, a small shop identical to any of a dozen in the neighborhood, located on the border between Snohomish and Redmond, and guaranteeing me a varied clientele. The big difference between my shop and the others was that every dusty shelf around us was completely bare.

Taggert's unblinking stare returned to me. "I know ya run illegal stuff though here, Stenberg. One of these days I should take you down, old man."

"You do what you have to, Sergeant, and so will I."

Shaking his horned head, he stomped to the door, boots ringing on the patterned metal floor. At the heavy door, he paused and glared back at me. "Remind me again why I let ya stay in business?"

I smiled. "Probably because that Ares military-grade smart-laser rifle sight you wanted will arrive next week. I'll drop you a line when it gets here."

Taggert's fleshy lips peeled back in what passed for a smile—not a pretty sight. "Oh, yeah—I almost forgot. See ya then." He squeezed through the doorway and mounted his heavily reinforced Dodge Guardian cycle. I let the door close as he kicked the engine into life and roared down the street.

Just in time, too. The chronometer in the upper left corner of my AR vision said it was time to open. With a mental command, I opened up my camera screens to peek at the street before my first appointment. My tracking program highlighted a tall form slouching on the other side of the run-down boulevard, almost invisible in the dark alley. I wasn't too worried. The local gang around here provided me with a first layer of protection, in return for the occasional favor. I was about to take a closer look when an incoming message flashed: *Sten—you open yet? If I could just pick up my package and motor, I'd appreciate it.*

My first client of the evening, a young Matrix mage, or technomancer—whatever they're calling themselves nowadays—who'd been running the shadows for the past six months. I sent a quick reply that the door would be open from 6:39 p.m. to 6:40 p.m.—six minutes from now.

At the appointed time, I hit the switch that canceled the electro-magnetic lock securing the door. A few seconds later, the heavy portal swung open, and a neatly dressed elf scurried through, the door closing behind him.

"Culver!" I waved him toward the counter. "C'mere, take a load off."

The kid sucked in a deep breath and walked to the counter, wiping his brow as he approached. "Thanks, Sten, I, uh, I'm sorry to grab and go like this—"

"Meh, don't worry about it, I won't keep you long." Reaching under the counter, I pulled out two identical black plastic cases. "I got two things that might work. This one—" I held up the case in my left hand, "—is the standard customizable latex mask, good for one impression, lasts up to twenty-four hours, yada yada yada." I set it on the counter.

"But this one—" I hefted the second case, "—is Nightech's Chameleon DS-1—a true shapechanging mask. It's a few micromillimeters thicker, but when you put it on, you'll know why. It can do everything the basic model can and then some. It'll take a mold based on the biometrics you download, and will retain them for up to forty-eight hours. However, it's also got a layer of proprietary nanoskin on the inside that will show true wearer emotion, including blood flow, if you blush or just get red in the face. Get in a cold place, and the skin will whiten and the lips turn blue, the whole combo meal. The real trick, however, is that it comes with matching synthskin gloves, and all three of them can change skin tone and general racial features on mental command. Get in a tight spot and you need a quick disguise—make yourself Hispanic. Or Black. Or even Asian. The mask will alter its contours accordingly to represent an average member of that race. Even better, you can still switch back and forth from your molded disguise to any of the ethnic stereotypes within the allotted time frame."

Culver whistled in amazement. "That sounds like exactly what I need, but—I don't think I have enough for it."

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"Don't sell yourself short, kiddo. With all the advances in nanopaste, this little number's fallen by the wayside recently. Personally, I think the switchability of it makes it worth more than the one-shot. But for fifteen-hundred nuyen—that's a friend price, you understand—it's yours." I didn't see the need to mention that my take on the sale was one hundred percent profit, since this mask and a dozen more just like them had literally fallen off a truck outside my store last week in a botched hijacking. Gangs could be so good for business.

"Really? Yeah, I can do that."

"Good, I'll just ring this up, and you're on your way." My AR screen flashed, indicating he'd transferred the appropriate amount. "I got a few more, so if you ever need another—or know anyone who does—you know where to send them."

"You got it, Sten." Culver grabbed the case and trotted to the door, turning as he waited for it to open. "And thanks—you really saved my hoop."

I nodded. "No problem. Now get out of here—and good luck, *chaver*."

With a nod, he disappeared into the night. I brought up the front street view again to see the watcher still lurking in the shadows. I kept the window open to eyeball him as a soft chime indicated the arrival of my next appointment.

Outside, a jet-black Mitsubishi Nightsky Limited pulled up to the curb. Two bulky men, a human and an ork, got out and took flanking positions at opposite corners of the sleek limousine. After carefully scanning their surroundings, the rear door opened, and another man, wider than the first two but looking even more muscular, emerged, his shaved head swiveling as he checked the street.

A message flashed on my AR: *Mr. Chinois to see Mr. Stenberg at 7:05 p.m.*

I liked these guys already—just the facts. Smoothing my thinning white hair back, I let him know the entrance would be open for the next thirty seconds.

The front door swung open, and the ork started to enter, obviously sweeping the place for an ambush.

"Hey, hey! One customer at a time!" I pointed at the sign on the wall behind me, which said the same thing in a dozen different languages.

The ork stood aside, and the wide-bodied man appeared, his eyes hidden behind the latest Evo sunglasses. "Mr. Gray is with me."

"Doesn't matter—one customer inside at a time. If you don't like my rules, you can shop somewhere else." My left hand drifted down to the pistol grip of the T-250 Defiance shotgun mounted underneath the counter. Its modified choke meant I could cover the entire back wall with double-ought buck with one squeeze of the trigger. The rest of the counter was armored against anything up to a .50 caliber round, the perfect combination of offense and defense. My frown firmly in place, I waited for the two hired goons to sort out what was going down.

After a brief subvocal conference, the wide man entered alone. His brick-like body was swathed in the latest lapelless Berwick suit, inky black with razor thin white stripes, making him seem to blur as he walked into the room. He glanced around at the bare walls, then his hand started to go to his ear and the tiny commlink nestled there.

"Don't worry—the room is shielded to prevent anyone from eavesdropping. My PAN is up if you need access to the outside, of course."

"You have a package for me. I'm transmitting the proper protocols now."

A burst of data came across on my commlink. Bringing up another file, I merged both, revealing a password that verified that the man was who he claimed to be.

Reaching down next to the Defiance, I picked up a small, silver metal case by its recessed handle. Setting it on the countertop, I pressed a corner of the box and watched the top split open, revealing its contents with a white puff of super-cooled air.

Nestled in anti-shock foam padding was a small, clear tube as long as my hand. Inside rested what looked like a long tapeworm; a thin, pale ribbon of flesh curled up on itself. A small light on the top of the tube flashed green every second.

"One GastroSelect STO-2000 slimworm, in perfect hibernation. Insertion and care instructions are included."

The man leaned over and peered at the case—no doubt scanning it to verify what I'd just told him, then straightened again. "Acceptable. The agreed-upon amount is being transferred to your account." He closed the case and picked it up, then turned and headed for the door.

"Please give Ms. Santana my regards." I called after him. I'd seen the man guarding the simsense-starlet who seemed to have too much of a sweet tooth, with her fluctuating weight the subject of many trideos and funblogs. When the call came through roundabout channels requesting the endosymbiont, I was more than ready to move into a brand new, lucrative market.

The man paused by the door, half-turning to regard me out of the corner of his eye, his free hand slipping under his generously cut suit jacket. "I don't know who you're referring to."

I didn't move a muscle. "Of course not, that's why you spent twice as much to purchase an easily obtainable endosym through me instead of going through more—public channels. I just thought you should let Ms. Santana know that every transaction completed here is kept in the strictest of confidence."

"That's good, old man, because if word gets out about this, I know exactly where to come back and ask a few questions."

As if he'd be able to penetrate the perimeter uninvited. I smiled. "Rest assured, the knowledge of her, ah, condition—and its solution—is safe with me."

The man left without another word. I exhaled only after he was gone. Normally I don't get that cheeky, but the bodyguard needed to know I knew, and more importantly, that it wouldn't get around. And when it didn't, more Hollywood types would seek my services.

My corner chrono said I had just enough time to prep for my next appointment. I verified that the meter-long black wooden case with the laminated lotus blossoms was where I'd placed it, then sat back on my stool and waited.

Exactly three minutes later, I got the message: *Mr. Solo wishes to make your acquaintance this evening.*

I replied instantly: *I look forward to meeting you, Solo-san. The door to my humble shop is always open for you.*

This client texted me back after a few seconds: *Domo arigato, Stenberg-san. I will arrive shortly.*

I hit the button to the door the moment before it swung open, then rested my hands on the counter as Mr. Solo ducked his head to step into my store.

The metahuman had come alone, as requested, but one glance at his face said he could take care of himself. As tall as a standard ork, his skin was dark blue, almost indigo, and was just one of his unusual features. Slightly bulging

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eyes gazed at me above a patrician nose and a mouth that couldn't hide the two outward-curving tusks protruding from his bottom jaw. Ivory-white, they matched the pair of eight-centimeter horns adorning his face, one jutting sideways from each temple. His glossy black hair was shaved and drawn back in the traditional samurai's topknot, and he was dressed in a clean gray kimono and tabi, or split shoes.

I inclined my head. "Welcome, Solo-san. Please, come in."

The oni bowed in kind—a fraction less than my own greeting, but a bow nonetheless. "Thank you, Stenberg-san. You are not exactly an easy man to locate."

"I find my clients prefer unobtrusiveness, and over the years, I have come to agree with them. It is safer for all concerned, hai?"

"Indeed." The Japanese ork glanced around, one eyebrow raising in puzzlement. "I also notice a distinct lack of wares for sale."

"As I'm sure you've heard, I only deal in certain requested items." I reached down for the case, bringing it up and setting it gently on the counter. The oni's breath quickened when he saw it. Flipping the catches and opening the lid, I awaited his reaction.

Resting on velvet over a foam cutout was a magnificent katana, its handle wrapped in dark-green eelskin that matched the saya, its lacquered green scabbard made of traditional honoki wood.

"As requested, a Norishige blade with the unique matsukawa-hada, or pine tree bark pattern, along the blade. Please feel free to examine it."

The oni picked up the sword with reverent hands, holding it as delicately as he might an infant. He drew the blade with a whisper of steel, angling it to catch the overhead lights and reveal the stippled pattern that only Norishige ever made. But along the 13th century edge gleamed a 21st century concession—a molecular-thin strand of beyond razor-sharp monofilament.

"It is beautiful."

"I had to contact several smiths before finding one that would modify the blade to your specifications. Many did not react—positively to the request."

"Times change, and we must change with them, or perish. Even the samurai eventually accepted matchlock weapons, did they not?" The oni slid the katana back into its soya and replaced the sword in its case. He bowed deeply. "It is everything promised, and more. I am ready to transmit the final portion of the agreed payment at your convenience."

"Whenever you are ready, Solo-san." A moment later, my bank account swelled even further. This transaction alone meant I could close early tonight—but first, I had one last bit of business to handle.

Bowing again to the oni, I came around the counter and escorted him to the door, holding the reinforced portal open long enough to catch a glimpse of the skulker in the alley shadows. As the Japanese ork glided into the darkness, I held the door open longer than necessary, practically inviting the man in. After a few seconds, I turned away and let the door start to swing shut.

"Wait!" The man darted across the street, coming right at me.

"We're closed!" I waited to see if the guy would make it before the portal sealed. He leaped onto the sidewalk and stuck his arm between the narrowing gap, thinking he had blocked the door from closing. Smiling, I mentally commanded the door to stop. If he hadn't, the punk's arm would have become my property, since it would have been left on the premises without its owner.

"I don't see anyone without an appointment."

"No, wait—Culver sent me—he said you could help me."

I acted like I was pondering his statement. My policy was firm: no appointment, no business. But even I made concessions to certain contacts. Although the young technomancer hadn't sent this kid. But I knew who had. Business was business … we'd see if he could earn his package.

"All right, five minutes, no more." I pulled the door open, and the young man scurried inside. He was dressed the latest steampunk fashion; thick leather longcoat with high collar, a white, long-sleeved shirt, and dark brown jodphurs tucked into heavy, hobnailed boots. The store's scanners alerted me to the pistol tucked under his coat.

He exhibited the familiar mix of apprehension and bravado, as if he was psyching himself up for something. Nothing I hadn't seen many times before. "All right, kid, whatcha need?"

The distinct sound of a gun being cocked as he drew it made my shoulders slump. *Why* did they always think a gun was the answer?

"I know you got good stuff in the back. You're gonna take me in, and I'm gonna take what I want. Any funny business, and I paint the walls with your brains."

I sighed. "All right, all right, no one has to get hurt. I just need to unlock the door."

"Yeah, yeah, but slowly—I'm watching you."

"I'm sure you are, omae." I walked to the back-room door slowly, moving with exaggerated motions to keep him from getting *too* jumpy with his little pea-shooter. Mentally, I gave a single command via my wireless connection to my store: *Attack Pattern Initiation*.

"Hurry up, old man," the kid said, nerves in his voice.

"Oh, I am," I said, reaching the backdoor, then turning and diving behind my counter, a reinforced clear shield dropping in place.

"Wha—*shit*," he screamed. I could visualize the dozen red laser lights dancing on his chest and face. I heard the sound of the rail-mounted sentry guns dropping from their hidden niches in the ceiling, and even more sweet, the clang of the grenades falling from the ceiling to the metal floor. Another scream and some pounding as the wannabe ganger pounded on the reinforced, and locked, door. Then the sound of coughing.

I stood up and activated the fans. The ominous red smoke from the grenade was harmless, but the youth huddled by the front door, clenching his throat, didn't know that. I flicked a glance at his Steampunk jodphurs. Dry.

"Like I always say: everyone needs something. In your case, you need more brains to try a heist like this. But that's neither here nor there." I reached below my desk, ordering the shield to raise up. There was one last box waiting. "Here," I said, setting the box on the counter. The kid stood up slowly, confusion clear on his face. "Here's the deal," I said, conversationally, as I ordered the sentry guns to withdraw. "Red Racer sends you boys in here, and if you don't piss yourselves, you get this. I get some protection on the streets. It may not be the best relationship in the world, but it works."

The kid lifted the lid to the box. Inside was a synthleather jacket, armored, black with red and yellow striping.

Gang colors.

All things, to all people. That's what I specialize in.

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Nothing to Fear if You've Got the Gear

—Street proverb

This section introduces rules for gear—carrying, concealing, and purchasing—and provides you with a fine selection of the legal, illegal, and downright evil stuff used on the streets of 2072.

STREET GEAR

Note that starting characters may not purchase items with a rating greater than 6 or an Availability greater than 12. Once the game is on, characters are free to try to get their hands on anything they can buy, scam, or steal—within the gamemaster's discretion, of course.

GEAR RATINGS

Every gear item described in this chapter includes a set of statistics. Every item has a Cost, and most items have an Availability and Device rating. The other statistics depend on the type of item and are explained in the Gear Ratings sidebar.

CARRYING GEAR

As long as your players are reasonable about the carrying abilities of their characters, there is absolutely no need for the gamemaster to micromanage weights and encumbrance (and if they aren't reasonable, feel free to penalize them appropriately).

There may be circumstances, however, when knowing roughly how much your character can carry may have an impact on the storyline—like when you're trying to make it out the corporate compound's gate with an armload of prototype electronics and your unconscious dwarf buddy over your shoulder before the cyberdogs get you. In this case, the rules for *Lifting and Carrying,* p. 139, provide an appropriate starting point.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Characters can lift and carry their Strength x 10 kilograms in weight without any sort of test—this is your carrying capacity. Lifting and carrying more calls for a Strength + Body Test. Each hit increases the weight you can lift by another 10 kilograms.

ENCUMBRANCE

If a character overburdens herself with gear, she will suffer encumbrance modifiers. For every 5 kilograms that you exceed your carrying capacity, you suffer a –1 dice pool modifier to physical actions. A character with Strength 3 (Carrying Capacity 30) that is trudging along with 50 kilograms of equipment will suffer a –4 dice pool modifier.

The maximum any character can carry is equal to her Carrying Capacity x 2 (or Strength x 20 kilograms).

SIZE CUSTOMIZATION

Trolls have incredibly large bodies and hands, while dwarfs have rather small bodies and hands—consequently, both have trouble using gear built for human dimensions. Thanks in part to corporate initiatives like Evo's MetaErgonomics division, there is a wide array

GEAR RATINGS

Ammo: Refers to the amount of ammunition a ranged weapon can hold, followed by the method of reloading in parentheses: (b) means break action, (c) means clip, (d) means drum, (ml) means muzzle-loader, (m) means internal magazine, (cy) means cylinder, and (belt) means belt feed.

Armor: Each piece of armor has an Armor value that is split into two components: Ballistic and Impact. The higher the Armor value, the higher its protective abilities. The value to the left of the slash is the Ballistic armor rating, which is used against attacks that apply a large amount of kinetic energy to a small area (most firearms, bows, crossbows, etc). The value to the right is the Impact armor rating, used against attacks where the kinetic energy is more diffused (melee attacks, energy weapons, explosives, nonlethal ammunition, etc.).

Armor Penetration (AP): All weapons have an Armor Penetration value, indicating how they interact with armor (*Armor Penetration,* p. 162). A positive value adds to the target's Armor value, while a negative value reduces the target's Armor value.

Availability: The higher the Availability of an item, the more difficult and costly it is to get it (*Availability,* p. 312). Gear without an Availability rating can be bought for its standard price at your local store without any problem. The letter that follows shows whether the item is restricted (R) or forbidden (F). Items without a letter in parentheses are considered legal. See *Legality,* p. 313.

Blast: This is the amount the blast weapon's Damage Value is reduced per meter of distance from the explosion's point of origin (*Explosives,* p. 325).

Capacity: Some sensor packages and cyberware can be equipped with a range of subsystems. A Capacity value is listed for these, indicating the maximum amount of Capacity points worth of accessories it can hold. The Capacity costs of subsystems/accessories are listed in brackets. Note that some cyberware items can be installed as standalone items (taking up Essence only) or as subsystems instead (taking up Capacity).

Concealability Modifier: This indicates an item's ability to be hidden, and is applied as a dice pool modifier to Perception + Intuition Tests (*Concealing Gear,* p. 311).

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Cost: This is the base price a character must pay to buy the item. If the item is legal, this is the standard price found at stores or online. Note that rare and/or illegal items may cost less or more depending on certain black market variations (*Street Values,* p. 312). Cost is also subject to local supply and demand, so the gamemaster should feel free to adjust it accordingly for certain settings.

Damage Value (DV): A weapon's Damage Value represents the amount of damage it causes when it hits a target. Damage Values consist of a number (the boxes of damage inflicted) and a letter indicating the type of damage caused: P for Physical, S for Stun. See *Damage,* p. 162.

A notation of (f) following the DV means that the weapon's damage and AP are precalculated for flechette ammunition (p. 323). A notation of (e) indicates the weapon inflicts Electricity damage (p. 163).

Device Rating: The Device rating determines the overall quality and effectiveness of an item. When the item provides a bonus to certain types of tests, apply the rating as a dice pool bonus to the test. For example, a medkit with a Device rating of 3 would add three dice to First Aid Tests, while a medkit with a rating of 5 adds five dice. In some cases, a Device rating may be used in place of a character's skill, such as a medkit that is hooked up to a patient and allowed to work without a character's supervision.

Essence Cost: All cyberware and bioware implants have an Essence cost, representing the reduction of the character's Essence rating that occurs when the 'ware is implanted. Essence costs for cyberware and bioware are tracked separately; subtract the higher value in full from the character's Essence, but only half the lesser value (Essence, p. 68).

Mode: A firearm's firing mode indicates the rate of fire it is capable of. Some weapons have more than one mode available, so characters may switch between them (*Firearms* , p. 153). The firing modes are: SS (single-shot), SA (semi-automatic), BF (burst fire), and FA (full auto).

Mounts: Shows where a weapon accessory can be attached to a weapon: underbarrel, barrel, or top-mount. Only one accessory can be attached to a particular mount. Integral accessories(those that come with the weapon) don't take up mount locations. Hold-outs don't have mounts. Pistols (including machine pistols) have a top mount and a barrel mount. SMGs, all rifles, and heavy weapons have a top mount, barrel mount, and underbarrel mount. Projectile weapons can only be equipped with a laser sight or a smartgun system.

Reach: All melee weapons have a Reach rating, an abstract value that rates the length of the weapon, giving its wielder an advantage over enemies with a lower Reach.

Recoil Compensation (RC): This lists the amount of recoil compensation a firearm has to offer, reducing the modifiers from a weapon's recoil (*Recoil,* p. 152). Numbers in parentheses refer to full recoil compensation that applies only when all integral accessories are used (folding or detachable stocks and so forth).

Signal Rating: The output power of electronic transmitters (communications gear, wifi commlinks, sensors, and ECM). The effective Signal range is listed on the *Signal Rating Table*, p. 222.

of mass-produced consumer goods specifically tailored for dwarf and troll needs at no extra cost. When it comes to less-common gear, however, dwarf and troll characters may need to pay extra in order to acquire versions modified for their metatype. Modified gear typically costs 110% of the standard price, though it may rise as high as 125%. The gamemaster determines when such cases arise. (As a rule, we suggest that metatype modification costs not be incurred for any gear purchased during character creation.)

USING UNADAPTED GEAR

When using an item not customized for their hand sizes, dwarf and troll characters receive a –2 modifier on their dice pools. This modifier also applies in reverse; an elf trying to use a dwarf-modified weapon suffers a –2 dice pool modifier. This effect is also cumulative, so a dwarf forced to use a troll-modified tool (or vice versa) would suffer a –4 dice pool modifier.

CONCEALING GEAR

Surprise is a shadowrunner's best friend, and there's no backup better than an ankle-holstered pistol. Runners commonly carry gear that they don't want casual onlookers to know about, whether it's illegal, would attract unwanted attention, or is intended to be an ace in the hole. Certain items are more easily concealed than others, of course; packing a holdout pistol without notice tends to be easy, but trying to hide a katana under your long coat is challenging at best.

To determine if someone notices a worn or carried item, make a Perception Test and apply a Concealability dice pool modifier as appropriate to the item. The Concealability Table (below) lists a selection of items and the standard modifiers that apply. If a character is intentionally trying to hide something, treat this as an Opposed Test against the concealing character's Palming + Agility Test.

Some gear is specifically designed to be more concealable, or is crafted in such a way as to make it easier to hide other items (like a long coat with hidden pockets). These items apply a special Concealability modifier as noted in their descriptions.

PHYSICAL SEARCHES

What if someone pats your character down, looking for contraband? In this case, the searching character makes an Agility + Intuition Test, and Concealability modifiers only apply at half their value (round down).

CONCEALABILITY TABLE

CONCEALABILITY MODIFIER	EXAMPLES
–6	RFID tag, bug, slap patch, micro-electronics, micro-drone
–4	Holdout pistol, monowhip, ammo, credstick, chips/softs, sequencer/passkey
–2	Light pistol, knife, sap, minidrone, microgrenade, flash-pak, jammer
+0	Heavy pistol, taser, grenade, goggles, commlink
+2	Machine pistol, medkit, club
+4	SMG, stun baton, sword
+6	Assault rifle, katana

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AVAILABILITY AND BUYING GEAR

The Availability rating represents how easy (or hard) it is to acquire a piece of equipment. Availability represents a range of factors: scarcity, legality, distribution issues, and so on.

STANDARD GOODS

Most standard items have no Availability rating, which means that they can be purchased normally from a retail vendor—either an actual physical location or an online Matrix store. In this case, the character merely has to pay the listed cost for the item. The gamemaster should feel free to adjust the cost according to local market fluctuations.

Though standard goods are easy to buy, there are drawbacks. Data mining is 2072 has advanced to the point where records of legal purchases are almost always kept, shared, and cross-indexed, creating a potential datatrail back to the character. Likewise, purchasing habits are valuable information to marketing companies, so that they may tailor AR advertisements according to your specific history. It may be embarrassing to a street samurai to have a rival hacker invade his PAN and pinpoint his favorite convenience store as a place to stake out to ambush him, but it's even more embarrassing for the samurai's rep if that hacker spreads around the fact that he has a long purchasing history of buying used women's toe socks. Fake IDs (p. 267) may of course be used to sidetrack the construction of any data profiles, but keep in mind that such IDs may accumulate profiles of their own after long-term use, whether or not they are real.

Note that many standard goods can also be purchased on the black market. An Availability Test is usually not necessary, but the gamemaster should adjust the price as noted under *Street Values*.

BLACK MARKET GOODS

When it comes to the interesting stuff, the higher the Availability rating is, the harder it is to acquire the item.

AVAILABILITY INTERVAL

ITEM COST	INTERVAL
Up to 100¥	12 hours
101¥ to 1,000¥	1 day
1,001¥ to 10,000¥	2 days
10,001¥+	1 week

STREET COSTS

SITUATION	COST ADJUSTMENT
Item counterfeit	–20%
Item stolen	–20%
Item used	–20%
Item used in a crime under investigation	–10%
Price war between rival dealers	–10%
Market flooded	–10%
Distribution channels monopolized	+20%
Law enforcement crackdown on item	+50%
Market dry	+20%

THE AVAILABILITY TEST

If a character wishes to purchase a controlled item on the black market, make a Negotiation + Charisma Extended Test with a threshold equal to the Availability and an interval based on the item's cost (see the Availability Interval table, below).

If a character is willing to expend a little bit more cash, she can increase her chances of finding a willing seller and expediting the purchase. For every additional 25% of the item's value, the character gains an additional die on the Availability Test (maximum 10 extra dice). The character must declare her intention to spend more before making the Availability Test.

Glitches: If a character rolls a glitch on an Availability Test, her inquiries may have attracted some unwanted attention: Lone Star, a criminal syndicate, rivals or enemies, or something similar. If the character rolls a critical glitch, she may have somehow insulted someone important (cutting off that purchasing contact until amends are made) or may find herself caught in a black market sting operation.

example

Twitch (Charisma 3, Negotiation 3 with the Bargaining specialization) is looking to purchase an Ares Alpha (Availability 12F, Cost 1,700¥). His dice pool is 8 (3 + 3 + 2) for the Negotiation + Charisma (12, 2 day) Extended Test. With his first roll he gets 4 hits, and on his second roll he gets 3 more. Those 7 hits are good, but not good enough. After 4 days Twitch is still looking, but things are getting a little out of hand so he needs that assault rifle fast! He decides to pay three times the standard price (200% extra), which is worth a bonus of 8 dice on his roll. This time he gets 5 hits (for a total of 12) on the Extended Test, so on the sixth day of his search he's finally able to purchase the assault rifle for 5,100¥.

FIXERS AND AVAILABILITY

A character may choose to have a fixer or other contact find the gear she's looking for. See *Swag*, p. 287, for details.

STREET VALUES

There are many factors that may affect an item's worth on the street: whether or not it was stolen, used, used in a recent crime (you don't want to get caught carrying a murder weapon for a crime you didn't commit, do you?), how common or rare it is, how much the authorities have been cracking down on goods of that type, whether or not some syndicate has a monopolization of the supply channels, whether it's a counterfeit knock-off of some brand name item, and so on. Sometimes black market goods are much cheaper (no tax!), other times they're much more expensive. The gamemaster determines which variables affect the asking price, using the suggestions on the Street Costs table (at left) as a guideline.

FENCING GEAR

Characters may fence loot that they've obtained on a shadowrun. As with buying equipment, the value a character can get for fencing gear depends on its Availability: the higher the Availability rating, the better chance the character has for getting a good value from the sale.

The basic asking price for fenced gear is 30% of its original price. Fencing an item requires a Negotiation + Charisma (10, 6 hours) Extended Test. The character may add the item's Availability rating to her dice pool. She can also decide to reduce the asking price of the item in order to find a buyer more easily—for every deduction of 5 percent from the basic asking price, the character receives one bonus die to her dice pool. Other modifiers may apply, depending on the type and condition of the item, as determined by the gamemaster.

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Characters may hire a fence or other contact to sell the item for them. See *Swag,* p. 287, for details on how this is handled.

Glitch: If a character rolls a glitch on a fencing test, her attempts have attracted attention from unwanted parties, as noted under Availability glitches, p. 312.

LEGALITY

Operating outside the law is part of a shadowrunner's job description. This not only includes criminal activity, but also the possession of a large array of prohibited items. This chapter features a wide range of gear, ownership of which is often considered illegal.

To reflect this, items are classified as *legal, restricted* (R), and *forbidden* (F). A legal item may be purchased freely and can be owned, transported, and used without restriction. Of course, if you commit a crime with it (for example, smashing someone's skull with a toolbox or threatening someone with a baseball bat), you are subject to punishment, but this is due to the crime itself, not the item you used to commit it.

A restricted item may be purchased, owned, and transported under special circumstances. For example, you are allowed to purchase and own a gun when you have a firearms license for it. To carry a gun with you, you may need a more specific concealed carry permit. If you threaten someone with it or use it to shoot at someone, all the force of the law comes crashing down on you. Licenses can be obtained through legal channels, as long as you are an upright citizen in possession of a legal SIN. Shadowrunners with fake SINs can of course obtain similar fake licenses (p. 332). A fake license is always connected to a fake SIN, and if one of them is exposed, the other will also become worthless.

A forbidden item may never be legally purchased or owned, let alone transported or used, by a private person. Don't get caught.

JURISDICTION

The law, of course, varies in different countries all over the world—and with megacorporate extraterritoriality in *Shadowrun,* sometimes from block to block. Police officers in one jurisdiction may of course turn a blind eye to the possession of certain items that would cost you your life if you were caught with them in another. The legality restrictions in this book use the Seattle, UCAS, setting as a base guideline. Whenever the characters are in another national or corporate jurisdiction, the gamemaster determines exactly what the legalities and punishments are, as appropriate to his campaign.

CYBERWARE AND BIOWARE GRADES

Cyberware and bioware is available in four grades: standard, alphaware, betaware, and deltaware. Only standard and alphaware may be purchased at character creation. The prices for cyberware and bioware presented in this chapter are for standard 'ware. When purchasing implants of other grades, apply the Essence Cost and Cost adjustments as noted on the Implant Grades table (bottom right).

Note that cyberware accessories must be of the same grade as the implant they are added to.

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

In 2072, almost every device is computerized and equipped with a wireless link—from guns to toasters to clothing to sensors to cyberware. As a rule, assume that any gear item that is electronic or mechanical has a wireless-enabled computer in it. Even non-electronic devices without moving parts may have a built-in computer, if it might be useful or convenient to the user (wouldn't you like to be able to download and play your favorite songs on your jacket?). The gamemaster has final determination over what items are wireless-enabled.

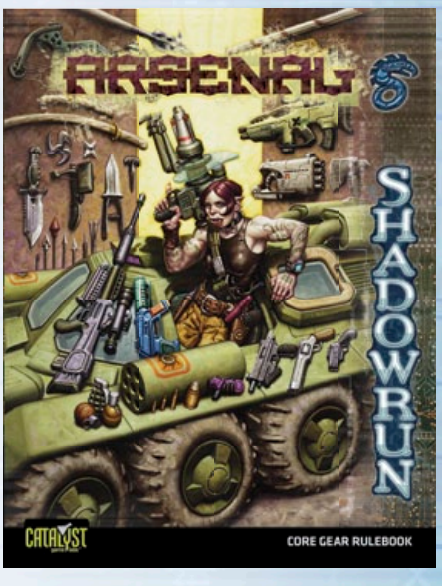
Even if a device isn't wireless, it may be tagged (*RFID Tags,* p. 329). Many non-wireless items are tagged to identify the owner if stolen, while others feature sensor tags that monitor the item's functionality and alert the user if any malfunctions occur or servicing is necessary. This is even true of non-electronic cyberware, such as bone lacing—sensor tags are a convenient way of monitoring for stress fractures and other complications.

Sample Device ratings for items can be found on p. 222 of *The Wireless World.*

ARSENAL

Arsenal, the advanced gear rulebook, is the ultimate add-on of cool equipment, weapons, vehicles, and runner gear for the enterprising shadowrunner and complements the diverse offering in *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition.* In Arsenal's 200-page toy chest, you will find:

- 100+ New weapons, accessories, upgrades, and new ammo types
- 50+ New vehicles in all shapes and sizes plus 27 new drones
- 100+ Items of runner gear ranging from armor to environmental survival gear to spy toys
- 25 Revolutionary manatech devices
- Advanced rules for explosives, chemicals and drugs
- Advanced rules for Martial Arts, additional combat options, and environmental dangers
- Extensive options for Vehicle and Weapon Customization



IMPLANT GRADES

GRADE	ESSENCE COST MULTIPLIER	COST MULTIPLIER
Standard	x 1.0	x 1
Alphaware	x 0.8	x 2
Betaware	x 0.7	x 4
Deltaware	x 0.5	x 10

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The following are common services the characters may wish to enjoy. Most such costs are subsumed by a character's Lifestyle, but these costs are provided for gamemaster reference. Prices listed are average and will vary depending on locale and circumstances.

Service	Cost
Dataterm	0.5¥ per minute
Vending machine clothes ("flats")	5¥
Private room at restaurant or club	100¥ per hour
Private room with privacy features†	200¥ per hour
Safehouse	500¥ per day
Prostitute services	20–50¥
Meat puppet parlor	50¥ per hour
Escort service	100¥ per hour
Bodyguard service	200¥ per day
Medical insurance	200¥ per week

Housing	Cost
Coffin hotel (24 hours)	30¥
Hostel (24 hours)	30¥
Motel room (per hour)	20¥
Motel room (24 hours)	100¥
Hotel room (24 hours)	200¥
Suite (24 hours)	500¥
Luxury suite (24 hours)	1,000¥

Food (per person)	Cost
Vending machine meal	2¥
Fast food meal	5–10¥
Breakfast or Lunch	10–15¥
Dinner	20–25¥
Dinner at fancy restaurant	100–200¥

Entertainment	Cost
Nightclub admission	15–50¥
Live performance	10–200¥
Standard drinks	5¥
Premium drinks	10–15¥
Ticket to major sporting event	20–50¥
Season tickets	2,000¥
Trid movie or simflick	15¥
Sim/gaming parlor	30¥ per hour

Travel	Cost
City transport	
Public transport (bus, rail)	1¥ per 10 km
Public transport (1 week pass)	20¥
Taxi	1¥ per 1 km
Z-zone taxi*	10¥ per 1 km
Commuter air	10¥ per 1 km
Parking (1 hour)	6¥
Parking (all day)	25¥
Car rental (1 day)	100¥
Car rental (1 week)	500¥
Air travel	0.1¥ per 1 km
Suborbital/semiballistic flight	0.5¥ per 1 km
Local flight	1¥ per 1 km
Rail fare	0.2¥ per 1 km
Bus fare	0.1¥ per 1 km
Bus/Rail 1-month pass	250¥

Body Fashion	Cost
Tattoo	50–1,000¥
Whole-body dye	275¥
Piercing	20–250¥
Branding	150–500¥

* More charges may apply depending on threat level and damage.

† Privacy features: white noise generator and astral wards.

TURNING IT OFF

While wireless functionality is convenient, it is also a security risk. The drawback to being able to save files on your favorite rifle or cyberarm is that it might get hacked. Wireless devices also tend to leave a datatrail as they interact with other networks around you (one good reason to operate in hidden mode and keep everything in your PAN slaved to your commlink). Being careless with that can lead to someone tracking you down or pinpointing you at the scene of a crime. One way to prevent this is to load your devices up with IC and encryption—courtesy of your team's hacker—but another might be to simply turn it off.

Any device's wireless capability can be turned off with a simple command. Of course, that means it needs to be turned back on manually, unless you set it to reactivate at a specified time.

If you consider a device's wireless link to be a nuisance, you can have it removed completely with a Hardware + Logic (8, 10 minutes) Extended Test—or simply purchase a non-wireless device in the first place (always an option, though it may get you some funny looks). RFID tags can also be removed with a tag eraser (p. 330).

GEAR LISTING

The following selection of items are available through fixers, fences, black market shops, online sites, and lore shops.

MELEE WEAPONS

Melee weapons are the basic hand-to-hand fighting implements still in use today (*Melee Combat,* p. 156). This list does not include impromptu weapons created from material on hand (see Melee Weapons Table, p. 158, for examples).

The Damage Value for most melee weapons is based on the character's Strength ÷ 2, as modified by the weapon.

Note that cyberware melee weapons are detailed on p. 344.

BLADES

Use the Blades skill to employ these weapons.

Combat Axe: This two-handed tungsten alloy axe typically comes with a spring-loaded thrusting point concealed in the handle.

Forearm Snap-Blades: These external spurs feature a forearm sheath with three blades that extend and retract via muscle-movement commands or wireless link.

Katana: The legendary, two-handed sword of the samurai—chop up your enemies with style.

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Knife: A basic, all-purpose cutting tool.

Monofilament Sword: This well-balanced broadsword features superfine monofilament wire attached to its edges.

Survival Knife: This fine quality blade features several accessories: retractable GPS monitor, micro-lighter, and a compartment in the handle that will hold one small item. The flat sides of the blade are covered with a non-toxic chemical that can be activated to provide 2 hours of phosphorescent light.

Sword: Get medieval with this sharp and heavy toy of destruction. Swords encompass a variety of one-handed blades, from scimitars to machetes to longswords.

CLUBS

Use the Clubs skill to bludgeon your enemies with these weapons.

Club: Anything from a hickory "tire-knocker" to a baseball bat to a two-by-four with a rusty nail.

Extendable Baton: The shaft of this club telescopes out when flicked sharply. When retracted, it is more easily concealed (–2).

Sap: A small, springy club, specially designed for concealability (–2).

Staff: A large, heavy stick, popular with some magicians for that traditional look.

Stun Baton: The standard riot-control weapon, this weighted stick delivers an electrical charge that deals Electricity damage (p. 163). It has 10 charges; when plugged in, it recharges at a rate of one charge per 10 seconds.

EXOTIC WEAPONS

These weapons require the Exotic Melee Weapon skill to use.

Monofilament Whip: One of the deadliest weapons on the streets, this nanowire whip cuts through bone and armor with horrifying ease. The line extends out to two meters, and retracts into the weapon's haft when not in use. The whip action, the presence of a weighted tip, and the danger of the monofilament line make wielding this weapon difficult at best. If an attacker using a monofilament whip rolls a glitch, she has either tangled the line around itself, gotten the weighted tip stuck on something, or inadvertently cut something nearby apart. If the attacker rolls a critical glitch, she has struck herself and must resist the whip's standard Damage Code.

Pole Arm: This spear-like weapon usually features an axe-head or similar blade and has become quite popular with trolls and other large individuals, even though it's not easy to handle.

UNARMED COMBAT

These weapons require the Unarmed Combat skill to use.

Shock Gloves: This pair of insulated plas-fabric gloves has a wire mesh that discharges electric current when triggered by impact. The gloves deal Electricity damage (p. 163) and have 10 charges (each); when plugged in, they recharge at a rate of one charge per 10 seconds.

PROJECTILE AND THROWING WEAPONS

These weapons are man-powered, but may use simple mechanical assistance for additional distance or speed. Rules for projectile weapons are covered on p. 155.

Bows: A traditional longbow of fiberglass or wood, or a modern compound-and-pulley bow. Reloading the bow takes one "Ready Weapon" Action (p. 147).

Bows have minimum Strength ratings that indicate the minimum Strength a character must have to use that weapon. When attacking with a bow, a character whose Strength is less than the Strength minimum suffers a –2 dice pool modifier per point below the minimum; this penalty reflects the difficulty they have in pulling the bow and nocking an arrow. The weapon's minimum Strength rating is also used

BLADES	REACH	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Combat Axe	2	(STR/2 + 4)P	–1	8R	600¥
Forearm Snap-Blades	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–	6R	150¥
Katana	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–1	4R	1,000¥
Knife	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–	–	20¥
Monofilament Sword	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–1	8R	750¥
Survival Knife	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–1	–	50¥
Sword	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	–	4R	350¥

CLUBS	REACH	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Club	1	(STR/2 + 1)P	–	–	30¥
Extendable Baton	1	(STR/2 + 1)P	–	–	50¥
Sap	–	(STR/2 + 1)S	–	–	30¥
Staff	2	(STR/2 + 2)P	–	–	50¥
Stun Baton	1	6S(e)	–half	4R	400¥

EXOTIC MELEE WEAPONS	REACH	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Monofilament Whip	2	8P	–4	12F	3,000¥
Pole Arm	2	(STR/2 + 2)P	–2	4R	1,000¥

UNARMED	REACH	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Shock Glove	–	5S(e)	–half	3R	200¥

BOWS	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Bow	(STR Min +2)P	–	2	Rating x 100¥
Arrow	–	–	2	5¥
Injection Arrow	–	–	8R	50¥

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to determine the weapon's range and damage. Material science limits high-tech bows to a maximum Strength rating of 12. The maximum Damage Value an arrow fired from the bow can inflict is equal to the bow's rating x1.5.

Crossbows: Modern crossbows are equipped with automatic reloading devices to allow for faster firing rates (reloading doesn't require a Ready Weapon action, unless you happen to be using a museum piece). Crossbows also feature internal magazines (m) holding up to 4 bolts. Available in Light, Medium, and Heavy sizes.

Injection Arrows/Bolts: An injection arrow or bolt causes the same damage as a regular arrow/bolt, but an attack that inflicts at least 1 point of damage will also deliver one dose of whatever chemical substance the arrow/bolt was loaded with. This counts as an injection attack vector (p. 254).

Shuriken: This multi-edged airfoil throwing blade is available in many different styles. A character can ready Agility ÷ 2 shuriken per Ready Weapon action.

Throwing Knife: Any of a variety of slim knives or spikes. A character can ready Agility ÷ 2 throwing knives per Ready Weapon action.

FIREARMS

Firearms are primarily slug-throwers. Many weapons offer two versions, for standard loads or for caseless ammunition, though the latter is far more common in the 2070s. A weapon can fire either type of ammunition, but not both interchangeably.

A digital ammunition counter and wireless capability are standard equipment for modern firearms.

TASERS

Tasers deliver an electric charge that inflicts *Electricity Damage* (p. 163) to incapacitate a target. Tasers are resisted with half Impact armor (round up). Use the Pistols skill when firing a taser.

Defiance EX Shocker: The EX Shocker fires up to 4 darts that trail wires of up to 20 meters long. It also features contacts that allow it to be used as stun weapon in melee.

Yamaha Pulsar: The Pulsar fires capacitor darts at a target, eliminating the wires that trail from dart to weapon with other taser models.

HOLD-OUTS

Use the Pistols skill when firing a hold-out pistol.

Raecor Sting: This weapon's "lemon-squeezer" design (the gun's barrel protrudes from between the firer's fingers and it's fired by making a fist) and its polyresin composition (undetectable by MAD scanners) makes for a very stealthy weapon. It fires flechette ammunition only (already included in the weapon stats).

Streetline Special: This small, lightweight weapon is made of composite materials (MADs suffer a –2 dice pool modifier to detect it, see p. 262). It is a common weapon among those on society's bottom rung.

CROSSBOWS	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Light	3P	–	2	300¥
Medium	5P	–	4R	500¥
Heavy	7P	-1	8R	750¥
Bolt	–	–	2	5¥
Injection Bolt	–	–	8R	50¥

THROWING WEAPONS	DAMAGE	AP	AVAILABILITY	COST
Shuriken	(STR/2)P	–	2	30¥
Throwing Knife	(STR/2 + 1)P	–	2	20¥

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LIGHT PISTOLS

Use the Pistols skill when firing a light pistol.

Colt America L36: An old-timer with a very good reputation, this sleek automatic pistol is easy to conceal and commonly available.

Fichetti Security 600: Designed as a light sidearm for security personnel, this pistol has a highly efficient feeding mechanism that allows it to hold an incredible 30 bullets. It comes fully equipped with a detachable folding stock and laser sight.

Hammerli 620S: Sleek and stylish, the Hammerli offers the range of a heavy pistol within a light pistol casing (use Heavy Pistol ranges, p. 151). It also includes integral gas-vent and smartgun systems.

Yamaha Sakura Fubuki: The "Cherry-Blossom Storm" is the flagship for Yamaha's new line of electronic weapons that feature no moving parts. Rather than a standard magazine, the bullets are stacked in-line in each of the four barrels, allowing the firing of ultra-fast short bursts. The Fubuki may only fire narrow bursts (not wide), but burst recoil is handled like SA recoil (–1 Recoil on the second burst each Action Phase only). Includes an integral folding stock.

HEAVY PISTOLS

Use the Pistols skill when firing a heavy pistol.

Ares Predator IV: The all-time favorite sidearm among mercenaries and security services. Includes a smartgun system.

Ares Viper Slivergun: The Slivergun is a sleek weapon with burst fire capabilities and built-in sound suppression. It fires metal slivers that count as flechette ammunition (already factored in to the Damage Code).

Colt Manhunter: Popular among law enforcement, the Manhunter features a built-in laser sight.

Remington Roomsweeper: This short-barreled "shotgun pistol" can be loaded with shot rounds rather than slugs, in which cases it uses heavy-pistol ranges but shotgun rules (*Shotguns,* pp. 154–155).

Ruger Super Warhawk: Feeling lucky, punk? This heavy revolver looks as scary as the holes it tears through things. It cannot be equipped with a silencer.

MACHINE PISTOLS

Use the Automatics skill when firing a machine pistol.

Ceska Black Scorpion: This classic machine pistol combines concealability with burst fire capabilities. It comes equipped with an integral folding stock.

Steyr TMP: This lightweight polymer-frame pistol is capable of full autofire, but its lack of recoil compensation makes it difficult to control.

TASERS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Defiance EX Shocker	8S(e)	–half	SS	–	4 (m)	–	150¥
Yamaha Pulsar	6S(e)	–half	SA	–	4 (m)	–	150¥

HOLD-OUTS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Raecor Sting	6P(f)	+5	SS	–	5 (c)	6R	350¥
Streetline Special	4P	–	SS	–	6 (c)	4R	100¥

LIGHT PISTOLS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Colt America L36	4P	–	SA	–	11 (c)	4R	150¥
Fichetti Security 600	4P	–	SA	(1)	30 (c)	6R	450¥
Hammerli 620S	4P	–	SA	1	6 (c)	8R	650¥
Yamaha Sakura Fubuki	4P	–	SA/BF	(1)	10 (ml) x4	10R	2,000¥

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SUBMACHINE GUNS

Use the Automatics skill when firing a submachine gun.

AK-97 Carbine: The AK-97 has earned its fame in many campaigns around the globe. Its reliability is legendary—you can bury it for 10 years, dig it up, and fire it immediately without a single problem. Includes a detachable folding stock.

HK 227-X: The SMG of choice for many corporate and military security forces. The HK 227-X boasts a retractable stock, smartgun system, and integral sound suppressor.

HK MP-5 TX: Carrying on the classic MP-5 design, an aggressive marketing campaign and featured usage on the blockbuster *Combat Mage: TNG* sim have made it popular on the streets. The TX includes a gas-vent 2 system, a laser sight, and a detachable folding stock.

Ingram Smartgun X: This smartgun upgrade features gas-vent 2, a smartgun system, a sound suppressor, and a detachable folding stock.

Uzi IV: A worthy descendent of the famous Israeli weapon, this SMG features an integral folding stock and laser sight.

ASSAULT RIFLES

Use the Automatics skill when firing assault rifles.

AK-97: The common version of this premier assault rifle, ideal for anyone with a small budget.

Ares Alpha: Designed for Ares Firewatch special forces, the Alpha includes an underbarrel grenade launcher, a smartgun system, and a special chamber design that provides 2 points of recoil compensation.

FN HAR: This assault rifle is increasingly popular with corporate response teams and private security forces specializing in high-threat areas. It comes with a laser sight and a Rating 2 gas-vent recoil compensation system.

HEAVY PISTOLS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ares Predator IV	5P	–1	SA	–	15 (c)	4R	350¥
Ares Viper Slivergun	8P(f)	+2	SA/BF	–	30 (c)	5R	500¥
Colt Manhunter	5P	–1	SA	–	16 (c)	4R	300¥
Remington Roomsweeper	5P	–1	SA	–	8 (m)	6R	250¥
w/flechettes	7P(f) +5						
Ruger Super Warhawk	6P	–2	SS	–	6 (cy)	3R	250¥

MACHINE PISTOLS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ceska Black Scorpion	4P	–	SA/BF	(1)	35 (c)	8R	550¥
Steyr TMP	4P	–	SA/BF/FA	–	30 (c)	8R	600¥

SUBMACHINE GUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
AK-97 Carbine	5P	–	SA/BF/FA	(1)	30 (c)	4R	400¥
HK-227X	5P	–	SA/BF/FA	(1)	28 (c)	8R	800¥
HK MP-5 TX	5P	–	SA/BF/FA	2 (3)	20 (c)	4R	550¥
Ingram Smartgun X	5P	–	BF/FA	2 (3)	32 (c)	6R	650¥
Uzi IV	5P	–	BF	(1)	24 (c)	4R	500¥

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HK XM30: This award-winning modular "weapons platform" can turn a single soldier into a one-man army. The baseline assault rifle features lightweight composite construction, a smartgun system, rigid stock with shock pad, and an underbarrel grenade launcher with grenade link. The weapon may be reassembled with optional modules—taking an Automatics + Agility (5, 1 minute) Extended Test to swap them in—into either an underbarrel shotgun, compact carbine, sniper rifle (with an imaging scope), or LMG (with bipod) configuration.

SPORT RIFLES

Use the Longarms skill when firing sport rifles.

Ruger 100: This sport rifle is the favorite weapon for many professional hunters. It features a built-in imaging scope and a rigid stock with shock pad.

PJSS Elephant Rifle: If you want to shoot something big from a safe distance, this huge double-barreled rifle is your weapon of choice. Its two barrels can be shot at once with +1 DV and a –1 Recoil modifier. Includes a rigid stock with shock pad.

SNIPER RIFLES

Use the Longarms skill when firing precision sniper rifles. While sturdier than earlier models, sniper rifles in 2072 are still not designed for close-up combat. At the end of every Turn in which the rifle is used in a running firefight (as opposed to a sniping situation), roll an Edge Test. For every Edge Test failed, the weapon incurs a –1 dice pool modifier until it is recalibrated with an Armorer + Logic (8, 1 Minute) Extended Test. The modifier is doubled if the weapon is used in combat as a melee weapon or to defend from a melee attack.

Ranger Arms SM-4: This rifle features a silencer, imaging scope, and a rigid stock with shock pad. The SM-4 disassembles completely in order to fit into a standard briefcase; assembling or disassembling it takes 3 Complex Actions.

Walther MA-2100: The chosen sniper rifle of the Confederated American States Army, the MA-2100 is designed to military specifications. It is far more stable and hardy than other sniper rifles (dispensing with the Edge Test when used in Ranged Combat outside its sniping role, though not Melee Combat). However, the downside to this model is that it cannot be disassembled to fit into a briefcase. It comes with an internal smartgun system and a rigid stock with shock pad.

SHOTGUNS

Use the Longarms skill when firing shotguns. See the special rules for shotguns on pp. 154–155.

Mossberg AM-CMDT: This heavy automatic shotgun can fill a whole room with whirling pellets of shot in an instant, which makes it a terrifying weapon in house-to-house combat. It fires flechette ammuniton only (already included in the weapon stats).

Remington 990: The Remington includes an imaging scope and a rigid stock with shock pad. It can fire regular slug or flechette ammunition.

SPECIAL WEAPONS

Use the Exotic Ranged Weapon skill when firing these weapons.

Ares S-III Super Squirt: This popular non-lethal weapon fires dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO, a carrier that forces the skin to absorb chemicals) gel packs that can deliver a chemical substance over light pistol ranges. The attack itself causes no damage, but when the target is hit successfully, the DMSO delivers the substance directly into the target's bloodstream (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254).

Fichetti Pain Inducer: This non-lethal weapon uses a microwave beam that excites the molecules of the target's skin, inflicting intense pain (the target feels as if she were on fire). Treat this like a toxin attack (p. 254) with a Power of 8. The target resists with Body + half impact armor (round up). If the modified Power exceeds the target's Willpower, the target must spend her next Action Phase doing whatever it takes to get away from the pain (usually this means running away). The attacker can continue to hold her beam on a target with a Complex Action unless the gamemaster deems the target has dodged away or found cover. If the target cannot flee, she is incapacitated with pain and suffers a dice pool modifier equal to the modified Power on all tests for as long as the beam is trained on her. The Pain Inducer has 10 charges; when attached to a power point, it reloads one charge per 10 seconds.

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Parashield Dart Pistol: The industry standard dart pistol, the Parashield dart pistol fires injection darts (*Injection Darts*, p. 324) with narcoject or another payload. The Parashield dart pistol uses heavy pistol ranges.

Parashield Dart Rifle: The rifle version of the Parashield Dart Pistol, this rifle uses compressed air to fire injection darts. The Parashield rifle uses sporting rifle ranges.

MACHINE GUNS AND ASSAULT CANNONS

Use the Heavy Weapons skill when firing these weapons. They suffer from double Recoil modifiers (*Recoil,* p. 152).

Ingram White Knight: When you're looking for a good bang for your buck, the White Knight is your kind of gun. It's equipped with a detachable folding stock and an integral gas-vent system that provides 5 points of recoil compensation and cannot be further upgraded.

Stoner-Ares M202: This MMG packs a tremendous punch into a relatively light framework made of extra-durable compounds. Due to its comparatively smaller size, it's a very popular secondary weapon for military vehicles, but can also be equipped with various accessories to make it into a personal weapon.

Ultimax HMG-2: Equipped with a detachable tripod, a rigid stock with shock pad, and a gas-vent 3 system, the Ultimax is usually fired from a prone, sitting, or kneeling position, though some trolls might be strong enough to fire it while standing.

Panther XXL: This enormous assault cannon fires special ammunition common to the primary weapon in many small tanks. It comes with a smartgun system.

GRENADE AND MISSILE LAUNCHERS

Use the Heavy Weapons skill when firing grenade and missile launchers.

Ares Antioch-2: The Antioch-2 features a classic grenade launcher design, combined with a smartgun system.

ArmTech MGL-12: This bullpup-configuration model is popular, since it fires in semi-auto mode and carries more minigrenades than its competitors.

Mitsubishi Yakusoku MRL: The internal loading mechanism of the Yakusoku Multi Rocket Launcher allows it to insert up to 4 different types of missiles (2 each) and choose freely (via the integrated smartgun connection) which of them to fire with each shooting action. Its two firing tubes also allow for a quicker rate of fire.

Aztechnology Striker: The Striker is an extremely light disposable launcher—perfect for shadowrunners who want to deliver a punch and make a quick, unencumbered getaway.

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ASSAULT RIFLES	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
AK-97	6P	–1	SA/BF/FA	–	38 (c)	4R	500¥
Ares Alpha	6P	–1	SA/BF/FA	2	42 (c)	12F	1,700¥
Grenade Launcher	Grenade	–	SS	–	6 (c)		
FN HAR	6P	–1	SA/BF/FA	2	35 (c)	8R	1,000¥
HK XM30	6P	–1	SA/BF/FA	(1)	30 (c)	15F	2,500¥
Grenade Launcher	Grenade	–	SS	–	8 (c)		
Shotgun	7P	+1	SA	(1)	10 (c)		+1,000¥
Carbine	5P	–	SA/BF/FA	(1)	30 (c)		+500¥
Sniper	7P	–2	SA	(1)	10 (c)		+1,000¥
LMG	6P	–1	BF/FA	2 (3)	100 (belt)		+1,000¥

SPORT RIFLES	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ruger 100	7P	–1	SA	(1)	5 (m)	4R	900¥
PJSS Elephant Rifle	9P	–1	SS	(1)	2 (b)	12R	6,000¥

SNIPER RIFLES	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ranger Arms SM-4	8P	–3	SA	(1)	15 (c)	16F	6,200¥
Walter MA-2100	7P	–3	SA	(1)	10 (m)	10F	5,000¥

SHOTGUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Mossberg AM-CMDT	9P(f)	+5	SA/BF/FA	–	10 (c)	12R	1,000¥
Remington 990	7P	–1	SA	(1)	8 (m)	4R	550¥
w/ flechettes	9P(f)	+2					

SPECIAL WEAPONS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ares S-III Super Squirt	Chemical	–	SA	–	20 (c)	4	500¥
Fichetti Pain Inducer	Special	–half	SS	–	Special	8R	2,000¥
Parashield Dart Pistol	As Drug/Toxin	–2	SA	–	5 (c)	6R	600¥
Parashield Dart Rifle	As Drug/Toxin	–2	SA	0	10(c)	6R	1,700¥

LIGHT MACHINE GUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ingram White Knight	6P	–1	BF/FA	5 (6)	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	12F	2,000¥

MEDIUM MACHINE GUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Stoner-Ares M202	6P	–2	FA	–	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	12F	4,500¥

HEAVY MACHINE GUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ultimax HMG-2	7P	–3	FA	3 (10)	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	15F	7,500¥

ASSAULT CANNONS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Panther XXL	10P	–5	SS	(1)	15 (c)	20F	5,500¥

GRENADE LAUNCHERS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Ares Antioch-2	Grenade	–	SS	–	8 (m)	8F	600¥
ArmTech MGL-12	Grenade	–	SA	–	12 (c)	10F	2,000¥

MISSILE LAUNCHERS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO	AVAILABILITY	COST
Aztechnology Striker	Missile	–	SS	–	1 (ml)	10F	1,000¥
Mitsubishi Yakusoku MRL	Missile	–	SA	–	8 (m)	20F	12,000¥

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FIREARM ACCESSORIES

Most firearm accessories must be attached to a particular mount (see the *Gear Ratings* sidebar, p. 310). Each mount can only hold one accessory.

Airburst Link: This grenade/rocket launcher smartgun accessory uses the distance to the target as determined by the rangefinder and programs the minigrenade/rocket to explode in the air after it has traveled the target distance. This airburst setting reduces the scatter from 3D6 to 1D6. All minigrenades/rockets can be timed in this manner. Air-timed airburst attacks explode in the Action Phase in which they were launched.

Bipod: Bipods are two-legged braces that extend downward from the weapon, allowing it to be fired low to the ground with the user in a sitting or prone position. A bipod can be attached to the underbarrel mount and provides 2 points of recoil compensation when properly deployed. Attaching or removing it takes a Complex Action.

Concealable Holster: Various types of holsters can be worn over the hip, in the small of the back, under the arm, on the forearm, or on the ankle. The concealable holster adds –1 to the item's Concealability (p. 311).

Gas-Vent System: Gas-vent recoil compensation systems vent a weapon's barrel gases at a specific vector to counter barrel climb. Gas-vent systems can be built into machine pistols, SMGs, assault rifles, and machine guns. Installing them takes up the barrel mount and requires an Armorer + Logic (8, 1 hour) Extended Test; once installed, they cannot be removed. Weapons already equipped with a built-in gas-vent system cannot be equipped with an additional gas-vent system.

The gas-vent 2 system provides 2 points of recoil compensation; the gas-vent 3 system provides 3 points of recoil compensation.

Gyro Stabilization: This is a heavy upper-body harness with an attached, articulated, gyro-stabilized arm that mounts a rifle or heavy weapon. The system neutralizes up to 6 points of recoil and movement modifiers. Attaching or removing a weapon takes a Simple Action. Getting into the gyro-mount takes 5 minutes, while using the built-in quick release to get out of it takes a Complex Action.

Hidden Arm Slide: Attached to the forearm and worn under clothing, this slide can accommodate a pistol-sized weapon. With a wireless signal or correct sequence of arm movements, the slide releases the weapon/object right into the wearer's hand. This takes only a Free Action.

Imaging Scope: These classic scopes are attached to the top mount; attaching or removing them takes only a Simple Action. Imaging scopes can be upgraded with any of the vision enhancements noted on p. 333.

Laser Sight: This device uses a laser beam to project a glowing red spot on the target. This provides a +1 dice pool modifier for ranged attacks (this modifier is not cumulative with smartlink bonuses). The laser sight can be attached to either the underbarrel mount or top mount. Attaching or removing it takes a Complex Action.

Periscope: This adjustable "off-axis viewer" attaches to a top-mount and allows you to target a weapon around corners.

Quick-Draw Holster: This easy-access holster reduces the threshold for quick drawing the holstered weapon to 2 (*Quick Draw,* p. 147).

Shock Pad: This shock-absorbing pad can be mounted on the rigid shoulder stock of a rifle, shotgun, or heavy weapon, and provides 1 point of recoil compensation.

Silencer: The silencer is a barrel-mounted accessory that reduces the sound and flash of a weapon's discharge. A silencer can only be used with single-shot or semi-automatic weapons (and not with revolvers). It applies a –4 dice pool modifier on all Perception Tests to notice the weapon's use or locate the weapon's firer. Attaching or removing a silencer takes a Complex Action.

Smart Firing Platform: This is a non-mobile robotic tripod (p. 323) equipped with a remote-control pivot that allows for a 180-degree firing arc (and a 60-degree inclination). A smartgun-equipped weapon mounted to the platform can be fired remotely or by the platform's Pilot. The platform is equipped with Pilot 3, Sensor 3, and one Targeting autosoft (p. 246) at Rating 3.

Smartgun System: The smartgun system connects a firearm or projectile weapon directly to a user's smartlink (p. 333). It incorporates a laser range finder and a small camera, and keeps track of ammunition, heat buildup, and material stress. It allows a smartlinked character to mentally switch between gun modes, eject clips, and fire the gun without pulling the trigger. The camera allows for targeted shooting around corners, without exposing oneself to return fire.

The system makes use of advanced calculation software, allowing the user to aim even weapons with a highly ballistic firing arc (like grenades) with tremendous precision over any distance. The smartgun system can also be accessed via wireless link, allowing for the gun to be remotely fired or to block the trigger (in case an opponent gets ahold of it). When used with a smartlink, it provides a +2 dice pool bonus on the ranged attack test.

Retrofitting a firearm with an internal Smartgun system doubles the weapon's price. An external smartgun system can be attached to the top mount or underbarrel mount with an Armorer + Logic (4, 1 hour) Extended Test. The small camera can be equipped with vision enhancements (p. 333).

Sound Suppressor: The sound suppressor is a barrel-mounted accessory similar to the silencer but specifically designed for burst-fire and full-auto weapons. It applies a –4 dice pool modifier to Perception Tests to notice the weapon's use or locate the weapon's firer. Attaching or removing it takes a Complex Action. It must be replaced after every 300 rounds of burst or autofire.

FIREARM ACCESSORIES	MOUNT	AVAILABILITY	COST
Airburst Link	–	6R	500¥
Bipod	Under	2	100¥
Concealable Holster	–	2	75¥
Gas-Vent 2 System	Barrel	4R	200¥
Gas-Vent 3 System	Barrel	6R	400¥
Gyro Stabilization	Under	7	3,000¥
Hidden Gun Arm Slide	–	4	350¥
Imaging Scope	Top	3	300¥
Laser Sight	Top/Under	2	100¥
Periscope	Top	3	50¥
Quick-Draw Holster	–	4	100¥
Shock Pad	–	2	50¥
Silencer	Barrel	8F	200¥
Smart Firing Platform	Under	12F	2,000¥
Smartgun System, internal	–	6R	Weapon Cost
Smartgun System, external	Top/Under	4R	400¥
Sound Suppresser	Barrel	12F	300¥
Spare Clips	–	4	5¥
Speed Loader	–	2	25¥
Tripod	Under	4	300¥

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Spare Clips: Extra ammunition clips come unloaded; they can hold the maximum rounds for the weapon and are not interchangeable from weapon to weapon even within the same class.

Speed Loader: The speed loader is a simple device that can hold a ring of bullets for fast insertion into a revolver (pistol with a cylinder). See the Reloading Firearms table, p. 324.

Tripod: Tripods provide a stable basis to fire a weapon low to the ground with the user in a sitting or kneeling position. A tripod can be attached to the underbarrel mount and provides 6 points of recoil compensation when properly deployed. Attaching or removing it takes one Complex Action.

AMMUNITION

Ammunition is defined first by its various types (standard, gel, APDS, etc.), second by the class of gun for which it was made (light pistol, assault rifle, MMG, etc.), and third as cased or caseless.

For simplicity, each kind of gun can trade ammo with another of its class; for example, all light pistols can share ammo. At the gamemaster's discretion, other weapon types may be allowed to share ammunition (some different firearm types do use the same ammunition in real life).

In these basic rules, the difference between cased and caseless ammunition is that caseless ammo has its own propellant and does not have a cartridge case. A gun can fire cased or caseless ammo, but not both.

The ammunition's Damage Modifier and AP Modifier are added to the weapon's usual DV and AP. For example, an Ares Predator IV (DV 5, AP –1) with APDS (AP –4) would have a modified Damage Code of DV 5, AP –5.

APDS Rounds: Amor-Piercing Discarding Sabot (APDS) rounds are specially designed to travel at high velocities and pierce armor. APDS reduces the effectiveness of Ballistic armor (AP –4).

Assault Cannon Rounds: These highly stable explosive rounds are made of HDX superplast compound.

Explosive Rounds: Explosive rounds are solid slugs designed to fragment and explode on impact. They increase the DV by 1.

Explosive rounds will misfire whenever a critical glitch is rolled. When this occurs, the character firing the weapon is automatically struck by one "attack," with a Damage Code equal to the normal damage done by the weapon. The character may make a damage resistance test as normal. Any attack the affected character is making at the time misses.

EX Explosive Rounds: This improved model of explosive rounds adds 1 to the weapon's DV and has an AP of –1. It follows all other standard explosive rounds rules.

Flechette Rounds: Tiny, tightly packed metal slivers function as the business end of a flechette round. They are devastating against unprotected targets, but not very effective against rigid armor. Flechette rounds raise the DV of weapons by +2. They also raise the effective value of Impact armor (AP +5). Flechettes are resisted with Impact armor.

Guns with flechette ammo already figured into their Damage Code have an (f) notation following the Damage Code.

Gel Rounds: These non-lethal rounds use a hard jelly-like substance and are often employed for riot control. They are usually semi-rigid slugs that flatten on impact, disbursing their kinetic

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energy over a larger-than-normal area. Gel rounds inflict Stun damage and are resisted with Impact armor (AP +2). Gel rounds reduce the target's Body by 2 when checking for knockdown; see *Knockdown,* p. 161.

Injection Darts: For use with dart guns of various types—such as the Parashield pistol and rifle—injection darts carry a single dose of a drug or toxin. Effects depend on the drug payload, but to successfully deliver the payload and penetrate armor, the attacker needs two net hits on the Ranged Combat Opposed Test.

Regular Ammo: Standard full metal jacket rounds for all kinds of uses (mostly killing).

Stick-n-Shock: This is a special adhesive projectile that sticks to the target and incorporates a battery pack that delivers short bursts of high-voltage pulses. The Stick-n-Shock replaces the weapon's Damage Value with its own.

Tracer Rounds: Tracer ammo burns "tracers" along the line of flight, making it easier for the shooter to home in on the target. This type of ammunition can only be used in full-auto weapons and is loaded as every third round in a clip. This is an exception to the restriction of one type of ammunition to a clip. Non-smartgun users firing tracer rounds receive a +1 dice pool modifier at all ranges beyond Short when firing a short burst, +2 when firing a long burst, and +3 when firing a full burst.

Taser Dart: These darts are designed to be loaded into taser weapons.

RELOADING FIREARMS

RELOADING METHOD	ACTION REQUIRED	RESULT
Removable Clip (c)	Simple Action	Remove or insert clip
Fill Clip	Complex Action	Insert (Agility) rounds into clip
Break Action (b)	Complex Action	Insert 2 rounds
Internal Magazine (m)	Complex Action	Insert (Agility) rounds
Muzzle-Loader (ml)	Complex Action	Load 1 muzzle tube
Cylinder (cy)	Complex Action	Insert (Agility) rounds
Speed Loader	Complex Action	Use speed loader to completely load gun
Belt Feed (belt)	Complex Action	Remove or insert belt
Fill Belt	Complex Action	Insert (Agility ÷ 2) rounds into belt
Drum (d)	Complex Action	Remove or insert drum

GRENADES, ROCKETS, AND MISSILES

Grenades are small, self-contained explosive packages. They may come with a built-in timer to detonate after a pre-set amount of time (usually 5 seconds), a motion-sensor set to detonate on impact, or a wireless link set to detonate upon remote command. Damage from grenades is resisted with Impact armor.

Some grenade models are spherical or cylindrical, while aerodynamic models are rings or disks with superior range capabilities. Minigrenades are specifically designed for use with grenade launchers. They are set to arm when they have traveled 5 meters from their point of origin and explode on impact (unless using an airburst link, see p. 322). This safety feature can be disabled with an Armorer + Logic (3, 5 Minutes) Extended Test. Minigrenades have the same Cost and effects as standard grenades.

Use the Throwing skill when throwing grenades, or Heavy Weapons when launching from a grenade launcher. Follow the rules for *Grenades,* p. 155. Grenades and similar explosives can also be rigged with a tripwire to set up as a basic booby-trap. This requires a Demolitions + Agility (8, 1 Complex Action) Extended Test.

Flash-Bang Grenades: Upon detonation, flash-bang grenades spread a metallic powder out over the area that ignites in contact with the oxygen in the atmosphere, creating a loud, bright, shocking blast distributed equally over a radius of 10 meters.

Flash-Pak: The size of a pack of cigarettes, this unit contains four quartz-halogen micro-flashes designed to fire in random strobe sequences to disorient, distract, and blind opponents. Anyone facing a flash-pak receives a –4 dice pool modifier on attack tests due to the intense glare (flare compensation reduces this modifer to –2). The flash-pak has 10 charges; when activated, it uses up one charge per Combat Turn. When plugged in, it recharges one charge per 10 seconds.

Fragmentation Grenades: These are designed to spread a cloud of deadly shrapnel over a large area, seriously injuring soft targets. Their damage value reduces by –1 per meter from the point of the explosion's origin.

High Explosive Grenades: These grenades are designed to deliver a tremendous blast, penetrating even heavily armored targets. Their damage value reduces by –2 per meter from the point of the explosion's origin.

Gas Grenade: Instead of exploding, the gas grenade releases a cloud of gas over an area with a diameter of 20 meters. This is usually riot control/CS gas, but many other chemicals can be chosen (p. 255). The cloud lasts for approximately 4 Combat Turns (less in windy areas, longer in confined areas at the gamemaster's discretion).

Smoke: Similar to the gas grenade, the smoke grenade releases a cloud of smoke over an area with a diameter of 20 meters. The cloud obscures vision, applying visibility modifiers for smoke to relevant tests.

AMMUNITION, PER 10 SHOTS	DAMAGE MODIFIER	AP MODIFIER	ARMOR USED	AVAILABILITY	COST
APDS	—	–4	Ballistic	16F	70¥
Assault Cannon	As Cannon	As Cannon	Ballistic	16F	450¥
Explosive Rounds	+1	0	Ballistic	8F	50¥
EX-Explosive Rounds	+1	–1	Ballistic	12F	100¥
Flechette Rounds	+2	+5	Impact	2R	100¥
Gel Rounds	–1 (Stun)	+2	Impact	4R	30¥
Injection Darts	As Drug/Toxin	—	Impact	4R	75¥
Regular Ammo	—	—	Ballistic	2R	20¥
Stick-n-Shock	6S(e)	–half	Impact	5R	80¥
Tracer	—	—	Ballistic	5R	75¥
Taser Dart	As Taser	–half	Impact	2	50¥

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It lasts for approximately 4 Combat Turns (less in windy areas, longer in confined areas at the gamemaster's discretion).

Thermal Smoke: These are the same as smoke grenades, except that the smoke contains hot particles that obscure thermographic vision; apply the visibility modifiers for thermal smoke.

ROCKETS AND MISSILES

Rockets are projectiles consisting of a light metal or plastic body with stabilizing fins, a propulsion system (usually solid-chemical), and a warhead. They are considered "dumb" weapons because they go only where they are pointed and have no internal or external guidance capability.

Missiles are rockets that carry internal guidance and tracking systems, and are more expensive than standard "dumb" rockets. Because of their sophisticated electronics, missiles are considered "smart" weapons. The onboard electronics assist the firer in acquiring and hitting the target.

See *Resolving Rocket and Missile Fire,* p. 156, for rules on firing rockets and missiles. Rockets and missiles are set to arm when they have traveled 20 meters from their point of origin and explode on impact. This safety feature can be disabled with an Armorer + Logic (3, 5 Minutes) Extended Test. Rockets/missiles fired with an airburst link (p. 322) can be exploded in midair at a predefined location (reducing scatter to 1D6).

Anti-Vehicle: AV rockets/missiles contain a shaped-charge warhead designed to burn or punch its way through a vehicle or barrier. Though the impact causes a blast, it is limited compared to that of a High-Explosive projectile. AV attacks have an AP of –6 against vehicles, –2 against other targets.

Fragmentation: Used principally against people, the warhead discharges high-speed metal or plastic-metal fragments designed to tear into unprotected flesh. These rockets/missiles are very effective against unprotected individuals, but fairly ineffective against barriers, structures, and vehicles.

High-Explosive: HE rockets/missiles are designed to do heavy damage to a large area. Their blast pattern is similar to that of a grenade, but much larger. They are not particularly effective against hardened targets, such as vehicles or protected military structures. HE weapons use the standard grenade rules for determining the blast and its effects.

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives are primarily used to damage structures. Characters use Demolitions skill to prepare explosives, identify key or weak structural points, and focus the blast. Each hit on the Demolitions + Logic Test adds 1 to the explosive's effective rating. See *Destroying Barriers,* p. 166, for calculating an explosive's effect on a barrier.

An explosive's Damage Value is calculated as (modified) rating x the square root of the kilograms used. Damage is Physical. Like grenades, the DV is reduced the further you get from the epicenter of the blast. The Blast value for a circular explosion is –2 per meter, while the Blast value for a directional explosion (up to 60 degrees in a specific direction) is –1 per meter. When attached directly to a target, the target's armor is halved, otherwise the explosive is assumed to have an AP value of 0.

If an explosion destroys a barrier, it creates a cloud of deadly shrapnel that threatens an area far bigger than the actual blast—the Blast value is halved, effectively doubling the radius of effect.

Commercial Explosives: This covers a range of explosive compounds, both solid and liquid, composed of a high explosive chemical and a stabilizer to reduce the sensitivity and increase the stability of the material.

Plastic Explosives: Highly stable, moldable, and adhesive, plastic explosives are ideal for certain jobs—like blowing a hole in a wall. They are usually color-tinted to indicate the level of current needed to detonate them, from the black of magnetic-field induction to the chalky white of 440-volt industrial explosives.

Explosive Foam: This special plastic explosive compound has the consistency of shaving cream, is stored in an aerosol can, and can be

GRENADES	DAMAGE	AP	BLAST	AVAIL	COST
Flash-Bang	6S	–3	10m Radius	6R	30¥
Flash-Pak	Special	–	Special	4	200¥
Fragmentation	12P(f)	+5	–1/m	10F	35¥
High Explosive	10P	–2	–2/m	7F	45¥
Gas	Chemical	–	10m Radius	4 + Chemical	20¥ + Chemical
Smoke	–	–	10m Radius	4R	30¥
Thermal Smoke	–	–	10m Radius	6R	35¥

ROCKETS	DAMAGE	AP	BLAST	AVAIL	COST
Anti-Vehicle	16P	–2/–6*	–4/m	20F	1,000¥
Fragmentation	16P(f)	+5	–1/m	16F	500¥
High Explosive	14P	–2	–2/m	20F	750¥
* AVR/AVMs have an AP of –2 against people, –6 against vehicles.					

MISSILES	DAMAGE	AP	BLAST	AVAIL	COST
As Rocket	As Rocket	As Rocket	As Rocket	+5	+Sensor rating x 500¥

EXPLOSIVES, PER KILOGRAM	RATING	AVAILABILITY	COST
Commercial	3	8R	100¥
Foam	4–15	12F	Rating x 100¥
Plastic	4–15	16F	Rating x 100¥

ACCESSORIES	RATING	AVAILABILITY	COST
Detonator Cap	–	8R	75¥

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sprayed onto a surface or into a crevice. Like regular plastic explosives, explosive foam is detonated by electric current.

Detonator Cap: Contains a detonator explosive or electrical fuse with which an explosion can be initiated. Incorporates a timer and wireless receiver for remote detonation.

CLOTHING AND ARMOR

No one wants to walk the streets naked—not just because of the social implications, but also because of everyday dangers like acid rain and ultraviolet radiation.

Clothing in 2072 comes with some incredible options to enhance its wearer's quality of life. Commlinks, music players, and other electronic devices are often woven right into the fabric, powered by interwoven batteries or special fabrics with solar recharging capability. Electrochromic threads that change color with low voltage, flexible screens, woven fiberoptics, and similar features allow you to alter the color or display complex images and patterns. Combined with a wireless link, you can set your clothing to display messages and images from a library file on your commlink, change color according to the weather forecast, or even glow brighter when in the vicinity of more commlinks. More advanced ruthenium polymer systems can take on any color the user wishes in seconds, scanning the surroundings so she can melt into the background (or stand out from a crowd).

Feedback Clothing: This clothing modification creates feedback and resistance in order to allow for a tactile augmented reality experience. This technology is still rare, as full immersion solutions are cheaper and also more effective.

Leather Jacket/Duster: Whether a basic jacket or a knee-length duster the leather jacket never goes out of style and offers a modicum of protection.

ARMOR

Thanks to monofilament ballistic fabrics, spiderweave threads, ceramic-titanium composite plates, and liquid armor packs to cover non-rigid areas, modern armor is lightweight, flexible, and concealable. The following armor items offer tremendous damage resistance without slowing the wearer down or drawing too much attention. For game rules dealing with armor, see p. 160.

Actioneer Business Clothes: These discreetly armored "power suits" are still très chic among Mr. Johnsons, fixers, and executives who are looking for a little high-class protection with their neo-Japanese style. Features a concealed holster (an additional –2 Concealability modifier) inside the jacket.

Armor Clothing: The extra-resilient ballistic fiber in armor clothing offers basic protection while being indistinguishable from regular clothing.

Armor Jacket: The most popular armor solution on the streets comes in all styles imaginable. It offers good protection without catching too much attention, but don't think of wearing it to a dinner party.

Armor Vest: Modern flexible-wrap vests are designed to be worn under regular clothing without displaying any bulk.

Camouflage Suit: A full body suit with computer-designed environmental-pattern facsimiles. All have reversible day/night patterns. When worn in an appropriate environment, the suit inflicts a –2 Perception Test dice pool modifier to spot the wearer (if worn in an inappropriate environment, it incurs a +2 bonus instead). Also armored for additional protection.

Chameleon Suit: A full body suit made from ruthenium polymers supported by a sensor suite that scans the surroundings and replicates the images at the proper perspectives, providing the wearer with chameleon abilities. Apply a –4 dice pool modifier to Perception Tests to see the wearer. Also armored for additional protection.

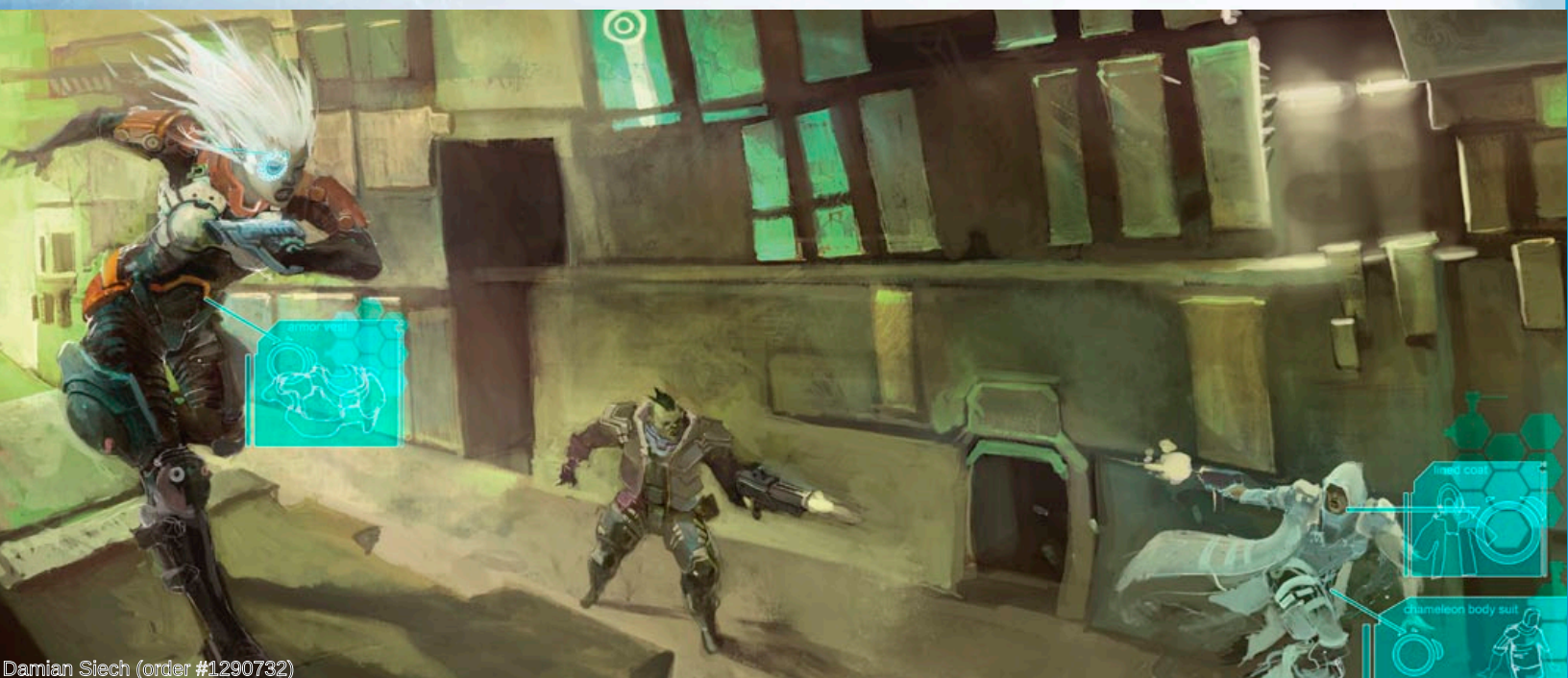
Full Body Armor: Worn by military and security personnel around the world, full body armor is often styled for intimidation as much as ease of movement. It features a padded undersuit, over which patches of liquid armor gel and extensive armor plates are attached. Though surprisingly lightweight, full body armor is certain to draw attention. In addition to an array of useful tactical gear and webbing, full body armor can be outfitted with environmental adaptation (for hot or cold environments) and/or a chemical seal to completely protect the wearer from toxic environments or attacks.

Full body armor is electronically integrated with a wireless link, and can be enhanced with additional features such as vision enhancements, tracking/RFID signals, smartlink, and more.

The armor suit's helmet incorporates a wireless link and can be equipped with any of the vision enhancements noted on p. 333.

Lined Coat: Reminiscent of the long dusters worn in the days of the Wild West, lined coats offer good protection and also provide an additional –2 Concealability modifier to items hidden underneath.

Urban Explorer Jumpsuit: Ideal for messengers, athletes, and anyone on-the-go, these colorful jumpsuits are well-ventilated for lots



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of action but surprisingly protective with light-weight densiplast and liquid reactive armor. Features a built-in music-player and biomonitor (p. 337).

ARMOR MODIFICATIONS

Worn armor can be upgraded with a range of modifications. Each of these is available in a rating between 1 and 6 (except chemical seal, which is unrated).

Chemical Protection: The application of water-resistant, nonporous, and impermeable materials helps protect the wearer against contact-vector chemical attacks (*Toxin Protection,* p. 254). For full body armor, this will also protect against inhalation-vector attacks.

Chemical Seal: Only available to full body armor, the chemical seal is an actual airtight environmental control that takes 1 Complex Action to implement. It provides complete protection against contact and inhalation vector chemicals, and has a built-in 1-hour air supply.

Fire Resistance: Fire-retardant, heat-resistant, and nonflammable materials protect the wearer against Fire damage (p. 164), adding its full rating to the armor value.

Insulation: Thermal fibers, insulating layers, and heat-retentive materials protect the wearer against Cold damage (p. 163), adding its full rating to the armor value.

Nonconductivity: Electrical insulation and grounding materials protect the wearer against Electricity damage (p. 163), adding its full rating to the armor value.

Shock Frills: These strips of "fur" are electrically charged when activated, standing on end and inflicting Electricity damage (p. 163) to anyone that comes into contact. this modification must be used with the nonconductivity modification (so that the wearer does not get shocked). Use unarmed Combat to attack with the frills. The frills hold 10 charges; when attached to a power point, they reload one charge per 10 seconds.

Thermal Damping: Designed to reduce the wearer's thermal signature, inner layers capture and retain heat while outer layers maintain a surface temperature equal to the surrounding air. Thermal damping adds its rating as bonus to Infiltration Tests to avoid thermal sensors, thermographic vision, etc.

HELMETS AND SHIELDS

Helmets and shields do not count as separate pieces of armor; instead, they modify the rating of worn armor by their rating (*Armor and Encumbrance,* p. 161).

Due to the unwieldiness of a shield, a character using one suffers a –1 dice pool modifier on any physical tests (including attacks). Shields can also be used as a melee weapon (using the Exotic Melee Weapon skill).

Shields may be upgraded with the chemical protection, fire resistance, and nonconductivity armor modifications. When combining armor and a shield, only one of them provides the modification bonus (wearer's choice).

Helmet: Helmets come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, but their common purpose is to protect the head from trauma. Helmets are often tricked out with accessories such as trode nets and visual aids.

Ballistic Shield: This large opaque shield is used for house raids and other SWAT activities. It features a clear plastic window and a built-in ladder frame along the inside so that it can be used to climb over small obstacles.

Riot Shield: The riot shield is made from clear plasteel and is mainly used for riot control.

Taser Shield: As an added crowd control measure, a taser shield can be used to shock anyone who comes into contact with it, inflicting Electricity damage (p. 163). The taser shield holds 20 charges; when attached to a power point, it reloads one charge per 10 seconds.

ELECTRONICS

For complete coverage of the Matrix attributes used by electronics equipment, see p. 222.

COMMLINK

Commlinks are the universal Matrix access device, used by everyone to be online all-the time, control all of their electronics, access their ID and accounts, and enhance their experiences with augmented and virtual reality. For an exploration of the commlink's uses, see *Commlinks* (p. 221) and *Networking* (p. 223) A range of stock commlinks and operating systems are provided.

Though variations exist according to different models, the standard commlink contains most of the following features: music player,

CLOTHING	B/I	AVAIL	COST
Clothing	0/0	–	20–100,000¥
Feedback Clothing	–	+8	+500¥
Leather Jacket	2/2	–	+200¥

ARMOR	B/I	AVAIL	COST
Actioneer Business Clothes	5/3	8	1,500¥
Armor Clothing	4/0	2	500¥
Armor Jacket	8/6	2	900¥
Armor Vest	6/4	4	600¥
Camouflage Suit	8/6	4	1,200¥
Chameleon Suit	6/4	10R	8,000¥
Full Body Armor	10/8	14R	6,000¥
Helmet	+2/+2	–	+1,000¥
Chemical Seal	–	+6	+5,000¥
Environment Adaptation	–	+3	+2,000¥
Lined Coat	6/4	2	700¥
Urban Explorer Jumpsuit	6/6	8	500¥
Helmet	–/+2	–	+50¥

ARMOR MODIFICATIONS	B/I	AVAIL	COST
Chemical Protection	–	8	Rating x 250¥
Fire Resistance	–	4	Rating x 100¥
Insulation	–	4	Rating x 150¥
Nonconductivity	–	6	Rating x 200¥
Shock Frills	–	6R	200¥
Thermal Damping	–	10F	Rating x 500¥

HELMETS AND SHIELDS	B/I	AVAIL	COST
Helmet	+1/+2	2	100¥
Ballistic Shield	+6/+4	12R	1,500¥
Riot Shield	+2/+6	6R	200¥
Taser Shield	+2/+6	10R	750¥

UNARMED COMBAT	REACH	DAMAGE	AP
Shock Frills	–	6S(e)	–half

EXOTIC MELEE WEAPON	REACH	DAMAGE	AP
Riot Shield	–	(STR/2)S	+2
Taser Armor/Shield	–	6S(e)	–half

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micro-trid/holo projector/"touch-screen" display, camcorder, microphone, image/text scanner, RFID tag reader, GPS (global positioning system, triangulated from registered local wireless nodes), roll-up Velcro-fastening keyboard, chip player, credstick reader, retractable earbuds, voice-access controls, and a shock and water-resistant case.

Sim Module: The sim module is an interface device that controls the simsense experience. It translates computer signals (simsense data) into neural signals, allowing the user to directly experience simsense programs, augmented and virtual reality (*Virtual Reality,* p. 220). A sim module must be accessed via trodes or a direct neural interface (datajack, implanted commlink, etc).

Standard (legal) sim modules only interpret cold sim (p. 226). It is possible to modify a sim module to allow the user to experience hot sim (p. 226) and BTLs (p. 259) with a Hardware + Logic (10, 1 hour) Extended Test, but this also makes the user more vulnerable to Black IC programs. As a precaution against hijacking, modified modules have a physical switch to change between cold and hot sim.

As a safety precaution, sim mods override your motor functions while you are fully immersed in VR/simsense, so that you don't blindly thrash around in the real world and potentially injure yourself or break things. This means that your physical body is limp while you're online, as if you were sleeping. This reticular activation system (RAS) override can also be disabled with a Hardware + Logic (5, 1 hour) Extended Test, at the user's own risk.

ACCESSORIES

Typically used with commlinks, these accessories are compatible with any electronic device. All are wireless-equipped. See also *Vision Enhancers,* p. 333.

COMMLINK MODEL	RESPONSE	SIGNAL	COST
Meta Link	1	2	100¥
CMT Clip	1	3	300¥
Sony Emperor	2	3	700¥
Renraku Sensei	2	4	1,000¥
Novatech Airware	3	3	1,250¥
Erika Elite	3	4	2,500¥
Hermes Ikon	4	3	3,000¥
Transys Avalon	4	4	5,000¥
Fairlight Caliban	4	5	8,000¥

STOCK OPERATING SYSTEM	FIREWALL	SYSTEM	COST
Vector Xim	1	1	200¥
Redcap Nix	1	2	400¥
Renraku Ichi	2	2	600¥
Mangadyne Deva	2	3	800¥
Iris Orb	3	3	1,000¥
Novatech Navi	3	4	1,500¥

AR Gloves: Available in all sizes and shapes, these gloves allow the user to manually interact with the Matrix, by manipulating virtual arrows, accessing a virtual keyboard or display, or remotely controlling a device. They are also equipped with force feedback, allowing for a limited tactile augmented reality experience. These gloves are also able to provide basic information regarding touched or held items, such as weight, temperature, and hardness.

Biometric Reader: For access-control to online accounts or certain devices, the proper biometric scan must be provided (*Biometrics,* p. 265). A different reader is required for each type of biometric data.

Nanopaste Trodes: This highly-sensitive high-tech nanite paste can be used to "paint" an electrode net around the head. Popular with the club-going set, nanopaste is often artistically applied in a variety of colors and designs.

Printer: Disposable full-color printers come attached to the paper container.

Satellite Link: This allows the user to uplink to communication satellites in low-Earth orbit, connecting to the Matrix from places where no local wireless networks exist. This link has a Signal rating of 8. Includes a portable satellite dish.

Simrig: An advanced version of the trode net, the simrig records simsense experience data (both physical and emotive) from the wearer. Simrigs incorporate a sim module.

Skinlink: With skinlink, a device is adapted to send and receive data transmitted through the electrical field on the surface of metahuman skin. Though limited to touch, skinlink communication has the advantage of being protected from signal interception or jamming.

Subvocal Microphone: Attached with adhesive to the center of the throat, this hard-to-spot microphone allows the user to communicate via subvocalized speech. A –4 dice pool modifier is applied to audio Perception Tests to overhear what she is saying.

Trodes: This net/headband of electrodes and ultrasound emitters enables the wearer to experience simsense and are used with a sim module. Trodes are often concealed under headbands, hats, or wigs.

ACCESSORY	DEVICE RATING	AVAIL	COST
AR Gloves	3	–	250¥
Biometric Reader	3	4	200¥
Nanopaste Trodes	3	2	100¥
Printer	1	–	5¥
Satellite Link	3	4	500¥
Sim Module	3	–	100¥+
Modifi ed for BTL/hot sim	3	4F	250¥+
Simrig	3	12	1,000¥
Skinlink	3	6	50¥
Subvocal Microphone	3	6	50¥
Trodes	3	–	50¥

MISC. ELECTRONICS	DEVICE RATING	AVAIL	COST
Electronic Paper	1	–	20¥
Holo Projector	3	–	200¥

RFID TAGS (PER 20)	DEVICE RATING	AVAIL	COST
Standard RFID Tags	1	–	1¥
Security Tags	3	4	100¥
Sensor Tags	3	4	500¥ (sensor not included)
Stealth Tags	3	6	5¥

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MISC. ELECTRONICS

All these items are wireless-equipped.

Electronic Paper: This electronic sheet is roughly the size of a piece of paper and can be folded to fit into a pocket. It digitally displays any input data and can act as a customizable touchscreen controller.

Holo Projector: This device projects a trideo hologram into any open space within 5 meters. Though holos can be quite realistic, a Perception + Intuition (2) Test is usually sufficient to distinguish a hologram from a real object or person.

RFID TAGS

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags form an integral part of every product that leaves the production line. Ranging in size from microscopic to the size of a price tag, tags have a stick-to-anything adhesive backing and can sometimes be difficult to spot. Tags are programmed to transmit small amounts of data: serial numbers, product specs, and pricing (for distribution and retail); arrows and advertisements (for geo-tagging locations and objects, leaving a virtual AR message for anyone who comes by); ID (for employee tracking and access control); owner contact information (in case an item is stolen); vehicle registration; etc. Tags can be used as tracking devices, periodically transmitting to local scanners or to the wireless Matrix (along with the local access point's GPS data), though their limited range makes them useless in dead zones. RFID Tag data is often fixed, but in some cases is reprogrammable. Tags are readable by anyone with a commlink. They have a Signal rating of 1.

The physical location of a tag can be found with a radio signal scanner (p. 334). Tag data can be erased with a tag eraser (p. 330) or programmed with an Edit program (which is what runners do to create fake tags). Fixed tag data can only be altered if the tag is physically accessed, requiring a Hardware + Logic (5, 1 minute) Extended Test. Data on a tag may be encrypted.

Security Tags: Security-conscious megacorps often implant security tags in their salarymen and valued citizens (usually in the hand or arm). These tags are used to monitor employees' workplace activities, grant clearance to authorized devices and areas (and alert security when detected in unauthorized areas), and provide a means of tracking in case of abduction. These same tags are also used on criminals, both in the joint and when released on parole/monitoring conditions. Parents and schools also use them to track students.

Security tags are hardened so that they cannot be erased with a tag eraser. Tags can be easily implanted under the skin at no Essence Cost. Removing them requires a First Aid + Logic (8, 1 minute) Extended Test. Many security systems will trigger an alert if a security tag in their bounds is deactivated.

Sensor Tags: These tags are equipped with single rating 1 sensor (*Visual Sensors & Imaging Devices,* p. 332; *Audio Sensors,* p. 333; and *Sensors,* p. 333) and are programmed to monitor a certain object/person/environment and respond to certain conditions. Sensor tags are used for diagnostic purposes in various devices, vehicle components, and cyberware, as well as to monitor temperature in food shipments, and many similar purposes.

Stealth Tags: Stealth tags are encoded to remain silent and only respond to transmissions with the proper passcodes. They cannot be located with a commlink or bug scanner (unless the codes are known). They typically use special frequencies and other tricks to avoid detection. These tags are also disguised so as not to look like RFID tags (an additional –2 Concealability). Stealth tags are often used as a backup for security tags, and may be implanted in the same way.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COUNTERMEASURES

Headjammer: The headjammer is used by security personnel to prevent the use of headware commlinks and communication systems. When the headjammer is attached to a person's head and activated, it works in the same way as a jammer, but its effects are limited to that person's head.

Jammer: This device floods the airwaves with electromagnetic jamming signals to block out wireless and radio communication. The jammer automatically jams any device with a Signal rating lower than its Device rating. The area jammer affects a spherical area—its rating is reduced by 1 for every 5 meters from the center (similar to the blast rules for grenades). The directional jammer affects a conical area with a 30-degree spread—its rating is reduced by 1 for every 20 meters from the center. Walls and other obstacles may prevent the jamming signal from spreading or reduce its effect (gamemaster's discretion).

Micro-Transceiver: This classic short-range communication device is perfect for discreet operations. The micro-transceiver consists of an earbud and adhesive subvocal microphone (p. 328). The transceiver's Signal rating is equal to its Device rating.

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Tag Eraser: This handheld device creates a strong electromagnetic field that burns out RFID tags. The eraser must be brought within 1 centimeter of the target, but will automatically burn any non-hardened tag out, no test required. The eraser's electromagnetic field is also capable of erasing/scrambling other non-optical electronic circuit systems at the gamemaster's discretion. The eraser cannot burn out security RFID chips (p. 329).

White Noise Generator: This devices creates a field of random noise, masking the sounds within its area. All Perception Tests to overhear a conversation within 10 meters of a white noise generator receive a negative dice pool modifier equal to the generator's rating. If more than one generator is in use, only count the highest rating.

DATACHIPS AND SOFTWARE

Storing data is rarely a concern in 2072, as omnipresent wireless systems allow a tremendously fast and always-available transfer of information, games, music, trideo, and simsense, and other data between devices, whenever and wherever a user wants them. Thanks to modern tech, size and transfer rates are no longer an issue.

Software can be purchased online or on hardcopy chip. The programs commonly used for Matrix activities are detailed under *Programs,* p. 232.

Datachip: For those occasions when you want to transfer data by physical means—like bringing those stolen weapon specs to Mr. Johnson, when you wouldn't trust a Matrix transfer—optical memory chips (OMCs) can hold hundreds of gigapulses of data in a small finger-sized chip, accessible by any electronic device.

Datasoft: Datasofts encompass a wide variety of information files, from databases to textbooks to literature.

Mapsoft: Mapsoft programs feature detailed information on a particular area, from streets to business/residential listings to topographical, census, GPS, and environmental data. An interactive interface allows you to quickly determine the best routes/directions, locate the nearest spot of your choice, or create your own customized maps. The mapsoft automatically updates itself with the latest data and will retrieve correlating online data (GridGuide traffic reports, restaurant menus, etc.) as necessary.

Matrix Programs: Typical Matrix Programs include common use user utilities, hacking suites, agents and IC. Rules for these can be found on pp. 232–234.

Tutorsofts: These virtual private tutors aid the user in learning a specific skill. The tutorsoft makes Instruction Tests with a dice pool equal to its rating x 2. Tutorsofts are available for all skills except Magic and Resonance skills.

COMMUNICATIONS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Headjammer (Rating 1–6)	6R	Rating x 250¥
Jammer, Area (Rating 1–10)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 500¥
Jammer, Directional (Rating 1–10)	(Rating x 2)F	Rating x 500¥
Micro-Transceiver (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 2	Rating x 200¥
Tag Eraser	6F	150¥
White Noise Generator (Rating 1–6)	Rating +1	Rating x 50¥

SKILLSOFTS

A skillsoft program is a programmed/recorded skill—as in, a person's knowledge and memory (including "muscle memory"). When used in conjunction with the proper hardware or cyberware, skillsofts allow users to know and do things they never otherwise learned. When a skill test is called for, the character may use the skillsoft rating in place of an appropriate skill. If the character already possesses the skill, use whichever rating is higher.

Since skillsofts prevent users from gaining experience on their own, they are not useful as a learning tool. They are highly favored, however, by corporations interested in cheap labor (no need to spend years of education on technicians when you can simply equip some grunt with a knowsoft).

Tests made while using a skillsoft may not be boosted with Edge.

Activesofts: Activesofts replicate skills that require physical activity, including all Combat, Physical, Social, Technical, and Vehicle skills (but not Magic or Resonance skills). Recording and programming physical skills is more difficult, so Activesofts are limited in rating. Activesofts must be accessed with a skillwire system (p. 342); the rating of the activesoft is limited by the skillwire system's rating.

Knowsoft: Knowsofts replicate Knowledge skills, actively overwriting the user's knowledge with their own data. Knowsofts must be accessed with a direct neural link (either a sim module or datajack).

Linguasoft: Linguasofts replicate language skills, allowing the user to speak a foreign language as fluently as her native language. Linguasofts may also be used as real-time translation programs. Linguasofts must be accessed with a direct neural link (either a sim module or datajack).

SIMSENSE

Simsense is the pinnacle of modern entertainment. Simsense programs are created when a simrig records a person's sensory input (all five senses) plus their emotive response. These recordings may then be played back and experienced by another user with a sim module. Simsense has become the predominant medium in the entertainment industry, with "simflicks" raking in billions of nuyen and a range of celebrity simsense stars capturing the public's imaginations and desires.

Sim programs range from special-effects laden action blockusters and steamy romances to completely programmed anime specials to porn and underground crime and snuff sims. Some sims have a poly-point-of-view feature, allowing you to switch back and forth to experience the action through different performers.

BTL Recordings: Conventional simsense recordings include signal peak controllers to protect the spectator from physical brain damage, as well as to reduce the addiction qualities of jacked up high-amplitude signals and direct stimulation of the pleasure centers of the brain. Better-than-life programs don't have these controllers, promising the illusion of a better life to all those who've been chewed up and spit out by society.

Continuous exposure to BTL leads to psychological addiction and unpleasant side effects like catatonia, multiple personality disor-

MATRIX PROGRAMS	AVAILABILITY	COST (UP TO RATING 3)	COST (UP TO RATING 6)
Common Use	—	Rating x 50¥	Rating x 100¥
Hacking	(Rating x 2)R	Rating x 500¥	Rating x 1,000¥
Agents/IC /Pilot	Rating x 3	Pilot rating x 1,000¥ Pilot	Rating x 2,500¥
System	—	Rating x 200¥	Rating x 500¥
Firewall	—	Rating x 200¥	Rating x 500¥
Autosoft s (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 2	Rating x 500¥	Rating x 1000¥

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der, amnesia, flashbacks, mania, synesthesia (sensory crossover), and, in some cases, death due to malnutrition, dehydration, or suicide. (For more details, see p. 257.) BTLs are usually programmed to burn-out or self-erase after one use, sending you back to the dealer for more.

Virtual Reality Gaming: The use of simsense technology has led to a whole new generation of games, linking the player directly into a true first person shooter perspective (Ultra Mario, Dunkelzahn's Quest XII, Sahara Soldier, Shadowrun MMORPG) or hovering over the action (SimCiv, EuroWar 2032, Final MageCraft). Most games offer both a SinglePlayer and Matrix MultiPlayer option (the latter for a monthly fee). Many of them offer not only a gaming challenge but also a perfect alternative to the dismal existence of most people's real lives.

ARE SOFTWARE

Augmented reality has led to the development of AR environment (ARE) software that alters the user's perception of reality, allowing the user to customize the "world" they live in. ARE programs are continuously connected to the user's senses as well as the Matrix, allowing them to react to changes in milliseconds. The experience is only as good as the user's equipment, of course, so a sim module is mandatory for the more sophisticated programs. ARE users are noticeable from the odd (and sometimes dangerous) behavior patterns that come from living in a private world that only they can see, hear, etc. Like simsense, the danger exists that ARE users are in imminent danger of losing oneself to their fictional, illusionary dreamworld—many users in fact run their AREs 24-7, bringing "escapism" to a new level.

Virtual Surround Music: This software plays music in a way that mimics an outside source. When the user changes her position and facing, the way in which she perceives the music changes accordingly. Any style and arrangement is possible, from omnipresent background music to the throbbing bassline of surround-sound club-level subwoofers to the front-row of a stadium concert. If you're particularly inventive, you can try out what your favorite song sounds like when played at 10,000 decibels from 20 kilometers away.

Wall Space: Choose from a massive library of famous paintings to decorate your walls, so that you and your subscribed guests will have the pleasure of enjoying those classics as if they were really there. Photos, posters, video, and trideo can also be uploaded and projected in customizable sizes (including sounds, smells, and tactile perception like warmth and air movement). Size does not matter—you can plaster the walls of skyscrapers with the likeness of your favorite idoru with a snap of your fingers.

Virtual Pet: Simulate your favorite pet without having to feed or otherwise care for it (of course, if you enjoy the experience, you can enable a special option that lets the pet react to the amount of care you spend on it). Virtual pets include limited tactile experience (you can't grab it, but stroking is possible and you can feel its weight when carrying it on your shoulders), and you can have it with you at all times without worrying that it will run away or get run over by a car. All kinds of animals, critters, and fantastic creatures are possible in any sizes and numbers. You want a swarm of little pink flying elephants? No problem.

Virtual Person: Simulate your favorite person! Whether it's your ex-boyfriend or your favorite sim starlet, just access or upload their personal data, modify it as you see fit, and project the person into your life just like the real deal. This program only simulates one person at a time, and the realism in behavior depends on the amount of data given as well as the processing power of your commlink—best results are achieved with a growing assortment of downloadable sim-persons (including sim stars like Tracy Monroe and Neko-Katz).

Virtual Weather: Don't like the weather? Change it! Move the clouds or make them disappear, block out the sun or put it exactly where you want it. Change temperature to suit your needs (at your own risk, as the actual temperature doesn't change, just your perception of it). Make the rain go away or have it pour down on your miserable self whenever you want it. The program even allows limited alterations of the ambient brightness—you can always turn day into night, but in order to turn night into day, special equipment like low-light vision is required.

Miracle Shooter™: This multiplayer online roleplaying game from Ares Games takes place in reality. When you log in, the features of your chosen character are overlaid on your personal appearance, visible to all the other characters in the game. Shoot monsters to gain experience points plus cash to buy new guns and upgrades, or become the member of a faction in order to challenge players of other factions to battles. This game has already led to a number of freak accidents (for example, one player jumped from a footbridge right in front of a moving train); meanwhile, other software companies are rolling out their competing releases.

ID AND CREDSTICKS

ID and Credsticks are discussed in *Identification, Please,* p. 266.

Certified Credstick: The modern version of cash or bearer bonds, certified credsticks are not registered to any specific person—the electronic funds encoded on it belongs to whomever holds it. Certified cred requires no ID or authorization to transfer or use. These items are popular among those who prefer to leave no papertrail. The maximum amount of funds that can be carried on a credstick is determined by its type (see the Certified Credstick Table, below).

Credit Account: A credit account is an online banking account that can be accessed at any time via your commlink. Transactions require verification such as a passcode, a correct originating access ID (p. 225), and/or biometric authorization. All transactions are en-

STORAGE MEDIA	AVAILABILITY	COST
Datachip	—	1¥

DATA SOFTWARE	AVAILABILITY	COST
Datasofts (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 10¥
Mapsoft s (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 5¥
Tutorsofts (Rating 1–5)	—	Rating x 500¥

SKILLSOFTS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Activesofts (Rating 1–4)	8	Rating x 10,000
Knowsofts (Ratings 1–5)	4	Rating x 2,000
Linguasofts (Rating 1–5)	2	Rating x 500

ID/CREDSTICKS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Certified Credstick	—	25¥
Fake License (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 100¥
Fake SIN (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 1,000¥

SIMSENSE	AVAILABILITY	COST
Sim Recordings	—	5–200¥+
BTL Recordings	4F	20–200¥+
VR Games	—	50¥

ARE PROGRAMS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Virtual Surround Music	—	1¥ per simchip
Wall Space	—	50¥
Virtual Pet	—	100¥
Virtual Person	—	150¥
Virtual Weather	—	100¥
Miracle Shooter™	—	50¥ + 10¥ per month

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crypted (Rating 6+). Each account must be registered to a particular SIN, unless the account is handled via an underworld banking service or anonymous "offshore" bank (each with their own risks), and has a monthly fee (included in a character's lifestyle costs).

Fake License: For those who don't want to go through the standard legal channels, a fake license for all kinds of restricted items (*Legality,* p. 313) or activities (hunting, concealed carry, spellcasting, etc.)—as appropriate to the jurisdiction—can be obtained through the black market. Each type of item/activity requires a separate license. Though a digitally-signed electronic license can be carried on a commlink, licenses are also stored in (and verified through) various databases online. Each license is assigned to a particular ID/SIN (character's choice). Use the fake license's rating in an Opposed Test against the verification system's rating.

Fake System Identification Number (SIN): The SIN and its equivalents are what makes a mere metahuman being into a real person of the digital age. You get it when you are born and carry it with you until you die. It opens certain doors to you, and leaves others closed forever. Not to have it means to stand outside the system—making you into a non-entity, with restricted or non-existent civil rights. Shadowrunners only have a real SIN if they have the SINner quality (p. 95). Most runners don't have one, either because they were unfortunate enough to be born poor or because they lost it in the Crash of '64.

Getting by without a SIN can be a pain, so runners settle for the next best thing—a fake. If it's high quality, nobody will ever recognize the difference. If it's low quality, you'd better not use it in high security settings. The rating of the fake SIN is used in Opposed Tests against the ratings of any verification systems trying to discern its authenticity.

Just like a real SIN, anytime you use a fake SIN for legitimate activity you will leave a datatrail in your wake. This means that runners often go through SINs like candy, discarding them when they've been used for traceable activity or begin to accumulate a profile that could be a detriment. Most runners will in fact have two or more fake SINs available at a time: one for legal activity like paying rent and going shopping, another for less savory activities, and possibly a third to be used only when you need to get out of town fast and undetected.

For more details on SINs, see *Identification, Please,* p. 266.

TOOLS

Building and repairing items requires the tools to do the job. Tools must be bought separately for their specific skills (for example, Automotive Mechanic tools, Armorer tools, or Hardware tools). A *kit* is portable and contains the basic gear to make repairs. A *shop* is transportable with a large vehicle. A *facility* is immobile because of the bulky and heavy machines involved. Shops and facilities both are stocked with standard spare parts.

The gamemaster decides when a kit, shop, or facility is necessary for a particular build/repair job, and thus whether or not to apply an inadequate or unavailable tools dice pool modifier (see the Build/Repair Table, p. 138). At the gamemaster's discretion, certain specialized tools or unusual parts may need to be acquired separately.

TOOLS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Kit	–	500¥
Shop	8	5,000¥
Facility	12	100,000¥

VISUAL SENSORS & IMAGING DEVICES

From hip sunglasses to protective goggles to chic monocles, basic vision enhancers come in several common forms. All such devices have wireless capability, though they may also be directly wired via fiberoptic cable (except contacts). The ratings of vision sensors and imaging devices equals the number of vision enhancements that can be applied to the device.

Binoculars: Typically handheld, these come with built-in vision magnification. Available in optical and electronic versions.

Camera: The most common sensor, cameras can capture still photos, video, or trideo (including sound). Cameras may also be upgraded with vision enhancements (p. 333). Micro versions are available at Rating 1 (Capacity 1) only.

Contact lenses: The most recent generation display devices are worn directly on the eyes. They are nearly undetectable but offer little space for enhancements.

Goggles: Relatively large and robust devices, googles cover the eyes and are strapped to the head so they are hard to dislodge.

Glasses: Usually lightweight frames worn on the bridge of the nose, numerous styles are available.

Monocles: These are worn on a headband or helmet with a flip-down arm, or on a chain.

Imaging scopes: These vision enhancers and display devices are usually mounted on weapons (See *Mounts,* p. 311 though they are detachable.

OPTICAL DEVICES

These optical aids have many uses, one of which is enabling a magician to obtain optical (non-electronic) line of sight for spellcasting from cover. Spellcasting targeted through optics this way suffers a –3 dice pool modifier. These devices cannot take vision enhancements.

Endoscope: This is a 1-meter fiberoptic cable, of which the first 20 centimeters are made up of myomeric rope (p. 337) and an optical lens on each side. Allows the user to look around corners, through door slits, or into narrow spaces.

Mage Sight Goggles: These heavy goggles are connected to a myomeric rope (p. 337) wrapped around a fiberoptic cable that ends in an optical lens. The rope is available in lengths of 10, 20, or 30 meters.

Periscope: An L-shaped tube with two mirrors, the periscope allows the user to look (or shoot) around corners.

VISION SENSORS AND IMAGING DEVICES	CAPACITY	AVAILABILITY	COST
Binoculars (Rating 1–3)	1–3	–	Rating x 50¥
Binoculars, Optical	–	–	50¥
Camera (trideo) (Rating 1–6)	1–6 / [1]	–	Rating x 100¥
Contact Lenses (Rating 1–3)	1–3	6	Rating x 50¥
Glasses (Rating 1–4)	1–4	–	Rating x 25¥
Goggles (Rating 1–6)	1–6	–	Rating x 50¥
Monocle (Rating 1–4)	1–4	4	Rating x 25¥
Endoscope	–	8	250¥
Periscope	[1]	3	50¥
Mage Sight Goggles	[1]	12R	2,000¥

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VISION ENHANCEMENTS

A number of options are available for installation in visual sensors and imaging devices.

Flare Compensation: This protects the user from blinding flashes of light as well as simple glare. Flare compensation also protects users with thermographic vision from heat flashes and glare from infrared lighting. It eliminates the vision modifiers for glare.

Image Link: The image link either displays visual information (text, pictures, movies) in the field of vision or projects it onto the user's retina with a laser. Visual data is typically AR data received by the user's PAN, but other input is also accepted.

Low-Light Vision: This accessory allows the user to see normally in light levels as low as starlight. Total darkness still renders the user as blind as an unmodified person.

Smartlink: This accessory interacts with a smartgun system (p. 322) to project the weapon's angle of fire into the user's vision, centering red crosshairs where the user is pointing and highlighting perceived targets. The smartgun's laser rangefinder also calculates and displays the distance to the target. Additional data from the weapon, such as the ammunition level, heat buildup, and stress can also be displayed. Requires an image link.

Thermographic Vision: This enhancement enables vision in the infrared portion of the spectrum, enabling the user to see heat patterns. Thermographic vision is a very practical way to spot living beings in areas of total darkness (even though it is difficult to fully determine their type and appearance), to check if a motor or machine has been running lately, and to track heat footprints.

Ultrasound: The ultrasound accessory consists of an emitter that sends out continuous ultrasonic pulses and a receiver that picks up the echoes of these pulses to create a topographic ultrasound "map" that is laid over (or replaces) the user's normal visual sensory input. While ultrasound vision is perfect to "see" textures, calculate exact distances, and pick up things otherwise invisible to the naked eye (like people cloaked by an Invisibility spell), it is less adept at other tasks like perceiving colors and brightness. It cannot penetrate materials like glass that would be transparent to optical sensors.

The ultrasound sensor can be set to a passive mode, in which it does not emit ultrasonic pulses but still picks up ultrasound from outside sources (such as motion sensors or someone else's ultrasound sensors on active mode)

VISION ENHANCEMENTS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Low Light	+4	+100¥
Flare Compensation	+2	+50¥
Image Link	—	+25¥
Smartlink	+4R	+500¥
Thermographic	+6	+100¥
Ultrasound	+8	+1,000¥
Vision Enhancement (Rating 1–3)	+4	+(Rating x 100)¥
Vision Magnification	+2	+100¥

AUDIO ENHANCEMENTS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Audio Enhancement (Rating 1–3)	+2	+ (Rating x 100)¥
Select Sound Filter (Rating 1–3)	+8	+(Rating x 200)¥
Spatial Recognizer	+6	+100¥

Vision Enhancement: Vision enhancement gives the character sharper vision. It adds its rating as a positive dice pool modifier to the user's visual Perception Tests.

Vision Magnification: This zoom function magnifies vision by up to 50 times, allowing distant targets to be seen clearly. It is available as both an optical (ideal for spellcasting at distant targets) or electronic (with real-time image correction) enhancement. For rules on using vision magnification in ranged combat, see p. 150.

AUDIO SENSORS & ENHANCERS

There are three common types of audio devices and sensors. The rating of such devices equals the number of audio enhancements they can be fitted with.

Earbuds: Sophisticated hearing enhancers in the form of ergonomic ear plugs.

Headphones: A full headset with adjustable strap, headband, or attached to a helmet.

Microphone: A standard omnidirectional audio pick-up and recording. Usually incorporated/connected to a commlink or other recording device. Micro versions are available at Rating 1 (Capacity 1) only.

AUDIO ENHANCEMENTS

Audio enhancements are commonly available as earbuds or headphones. Each will play audio input from AR or other sources.

Audio Enhancement: Audio enhancement allows the user to receive a broader spectrum of audio frequencies (including those outside the user's normal audible spectrum, like high and low frequencies) while experiencing finer discrimination of nuances and blocking out distracting background noise. Audio enhancement adds its Rating as a positive modifier to the user's Listening Perception Tests.

Select Sound Filter: This filter allows the user to block out background noise and focus on specific sounds or patterns of sounds (including sound, word, or speech pattern recognition). Each rating point allows the user to select a single sound group (such as a conversation or the breathing of a guard dog) and focus on it. The user can only actively listen to one group at a time, but she may choose to record the others for later playback or set them to triggered monitoring (such as sounding an alert if there is a variation in the breathing pattern of the dog, or if the conversation brings up a certain topic).

Spatial Recognizer: This accessory pinpoints the direction from which a sound is coming. The user receives a bonus of +2 dice pool modifier on all Perception Tests to find the source of a specific sound.

SENSORS

Thanks to ubiquitous computing and the propagation of wireless technology, sensors are found almost everywhere. Cheaply-produced by the billions, miniaturization and integration with other systems have made them often difficult to spot.

Sensor packages combine several types of sensor into one unit. RFID Sensor tags are described on p. 329; microsensors are the size of a coin or smaller and are used on micro-drones or often disguised as other items; handheld sensors are easily carried in the palm; mounted sensors are lunchbox-sized; drone and vehicle sensors are self-explanatory.

AUDIO SENSORS AND AND ENHANCERS	CAPACITY	AVAILABILITY	COST
Earbuds (Rating 1–3)	1–3	—	Rating x 10¥
Headphones (Rating 1–3)	1–3	—	Rating x 50¥
Microphone (Rating 1–6)	1–6 / [1]	—	Rating x 50¥

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Each package has a sensor range that indicates the limits of the sensor's reach (see the Signal Rating Table, p. 222), though some specific sensors have their own maximum ranges. Each sensor package also has a Capacity rating; the total Capacity rating of the individual sensors may not exceed the package's Capacity rating.

In the case of vehicles, their Sensor rating indicates the Sensor package rating installed in the vehicle. Vehicle sensors, and indeed sensors in any package, may be used individually in which case they generally have a default rating equal to the package's Sensor rating.

The Sensor package rating should be used for most situations and is equal to the average rating of all the sensors in a package (rounded up). Sensors that do not possess ratings are treated as if they had a rating equal to the package's rating for this purpose only. Under certain circumstances, a gamemaster may decide that certain sensors in a package may not apply, or that only one specific type of sensor is relevant to the situation at hand. Some sensors might just not be suitable for the given task, may be pointing into the wrong direction, and so on. Alternately, the character may elect to use only one sensor for a particular job. In either case, consider the applicable sensor to have the same rating as the vehicle's Sensor rating, though if the character has previously modified the sensor package, the individual sensor may use its own rating (if higher.) If the character desires to use more than one sensor but not the full package (i.e., a microphone and camera) use only the highest rating.

Atmosphere Sensor: Weather forecasts are notoriously untrustworthy (thanks to pollution, the Awakening, and other factors), but atmospheric sensors can keep you from getting caught in the rain.

Camera: See *Visual Sensors and Imaging Devices,* p. 332.

Cyberware Scanner: This millimeter-wave scanner is primarily intended to detect cyber-implants, but can be used to identify other contraband as well. Maximum range 15 meters. See p. 262.

SENSOR PACKAGES	CAPACITY	SIGNAL
RFID	1	0
Micro	1	2
Handheld/Minidrone	3	3
Mounted/Small Drone	5	4
Medium Drone	6	4
Large Drone	8	4
Vehicle	12	5

Directional Microphone: Allows the user to listen in on distant conversations. Solid objects as well as loud sounds outside the line of eavesdropping block the reception. Maximum range is 100 meters.

Geiger Counter: This sensor picks up the amount of radioactivity surrounding it.

Laser Microphone: This sensor bounces a laser beam against a solid object like a windowpane, reads the vibrational variations of the surface, and translates them into the sounds that are occurring on the other side of the surface. Use Perception + Device rating for the listener's Perception Test. Maximum range is 100 meters.

Laser Range Finder: This simple sensor emits a laser beam that is reflected off a target's surface and picked up by a detector to calculate the exact distance.

MAD Scanner: The MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection) scanner is used to detect weapons and concentrations of metal. It has a maximum range of 5 meters. See p. 262.

Microphone: See *Audio Sensors,* p. 333.

Motion Sensor: This sensor uses a mix of ultrasound and low-power infrared to detect motion and drastic changes in the ambient temperature. See p. 261.

Olfactory Scanner: The olfactory sensor picks up and analyzes the molecules in the air. It works in the same way as the olfactory booster (p. 339).

Radio Signal Scanner: The radio signal scanner locates and locks in on radio traffic from RFID tags, wireless networks, and other transmitters, and is especially useful at capturing signals originating from nearby. The scanner can also measure a signal's strength and pinpoint

SENSOR FUNCTIONS	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Atmosphere Sensor (Rating 1–3)	[1]	2	Rating x 25¥
Cyberware Scanner (Rating 1–6)	[1]	4R	Rating x 75¥
Directional Microphone	[1]	4	50¥
Geiger Counter	[1]	4	50¥
Laser Microphone (Rating 1–6)	[2]	8R	Rating x 50¥
Laser Range Finder	[1]	8	100¥
MAD Scanner (Rating 1–3)	[1]	6R	Rating x 75¥
Motion Sensor	[1]	4	50¥
Olfactory Sensor (Rating 1–6)	[1]	4	Rating x 500¥
Radio Signal Scanner (Rating 1–6)	[1]	4R	Rating x 25¥

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its location. Treat the scanner as if it were a Sniffer program (p. 234) equal to its rating; see p. 229 for rules on detecting and intercepting wireless signals.

SECURITY DEVICES

For more details on security systems, see p. 259.

Key Lock: Even in the wireless world, there are still some mechanical key locks around—some for nostalgia, some for the simple fact that many burglars don't expect them, and others because they haven't been replaced within the last 60 years. For more details, see *Locks,* p. 262.

Maglock: Maglocks are electronic locks with a variety of access control options, from keypads to passcards to biometrics. For more information, see *Maglocks,* p. 263.

Restraints: Standard metal restraints (with mechanical or wireless-controlled lock) have Armor/Structure ratings of 12 (*Barriers,* p. 166). Modern plasteel restraints that are heat-fused and remain in place until the subject is cut free have Armor/Structure ratings of 15. Disposable plastic straps that are lightweight and easy to carry in bundles have Armor/Structure ratings of 6. Containment manacles are attached to a prisoner's wrists or ankles to prevent her from extending a cyber-implant weapon, and have Armor/Structure ratings of 12.

BREAKING AND ENTERING TOOLS

Rules for typical security systems and devices can be found on pp. 259–264.

Autopicker: This lockpick gun is a quick and effective way of bypassing mechanical locks. The autopicker's rating added as a dice pool modifier to the Locksmith + Agility Test to pick the lock (p. 135), or used in place of Locksmith skill if the character lacks it.

SECURITY DEVICES	AVAIL	COST
Key Lock (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 10¥
Maglock (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 100¥
Keypad or Card-reader	—	+50¥
Anti-Tamper Circuits (Rating 1–4)	—	+(Rating x 100¥)
Biometric Reader (per reader)	+4	+200¥

RESTRAINTS	AVAIL	COST
Metal	—	20¥
Plasteel	6R	50¥
Plastic (per 10)	—	1¥
Containment Manacles	6R	200¥

B&E GEAR	AVAIL	SIGNAL
Autopicker (Rating 1–6)	8R	Rating x 200¥
Cellular Glove Molder (Rating 1–3)	12F	Rating x 200¥
Chisel	—	20¥
Keycard Copier (Rating 1–6)	8F	Rating x 300¥
Lockpick Set	6R	300¥
Maglock Passkey (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 2,000¥
Miniwelder	2	250¥
Monofilament Chainsaw	4	300¥
Sequencer (Rating 1–6)	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 200¥
Wire clippers	—	25¥

EXOTIC MELEE WEAPON	REACH	DAMAGE	AP
Monofilament Chainsaw	1	5P	–2

Cellular Glove Molder: This device will take a finger or palm print and mold a "sleeve" that can be worn to mimic the print (*Print Scanners,* p. 263).

Chisel: The chisel doubles the user's effective Strength when breaking in a door or similar obstacle by force.

Keycard Copier: The keycard copier allows the user to copy a stolen keycard in seconds before returning it to its owner. A new keycard can then be manufactured with a Hardware + Logic (8, 1 hour) Extended Test. When used, the forged keycard uses its rating in an Opposed Test against the maglock (*Maglocks*, p. 263). Note that some security systems will note the unusual usage of duplicate keys (such as using a forged key to get inside a lab when the original key was used to get in recently and has not left yet).

Lockpick Set: These mechanical burglary devices are used to overcome key locks. They are considered necessary tools for the task.

Maglock Passkey: The passkey can be inserted into a cardreader's maglock, fooling it into believing that a legitimate passkey has been inserted. See *Maglocks,* p. 263.

Maglock Sequencer: An electronic device required to defeat keypad-maglocks (*Maglocks,* p. 263).

Miniwelder: This portable device creates a small electric arc to melt metals and other materials in order to separate them or weld them together. Its power supply provides it with a running time of 30 minutes. While creating an intense heat, the arc is much too small to make a good weapon (you might as well try to use a lighter). When used to cut through barriers, its Damage Value is 15.

Monofilament Chainsaw: The top of each chain segment on this portable motorized saw is covered with monofilament wire. Ideal for cutting through trees, doors, and other immovable objects, it is too unwieldy to make a good melee weapon (use Exotic Melee Weapon skill and apply a –2 dice pool modifier on attack and parry tests). When used against barriers, double its Damage Value.

Wire Clippers: Wire clippers double the user's effective Strength when cutting wire.

DRUGS (PER DOSE)	AVAIL	COST
Cram	2R	10¥
Deepweed	8F	400¥
Jazz	2R	75¥
Kamikaze	4R	100¥
Long Haul	—	50¥
Nitro	2R	50¥
Novacoke	2R	10¥
Psyche	—	200¥
Zen	4R	5¥

UTILITY CHEMICALS (PER DOSE)	AVAIL	COST
Glue Sprayer	2	150¥
Thermite Burning Bar	16R	500¥

COMBAT CHEMICALS (PER DOSE)	AVAIL	COST
CS/Tear Gas	4R	20¥
Gamma-Scopolamine	14F	200¥
Narcoject	8R	50¥
Nausea Gas	6R	25¥
Neuro-Stun	12R	60¥
Pepper Punch	—	5¥
Seven-7	20F	1,000¥

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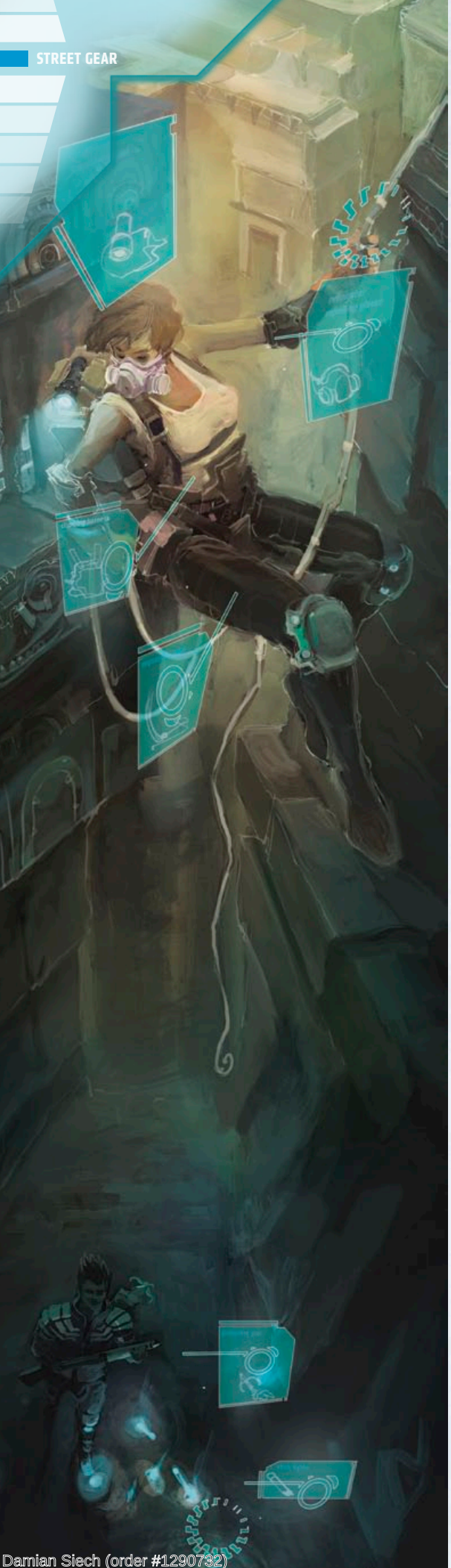

CHEMICALS AND DRUGS

Rules for combat chemicals, drugs, and toxic substances are on pp. 254, 256, 335.

Glue Sprayer: This fast-drying aerosol superglue allows the user to quickly seal off a portal (such as a door or window). The glue takes 1 Combat Turn to harden. Anyone attempting to force open the door must make a Strength + Body Opposed Test against the glue's dice pool of 10.

Thermite Burning Bar: Thermite gel is an incendiary material that burns at extremely high temperatures. It is applied with the help of a burning bar—a rod of thermite and oxygen mounted on a handle and in a frame—that can be used to melt holes in iron, steel, and even plasteel. The thermite burning bar inflicts Fire Damage with a DV of 20. It cannot be used as a weapon, as it must be carefully applied.

SURVIVAL GEAR

Common survival gear includes the following:

Chemsuit: This slick, impermeable garment is worn over other clothes and provides chemical protection equal to its rating (*Chemical Protection,* p. 327). If worn with chemical-resistant armor, only the highest chemical protection rating applies.

Climbing Gear: Includes an ascent/descent harness, gloves, carabiners, crampons, and so forth.

Diving Gear: This underwater equipment includes a partial face mask with snorkel, a breathing regulator, an air tank with 2 hours of air, a wet suit, and a buoyancy compensator (an inflatable vest that can be used to send a diver to the surface when she can't get there on her own). The regulator and air tank protect against inhalation vector toxins just like a gas mask. The wet suit provides a +1 dice pool bonus for resisting Cold damage (p. 163).

Flashlight: Modern flashlights use long-lasting superbright LEDs. Durability and brightness depend on the size—the bigger, the better. Also available in low-light and infrared versions, reducing Visibility modifiers for low-light and thermographic vision, respectively.

Gas Mask: This air-supplied respirator completely covers the user's face and provides immunity to inhalation-vector toxins (*Toxins,* p. 254). It comes with a 1-hour clean air supply, and can be attached to larger air tanks. It cannot be combined with a regular respirator.

Gecko Tape Gloves: These gloves are made of a special dry adhesive that incorporates millions of fine microscopic hairs that bonds to other surfaces. Individually these bonding forces are insignificant, but when combined, they are strong enough to stick a troll upside-down on a ceiling. Gecko tape gloves come as a set that includes gloves, knee-pads and slip-on soles. A character using them is treated as if she were performing assisted climbing (p. 132). These gloves are useless when wet.

GPS: This device measures signals received from either wireless access points or GPS (Global Positioning System) satellites and triangulates the user's exact location (plus or minus 5 meters). Commlinks do this automatically in wireless environments, of course, so GPS units are primarily used in the wilderness or areas without wireless coverage.

Hazmat Suit: The hazmat suit covers the whole body and includes an internal air tank with 4 hours of air. As long as it is not damaged, it provides the user with a chemical seal (p. 327) and protects from contact and inhalation vector toxins (*Toxin Protection,* p. 254). Even if breached, it still provides several points of chemical protection (gamemaster's discretion).

Light Stick: Bend, snap, and shake it for a couple of hours of chemical light.

Magnesium Torch: Activate for 5 minutes of bright torchlight.

Micro Flare Launcher: The flare launcher can shoot colored flares about 200 meters into the air, illuminating an area the size of a city block for a couple of minutes and negating the modifier for poor or low lighting. If wielded as a weapon, use Exotic Ranged Weapon skill; the micro flare deals Fire damage (p. 164).

Rappeling Gloves: These gloves are made of a special fabric that allows the wearer to get a tighter grip on a grapple line, giving her a +2 Strength bonus on all tests to hold her grip on the line. These gloves are necessary in order to use ultrathin microwire.

Respirator: A respirator is a filtering device worn over the mouth and nose that protects against inhalation-vector toxins (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254). The respirator adds its ratings to toxin resistance tests.

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Survival Kit: An assortment of survival gear in a rugged bag. Includes a knife, lighter, matches, compass, lightweight thermal blanket, several days' worth of ration bars, a water-purification unit, and more.

GRAPPLE GUN

This gun can shoot a grappling hook out to 75 meters. It comes equipped with an internal winch, to pull back the grapple (or pull up small loads). Use Exotic Ranged Weapon skill to wield this as a weapon; grapple gun attacks are resisted with Impact armor.

Micro rope can support a weight of up to 2,000 kg; all other ropes can support a weight of up to 4,000 kg.

Microwire: This micro rope is made of an extremely thin and resilient fiber, so a great length of it can be stored in a very small compartment. On the downside, it can only be grabbed with special protective rappeling gloves, otherwise it will cut straight through the climber's hands (inflicting 8P damage).

Myomeric Rope: Made of a special myomeric fiber, this rope's movements can be electronically controlled (over a maximum length of up to 30 meters)—for example, winding like a snake to reach around an obstacle or to tie to a ledge. The rope is not very strong, so it cannot be used to restrain people or pick up large objects.

Stealth Rope & Catalyst Stick: When stealth rope is touched with the catalyst stick, a chemical reaction is triggered that causes it to crumble to dust within seconds, leaving (almost) no trace. The catalyst stick is re-usable.

SURVIVAL GEAR	AVAIL	COST
Chemsuit (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 2	Rating x 100¥
Climbing Gear	–	200¥
Diving Gear	6	2,000¥
Gas Mask	–	200¥
Gecko Tape Gloves	12	250¥
GPS	3	200¥
Hazmat Suit	8	1,000¥
Flashlight	–	25¥
Light Stick	–	5¥
Magnesium Torch	–	20¥
Micro Flare Launcher	–	50¥
Micro Flares	–	25¥
Rappeling Gloves	–	70¥
Respirator (Rating 1–6)	–	Rating x 25¥
Survival Kit	4	100¥

GRAPPLE GUN	AVAIL	COST
Grapple Gun	8R	500¥
Catalyst Stick	8F	120¥
Microwire	4	50¥ per 100 m
Myomeric Rope	10	200¥ per 10 m
Standard Rope	–	50¥ per 100 m
Stealth Rope	8F	85¥ per 100 m

EXOTIC RANGED WEAPON	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	AMMO
Micro Flare Launcher	3P	–	SS	1 (ml)
Grapple Gun	5S	–	SS	1 (ml)

BIOTECH

For details on healing, see p. 252.

Biomonitor: This compact device measures life signs—heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, and so on. The biomonitor can also analyze blood, sweat, and skin samples. Used by medical services and patients who need to monitor their own health, biomonitors can be worn as an armband or wristband or integrated into clothing.

Disposable Syringe: Made of plastic with a metal needle, syringes are intended for a single use. Can be used to apply injection-vector toxins (p. 254).

Medkit: The medkit includes drug supplies, bandages, tools, and a (talkative) doctor-expert system that will advise the user on techniques to handle most typical medical emergencies (including fractures, gunshot wounds, chemical wounds, and poisoning, as well as offering advice for the treating of shock, handling blood loss, and of course performing resuscitations). The medkit's rating adds to the dice pool of all First Aid Tests, and replaces the character's skill if the character doesn't possess the skill (*Medkits and Autodocs,* p. 253). It must be refilled regularly (usually after every mission, gamemaster's discretion).

DOCWAGON™ CONTRACT

Don't leave home without it! DocWagon offers first-class medical care on a 24-hour house (or street) call basis. Four contract services are available: basic, gold, platinum, and super-platinum. A DocWagon contract requires the filing of tissue samples (held in a secure vault staffed by bonded guards and mages) and comes with a biomonitor RFID tag implant or wristband (basic service) that can be activated to call for help and then to serve as a homing beacon for roving DocWagon ambulances and choppers. Rupture of the band will also alert a DocWagon representative.

Once a call from a contract-holder is confirmed, most DocWagon franchises guarantee arrival of an armed trauma team in less than ten minutes, or else the immediate medical care is free. Resuscitation service carries a high premium (5,000¥), as does High Threat Response (HTR) service (base 5,000¥). In the latter case, the client (or her heir) is expected to pay medical bills up to and including death compensation (20,000¥) for DocWagon employees.

Gold service includes one free resuscitation per year, a 50 percent reduction on HTR service charges, and a 10 percent discount on extended care. *Platinum service* includes four free resuscitations per year and a 50 percent discount on extended care. There is no charge for HTR services, but employee death compensation still applies. *Super-Platinum* subscribers are entitled to five free resuscitations a year and do not have to pay for HTR services or death compensation.

DocWagon will not respond to calls on extraterritorial government or corporate property without permission from the controlling authority.

BIOTECH	AVAIL	COST
Biomonitor	–	300¥
Disposable Syringe	4	10¥
Medkit (Rating 1–6)	–	Rating x 100¥
Medkit Supplies	–	50¥

DOCWAGON CONTRACT	AVAIL	COST
Basic	–	5,000¥ per year
Gold	–	25,000¥ per year
Platinum	–	50,000¥ per year
Super-Platinum	–	100,000¥ per year

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AUGMENTATION

The advanced medtech rulebook, *Augmentation,* features personal enhancement technologies for all character types. It presents setting information and rules for advanced cybertech and biotech, as well as the cutting edge techniques of gene therapies and nanoware. These include:

- 60+ New cyberware implants, cyberlimb upgrades, and cybersuites
- 50+ Original bioware implants including advanced symbionts
- 40+ gene therapies and treatments
- 50+ SOTA nanotech devices, nanocybernetics, and nanoware colonies
- Advanced rules for severe wounds, cybersurgery, and diseases/pathogens
- Cutting edge tech for gamemasters such as biodrones, jarheads, and cyberzombies

SLAP PATCHES

Slap patches are adhesive DMSO-based drug dispensers that allow continual, safe administration of necessary chemicals. They are applied directly to the patient's skin. Applying a slap patch to an unwilling patient requires a successful melee attack (touch only).

Antidote Patch: Add the rating of an antidote patch to any toxin resistance tests (p. 254) made within 20 minutes after it has been applied (this only applies for toxin the antidote protects against).

Stimulant Patch: This patch allows a user to ignore the injury modifiers of Stun damage; treat it as High Pain Tolerance (p. 91) equal to patch's rating. This effect lasts for rating x 10 minutes—after that period of time, she receives one additional point of Stun damage. While a stimulant patch is in effect, the character is unable to rest.

Tranq Patch: This patch inflicts Stun damage equal to its rating.

Trauma Patch: If placed on a dying patient, it allows her to make a stabilization test (*Physical Damage Overflow,* p. 253) using her Body instead of First Aid/Medicine.

DISGUISES

Latex Face Mask: When the mage has her day off, you can still disguise yourself with this handy piece of equipment. The mask includes a disposable lifecast kit that produces a true-to-life latex face replica. New disguises may be programmed with a rating equal to the hits on a Computer + Edit Test (max hits equals Disguise skill). They may also be copied from a biometric scan (rating equals scanner rating). The rating of the mask adds to the dice pool for Disguise Tests. The mask and kit can only be used once.

Nanopaste Disguise: The use of cheap cosmetics and latex based disguises are a thing of the past with the development of a versatile biostatic nanite paste. Once spread across the affected area, the paste utilizes the body's bioelectric charge to power itself. It can be programmed to change color and texture or to display patterns. The paste can also remember preset configurations. A small container of paste covers the user's face and hands, while the large container coats the entire body. The nanopaste may be programmed in the same manner as the latex face mask (above). The rating of the nanopaste disguise adds to the dice pool for Disguise Tests. The nanopaste disguise lasts for 24 hours.

CYBERWARE

Cybernetic modification is commonplace in 2072. Bodyshops offering minor procedures can be found in every strip mall, and recent advances in cybernetics have brought down the price of once-costly procedures, making cyberware even more readily available to the masses. Even the poor might have cybernetic vision, hearing enhancements, or a datajack.

In addition to wireless functionality, most cyberware devices are equipped with a direct neural interface (DNI) that allows the user to mentally activate and control their functions. They can also be linked to other cyberware implants.

HEADWARE

These small complex devices are inserted into the head (typically constructed via less-invasive nanosurgery). Items that have a Capacity rating may be installed in cyberlimbs instead, costing capacity rather than Essence.

Commlink: An implanted version of the commlink (p. 327), popular with hackers and salarymen on the go. A Sim Module (modified for hot sim or not) may be implanted at additional cost.

Control Rig: This implant harnesses the raw data-coordinating and synchronization power of the middle brain for the express purpose of directly manipulating rigged vehicles/drones. The control rig provides a +2 dice pool bonus on all Vehicle skill tests while the rigger is "jumped into" a vehicle/drone via full virtual reality. This bonus does not apply to other drone manipulation through the Matrix.

SLAP PATCHES	AVAIL	COST
Antidote Patch (Rating 1–6)	Rating	Rating x 50¥
Stimulant Patch (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 2	Rating x 25¥
Tranq Patch (Rating 1–10)	Rating x 2	Rating x 20¥
Trauma Patch	2	500¥

DISGUISE	AVAIL	COST
Latex Face Mask	8	500¥
Nanopaste Disguise		
Small Container	12	500¥
Large container	16	1,000¥

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Cranial Bombs: An illegal method of coercion, cranial bombs are the ultimate headache. Kink bombs are designed to damage only part of the victim's head, either rendering specific headware (or other cyberware) useless or damaging the brain to cause blindness, stuttering, hearing loss, etc. Microbombs are just powerful enough to kill the bearer. Area bombs do the same, but also affect a blast area like either a fragmentation or high explosive grenade (p. 155). The bombs can be remote- or time-detonated, or even set to discharge by sound recognition. If installed in cyberlimbs, these bombs are designed to destroy specific components (kink), the entire limb (micro), or blast the area (area).

Datajack: A datajack allows a user to directly interface with any electronic device via a fiberoptic cable. Datajacks also allow users to slot and mentally access chips, softs, and BTLs. Datajacks are equipped with their own memory storage for downloading or saving files. Two datajack users can string a fiberoptic cable between themselves to conduct a private mental communication immune to radio interception/eavesdropping.

Data Lock: This specialized version of the datajack is used by couriers, spies, and aides to top officials and executives, allowing them to act as walking data safes. Stored data is encrypted, and a special code is required to transfer data in or out through the data lock. Most importantly, the data lock is neither wireless-enabled, nor does the implanted character have mental access to the data—she's merely a carrier.

Olfactory Booster: Known on the street as a "sniffer," "cybernose," or "cybersnout," the olfactory booster enhances, identifies, and records smells (and can play them back later). This opens a completely new world of sensual information for the user, because smell carries much more information than a normal metahuman nose would ever be able to pick up—for example, many diseases can be identified by smell, and a metahuman body unconsciously produces odors corresponding to emotions (joy, fear, anger, etc.). Further, the olfactory booster can continuously analyze the composition of air and set off an alarm if it picks up traces of explosives, ammunition propellant, or various substances used in biological and chemical warfare (*Scanners,* p. 262). A cut-off function allows the user to completely ignore intense odors. The olfactory booster is usually linked to the user's PAN to create an even more thorough AR experience.

Apply the olfactory booster's rating as a dice pool bonus for any Perception Tests involving smells.

Sim Module: An implanted version of the external sim module (p. 328), popular with sim lovers and BTL users.

Taste Booster: The taste booster performs the same function as the olfactory booster (see above), except that it enhances the user's tastebuds. The taste booster also allows the user to experience taste sensations in AR situations that are programmed for taste. Apply the taste booster's rating as a dice pool bonus to any Perception Test involving tastes.

Tooth Compartment: These hollow teeth come in storage and breakable models. The storage model is used to smuggle contraband and micro-size items (gamemaster's discretion). The breakable model triggers a linked effect (such as starting a tracking signal or releasing poison) when the user bites hard on the tooth.

Ultrasound Sensor: This is an implanted version of the ultrasound sensor (p. 333).

Voice Modulator: This implant enhances the subject's vocal organs. She can speak with an increased volume of up to 100 decibels without exhaustion, or shift her pitch to create perfect bird calls, mellifluous singing, and uncanny vocal impressions. The modulator can also play back a recorded voice; however, she cannot use the recorded voice for any purpose other than to mimic exactly what it said (voice recognition systems will spot the deviation from the original). For more deceptive purposes, the (highly illegal) secondary pattern function can be installed—it can be loaded with a recording from another person's voice to create an almost perfect reproduction. To fool a voice recognition system, make an Opposed Test between the voice modulator's rating and the system's rating (p. 222).

EYEWARE

Cybereyes are likely the most common cyberware in the Sixth World. Once designed to help the blind, the cybereyes of today allow for even better vision than the original equipment—it's not uncommon for anyone who can afford it to exchange perfectly functioning natural eyes with cybernetic replacements. Cybereyes can be purchased in any shape or color the user desires from perfectly natural seeming to the most outrageous of ocular designs. Color and patterns are easily altered by downloading a new skin. For those who don't want to go for the full switch, many cybereye features are offered as non-replacement retinal modifications to the natural eyes.

Eyeware subsystems either take up Capacity in a cybereye or Essence in a natural eye (not both). For both replacements and retinal mods, upgrades usually involve both eyes so the user's vision is not unbalanced.

HEADWARE	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Commlink	0.2	[2]	–	2,000¥ + Commlink Cost
Control Rig	0.5	–	8	10,000¥
Cranial Bombs				
Kink Bomb	0	[1]	16F	2,000¥
Microbomb	0	[2]	16F	5,000¥
Area Bomb	0	[3]	20F	10,000¥
Datajack	0.1	[1]	–	500¥
Data Lock	0.1	[1]	12	1,000¥ + Encryption
Olfactory Booster (Rating 1–6)	0.2	[2]	Rating x 4	Rating x 1,000¥
Sim Module	0.2	[2]	–	2,000¥
Hot-Sim Modified	0.2	[2]	12F	5,000¥
Taste Booster (Rating 1–6)	0.2	–	Rating x 4	Rating x 1,500¥
Tooth Storage Compartment	–	–	8	200¥
Tooth Breakable Compartment	–	–	12	500¥
Ultrasound Sensor	0.3	[2]	10	6,000¥
Voice Modulator	0.2	–	4	7,500¥
Secondary Pattern (Rating 1–6)	–	–	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 5,000¥

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Cybereyes: This system offers 20/20 vision for both eyes and includes an image link and an eye recording unit (for no extra cost), as well as capacity for various enhancement systems.

Eye Recording Unit: The eye recording unit connects to the user's optical nerves and records all data directly into attached storage (accessible by the user's PAN). To prevent data theft, the user can opt to make this storage only accessible by special means (sim module, datajack, etc.).

Flare Compensation: An implanted version of the flare compensation enhancement (p. 333).

Image Link: An implanted version of the image link enhancement (p. 333).

Low-Light Vision: This accessory allows the user to see normally in light levels as low as starlight. Total darkness still renders the user as blind as an unmodified person.

Ocular Drone: This enhancement only affects one eyeball per purchase but it installs a small spyball drone in the user's ocular cavity. The spyball functions as a normal cybereye until the user chooses to remove it and control it as though it were a standard spyball drone (*Lone Star iBall,* p. 350). A user who chooses to replace both eyes with ocular drones is effectively blind while both drones are operating apart from her. Not available as a retinal modification.

Protective Covers: These can protect both cyber and normal eyes, and confer both Ballistic and Impact armor bonuses of +2 to the eye area. Available in transparent or one-way reflective versions.

Retinal Duplication: Can be loaded with a recording of someone else's retina to create an almost perfect reproduction. Make an Opposed Test between the retinal duplication rating and the retinal scanner rating (*Biometrics,* p. 263).

Smartlink: An implanted version of the smartlink enhancement (p. 333).

Thermographic Vision: An implanted version of the thermographic vision enhancement (p. 333).

Vision Enhancement: An implanted version of vision enhancement (p. 333).

Vision Magnification: An implanted version of the vision magnification enhancement (p. 333).

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EARWARE

Like eyeware, earware can be installed within a complete cyberear replacement (costing Capacity) or as an inner ear modification (costing Essence). Upgrades usually involve both ears, so the user's hearing is not unbalanced.

Cyberears: These implants usually just replace the inner ear (though sometimes the auricle as well, if the user desires), and offer perfect hearing within normal ranges. They include a sound link and an ear recording unit (at no extra cost), as well as capacity for various enhancement systems.

Audio Enhancement: An implanted version of audio enhancement (p. 333).

Balance Augmenter: The balance augmenter enhances the inner ear's natural balance mechanism. The user receives one bonus die on all tests involving balance, such as climbing, walking across a narrow platform, landing after a jump, and so on.

Damper: This implant protects the user from sudden increases in sound as well as damaging sound levels. The damper adds a +2 dice pool modifier to resisting sonic attacks.

Ear Recording Unit: The ear recording unit connects to the user's auditory nerves and records all data directly into unlimited data storage that can be accessed by the user's PAN. To prevent data theft, the user can also opt to make this storage only accessible by special means (datajack, etc.).

Select Sound Filter: An implanted version of the select sound filter audio enhancement (p. 333).

Sound Link: The sound link plays audio (recordings, movie soundtracks, music, etc.) from linked sources (PAN, datajack, etc.) directly into the user's (cyber)ears. Commonly used for AR sound.

Spatial Recognizer: An implanted version of the spatial recognizer enhancement (p. 333).

BODYWARE

Bodyware that does not have a Capacity rating must be installed directly into the user's body; it cannot be installed into cyberlimbs. Bodyware with a Capacity rating may be installed in cyberlimbs, costing capacity rather than Essence.

Bone Lacing: The cellular structure of the user's bones is augmented with lattice chains of reinforcing plastics and metals to improve the bones' integrity and tensile strength, but the augmentation also adds extra weight. Plastic bone lacing confers a bonus of +1 to the Body attribute for damage resistance tests. Aluminum bone lacing confers a +2 Body bonus for damage resistance tests and a +1 Impact armor bonus (cumulative with worn armor). Titanium bone lacing confers bonuses of +3 to Body for damage resistance tests and +1 to both Ballistic and Impact armor. Characters with bone lacing also inflict Physical damage with their unarmed blows. Bone Lacing is incompatible with Bone Density Augmentation bioware.

Cosmetic Modification: Outpatient treatments that take about 2 hours can be obtained to alter the user's appearance—shape, coloration, and pigmentation of the face and body along with addition or removal of hair (fiberoptic hair with changing color patterns is still

EYEWARE	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Cybereyes Basic System				
Rating 1	0.2	4	–	500¥
Rating 2	0.3	8	4	750¥
Rating 3	0.4	12	6	1,000¥
Rating 4	0.5	16	8	1,500¥
Eye Recording Unit	0.1	*	4	2,000¥*
Flare Compensation	0.1	[1]	4	750¥
Image Link	0.1*	4*	500¥	
Low-Light Vision	0.1	[2]	4	1,000¥
Ocular Drone	–	[6]	6	3,000¥
Protective Covers	–	–	4	100¥
Retinal Duplication (Rating 1–6)	0.1	[1]	16F	Rating x 15,000¥
Smartlink	0.1	[3]	8R	1,000¥
Thermographic Vision	0.1	[2]	4	1,000¥
Vision Enhancement (Rating 1–3)	0.1	[Rating]	Rating x 3	Rating x 1,500¥
Vision Magnification	0.1	[2]	4	1,000¥
* Included in the Cybereyes basic system.				

EARWARE	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Cyberears				
Rating 1	0.2	4	–	500¥
Rating 2	0.3	8	4	750¥
Rating 3	0.4	12	6	1,000¥
Rating 4	0.5	16	8	1,500¥
Audio Enhancement (Rating 1–3)	0.1	[Rating]	Rating x 3	Rating x 1,500¥
Balance Augmenter	0.1	[4]	10	5,000¥
Damper	0.1	[1]	4	750¥
Ear Recording Unit	0.1	*	4	500¥
Select Sound Filter (Rating 1–6)	0.1	[Rating]	Rating x 3	Rating x 1,000¥
Sound Link	0.1	*	–	250¥
Spatial Recognizer	0.1	[2]	8	750¥
* Included in the Cyberears basic system.				

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very popular). Exotic modifications like scaly skin, colorful fur, cat ears, ork tusks, or tails are more difficult to come by.

Dermal Plating: Dermal plating consists of hard plastic and metal fiber plates bonded to the user's skin. The plates are clearly visible and can be stylized for surface texture and color. Dermal plating confers a bonus to both Ballistic and Impact armor equal to its rating. Dermal plating cannot be combined with orthoskin.

Fingertip Compartment: Allows the storage of micro-sized items (gamemaster's discretion regarding what can be fit into the compartment) in the tip segment of a finger. Inserting or retrieving an object takes one Complex Action. Items held within are completely concealed. Spotting a fingertip compartment requires a Perception + Intuition (4) Test.

The fingertip compartment is a very popular storage device for a monofilament whip (p. 315), with the fingertip acting as control weight. Extending a monofilament whip from a fingertip compartment takes one Simple Action, while retracting it requires one Complex Action.

Grapple Gun: This is an implanted version of the grapple gun described on p. 337.

Internal Air Tank: The internal air tank replaces part of one lung with a pressurized internal air reserve that allows the user to hold her breath for up to 2 hours. This allows extended underwater operations as well as protection from inhalation-vector toxins (p. 254)–assuming the user holds her breath. Refilling the air tank (through an intake valve located under the ribcage) takes 5 minutes.

Muscle Replacement: Implanted, vat-grown synthetic muscles replace the user's own. Calcium treatments and skeletal reinforcement allow an overall increase in the user's strength. Muscle replacement increases both the Strength and Agility attributes by its rating. It cannot be combined with muscle augmentation or muscle toner bioware.

Reaction Enhancers: By replacing part of the spinal column with superconducting material, a character's reaction time can be increased. Add the rating of reaction enhancers to a character's Reaction attribute (this will also affect Initiative). Reaction enhancers are incompatible with most other Initiative-boosters.

Simrig: This is an implanted version of the external simrig (p. 328).

Skillwires: Skillwires are a system of neuromuscular controllers placed alongside the body's natural nervous system to override muscular movement. Skillwire systems allow the use of activesofts (p. 331) with a rating up to the skillwire rating. A skillwire system can handle a number of skillsofts with a total rating equal to its own rating x 2. Changing the current selection of skillsofts takes one Simple Action.

Smuggling Compartment: Smuggling compartments may only be placed in parts of the body that can be easily hollowed out/replaced. These compartments allow the storage of micro-sized items (the gamemaster has final determination on what a compartment can hold). Spotting a smuggling compartment requires a Perception + Intuition (4) Test. Inserting or retrieving an object takes a Complex Action.

Touch Link: The touch link is a small unit attached at the base of the spine that allows for the processing of tactile information (texture, temperature, etc.) directly to the user's neural system. This information is usually received via the user's PAN, but it can also be input from other sources.

Wired Reflexes: This highly invasive operation implants a multitude of neural boosters and adrenalin stimulators in strategic locations all over the body, catapulting the patient into a whole new world where everything around her seems to move in slow motion. The system includes a trigger to turn the wired reflexes on and off (taking a Free Action). When activated, wired reflexes confer a bonus of +1 to Reaction and +1 Initiative Pass per point of rating. Wired reflexes cannot be combined with any other form of Initiative enhancement, except Reaction Enhancers.

BODYWARE	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Bone Lacing				
Plastic	0.5	–	8F	5,000¥
Aluminum	1	–	12F	15,000¥
Titanium	1.5	–	16F	40,000¥
Cosmetic Modification	–	–	2–12	200¥–10,000¥
Dermal Plating (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.5	–	(Rating x 5)R	Rating x 5,000¥
Fingertip Compartment	0.1	[1]	4	750¥
Grapple Gun	0.5	[5]	8	1,500¥
Internal Air Tank	0.25	[3]	4	650¥
Muscle Replacement (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 1	–	(Rating x 5)R	Rating x 5,000¥
Reaction Enhancers (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.3	–	(Rating x 5)R	Rating x 10,000¥
Simrig	0.5	–	8	5,000¥
Skillwires (Rating 1–5)	Rating x 0.2	–	(Rating x 4)	Rating x 2,000¥
Smuggling Compartment	0.2	[2]	6	1,500¥
Touch Link	0.1	–	6	1,000¥
Wired Reflexes				
Rating 1	2	–	8R	11,000¥
Rating 2	3	–	12R	32,000¥
Rating 3	5	–	20R	100,000¥

UNARMED COMBAT ATTACK	REACH	DAMAGE	AP	COST
Plastic Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–	5,000¥
Aluminum Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–	15,000¥
Titanium Bone Lacing	–	(STR/2 + 3)P	–	40,000¥

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CYBERLIMBS

In today's world of transplant-friendly bioware, the use of cyberlimbs is sometimes viewed as crude and outdated. On the other hand, they are cheap and easy to service and upgrade, so in the end they became even more popular for the less fortunate. Additionally, since cyberlimbs are capable of superior performance than natural ones and are compatible with a variety of specialized technologies, this kind of cyberware remains in high demand.

Cyberskulls and –torsos are included in this category, though they are in fact shells rather than full replacements.

When a particular limb is used for a test (such as leading an attack with your cyberarm), use the attribute for that limb (natural or cyber); in any other case, take the average value of all limbs involved in the task (round down). If a task requires the careful coordination of several limbs, use the value of the weakest limb. The attributes of partial limbs (including cyberhands and –feet) may be enhanced, but their attributes only apply for tests directly involving those limbs (such as a Strength Test when gripping something with an enhanced cyberhand). Cyberlimbs cannot hold any bioware, nor any cyber-implants that take up Essence rather than Capacity. Essence cost, Capacity, and other stats can be found on the Cyberlimb table (below).

Cyberlimbs have other useful features. They also grant the user 1 extra damage box to her Physical Condition Monitor for each cyberlimb she possesses. They have Capacity, allowing the integration of cyberweapons and other cyber accessories. They can perform at superhuman levels with the right enhancements. Finally, cyberlimbs can be dangerous even if they don't possess cyberweapons. Their Unarmed Damage Value is (STR ÷ 2)P.

Cyberlimbs come in two distinct types: *standard* and *customized*.

Standard limbs: These prosthetics are basic off-the-shelf models. All standard cyberlimbs come with Body, Strength, and Agility attributes of 3. These values can only be augmented by cyberlimb enhancements. On standard cyberlimbs, a cybertorso is required to have cyberlimb enhancements with a rating higher than 3.

example

Critical George has Body 3, Strength 4, and Agility 2. He has a cybertorso with a Body 6, Strength 5, and Agility 3, a left cyberarm with Body 3, Strength 7, Agility 3, and a left cyberleg with Body 5, Strength 3, and Agility 3. If he punches someone in the face with his left arm, he uses Agility 3 on the attack test and Strength 7 for calculating his damage. If he wants to run down a hallway—requiring careful coordination of both legs—he makes his Running + Strength Test using the lower Strength of 3. If he gets shot, however, he uses the average value of his Body attributes, rounded down—in this case, 4.

Customized cyberlimbs: These limbs are tailored and customized to the intended user's frame and musculature. Such customized cyberlimbs also come with physical Attributes of 3, but are more versatile and expensive than standard models. Customized cyberlimbs function like standard limbs in most regards, but come with Body, Strength, and Agility attributes that may exceed the standard cyberlimb attribute rating of 3. They allow the user to raise their starting Body, Strength, and Agility attributes up to the character's natural attribute maximum (p. 68). However, each attribute point raised above 3 increases the limb's Availability by 1 point and adds 1,500¥ to the cost—though it does not take up any Capacity. Increases above the natural attribute maximum and up to the augmented maximum must be handled as cyberlimb enhancements, with the standard Capacity and nuyen costs (*Cyberlimb Enhancements,* p. 344). In all other stats customized cyberlimbs are identical to standard cyberlimbs (ie. Capacity limits, etc).

example

Carlos is an ork street samurai with Body 8, Strength 6, and Agility 4. Carlos wants his new customized cyberarm designed for his natural physique and built to have the same level of physical attributes. Carlos raises the basic attributes of his cyberarm to these stats, an increment of 9 attribute points total (a 5 point increase from Body 3 to Body 8, 3 points from Strength 3 to Strength 6, and finally 1 point to raise his arm's Agility from 3 to 4). The cyberarm's standard availability is increased by 9 points and becomes 13, while the price is raised by 13,500¥ and is now 28,500¥.

A few months later, when Carlos has some extra cash in his account thanks to a very profitable job, he decides that he wishes to enhance his cyberarm's attributes

STANDARD CYBERLIMBS	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Obvious Limbs				
Full Arm	1	15	4	15,000¥
Full Leg	1	20	4	15,000¥
Hand/Foot	0.25	4	2	5,000¥
Lower Arm	0.45	10	4	10,000¥
Lower Leg	0.45	12	4	10,000¥
Torso	1.5	10	12	20,000¥
Skull	0.75	4	16	10,000¥
Synthetic Limbs				
Full Arm	1	8	4	20,000¥
Full Leg	1	10	4	20,000¥
Hand/Foot	0.25	2	2	6,000¥
Lower Arm	0.45	5	4	12,000¥
Lower Leg	0.45	6	4	12,000¥
Torso	1.5	5	12	25,000¥

CUSTOMIZED CYBERLIMBS	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Each BOD, STR, or AGI point above 3	as cyberlimb	as cyberlimb	as cyberlimb +1	+1500

CYBERLIMB ENHANCEMENTS	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Armor (Rating 1–4)	–	Rating x 2	Rating x 5	Rating x 300¥
Body (Rating 1–7)	–	Rating x 1	(Rating x 3)R	Rating x 200¥
Strength (Rating 1–7)	–	Rating x 1	(Rating x 3)R	Rating x 250¥
Agility (Rating 1–7)	–	Rating x 1	(Rating x 3)R	Rating x 250¥

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even further. Since Carlos has no cybertorso, he can only have cyberlimb enhancements with a rating of 3. He decides to purchases a Rating 3 Strength enhancement and a Rating 1 Body enhancement to add a decent punch to his melee attacks and a little bit of extra durability to his new cyber toy. Both enhancements require a total Capacity of 4 points (3 for the Strength enhancement and 1 for the Body enhancement), leaving 11 Capacity points of the arm's 15 starting capacity for future enhancements or accessories. The enhancements cost an additional 950¥. Carlos's cyberarm now has Body 9, Strength 9, and Agility 4.

Whether they are standard or customized, cyberlimbs may be either *obvious* or *synthetic*.

Obvious Cyberlimbs: These implants are immediately recognizable as artificial limbs unless the character covers them with clothing. They are often chromed or matte colors but visibly mechanical in nature. In some cases, they are glaringly obvious and outlandish. This tends to affect the character's social dealings.

Synthetic Cyberlimbs: Synthetic limbs are disguised as natural limbs. A Perception + Intuition (3) Test is necessary to visually detect a synthetic limb (Cybertechnology skill may replace Perception for this test); synthetic limbs are obviously artificial to the touch.

CYBERLIMB ENHANCEMENTS

Cyberlimb enhancements use up the Capacity of the cyberlimb they enhance. There are four different types of enhancements available: Body, Agility, Strength, or Armor enhancements. Physical Attribute enhancements come in ratings equal to the Attribute bonus they provide. Armor enhancements installed on cyberlimbs are both Ballistic and Impact, and it is cumulative with all forms of worn armor.

CYBERLIMB ACCESSORIES

These items may only be installed in cyberlimbs.

Cyberarm Gyromount: When activated, counterweights pop out of the user's wrist and provide her with better balance and reduced recoil for improved firing capability. The effects are similar to a gyro stabilization system (p. 322) with a Rating of 3. The effect is not cumulative with the bonus from a gyro-stabilization system.

Cyberarm Slide: Similar to the hidden arm slide (p. 322), the cyberarm slide uses the same rules, but has the added advantage of total concealment. Spotting a cyberarm slide requires a Perception + Intuition (4) Test.

Cyber Holster: Cyber holsters can be installed in cyberarms, cyberlegs, and cybertorsos. They can hold a pistol-sized weapon or smaller within the limb, and are completely enclosed until activated and popped out. Inserting or retrieving a weapon takes one Simple Action. Spotting a cyber holster compartment requires a Perception + Intuition (4) Test.

Hydraulic Jacks: This implant requires two cyberlegs—each hydraulic jack consumes an amount of Capacity in its leg equal to its rating. Each rating point adds a +1 dice pool modifier to jumping tests (p. 134), adds 20 percent to the character's maximum jump distance, and (as long as the character manages to land on her feet) reduces the effects of falling by 2 meters. For example, a character with Rating 3 hydraulic jacks falling 10 meters would be treated as falling from a height of 4 meters.

Large Smuggling Compartment: Because it is installed in a cyberlimb, this version of the smuggling compartment (p. 322) is larger, and can hold pistol-sized items (gamemaster has the final say on what fits). Spotting a smuggling compartment requires a Perception + Intuition (4) Test. Inserting or retrieving an object takes a Complex Action.

CYBER-IMPLANT WEAPONS

For street samurai who never want to go anywhere unarmed, cyber-implant weapons are the way to go.

Cyberguns: Cyberguns are usually installed into cyberarms, though there have been reports of cyberleg-mounted versions, and in rare occasions they are implanted directly into a natural limb. Depending on the size of the gun, it can take up part of the user's forearm or replace it altogether, with the functional parts of the arm built around it. The guns fire either through a hidden port in the palm, or by folding back the user's hand at the wrist. To meet their stealth requirements, most of their parts are built from non-metallic compounds, while the remaining metallic parts are incorporated into the (cyber) arm's structure. Each limb can only hold one cybergun.

All cyberguns have internal magazines (m) and can be equipped with a hidden external ammo port, though once the clip is attached the cybergun's presence becomes quite obvious. All cyberguns are pre-equipped with smartgun systems (p. 322). Laser sights, silencers, and sound suppressors are also available; other weapon accessories (like gas-vent systems) cannot be installed.

Cyber Melee Weapons: Cyber melee weapons are the classic toys of razorboys and gillettes. They are available as cyberlimb upgrades,

CYBERLIMB ACCESSORIES	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Cyberarm Gyromount	–	[4]	12F	6,000¥
Cyberarm Slide	–	[8]	12R	3,000¥
Cyber Holster	–	[7]	8R	2,000¥
Hydraulic Jacks (Rating 1–6)	–	[Rating per limb]	9	Rating x 2,000¥ (total)
Large Smuggling Compartment	–	[5]	20R	100,000¥

CYBERGUNS	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Holdout Pistol	0.15	[2]	12R	800¥
Light Pistol	0.35	[4]	14R	1,500¥
Machine Pistol	0.4	[4]	16R	2,000¥
Heavy Pistol	0.6	[6]	16R	3,200¥
Submachine Gun	1	[10]	20R	2,500¥
Shotgun	1.1	[11]	20R	2,100¥
Grenade Launcher	1.5	[15]	20F	4,000¥
External Clip Port	0.1	[1]	–	100¥
Laser Sight	0.1	[1]	–	100¥
Silencer	0.2	[2]	–	400¥
Sound Suppressor	0.3	[3]	–	600¥

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but are also in heavy use as standalone systems implanted into the user's natural hands. *Hand razors* are 2.5-centimeter, chromed steel or carbon fiber blades that replace the user's fingernails or slide out from beneath synthetic nail replacements. *Hand blades* slip out of the side of the hand opposite the thumb, parallel to the hand. *Spurs* consist of a variable number of blades protruding from the user's wrist or knuckles. The *shock hand* features shock pads built into the knuckles or palm of the hand—these inflict a nasty shock to anything they are in contact with when activated. Shock hands deal Electricity damage (p. 163) and have 10 charges (each); when plugged in they recharge at a rate of one charge per 10 seconds.

The list of accessories for cyberlimbs and cyber-implant weapons in the core rules is greatly expanded upon in the *Augmentation* advanced rulebook.

BIOWARE

Bioware is the next step in augmentation. Instead of replacing body parts with electronic machines, bioware augments the body's own functions and is integrated as if it were a natural feature. This application of biotechnology is a tricky business, as the fine balance between the body's numerous organic systems must be maintained. Bionics and bioengineering techniques have improved greatly over the last decade, making bioware the new state of the art technology. While it's more expensive monetarily, it is very low on Essence cost and difficult to distinguish from the original—very useful if you want to keep a low profile.

Adrenaline Pump: This small, muscular sac is implanted in the lower abdominal cavity and connected to each of the two suprarenal glands. When dormant, the pump serves as a reservoir for adrenaline and noradrenaline. When activated, the sac contracts, sending a surge of concentrates into the bloodstream. Stress and other emotional states such as anger, fear, or lust might also activate the pump; the gamemaster can call for a Composure Test (p. 138) in such cases to determine if the pump activates or not.

When the adrenaline pump is triggered, the user ignores injury modifiers from Stun damage, and she will not fall unconscious when Stun damage reaches its maximum. The adrenaline pump's rating is also added to Strength, Agility, Reaction, and Willpower attributes (up to the user's augmented maximum). The pump works for Rating x 1D6 turns; this duration cannot be ended prematurely. When the duration ends, the user crashes, immediately taking one box of unresisted Stun damage for every turn the pump was active. After the effects end, the attribute values return to normal and the user can no longer ignore the injury modifiers of the Stun damage taken. While an adrenaline pump is in effect, the character is unable to rest.

After the effects have worn off, the pump requires 10 minutes to regenerate its supply—during that that time it cannot be activated.

Bone Density Augmentation: In a long and painful process, the molecular matrix of the subject's bones is altered for density and strength. The procedure also strengthens ligaments, but as a side effect increases the character's weight. Increase the recipient's Body by the bone density rating for damage resistance tests. Characters with bone density augmentation deal Physical damage in unarmed combat. Bone Density Augmentation is incompatible with the Bone Lacing implant

Cat's Eyes: Vat-grown replacement eyes with a structure that amplifies light and enhances the user's night vision, providing her with natural low-light vision. Cat's eyes are slit and reflective. This bioware is not compatible with cyberware eye enhancements.

Digestive Expansion: This treatment expands the range of substances a metahuman can safely digest—including roots, grass, peat, and a number of plants that are normally considered inedible. It also includes a modification of the taste buds and olfactory senses to make it easier to "stomach" unusual foods. The character's lifestyle costs are reduced by 20 percent and she receives a +2 dice pool modifier on tests to resist ingestion-vector toxins (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254).

Enhanced Articulation: A number of procedures like joint-surface coating, relubrication, and tendon and ligament augmentation lead to more fluid muscle and joint action. Enhanced articulation provides its user with a +1 dice pool modifier on any test involving Physical skills that are linked to Physical attributes. This bonus may be combined with bonuses from other sources (reflex recorder, specialization, etc.).

Muscle Augmentation: Using a biological weaving treatment, special vat-grown muscle cables are braided into existing muscle fibers, enhancing the muscle's mass and performance. Muscle augmentation adds its rating to the character's Strength. It is not compatible with muscle replacement, but can be combined with muscle toner.

CYBER MELEE WEAPONS	ESSENCE	CAPACITY	AVAIL	COST
Hand blade (Retractable)	0.25	[3]	10F	1,500¥
Hand Razors (Retractable)	0.2	[2]	10F	900¥
Spur (Retractable)	0.3	[3]	12F	1,800¥
Shock Hand	0.25	[3]	8R	1,000¥

CYBER-MELEE WEAPONS	REACH	DAMAGE	AP
Hand Blade	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Hand Razors	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Shock Hand	–	6S(e)	-half
Spurs	–	(STR/2 + 3)P	–

CYBERGUNS	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	BLAST	RC	AMMO
Cyber Hold-Out	4P	–	SS	–	–	2 (m)/6 (c)
Light Cyber Pistol	4P	–	SA	–	–	12 (m)/12 (c)
Cyber Machine Pistol	4P	–	SA/BF	–	1	12 (m)/35 (c)
Heavy Cyber Pistol	5P	-1	SA	–	–	10 (m)/10 (c)
Cyber Submachine Gun	5P	–	SA/BF	–	2	12 (m)/24(c)
Cyber Shotgun	7P	-1	SA	–	–	10 (m)/10 (cy)
w/ Flechettes	9P(f)	+5				
Cyber Microgrenade Launcher	as grenade	–	SS	-2/meter	–	2 (m)/6 (c)

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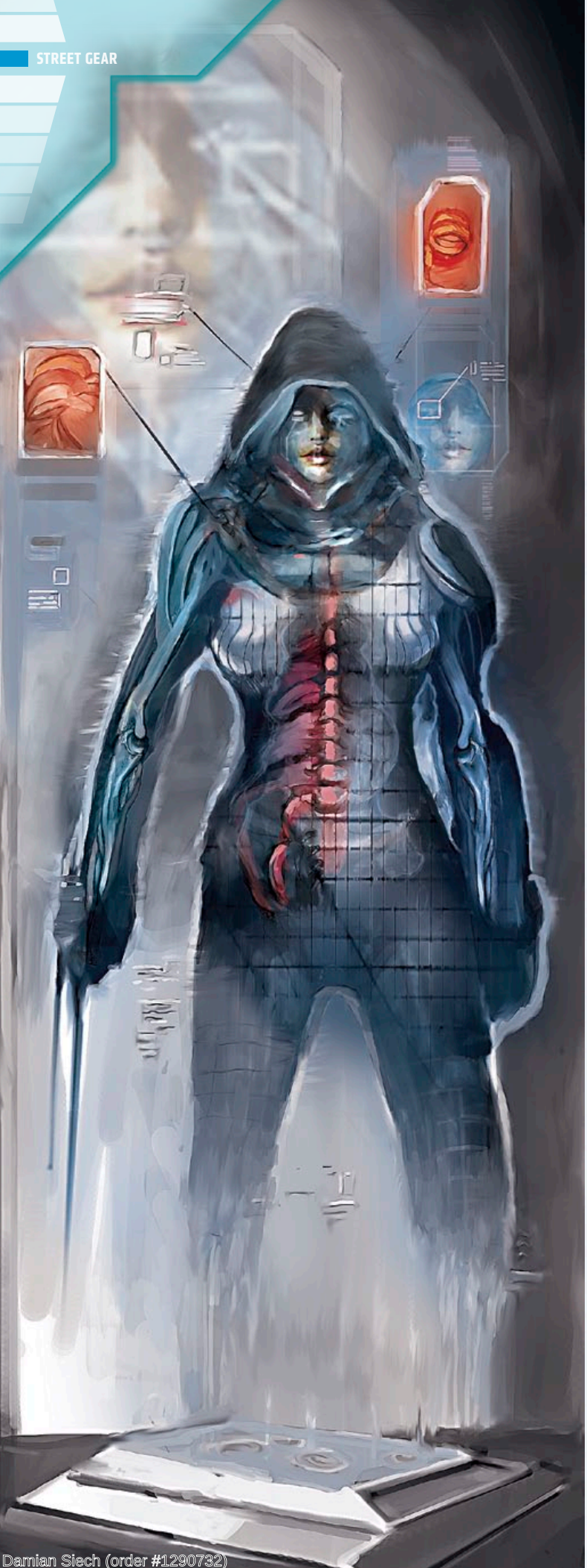

Muscle Toner: This treatment incorporates vat-grown elastic muscle fibers into existing muscle tissue, increasing muscle tension and flexibility. Muscle toner adds its rating to the character's Agility. It is not compatible with muscle replacement, but can be combined with muscle augmentation.

Orthoskin: Weaves an energy-diffusing material just beneath the skin providing the equivalent of personal armor, while being virtually indistinguishable from unaugmented skin. Orthoskin adds its rating to the character's Ballistic and Impact ratings (cumulative with worn armor). It cannot be combined with dermal plating.

Pathogenic Defense: An enhancement of the spleen, this treatment spearheads the production of more effective and aggressive leukocytes (white blood cells). Pathogenic defense adds its rating to toxin resistance tests against biological (not chemical) toxins and diseases (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254).

Platelet Factories: Platelet factories increase the body's ability to handle Physical damage by accelerating the production of platelets within bone marrow, thus lessening the trauma from large wounds and quickly stopping bleeding. Any time the user suffers 2 or more points of damage, the damage is instantly reduced by one point.

Skin Pocket: With this bioware, a concealed flap of skin covers a pocket capable of holding several small items (gamemaster determines what can fit), weighing no more than 1 kilogram. Spotting a skin pocket requires a Perception + Intuition (3) Test. It takes a Complex Action to add or remove an item.

Suprathyroid Gland: Placed on top of an individual's existing thyroid gland, the suprathyroid gland supersedes the metabolic functions of the thyroid, optimizing catabolism and anabolism. The altered metabolism produces more energy and effectively supercharges the recipient. Characters with a suprathyroid gland have a tendency toward hyperactivity and must ingest twice as much food and drink as a normal person to fuel the higher metabolic rate.

The Suprathyroid Gland provides an attribute bonus of +1 to the user's Body, Agility, Reaction, and Strength. Lifestyle costs rise by 10%.

Symbiotes: These tailored microorganisms introduced into the user's bloodstream greatly enhance its regenerative functions. To fuel the symbiote activity, the character must increase her consumption of food and drink.

Add the rating of symbiote bioware as a dice pool modifier on healing tests (both Physical and Stun). Symbiotes add 20% to the characters Lifestyle costs.

Synthacardium: Artificially enhanced myocardium enables the heart to perform at higher levels. The synthacardium adds its rating as a dice pool modifier on all Athletics Tests. This bonus may be combined with bonuses from other sources.

Tailored Pheromones: The subject's body is altered to release specially designed pheromones to subtly influence others. Tailored pheromones add their rating as a dice pool modifier to Charisma and Social Skill Tests. This bonus has no effect on magical abilities and tests.

Toxin Extractor: A specially cultivated cluster of cells implanted into the liver improves the efficiency and expands the spectrum of catabolic activity (the breakdown of complex substances). The toxin extractor adds its rating as a dice pool modifier to toxin resistance tests (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254).

Tracheal Filter: This filter is implanted at the top of the trachea, just below the larynx, to absorb airborne impurities and keep them from reaching the lungs. The filter adds its rating to toxin resistance tests to resist inhalation-vectored toxins (*Using Toxic Substances,* p. 254).

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CULTURED BIOWARE

Cultured bioware must be tailor-made for the intended recipient, so it is more expensive and takes longer to acquire.

Cerebral Booster: Nerve tissue, along with convolutions and gyri (ridges and furrows), is added into the frontal lobes of the cerebrum. The extra cells and increased surface area improve brain functions. The cerebral booster augments the user's Logic attribute by its rating.

Damage Compensator: Compensators are implanted ribbons of transmissive nerve fiber that bypass the safety inhibitors, allowing their host to act while suffering from physical and mental trauma. The user may ignore a number of damage boxes (both Physical and Stun) equal to the compensator's rating before determining injury modifiers.

Mnemonic Enhancer: By attaching a highly concentrated growth of gray matter to the brain, the capacity of both short- and long-term memory is increased. Add the enhancer's rating as a dice pool modifier to Knowledge, Language, and memory-related tests (this bonus may be combined with bonuses from other sources). The enhancer also adds a +1 dice pool bonus to Instruction Tests where the user is the subject of the instruction.

Pain Editor: The editor is a cluster of specialized nervous tissue designed to filter sensory stimuli. As long as the pain editor is active, the user can ignore the injury modifiers of Stun damage and will not fall unconscious when the Stun damage reaches its maximum. The subject feels no pain and is unaware of the extent of damage taken without examining herself or being informed by a biomonitor (p. 337). While active, the pain editor provides a bonus of +1 to the user's Willpower attribute, but reduces her Intuition by 1 point (never below 1). Additionally, all tactile Perception Tests receive a dice pool modifier of –4.

Reflex Recorder: With this enhancement, extra neural material is grown in small clusters around the thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves to allow memorization of certain "learned" motor reflexes. The reflex recorder adds 1 to the rating of a specific skill or skill group (Combat and Physical skills only). Multiple recorders may be taken for multiple skills, but the effects don't stack. This bonus may be combined with bonuses from other sources.

Sleep Regulator: The sleep regulator modifies the hypothalamus region of the brain, allowing for longer periods of wakefulness. The recipient requires less sleep per day and the sleep she gets tends to be deeper and more restful. The sleep regulator allows a character to get by with three hours of sleep each night and stay awake for 48 hours before modifiers start to take effect. Resting hours for healing purposes are not affected.

Synaptic Booster: With this bioware, the nerve cells making up the spinal cord are encouraged to replicate and lengthen, providing a wider "datapath" for the transmission of impulses and decreasing the amount of time required for the signal to traverse the distance. The booster confers a bonus of +1 Reaction and + 1 Initiative Pass per point of rating. The synaptic booster cannot be combined with any other form of Initiative enhancement.

BASIC BIOWARE	ESSENCE	AVAILABILITY	COST
Adrenaline Pump (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.75	(Rating x 6)F	Rating x 30,000¥
Bone Density Augmentation (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 0.3	12	Rating x 20,000¥
Cat's Eyes	0.1	4	7,500¥
Digestive Expansion	0.5	4	20,000¥
Enhanced Articulation	0.3	12	40,000¥
Muscle Augmentation (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 5)R	Rating x 7,000¥
Muscle Toner (Rating 1–4)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 5)R	Rating x 8,000¥
Orthoskin (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.25	(Rating x 4)R	Rating x 30,000¥
Pathogenic Defense (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 0.1	8	Rating x 10,000¥
Platelet Factories	0.2	12	25,000¥
Skin Pocket	0.1	4	5,000¥
Suprathyroid Gland	0.7	20F	45,000¥
Symbiotes (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 5)	Rating x 10,000¥
Synthacardium (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.1	(Rating x 4)	Rating x 10,000¥
Tailored Pheromones (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 4)F	Rating x 15,000¥
Toxin Extractor (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 3)	Rating x 20,000¥
Tracheal Filter (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 3)	Rating x 15,000¥

UNARMED COMBAT ATTACK	REACH	DAMAGE	AP
Bone Density 1	–	(STR/2)P	–
Bone Density 2	–	(STR/2 + 1)P	–
Bone Density 3	–	(STR/2 + 2)P	–
Bone Density 4	–	(STR/2 + 3)P	–

CULTURED BIOWARE	ESSENCE	AVAILABILITY	COST
Cerebral Booster (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.2	(Rating x 6)	Rating x 10,000¥
Damage Compensators (Rating 1–12)	Rating x 0.1	(Rating x 3)F	Rating x 15,000¥
Mnemonic Enhancer (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.1	(Rating x 5)	Rating x 7,500¥
Pain Editor	0.3	18F	40,000¥
Reflex Recorder			
Skill Group	0.2	12	25,000¥
Skill	0.1	10	10,000¥
Sleep Regulator	0.15	8	10,000¥
Synaptic Booster (Rating 1–3)	Rating x 0.5	(Rating x 6)R	Rating x 80,000¥

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MAGICAL EQUIPMENT

Foci, Magical Supplies, Fetishes, and **Spell Formulae** are described in *The Awakened World,* p. 176.

FOCI	AVAILABILITY	COST
Spellcasting Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 15,000¥
Counterspelling Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 5,000¥
Sustaining Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 10,000¥
Summoning Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 15,000¥
Banishing Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 5,000¥
Binding Focus	(Force x 4)R	Force x 10,000¥
Weapon Focus	(Force x 5)R	Force x 10,000¥
Power Focus	(Force x 5)R	Force x 25,000¥

MAGICAL SUPPLIES	AVAILABILITY	COST
Spirit Binding Materials	(Force x 2)	Force x 500¥
Magical Lodge Materials	(Force x 2)	Force x 500¥
Biofiber	(Force x 3)	Force x 100¥ per sq. meter

FETISHES	AVAILABILITY	COST
Combat	8R	200¥
Detection	2	50¥
Healing	2	500¥
Illusion	2	100¥
Manipulation	6R	300¥

SPELL CATEGORY	FORMULAE COST	PERSONAL INSTRUCTION COST	AVAILABILITY
Combat	2,000¥	Instruction skill x 1,500¥	8F
Detection	500¥	Instruction skill x 250¥	4R
Health	500¥	Instruction skill x 250¥	4R
Illusion	1,000¥	Instruction skill x 500¥	8R
Manipulation	1,500¥	Instruction skill x 1,000¥	8R

VEHICLES & DRONES

Vehicle attributes are described in *Vehicle Combat*, p. 167.

Rigger Adaptation: When added to a vehicle, this "black box" allows a character with a control rig (p. 338) to rig the vehicle (*Rigging* and *Drones,* p. 244), either through a direct fiberoptic cable or wireless link.

Weapon Mounts: Vehicles may be equipped with a number of weapon mounts equal to their Body ÷ 3 (round down). Weapon mounts may hold any LMG or smaller-sized weapon and 250 rounds of ammo.

TYPICAL PASSENGER CAPACITY

The following values are typical seating capacities for human-sized passengers. As a rule of thumb, trolls adaptation replaces two seats with a single oversized one. Some vehicles may have cargo space available to replace with additional seating.

VEHICLE	SEATING
Personal Mobility Vehicle	1
Motorbike	2
Subcompact	2
Compact	3 or 4
Sedan	5
Sportscar	3
Limousine	5
Family Van	5 to 7
Delivery Van	3
Patrol Car	5
APC/Riot Control Vehicle	10 to 14
T-Bird	8
Autogyro/Aerial Personal Mobility Vehicle	1
Cargo Helicopter	4
Utility Helicopter	7
Personal Jet	5 to 10
Transport Plane	20

GROUNDCRAFT

Dodge Scoot: This electric-powered scooter is perfect for whizzing down city streets. Compact and affordable, the Scoot is available in a wide variety of colors, and the plastic chassis can be shop-modified to customer specs.

Harley-Davidson Scorpion: This bike is a classic, heavy-bodied road hog, fitted with light armor. The Scorpion remains a favorite with go-gangers and the occasional simstar.

Yamaha Growler: This durable off-road cycle was popularized by the "CalFree Rangers" tridshow, is popular with thrill-seekers and wilderness buffs. Comes with either electric or hybrid biofuel engine.

Suzuki Mirage: This racing bike is a fast street machine whose slick styling makes it a favorite with go-gangs and sees use in the Combat Bike circuit. This is the latest iteration of the Suzuki classic.

Honda Spirit: A sleek three-wheeled two-seater with an electric engine, the Spirit is popular with commuting sprawl dwellers. The Spirit is available with a bubble hood for bad weather.

Ford Spiral 115Ti: A mid-range sports coupé aimed at the low-price sports car market. The 115Ti is practical for inner-city commuting and fashionable enough to show off on a night out on the town.

Mercury Comet: This standard sedan is famous for its reliability and economy. Its traditional lines, four doors, an capacious luggage storage has made it the bestselling family car in North America, replacing the Ford Americar.

Toyota Gopher: A classic pickup with great off-road suspension, superior handling, and a loyal customer base. A little dated, the Gopher sees widespread use in rural areas and Third World nations thanks to its low-maintenance hardy design.

Mitsubishi Nightsky: Decadent, secure, and high-tech, this limo is the standard transport for corp executives and media stars. Features concealed armor and a chemical seal as well as variety of luxury amenities.

Eurocar Westwind 3000: The latest in a classic series of sleek, low-slung speed machines from the European automaker. Its aerodynamic, hatchdoor design is popular among powercar lovers making it a challenger to the ever popular Saab Dynamit 788 TI. This turbocharged luxury sportscar offers improved suspension and high performance—at a hefty price.

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GMC Bulldog Step-Van: One of GMs topsellers, this capacious armored van is favored by delivery drivers, security forces, and shadowrunner teams.

GMC Everglades: This general-purpose air-cushion vehicle can be easily converted from a passenger to a cargo craft and is a common sight in well-travelled waterways and marshy areas.

Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1: The Patrol-1 is the most common patrol car in use today. Aside from an lightly armored chassis, the Patrol comes with the enclosed detainee containment, gun safe in the trunk, and may be customized with a pop-up turret.

GMC Beachcraft: The Beachcraft is a swift, lightly armed hovercraft used by several Coast Guard and security forces to patrol waterways and shorelines. It has been known to pop up in pirate hands.

Ares Citymaster: This urban riot-control vehicle functions as a mobile command post. Often used for urban pacification duties and security support functions this APC features a chemical seal, life support (20 man-hours), a small turret, and plenty of armor.

WATERCRAFT

Samuvani Criscraft Otter: A mid-size craft fine for pleasure boating, the Otter also does light hauling and utility work. This five-meter long vessel features a fiberglass open hull.

Marine Tech Sea Nymph: An opulent luxury yacht for those who like to sail in style. The latest seacraft design and technologies make for a great sailing experience.

Morgan Cutlass: This high-power patrol boat is lightly armored and comes equipped with two pintle-style weapon mounts (capable of mounting LMGs or smaller weapons) and a sophisticated sensor suite.

Vulkan Electronaut: A 2-person mini-sub available in a wide selection of utility models. Often used on patrol and short-range reconnaissance duties, and resupply runs.

AIRCRAFT

Cessna C750: This dual-prop craft can carry passengers or serve as a surveillance plane. Its light frame and economy have ensured some are used by smuggling operations.

Ares Dragon: This solid-built, versatile double-prop cargo helicopter can be fitted with extra cargo containers and is seen in a wide variety of roles in urban and remote areas all over the Sixth World. It also sees military use.

Hughes Stallion: This workhorse utility helicopter can be fitted to carry cargo, though it slows the vehicle down. It is traditionally used as a people carrier or light cargo lifter.

Northrup Wasp: This one-man rotorcraft was designed for police and security service. The Wasp is lightly armored and comes equipped with a weapon mount (capable of mounting a LMG or smaller guns).

VTOL/VSTOL

GMC Banshee: This light t-bird vectored-thrust craft was designed for reconnaissance and courier duty.

Federated Boeing Commuter: This tilt-wing aircraft sees heavy use as an inter-city shuttle.

Damian Siech (order #1290732)

DRONES

All drones are equipped with rigger adaptation.

Shiawase Kanmushi: This quad-leg micro-drone "bug" crawler is ideal for penetrating closely confined areas and is capable of crawling on walls and ceilings.

Sikorsky-Bell Microskimmer: Quiet and durable, this skimmer is smaller than a can lid and can even skim over water.

Lone Star iBall: Designed to be tossed or rolled into a room, this minidrone can roll on its own but cannot handle stairs, lips, or large obstructions. An offensive version comes equipped with a built-in flash-pak and smoke grenade for an extra 500¥.

MCT Fly-Spy: The size of a large insect, this flying eye-in-the-sky is very handy for shadowing people, given that it's hard to spot. Equipped with a Maneuverability 2 autosoft.

Aztechnology Crawler: Designed to operate as a remote snooper in rough rural or urban terrain, this small crawler can handle stairs and other obstacles. Efficient and robust, the Crawler has an impressive autonomy.

Lockheed Optic-X: The wings on this VSTOL stealth craft fold up for easy transport. Its patented signature limiting techology make it a favorite of intelligence agencies and shadowrunners.

GM-Nissan Doberman: The Doberman is a perimeter-patrol crawler drone equally effective during daytime or night-time conditions. It comes equipped with a weapon mount t (capable of mounting a LMG or smaller guns) as well as Clearsight 3 and Targeting 3 autosofts.

MCT-Nissan Roto-Drone: The Roto-Drone is a simple, no-nonsense rotor-wing drone design that is easy to customize and integrate weapons systems into.

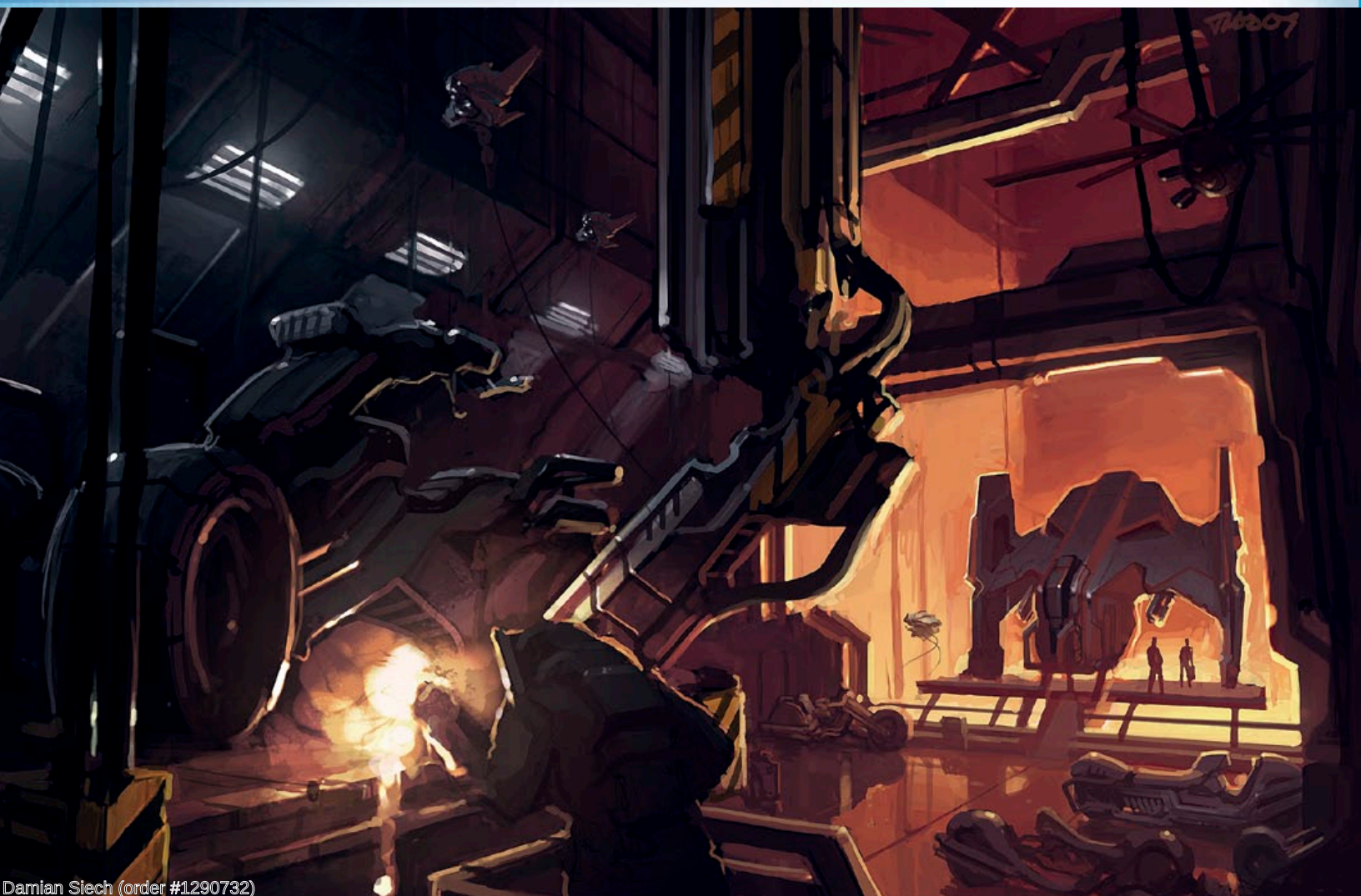
Renraku Stormcloud: This solar-powered mini-blimp can stay in the air for days high above its surveillance target. Commonly used as an eye-in-the-sky for site security as well as various air traffic control functions. Equipped with a Clearsight 3 autosoft.

Cyberspace Designs Dalmatian: The Dalmatian vectored-thrust recon drone features a unique limited hover capability and a sturdy frame for its light weight. Lone Star has licensed the design for urban surveillance duties.

CrashCart AutoDoc: The autodoc is a mobile stabilization unit—it immediately stabilizes any character hooked up to it (p. 253). The AutoDoc is equipped with a Rating 4 medkit.

Steel Lynx Combat Drone: A hardened ground-combat machine, the Steel Lynx possesses four wheeled legs and a turret weapon mount (capable of mounting a LMG or smaller guns). It comes with Defense 3 and Targeting 3 autosofts.

VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS	AVAILABILITY	COST
Rigger Adaptation	4	2,500¥
Weapon Mounts	8F	2,500¥



Damian Siech (order #1290732)

BIKES	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Dodge Scoot (Scooter)	+1	10/15	60	1	4	2	1	—	3,000¥
Harley-Davidson Scorpion (Chopper)	+2	15/30	120	2	8	4	1	—	12,000¥
Yamaha Growler (Off -Road Bike)	+1	15/40	150	1	6	6	1	—	5,500¥
Suzuki Mirage (Racing Bike)	+2	20/50	200	1	6	4	1	—	6,500¥

CARS	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Eurocar Westwind 3K (Sports Car)	+3	20/60	240	3	10	6	1	—	85,000¥
Ford Spiral 115Ti (Low-Cost Sports Car)	+2	15/55	180	2	10	6	1	—	45,000¥
Honda Spirit (Subcompact)	+1	10/20	80	1	8	6	1	—	10,000¥
Mercury Comet (Sedan)	0	15/30	110	2	10	6	1	—	14,000¥
Mitsubishi Nightsky (Limousine)	–2	15/25	100	3	12	10	1	—	120,000¥
Toyota Gopher (Heavy-duty Pickup)	0	5/20	100	1	14	8	1	—	35,000¥

TRUCKS	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
GMC Bulldog Step-Van (Van)	0	5/10	90	2	16	8	1	—	35,000¥

HOVERCRAFT	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
GMC Everglades (Hovercraft)	+1	10/20	120	2	14	6	1	4	25,500¥

MILITARY AND SECURITY VEHICLES	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1 (Patrol Car)	+3	10/45	180	3	10	10	1	12R	22,700¥
GMC Beachcraft (Patrol Hovercraft)	+2	10/40	160	2	12	16	2	16R	63,000¥
Ares Citymaster (Riot Control Vehicle)	–1	5/30	120	3	16	20	3	20R	51,200¥

BOATS & SUBS	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Morgan Cutlass (Patrol Boat)	+2	15/30	60	3	16	10	3	12R	90,000¥
MT Sea Nymph (Yacht)	–3	10/20	45	2	18	6	1	—	170,000¥
SC Otter (Sport Cruiser)	+1	5/10	45	1	12	6	1	—	12,500¥
Vulkan Electronaut (Mini-sub)	0	5/10	30	2	12	10	2	10	158,000¥

WINGED PLANES	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Cessna C750 (Twin-Prop Airplane)	–1	20/90	340	2	18	4	—	8	164,000¥

ROTORCRAFT	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Ares Dragon (Cargo Helicopter)	–1	10/40	260	3	22	8	—	12	495,000¥
Hughes Stallion (Utility Helicopter)	–1	15/50	190	3	14	8	—	12	225,000¥
Northrup Wasp (Autogyro)	0	15/30	130	2	10	6	—	12R	106,000¥

VTOL/VSTOL	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
GMC Banshee (Thunderbird)	+1	50/250	1,000	2	20	18	—	24F	2,350,000¥
Fed Boeing Commuter (Tilt-Wing Airplane)	–2	10/30	120	3	16	8	—	16R	320,000¥

DRONES	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED	PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR	AVAIL	COST
Shiawase Kanmushi (Microdrone)	+1	2/10	10	3	0	0	1	8	1,000¥
S-B Microskimmer (Microdrone)	+1	2/10	10	3	0	0	1	8	1,000¥
Lone Star iBall (Minidrone)	+1	3/15	15	3	1	0	2	6	1,500¥
MCT Fly-Spy (Minidrone)	+1	3/15	15	3	1	0	2	6	2,000¥
Aztechnology Crawler (Small)	0	5/20	50	3	2	0	2	4	1,700¥
Lockheed Optic-X (Small)	0	5/20	75	3	2	0	2	6	1,700¥
GM-Nissan Doberman (Medium)	0	10/25	75	3	3	6	3	6	3,000¥
MCT-Nissan Roto-drone (Medium)	0	10/25	100	3	3	2	3	6	2,000¥
Renraku Stormcloud (Medium)	–3	5/10	25	3	3	2	3	6	2,600¥
C-D Dalmatian (Large)	0	15/40	120	3	4	2	3	9	2,200¥
CrashCart AutoDoc (Large)	0	5/10	30	3	4	2	1	8R	4,000¥
Steel Lynx (Large)	0	15/40	120	3	4	9	3	12R	5,000¥

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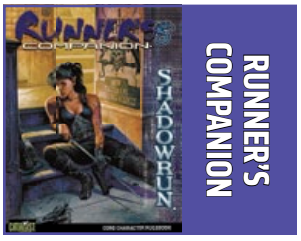
SHADOWRUN MASTER INDEX

This master index includes references to this book along with other *Shadowrun* core rulebooks: *Arsenal*, *Augmentation*, *Runner's Companion*, *Street Magic*, and *Unwired*.



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Damian Siech (order #1290732)

SHADOWRUN

PERSONAL DATA

Name/Primary Alias

Metatype | Ethnicity

Age | Sex | Height | Weight

Total Karma | Current Karma | Street Cred | Notoriety

CORE COMBAT INFO

Primary Armor B / I

Primary Ranged Weapon

DAM | AP | Mode | RC | Ammo

Primary Melee Weapon

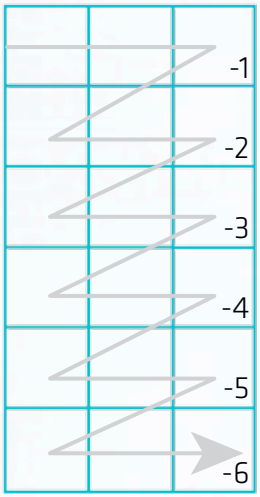
Reach | DAM | AP

ATTRIBUTES

Body		Total Edge		(Natural Max 6, or 7 for humans)
Agility		Current Edge		
Reaction		Essence		(Max 6)
Strength		Magic OR Resonance		(Max 6 + Initiation Grade OR Submersion Grade)
Charisma		Initiative		(Reaction + Intution + Reflex Enhancers)
Intuition		Initiative Passes		
Logic		Matrix Initiative		(Response + Intution)
Willpower		Astral Initiative		(Intution x 2)

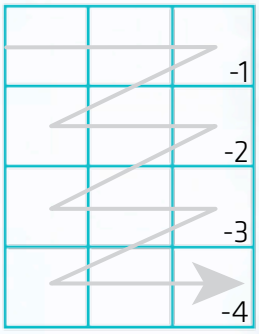
CONDITION MONITOR

Physical Damage Track



Characters have 8 + (Body÷2, round up) boxes on the physical damage track; black out extra boxes.

Stun Damage Track



Characters have 8 + (Will÷2, round up) boxes on the stun damage track; black out extra boxes.

For every 3 boxes of damage on any one damage track, the character takes a –1 Dice Pool modifier on tests; these modifiers are cumulative within and across damage tracks, see *Wound Modifiers*, p. 163.

SKILLS

Skill	RTG	ATT	DP	Type	Skill	RTG	ATT	DP	Type
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
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				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K
				A K					A K

QUALITIES

Quality	Notes	Type
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N
		P N

IDs / LIFESTYLES / CURRENCY

Primary Lifestyle

Nuyen | Licenses

Fake IDs and Related Lifestyles, Funds, and Licenses

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Damian Siech (order #1290732)

SHADOWRUN

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	DAM	AP	Mode	RC	Ammo

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	DAM	AP	Reach

AUGMENTATIONS

Augmentations	Rating	Notes	Essence

SPELLS

Spell	Type	Range	Duration	DV

SPIRITS OR SPRITES

Spirit OR *Sprite*	Force	Services	(Un)Bound OR *(Un)Registered*

ARMOR

Armor	Ballistic/Impact	Notes

COMMLINK

Commlink	OS	
Response	System	
Signal	Firewall	
Programs		

VEHICLE

Vehicle	Handling	
Accel	Speed	
Pilot	Body	
Armor	Sensor	
Notes		

CONTACTS

Name	Loyalty	Connection

ADEPT POWERS OR COMPLEX FORMS

Name	Rating

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MAP OF NORTH AMERICA - 2072

- National Capital
- Noteworthy Sprawl
- International Boundaries
- City
- Split City
- Noteworthy Area
- State Boundaries (U.S.A. circa 1990)

Damian Siech (order #1290732)