26000

SHADOWRUN®

WK GAMES

FANPRO

FOURTH EDITION

BUZZKILL

Some shadowrunners say that the scariest words in the English language are "Trust me." I don't buy it. Any 'runner worth the name doesn't have enough trust left in him to meet his grandmother for breakfast without legwork and backup. No—by my reckoning, the scariest words around are "It'll be easy."

That's what Frankie said just after his call interrupted me at a little club in Redmond, right in the middle of the first poker game in weeks where I actually had a chance to come out ahead. "Can't this wait, Frankie?" I asked, staring glumly through his translucent AR image at my ace-high two pair and cutting hurried glances over the cards at the three suspicious slots across the table. We hadn't been working with Frankie long, but he'd set us up with some decent jobs so it wasn't smart to blow him off.

"You tell me," the ork said cheerfully in his vaguely Noo Yawk accent. "You want the job or not? You guys ain't exactly been flush lately—"

"Yeah, yeah." I sighed. He was right. Me, I wasn't quite wondering if I was going to have to start selling cyberware pieces to make rent, but—

"Don't worry," Frankie soothed. "It'll be easy. In and out. But ya gotta make up yer mind now—the job's tonight and if you don't wanna meet with Johnson I gotta find somebody else."

The two pair beckoned me, and the bozos were making noises across the table. I held up a placating hand and sighed again. I noticed I'd been sighing a lot these days. "Okay, Frankie, okay. Send me the details and give me half an hour to get everybody together."

Frankie's tusks rose in a grin as he signed off. I looked at the cards again. Surely I had time to finish out the hand. "Okay, see and raise fifty," I said, tossing chips in the middle.

"Call," said one of the yahoos. With a smile that showed three kinds of teeth—bad, tobacco-stained, and missing—he dropped a full house on the table.

It was going to be one of those nights.

I got to the bar twenty minutes early, automatically subscribing my PAN to the place's net to get the layout, specials, and any messages that the team might have left for me—and to slip the bartender some cred and let him know we were meeting "Mr. Johnson" in the back room at eight. Nobody much used cash anymore—bribes were handled wirelessly, all neat and tidy. The place wasn't quite a dive, despite the huddle of drooling chipheads I'd had to step over out front. Nowadays even some of the nice bars had their undesirables, at least until security got around to rounding them up. It smelled like beer, sweat, and just a hint of vomit.

I looked around. Locke was already there, slumped morosely into the corner of a booth near the back with what looked like a half-empty glass of whiskey in front of him. I sent an order for a beer to be delivered to the same place, then fought my way to the back and dropped onto the bench across from him. I decided not to mention the whiskey; Locke was an odd guy, all points and angles—and that was just his personality. We just wrote it off to the fact that he

was a mage—with those guys, weird went with the territory. "You're early," I said.

Locke grunted, running a hand over the two-day stubble on his chin. "I like it here. Where else can you get propositioned and puked on in the same evening?"

"By the same person?" I grinned. My beer arrived and we both went silent, waiting.

The rest of the team showed up shortly, together. Zumi with that oddly endearing combination of troll-tough and nervous—I still hadn't quite gotten my mind around a nervous troll, but I guess when you used to be a Japanese corp princess and your world got turned ass over teakettle by growing a meter and sprouting horns during the Year of the Comet, you were entitled to your quirks. Desmo was almost as uncomfortable, a fish out of water without the van that was like an extension of his body. Since our last member was joining us virtually from his car out in the parking lot, that made all of us present. "Okay," I said, finishing my beer and rising, "Looks like it's showtime."

Johnson was a dwarf, compact and broad-beamed with a short, neatly-cut beard and mirrorshades. Everything about him screamed "mid-level corp," from his nice mid-level suit to the nice mid-level prissy human assistant sitting next to him fiddling with a commlink. The dwarf glanced at his commlink and motioned us to sit down. Locke and I did; Zumi faded back and hung out near the door. That was fine: she didn't like negotiations and it couldn't hurt to have somebody watching the exit. Desmo took a seat off to the side—he liked to listen to the spiel but stay out of the way.

> *By my reckoning, the scariest words around are "It'll be easy."*

Johnson looked us over, then got right to it: "I've got a job that shouldn't take much effort, but it's got to be done tonight. Does that work for your schedules?"

Next to me I could almost feel Locke rolling his eyes, but I doubt the dwarf saw it. He seemed to have pegged me as the guy to talk to. "That could be arranged," I said, "depending on what you've got in mind."

The dwarf looked like he expected that. "Of course. I'll give you the basics and then, assuming we have an understanding, we'll go from there." When nobody objected, he continued: "The job involves gaining entry to a facility, removing some information, and planting something else. The security is not extensive, and I'd estimate you could be in and out in less than an hour."

"Oh, sure," Locke muttered to my left. "With them it's *always* easy."

I ignored him; that was usually best. "Where's the facility?"

"It's local," the dwarf assured me. "I can't tell you anything else until you agree to take the job, but I'm authorized to offer you five thousand nuyen—half up front and half on completion."

Yeah, yeah—now begins the dance. "Well, Mr. Johnson—I'm sure you know we can't make any decisions about compensation until we know what we're up against, can we?"

Johnson's head dipped a bit; his eyes, behind the shades, were unreadable. "That's true indeed," he said. "I assure you it's a fair price, but since we're at an impasse here, without going into details, I can say that the security is nothing that a team of your caliber would consider challenging. Please make up your mind quickly, though, because if you choose not to take the job I've still got to find another team." He put his hands on the table and looked like he was getting ready to get up.

Damn him anyway. "Wait," I said quickly, earning me a smirk from Locke.

The dwarf settled back. "Yes?"

I cast a sideways glance at Locke and said, "Assuming you're not jacking us around and the job's what you say it is, and assuming further that you're lowballing because everybody lowballs, what do you say to six thousand?"

The barest flicker of a smile crossed Johnson's face and then the mask was down again. He was good, and he knew the score. He paused, for a second taking on the unfocused stare of somebody mentally accessing an AR visual display, and finally nodded. "All right, then—six thousand. We have a deal." He fiddled for a moment with his commlink, stared into space again, and then hit a akey. I felt my own 'link buzz *incoming.* "Your advance, and my contact information." Then he indicated the prissy human, a dark-haired, rat-faced little man who looked vaguely annoyed when his boss's attention wasn't on him. "My assistant will give you the details of the job. I'll be expecting to hear from you no later than two a.m. Please don't be late."

"Okay," I said as we left the bar in Desmo's van. "Let's go over this again to make sure we've all got it down." I didn't like that we didn't have much time to check things out this time, but that was the way it went sometimes. You lived with it and did the best you could.

Locke shrugged. "Easy. We break into a warehouse, put this—" he pulled a dark-colored bottle from the pocket of his rumpled longcoat "—in the stuff in the tanker truck we find inside, and then get into the offices and steal some files from the computer. Then we collect the rest of our fee, go home and celebrate with booze and hookers."

"We gotta do it in that order," Desmo reminded us.

"Well, sure," Locke said. "If we had the cred for the booze and hookers, why would we bother doing the job?"

Zumi swatted him gently (for her) across the top of the head. "He's right—the stuff in the truck first, then the office. Johnson's guy was pretty clear on that. We should find out something about this place," she added, as always a lot less nervous when it was just us. "I know we don't have much time, but—"

"Already done," came a bubbly voice from the van's speakers, cutting off Desmo's pounding synthrash beats. The dwarf rigger reached in his pocket activated a holoprojector on the dashboard. The image of cheerful purple cartoon tiger in mirrorshades appeared, bouncing up and down on a springy tail. It smiled, displaying shiny fangs. "While you guys were screwing around in the bar, I was hacking Johnson's commlink. His name is Gunther Markstrom—he's a regional manager for Lightning Brands, which is a subsidiary of Evo. The place we're hitting is the Tacoma warehouse, which happens to be run by their rival, Buzz Beverages. Buzz is all geared up to do the first run on a test market for a new energy drink called Buzz!Blitz."

"I've heard of that," Zumi spoke up. "There are ads up all over the places I hang out—they're aiming it at ork and troll guys. You know: it's big, it's full of stimulants, it'll make you edgy and pissed off and give you a dick the size of a fire hydrant. It's so extreme it'll make elves' heads pop off or something."

"Yup," the holographic tiger agreed. "Huge ad campaign—trideo, spot ads beamed to people's PANs, print, Matrix, the whole works. Slick job. Just a few cities, though. They're gonna try it out there and see how it goes over. If it does, they'll roll it out to the rest of the UCAS." A brightly-colored trid image of several tough young trolls causing mayhem appeared on our vidscreens, accompanied by the flashing slogan "BUZZ!BLITZ—CHUG THE BOMB" in angry red letters. Subtle.

I indicated the bottle Locke held. "So according to Johnson's guy, this stuff goes into the tanker truck with the flavoring mixture and screws up the taste of the drink so the test-market fails. Right, Spaz?"

"Exactly," said the tiger. "Johnson had Buzz's project plan on his 'link. Their schedule's so tight they don't even have time for last-minute taste tests. They're already behind—they've got all kinds of events planned, so they can't be late. They'll be shipping the stuff out as fast as they make it. Even if they taste it beforehand and catch the problem, the production run's still ruined so they can't sell it. And our Mr. Johnson, who's got a similar product in the works—and a similar kind of carpet-bomb ad campaign going on for its release next week—gets the jump on his competitor."

"What about the files?" Desmo asked. "You get anything on those?"

"Nope," Spaz said. "From the look of it, it's just a little industrial espionage. They probably want us to do that part last in case we get spotted and have to get out in a hurry."

"So Johnson's frosty?" I asked Spaz. "Not likely to screw us over?"

"Like *that* ever happens." Locke drawled.

"Nah," Spaz said. "He checks out. His ass is in a sling if Buzz's launch is successful and gets the drop on him, so he's got no reason to jerk us around, far as I can find."

I glanced around at the rest of the team. "Okay, then. Let's gear up and get on with it. Spaz, you know you're gonna have to do this one in the meat, right?"

"Aww, *Taaaggg*—" The whining voice and sulky pout didn't quite fit with the goofy-looking tiger.

"Not like we like it either," Locke said.

"Desmo, you ready?" I subvocalized over the team's comm network. The night was moonless and a little drizzly, but the few working sodium-vapors casting sickly little pools of light at intervals down the street meant my cybereyes were functioning just fine. The whole area smelled like ocean and rot. I slumped in the shadows of the next-door warehouse's doorway and waited until the dwarf's affirmative response came back. He was halfway down the block in the van, keeping an eye on the area with an overhead spotter drone. The rest of the team was in the doorway with me, cranked up with anticipation but hiding it well.

Locke had already done his astral-recon thing, declaring the place deserted except for one security guard ("from his aura he's thinking more about getting laid than guarding") and what he called "a corps of elite attack rats." That told me the security was mostly automated, which jibed with the intel Johnson's flunky had given us. "Anything, Spaz?"

Spaz waved me off, concentrating on something none of the rest of us could see. "Nothing. I'm monitoring the police bands and I'm not picking up any calls anywhere near here." We were all getting our minds around the change—Spaz almost never went on runs with us in the meat—he preferred to stay close by and run Matrix overwatch—so the sight of a skinny, crater-faced elf guy with a high-pitched whiny voice took a little getting used to when we were accustomed to the cartoon tiger. In the meat, Spaz was the only elf I'd ever met whose natural social graces were pretty much nonexistent. He didn't bathe too often, either. So much for the stereotype.

"All right," I said. "Unless anybody's got a good reason not to, let's get this done."

Remember what I said before about the three words that should strike terror into any halfway-sane shadowrunner's heart? You're smarter than me, then, because I didn't. Funny how being broke can make you stupid.

Things got started okay—I disabled the security system and Spaz hacked in to make sure that the cameras were showing what we wanted them to show in case somebody off-site was monitoring them. After that it was just the simple matter of waiting for Locke's okay that the guard was off in the other part of the building and we were in. Occasionally I regretted the cred I'd dropped awhile back on a maglock passkey, but this wasn't one of those times.

The interior of the warehouse was dim and cavernous, lit only by a few faint emergency lights far overhead. We paused a moment, getting our bearings. "Everything okay out there, Desmo?" I subvocalized.

"A-OK, boss," the dwarf's voice came back reassuringly quickly. "No sign of anybody."

"Got the layout," Spaz said. "Everybody switch on your overlays."

I did, and a ghostly 3-D floorplan of the warehouse appeared superimposed over my vision. Everything was labeled—crate contents, vehicle locations, even where the bathrooms were. The tanker we were looking for was all the way over on the other side, near the far wall next to several large stacks of crates. Next to us, off to our right, was a

Buzz
Brew

wooden stairway leading upward. The overlay indicated (just as Johnson's guy had said) that the office was up there.

"What I don't get," Spaz spoke up in a stage whisper, "is how come we have to plant the stuff first and *then* steal the data. That's ass-backwards, especially with a layout like this."

I thought about that for a minute. This was why we kept Spaz around, despite his desperate need for a personality transplant. "You know, he's right," I said.

"That's what Johnson wanted," Zumi pointed out. "He was very clear—"

"No, his *flunky* was very clear," Locke interrupted. "I don't see him paying our fee, do you?"

"Fuck his assistant," I growled. "They aren't paying us to be stupid." And stupid it would be—if anybody caught us, I'd rather be in the middle of a warehouse with lots of cover than stuck in an office babysitting a hacker while he sucked data out of an offline computer system. I made a decision. "Files first, then truck." I thought about splitting up to do it faster, but splitting up could get you dead in a hurry if anything went south.

We hustled it up the stairs. They creaked under our weight, especially Zumi's, and we were all sure the guard was going to raise the alarm any second. Locke kept an eye out when he got to the top and caught the guy coming around a corner—a middle-aged ork carrying a flashlight. One spell later and the ork got a ticket to dreamland.

As I was about to slip around a corner, my thermovision picked up a heat-trace reflecting off one of the trucks at the end of the row.

The office door was locked but it might as well not have been. Ten seconds later we were inside the office, a small and cluttered little cube full of boxes, chairs and old datafaxes. Spaz sat down at the desk and started doing his thing to hack into the terminal holding the files. Zumi kept watch on the stairs outside while I paced nervously, holding my H&K at the ready. This was too easy. Yeah, jobs went easy sometimes. It *did* happen. Just not very often. "Desmo? Everything still okay?"

No answer, just a slight crackle of static.

I froze. *Just a glitch. That's all.*

"Desmo? You there? Speak up, *omae*."

Nothing.

The hairs on the back of my neck were starting to crawl.

Spaz was oblivious, his mind plugged into another world, but Locke caught my nervousness and amplified it. He threw himself into another chair and slumped.

I went to the door. "Zumi? See anything?"

"Nothing here," she said.

But now Locke was back. "Fuck!" he growled. "We've got six guys coming in fast from the back, and we're not talking more rest-home refugees like our guard."

It'll be easy. Yeah, right. "Spaz!" I barked, smacking the hacker a good one on the shoulder.

"What?" he whined. "I've almost—"

"Abort!" I yelled. And louder: "Zumi! Incoming!" I glanced quickly around the office: no windows, just the one way out. This wasn't good. "Come on! We don't want to get trapped in here."

We got out of the office before we saw them down on the warehouse floor, spreading out and taking positions behind crates. I knew we were sitting ducks up here—the walkway's flimsy wooden railing wouldn't even provide minimal cover. As if to punctuate this fact a round tore through the wall to my right, the gun's report echoing like thunder. "Down!" I yelled, my own SMG chattering a staccato *budda-budda-budda* as I returned fire. "Get cover!" I vaulted over the railing and miraculously didn't get hit by a volley of rounds as I rolled behind a crate on the ground floor. I heard the railing splinter above me as Zumi tried to do the same thing—she lost her balance and hit the ground hard, but her armor took some of the impact and then she was gone, hidden behind another crate.

"Locke? Spaz?" I still had the warehouse's layout on my overlay, and my mind spun fast trying to come up with a way we could get out of here without having to take out all six of these guys. "You guys okay?"

"Just peachy." Locke said. "I'm invisible, so don't shoot me."

"I'm still upstairs." Spaz's voice shook. "Damn it, Tag, you see why I don't want to—"

"Shut up, Spaz." Then I forgot about him as one of the guys poked his head out from behind a crate and I unloaded on him, pleased to hear a scream and then the clatter of a gun hitting the ground. "One down!"

"Tag, I'm hooked in to the cameras." Spaz had apparently recovered at least some of his courage. Little ghostly red X's—5 of them—appeared on my overlay.

I didn't pause for reflection. Yanking a flash grenade from my belt I chucked it over top of a pile of boxes and ducked as its charge lit up the place like the sun for a fraction of a second. A second after that I heard the unmistakable sound of another grenade (the regular bang-bang variety) going off on the other side of the warehouse and grinned: Zumi had the same overlay I did, and she hadn't wasted any time either. "Good one, Zumi!" I cheered. "Spaz, get your ass down here—we're aborting. Objective is now to get everybody out alive."

One of the X's disappeared from the map. "Damn it—heads up, guys—camera lost him!"

I slowed, advancing with caution down a narrow crate-canyon. As I was about to slip around a corner, my thermovision picked up a heat-trace reflecting off one of the trucks at the end of the row. Instinctively I dived sideways and rolled, giving thanks for my wired reflexes as another volley hit right where I'd been. "Everybody, try to head toward the big roll-up door over there! Spaz, get it open!" The X's were moving again.

It was about then that everything started going to hell in earnest. A thump and a cry of pain behind me told me that Spaz had finally gotten himself down off the catwalk—the hard way, from the sound of things. "You hurt?"

"It's my ankle!" The X's wavered, then stopped moving.

"Spaz—"

"Working on it!" The hacker's voice was bright with fear and pain.

I hurried back toward where he'd been, poking my head out behind crates to check for somebody to shoot. All I saw was Zumi, sneaking as quietly as a troll could sneak. She'd unslung her assault rifle from her back now, so she—

Automatic weapon fire chattered, and Zumi's head exploded in a rain of bone and horns and brains. Just like that. No scream, no nothing. Her body dropped, her gun clattering to the floor.

"You fucking *bastards!*" I screamed, bringing my own gun around and unleashing a deadly hailstorm of rounds into her shooter, who'd been in the process of trying to drop back down from his vantage point high up on a crate. He cried out and fell.

Fuck! "Locke, you got any tricks? Zumi's dead—" Off to my left, I could see the big door starting to slowly trundle its way upward.

"Maybe." The mage's voice sounded tense. "Get the kid. I'll see if I can cover us on the way out."

Four of them, three of us. I had my cybereyes cycling through the spectra—low-light, thermo, ultrasound—and my SMG in constant motion as I backed toward Spaz's last known position. The X's started moving on the overlay again, so I chucked another grenade and ran the other way as the explosion took out several crates and at least one of the bad guys. I wondered why they weren't doing the same thing and thanked whatever deity had switchboard duty that night for small favors. The door was almost all the way up now. *Three of them, three of us*.

"Get over here," Locke called. "Near the door. Stay low."

We did as he told us, pausing a few seconds for me to reload behind a crate. A few seconds too long—a sudden *crack* and my arm lit up with pain as a lucky shot tore through my armored jacket into the meat of my bicep, spinning me around in a spray of blood. Spaz looked near-panicked. "Tag?"

"I'm all right," I growled through gritted teeth. I'd have to be all right. We didn't have any other option right now.

By some miracle we made it to the door—but of course our attackers knew that was exactly where we were heading, so that was bad. The three remaining ones clustered behind cover, and I knew if we ran out there it would be crossfire suicide. "Locke—?"

He didn't answer, but suddenly the air between us shimmered as a large figure carved of living fire appeared in the empty space. "Sic 'em!" the mage cried.

That turned the tide. All three of them unloaded their SMGs into the elemental, but they might as well have been shooting slingshots for all the good it did them. The fiery form surged forward, doing its best to envelop them in its burning grasp. Crates around them were starting to catch fire. "Now let's get the hell out of here!" Locke yelled.

We didn't wait around to see what happened to the guards, the warehouse, or the truck. My only regret was that we'd had to leave Zumi's body behind.

"Fuck, fuck, *fuck!*" I slammed my fist down on the dashboard of Desmo's van hard enough to dent it. "What went wrong, people?"

"Somebody was on to us," Locke growled from the front seat, where he was trying to get me to hold still long enough to heal my arm.

"Damn skippy," Spaz agreed. He was in the back, looking uncomfortable having to sit next to Desmo's dead body. We'd found the dwarf in the driver's seat of the van when we got back, the neat red hole drilled through his forehead matching the not-so-neat hole through the back of his skull, and done the best we could to lay him out and clean up. Spaz was actually driving the van from back there, so my spot in the pilot's seat was just for show.

"Johnson?"

The elf shook his head. "He checked out. And what would he get from this? I told you, he had to want this job to succeed. What would he get for screwing up his own job?" He sighed, indicating Desmo's commlink on the seat next to him. "Looks like the only reason those guys attacked us inside instead of lying in wait out here was 'cause they got spooked. Des's drone spotted them, but they jammed his signal and cacked him before he could get a message out to us. They probably weren't sure, which was why they moved in."

I sighed, bowing my head in frustration. Two of my team were dead. *It'll be easy.* Yeah, right. Famous fucking last words. "Okay," I said at last. "When we get back, our first job is figuring out who the hell sold us out. Call in whatever favors you can and I'll do the same. I want answers, and I want 'em now. Somebody's going down for this."

For once, Locke didn't have a smartass remark.

In the end it was a joygirl and our own resident hacker that cracked the thing for us.

The joygirl was a longtime friend of mine named Tiffany (we went back as far as my corp days before my identity went bye-bye in the Crash, and not many people could say that). I'd sent out the holopics of Johnson and his assistant that Spaz had snapped at the meet to several contacts with a promise of a payoff to anybody who could give me dirt on them, and her reply came back less than an hour later. "Hey, sugar," she said. "I don't know anything about the dwarf, but I've seen the human. He goes by Artie, and he's a real piece of—work."

"You—uh—provided services for him?" I don't know why the thought made me a little queasy, but it did.

"No—I'm not his type, and he's not mine. Word is he likes it rough—and he likes it rough with metas."

"So he's a meta lover?" That would make sense, given that he worked for a dwarf.

"That's not the way I hear it. More like he—takes out his aggressions on them, you know? Ever since word got around the area, he's havin' a hard time findin' anybody who'll let him touch 'em."

Interesting ... very interesting. "Thanks, Tiff. You've been a real help." I slotted her the promised payment, along with a little extra for old time's sake.

Tiff grinned. "Thanks a lot, sugar—it's been a slow month."

"Somebody definitely set us up," Spaz reported back shortly after I'd talked to Tiffany. He was back in his virtual world now, and the cartoon tiger speaking to us through my trid screen looked a lot more confident than the pimply kid. "Looks like we messed up their plans, too."

"Oh, really?" Locke was slumped on the couch, his feet propped up on my coffee table. "Because we were so successful and all—"

"Shut up, Locke," I muttered, my attention fully on the trid. "Go on."

"I was poking around in the data I got from their system," the hacker continued. "The data we were *supposed* to get was basically useless, but naturally I grabbed a few extra goodies that looked interesting. One of them turned out to be *really* interesting. Seems like there were triggers in the system set to call the security guys as soon as somebody hacked in."

I stared. "You mean—not only did they know we were coming, but they were supposed to wait until we—"

"Kinda explains why Johnson's boy wanted us to hit the truck first," Locke said. "Do the job, then get our asses fried doing a useless data steal. No fuss, no bother, no strings."

"I wonder—do you think Johnson *knows* we didn't plant the stuff in the truck?"

"It's a good thing we didn't," Locke said. "I don't know about you guys, but mass murder's not on my playlist."

Now we all got to stare at the mage. "What—?"

He pulled the bottle out of his pocket; it was now sealed up in a thick plastic bag. "While you were tracking down Johnson's flunky, I decided to have a friend test the contents of this bottle to see if our employers were telling the truth. Turns out they weren't—this stuff wouldn't have made the drink taste bad. It would have probably killed about half of the people who drank it, several hours after the fact. Nasty poison, and it doesn't take much to do the trick."

We were all silent for a moment to let that sink in. We had almost killed hundreds of people, and only our sheer orneriness about doing things the way we were told had saved us. "But why would Johnson want to—" Spaz began.

"Wait a second ... " I said slowly. I turned it around in my mind for a minute. "My friend said that Johnson's assistant Artie likes to rough up meta joygirls. And the people who were going to be buying that drink were almost all orks and trolls—"

There was a thump as Locke's feet hit the floor. "I'll be back," he said quickly. "I need to go talk to somebody." He was out the door before we could say anything.

He called half an hour later. "I thought so," he said. From the look of the background behind him, he was driving through a pretty bad end of town, and his expression could best be described as "reluctantly triumphant". "No wonder Johnson's lackey's got it in for metas—he's Humanis. Name's Arthur Carroll, and there's definitely a pointy hood with his name on it."

I took a deep breath. Everybody knew the Humanis Policlub—at the civilized end they sponsored pro-human rallies and supported human candidates for public office. At the not-so-civilized end, the one most people didn't see, they got their sheet-covered hands into a lot messier business, some of it pretty damned ugly. "Should I even ask you how you found this out?"

"Nope," the mage said, almost cheerful. "But I found out, and let's just say the guy who told me should know. He'll wake up sometime tomorrow, if the ghouls don't get him first. I'll be back in twenty, but you should probably run with that info."

Run we did—or rather, Spaz did. Me, I sat in my crappy chair by the window and looked out over the garbage-strewn street at the junkies and chipheads huddled down below, watching the rain and thinking about what we'd almost done. Near as we could figure, Mr. Johnson—the dwarf—had no idea that his assistant had taken what had essentially been a plan for a little cut-rate industrial larceny and transformed it into what had almost been the mass poisoning of hundreds of orks and trolls. With that on the table, the ruin of Buzz Beverages didn't even rate notice.

Locke got back shortly after and threw himself back on the couch with another beer from my fridge. He didn't look any happier than I felt.

"You think we should give Frankie a call?" I asked, just to break the silence that had settled over us like a wet blanket.

"What for?"

"I dunno—let him know he should check into his jobs a little better before he calls us, maybe?"

Locke started to answer but was interrupted by the sight of the tiger popping back on my trid screen. His fangy face was twisted into an uncharacteristic snarl.

"You got something?" I asked quickly, leaning forward.

"Oh, hell yeah." Spaz didn't even try to make the voice sound cartoony this time. "You guys are *not* gonna like this … "

The door to the seedy little bar's back room burst open and an angry-looking Arthur Carroll strode in, glaring. "Damn it, this had better be good, or—"

He stopped short as the door slammed shut behind him. "What—?" Spinning around, he nearly collided with me and my friends Heckler and Koch.

"Get in there, Artie," I said, prodding him with the barrel toward the table, the lone other occupant of which was currently in shadow. I flipped on the light to reveal Frankie, our fixer. A moment later Locke shimmered back to visibility, his Predator pointed at the ork's temple—explaining away the worried look on Frankie's face. "Have a seat," I added.

Artie couldn't decide who to glare at first. "Listen, this is—"

"Unexpected?" I asked. "Like, we were supposed to be dead?" I ground the barrel of my gun into the space between his shoulderblades. "Unfortunately for you, you only got two of us. Even more unfortunately for you, we're not too happy about that."

"What the hell is this about?" Frankie demanded, finding his voice. "What's it got to do with me?"

"You called me, you tusker asshole," Artie spat.

The trid screen on the far side of the room flicked on to reveal the tiger, looking uncharacteristically predatory. "Actually, he didn't. I did. And I called you too, Frankie. It was sickeningly easy to hack your outgoing Matrix feeds and spoof your addresses to make you each think the other one wanted a meet."

I shrugged when they both glared at me. "You shouldn't be surprised." I motioned toward Artie. "When Spaz told me he'd hacked Artie's system and found emails with somebody planning this whole thing and offering a payoff for a successful job, it wasn't hard to put two and two together. The only part of this I don't get, Artie, is why you worked with an ork. I thought you didn't like orks."

"Or anybody else who doesn't look like you," Locke added.

Artie had reached the end of his patience. "You'd know if you weren't so stupid," he said, contempt dripping from his voice.

"Oh, hey, let me try," Locke spoke up, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "You're a devious little weasel … so let's see—first, you get to kill or poison a bunch of dirty orks and trolls. Second, you get to ruin a division run by a dwarf. Third, you get to kill off a team of meta and race-traitor street scum. How am I doing so far?"

Arnie just glared.

It was all coming clear now. "And fourth," I put in, "You get to ruin the rep of an ork fixer when word gets out that he screwed his team for, what—a couple thousand nuyen?"

"One," Spaz offered.

"One? Cheap bastard. We're worth way more than that," Locke said.

Back at the table, GlareFest 2070 was continuing, with Frankie shooting stinkeye at Artie and Artie spreading it around to the rest of us. "You son of a bitch—" Frankie growled at the little human.

Artie ignored him. "What are you gonna do with me?" he demanded, sneering. "Blow me away with that?" He indicated my H&K. "Somebody'll hear."

I grinned. "Nah, Artie. That's way too low-class. I prefer a little *irony* in my revenge. Locke?"

The mage had moved away from Frankie while I spoke, and now he came back with a tray containing four glasses, each filled with a fiery red carbonated liquid. "This stuff's pretty vile," he said conversationally. "I tried it. Even without the poison it's awful—nearly takes the roof of your mouth off, but I guess macho troll guys are into that kind of self-mutilation thing." He set the tray down in the middle of the table.

"Two of them came straight out of the can," I said, taking a seat but keeping the gun trained on them. "The other two are … your own special recipe, Artie. Sporting chance for both of you, neh?"

Artie was turning several shades of red. He looked like he was going to bolt but I cuffed him one upside the head before he could move. "We got all night," I told him. "Zumi and Desmo ain't comin' back any time soon. Figure they're buying this round."

. . . TABLE OF CONTENTS . . .

Buzzkill 2
Welcome to the Shadows 14
- **The Basics** 16
  - What is a Roleplaying Game? 17
- **Roleplaying Shadowrun** 17
  - What Runners Do 17
  - Basic Runner Types 18
  - Settings 19
  - Shadow Activity 21

A History Lesson for the Reality Impaired 22
- **The Rise of the Megacorps** 22
- **Death and Chaos** 25
- **Metamorphoses** 26
- **Divided We Stand, United We Fall** 27
- **Hate and Brotherhood** 29
- **The Corporate Shuffle** 30
- **Will to Power** 31
- **Year of the Comet** 32
- **Matrix Crash 2.0** 33
- **It's a Wireless World** 34

Life on the Edge 35
- **Day to Day** 36
  - A Place to Stash Your Gear 36
  - Getting Around 36
  - You Are What You Eat 36
  - Show Me The Money 36
  - SINless in Seattle 38
  - The Doctor Is In 38
- **Welcome to the Machine** 38
  - Matrix 2.0 38
  - The Network is the Consumer 39
  - Sharing the Love 39
  - Tagging, 2070's Style 39
  - Big Brother is Watching 39
- **Get Your Mojo Workin'** 39
  - Magic in the Media 39
  - John Q. Public 40
  - Magic and Religion 40
  - Ghouls and Spirits and Dragons—Oh My! 40
  - Magic in the Shadows 40
- **Takin' Care of Business** 40
  - Extraterritoriality 41
  - Guarding the Henhouse 41
  - In the Family 41
  - The Big Ten 42
  - Strange Bedfellows 44
- **Livin' Large** 44
  - Nightlife 44
  - Music 45
  - Sports 45
  - Simsense 45
  - Trideo, Radio, and Cinema 46
  - Advertising 46
  - Fashion 46
  - Sex 47
  - The Dark Side 48
- **Criminal Elements (Other Than You)** 49
  - Organized Crime 49
  - Gangs 49
  - Organleggers 49
- **He Ain't Heavy ...** 50
  - The Way It Is 50
  - Pro-Meta activist Groups 50
  - Racist Organizations 50

Game Concepts 51
- **Playing Shadowrun** 52
- **The Abstract Nature of Rules** 52
- **Dice** 54
- **Making Tests** 54
  - Dice Pools 54
  - Dice Pool Modifiers 54
  - Target Number and Hits 55
  - Glitches 55
  - Rule of Six 56
- **Different Types of Tests** 56
  - Success Tests 56
  - Opposed Tests 57
  - Extended Tests 58
  - Teamwork Tests 59
  - Trying Again 59
  - Critical Success 59
- **Time** 59
  - Combat Turns 59
  - Actions 60
- **Shadowrunning by the Numbers** 60
  - The Concept 60
  - Metatype 60
  - Attributes 60
  - Magic 62
  - Skills 63
  - Qualities 63
  - Gear 63
  - Body Modifications 63
  - Contacts 64
  - Lifestyle 65
  - Condition Monitors 65
  - Karma 65
- **Metahumanity** 65
  - Dwarfs 65
  - Elves 66
  - Humans 66
  - Orks 66
  - Trolls 67
- **Edge** 67
- **Tweaking the Rules** 69

Creating a Shadowrunner 70
- **Sample Characters** 72
- **Building a Shadowrunner** 72

Build Points (BP) 72
Choose Your Metatype 72
Purchase Attributes 73
Acquire Skills 74
Qualities 77
Assigning Resources 84
Gear 84
Magical Resources 85
Technomancer Resources 86
Contacts 86
Finishing Touches 86
Final Statistics 86
Starting Nuyen 87
Gamemaster's Approval 87
Background and Story 87
Build Point Cost Summary Table 88

Sample Characters 89

Skills 105
Base Skills 106
Active Skills 106
Knowledge Skills 106
Language Skills 106
Using Skills 106
Skill Groups 106
Skill Ratings 106
Specialization 109
Defaulting 110
Combat Active Skills 110
Magic Active Skills 113
Physical Active Skills 113
Using Climbing 115
Using Escape Artist 115
Jumping 116
Using Navigation 116
Using Perception 117
Using Running 117
Using Stealth Skills 118
Using Survival 118
Using Swimming 118
Using Tracking 119
Resonance Active Skills 119
Social Active Skills 120
Using Charisma-Linked Skills 120
Technical Active Skills 123
Using Forgery 124
Using Locksmith 125
Using Technical Skills to Build or Repair 125
Vehicle Active Skills 125
Special Active Skills 127
Knowledge Skills 127
Choosing Knowledge Skills 127
Street Knowledge 127
Academic Knowledge 128
Professional Knowledge 128
Interests 128
Using Knowledge Skills 128
Language Skills 128
Language in 2070 129
Lingos 129
Using Language Skills 129
Using Attributes 130
Attribute-Only Tests 130

Combat 131

Combat Turn Sequence 132
Initiative 132
Initiative Score 132
Initiative Passes 134
Switching Initiative 134
Initiative and Edge 134
Initiative Glitches 134
Delayed Actions 134
Timed Items and Initiative 135
The Action Phase 135
Free Actions 135
Simple Actions 136
Complex Actions 138
Movement 138
Resolving Combat 138
Opposed Combat Test 138
Combat Sequence 139
Ranged Combat 140
Ranged Attack Modifiers 140
Defending Against Ranged Combat 142
Firearms 142
Single-Shot Mode 142
Semi-Automatic Mode 142
Burst-Fire Mode 142
Full-Auto Mode 143
Ammunition 144
Shotguns 144
Projectile Weapons 144
Projectile Weapon Types 145
Grenades 145
Rockets and Missiles 146
Resolving Rocket and Missile Fire 146
Melee Combat 146
Defending Against Melee Combat 147
Melee Modifiers 147
Melee Combat Weapons 148
Other Combat Factors 148
Armor 148
Called Shots 149
Defense Modifiers 150
Full Defense 151
Interception 151
Knockdown 151
Subduing (Melee Only) 152
Damage 152
Types of Injury 152
Damage Codes 152
Damage Resistance Tests 153
Applying Damage 153
Wound Modifiers 153
Dead Man's Trigger 154
Special Types of Damage 154
Surprise 155
Surprise and Perception 155
Surprise Tests 155
Effects of Surprise 156
Barriers 157
Barrier Ratings 157
Shooting Through Barriers 157
Destroying Barriers 157
Vehicle Combat 158
Vehicle Attributes 158
Vehicle Tests 159
Tactical Combat 160
Chase Combat 160
Attacks Against Vehicles 161
Vehicle Damage 161
Gunnery 162
Sensor Tests 162
Sensor Targeting 162

The Awakened World 163
The Basics 164
Awakened Attributes 164
Magic Use 164
Sorcery 164
Conjuring 166
Drain 167
Magical Lodges 167
Noticing Magic 168
Magic Actions 168
Traditions 169
Creating a Tradition 169
Magic and Spirits 169
Drain Attribute 170
Example Traditions 170
Sorcery 171
Spells 171
Spellcasting 173
Ritual Spellcasting 174
Counterspelling 175
Conjuring 176
Spirits 176
Summoning 179
Banishing 180
Binding 180
Watcher Spirits 181
The Astral World 181
Auras and Astral Forms 181
Astral Perception 182
Astral Signatures 182
Astral Projection 183
Astral Combat 184
Astral Tracking 185
The Metaplanes 185

Mana Barriers 185
Mana Lodges 185
Wards 185
Passing Through Barriers 185
Adepts 186
Mystic Adepts 186
Adept Powers 187
Initiation 189
Initiate Powers 189
Foci 190
Bonding 191
Activation 191
Spell Foci 191
Spirit Foci 191
Weapon Foci 191
Power Foci 191
Mentor Spirits 192
Roleplaying a Mentor Spirit 192
Mentor Spirit Modifiers 192
Mentor Spirit Archetypes 192
Street Grimoire 195
Spell Characteristics 195
Combat Spells 195
Detection Spells 197
Health Spells 199
Illusion Spells 201
Manipulation Spells 202

The Wireless World 205
Matrix 2.0 Basics 206
Augmented World 206
Matrix Topology 206
Device and Software Ratings 206
Using the Matrix 206
Hacking the Matrix 208
Matrix Combat 208
Rigging 208
Augmented Reality 209
Zones 209
Commlinks and Networking 210
PAN Modes 211
Persona 211
Linking and Subscribing 212
Matrix Attributes 212
Pilot Programs 213
Getting Online 214
Commcodes 214
Authorized Access 215
The Datatrail 216
Using the Matrix 217
Matrix Perception 217
Accessing Multiple Nodes 218
Using Computer Skill 218
Using Data Search Skill 219
Other Matrix Actions 220
Hacking 221
Hacking and Accounts 221
Breaking In 221
Hacked!—Once Inside 222
Intruder Alerts 222
Using Hacking Skill 223
Using Electronic Warfare Skill 225
Programs 225
Common Use Programs 226
Hacking Programs 226
Loading and Using Programs 227
Agents 227
Intrusion Countermeasures 228
Source Code and Piracy 228
Virtual Reality 228
VR Access Mode 228
VR Matrix Perception 229
Cybercombat 230
Matrix Initiative 230
Matrix Attacks 230
Matrix Damage 231
Matrix Condition Monitor 231
Black IC Attacks 231
Simultaneous Combat in Multiple Nodes 232
Technomancers 232
Resonance 232
The Living Persona 233
Technomancer Skills 233
Complex Forms 233
Threading 234
Sprites 234
Decompiling Sprites 236
Types of Sprites 236
Sprite Powers 236
Matrix Signatures 237
Fading 237
Submersion 238
Rigging and Drones 238
Drones 238
Rigger Actions 239
Autosoft Programs 239
Commlink Customization 240
Buying Upgrades 240
Buying Your Own Hardware 240
Coding Your Own Programs 240

Running the Shadows 241
Health 242
Healing 242
Physical Damage Overflow 244
Toxins 244
Toxin Attributes 244
Using Toxic Substances 245
Sample Toxins 246
Drugs and Brainbenders 246
Substance Abuse 247
Drugs 248
Better-Than-Life 250
Security Systems 251
Physical Security 251
Technical Security 253
Magical Security 256
Matrix Security 256
Reputation 257
Street Cred 257
Notoriety 257
Public Awareness 258
Identification, Please 258
What's in a SIN? 258
Commlinks, Credsticks, and ID 259
Fake ID 260
Lifestyles 261
Karma 263
Awarding Karma 263
Character Improvement 264
Improving Skills and Skill Groups 264
Improving Attributes 264
Other Improvements 264
Gamemaster Advice 265
Creating an Adventure 267
Integrating New Team Members 269
Keeping Secrets 270
Tips for Less Stressful Shadowruns 270

Friends and Foes 271
Non-Player Characters 272
Grunts 272
Sample Grunts 274
Prime Runners 276
Contacts 278
Contacts by the Numbers 278
Fleshing Out Contacts 278
Using Contacts 279
Playing Contacts 281
Sample Contacts 282
Critters 285
Attributes and Skills 285
Powers 286
Weaknesses 290
Critter Combat 291
Ordinary Critters 291
Paracritters 292
Spirits 294
Dracoforms 295

Street Gear 298
Gear Ratings 300
Carrying Gear 300
Carrying Capacity 300
Encumbrance 300
Size Customization 300
Using Unadapted Gear 301
Concealing Gear 301
Physical Searches 301
Availability & Buying Gear 301
Standard Goods 301

Black Market Goods 302
Fencing Gear 303
Legality 303
Jurisdiction 303
Cyberware and Bioware Grades 303
Wireless Connectivity 304
Turning it Off 304
Common Costs 304
Gear Listings 304
Melee Weapons 305
Projectile & Throwing Weapons 306
Firearms 306
Firearm Accessories 310
Ammunition 312
Grenades, Rockets, and Missiles 313
Explosives 315
Clothing and Armor 316
Electronics 317
Datachips and Software 320
ID and Credsticks 322
Tools 323
Vision Enhancers 323
Audio Enhancers 324
Sensors 325
Security Devices 326
Breaking & Entering Tools 326
Chemicals 327
Survival Gear 327
Biotech 329
Disguises 330
Cyberware 330
Bioware 338
Magical Equipment 341
Vehicles & Drones 342

Credits: Shadowrun Fourth Edition

Design Team
Rob Boyle, Elissa Carey, Brian Cross, Dan Grendel, Adam Jury, Steve Kenson, Drew Littell, Christian Lonsing, David Lyons, Michelle Lyons, Jon Szeto

Writing
Rob Boyle, Elissa Carey, Brian Cross, Dan Grendel, Adam Jury, Robyn King-Nitschke, Christian Lonsing, David Lyons, Michelle Lyons, Jon Szeto

Editing
Rob Boyle, Robyn King-Nitschke, Michelle Lyons

Index
Rita Tatum

Shadowrun Line Developer
Rob Boyle

Art
Art Direction
Rob Boyle
Cover Art
Mark Zug
Cover Design
Michaela Eaves
Interior Layout
Adam Jury, Jason Vargas
Color Section Layout
David M. Stansel-Garner (and Troy too!)
North America Map
Mikael Brodu
Shadowrun Logo Design
Catherine Brigg
Cool Symbols
Nigel Sade
Character Sheet
Adam Jury, Drew Littell
Color Illustration
Shane Coppage, Fergus Duggan, Steve Ellis, Michael Komarck
Illustration
Echo Chernik, Alex Draude, Fergus Duggan, Steve Ellis, Jacob Glaser, John Gravato, Chris Lewis, Brad McDevitt, Thomas Rooney, Anne Rouvin, Klaus Scherwinski, Chad Sergesketter, Per Sjogren, Christophe Swal, Kevin Wasden

Shadowrun Originally Created By
Jordan Weisman, Bob Charrette, Paul Hume, Tom Dowd, L. Ross Babcock III, Sam Lewis, and Dave Wylie

Some Material Based on Previous Work By
Bob Charrette, Tom Dowd, Paul Hume, Steve Kenson, Michael Mulvihill, Sharon Turner-Mulvihill, and really everyone who has contributed to Shadowrun over the years.

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Find us online:
info@shadowrunrpg.com
(Shadowrun questions; please check the website FAQ first!)
http://www.shadowrunrpg.com
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. . . WELCOME TO THE SHADOWS . . .

The club was packed. Punks pogoed on the ground floor, wire-thin and barely-clothed ravers danced to techno on the upper balcony. They all moved to a different rhythm—some listening to entirely different music through headphones or implants, others too drugged out of their minds to know or care. Four of the club-goers moved in sync, methodically and alertly making their way towards the bar in back from different directions.

The bar opened onto a street-level patio. A phalanx of intimidating orks in business suits, fashionable yet generic, cordoned off one wing of the patio, watching the four closely as they approached. Behind the bodyguards, a lone human sat at a table on the edge of the patio, sipping wine as if he enjoyed his private patio domain. His expensive suit and shoes practically cringed at being seen in such a dingy setting. The four wordlessly slid past the orks, glares extended on both sides, and sat down at the table without introduction.

The suited man nodded to each, a thin smile unwavering on his lips, and introduced himself simply as Mr. Johnson. "I have a target. He's arriving at SeaTac tomorrow morning, 0500 hours. He's already arranged for transportation to downtown with one of the air taxi services. I have complete schedule information, of course. I need you to be that air taxi, and to drop him off at a location to be specified once you have him in the air. Unharmed, of course. He's not a willing participant."

The four exchanged a series of lengthy glances and throat mumblings, a telltale sign they were quietly discussing the offer over their private wireless mesh network. Not a word was said aloud. Sure is a rush. Sec there will be tight. I might have an in. Air-Taxis? Rad! Let's rock!

After a few seconds, several nodded, agreeing with the voices in their heads. One of the four leaned forward, the nanotats on his bald head clashing with the color of spotlights bleeding from the dance floor, and asked the all-important question. "Compensation?"

Johnson paused, downed the last of his wine, and put the glass softly down on the table. "20,000 nuyen, twenty-five, seventy-five. Keep it totally clean, and there's an extra five K."

Another of the four—this one a lanky elf—spoke up. "Passcodes. What do you have for the air taxi's system?"

The suit looked annoyed for a moment, his posture changing, finger traveling along the rim of his empty glass. "Nothing. I know the service, the times, the info about the target; the rest is up to you."

The elf looked at his team again, silently messaging. Shouldn't be that hard of a hack. Delay his taxi, insert ours, get the guy, and bug out like it was Chi-town. It's gonna be a long night, though.

The others nodded silent approval. The bald one leaned forward again. "We're in. Beam the info to him,"—he indicated the elf with a jerk of his thumb—"and we'll see you in the morning."

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

2070. 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 in the new world for themselves. 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 famine 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 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 have become the new world superpowers, a law unto themselves. The entire planet speaks their language; the nuyen has become 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 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 rise above 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 can slide like a whisper 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 can 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 surround the Earth, are sought after to spy on the competition, sling spells against an enemy, commit magical sabotage, and for any other purpose that their employers can dream up. All these individuals sell their skills to survive, taking on the 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 and driven by intrigue and adrenaline. Those who play in it 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. 51), or turn to *A History Lesson for the Reality Impaired* (p. 22) or *Life on the Edge* (p. 35) 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 p. 70). 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. 51).

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. FanPro 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!

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 that 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

INCOMING FEED.....

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, 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.

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 is usually the front-man at any

meet and handles negotiations with Mr. Johnsons, dealers, info-brokers, and situations where legwork and networking is necessary. 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 body's abilities. Adepts tend to be athletically oriented, with good stealth and combat skills.

Hackers are characters that specialize in computers, and accessing and manipulating data via the Matrix—either using augmented reality or going full-bore and using virtual reality to help them 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 they 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. If getting down and dirty with the physical and electronic guts of your ride is more your thing, you 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 attempt 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 with similar labels, 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. 70)—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. 89.

SETTINGS

Shadowrun is set only sixty-five 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.

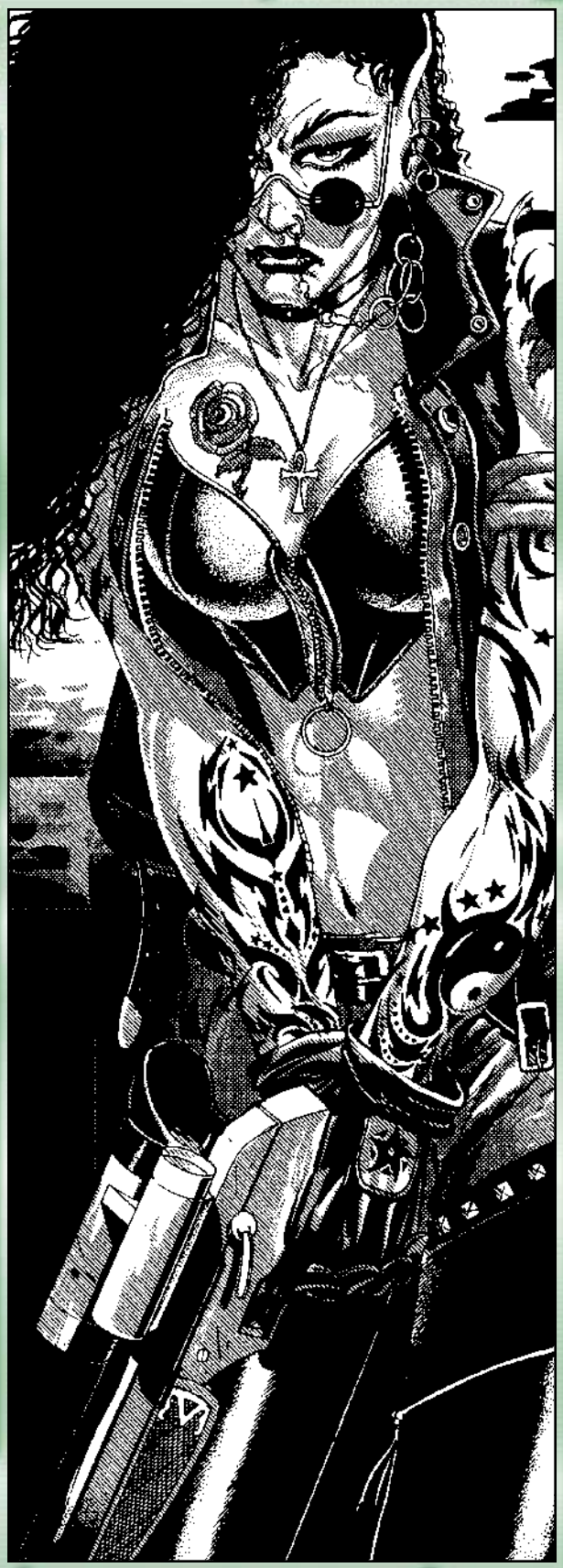
The Matrix

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, comprise 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 recreational purposes. In fact, most people are online all of the time, constantly interacting with the Matrix via their *commlinks* and *augmented reality (AR)* overlays. Most people have their own *personal area network (PAN),* a micro-network linking together all of their personal devices using 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. 205.

Of central interest to most casual users are geo-tags which 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 be



watching the security cameras mounted in their child's day-care 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, 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 mention more than a few 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 while it plans for more. Most metahumans consider the vast urban sprawls to be their home, whether it be the glittering skyscraper penthouses of the corporate elite, the winding homogenous mazes of a corporate housing enclave, or the warzone atmosphere of a blighted ghetto that the police long ago surrendered to gangs. 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 host and steals information. While this can often be done from a remote location, they often prefer to work on site, doing 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 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 are **tailchasers,** or simply "distraction runs" 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. Many runners refuse to take these jobs and view dirtying their hands for money in this way as vile. The world of 2070 contains many factions, each with multitudes of enemies who 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.

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 it simply by their existence, because they possess illegal cyberware or practice magic without a license. While some runners have legitimate jobs, many do not have SINs, and 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.

. . . A HISTORY LESSON FOR THE REALITY IMPAIRED . . .

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 is willing to learn something for the sake of knowledge, not just survival.

—FastJack

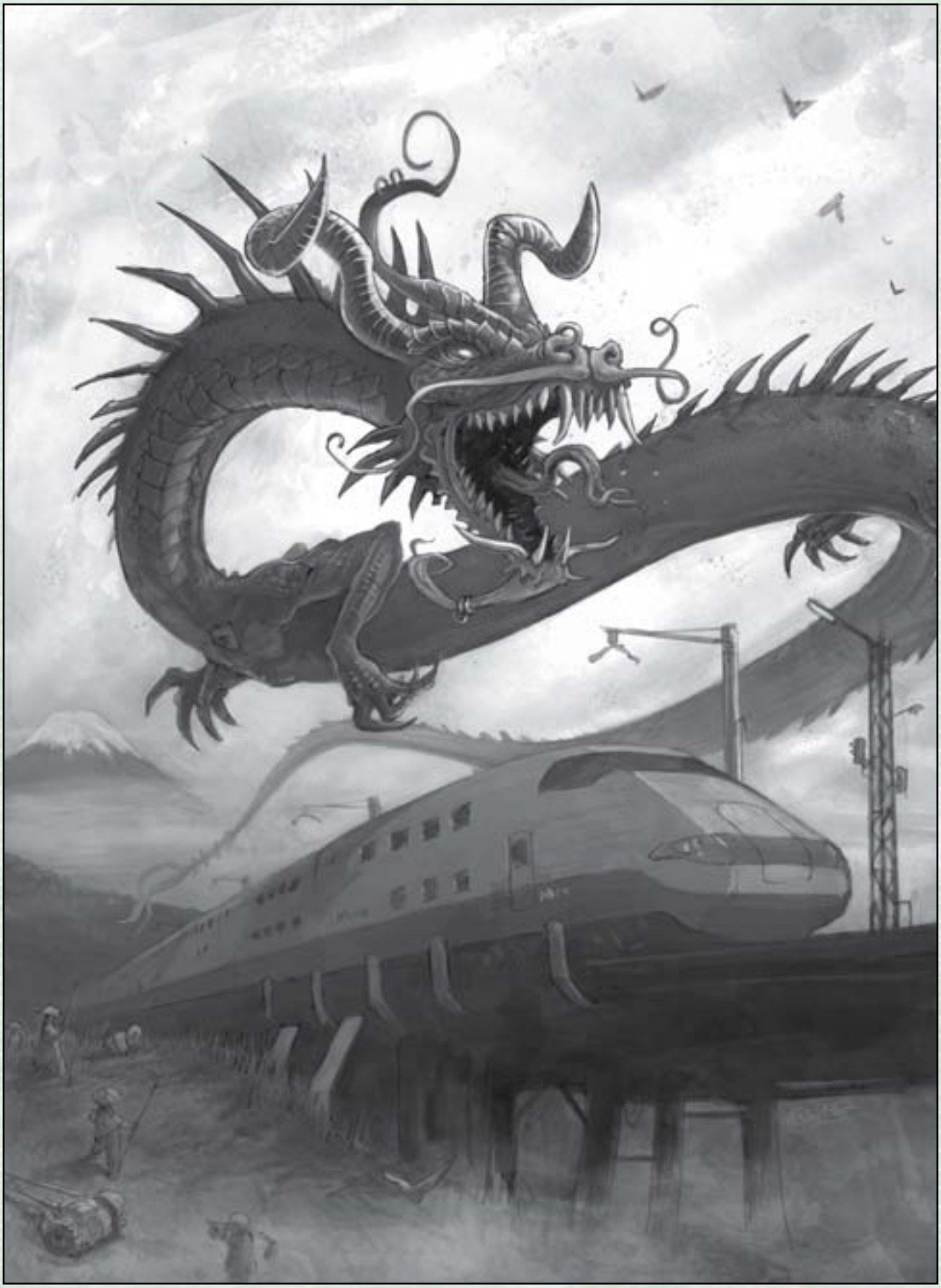
THE RISE OF THE MEGACORPS

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 1990's, 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 began supplementing them with their own private security forces—forces that, far from stereotypical doughnut-eating "rent-a-cops," grew 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's 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 protections 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 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.

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. government 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 crime-related 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, were 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 as 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 exercised 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. Those 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.

THE AWAKENING

As if a prelude of what was to come, suddenly a percentage of children all around the world were 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 American 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 were fighting for exclusives while the military was trying 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.

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 it, 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 United States of America, 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 pass 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 U.S. 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

INCOMING FEED.....

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.

METAMORPHOSES

Yet more changes came down the pike between 2018 and 2029: ASIST, 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 '20s.

Then in 2019, British braintrust corporation Transys Neuronet successfully attached the first completely cybernetic replacement limb to a human being. This human being 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 an-

other 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 there.

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 had 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 world wide 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 later made it so much safer 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 infocalypse.

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 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 generated 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 much of their knowledge 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.

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 in the decade that followed. 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 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 Confederated American States (CAS). Though Florida had been part of the original secession talks, the state instead decided to join the new Caribbean League.

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 the troops in to take care of the rebellious Belarusians and Ukrainians. Unfortunately for them, 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 EuroWars 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 communi-

cations 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 did not claim 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.

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 had 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 n'Óg with all the gosh and blarney he could muster.

With such a wondrous example to follow, in 2035 the Sinsearach elves simultaneously 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, however. 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.

The help sent was 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 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 14th 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 under this category. It also sometimes meant that metahumans 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, oth-

erwise 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.

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 with ghosts and hungry ghouls.

Boston had Bloody Tuesday 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 prevented in places 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 keep the public from finding out the truth. Sad to say that we found out regardless, thanks to the debacle in Chicago.

Cermak Blast

Ares investigative teams discovered that Chicago had 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. To add 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 will always be in some state of flux, the megacorporations as we know them in 2070 have all been fairly recognizable since at least the '40s. 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.

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 to enjoy the rewards of their labors, however: both died under mysterious circumstances in 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 handing all of this over to the company. 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 got its name changed after the Crash of '29 when a corporate hotshot named Inazo Aneki bought it and completely restructured it. It became a key player in rebuilding the information network after the Crash, and thus made wagonloads of money. But it got a bit too big for its own britches when it began dabbling in the creation of semi-autonomous knowbots (SKs) in 2049; though this launched it further ahead of the tech curve and thus the market share, its applications toward the Seattle Renraku Arcology 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. 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, the joint, Corporate Court-backed 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 highlights just how blood-thirsty 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

If you'd asked your typical SINless sprawl resident what he thought of dragons, much less Dunkelzahn, you'd be greeted with blank stares or shrugs. Before 2057, 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.

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

What no one except perhaps Dunkelzahn and a few others realized, however, were 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 thanks to its pet creative (an elf claiming to be Leonardo) disappearing and seemingly erasing his data when he did so; this left the megacorp with little in the way of proof to defend itself against Fuchi's claims that Lanier gave Renraku proprietary data, allowing Renraku to dominate

the market for a time. 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 follow ... 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 helped prepare the way for the island nation's later 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; this afflicted Japan with volcanic eruptions and tidal waves. The Bay Area suffered earthquakes, the Philippines were hit with additional 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 it was in Los Angeles, demolishing its 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, except for one young man, had been killed. 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. Everyone complied except for General Saito, well installed in San Francisco and having taken it and the Central Valley under his control. Saito quickly became not only a worrisome irritant to the Diet and the Emperor, but a royal pain to the people of CalFree who really hadn't counted on this, especially the metahumans, whom he 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 and control, 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 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 perhaps the Treaty of Denver would be nullified, and we'd have war between the Native American Nations, the UCAS, and the CAS. A meeting cleared up everything, reshuffling Denver's organization, making Ghostwalker 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 allowed Denver the ability to defend itself in case of attack without necessitating 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: when the dust settled, 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 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 and escaped as soon as she could with a decker named Dodger; and Deus, another AI created within Renraku as an attempt to have a pet intelligence to heel, and built using code ripped from Morgan (who thenceforth became Megaera, poor broken thing).

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'S 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 as nodes 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 would 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, willing to 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 for use in their plan to bring down Deus and the Matrix. The stolen nanovirus was accidentally released during infiltration of a Swiss extraterritorial corp zone, killing everyone present but allowing Z-IC to identify the weapon. They 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 2070. 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 in place 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 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, levied its close relationships with several key nations (including Tir Tairngire and Pueblo, among others) along with 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.

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, had attempted to stage a coup and failed. Still, they'd 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, 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 60s, 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 erstwhile blessing. The withdrawal of the megacorporation Mitsuhama Computer Technologies from Tsimshian territory after it was finished plundering left the territory rather empty; the Salish-Shidhe lost no time in effectively making it a Salish protectorate. This has 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 found themselves dropped below sea level and were inundated with tidal waves. While San Francisco and the Bay Area were mostly spared, waters have 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.

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

. . . LIFE ON THE EDGE . . .

Hey Johnny,

Long time no see! Just thought I'd let you know what I'm up to now that I'm back out on the streets. I'm glad as hell to be out—my head's finally starting to get clear and the nightmares are toning down some now. Mostly, anyway.

Man, the world sure has changed! I know we didn't exactly have the latest tech in the stir, and I kept up with the news some (as much as they let me, anyway—I mean, you'd have to live under a rock to miss the Matrix crash), but I was not ready for what was out there!

I think Eddie was havin' fun with me. He set me up with a commlink and a pair of AR shades and took me down to Aurora Village to check out the sights. You should have seen him laugh when I freaked out—I tell you, Johnny, things were coming at me from everywhere! Maps of the whole place, ads for stores, ads for stuff from most of the megacorps, come-ons from chicks who read my profile (yeah, Eddie made one up for me, and after I looked at it, I guess I know why those girls were interested), recommendations for stuff I might like to buy, plus all the usual spam-type junk. I thought I was gonna go crazy trying to filter it all out. That's when Eddie started laughing, took my commlink and changed a few settings—and after that I was blown away by what I was seeing. The spam and stuff was gone, but the maps, the ads, the signs—it was amazing, Johnny! I guess I looked pretty stupid standing there taking it all in, but that's okay. I picked up a new simsense player and a few new sims—I guess Neil the Ork Barbarian is still around (even if it feels like some new guy is playing him now), so it's nice that not everything has changed.

We ran into a little trouble then—these Humanis assholes were set up at one end of the mall broadcasting their crap and I guess I got a little angry. Unfortunately, so did a couple troll gangers from the Spikes who were hanging around the area. Eddie wasn't laughing anymore when me and the Spike guys started showing the Humana-goons that maybe they should take their garbage somewhere else. Good thing for me, Eddie managed to grab my ass and yank me outta there before security showed up—I mean, I hate bigots as much as the next ork, but I'm not ready to go back inside just yet. There's too much wiz stuff out here that I still gotta figure out.

Hey, gotta go—got a date in an hour with one of the chicas from the mall (get this—she's a shaman! I've never hooked up with a spellslinger before, so I hope she doesn't turn me into a toad or something if I piss her off), and the fridge is telling me we're outta beer. Come by sometime and we'll go have a few and catch up on old times—and maybe you can point me at somebody who can get me some work, if you know what I mean.

--Mike

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.

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. Rooms are set to automatically turn lights on and off when you enter or leave, 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 litterbox 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 intra-city 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.

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 awhile, 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 "frankenfoods" 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.

SEXXX!
OUI, OUI!
VIVA REVOLUTION!
TALISMONES
CLARENZA CANOLLI
RADIATION AREA
1150

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 with. 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.

SINLESS IN SEATTLE

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 means "rich" and "poor." 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, leonization 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 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. 205, 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. 205).

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.

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.

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. 163, 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.

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 that (for whatever reason) don't have that option—and for those who can handle it, the rewards of shadowrunning can be great.

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

How did the megacorporations get so powerful (in addition to creating or having a hand in just about everything we buy)? One word: extraterritoriality. What this means is that the megacorps essentially make their own rules within their own territory—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 13 justices drawn from the ranks of the Big 10 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 if they allow things to devolve into chaos, that will 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 commute by shuttle or communicate via Matrix connection.

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.

THE BIG TEN

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

Ares Macrotechnology

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're 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), with smaller divisions in many other areas.

Aztechnology

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% 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

Headquarters: Vladivostok, Russia

As suggested by its name, Evo is a corporation that looks to the future. Formerly called Yamatetsu, the 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 non-human people in mind.

Horizon

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 and 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.

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

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

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 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

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 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

Headquarters: Essen, Germany

Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries can be summed up in one word: Lofwyr. The great dragon owns nearly 100% 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

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, the question is more, "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

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

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 in your commlink 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 '70s 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 permitted musicians to plug directly into their instruments and create the music they heard 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 '70s, 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 reluctantly to 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).

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, 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

'70s 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 '60s 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), 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 & discipline, exhibition-

COMMON STREET SLANG IN 2070

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.* derogatory term for dwarf
hermit – *n.* a commlink user who always operates in hidden mode.
hez – *n. Or'zet.* courage, sexual prowess.
hoi – 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.* 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.* derogatory term for non-ork or non-troll
so ka – *Japanese.* I get it, I understand.
spider – *n.* security rigger.
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.

ism, 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) 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 2070, 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 "data brokering."
- **Ghost Cartels:** Though the traditional Central and South American narco-cartels suffered setbacks with the development of 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.

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.

. . . GAME CONCEPTS . . .

Saint James sat at the airport terminal, watching the data flow. He knew that his mark had already landed, cleared customs, and had yet to pick up his checked baggage. Less than 500 meters away, both Bills and Turbo Bunny loitered, dressed as Sea-Tac Express employees. Bunny wasn't wearing her normal long rainbow braids, and her short, messy blonde hair was covered with a Sea-Tac Express cap. The nanotats on Bills's shaved head were also covered.

At exactly 0458 hours, the timer in Saint James's AR display flashed red and he activated his first piece of code. A signal went out to Sea-Tac Express unit 032, triggering a warning light that indicated repair service was needed, and instructing the driver and assistant to leave the craft when they returned to the bay. The two STE employees left the craft and walked away, happy to take an unscheduled break. Nonchalantly, Bills and Turbo Bunny walked over to the helicraft, speaking casually to each other as any co-workers would. The vehicle's security system registered them as the previous two staff returning to their post after a break, and the craft started again, engine idling.

The security at Sea-Tac was too tight to bring drones on site, so Abraxas waited inside the airport, near the baggage claim, keeping an eye out for the mark. Two tense minutes passed as he paced back and forth. In his rumpled business suit he looked like just another stressed-out corp commuter.

"Mark spotted," he subvocalized via subdermal microphone, when he finally noticed their target approaching. "Coming down the escalator now ... looks tired. Oh, fuck. He has an escort."

"That wasn't in the plan," Saint James transmitted back. "What's the scan?"

"Tall guy, ork, Latino." Abraxas responded. "Bodyguard for sure—he's not carrying the guy's bags or anything."

Bills cut in: "Just one? Move on to plan two, no changes. Subdue after entry, ASAP."

Abraxas watched the bags circle on the carousel, keeping tabs on the two men out of the corner of his eye. The target grabbed his bag when it came around, nodded to the guard, and headed out towards the taxi loading area. The bodyguard followed, alertly scanning the crowd. Abraxas picked a random bag from the carousel and began to saunter in the same direction, fumbling with his commlink as he walked. "They're at the doors. It's go time."

Saint James activated his second piece of code, diverting the scheduled pick-up call order to Turbo Bunny's taxi. She brought the commuter craft to life and eased it out into the flow of traffic. A minute later, she landed at the target's designated pick-up point.

The doors to STE-032 slid open, and a uniformed Bills called out the target's name—and several others. "Sorry, sir. We're having some technical and scheduling issues, so we're going to have to take on some other passengers for this trip. They're heading to the same destination, so there will be no delays for you. `We apologize for the inconvenience."

The bodyguard squinted at this news, but the target—obviously eager to just get going—stepped into the helicab. The bodyguard, Saint James, and Abraxas all followed, stepping into the taxi and taking seats like normal commuters. The doors closed, and Turbo Bunny took the craft airborne.

Saint James ran the third and final piece of code, and business as usual resumed at the Sea-Tac Express gateway.

Urgent Message...

For veterans of *Shadowrun, Third Edition* (and the first and second editions!), here's the lowdown on important mechanical concepts that have changed:

- Dice pools no longer exist in their SR3 form. They are now attribute + skill +/– modifiers.
- The target number for dice rolls is now always 5. Yes, all target numbers. Modifiers add or subtract from dice pools, not the target number.
- Each roll of 5 or 6 is a "hit" rather than a "success." Success is determined by the number of hits scored.
- The Rule of One is triggered more frequently, and may be triggered even when the roll is successful. See *Glitches*, p. 55. We feel your pain.
- The Rule of Six no longer applies, except when you are using Edge. See p. 67.
- Open Tests no longer exist.
- A new type of test–Extended Tests–has been added.
- The maximum for natural, unaugmented Physical and Mental attribute ratings is now 6 (plus metatype modifiers).
- Intelligence is divided into two new attributes: Intuition and Logic.
- Quickness is divided into two new attributes: Agility and Reaction (Reaction is no longer a derived attribute).
- Initiative is now a derived attribute (Reaction + Intuition).
- Two new attributes have been added: Edge (luck) and Resonance (for technomancers).
- Magic no longer starts at 6; it must be purchased just like other attributes.
- Bioware and cyberware both reduce Essence, but they are tracked separately and the lesser value counts at half.
- Exclusive Actions no longer exist.
- You may now purchase skill groups–groups of related skills with a cheaper bundled cost.
- All types of combat are now handled as Opposed Tests.
- Condition Monitors are no longer fixed at 10 boxes (see *Condition Monitors*, p. 65).
- Wound Levels are gone and Damage Codes were changed to a single Damage Value (see p. 152) and an Armor Penetration modifier (see p. 152).
- Matrix attributes and ratings are radically different (see *The Wireless World*, p. 205).
- Street Index, Legality, Concealability, and Weight have been removed from gear statistics in favor of simplified systems.

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.

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—they work together to build and experience tense and dramatic adventures and encounters. 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. 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.

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 modifiers—both positive and negative—to determine the final dice pool. The player then rolls a number of dice equal to the dice pool.

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).

Attribute-Only Tests

For some tests, the gamemaster may decide that no skill is appropriate and instead picks two separate **attributes** that are relevant to the test (see *Using Attributes,* p. 130).

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. 110.

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

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** (see p. 56) do not affect the dice pool. Unless otherwise stated, any modifier mentioned is considered to be a **dice pool modifier** as noted above.

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. 67). 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. 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.

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.

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.

Note that characters may spend Edge to negate a glitch (see p. 67).

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 (see p. 67; note that the character still fails).

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 (see p. 67). 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).

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.

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

DIFFICULTY TABLE

Difficulty	Threshold
Easy	1
Average	2
Hard	3
Extreme	4

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: **SuccessTests, 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 a threshold as high as 4. The Difficulty 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 (see p. 67).

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 not based so much on the situation as 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.

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.

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.

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 tring 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).

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 Lyrian'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 subtasks (check-up, fix the engine, change the tires, upgrade the onboard computer, fill in the bullet holes) that are each handled separately.

Though it may seem that characters are guaranteed of success in an Extended Test over time, that is not always the case. 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. A good limit is to allow a maximum number of rolls equal to the character's dice pool (so a character rolling 6 dice has 6 attempts to get it done). 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.

Urgent Message...

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

Task Difficulty	Threshold
Easy	4
Average	8
Hard	12
Extreme	16+

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 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 time, 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.

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 (.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 the primary character's dice pool. The primary character than makes the test, and her results determine success.

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 means 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. 67), 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).

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. 132). The point during each Combat Turn when a specific character can act is called a **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. 135–138 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. 135.

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* may be of one of the 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. 65, 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 (see 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.

ATTRIBUTES

There are twelve **attributes** in *Shadowrun,* though each character has just ten or sometimes eleven. 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. 130).

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-foot-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.

Mental

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

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 be regained until certain in-game events occur, at the discretion of the gamemaster (see *Edge,* p. 67).

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 off the game with an Essence of 6.

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 (see p. 132), which determines 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 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 with a Magic of 1 or higher cannot possess a Resonance attribute, and vice versa.

Resonance is a special attribute for technomancers, characters able to manipulate the Matrix with their minds alone (see *Technomancers,* p. 232). Resonance is an attunement to the echoes and transmissions that permeate the electronic world, an alignment with the wired 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 with a Resonance of 1 or higher cannot possess a Magic attribute, and vice versa.

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 (see p. 73). The maximum *augmented* attribute value for each metatype is equal to 1.5 times this figure, rounded down (see the Metatype Attribute Table, p. 73). This also applies to Initiative.

During gameplay, players can spend **Karma t**o improve character attributes (see *Character Improvement,* p. 263). 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. 189); for Resonance the maximum rating is 6 + submersion grade (see *Submersion,* p. 238).

The maximum natural rating for Edge is 6 (7 for humans).

HUMAN ATTRIBUTE RATINGS

Rating	Description
1	Weak
2	Underdeveloped
3	Typical
4	Improved
5	Superior
6	Maximum unmodified human

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. 163).

In *Shadowrun,* Awakened characters must purchase either the **Adept quality** (p. 77), **Magician quality** (p. 79) or **Mystic Adept quality** (p. 79) 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. 173) and **Conjuring** to summon **spirits** (see *Summoning,* p. 176). Both spellcasting and conjuring, as well as other magical activities, cause a type of fatigue to magicians called **Drain** (p. 167).

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** (see p. 170). 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** (see p. 170). 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. Some adepts take a hermetic-like approach to magic, while others follow the principles of shamanism.

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. 192).

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. 105, has a complete listing.

All skills have a predetermined linked attribute—the attribute that applies when the skill is used. The rating of the attribute plus the rating of the skill combined 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. 77). Adept powers, implants or magic may provide bonus dice to a skill, creating a *modified* skill rating, but this does not change the base skill rating. 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 2 extra dice on tests using that skill when the particular specialty applies (see *Specializations,* p. 109). 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. 106). Starting characters cannot have a skill group higher than Rating 4.

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. 77.

Characters may not purchase more than 35 BP worth of Positive qualities or take more than 35 BP worth of Negative qualities.

GEAR

Gear is stuff the character owns. Gear includes a runner's trusted sidearm, her nightclub clothes and corporate drone disguise, her micro-transceiver 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 *Gear* chapter, p. 298. 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 (see p. 210). 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. 205). Commlinks are also the interface characters use to experience the augmented reality of the Matrix (see p. 209). There are drawback to having commlinks (and other wireless devices), however—see *What Every Shadowrunner Needs to Know About Hacking,* p. 224.

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 for armor penetration. The AP modifies the value of any armor used to resist the attack. See *Damage Codes,* p. 152, for further explanation of how these codes are used.

BODY MODIFICATIONS

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 a complete listing of various pieces of cyberware and their effects, see p. 330.

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 that 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. 338.

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.

Additionally, there is a higher grade of bioware that has been grown from the recipient's own cloned cells, known as **cultured bioware.** Cultured bioware is more Essence friendly than standard 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. 278.

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. 278.

Connection Rating

A contact's Connection rating indicates how useful he is in terms of his own network of contacts and influence. Connection

METAHUMAN CHARACTERISTICS TABLE

Metatype	Avg. Height	Avg. 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

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. 278.

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. 261.

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. 152, 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. 263). 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 across the globe in geographic and ethnic terms. 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.

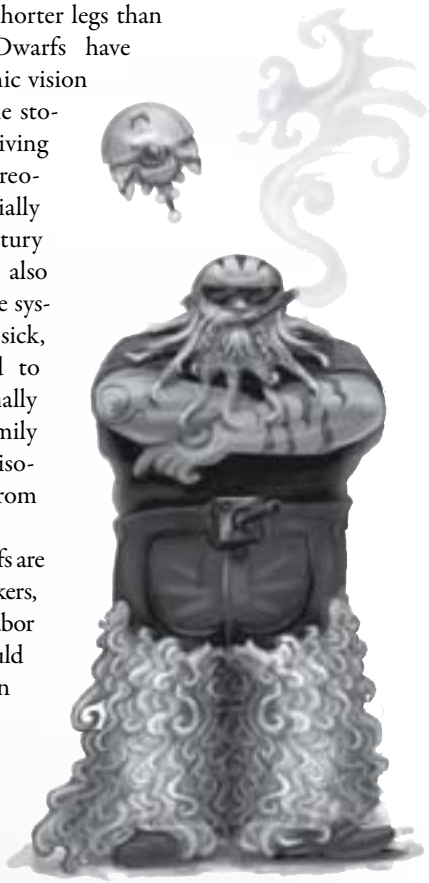
In 2070, most metahumans are born to parents of the same metatype. In the case of mixed parents, the child has a roughly even chance of being born as the metatype of either the father or the mother. There are no "half breeds" in the Sixth World—no elf-orks or dwarf-trolls, no matter how amusing the concept 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 pumillonis

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 *is* 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 Tir na nOg).

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.

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 kg. 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 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 '60s. 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 32—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 gainfully 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.

EDGE

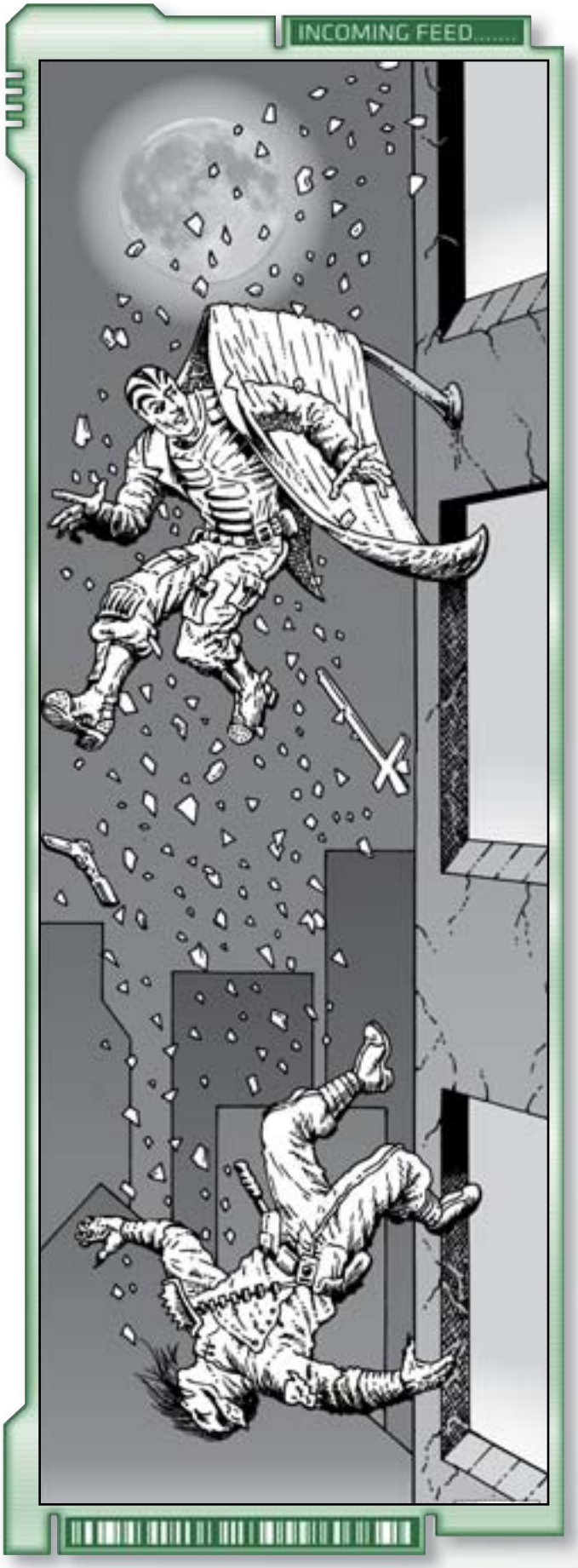
Edge is a character's luck, the favor of the gods, that unexplainable factor that allows her to beat the odds. A character's Edge attribute represents the number of **Edge points** a character has to spend during gameplay. Edge points can be used for a wide range of benefits, each noted below. Edge points that are spent are temporarily unavailable (see *Regaining Edge,* p. 68)—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. 68)

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. 56), 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. 56), however, only applies 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. 55) 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. 134). 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. 134).
- You may negate the effects of one glitch or critical glitch.
- You may invoke the Dead Man's trigger rule (see p. 154).

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, see p. 59). 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. 59) against the odds.
- Rolling a critical glitch (p. 56)—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.

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.)
- 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 the character is not necessarily unharmed by the action; 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.

TWEAKING THE RULES

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 gameplay:

- 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. 151) 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.

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 of play. 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.

. . . CREATING A SHADOWRUNNER . . .

In retrospect, I think I ventured into the shadows because that bastard Shahid showed up for my wife's funeral.

I never liked Shahid after he became the head of Carrie's department. But we were all family, or so the Shiawase corporate mission statement went, so I was supposed to treat him like my own brother. Never mind the fact that I haven't spoken to my brother in over ten years.

In any case, I was standing over Carrie's casket when Shahid walked up. He offered some clumsy condolences, but I remember one thing out of his otherwise meaningless blather: he was enrolling me in Shiawase's Survivors' Recovery Program because of the circumstances of Carrie's death.

Shahid offered some lame justifications, but as a corporate hacker, I knew better. The Survivors' Recovery Program, or SRP, was just a payoff to relatives of Shiawase employees whom the corp had ordered for permanent termination: hush money, in other words, for their killing. In hindsight, I now realize why Shahid never ascended further than middle management; it was obvious to the Powers-That-Be in Shiawase that they couldn't really trust him with secrets.

Carrie was just a cost estimator for a relatively unimportant program, so I was puzzled why Shahid was enrolling me in the SRP. My curiosity got the better of me, and I started digging into Shiawase's personnel database. There I uncovered two shocking secrets.

The first was a report from Shiawase's Market Information and Forecasting Department, the MIFD: the corp's intelligence agency. Apparently the MIFD believed Carrie to be a latent technomancer, seeing as she was a Matrix broker in the Boston stock exchange when Crash 2.0 hit.

It was like a ton of bricks had pounded into my chest—I must have been blind not to have seen the signs. After the crash, she had enough tech savvy to rival me, and that was my job. I thought she'd just taken an interest after hearing me go on aobut it for so many years. I was a goddamned fool. I'm so sorry, baby.

The second and more damning revelation was the actual cause of her death. I had thought Carrie died because of complications from her exploratory surgery. In an effort to awaken her technomantic abilities, though, Shiawase had introduced additional procedures to the operation. Things didn't work out the way they expected, and Carrie died in agony on the table.

You can imagine how I felt. Shiawase, the corp that was like my surrogate family, took away my only desire in the world while blindly pursuing their own avarice. What did that bode for me? I destroyed all of our personnel records and walked away from the comfort of corporate life for the truth that is the shadows.

But then again, you already knew that, didn't you, Mr. Johnson? So I'm sure you're wondering why I'm retelling all this. Simple, really: I want you to deliver a message to Shiawase—and particularly to Shahid—about my so-called "betrayal." It's unfortunate that you managed to find me, but I know your headware memory is recording all this for posterity. While I can't permit you to leave this hovel, transmitting your final recollections should do the job all the same.

See you in hell, Shahid.

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.

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.

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

The included sample characters are given on p. 89. These write-ups give basic descriptions and backgrounds for a few of the types of people living and working in the shadows. 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 let you begin playing *Shadowrun* right away.

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 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!

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 by purchasing attributes. This will lay the general foundation for the character and could significantly affect capabilities in other areas (namely skills and magic).

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 pages 89 to 104, 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 literal hired gun who's an expert at all types of firearms.

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.

METATYPE ATTRIBUTE TABLE

BP	Metatype	BOD	AGI	REA	STR	CHA	INT	LOG	WIL	INI	Metatype Abilities
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)	+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)	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)	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)	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)	Thermographic Vision, +1 Reach, +1 natural armor (cumulative with worn armor)

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. 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.

PURCHASE ATTRIBUTES

As mentioned in *Game Concepts,* 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 *Qualities,* p. 77). 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 only 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 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 *Assigning Resources,* p. 84).

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.

Altogether, Michelle has spent 255 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. 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 them both 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 240 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		

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 page 111 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 pp. 108–109 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 magically active characters can use the Assensing skill —meaning characters with the Magician or Mystic Adept qualities (p. 79), or characters with both the Adept quality (p. 77) and Astral Perception power (p. 187).

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. 127.

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. 106.

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.

Specializations

Skills are general—your character can shoot any pistol with the Pistol 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. 109).

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.

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.

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*

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.

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 (370 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. 127 of the *Skills* section). 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 an additional 1 BP. 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. 263).

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.

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. 129 of the *Skills* section.

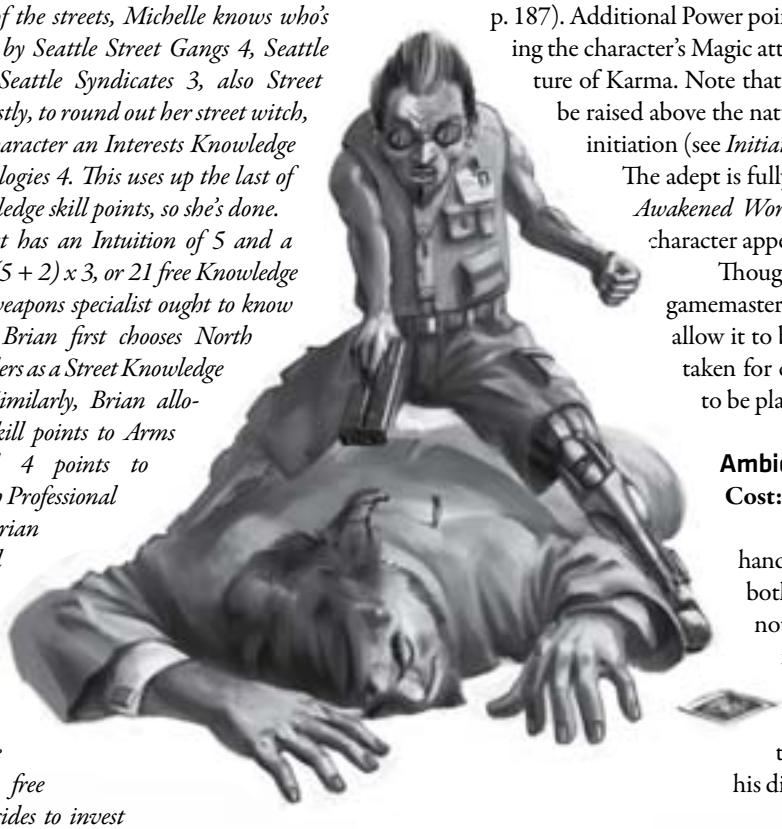
With Active skills already set, the duo takes a look at their characters' Knowledge skills.

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.



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 characteristics that often come to the forefront during the stressful situations shadowrunners often find themselves in. Qualities can either be positive or negative. Players purchase qualities during 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. 187). 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. 73). 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. 187). 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. 189) .

The adept is fully described on p. 186 of the *Awakened World* section; a sample adept character appears on p. 95.

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. 142). 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. 263).

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. 115). At the gamemaster's discretion, the character may be able to squeeze into small, cramped spaces where less limber characters couldn't fit.

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. 153). 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 cyberware, 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. 120). 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. 263). 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. 73). 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. 163). The Combat Mage, Occult Investigator, Radical Eco-Shaman, and Street Shaman sample characters on pp. 90, 97, 98, and 102 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. 169). Magicians may also have a mentor spirit (see *Mentor Spirits,* p. 192) 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. 181).

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. 173). The Magical Resistance quality, however, works even against beneficial spells such as Heal.

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 or Mystic Adept quality. The character has a patron mentor spirit (see *Mentor Spirits,* p. 192) 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. 174) 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. 73). 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 commlink's biofeedback filter (see p. 226).

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. 130), 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 do. The character receives a +2 dice pool modifier to all Healing Tests made on/for/by him, including magical healing.

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. 294). 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. 232). 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. 73). 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. 244). 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 p. 247.

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.

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.

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 (such as 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.

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. 130) 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. 122). 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. 55) 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.

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. 108 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.

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. 106), 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.

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 immunosuppressive 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. 258). 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).

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. 294). 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. 106). 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. 106), 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.

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 down to 365.

ASSIGNING 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 covers 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. 298. 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. 301).

Players need not spend starting resources down to the last nuyen. For suggestions on what to do with leftover money, see *Finishing Touches,* p. 86.

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. 330.

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 *Cyber- and Bioware Grades,* p. 303.

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. 62).

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. 261 of *Running the Shadows.*

Street: Literally living on the street; few or no expenses; eating out of the trash.

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 ex-

penses 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. 86 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.

LIFESTYLE COST TABLE

Lifestyle	Monthly Cost
Street	Free
Squatter	500¥
Low	2,000¥
Middle	5,000¥
High	10,000¥
Luxury	100,000¥

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 elemental conjuring 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. 189) 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. 169).

Spirits may be summoned on a temporary basis during gameplay (see *Conjuring,* p. 176), or even bound into longer-term service (see *Binding,* p. 180). 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. 190). 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.

Adepts may only bond to weapon foci. Magicians and mystic adepts can bond to any type of focus.

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. 187. Power points that are not spent during character creation may be "saved up" for later investment.

Michelle wants to get several spells for her mage. Looking over the spell list (p. 195) 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 7 points on an air spirit that owes her four services and a fire spirit that owes her three services (both Force 3,

as her Magic is 3). She also binds her Force 2 sustaining focus for 2 BP, leaving her with 8 BP.

TECHNOMANCER RESOURCES

Technomancers rely on their living persona, complex forms (p. 233) and sprites (p. 234) 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. 233). 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 toyour 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. 278). 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 p. 278.

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.

Michelle and Brian are almost finished. All that's left now is determining contacts.

Michelle only has 8 BP left, and she decides to go with a single contact. She chooses a talismonger with Connection 3 and Loyalty 5. Michelle decides that her magician is new to town, and the talismonger is an old 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. 184, and those for Matrix Initiative on p. 230.

CONDITION MONITOR BOXES

Body or Willpower	Condition Monitor
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¥

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 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 is 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 'runs.

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.

BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE

Property	BP Cost
Metatype	
Dwarf	25
Elf	30
Human	0
Ork	20
Troll	40
Attributes	
Physical and Mental	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Edge	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Magic	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept Quality)
Resonance	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Technomancer Quality)
Maximum Attribute value	25 for final Attribute Point
Skills	
Active Skills	4 per Skill Point
Knowledge Skills	2 per Skill Point (start with [Intuition + Logic] x 3 for free)
Skill Groups	10 per Group Point
Specializations	2 per Active specialization; 1 per Knowledge specialization
Positive Qualities	
Adept	5
Ambidextrous	5
Animal Empathy	10
Aptitude	10
Astral Chameleon	5
Blandness	10
Codeslinger	10
Double Jointed	5
Exceptional Attribute	20
First Impression	5
Focused Concentration	10 or 20
Guts	5
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15
Home Ground	10
Human Looking	5
Lucky	20
Magician	15
Magic Resistance	5 to 20
Mentor Spirit	5
Murky Link	10
Mystic Adept	10
Natural Hardening	10
Natural Immunity	5 or 15
Photographic Memory	10
Quick Healer	10
Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins	5 or 10
Spirit Affinity	10
Technomancer	5
Toughness	10
Will to Live	5 to 15
Negative Qualities	
Addiction	+5 to +30
Allergy	+5 to +20
Astral Beacon	+5
Bad Luck	+20
Codeblock	+5
Combat Paralysis	+20
Elf Poser	+5
Gremlins	+5 to +20
Incompetent	+5
Infirm	+20
Low Pain Tolerance	+10
Ork Poser	+5
Scorched	+5 (+10 for hackers/technomancers)
Sensitive Neural Structure	+5 (+10 for hackers/technomancers)
Sensitive System	+15
Simsense Vertigo	+10 (+15 for hackers/technomancers)
SINner	+5 or +10
Spirit Bane	+10
Uncouth	+20
Uneducated	+20
Weak Immune System	+5
Resources	
Gear	1 per 5,000¥ (max 50 BP)
Spells	3 per spell (max 2 x Spellcasting/Ritual Spellcasting)
Spirits	1 BP per service owed (max = Charisma)
Bonding Foci	1 per Force Point (max 5 x Magic)
Complex Forms	1 per rating point (max forms = Logic x 2)
Sprites	1 BP per task owed (max = Charisma)
Contacts	Connection rating + Loyalty rating

BOUNTY HUNTER

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.

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:	4.7
Initiative:	6 (8)
Initiative Passes:	1
Physical Damage Track:	12
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (126 BP)

Archery:	2
Athletics Skill Group:	2
Blades (Knives):	1 (+2)
Clubs (Batons):	2 (+2)
Dodge:	2
First Aid (Poisons):	3 (+2)
Longarms:	3
Perception:	2
Survival:	2
Tracking:	3
Unarmed Combat (Subdual Combat):	5 (+2)

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (18 FREE BP)

Cop Trids	3
Crook Hangouts:	3
Lone Star Procedures:	4
Parazoology:	2
Poison Antidotes:	2

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Sioux:	N
English (Cityspeak):	3 (+2)

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)

CYBERWARE

Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, Thermographic, Ultrasound Sensor, and Smartlink)
Cyberears (Rating 2, w/Audio Enhancement (3), Damper, Select Sound Filter (3))
Reaction Enhancers (2)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (100,000¥) (20 BP)

Extendable Baton; Stun Baton; Survival Knives (2); Shock Gloves (2); Bow (Rating 10) w/20 Arrows; Mossberg AM CMDT (Smartlinked) w/10 clips of Flechette ammo; Ruger 100 w/Bipod, Imaging Scope, and 10 clips of Regular ammo; Thermal Smoke Grenades (5); Flash-Paks (5); Lined Coat; Erika Elite Commlink w/Isis Orb OS; Lowlight Binoculars; Plasteel Restraints (4); Containment Manacles (2); Security Tags (20); Doc Wagon Contract (Gold, 1 Year); Middle Lifestyle (3 months)

CONTACTS (14 BP)

Beat Cop (Connection 2/Loyalty 4)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Street Doc (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 4D6+12 x 100¥
+1 Reach
+1 Natural Armor
Lost Natural Thermographic Vision with Implants

COMBAT MAGE

RACE: ELF (30 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
3	4	4	3	4	3	3	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 (18 FREE BP)

Corporate Security Tactics:	2
Lone Star Procedures:	2
Magic Background:	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

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.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (20,000¥) (4 BP)

Katana; Yamaha Sakura Fubuki (Smartlinked) w/Quick-Draw Holster and 20 clips of Regular Ammo; Lined Coat; Novatech Airware Commlink w/Mangadyne Deva OS, Trodes, and Sim Module modified for BTL/hot sim; Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); Magesight Goggles; Simrig; Stimulant Patches (4, Rating 3); Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

CONTACTS (8 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Talismonger (Connection 2/ Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6+9 x 50¥
Natural Low-Light Vision

COVERT OPS SPECIALIST

When the Covert Ops Specialist is doing her best work, you'll never see her. A master of infiltration and espionage, she's highly trained in the art of getting in, getting what she'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. She moves like a ghost, quick and quiet, and her specialized gear helps her pass unseen and gather the information she needs. Don't think she can't handle herself in less covert circumstances, though—if need be, she can talk or fight her way out of most situations.

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 (140 BP)

Athletics Skill Group:	3
Close Combat Skill Group:	3
Electronics Skill Group:	2
Disguise:	2
Etiquette:	2
Infiltration:	4
Perception:	2
Pistols:	2
Shadowing:	3

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (24 FREE BP)

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 (15 BP)

Blandness	(10 BP)
Double Jointed	(5 BP)
Murky Link	(10 BP)
Incompetent (First Aid)	(+5 BP)
Weak Immune System	(+5 BP)

CYBERWARE

Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, Smartlink, Thermographic, and Vision Magnification)
Reaction Enhancers (2)
Spur

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (75,000¥) (15BP)

Monofilament Sword; Shock Gloves; Hammerli 620S (w/Silencer and 10 Clips of Regular Ammo); Ingram Smartgun X (w/Sound Suppresser and 10 Clips of Regular Ammo); Armor Jacket; Chameleon Suit; 5 Flash-Paks; 5 Smoke Grenades; Hermes Icon Commlink (w/Novatech Navi OS and Glasses w/Image Link); Fake SIN (Rating 4); Jammer (Area, Rating 5); White Noise Generator (Rating 4); Gas Mask; Large Container of Nanopaste Disguise; Grapple Gun w/Climbing Gear, 200m of Stealth Rope, Catalyst Stick; Rappelling Gloves; Gecko Tape Gloves; Lockpick Set; Autopicker; Wire Clippers; Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Monofilament Chainsaw; Keycard Copier (Rating 4); Medkit (Rating 6); AR Gloves; High Lifestyle (1 month)

CONTACTS (10 BP)

Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)
Mr. Johnson (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 4D6+3 x 500¥

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:	4.4
Initiative (Matrix):	11 (11)
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (152 BP)

Aeronautics Mechanic:	2
Automatics:	3
Automotive Mechanic:	2
Electronics Skill Group:	4
Gunnery:	4
Locksmith:	2
Perception:	2
Pilot Aircraft:	6
Pilot Anthroform:	3
Pilot Ground Craft:	4

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (27 FREE BP)

Computer Background:	3
Local Junkyards:	5
Hospital Routes:	4
Pirate Trid Broadcasts:	4
Safe Houses:	3
Sci-Fi Sims:	3

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Japanese:	N
Chinese:	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)

CYBERWARE

- Control Rig
- Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light, and Thermographic Vision)
- Datajack
- Reaction Enhancers (2)
- Touchlink

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥250,000) (50BP)

Middle Lifestyle (2 Months); HK MP-5 TX (w/ 10 clips of Exploding Ammo); Armor Jacket; Transys Avalon Commlink (w/Response 5, Signal 5, Firewall 5, System 5, hot sim modification); AR Goggles w/Image Link; AR Gloves; Drone Workshop; Lockpick Set; Autopicker; Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Toolkit

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)
- 2 Lockheed Optic-X Drones
- 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, w/HK-227x, 10 clips of Exploding Ammo for each)
- 4 Shiawase Kanmushi Microdrones
- 4 Offensive Lone Star iBalls

CONTACTS (8 BP)

- Fixer (3 Connection/2 Loyalty)
- Mechanic (2 Connection/1 Loyalty)

NOTES

- Starting Nuyen: 4D6 + 10 x 100¥
- +2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins
- Lost Natural Thermographic Vision due to implants

ENFORCER

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.

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 BP)

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)

CYBERWARE

Datajack
Wired Reflexes (2)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (55,000¥) (11 BP)

Transys Avalon Commlink (w/Renraku Ichi OS and Sim Module Modified for BTL/Hot Sim); AR Gloves; Glasses w/Smartlink and Image Link; Ares Predator IV (w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo); Remington 990 (Smartlinked, w/10 clips of Flechette Ammo); Monofilament Sword; Lined Coat; 3 Different BTL Chips; Fake Gun License (Rating 4); High Lifestyle (1 Month)

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 500¥
Natural Thermographic Vision
+1 Reach
+1 Natural Armor

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 (126 BP)

Con:	4
Dodge:	2
Electronics Skill Group:	2
Etiquette:	5
Ground Craft (Car):	2 (+2)
Intimidation:	3
Negotiation:	5
Perception:	3
Pistols:	2

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (27 BP)

Fine Cuisine:	3
Fine Restaurants:	3
Urban Brawl Schedule:	3
Combat Bike Schedule:	3

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English:	N
Arabic:	3
Chinese:	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)

CYBERWARE

Commlink (Transys Avalon w/Iris Orb OS)
Datajack

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, she uses her charm and charisma to negotiate with Mr. Johnson, wine and dine information sources, and talk her way out of tricky situations where blazing guns aren't the smart way to go. The Face's strengths are in her wide web of contacts and business associates, her magnetic personality, and her uncanny ability to figure out what people want and give it to them—all the while cutting a better deal for herself and her team. She's got style, she's got flair, she's up on all the latest fashions and trends, and she's just as comfortable chatting over drinks with a corporate bigwig as she is discussing this year's Urban Brawl draft with a group of sprawl gangers. She's the consummate social chameleon, easily slipping in and out of character to make the best of any situation.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (45,000¥) (9BP)

Mitsubishi Nightsky; AR Gloves; Armor Clothing; Monocle w/Image Link; 2 Fake SINs (2); Fichetti Security 600 (w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Regular Ammo); 4 Certified Credsticks; High Lifestyle (1 Month)

CONTACTS (25BP)

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 + 4 x 500¥
+2 dice for Body Tests to resist pathogens and toxins
Natural Thermographic Vision

GUNSLINGER ADEPT

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, in 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 literal gun for hire, the Gunslinger Adept finds no job too small and no challenge too great.

RACE: ORK (20 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (250 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	E
5	5	5 (7)	4	2	3	3	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
Dodge:	3
Etiquette (Street):	2 (+2)
Firearms Skill Group (Pistols Improved Ability):	4 (+2)
Perception (Visual):	3 (+2)
Pilot Ground Craft (Car):	1 (+2)

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (18 FREE BP)

Firearms Design:	4
Firearms History:	2
Hong Kong Action Movies:	3
Hong Kong Triads:	3
Lone Star Procedures:	3

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Chinese:	N
English (Cityspeak):	2 (+2)

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)

Combat Sense: 2
Improved Ability (Pistols): 2
Improved Reflexes: 2

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (45,000¥) (9 BP)

Low Lifestyle (3 months); 2 Colt Manhunters (Smartlinked, w/Quickdraw Holsters and 20 clips of Explosive Ammo); Raecor Sting (w/Concealable Holster and 2 clips of Flechette Ammo); Contact Lenses w/Smartlink and Image Link; AR Gloves; Lined Coat; Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1; Hermes Ikon Commlink (w/Mangadyne Deva OS); Fake SIN (Rating 3); Fake Detective License (Rating 4); Medkit (Rating 6); Autopicker

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 +7 x 50¥
Natural Low-Light Vision

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:	4.15
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	(10 BP)
Photographic Memory	(10 BP)
Uncouth	(+20 BP)

CYBERWARE

- Commlink (Sony Emperor modified for BTL/Hot Sim, w/Response 5, Signal 5, System 5, Firewall 5)
- Control Rig
- Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Smartlink, Thermographic Vision, and Protective Covers)
- Datajack
- Data Lock (Encryption 5)

BIOWARE

- Enhanced Articulation
- Skin Pocket
- Sleep Regulator

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 pit his skills and the power of his programs and his customized commlink 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 system and smoothing the way for his meat-bound teammates.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (150,000¥) (30BP)

AR Gloves; Hammerli 620S (w/10 clips of Regular Ammo); Armor Vest; Biometric Reader; Subvocal Microphone; 20 different VR Games; Virtual Surround Music; 4 Fake SINs (Rating 4); Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

PROGRAMS

Analyze 5; Armor 4; Attack 5; Biofeedback Filters 4; Black Hammer 4; Browse 5; Command 5; Data Bomb 3; Decrypt 3; Edit 5; Encrypt 5; Scan 5; Spoof 4; Stealth 5; Track 4

CONTACTS (12 BP)

- Blogger (Connection 3/Loyalty 1)
- Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)
- Spider (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)

NOTES

- Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 7 x 50¥
- Lost Natural Low-Light Vision due to implants

Occult Investigator

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.

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	3	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
Palming:	2
Perception (Visual):	4 (+2)
Pistols:	2
Shadowing:	2
Sorcery Skill Group:	3

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (24 FREE BP)

Chemistry:	3
Local Area Knowledge:	4
Magic Theory:	4
Underworld Politics:	4

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Arabic:	N
English: (Cityspeak)	3 (+2)
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

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (25,000¥) (5 BP)

Colt Manhunter (w/Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Regular Ammo); Sony Emperor Commlink (w/Renraku Ichi OS); Monocle w/Image Link; AR Gloves; Mage Sight Goggles; Glasses w/Low-Light, Flare Compensation, and Thermographic Vision; Earbuds w/Audio Enhancement, Select Sound Filter, and Spatial Recognizer; Lined Coat; Magical Lodge Materials (Force 3); Maglock Passkey (Rating 4); Lockpick Set; Autopicker; Fake SIN (Rating 3); Fake Press License (Rating 4); 20 Security Tags; 3 Micro Cameras; 3 Micro Microphones; Radio Signal Scanner (Rating 3); Micro Directional Microphone; Low Lifestyle (2 Months)

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 +5 x 50¥

RADICAL ECO-SHAMAN

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	2

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)
Spirit Mentor (Raven)	(5 BP)
Allergy (Moderate, Pollutants)	(+15 BP)
Spirit Bane (Fire Spirits)	(+20 BP)

SPELLS (18 BP)

Chaotic World
Critter Form
Flamethrower
Heal
Manabolt
Mob Mood

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.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (15,000¥) (3 BP)

10 Kilos of Foam Explosives (w/10 Detonator Caps); Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); Colt Manhunter (w/ 10 Clips of Regular Ammo); Camouflage Suit; Armor Vest; Survival Knife; Medkit (Rating 6); 3 Tranq Patches (Rating 5); 2 Trauma Patches; Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

CONTACTS (9 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Talismonger (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 3 x 50¥
+2 dice for Manipulation spells, +2 dice for air spirits
The Radical Eco-Shaman must make a Willpower + Charisma (3) Test to avoid exploiting someone else's misfortune to her own advantage.

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: ELF (30 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (210 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
3	5	5 (7)	2	3	5	4	3	3

Essence:	2.8
Initiative (Matrix):	12 (11)
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (124 BP)

Automatics:	2
Dodge:	2
Etiquette (Smugglers):	2 (+2)
Electronic Warfare:	3
Hacking (Surveillance Devices):	2 (+2)
Gunnery:	4
Mechanic Skill Group:	2
Navigation:	2
Perception:	2
Pilot Aircraft:	4
Pilot Ground Craft:	5

KNOWLEDGE (27 FREE BP)

Auto Mechanics:	5
Border Patrol Tactics:	4
Engineering:	3
Smuggler Safe Houses:	4
Smuggling Routes:	5

LANGUAGES

English:	N
Spanish:	3
Sperethiel:	3

QUALITIES (+25 BP)

Incompetent (Unarmed Combat)	(+5 BP)
Low Pain Tolerance	(+10 BP)
Moderate Allergy to Sunlight	(+10 BP)

CYBERWARE

- Aluminum Bone Lacing
- Control Rig
- Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Smartlink, and Thermographic Vision)
- Datajack
- Reaction Enhancers (2)
- 2 Smuggling Compartments
- Commlink (Fairlight Caliban w/Firewall 5, System 5, Response 5, modified for BTL/Hot Sim)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (250,000¥) (50 BP)

Ares Predator IV (w/ Concealable Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo); Helmet; Lined Coat; AR Gloves; Automotive Toolkit; Automotive Shop; Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

PROGRAMS

Command 5; ECCM 5; Encrypt 5; Scan 5; Stealth 5

AUTOSOFTS

Clearsight 4; Defense 4; Electronic Warfare 4; Maneuver (Ground Craft) 4; Targeting (Heavy Weapons) 4

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, w/ Ingram White Knight LMG, 2 belts of 100 Explosive Rounds)

CONTACTS (11 BP)

- Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
- Mechanic (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
- Mr. Johnson (Connection 2/Loyalty 1)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 1 x 50¥

Lost Natural Low-Light Vision due to implants

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):	3 (+2)
Firearms Skill Group:	3
Intimidation:	3
Pilot Ground Craft (Bike):	2 (+2)
Running:	3
Shadowing:	4
Survival (Urban):	2 (+2)

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (18 FREE BP)

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)

CYBERWARE

Datajack
Muscle Replacement

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 (25,000¥) (5 BP)

Remington Roomsweeper (w/10 clips of Flechette Ammo); Harley Davidson Scorpion; Combat Axe; Survival Knife; Extendable Baton; Armor Jacket; Sony Emperor Commlink (w/Redcap Nix OS and Sim Module Modified for BTL/Hot Sim); Fake Drivers License (Rating 4); Miracle Shooter (1 Year) and 8 misc. VR Games; Virtual Pet; Glasses w/Image Link; AR Gloves; Low Lifestyle (1 Month)

CONTACTS (11 BP)

BTL Dealer (Connection 2/ Loyalty 1)
Gang Leader (Connection 2/ Loyalty 1)
Gang Member (Connection 2/Loyalty 3)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 1 x 50¥
Natural Low-Light Vision

STREET SAMURAI

Part man, part machine, all dangerous—sometimes it's hard to tell where the Street Samurai's meat body ends and his cybered enhancements begin. Tough, strong, frighteningly fast, and trained in the arts of combat and tactics, he's a hyper-efficient killing machine who can handle just about any situation he gets into. Whether former military, former corp, or former something-he-won't-discuss, these days he's a freelance street operative who prides himself on his strict sense of honor. He is as learned in the ways of the samurai warrior as he is in the practice of security procedures, and he prides himself on always remaining one step ahead of the dishonorable street scum who seek vainly to best him..

RACE: HUMAN (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES: (200 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E
4	5 (7)	4 (6)	5 (7)	2	3	2	3	2

Essence:	0.8
Initiative:	7 (9)
Initiative Passes:	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (148 BP)

Athletics Skill Group:	3
Automatics:	5
Blades:	4
Dodge:	3
Heavy Weapons:	3
Infiltration:	2
Negotiation:	2
Pilot Ground Craft (Bike):	1 (+2)
Pistols:	4
Unarmed Combat:	5

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (15 FREE BP)

Firearm Design:	3
Safe Houses:	4
Zen Meditation:	3

LANGUAGES

Spanish:	N
English (Cityspeak):	2 (+2)
Japanese:	2

QUALITIES (+5 BP)

Guts	(5 BP)
High Pain Tolerance	(10 BP)
Addiction (Mild, Stimulants)	(+5 BP)
Incompetent (Hacking)	(+5 BP)

CYBERWARE

- Wired Reflexes (Alpha) (2)
- Dermal Plating (Alpha) (2)
- Muscle Replacement (Alpha) (2)
- Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/Flare Compensation, Low-Light Vision, Protective Covers, Smartlink, and Thermographic Vision)

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (190,000¥) (38BP)

Hermes Ikon (w/Redcap Nix OS and Sim Module); AR Gloves; Katana; Survival Knife; 2 Ares Predator IVs (w/Concealable Holsters and 10 clips of Exploding Ammo for each); Ingram Smartgun X (w/10 clips of Regular Ammo); Stoner-Ares M202 (Smartlinked, w/2 100 belts of Regular Ammo); Doc Wagon Contract (Platinum, 1 Year); Suzuki Mirage; Armor Vest; Low Lifestyle (3 Months)

CONTACTS (9 BP)

Fixer (Connection 3/Loyalty 2)
Street Doc (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 x 50¥

STREET SHAMAN

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	1

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):	1 (+2)

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (24 FREE BP)

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

The Voice of Magic 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.

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥5,000) (1BP)

Survival Knife; Magical Lodge Materials (Force 5); Leather Jacket; Meta Link Commlink (w/Vector Xim OS); Medkit (Rating 4); Gas Mask; Goggles w/Image Link; Street Lifestyle (2 Months)

CONTACTS (7BP)

- Squatter (Connection 1/Loyalty 2)
- Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

- Starting Nuyen: 1D6 + 2 x 10¥
- 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.

TECHNOMANCER

The Technomancer does not merely run the Matrix—she inhabits it, moving through it with the easy familiarity of a fish in home waters. She doesn't need a clumsy commlink to give her access, nor does she need to spend her time writing tedious programs to do her bidding—her mind and her reflexes are all she needs to ride the electron waves and shape the virtual world. Touched by the Resonance, she communes with the soul of the machine and finds her home more among its datatrails and network traffic than she ever did among the streets and buildings of the sprawl.

RACE: HUMAN (0 BP)

ATTRIBUTES (230 BP)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	R	E
2	2	4	2	3	5	5	3	5	2

Essence:	6
Initiative (Matrix):	9 (11)
Initiative Passes (Matrix):	1 (3)
Physical Damage Track:	10
Stun Damage Track:	10

ACTIVE SKILLS (132 BP)

Cracking Skill Group:	3
Electronics Skill Group:	3
Dodge:	2
Negotiation:	2
Perception:	3
Pistols (Light Pistols):	1 (+2)
Tasking Skill Group:	4

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS (30 FREE BP)

Comic Books:	3
Corporate Matrix Security Procedures:	4
Data Havens:	3
IC Identification:	3
Matrix Theory:	3
Operating Systems:	5

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Spanish:	N
English (Cityspeak):	4
Chinese:	2
Japanese:	3

LIVING PERSONA

Firewall:	3
Response:	5 (6)
Signal:	3
System:	5
Biofeedback Filter (Natural Hardening):	3 (4)

QUALITIES (+10 BP)

Natural Hardening	(10 BP)
Technomancer	(5 BP)
Combat Paralysis	(+20 BP)
Weak Immune System	(+5 BP)

COMPLEX FORMS (35 BP)

Analyze 2; Armor 3; Browse 3; Attack 4; Deception 5; Decrypt 3; Edit 3; Scan 3; Stealth 5; Track 4

GEAR & LIFESTYLE (¥15,000) (3 BP)

Low Lifestyle (3 Months); Lined Coat; Colt America L36 (w/Hidden Gun Arm Slide and 5 clips of Regular Ammo); Fake SIN (Rating 4); Dodge Scoot

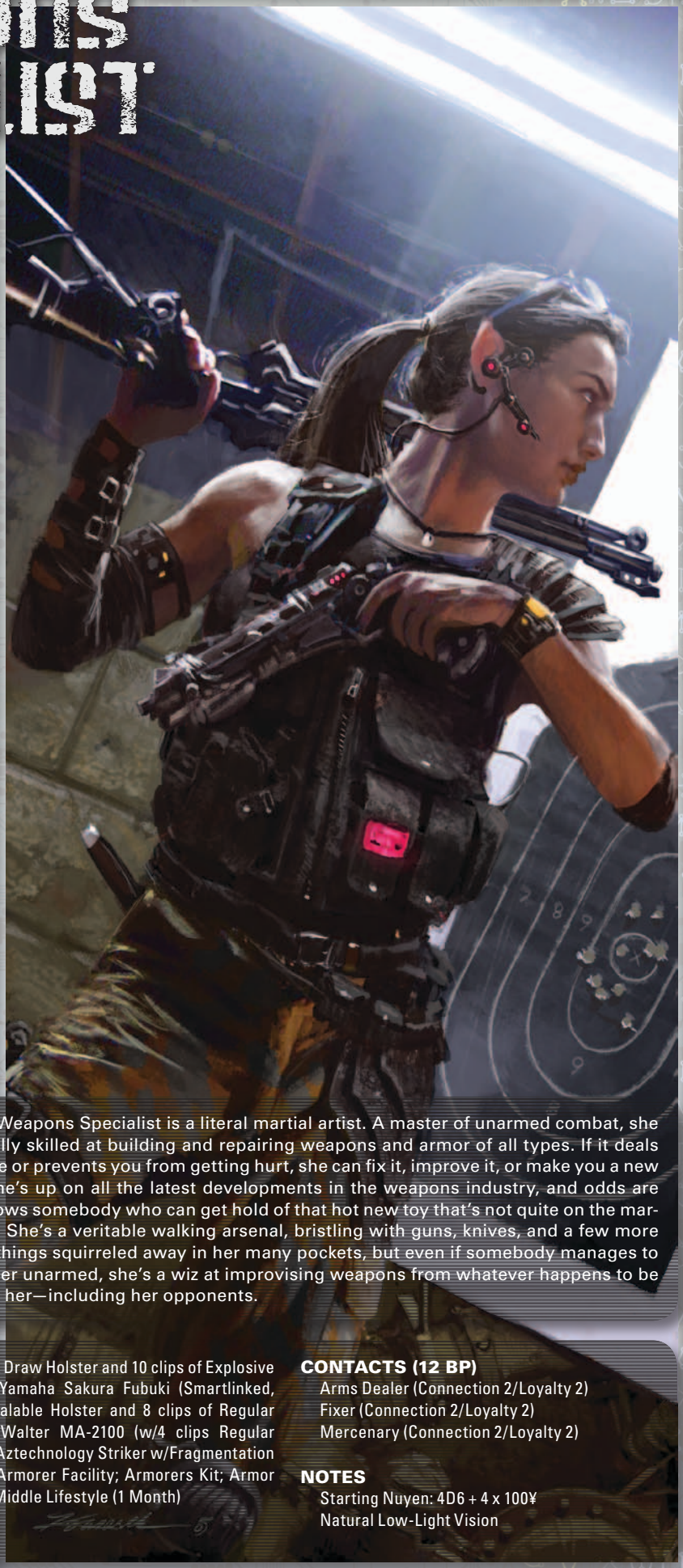
CONTACTS (8 BP)

Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Blogger (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 3D6 + 9 x 50¥

Weapons 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 BP)

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)

Novatech Airware Commlink (w/Renraku Ichi OS and Sim Module); Contact Lenses w/Image Link and Smartlink; Combat Axe; 2 Katanas; Survival Knife; Stun Baton; Bow (Min. STR 3) w/20 Arrows; Medium Crossbow w/20 Bolts; 10 Throwing Knives; 10 Shuriken; 10 Fragmentation Grenades; 5 Flash-Paks; Ares Predator IV (w/Quick Draw Holster and 10 clips of Explosive Ammo); Yamaha Sakura Fubuki (Smartlinked, w/Concealable Holster and 8 clips of Regular Ammo); Walter MA-2100 (w/4 clips Regular Ammo); Aztechnology Striker w/Fragmentation Rocket; Armorer Facility; Armorers Kit; Armor Jacket; Middle Lifestyle (1 Month)

CONTACTS (12 BP)

Arms Dealer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Fixer (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)
Mercenary (Connection 2/Loyalty 2)

NOTES

Starting Nuyen: 4D6 + 4 x 100¥
Natural Low-Light Vision

Damn, this monkey suit is itchy. I hung back and nursed my drink, trying not to fidget. With luck, I wouldn't pick up the wrong glass or say the wrong thing before Rico could finish taking care of biz.

Across the room, he looked like he was born to this, smiling and making just the right kind of bow to Mr. Takahara. I could tell it was right because Takahara was smiling too, his whole face lighting up like Rico was his long-lost college buddy or something, even though I knew they'd never met before tonight. I could see Rico's lips moving and hear the smooth Japanese words coming out of his mouth over the radio link. I didn't know what he was saying, but it must have been the right thing. Takahara nodded, smiled again, and surreptitiously reached into his jacket pocket, pulling something out and handing it to Rico under cover of offering him a napkin. They made small talk for a couple more minutes and then Rico was back, motioning for me to follow him out of the room.

I was impatient for some action, but Rico shook his head. I admit it—I'm pretty much a one-trick pony. I hurt things, either with a gun or up-close-and-personal. Rico, he's not so good at causing pain, but he makes up for it by knowing how to do all kinds of other things. Things like speaking five languages, being able to talk his way out of fights (I don't see the fun in that, but I have to admit it's saved our skins more than once), and knowing how to patch people up when they got hurt. He even knew a little bit about magic, despite being every bit as mundane as I was. "He tell you where?" I whispered as we left the main party area and headed toward the back of the rambling old mansion.

Rico just nodded. I must have smirked or something, because he grinned at me and said, "Bored yet?" I just followed him, both of us taking care not to be seen. A couple of turns later, and we'd reached a locked door down a side hallway. "Keep a lookout," he told me, then took a small electronics kit from his pocket and knelt down by the door. In a few seconds the lock made a soft beep and the door clicked open. Rico slotted the chip Takahara had given him into the old-fashioned cyberterminal on the room's desk and was downloading the paydata to his commlink. All we had to do now was go back to the party, say our goodbyes, and get out before anybody was the wiser.

Two shadows appeared around the corner out in the hall, and the muted sound of their booted feet was joined by the clicks of automatic weapons being readied. "Incoming!" I subvocalized to Rico, drawing my own silenced pistol. I wasn't worried—after a night of feeling like the only one without a dance partner at the high school prom, I was finally getting the chance to do what I was good at.

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 (see *Specializations,* p. 109).

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 him 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. 111.

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 (see *Creating a Shadowrunner,* p. 70). During game play, characters can improve or specialize in skills, or learn new ones as they experience new things. See *Improving Skills and Skill Groups,* p. 264.

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. 110–126.

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. 127.

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.

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, orunderstand 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.

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 Skills and Skill Groups,* p. 264.

> *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 Intuition 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. 77).

SKILL RATINGS TABLE

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. 82). 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 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 (2 year college degree)
Knowledge Skill Example (Street): Lived in Seattle for five or more years.

Continued on page 109

SKILL RATINGS TABLE (CONTINUED)

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 (4 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 4-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 (NFL, NHL, MLB, NBA, 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. 77).
Athletics Example: Athletic legend: Michael Jordan, Babe Ruth, Pele, Wayne Gretzky, Joe Montana
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

The unmodified skill rating assigned at character creation or purchased during game play is considered to be the character's *base* skill rating. Some spells, abilities and implants may provide bonus dice to a skill, creating a *modified* skill rating, but this does not change the base skill rating. These extra dice are listed in parentheses after the base skill, as in Spellcasting 4 (+2). A modified skill cannot exceed the base skill rating x 1.5 (making 9 the maximum possible rating, or 10 with the Aptitude Quality).

The Skill Ratings Table on pp. 108–109 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 charac-

SKILL GROUPS

Athletics (Usually Strength)
Climbing
Gymnastics
Running
Swimming

Biotech (Usually 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 Intuition)
Navigation
Survival
Tracking

Sorcery (Magic)
Counterspelling
Ritual Spellcasting
Spellcasting

Stealth (Usually Intuition)
Disguise
Infiltration
Palming
Shadowing

Tasking (Resonance)
Compiling
Decompiling
Registering

ter 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's rating 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 Pistol 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. 70. Characters may take on additional specializations during game play.

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.

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 minus 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. 131.

Archery (Agility)

Archery governs the use of muscle-powered projectile weapons.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: None
Specializations: Bows, Crossbows, Slingshots

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
Armorer
Automotive Mechanic
Computer
Cybertechnology
Cybercombat
Data Search
Demolitions
Electronic Warfare
First Aid
Industrial Mechanic
Hacking
Hardware
Medicine
Nautical Mechanic
Professional Knowledge
Software

Willpower
Astral Combat
Survival

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE

Magic
Banishing
Binding
Counterspelling
Ritual Spellcasting
Spellcasting
Summoning

Resonance
Compiling
Decompiling
Registering

Note: You cannot default on *Italicized* skills.

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

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*, p. 112).

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 (ie, 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 Weapon 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. 163.

Assensing (Intuition)

Assensing is the skill of learning information from auras, astral forms and astral signatures (see *Astral Perception,* p. 182). Only characters capable of astral perception (they either 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 (see *Astral Combat,* p. 184). Only characters capable of astral perception (they either 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: By specific foci types or opponents (Blade 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. 180).

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. 180).

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. 175).

Default: No
Skill Group: Sorcery
Specializations: By spell type (Combat Spells, Detection Spells, etc.)

Ritual Spellcasting (Magic)

The Ritual Spellcasting skill is used to cast spells in a ritual fashion (see *Ritual Spellcasting,* p. 174). 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. 173).

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. 179).

Default: No
Skill Group: Conjuring
Specializations: By spirit type (Spirits of Fire, Spirits of Water, etc.)

PHYSICAL ACTIVE SKILLS

Specific rules for using these skills can be found following the skill descriptions.

Climbing (Strength)

Climbing is used to ascend vertical obstacles or walls, whether using tools or unassisted. See *Using Climbing,* p. 115.

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. 118.

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. 115.

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 *Jumping,* p. 116.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Balance, Breakfall, Dance, Jumping, 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. 116.

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: 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. 117.

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 himself and conserve energy while running. See *Using Running,* p. 117.

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. 118).

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. 118.

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. 118.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Athletics
Specializations: Long Distance, Sprinting

CLIMBING TABLE

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

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. 119.

Default: Yes

Skill Group: Outdoors

Specializations: Desert, Forest, Jungle, Mountain, Polar, Urban, Other appropriate terrain

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 (see p. 327). 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 above.

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, slow their descent, 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 an 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 (see *Falling Damage,* p. 154).

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.

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 Logic + Climbing 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 (see *Falling Damage,* p. 154).

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

ESCAPE ARTIST TABLE

Restraints	Threshold	Interval
Ropes	4	1 minute
Handcuffs	4	1 minute
Straitjacket	6	1 minute
Containment manacles	8	1 minute

Situation	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

Extended Test with a threshold based on the complexity of the restraints, as noted on the Escape Artist Table, p. 115. At the gamemaster's discretion, some restraints may simply be too difficult to escape from without outside help.

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.

JUMPING

Characters may make two kinds of jumps: a running jump and a standing jump. 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 Agility + Gymnastics 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 Agility + Gymnastics 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 an Agility + Gymnastics 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 Agility + Gymnastics 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 jumps a number of meters equal to the hits rolled on the Agility + Gymnastics 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 (see *Falling Damage,* p. 154).

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 he decides to jump it. Ma'fan goes for distance, rolling his Agility 6 + Gymnastics 4, getting 3 hits. That's enough to clear 6 meters (3 x 2) with his running start, so he 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 NAVIGATION

Thanks to modern day GPS and mapsofts, finding one's way around rarely requires a test. When a character finds

JUMPING TABLE

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

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 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 (see *Surprise*, p. 155).

Gamemasters may call for Perception Tests for any situation that involves sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. See the Perception Test Modifiers Table 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 RUNNING

Characters with the Running skill may attempt to increase the distance they can run by spending a Simple Action and

PERCEPTION TEST THRESHOLDS

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

PERCEPTION TEST MODIFIERS

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

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

SURVIVAL TEST TABLE

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 Modifiers
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

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 (see *Movement,* p. 138). 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 (see *Fatigue Damage,* p. 154).

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 (see p. 117) 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 Intuition + Shadowing to notice someone tailing him.

Lance uses his Infiltration skill to sneak past a guard, rolling Agility 3 + Infiltration 4 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.

Using Disguise

The Disguise skill also 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.

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.

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. 155).

SWIMMING RATES

Metatype	Swimming Rate (m/turn)
Dwarf	4
Elf	6
Human	5
Ork	5
Troll	7

Holding Your Breath

A typical character can hold her breath for 48 seconds (8 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

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 their Strength plus the hits on a Swimming (Long Distance Test). After that point, the character suffers 1 box of Stun damage that cannot be resisted each minute.

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.

TREADING WATER MODIFICATIONS 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

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 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 TRACKING

To find critter tracks or locate someone's trail is a simple Tracking Success Test with a difficulty threshold based on the terrain (see Difficulty Table, p. 56). 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.

RESONANCE ACTIVE SKILLS

This category covers those skills known only to characters with the Technomancer quality (p. 80).

Compiling (Resonance)

This skill is used to create sprites and determines how many tasks they owe you (see *Sprites,* p. 234).

Default: No
Skill Group: Tasking
Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

Decompiling (Resonance)

This skill is used to decompile sprites (see *Sprites,* p. 234).

Default: No
Skill Group: Tasking
Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

Registering (Resonance)

This skill is used to register sprites for longer-term service (see *Sprites,* p. 234).

Default: No
Skill Group: Tasking
Specializations: By sprite type (Data, Machine, etc.)

SOCIAL ACTIVE SKILLS

Rules for using these skills follow the skill descriptions.

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 Intuition + Con (or Negotiation). See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills*.

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 gaff she made that the character wouldn't have. See *Using Etiquette,* p. 121.

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. 123.

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 Willpower + Intimidation. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills* 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 Charisma + Leadership. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills* 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 fast talk. It is opposed by the target's Charisma + Negotiation. Negotiation can also be used to determine if a character has noticed if someone is lying to them. See *Using Charisma-Linked Skills* for Test modifiers.

Default: Yes
Skill Group: Influence
Specializations: Bargaining, Diplomacy, Sense Motive

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. 122) 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, 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.

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

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

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.

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 –4 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 wrist computer. The gamemaster therefore applies an additional +2 modifier for Ashley. Applying all the modifiers (–5, +3), the gamemaster reduces Ashley's dice pool by 2 dice. That means she'll be rolling 7 dice (5 + 4 – 2) against the guard's 3 dice.

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.

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 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 Charisma + Perception. If the character wins, each net hit reduces the level of hostility/suspicion by one step (from Enemy to Hostile, Hostile to Neutral, and so on). If the target wins, no reduction takes place.

Etiquette can also be used to negate a gaff 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 Hostile, and so on).

SOCIAL MODIFIERS TABLE

Social Situation	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 (see p. 257)
Subject has (known) street reputation	–Street Cred (see p. 257)
Subject has "ace in the hole"	+2†
Subject has romantic attraction to character	+2
Character is intoxicated	–1§
Con Modifiers	
Character has plausible-seeming supporting evidence	+1 or 2
Subject is distracted	+1
Subject has plenty of time to evaluate situation	–1
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.

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.

TECHNICAL ACTIVE SKILLS

Details on using technical skills follow the skill descriptions.

Aeronautics Mechanic (Logic)

Characters with this skill can repair and maintain aircraft. The proper tools and time are still necessary. See *Using Technnical Skills to Build or Repair*, p. 125.

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. 125.

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. 125.

Default: No
Skill Group: Mechanic
Specializations: Anthroform, Hover, Tracked, Wheeled

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. 230).

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. 125.

Default: No
Skill Group: Biotech
Specializations: Bioware, Bodyware, Cyberlimbs, Headware, Nanoware

Data Search (Logic)

This is the character's research ability, their 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 Skill,* p. 220.

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. 315.

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*.

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. 221.

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. 125.

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. 125.

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. 125.

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 illnesses 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. 242.

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. 125.

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 *Coding Your Own Programs,* p. 240.

Default: No
Skill Group: Electronics
Specializations: Defensive Utilities, Offensive Utilities, Masking Utilities, Operational Utilities, Special Utilities (specify)

USING FORGERY

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 Intuition + Perception Test.

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	
Logic 5+	+0
Logic 1–4	–(5 – Logic)

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 (see *Identification, Please,* p. 258).

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 *Technical Security,* p. 255.

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 by "build" we mean to put 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.

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 . . . .

VEHICLE ACTIVE SKILLS

Vehicle skills are used for driving and vehicle combat (see p. 158).

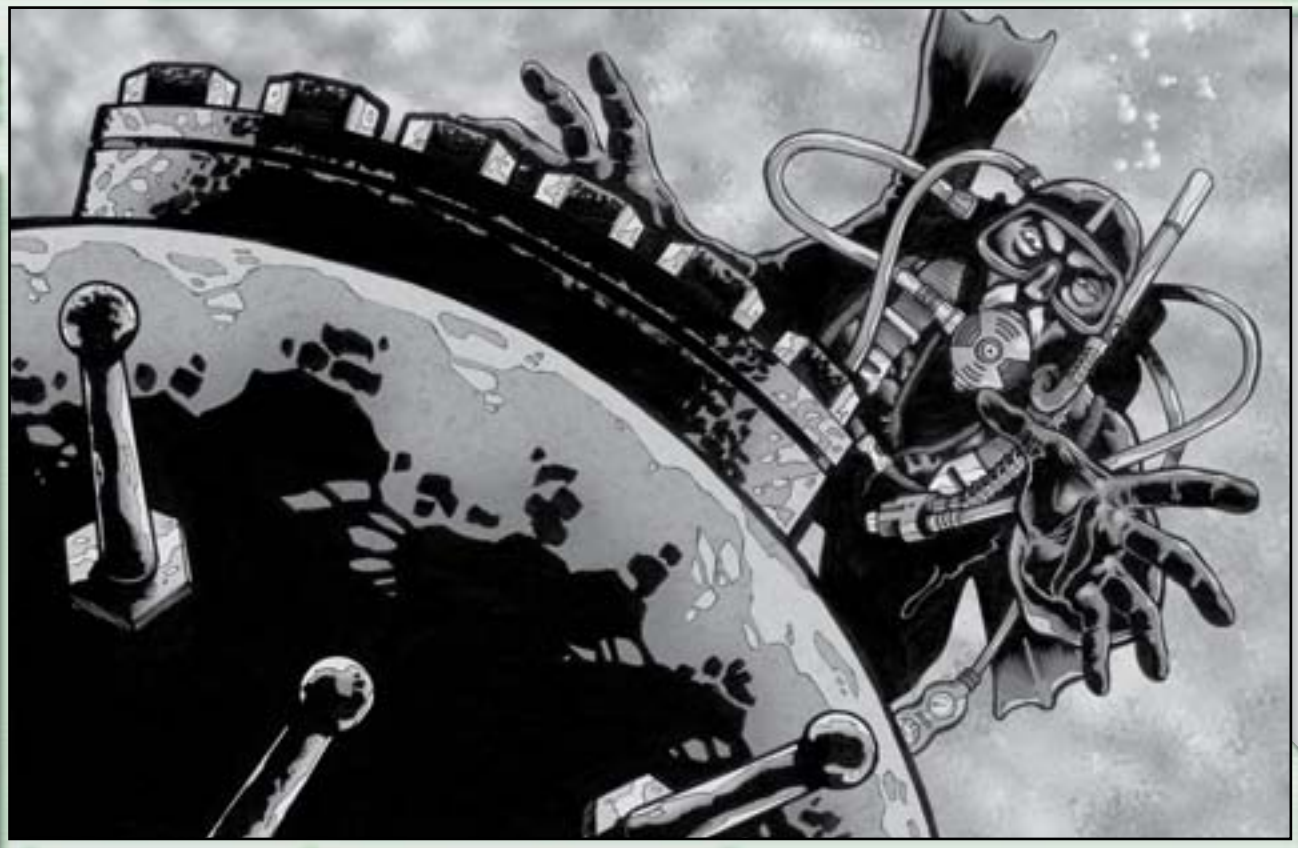
Gunnery (Agility)

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. 128.

STREET KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Street 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

Academic 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

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.

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.

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Professional 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), Government, Military
Security Design	Corporate, Magical, Matrix, Military, Physical, Private Home

INTERESTS KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Interests 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

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.

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 (p. 129) 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.

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 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*.

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 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.

KNOWLEDGE SKILL TABLE

Character Seeks:	Threshold
General knowledge	1
Detailed knowledge	2
Intricate knowledge	3
Obscure knowledge	4

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

Language (Intuition)

This skill must be taken separately for each language desired.

Default: Yes
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), 'l33t-speak (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.

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.

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 only 1 hit, not quite enough). Ashley loses the sense of what the woman is saying, but still, there might be a reward . . . .

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.

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 skill dice on the Negotiation Test.

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 a angry spirit, or seeing the remains of a ghoul's meal); in these cases, gamemasters should no longer ask for composure tests.

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 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. 300.

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.

Kraft could feel the eyes of the gangers on him, a near-palpable crawling sensation that trickled down his back along with his cold sweat. He crouched, waiting, his hand opening and closing on the haft of the knife at his belt. Across from him, at the other side of the five-meter circle defined by grinning synthleather-jacketed figures, the big ork smiled, showing yellowed tusks. "You ready, omae?" His voice was deceptively friendly, silken-smooth. His eyes bore the telltale jerkiness of the habitual cram user.

Kraft didn't answer. He knew he only had one advantage, and he'd better use it if he wanted to get out of here alive. In a quicksilver motion none of the gangers could follow, he drew and lunged at the ork. The knife's blade flashed in the warehouse's dim overhead light.

Fast as Kraft was, the ork was ready. He sidestepped—not without difficulty—and planted an oversized boot in the middle of Kraft's ass, sending him sprawling. By the time the laughing, shouting gangers had grabbed him and shoved him back into the center, the ork had his own knife out. In his other hand he held a length of chain he'd produced from somewhere. Kraft swallowed hard, his mind racing, knowing he'd now lost the element of surprise. Calm down ... you're still faster than he is ...

The two circled, predatory cats sizing each other up in a stinking urban jungle. Once, one of the gangers made a move behind Kraft, but the ork waved him off with a warning growl. This one was obviously personal. "You wanna deal with the Hardcases," he'd said, "You gotta go through Meltdown first. Then maybe we talk." He flicked the chain out, forcing Kraft to back off.

Kraft hung back, slowing his breathing and making himself concentrate. Meltdown's chain snaked out again, clipping him in the shoulder, taunting rather than hurting. "You ain't got the hez to swab our drekkers, Pinky. Whyn'cha get outta here and go back to screwin' yer mommy?"

All thought of care or prudence flew from Kraft's mind, replaced by red rage at the dripping contempt in the ork's voice. He flung himself forward, ducking neatly under knife and chain and slashing at Meltdown's belly. His cry of triumph was almost as loud as the ork's startled yell of pain as he connected. Blood sprayed hot and red across his face and he flashed a fierce grin. That would teach this ganger scum to—

The world exploded into pain as Meltdown's big fist came down on the back of his neck, dropping him in a heap like a broken doll. The gangers' yells muted instantly to indistinct babble in his ringing head. The ork, his belly wound bloody but blunted by his leather jacket, stood over Kraft with a look that mixed venom with a kind of mad ecstacy. "That was a mistake, Pinky," he roared. He raised his knife.

Once more an explosion echoed around the metal confines of the warehouse—this time originating not in Kraft's head, but from somewhere near the building's entrance. Automatic weapons fire. A series of neat holes appeared—one, two, three—in the middle of Meltdown's chest and, following an almost comical look of surprise, the ork proceeded to do a fine imitation of his name. "Nobody else move!" boomed a voice—a blessedly familiar voice—and then the rest of the gangers were scattering from their fallen leader like rats leaving a sinking ship.

Kraft, from his spot on the floor, grinned. "Didn't anybody tell you guys not to bring knives to a gunfight?" he murmured right before he passed out.

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 nonplayer 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.**

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. 134) 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. 134).

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.

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 the 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). No character can act in more than 4 Initiative Passes in a Combat Turn.

If a character was wounded in a previous Initiative Pass, wound modifiers may affect his Initiative Score on this and any subsequent passes.

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).

> *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 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.

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. No character can 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. 67).
- 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. 132). 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).

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.

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.

Note that timed items always go last in the case of tied Initiative Scores.

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, and 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. 205), while magical actions are detailed in *The Awakened World* (p. 163). 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. 149. 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 some devices may require longer to interact act with, as noted in individual gear descriptions.

Drop Object

A character may drop a held object as a Free Action. If he is holding objects in both hands, 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. 155). A character who is surprised may not drop prone.

Eject Smartgun Clip

A character linked to and holding a ready smartgun may use a simple cybernetic command to eject the weapon's clip. It still takes a Simple Action to insert a new, fresh clip. See *Smartgun System,* p. 311.

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. 151).

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. 138).

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.

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 ction, 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. 142, and *Smartgun Systems,* p. 311. This includes changing a shotgun's choke if the gun does not have a smartgun link. See *Shotguns,* P. 144.

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. 142.) 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. 141). 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. 312.

Observe in Detail

A character may make a detailed observation by taking a Simple Action. This allows a Perception Test (see *Using Perception,* p. 117).

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. 311), 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. 141). 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.

Remove Clip

A character may remove a clip from a ready firearm by taking a Simple Action. See *Insert Clip,* p. 136, and also *Reloading Weapons,* p. 312. 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 simple cybernetic command. See *Smartgun System,* p. 311.

COMBAT ACTIONS

Free Actions
Call a Shot
Change Linked Device Mode
Drop Object
Drop Prone
Eject Smartgun Clip
Gesture
Intercept
Speak/Text Phrase
Run

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/Vehicle Weapon
Full Defense
Melee/Unarmed Attack
Reload Firearm
Use Complex Object
Use Skill

Sprint

Sprinting allows a character to increase his Running rate by using a Simple Action and making a Running Test (see *Movement,* p. 138).

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. 141); 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,* at left) 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. 142.

Fire Mounted or Vehicle Weapon

A character may fire a ready mounted or vehicle weapon by taking a Complex Action. See *Vehicle Combat,* p. 158.

Full Defense

A character may choose to dedicate his attention to avoiding incoming attacks as a Complex Action (see *Full Defense,* p. 151). Note that full defense actions may be taken at any time, even before the character's Action Phase, as long as the character is not surprised—but it uses up the character's next available action. Characters may goon full defense even if they don't have an action that pass, sacrificing their first action of the next Combat Turn instead.

Melee/Unarmed Attack

A character may make a melee or unarmed attack by taking a Complex Action (see *Melee Combat,* p. 146). A character may also attack multiple targets within melee range with a single Complex Action (see *Multiple Targets,* p. 148).

Reload Firearm

Weapons that do not use clips must be reloaded using a Complex Action (see *Reloading Firearms,* p. 312).

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. 106).

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.

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. 148) and defending against attacks.

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.

RESOLVING COMBAT

Shadowrun includes four types of combat: ranged combat (p. 140), melee (also known as hand-to-hand, p. 146), astral combat (p. 184), and cybercombat (p. 230). All combat, whether it involves firearms, knives, astral attacks, or attack programs, is resolved in 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

MOVEMENT RATE TABLE

Metatype	Walking Rate (m/turn)	Running Rate (m/turn)
Humans, elves, orks	10	25
Dwarfs	8	20
Trolls	15	35

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.

1. Declare Attack

The attacker declares an attack as part of the Declare Actions part of his Action Phase (see p. 132) 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* see (p. 151) if he chooses.

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.

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,

WEAPON RANGE TABLE

Dice Pool Modifier:	+0	–1	–2	–3
		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	451–1500
Ballistic Projectiles				
Bow	0–STR	To STR x 10	To STR x 30	To STR x 60
Light Crossbow	0–STR x 2	To STR x 8	To STR x 20	To STR x 40
Medium Crossbow	0–STR x 3	To STR x 12	To STR x 30	To STR x 50
Heavy Crossbow	0–STR x 5	To STR x 15	To STR x 40	To STR x 60
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. 145.

touch-only combat spells, etc.) to still do damage.

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. 148), and apply the attack's Armor Penetration modifier (see p. 152); 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.

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.

6. Apply Damage

Apply the remaining Damage Value to the target's Condition Monitor (see *Damage,* p. 152). Each point of DV equals 1 box of damage. Wound modifiers (see p. 153) may apply as a result of damage. Characters may also need to check for knockdown (see p. 151).

RANGED COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Dice Pool Modifier
Attacker running	–2
Attacker in melee combat	–3
Attacker in a moving vehicle	–3
Target has partial cover	–2
Target has good cover	–4
Target hidden (blind fire)	–6
Attacker firing from cover	–1
Attacker wounded	–wound modifiers (see p. 153)
Attacker using laser sight	+1*
Attacker using smartlinked weapon	+2*
Attacker using image magnification	eliminates range modifiers (see p. 139)
Attacker using a second firearm	splits dice pool
Attacker using off-hand weapon	–2
Aimed shot	+1 per Simple Action
Called shot	–variable (see *Called Shots,* p. 149)
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
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

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. 55).

The various modifiers are listed on the Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, above, Visibility Table, above, and the Weapon Range Table, p. 139.

Range

Each weapon type has specified ranges, as noted on the Weapon Range Table (p. 139), 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. 306).

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. 145, and *Rockets and Missiles,* p. 146.

RANGED COMBAT SUMMARY

Attacker Rolls:	Agility + combat skill +/- modifiers
Defender Rolls:	Reaction +/- modifiers
Defender using Full Defense:	Reaction + Dodge +/- 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 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. 162.

Target Has Partial Cover

Attacks against targets obscured by intervening terrain such as brush, foliage, or various obstacles (crates, windows, doorways, curtains and the like) receive a –2 modifier if at least 25% of the target's form is obscured. For obscurity due to environmental conditions such as smoke or darkness, use the modifiers given on the Visibility Table (p. 140).

Target Has Good Cover

If at least 50% of the target's form is obscured by intervening terrain. A –4 dice pool modifier applies. This modifier can also apply to prone targets at least 20 meters away.

Target Hidden (Blind Fire)

A –6 modifier applies to attacks against targets that cannot be seen. This modifier normally applies only 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.

Note that shooting via Blind Fire (including against hidden/unseen targets) uses the firearms skill + Intuition (rather than Agility).

Attacker Firing From Cover

Hiding behind cover limits a character's ability to see the action, even if they quickly move out from behind cover to shoot, and so applies a –1 dice pool modifier to any attacks.

Attacker Wounded

Wound modifiers apply if the attacker has taken damage. See *Wound Modifiers,* p. 153.

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, or 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. 311) receive a +2 dice pool modifier. This bonus is not cumulative with the bonus for using a laser sight.

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. 137) 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 mag 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, their choice), unless they have the Ambidextrous quality (see p. 77).

Aimed Shot

Characters who aim receive a +1 dice pool modifier per Simple Action spent aiming. See *Take Aim,* p. 137.

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. 149.

Multiple Targets

If a character is attacking 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. 310).

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 is also subject to the double recoil 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. 310, for the exact degrees of recoil compensation. Recoil compensation does not counter any other situational modifiers.

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. 310. Gyro-stabilization is cumulative with recoil compensation.

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

There is no skill that applies to defending against ranged attacks—defending characters simply roll Reaction (the defaulting modifier does not apply). Characters may also go on full defense (p. 151).

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 mode (FA). Firearms are detailed in the *Street Gear* chapter (p. 298).

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 3 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 are intended to inflict a target with maximum damage. Narrow bursts 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 are intended to spray bullets around to have a better chance of hitting the target. Wide bursts decrease the defender's dice pool by –2.

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 4, so he only gets 1 hit. The target's dice pool is reduced by 2 from the wide burst though, so he rolls only 3 dice, also getting 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 6 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 (2 bullets short). If there are only 3 or less bullets available, treat it 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 (but not behind cover or prone) or that moves into or out of the suppressed 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 other than taking cover or dropping 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. 135).

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. 312). 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. 298).

SHOTGUNS

The shotguns described in the *Street Gear* section (beginning on p. 309) 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, +2 AP) Damage Code.

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 they inflict less damage and armor penetration. Taking into account the flechette ammunition, they inflict +0 DV, +4 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, +6 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 (at right) 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. 306).

GRENADES

Grenades are 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 given as 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 a simple adjustment to the grenade with an Armorer + Logic (4, 10 minutes) Extended Test.

Timing Grenades

As noted under *Timed Items and Initiative* (p. 135), 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. 310, 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.

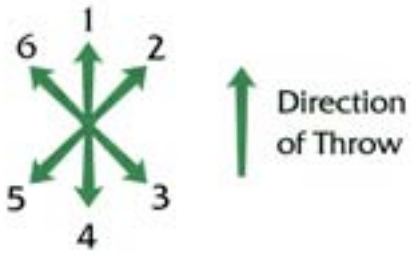
The gamemaster determines the direction of the scatter by rolling 1D6 and consulting the Scatter Diagram. The large arrow indicates the direction of the throw, so a result of 1 means the grenade continued on past the target, while a result of 4 means the grenade bounced back in the direction of the attacker.

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 1D6 for scatter (see *Airburst Link,* p. 310).

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 DIAGRAM



SCATTER TABLE

Type	Scatter
Standard Grenade	1D6 meters – 2 per net hit
Aerodynamic Grenade	2D6 meters – 4 per net hit
Grenade Launcher	3D6 meters – 4 per net hit
Rocket	2D6 meters – 1 per net hit
Missile	2D6 meters – 1 per net hit (– Sensor rating)
Airburst	1D6 meters – 1 per net hit (– Sensor rating)

The attacker reduces this scatter distance by 2 meters per net hit for standard grenades or 4 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, and any remaining hits are added to the DV. 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. 146) to find the grenade's Damage Code and Damage Value reduction rate.

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.

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. 157). 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.

GRENADE DAMAGE TABLE

Type	Damage Code	AP	Blast
Flash-Bang	6S	–3	10m Radius
Flash-Pak	Special	—	Special
Fragmentation	12P(f)	+2	–1/m
High Explosive	10P	–2	–2/m
Gas Chemical	—	10m Radius	
Smoke	—	—	10m Radius
Thermal Smoke	—	—	10m Radius

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 four walls 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."

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.

ROCKET/MISSILE TABLE

Type	Damage Value	AP	Damage Value Reduction
Anti-Vehicle	16P	–2/–6*	–4/m
Fragmentation	16P(f)	+2	–1/m
High Explosive	14P	–2	–2/m

* AVR/AVMs have an AP of –2 against people, –6 against vehicles.

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. 313

RESOLVING ROCKET AND MISSILE FIRE

Rocket fire is resolved in the same manner as for grenade launchers. See *Grenades,* p. 145.

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 (or vehicle's) Sensor rating (see *Passive Targeting,* p. 162). Active Targeting (see p. 162), 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. 162).

Impact armor protects against missile and rocket attacks.

ROCKET AND MISSILE SCATTER

Like grenades, missiles and rockets scatter (see the Scatter Table, p. 145). 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.

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 Modifiers Table, p. 148.

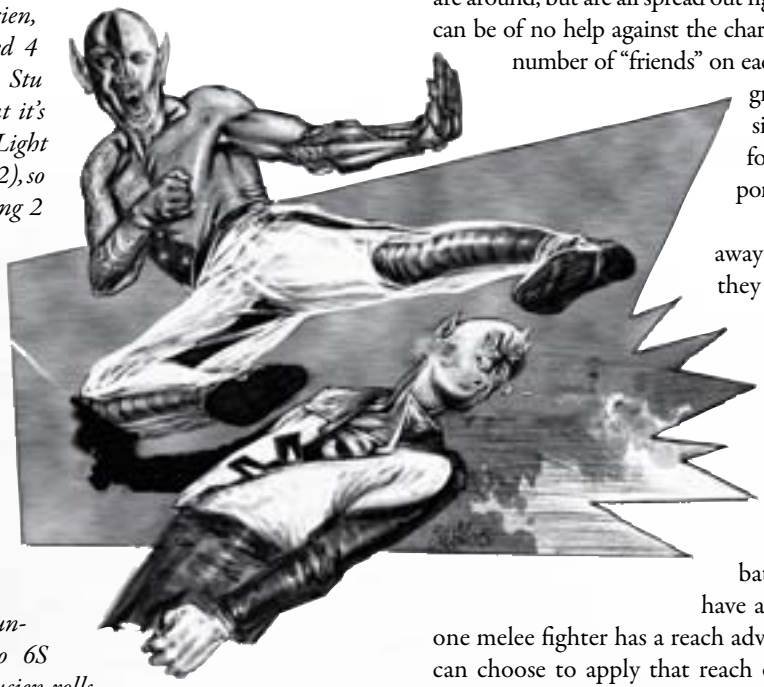
DEFENDING AGAINST MELEE ATTACKS

Defenders have three choices for defending against unarmed attacks. If they have a melee weapon in hand, they can *parry* the attack by rolling Reaction + the appropriate weapon skill. If they have Unarmed Combat skill, they can choose to *block* by rolling Reaction + Unarmed Combat. Or they can simply *dodge* out of the way using Reaction + Dodge.

Melee defenders can also choose to go on full defense (p. 151), and add Dodge skill dice to their defense roll.

Defenders apply dice pool modifiers according to the Defense Modifiers Table (p. 150). Some modifiers from the Melee Modifiers Table (p. 148) may apply to the defender as well.

An angry troll named Stu has cornered Lucien in a dark alley. Stu throws a meaty punch at Lucien, rolling his Unarmed 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 Modifiers Table (p. 148) apply to both attackers and defenders, unless specifically noted.

MELEE COMBAT SUMMARY

Attacker Rolls:	Agility + Combat skill
Defender Rolls:	Reaction + weapon skill (parry)
	Reaction + Unarmed Combat (block)
	Reaction + Dodge (dodge)
Defender using Full Defense:	Reaction + weapon skill/Dodge + Dodge
DV Modifiers:	net hits
Armor Used:	Impact
Condition Monitor Used:	Physical or Stun

Urgent Message...

Called Shots

Characters using melee weapons may call shots; see the *Called Shots,* p. 149.

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 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.

MELEE MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Dice Pool Modifier
Friends in the melee	+1 per friend (max. +4)
Character wounded	–wound modifier (see p. 153)
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 (see p. 140)
Called shot	variable (see *Called Shots,* p. 149)
Touch-only attack	+2

* You may apply Reach as a –1 dice pool modifier per net point to the opponent instead.

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. 77).

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 than an attack is coming (see *Surprise,* p. 155), then he cannot defend against it (no dodge or parry). It is generally assumed that characters engaged in combat have 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 Charging 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. 144 and *Ranged Combat,* p. 140). The Melee Weapons Table (p. 149) lists the melee weapons available in *Shadowrun,* along with their statistics. For full details, see the gear listings on p. 304.

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 (not Ballistic) is used to defend against melee weapons.

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. 140). The armor rating is reduced by the attack's AP value (see *Armor Penetration,* p. 152).

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.

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.

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 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.

MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

Blades	Reach	Damage Value	AP
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. 154).

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. A character can aim (see *Take Aim,* p. 137) and then call a shot at the time of the attack. Calling the shot is a Free Action.

When a shot is called, either of the following may occur, at the player's choice and with the gamemaster's agreement.

- 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 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.

DEFENSE MODIFIERS

Defending against attacks is not an easy task—bullets are faster than people. Various situational modifiers 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, p. 151.

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. 148).

Defender Wounded

Wound modifiers apply if the defender has taken damage. See *Wound Modifiers,* p. 153.

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.

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.

DEFENSE MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Dice Pool Modifier
Defender unaware of attack	No defense possible
Defender wounded	–wound modifiers (see p. 153)
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
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

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 either 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 Reaction + Dodge, whereas a character on full defense against a melee attack could roll Reaction + Dodge + Dodge, or Reaction + melee combat skill + Dodge. Full dodge may be used against both ranged and melee attacks.

Full Parry: Characters who go on full parry roll their Reaction + (melee combat skill x 2) 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. 155). 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.

> *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.*

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. 146).

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. 154.

Attacking to Knock Down (Melee Only)

An attacking character may intentionally intend 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.

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

The Damage Level 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. The AP is used to modify 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. Others 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.

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. 148). 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. 153) 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.

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. 65, the Condition Monitor has two columns: Physical and Stun. Physical damage is recorded in the Physical column, Stun damage in the Stun column. Each point of Damage Value = 1 box on the Condition Monitor.

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. 151).

Condition Monitor Tracks

As noted under *Condition Monitors,* p. 65, 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. 242).

Exceeding the Condition Monitor

When the total number of boxes in a column (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 column. 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 column, and then fill in 3 boxes in the Physical column. If the character has already taken damage in the Physical column, 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 column. See *Healing,* p. 242.

If a character takes more Physical damage than he has boxes in the Physical column, the character is in trouble. Overflowing the Physical column means that the character is near death. Instant death occurs only if damage overflows the Physical column 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 column 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. 244, for the rules governing medical aid to characters in that condition.

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 the effects of 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, the following conditions must be met:

1) 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.

2) 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.

3) 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.

FALLING DAMAGE TABLE

Distance Fallen (in meters)	Damage
1–2	2
3–6	4
7–8	6
over 8	+1 box per 2 meters

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. 317) 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. 117) 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. 317) 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.

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. 317) 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

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.

Characters fall at a rate of 150 meters per Combat Turn, increasing by +50 meters per turn until they reach terminal velocity of about 300 meters/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 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. 317) adds its full rating to the armor value.

Objects hit by a Fire damage attack are in risk of catching fire. Make a damage resistance test using the item's Armor x 2 (see *Barriers,* p. 157), 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 that they need to react to 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 are planning an ambush and have delayed 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 as appropriate, but they also jump or take an otherwise startled action, perhaps 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.

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).

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		

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.

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 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 char-

acter 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.

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.

Rambler has had enough of trying to shoot through the door, and just 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.

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

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 situations where flesh-and-blood characters outnumber the vehicles involved. (For example, the party is trying to stop the bad guy from boarding a helicopter and getting away.)

Chase combat usually occurs predominantly with vehicles (though this may not always be the case) and is generally a lot more fluid, based more on maneuverability than positioning. Also, chase combat occurs on 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. 230).

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 Body 3 motorcycle or combat drone, 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. 55).

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. 213.

Handling Rating

Every vehicle has a Handling rating that indicates how easy it is to pilot and maneuver. See the Handling Rating Table (p. 159) for specific examples.

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

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 determine 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.

A drive 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 start suffering real difficulties in trying to get their vehicle to go faster and still maintain 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.

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 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.

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	3
Ground Example: hairpin turn, "stoppie" on a motorbike, jackknifing a truck	
Air Example: landing on short runway	
Extreme	4
Ground Example: 180 without stopping, jumping an obstacle on a motorbike	
Air Example: landing on no runway	

TERRAIN 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 (ex: 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 streets Water Example: Shallow water zones, gentle rapids Air Example: Heavy air traffic, Nape-of-earth (NOE) flying over normal traffic	
Tight	+3
Ground Example: back alleys, heavy woods, very steep slopes, high traffic streets, mud, swamp, sand Water Example: Confined spaces (ex: inside a pipe), heavy rapids Air Example: Canyon gorges, flying at street level	

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 either 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, 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.)

Listed 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 Reaction + Vehicle skill +/– Handling to attack. The target rolls Reaction + Dodge if a pedestrian, or Reaction + Vehicle skill +/– Handling if driving another vehicle.

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.

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

CHASE COMBAT

Chase combat involves multiple vehicles moving at high speed over a distance. This covers everything from car and motorcycle chases to aerial dogfights to armored vehicles in mounted battle.

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).

Chase Combat Turn Sequence

Chase Combat is similar to regular combat. Here is the sequence for resolving Chase Combat:

1. **Opposed Vehicle Test.**
2. **Roll Initiative.** Roll Initiative as usual. All the normal rules for Initiative apply.
3. **Begin Chase Combat Turn.**
4. **Declare Action/Stunts.** Instead of actions, vehicles execute stunts. Like regular combat, stunts may be Free, Simple, or Complex. See *Chase Stunts.*
5. **Resolve Actions/Stunts by Initiative Order.** Resolve as normal, from highest Initiative Score to lowest.
6. **Resolve Actions/Stunts in subsequent passes.**
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.

Opposed Vehicle Test

At the beginning of each Chase Combat Turn, each driver makes a Vehicle Test. The winner chooses the Engagement Range he will have against all vehicles that scored fewer hits than he did. Ties are broken first by Edge, then Reaction, then Handling.

The rules for glitches and critical glitches on Vehicle Tests apply here.

Engagement Range

There are 3 Ranges of Engagement in Chase Combat: Close, Short, and Long.

Close 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.

Short 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.

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 (Close Range Only): The driver tries to cut off another vehicle in Close 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 (Close Range Only): The driver attempts to collide with another vehicle in Close Range. Resolve this as noted under *Ramming,* p. 160.

Passenger Actions

Passenger actions take place as normal, in Initiative order.

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.

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. 239). 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 = 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. 160).

Called Shots on Vehicles

Called shots against vehicles follow the same rules as for *Called Shots,* p. 149. A third 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.

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 cover (partial cover at the least, though full cover/blind fire may apply as the situation dictates). Passengers attempting to defend an attack inside a vehicle suffer a –2 dodge dice pool modifier, 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.

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. 239). Drones must have an autosoft appropriate to the weapon they are wielding in order to attack.

SENSOR TESTS

To detect a person, critter, or vehicle with sensors, the character/vehicle must make a successful Sensor + Perception Test (Sensor + Pilot 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.

SIGNATURE TABLE

Target Vehicle	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

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. 239). 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.

. . . THE AWAKENED WORLD . . .

Rosa coughed, the acrid smell of gunpowder burning her lungs. Another burst of gunfire rattled the dumpster behind her, echoing through the alley as the bullets ricocheted out of the empty metal box.

"Rosa!" She looked over to see Radio scramble out from the next dumpster. He grabbed Doc's coat where the sammy had fallen, pulling him back behind cover. "Rosa!" Radio yelled.

Crimson smeared the ground, marking the surfaces Doc's body had slid along. The vivid red made her stomach twist. She broke out in a sweat despite the chill night air. She tried to speak, but her voice wouldn't come.

"Answer me, damn it!" Radio was really pissed off. He never yelled. His hands were the same color red as the concrete.

Rosa blinked, and shook her head to clear it. She took a deep breath and tried again. "How bad is it?" she yelled, straining to be heard over the gunfire.

"Hammer's keeping them off on the other side, Doc's hurt bad. We are out of time. If we can't get that troll, it's over." Another burst of gunfire spat across both dumpsters, and Radio ducked to the side.

Rosa crept to the corner and peeked around. The heavily armored troll was the leader of the three man merc team. The good thing was, he hadn't taken cover. He didn't seem to see the need—bullets bounced off him like so many pebbles. The bad thing was, he didn't have a scratch on him.

As she looked, he saw her and grinned, baring his tusks. "Come on out, girlie," he said, casually strolling her way. She ducked back behind the dumpster again just before another hail of bullets peppered her hiding place. She was shaking.

"One shot ... only get one shot ..." she muttered to herself while mentally reviewing her spells. She focused on her lightning bolt spell. Only chance to take out this bastard is to overcast. It's going to hurt—a lot—but I don't think it'll kill me. The troll, on the other hand ...

Rosa shut her eyes tightly and chanted softly, letting the incantation help her build the framework for the energy to inhabit. The rush was euphoric. Lightning flew between her fingertips and in her hair. Her eyes glowed blue-white, and thunder rumbled in her ears as she chanted.

As she passed the point where she'd normally release the spell, the sensations changed. She felt the strain as she actively strove to keep control of the power. The ecstatic high turned hyper-intensive, crossing the border into pain. She fought to keep her voice steady as the power burned through her skin. Tears ran down her face. It was too much. Just a bit ... longer ... oh God, it hurts ...

With a scream, she rolled into the space between the dumpsters, the troll directly in her line of sight. Through a haze of pain, she saw his expression change to one of terror, right before she released the spell.

Inhuman screams filled the alley, hers and his. The scent of burning flesh mingled with the smoke from the ammunition. For her own private eternity, the lightning coursed through her and into the troll's body, even after he dropped to the ground.

Fatigue numbed the pain from the magic and her burned hands. As the last of the power faded, she no longer had the strength to keep her head and hands raised. Her forehead came to rest on the cold asphalt.

From a long way away, she heard Radio's voice. "You got him, Rosa. Good work."

In 2011, the Awakening transformed the world by making magic a reality. Some people in the Sixth World have the rare gift to use the power of magic. They are the *Awakened*.

In *Shadowrun,* an Awakened character is one with a Magic attribute of 1 or greater. Characters with a Magic of 0 are known as *mundanes*. Awakened characters have access to various magical skills and abilities. Those who use magical skills are *magicians,* while other Awakened characters focus their magical abilities inward and are known as *adepts*.

Magicians follow many different *traditions*. A tradition is a set of beliefs and techniques for using magic. It colors the magician's outlook and affects how the magician learns and uses magic. The choice of magical tradition is for life. Once you are on the path, there is no turning back. The most common traditions are *hermetic* and *shamanic*.

Adepts may also choose to follow a tradition, though their relationship with magic expresses itself differently. They focus their magical power inward to perfect the body and mind. They learn their unique abilities by exploring their personal connection to the magical world, whether through introspection and study or by communing with a spirit guide.

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.

Magic

The Magic attribute is only available to characters with the Magician, Adept, or Mystic Adept qualities (pp. 77 and 79). 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* (see p. 189 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.

Urgent Message...

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 p. 178).

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 revolves around the Magic-linked skills of the Sorcery and Conjuring skill groups.

SORCERY

Sorcery is the term used for manipulating spells in *Shadowrun.* Sorcery is a skill group comprised 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 Magic + Spellcasting dice. Other sources of power (foci, spirit spellcasting aid) and Visibility modifiers (p. 117) 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. 173.

SYSTEM ONLINE
POWER AT 45%
RITUAL SEQUENCE
INITIATED
PROGRESS
AT 1%

Urgent Message...

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

Continued on page 167

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 Magic + Ritual Spellcasting roll 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. 175.

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. 175.

CONJURING

Conjuring is the skill group used to deal with spirits. The group is comprised 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 an Opposed Magic + Summoning 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. 180).

Summoning is a Complex Action. For more information, see p. 179.

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 an Opposed Magic + Banishing 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. For more information, see p. 180.

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 Magic + Binding 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. 180.

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.

> *Salamander has just cast a manabolt and must now resist the Drain (Drain Code 3). He's a hermetic mage, so he uses his Logic 5 in addition to Willpower 3 to resist Drain. Rolling 8 dice, he gets only 2 hits, so he suffers 1 box of Stun damage from Drain.*

The base Drain Value for Spellcasting is listed in the spell's description (see p. 195.) 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).

MAGICAL LODGES

In order to progress in her studies, a magician must have a collection of symbols, writings, tools,

THEORIES ON THE NATURE OF MAGIC *(Cont.)*

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.

and other material that allows him to record her progress, gives him room to expand her knowledge, and assists him 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) or learned.

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 (see p. 185). 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 signature of the magicians who activated it (see *Astral Signatures,* p. 182). A lodge is magically linked to the magicians who activated it. This link can be tracked using astral projection (see *Astral Tracking,* p. 184).

If the magician wishes to increase the rating of an existing lodge, additional materials must be acquired to bring the Force up to the desired level. An activation ritual must also be performed, taking a number of days equal to the difference between the current Force and the desired Force. Gamemasters can generalize the cost of searching and gathering at a flat 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 personality and tradition. Hermetics often collect ritual tools such as daggers, scrollwork, runes, and—above all—books, though these days a virtual library often replaces the traditional hardcopy. 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: a lodge cannot be carried around on one's person while activated. It is an Awakened place, more than the sum of the objects it contains. When a lodge is moved, it must be set up again in order to be used, requiring a new activation ritual.

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. 117) with a threshold equal to 6 minus the magic's Force—more powerful magic is easier to spot. 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).

A sneaky shaman is working up a spell to control Zack's actions, so the gamemaster rolls a secret Perception Test for Zack to see if he notices it coming. Zack's not Awakened, but the Raven shaman's birdlike shamanic mask adds 2 dice to Zack's dice pool of 6. Zack rolls 8 dice and gets 3 hits. The shaman's spell is Force 4, so Zack only needed 2 hits (6 – 4) to see him working up the spell.

MAGIC ACTIONS

The following list describes the magical-oriented Free, Simple, and Complex Actions a character may take, as noted under *The Action Phase,* p. 135.

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. 189.

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. 190.

Declare Counterspelling Protection: A magician who wishes to protect others with Counterspelling (see p. 175) 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 (see p. 174).

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. 191.

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. 176).

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. 180.

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. 176).

Dismiss Spirit: A magician can use a Simple Action to send a conjured spirit away on "standby" (see *Conjuring,* p. 176).

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. 182).

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. 183.

Banish Spirit: A magician can attempt to banish a spirit by taking a Complex Action (see *Banishing,* p. 180).

Cast Spell: A magician may cast a spell by taking a Complex Action (see *Spellcasting,* p. 173).

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. 182.

Summon Spirit: A magician may summon a spirit by taking a Complex Action (see *Summoning,* p. 179).

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.

MAGIC ACTIONS

Free Actions
Centering
Deactivate Focus
Declare Counterspelling Projection
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

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 but 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 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 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 spir-

it of that type may serve a magician of that tradition (see *Spirit Services*, p. 177). For examples of spirit associations with magic, see *Spirits*, p. 294.

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.

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 Coyote he only gets an hour for lunch.)

Mages are scholars who study and practice magic using tried and established formulas and procedures. Mages continuously 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 the manifestation of the living earth; her children, the spirits, guide and aid the shaman, 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 the skies and storms, of the mountains and valleys, of lakes and rivers, of birds and rats, and the spirits 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. 168). A player can choose whether or not this effect is apparent for her character.

INCOMING FEED.....

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. 195.

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.

Spells 101

When looking at spells, 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 mana of a creature—what many traditions believe to be the very essence of its life force.

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. 181). Mana spells can only affect living things or entities composed of mana—such as spirits or foci.

Beyond the initial division of 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. 195).

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

Urgent Message...

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 detect 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 to 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 or items, shape, create, or channel energy, or change a target's form or appearance by altering its structure.

other words, Force serves as a limiter 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 an Extended Intuition + Spellcasting (5) Test (interval: 1 day). Instructors can make an Instruction Test (p. 123) 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.

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¥

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 Extended Magic + Intuition 5 Test, interval: 1 hour). For examples of items used as fetishes, see *Foci,* p. 190.

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 he'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 p. 174), 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.

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 (see p. 172), 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 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.

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.

In some cases, the caster may need to make a Perception Test to determine if a given target can be seen well enough to target with a spell. This Perception Test is part of the Complex Action required to cast the spell and takes no time of its own. Visibility modifiers (including darkness, cover, and other impediments) noted for ranged combat also reduce the magician's Magic + Spellcasting dice pool when casting spells.

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, to target 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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.

> *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 (Magic 4 + Spellcasting 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. 175), she may add Counterspelling dice to this resistance

test. If the target of a spell is on the other side of an astral barrier (see p. 185), 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 Indirect Combat spells do get to resist the damage as they would any ranged attack, use only their Armor rating x 2 (or just Armor against spells with elemental effects) to resist the damage caused (see *Barriers,* p. 157).

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. 171).

Failed spells have no effect. Regardless of whether the spell worked, the magician must resist the Drain.

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 Intuition + Spellcasting 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!

A go-ganger is about to ride Raze down on his motorbike, so Raze casts a Powerbolt at her. He chooses Force 5 and rolls his Magic 5 + Spellcasting 4 (9 dice), and gets 4 hits. The ganger rolls her Body 3 to resist, and gets only 1. The base damage of the Powerbolt is 5, increased by the net hits to 8—ouch! The Drain Code for the Powerbolt is (F ÷ 2) + 1, so Raze must resist 3 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).

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)	3
Highly Processed Objects	
(Computers, Complex Toxic Wastes, Drones, Vehicles)	4+

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 overcasting.

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 Willpower + Spellcasting (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 3 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 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. 185.

Note that magicians have a limit on the length of time they can astrally project (see p. 183). 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 Magic + Ritual Spellcasting 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. 172) 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 and on whether the target can resist the spell in question (see *Spells,* p. 171).

When casting begins, the dice pool is equal to the leader's Magic + Ritual Spellcasting. Each additional member of the team makes a Magic + Ritual Spellcasting test as if they were casting the spell; their net hits are added as dice pool bonus to the leader's Ritual Spellcasting dice pool (see *Teamwork Tests,* p. 59). Individuals may use foci to supplement their own tests.

SPELLCASTING BY THE NUMBERS

Step 1: Choose a Spell.
Step 2: Choose the Force up to the caster's Magic attribute (unless overcasting—see p. **172**).
Step 3: Choose a Target within the caster's line of sight.
Step 4: Roll Magic + Spellcasting.
Step 5: Determine Effect (see spell description).
Step 6: Roll Willpower + attribute to resist Drain.
Step 7: Determine Ongoing Effects (–2 sustaining modifier).

Urgent Message...

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 Intuition +Assensing (20 – spell Force, 1 hour) Extended Test for the target beginning an hour after the ritual spellcasting starts to determine if she 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 (spell defense) 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. 134). 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 attri-

bute (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 (see p. 59).

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 Magic + Intuition (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.

> *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.

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. 285.

Spirit Forms

The natural form of a spirit is its astral form. Most spirits also have the Materialization power (p. 289), 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 (see *Auras and Astral Forms,* p. 181). 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 (see p. 183), 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. 285, 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.

INCOMING FEED.....

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. 146) or astral (p. 184) 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 (see p. 288), 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.

Continual 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.

Urgent Message...

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.

Spirit Range: Spirits must remain within 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), 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 been given a remote service, it is technically released. Spirits on remote services no longer count against the limit of summoned spirits.

Bound Spirit Services

Binding is the method of compelling long-term services from a spirit (see p. 180). 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 services will go on standby when 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.

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. 172). Note that since the test to learn a new

spell is not based on Magic, the magician suffers no penalty to her dice pool for having a bound spirit present. 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* a spell 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.

SPIRIT SERVICES

Unbound Spirit Services	Bound Spirit Services
Combat	Any Unbound Spirit Service
Continual Use of a Power	Aid Sorcery
Perform Physical Task	Aid Study
Remote Service	Loaned Service
	Spell Binding
	Spell Sustaining

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 non-human 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. 169). 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 Magic + Summoning 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. 172) 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.

Urgent Message...

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.

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 spirits 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 Magic + Banishing. The target spirit rolls Force if unbound or Force + summoner's Magic if bound. The banishing magician may use a banishing focus (see p. 191) 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 Magic + Binding 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. 178). A bound spirit can perform some additional types of services (see *Spirit Services*, p. 177).

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,* at left) 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. 184). 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. 295.

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 Success 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 (see p. 177).

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 (see p. 290).
- **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 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 astral or physical 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.

THE ASTRAL WORLD

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.

The astral plane is the home of spirits and magic. It is suffused with mana, the essence of magic, which flows from the metaplanes into our physical world and through it to the astral, where it pools and infuses the astral plane with its presence.

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

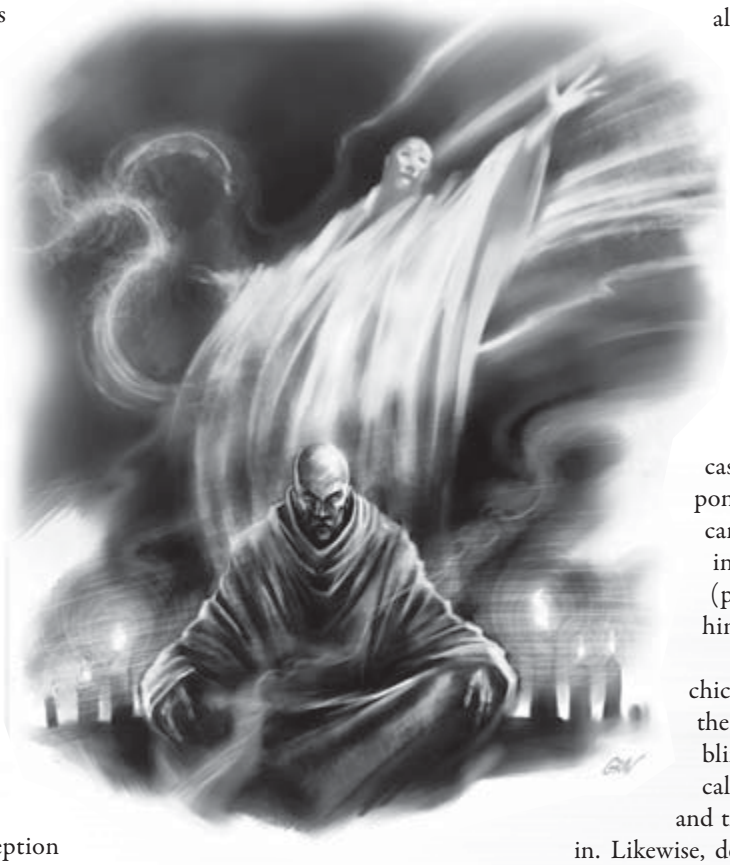
Living things that are not active on the astral plane still cast a reflection of themselves there, called an aura. Any nonliving objects appear as a faded semblance of their physical

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 (see p. 79), or to adepts and mystic adepts who buy the Astral Perception power (see p. 187). 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 Intuition + Assensing test, with the number of hits determining how much the magician learns, as outlined on the Assensing Table (p. 183). 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. 184) 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.

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. If successful, the character detects the signature. Once seen, a signature can be recognized if the character

sees it again (perhaps requiring a memory test, as noted on p. 130). 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. 184). 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 an hour 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 "Waking 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 fast for the magician to take in detail, so "running" magicians should suffer movement modifiers of –2 or more to their actions.

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. **184**). 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 ...* , p. 184.

Initiative in astral space is based entirely on Intuition (astral Initiative = 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

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 diganosis 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 cyber-implants. The exact Essence, Magic and Force of the subject. An accurate diagnosis of any disease or toxins which afflict the subject.
5+	Any other implants. The general cause of any emotional impression (a murder, a riot, a religious ceremony, and so on). The general cause of any astral signature (combat spell, hearth spirit, and so on). The fact that a subject is a technomancer.

Urgent Message...

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 COMBAT

Attack	Damage
Magician	Charisma ÷ 2 (round up)
Magician w/weapon focus	By weapon type
Spirit	Force ÷ 2 (round up)
Watcher Spirits	1

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 ATTRIBUTES

Physical Attribute	Astral Attribute
Agility	Logic
Body	Willpower
Reaction	Intuition
Strength	Charisma

Astral Initiative: Intuition x 2
Astral Initiative Passes: 3

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. 190), 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 the opposite of astral perception—the extending of the senses onto the physical plane. 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. 289), 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. Manifesting characters and spirits, however, are vulnerable to mana-based magical effects on the physical plane. 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 Willpower + Astral Combat skill 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 (see p. 192), 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 Extended Assensing + Intuition (5) Test (interval: 1 hour), modified as noted on the Astral Tracking Modifiers table (p. 184).

THE METAPLANES

There are realms beyond the astral plane, places known only to initiates (p. 189), 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 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 a solid barrier 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 ward must be placed on a non-living thing (walls, rocks, and so on). A ward cannot be moved from its physical component to another location. 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. 59). 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

Astral mana barriers may be attacked in astral combat, treat it as a standard barrier with an Armor and Structure equal to its Force (see *Barriers,* p. 157). 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 him 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 spell, 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).

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.

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 (see p. 182).

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, and 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.

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. 188), 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. 117), 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 *Jumping*, p. 116). Each level is also added to the character's Agility for determining the maximum distance a character can jump.

Improved Ability

Cost: .5 per level (Combat skills), .25 per level (Physical, Social, Technical skills)

This power gives you additional dice for use with a specific Active skill. Dice purchased for the Active skill carry over equally to any specializations of the skill you know. You cannot have more additional dice than your base skill rating. Improved Ability does not actually improve a skill's rating, it only provides additional dice for tests involving the skill. Improved Ability must be purchased for a specific skill, not a skill group.

This power costs .5 per level for all Combat skills and only .25 per level for Physical, Social, and Technical skills.

Improved Physical Attribute

Cost: 1 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 (see p. 264), 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 (2 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	2
2	3
3	5

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. 298, 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: Your sense of direction is so acute you know what direction you are facing, and whether you are above or below the local ground level, with a successful Perception Test. 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. 323).

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. 333).

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. 187).

A Killing Hands attack may also be used against creatures with Immunity to Normal Weapons (see p. 288) 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. 184).

Kinesics

Cost: .5 per level

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. 140), 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.

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. 184).

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 (see p. 242). 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 Charisma + Con 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.

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 (see p. 185), 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. 185).

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.

- **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. 182) at will, disguising it so that it cannot be used to identify him, 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 real-

ize 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.

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.

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 + Weapon Reach) x Force
Power Focus	8 x Force

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. 182). The connection between a focus and its owner can be tracked through astral space (see *Astral Tracking,* p. 185).

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.

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, handheld, 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 him 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.

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 or withheld to help the magician with Drain.

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 foci 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, or they may be withheld to help resist Drain.

Banishing foci add dice to any attempt to banish the appropriate type of spirit. These dice increase the magician's Magic + Banishing dice pool.

Binding foci add their Force to the magician's Magic + Binding dice pool when binding an appropriate type of spirit, or the extra dice may be withheld to help resist Drain. 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.

In physical combat, weapon foci add their Force in dice to the character's dice pool for melee attacks. The character

still relies on her Physical attributes and skills in combat; the weapon focus merely makes him 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 him to the astral plane. Making an attack with a weapon focus in astral space relies on the character's Willpower + Astral Combat dice pool (see *Astral Combat*, p. 184), 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.

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 him mentally, or perhaps appearing in astral space and guiding him 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. 79).

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 easy-going 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 (ie., 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.
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. 81; 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.

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 (see p. 192). 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.

STREET GRIMOIRE

The following are the most common spells in use in the 2070 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. 172 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. 146). One net hit is sufficient for the caster to touch the target.

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. 173).

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. 174).

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.

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.

SIMPLIFYING SPELL DRAIN

Urgent Message...

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.

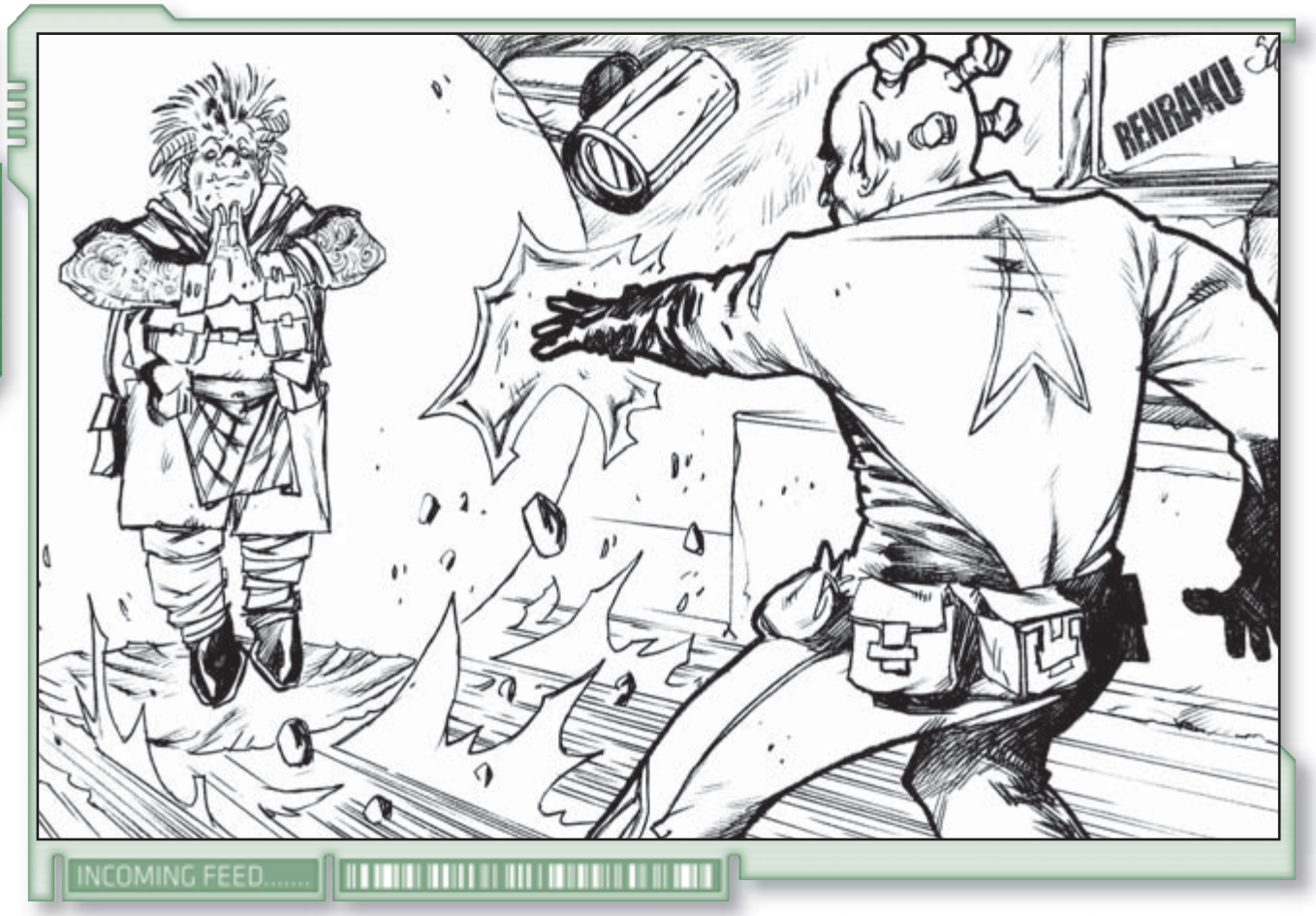
If a character decides at some point to cast a spell at a different Force value, simply modify the Drain by +1 or –1 for every 2 points the player increases or decreases the Force, respectively.

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.

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 Magic + Spellcasting is resisted by the target's Body (for physical spells) or Willpower (for mana spells), plus Counterspelling (if available). 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 much achieve enough hits to beat the item's Object Resistance (see p. 174). Net hits increase damage as normal (the object does not get a resistance test).

Indirect Combat Spells: Indirect Combat spells are treated like ranged combat attacks; the caster makes a Magic + Spellcasting Success Test versus the target's Reaction. If the spell hits, the target resist with Body + half Impact armor (+ Counterspelling, if available), with each hit reducing 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. 157).

Elemental Effects: Many Indirect Combat spells utilize damaging elemental energies such as Fire damage, Electrical damage, etc (see *Special Types of Damage,* p. 154). 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).

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 Pilot + Handling 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.

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. 154), 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)
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 (see p. 155).

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. 154). Lightning Bolt is a single target spell. Ball Lightning is an area spell.

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

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 nonliving 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 either cast upon the magician or a subject within Touch range. Using the sense may require the subject to take a Simple Action to Observe in Detail (see p. 136). 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).

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. Example: The troll is your contact, Moira, and she's wounded and being chased by three ork gangers!

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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. 174). 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. 175).

Passive: A passive sense is simply "on" and passes along any appropriate sensory input without any sort of interpretation (similar 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 caster'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 Magic + Spellcasting 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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 (see p. 174). 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.

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.

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. Its 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	Effect
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 Magic + Spellcasting 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 (see p. 245) 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 or Initiative 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.

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 (maximum): +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 (see p. 195) 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. 244).

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. 182). 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 (see p. 174). They are resisted by Intuition + Counterspelling (if any); non-living devices do not get a resistance test. The observer must generate more hits than the spellcaster to determine that the illusion is not real. If the spell is not completely resisted, the character is fully affected by the illusion.

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 • (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. 141) 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 makes 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.

MANIPULATION SPELLS

Manipulation spells control, animate, or transform matter and energy. Many Manipulation spells have a Threshold; this is a number of Magic + Spellcasting 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. 159). 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 (see p. 174). 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 (see p. 155) 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. 202. 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 Magic 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).

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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. See p. 185 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. 157).

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. 157). The caster can form the barrier as 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 caster's Force. The caster can adjust size of the barrier the same as the radius of an area spell (p. 173).

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. 285, 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 Magic + Spellcasting 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. 157).

. . . THE WIRELESS WORLD . . .

The team of runners crept down the sterile corporate hallway, cautiously approaching the door at the end. Frogger watched the others from the rear, his vision cluttered with augmented reality overlays. Through his implanted commlink, he could see and hear the invisible wireless mesh network linking the team together, allowing them to communicate silently with subvocalized speech and mentally-composed text messages. He kept one eye on the stream of chatter, focusing on his active connections with the other. One window streamed real-time footage from his surveillance drone hovering in place over the facility, showing him that there was still no indication that their intrusion was detected. Another window displayed a map of the compound, with his team noted as red dots and the locations of RFID-tagged employees in the building noted as blue dots. He monitored the corp's primary wireless net in a third window, where he was logged on—thanks to a cracked password he had carefully acquired in advance—as one Alice James, assistant security director. Whoever she was, her password opened doors, and that's what the team had needed to get this far.

Katja, the team's gillette, got his attention. Time to shine, hacker boy, *she subvocalized.* Work your Matrix magic on this maglock.

Frogger spent a brief moment trying to open this door via his hacked account, to no avail—Ms. James didn't have authorization to enter this part of the facility. Our hall pass just expired, *he messaged.* I'm going to have to do this the hard way. *After a few seconds of mental gymnastics, he bypassed the network's defenses, accessed the maglock, and instructed it to open—without triggering an alarm.* Too easy, *he noted, sounding disappointed, as the door popped open.*

Frogger followed the others into the room, closing the door behind him, and frowning as several of his visuals pixelated. As the team spread out into guarded positions, several warning icons grabbed his attention—he had just lost several connections and was picking up a new local network. Fuck! *He transmitted.* This wing must have wireless-inhibiting materials in the wall—just lost my outside links, and there's a new security network here. Give me a sec to hack it!

Spotting a surveillance camera in the corner, Frogger knew he had to act fast. Quickly sitting against a wall, he switched into full virtual reality mode. The room and his body evaporated, replaced by his familiar radioactive toad icon and his commlink's marsh "reality." He immediately shot down the wireless link and launched an array of automated routines against the network's firewall, probing for any number of known exploitable flaws with the speed and hyper-intensity that only hot sim could provide. Within seconds, he was in—but the system security wasn't slouching, and his unauthorized presence had been identified. He scrambled to access the vidcams, editing their feed so onsite security couldn't spot them too easily.

Looking bad, kids. Red lights, klaxons, all that—we need to move! *Though they could see no sign of it, the team immediately exploded into action, planting the "evidence" they had been hired to drop while watching for approaching security.*

Frogger continued to race through the system's carefully-sculpted "megacity" virtual landscape, when a menacing diesel machine icon suddenly raced towards him—which he immediately recognized as an intrusion countermeasures program. Frogger smiled to himself, and readied his attack software. Now it's time to have some fun.

In 2029, a mysterious virus devastated worldwide computer networks, 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 Crash brought down the Matrix once again. By 2070, the Matrix of old—from the datajacks and cyberdecks of its users to the wired computer hosts and mile upon mile of fiberoptic cable spaghetti—is no more. A new Matrix has arisen, a world of augmented perceptions and wireless connections.

In *Shadowrun*, nearly everyone is part of this interlinked electronic world, whether they will it or not. Your personal *commlink* allows you to be online wherever you go, 24-7-365, so that you are always in touch by phone or messaging. *Augmented reality* allows you to access data from the Matrix just about anywhere, overlaying it upon your physical senses like a personal heads-up display. Want to see a map, a restaurant's menu, or an incoming email message? It's just a mental click away. Wireless networking also allows you to engage in computer-aided socializing with anyone in your immediate vicinity, whether you want to read that hot elf's profile, sell an extra pair of *Speed Coma* tickets, or take on a gaming contender in a round of *Avatar Assassin.*

Certain shadowrunners, however, manipulate the wireless world to their advantage. These *hackers* specialize in commanding programs and machines to do their bidding, manipulating data, or ferreting out information locked away in digital vaults. Hackers are not the only pirates navigating the electronic seas: *technomancers*—the evolved children of the Matrix—possess the ability to transform the wireless world with nothing but the power of their naked minds.

Both hackers and technomancers excel in accessing and exploiting wireless (and wired) networks. Together they fill a vital role in any shadowrunning team, not just for their net-ninja abilities to compromise security systems or gather vital pieces of data, but also for their skills in controlling armies of drones and fully interfacing with vehicles—giving them an edge that even cybered street samurai cannot match.

Most importantly, hackers and technomancers are no longer leashed to the clunky cyberdecks and wired systems that limited their predecessors. They are now mobile and integrated members of any shadowrunning team.

MATRIX 2.0 BASICS

The Matrix of 2070 is composed of a near-infinite number of overlapping wireless mesh networks used to control nearly every aspect of modern life. The new Matrix is built to ensure that it is omnipresent, accessible from all locations, and integrated into daily life.

AUGMENTED WORLD

Augmented reality (AR) includes all types of sensory enhancements overlaid on a user's normal real-world perceptions. This allows the average citizen to see, hear, touch, and even smell the Matrix continuously while still interacting with the normal everyday world around them. Applications of AR are discussed in detail on p. 209.

AR is not to be confused with *virtual reality* (VR), where artificial sensations from the Matrix overwhelm your real-world perceptions and immerse you in a simulated reality—mentally separating you from your physical body. Unless otherwise noted, this chapter refers to augmented reality—the most common way of using the Matrix—rather than virtual. VR is discussed in detail on p. 228.

MATRIX TOPOLOGY

The Matrix a complex organism, a vast collection of billions of nodes all linked together in various networks that are themselves linked together. At the bottom layer of the pyramid are individual users with their commlinks and *personal area networks* (p. 210). These users and PANs wirelessly interact with other PANs and devices all around them in a wireless mesh network. Homes and offices are integrated through a terminal—or *term* for short—that tends to serve as its multimedia center (image scanner, full-size printer, video screen or holo display, larger speakers, and so on). This network connects through numerous gateways and hardwired base stations to the local Matrix infrastructure; together, they form a telecommunications grid. These grids are, in turn, interlinked, forming the backbone of the Matrix itself.

DEVICE AND SOFTWARE RATINGS

Every computerized electronic device—from commlinks to cyberware to vidcams to mainagents—has a set of basic attributes for use in certain Matrix interactions. Some of these attributes—Response, and Signal—are determined by the machine's hardware capabilities. Others—Firewall and System—are determined by the device's operating system (OS) software. For simplicity, however, most devices in *SR4* are given a standard Device rating that bundles all of these attributes together. These attributes are detailed under *Matrix Attributes,* p. 212.

Software also comes with specific Program ratings that determine how effective that particular program is. Software is detailed under *Programs,* p. 225.

USING THE MATRIX

Every *Shadowrun* character possesses basic computer and electronics skills (unless you possess the Incompetent or Uneducated negative qualities, p. 83 and 84) and has personal experience with networking, searching for data, and using the Matrix in general. Standard denizens of the Sixth World use their commlinks/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. For characters who want to maximize their Matrix use, however, the skills of Computer (see *Using Computer Skill,* p. 218) and Data Search (see *Using Data Search Skill,* p. 220) are invaluable.

Interface

You are represented in the Matrix by your *persona,* the graphical user interface that executes all of your commands. Your persona icon is what other Matrix users see when they interact with you online (see *Persona,* p. 211).

Urgent Message...

AR MODIFIERS

Depending on the situation, AR can be a bonus or a detriment. In most cases, AR will be beneficial to you, 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 to +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. The gamemaster determines the exact bonus, whether awarding extra dice to certain tests or applying an Initiative bonus to each meshed member of the team.

AR can also be a drawback, however. If you're occupied simultaneously with performing a data search and holding a conference call in your head, you're less likely to notice the 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 to –3 dice) to such situations.

Commcodes, Accounts, and Datatrails

Everyone who uses the Matrix has an access code. Your access code is like a phone number: it's how others know where to reach you online. It's also a way in which you may be tracked—something of concern to all shadowrunners. Details on your datatrail and protecting your privacy are covered under *Getting Online,* p. 214.

Many parts of the Matrix are open to public access, just like a web page—anyone can go there and view the contents. In order to enter some *nodes* (devices or networks), however—especially private ones—you must actually log in to an account. The type of account you have determines what actions you can legitimately take on that particular node (see *Authorized Access,* p. 215).

Matrix Actions

A number of actions are available to anyone interacting with the Matrix (see *Using the Matrix,* p. 217). When accessing by AR, these actions may be interchanged with standard physical actions.

Matrix Tests

The gamemaster may call for a test to see how well your character can achieve something in the Matrix, such as digging up a profile on Mr. Johnson. Matrix skill tests use the same skill + attribute dice pool as other tests, except that since you are interfacing with the machine world, you use an appropriate device or program attribute in place of your character's attribute. If your character is examining a stolen datafile to determine what corporate databank it came from, for example, you roll your Computer skill + Analyze program.

HACKING THE MATRIX

For hackers and technomancers, it's not enough to merely use and understand technology and the Matrix—they must explore and exploit it to its full potential. These wireless wizards find the skills of Hacking (see p. 223) and Electronic Warfare (p. 225) necessary to truly reach the beating heart of the machine world. The skills of Hardware and Software (p. 124) are also useful for hackers who want to create their own tools.

Hacking In

The primary task of hacking is breaking into the target node. This is the main point of contest between the hacker and system security, pitting the hacker's skills and programs against the target's Firewall and IC (intrusion countermeasures). Hackers can accomplish this in two ways: on the fly or slowly probing for an exploitable weakness. The first is more likely to raise alarms and trigger countermeasures; the second is more effective but takes time to accomplish properly. For full details, see *Hacking,* p. 221.

Once a hacker has penetrated a node, he can go about his business without having to compete with security anymore—*unless* he has triggered an alarm. If the system is alerted to the intrusion, he will have to deal with whatever IC and other countermeasures the gamemaster throws at him.

Other Hacker Tricks

Naturally, hackers have a wide repertoire of tricks up their digital sleeves, from covering their tracks to intercepting data to turning that street samurai's own cyberarm against him. Many of these are detailed under *Using Hacking Skill* (p. 223), *Using Electronic Warfare Skill* (p. 225), and *What Every Runner Needs to Know About Hacking* (p. 224).

MATRIX COMBAT

Cybercombat is the use of offensive programs against other icons in the Matrix. Cybercombat follows the same Opposed Test procedure as standard combat, pitting the attacker's Cybercombat + attack program versus the target's Response + Stealth. Programs substitute System for Cybercombat skill. For more details, see *Cybercombat,* p. 230.

RIGGING

Just as hackers can manipulate devices and security systems through the Matrix (or through a direct wired/wireless link), they can also control unmanned vehicles known as

drones. Thanks to simsense, you can even "jump into" certain devices, effectively "becoming" that device—a process known as "rigging." In effect, the rigger "possesses" the drone/device, sensing the real world through the device's sensors, and manipulates the device as if it were an extension of his own body. See *Rigging and Drones,* p. 238.

AUGMENTED REALITY

With augmented reality, the Matrix is not a place you *go* so much as a parallel digital world (similar to the astral plane) that you experience as an overlay onto your normal range of senses. Your commlink accesses Matrix data from the wireless nets around you, feeding you the results via simsense or any number of interface devices. AR sensory input is specific to each user—while you and your buddy can both access the menu icon "displayed" outside a restaurant, only you will hear the ringtone or feel the slight buzz that signals an incoming call.

In its most basic form, AR is experienced as visual sight cues, icons known as *arrows* (AROs, or augmented reality objects). You can see arrows by linking your cybereyes, display link cyberware, smart goggles, display-capable contact lenses, or retina-writing laser glasses to your commlink. Arrow data appears as ghostly images and text in your field of vision. You can customize your interface to "view" this data any way you like, or to filter out certain content (like visual advert spam). If you accept an incoming video call, for example, the caller's image/icon appears in your center 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 "window" or shift it to your peripheral vision so it doesn't interfere with RL activities.

AR can also be experienced through audible cues, transferred and heard via cyberears, audio link cyberware, earbud headphones, subdermal bone-vibrating speakers, or even tight-beam audio broadcasted to the ears from worn goggles or glasses. You can control the volume via mental command or physical interface, and you don't have to worry about snoopers overhearing since it's all in your head.

Advanced AR systems sometimes make use of tactile information—*haptics*—relayed through 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, but the specialized cyberware mods required for this cater to a small (and strange) market.

The easiest and most common way to get your AR fix, though, is through simsense. You need a sim module for your commlink to interpret the signals and feed you the data via a cyberware simrig, worn simrig, trode net, or datajack. Partial 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*)—do you really want a Buzz!Blitz energy drink advert to make you *feel* that way?

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 com-

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, so she controls the interface with the scroll wheel on her commlink.

As she enters the mall, Alex accesses its LAN, 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.

Example #2

Vladamir 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

Continued on page 210

Urgent Message...

INTERACTING WITH THE AUGMENTED WORLD *(Cont.)*

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 on, 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.

mon in feral areas—urban zones abandoned to decay, crime, and poverty—though some wireless infrastructure is maintained by crime syndicates, tech gangs, and anarchist/tribal groups. These areas are known as *static zones* (where access is intermittent or unreliable) and *dead zones* (where none is available).

For static zones, the gamemaster can choose to apply dice pool modifiers (between –1 and –3) to all Matrix actions to represent 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 somewhere).

Note that technomancers (p. 232) find static and dead zones to be unnerving and uncomfortable—the absence of the constant background hum of data traffic makes them itchy. Characters should handle this with appropriate roleplaying—their technomancers may get depressed, irritated, or otherwise upset. At the gamemaster's discretion, prolonged exposure to static and dead zones may inflict a minor dice pool modifier of –1 on technomancers for non-Matrix actions.

To get around the lack of a network in some areas, people will sometimes set up temporary networks.

On the flipside are *spam zones,* areas where manipulative advertising tricks are legal (or at least tolerated), including filter-bypassing, sensory-blasting AR pop-ups, emotive-charged sim feeds (porn stims being common), viral memes, spyware, and more. Common in tourist areas and red-light districts, spam zones can be highly distracting (dice pool modifier of –1 to –3).

COMMLINKS AND NETWORKING

Commlinks are the ultimate personal networking tool, used by almost everyone. They are a combination wireless router, cellphone, vidcam, PDA, GPS unit, chip reader, 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 area of shapes, sizes, and colors, from stylized head-sets or faux jewelry to cranial implants and commlinks woven into the fabric of your jacket.

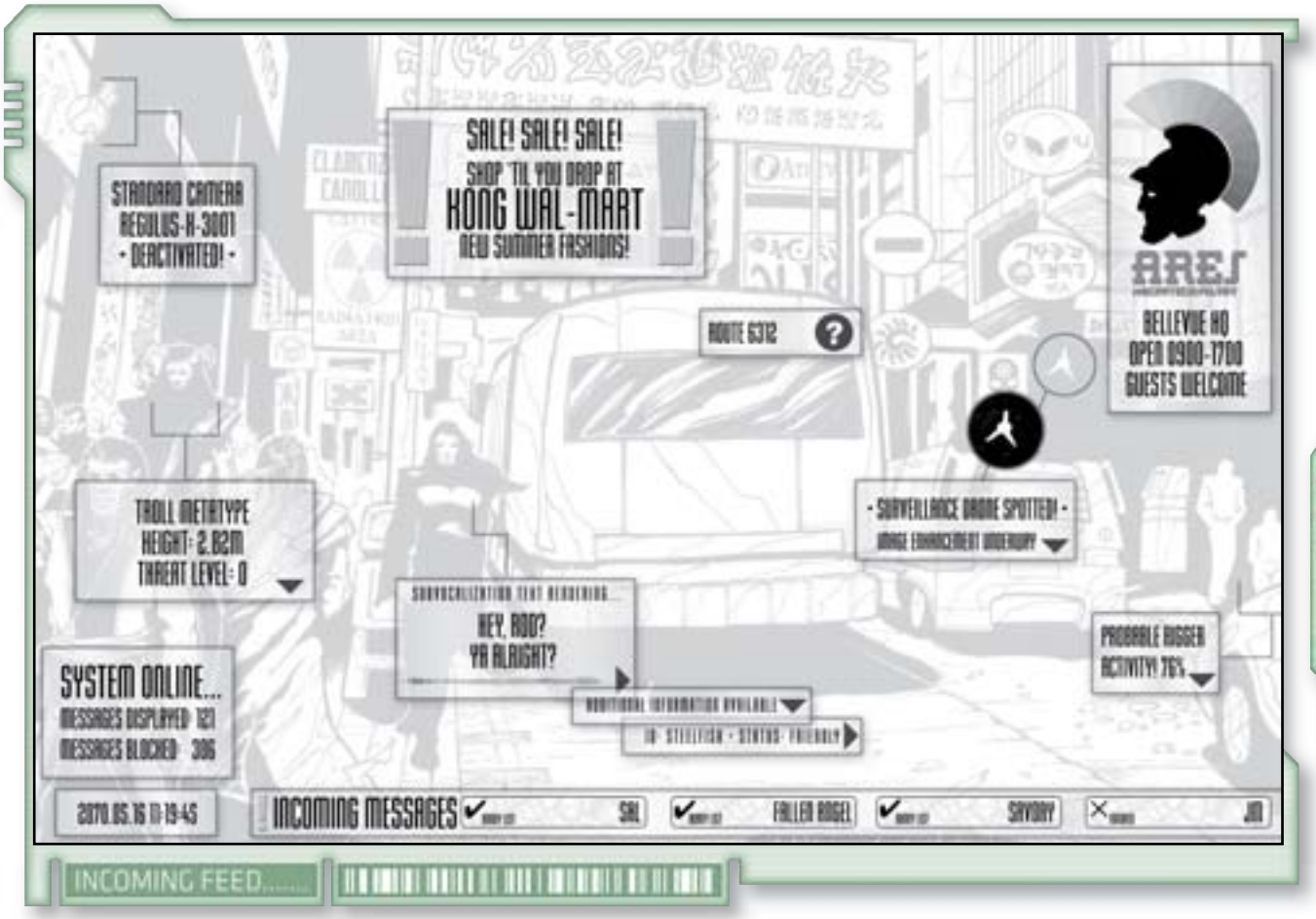
Commlinks serve as the primary hub for your PAN, allowing you to access and manipulate all of your PAN-connected electronics through your commlink. Need to make a call? Review a video file you took yesterday? Scan the diagnostics on your cyberlimb? Check the fuel on your drone? Program your alarm clock? You can do all of this and more through your commlink.

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, 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 over for transaction purposes—with proper authorization, of course.

Many people openly broadcast certain portions of their personal data via their PAN for others to access. This is often done for convenience and consumer purposes—for example, your favorite stores can access your purchasing history and wishlists 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 in public spaces.

Of course, most users carefully control how much information they make publicly available, but the law often requires certain core pieces of data to be accessible in certain areas (SIN and ID must be broadcast on UCAS federal property, for ex-



ample), or for certain data to be accessible by security officers who attempt to access it with authorized security codes. In high-security neighborhoods, it is common practice for police drones to scan the PANs of random people on the street—those with something to hide are usually up to no good.

PAN MODES

Via the commlink, PANs can be set to operate in three different modes. You can change the mode of your PAN as a Free Action (see *Change Linked Device Mode,* p. 135).

Active: This mode is the default for most PANs. In active mode, you can both access and be accessed by other nodes (PANs, devices, and networks). Certain areas may require your PAN to be in active mode (airports, corp facilities, etc.)

Passive: A PAN in this mode can access nodes but cannot be accessed by them without your approval. PANs in passive mode will still show up as active networks if searched for. 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.

Hidden: In this mode, your PAN is invisible to other nodes unless you access or authorize them. PAN users in hidden mode are said to be "ghosting," since there is no way for other users to see them. Using hidden mode is discouraged in some high-class social situations, where it is considered rude. In other areas, however—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

The persona represents your Matrix alter ego. It is a combination of programs that you use, in conjunction with your device's OS, to represent yourself to other users and nodes in the Matrix. Your persona's attributes are determined by the attributes of whatever device/OS you are using to access the Matrix—usually your commlink or terminal, though you may sometimes access via other devices.

Your persona's Firewall, Response, Signal, and System attributes are equal to the device and OS you are using to access the Matrix. Attacks made against your persona affect the device/OS, though Black IC programs affect the actual user directly.

Icon

Your persona's icon graphically represents you in augmented reality (and especially in virtual reality, see p. 228), and in most forms of Matrix communications (email, messaging, phone calls, etc). Whether you bought your icon off the shelf or programmed 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

Urgent Message...

A NOTE ON STORAGE MEMORY

Major advances in computer storage memory and data compression technologies by 2070 allow vast amounts of information to be stored in relatively minute spaces. Storage memory has become so large and efficient that, 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, of course, 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 remote storage devices.

shapes and forms, from animated characters and anthropomorphic creatures to more artsy or abstract designs like mobile waterfalls or swirling color patterns. All Matrix-capable devices have default icons loaded in case the user doesn't have his own—usually simple blank-white anonymous anthroform shapes, often emblazoned with the device manufacturer's stylized logo. Occasionally, programs you have loaded will add additional elements to your logo's look, such as the glowing green force field of an Armor program or the blurring effects of a Stealth program.

Altering or swapping out your icon takes a Free Action.

LINKING AND SUBSCRIBING

Now, just because all of your devices *can* talk to other devices doesn't mean that they *will*. For simplicity, privacy, and security, you may configure your devices so that they only interact with another specific device (usually your commlink, as your PAN's hub) or a specific network (your PAN). This prevents confusion between users (am I accessing my guncam or yours?) and also offers a degree of protection from snoopers and hackers. Rather than allowing any stranger access to all of your electronics, anyone that wants to interact with your PAN must connect to your commlink first.

In game terms, your persona maintains a subscription list of nodes that you are accessing and that are allowed to establish communication with you. The subscription list may be unlimited in size, but the number of nodes, agents, or drones that a persona may actively subscribe to (access) at any one time is limited to the persona's System x 2.

MATRIX ATTRIBUTES

Matrix attributes generally range in scale from 1 to 6, with the lower ratings indicating cheap, outdated, or salvaged components/software and higher ratings reflecting well-made parts/code. Some cutting-edge and prototype models may exceed rating 6 attributes, but these are exceptionally rare and hard to come by.

Response (Hardware)

Response is the device's processing power, or how quickly it reacts to input and processes commands and information. Combine Response with your Intuition to determine your Matrix Initiative (see p. 230).

Response may be affected if you run too many programs. For every x number of programs you have actively running, where x = System rating, your Response is reduced by 1. So if you're running 10 programs with a System 5, your Response will be reduced by 2.

Signal (Hardware)

Signal represents a device's raw broadcasting power. The higher the Signal, the farther the device can transmit. Though many factors can affect a device's Signal rating, the most important are antenna size and raw electrical power. Consequently, a device's size tends to limit how high its Signal rating can be. Implanted cyberware may be limited to a Signal of 1 or 2, while

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

giant vehicle-mounted sensors can have a Signal as high as 8 or 9. Sample Signal ratings and ranges are listed on the Signal Rating Table.

Note that for two devices to communicate with each other (as opposed to one-way communication), the devices must be within the range of the weakest signal rating involved.

Firewall (Software)

Firewall is the OS's built-in security. It protects against unauthorized access. The better a device's Firewall rating, the more likely it is to fend off hostile access attempts and exploits. Firewall is also used to defend against Matrix attacks in cybercombat (see p. 230).

System (Software)

System is the capability of the OS—its stability, multitasking properties, ability to control hardware, resources, and the general quality of it code. System also measures the OS's ability to run other programs—an OS cannot run a program with a rating higher than the OS rating.

A System program is limited by the Response rating of the device it is on; a System run on a device with a lower Response rating functions at the Response rating instead.

System serves as the limiter for the maximum rating a program can be run on that node (a higher rating program functions at the System rating instead), as well as the number of subscriptions allowed (System x 2, see *Linking and Subscribing,* p. 212). System also determines the number of programs that may be run before the system is overloaded and Response is affected (see *Response*).

Matrix Condition Monitor: System is also a reflection of the OS's ability to hold up against hostile code and errors—in other words, it determines the how much Matrix damage the device can take. The Matrix Condition Monitor is equal to System ÷ 2 (rounded up), plus 8. This is how many boxes of Matrix damage the device can take before its system crashes.

Device Rating (Universal)

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 (p. 214) lists typical Device ratings for common electronics.

PILOT PROGRAMS

Pilot programs represent a special type of OS—a system with specialized functions featuring semi-autonomous decision-making algorithms. Pilot is for devices that must be able to assess situations, make decisions, adapt, and ultimately func-

Urgent Message...

Issuing Commands

The Pilot programs of 2070 are exceptionally sophisticated. As a general rule, the gamemaster can assume that these robotic brains understand any commands that are issued to them, as long as these commands are within the device's usual range of function (or is covered by an autosoft's specialty). A surveillance rotordrone's Pilot, for example, will understand commands regarding flying directions, 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 probably fail to understand. Keep in mind that 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.

tion independently of a (meta)human operator for extended periods. The higher the Pilot rating, the "smarter" it is. Pilot is used in place of System for vehicles, drones, and agents, but otherwise has the same function as System.

In game terms, the Pilot attribute stands in for Computer, Cybercombat, Data Search, and Hacking skills, as called for. It may also represent an agent, IC, or drone's "Mental attributes" when called for (usually Intuition and Logic, and sometimes Willpower). A gamemaster may also make a Pilot + Response Test as a "common sense" test whenever the drone or agent has to make a decision.

ACCESSORIES

There are all sorts of interesting accessories available for your commlink, detailed on p. 318 of the *Gear* chapter. A few deserve specific mention here:

Sim Module

The sim-module accessory coverts simsense data into neural signals, so that you can experience other people's experiences (or programmed sensations)—including emotion. Sim modules are necessary to access virtual reality (see p. 228).

GETTING ONLINE

Though accessing the Matrix is as simple as turning on your commlink, there is much going on behind the scenes. This section discusses commcodes, accounts, and datatrails.

COMMCODES

Everyone using the Matrix has a personal *commcode,* or Matrix address—the equivalent of a cell phone number or email address—to which their calls and messages are directed. Your commcode is usually registered with a paid Matrix service provider, though numerous free (if unreliable) and anonymous shadow-sites offer the same service. Hackers and shadowrunners—and other criminals—typically pay extra for the anonymity and extra security of a black commcode.

When you're online (and when aren't you?), your commlink is usually 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 someone tracing that link to your current whereabouts (meaning your messages will be stored until retrieved later).

You can also take advantage of encrypted re-routing services that route your link through numerous shadow-operated "anonymizer nodes." These nodes intentionally strip all iden-

SAMPLE DEVICES

Device Type	Device Rating	Example
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

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 SYSTEMS

OS Model	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¥

tifying data from the link and even stagger traffic that enters and leaves the node in order to stymie traffic analysis attempts. These services add extra levels of security and anonymity that only the most dedicated and resourceful data-trail hackers could overcome.

AUTHORIZED ACCESS

Every Matrix node has a set of authorized users, people who have the proper accounts and passcodes and are granted privileges to take certain actions on the node as legitimate users. Authorized users often don't need to make tests when attempting certain tasks, whereas a hacker who infiltrates the node would need to make tests in order to illicitly manipulate the node.

Note that many nodes also have public access areas (or may be entirely public)—the Matrix equivalent of websites.

Passcodes

Legitimate accounts are protected with passcodes. Speaking metaphorically, a passcode is a key that allows you to open certain locked doors within a house; depending on the privileges assigned to the passcode, the key will not work on certain doors, requiring you to pick the lock (what hackers do).

Passcodes come in various formats depending on the security needs of the provider. These can range from very simple to exceedingly complex, though system designers have to keep in mind that the more complex the passcode, the less user-friendly the system. Creating a good passcode system is often a struggle to find a compromise between security and ease of use.

Basic Passcodes consist of sets of symbols that you enter to log on. 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.

Linked Passcodes requires an extra bit of input from the user—an extra level of identification specific to a person or a device. This can be a scan from a security scanner (retinal, fingerprint, palmprint, and so on) linked to the commlink/terminal 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

MATRIX JARGON

Arrow (from ARO, or Augmented Reality Object)—Virtual representations (usually visual graphics) used to represent things in augmented reality.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)—Self-aware and self-sustaining intelligent programs that evolved within the Matrix.
Artificial Sensory Induction System Technology (ASIST)—Hardware and programs that allow one to directly experience the senses of another (simsense).
Augmented Reality—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.
Better-Than-Life (BTL)—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—The personal computer used by nearly everyone to access wireless services, typically loaded with accessories. Commlinks also serve as the hub of the user's PAN (personal area network). Often just "comm" or "link."
Complex Form—The mental algorithms that technomancers learn to manipulate the Matrix.
Control Rig—An implant that enhances a rigger's abilities when "jumped into" a vehicle (see p. 332).
Dead Zone—A location with no wireless networks.
Device—Individual electronics that are connected to the Matrix, such as commlinks, terminals, cyberware, security cameras, drones, etc.
Dot (from DOT, or Digital Object Tag)—Data attached to AROs/icons within augmented reality.
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.
Drone—Unmanned vehicles, 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.
Gateway—The link between a mesh network and another network
Geo-tagging—Assigning dots (data that can only be sensed with AR) to a specific physical location. Often done with RFID tags.

Continued on page 216

MATRIX JARGON *(Cont.)*

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 interlocking networks.
Hacker—Someone who explores and exploits technology in general and the Matrix specifically, often illegally and sometimes with criminal intent.
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 in the Matrix.
Intrusion Countermeasures (IC)—Any software program installed in a computer system (host) with the express purpose of protecting that system from unauthorized users. Pronounced as "ice."
Jackpoints—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 full VR.
Meshed—Slang for online, connected to the Matrix.
Mesh Networks—A network in which every device on the network is connected to every other device.
Networks—Interacting groups of computerized devices.
Node—Any device or network that can be accessed.
Operating System (OS)—The master program that controls a specific device.
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 "shell" program that represents a user in the Matrix; the user's icon.
Pilot—A robotic brain program, similar to System, but including semi-autonomous decision-making abilities. Used for agents and drones.
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.

Continued on page 218

that plug into a commlink or terminal. Many corporations require this accessory for telecommuting workers. When a logon is attempted, the node queries the module; if it doesn't receive the proper code, the user is denied access.

Account Privileges

Most accounts have some sort of limitations; after all, it doesn't make sense to allow every user to read every other user's email and access their personal files. Likewise, system administrators and security hackers need privileges above and beyond those of the basic user. Three types of account privileges exist: personal, security, and admin. If you have the passcode for an account, you are considered a legitimate authorized user, unless you attempt an action that the account does not have privileges for.

Personal accounts provide basic privileges to access the files and devices you need to do your job, but that's about it. The extent of access typically depends on the user's position in the organization: a supervisor will have wider access than a lowly office temp. Sometimes personal accounts will be grouped together, so that users in that group may access files marked for access by their group.

Security accounts are given to senior management and the mid-level technical staff. Most security hackers also have security passcodes, though some have been known to hack themselves up to admin access, depending on how strongly their corporation feels on this issue. Security users are also often part of one or more user groups.

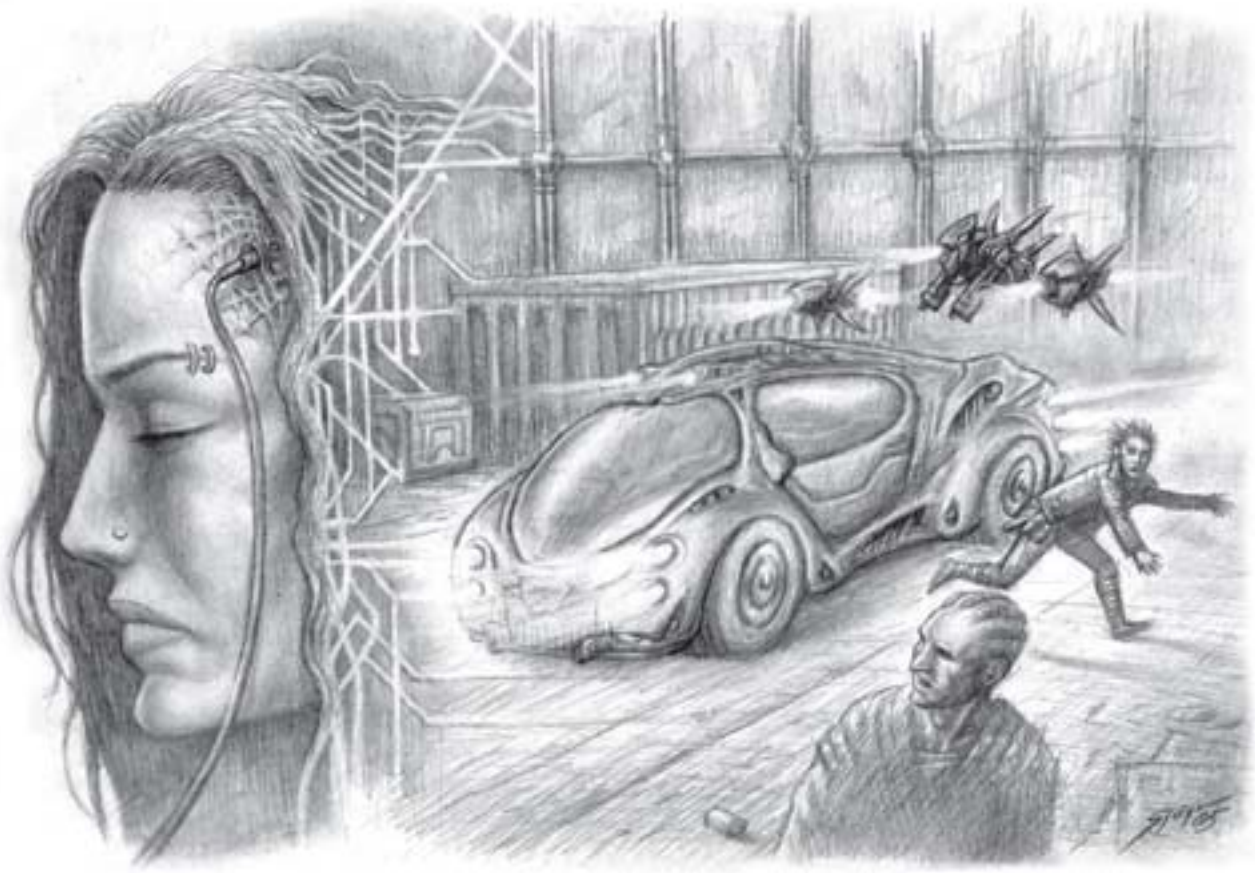
Admin status is only granted to a few users. Also known as "root," admin privilege gives you total access, so that any problems that come up in the system can be solved. Admin access authorizes almost any activity, including destruction of important data or actions that damage the system or render it inactive.

Note that standard electronic devices only have admin accounts, as there is no need for other accounts for their software.

THE DATATRAIL

Every time you are online—which is usually *all of the time*—your presence is logged. Every wireless device, terminal, and wired jackpoint has a unique serial number assigned by the manufacturer (and often registered with the local telecomm authorities as well). This *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 by hackers to track you down or by law enforcement to link you to certain crimes or activities.

For information on spoofing your datatrail, see p. 224.



USING THE MATRIX

The default method used to access the Matrix is via augmented reality (as opposed to full-immersion virtual reality, described on p. 228). When you utilize the Matrix with AR, you act at regular meat-body speeds, using your character's physical standard Reaction and Initiative, as normal (see *Initiative,* p. 132).

MATRIX PERCEPTION

With augmented reality, you do not perceive yourself as "within" the Matrix—you see aspects of the Matrix digitally overlaid upon the real world around you. When you access a node, you do not "go there," but you see (or otherwise perceive) an icon of that node "projected" in your vision. In digital terms, your connection is passed from node to node until you reach your destination.

Perception within the Matrix is entirely computer-generated. Because you do not actually see, 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 AR Matrix perception is usually limited to a very narrow subset of things, such the icons of nodes/users you are interacting with, menus, dots, arrows, and any display features you call up.

Matrix Perception Tests

If you wish to specifically examine an arrow, dot, or other Matrix object—users, programs, IC, nodes, files, etc.—take a Simple Action to Observe in Detail (p. 136). Make a Matrix Perception test using your Computer + Analyze program (rather than Perception + Intuition). The gamemaster sets the threshold according to the difficulty of the situation (see *Perception Test Thresholds,* p. 117).

If your target is intentionally trying to hide from you, this becomes an Opposed Test, with the target rolling Hacking + Stealth (or Firewall + Stealth for programs/nodes). As a rule, anything running a Stealth program is considered to be hiding.

Your net hits determine how successful the examination is. For each net 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. You could learn, for example, any Matrix damage an icon has taken, whether a file has been edited, if a file has a Data Bomb program attached to it, whether there's a secret trap door access node here to another network, or whether someone has tapped wired Matrix traffic through this node (see *Intercept Traffic,* p. 224).

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. A successful scan will be reported to you. The program will maintain that task for as long

MATRIX JARGON *(Cont.)*

RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags—Small devices that hold data and transmit it over short range to nearby receivers
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 (see p. 332).
Sculpted System—Matrix hosts with detailed, non-standard iconography (when viewed in full virtual reality), usually encompassing a particular metaphor.
Signal—A computer attribute representing the strength of its wireless radio signal.
Simrig—A device for recording simsense (see p. **320**).
Simsense (aka sim, simstim)—Hardware and programs that enable a person to experience the reality of what has happened to someone else.
Spam Zone—An area flooded with invasive and viral AR advertising.
Spider—A security hacker/rigger employed by a corporation or law enforcement agency to protect certain Matrix areas from hackers and/or to rig a specific building's web of security systems, drones, and defenses.
Sprites—Semi-autonomous bots created by technomancers to assist them in manipulating the Matrix. Referred to by some as "spirits of the machine."
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 an actual physical link.
Trodes—A headband or net worn on the head (often under a wig or hat) that allows the reception of simsense.
Virtual Reality—A state where outside stimuli are ignored and the user is only receiving impressions from the Matrix.
Wide Area Network (WAN)—A network, usually wireless, that covers a large area.
WiFi—"Wireless fidelity," or wireless networking.

as you are on that node or until you kill that process. The gamemaster secretly conducts Matrix Perception Tests to determine if you detect other icons accessing the system.

Note that technomancers receive an inherent +2 dice pool bonus on all Matrix Perception Tests.

ACCESSING MULTIPLE NODES

It's common practice for Matrix users to connect to more than one node at the same time—this is just a matter of switching between open windows. There is no penalty to switch your attention between accessed nodes, but you can only act in one node at a time (meaning each action only applies to one node). There is also a limit to how many nodes you can access at once: you can only connect to a maximum of System x 2 nodes at any one time.

If there's ever any need to make a test for a persona in a node that the user has accessed but is not currently "active" in (in other words, his attention is focused on his persona's activities in another node), then the tests should only use the appropriate program rating or computer attribute, and not the user's skill.

Note that your icon appears in each node you access, and each "copy" icon may be attacked in Matrix combat. It is extremely bad news to be attacked in more than one node at once, as you have to divide your attention between two fights (see p. 232). Any Matrix damage inflicted upon your persona's Condition Monitor affects all of the "copies" of your persona icon simultaneously.

> *Netcat is kicking ass in an online game when her team calls her up needing some legwork. She doesn't want to let the pre-teen cyber-warriors she's squashing off-the-hook, so she keeps playing but also takes a quick second to open a new window to access a public database and start searching. Halfway through her third victory, she finds a clue in the database that points to a file in a corporate network. She doesn't want to waste time, so she fires up a link to the network and starts probing it for weaknesses. She can tell it'll be a long night, so she also connects to her kitchen at home and instructs it to prepare dinner. With a System rating of 6, Netcat can access 12 nodes this way simultaneously.*

USING COMPUTER SKILL

Whenever you undertake a task using a computerized electronic device within its standard working parameters, odds are you'll be using Computer skill. Examining a file for traces of tampering? Doctoring up an image for blackmail purposes? Editing the logs to eliminate traces of your activities? These and similar tasks all call for Computer Tests.

When you are dealing with a particular device, you roll Computer + Logic against an appropriate gamemaster-determined threshold. When you are utilizing a particular program, you roll Computer + program rating. Standard situational modifiers may apply, as decided by the gamemaster.

In addition to *Matrix Perception* (p. 217), Computer skill plays a particular role in the following Matrix actions. Note that Computer only applies when you have authorized access—if you are trying to manipulate a node, program, or file illicitly, then you make the test with Hacking skill instead (see p. 223).

Edit

You can take a Complex Action to create, change, or erase a file. You can only make minor changes to a file on the fly per action—manually altering one line of print or one image, for example, subject to gamemaster approval. You may

also copying some or all of a file, or insert pre-readied material. More extensive changes require longer periods and/or an Extended Test. Use Computer skill + Edit program for Edit Tests.

You can also alter a device's output—video taken by a security camera, for example, or telemetry data taken by a vehicle sensor. A single Edit action only alters output for a short period (one Combat Turn). In order to alter output for a longer period, you must first take control of the device (see p. 220) prior to the Edit action.

Edit can also be used for creative output, such as crafting a life-like 3-D holo to use as a distraction, or forging a convincing set of fake credential printouts.

Repair Icon

You can repair Matrix damage an icon has taken in cybercombat (p. 230) with a Repair Icon action. Make a Computer + Medic (1 Combat Turn) Extended Test; each hit heals one box of Matrix damage on the icon's Matrix Condition Monitor.

This action may not be used to repair technomancers.

Track

With a Track action, you can trace a user's datatrail from his icon back to his physical location. This is different from a Data search action (which is like looking up someone's commcode in a directory); a trace follows the target's current connections node-by-node all the way back to the source. Note that you must have detected the target with a Matrix Perception Test (p. 217) in order to trace him.

Make an Extended Computer + Track Test (10, 1 Initiative Pass), applying modifiers from the Track Modifiers Table (p. 220). If the target performs a Redirect action (p. 224), add the hits from this action to the threshold. If the target is running a Stealth program, apply it as a dice pool modifier.

Once you've scored hits equal to the threshold, you've identified the target's originating node and access ID (see *Authorized Access,* p. 215). If the node is wired to the Matrix, you've ascertained its physical location. If the node is a mobile wireless device, the device's rough current physical location has been triangulated (to within 50 meters). You can continue to monitor the device's location if it moves, as long as the device stays on and maintains a wireless connection.

System security will often trace hackers this way, and then either dispatch a corporate threat response, notify the police, or launch their own hacking attack on the hacker's home node (either by dispatching a security specialist or IC programs) to give the hacker a taste of his own medicine.

Transfer Data

You can transmit or receive data from one node to another—including uploading and downloading files, sending messages, and so on—with a Transfer Data Simple Action. If the gamemaster calls for a test to accomplish this, use Computer + Edit program.

Note that bandwidth and transfer speeds in the modern Matrix are fast enough to make all but the largest of file transfers almost instantaneous. Unless the gamemaster rules otherwise, transfers complete at the end of the Combat Turn in which they were started. A transfer can be terminated at any time with a Free Action.

MATRIX ACTIONS

Any Matrix user can undertake these actions, whether you are accessing with augmented or virtual reality.

Free Actions	See Page:
Alter/Swap Icon	211
Change Linked Device Mode	135
Detect Wireless Node	225
Jack Out	220
Speak/Text Phrase	136
Terminate Data Transfer	219
Simple Actions	
Observe in Detail	217
Call/Dismiss Sprite	235
Deactivate Program or Agent	228
Decrypt (with key)	225
Issue Command	221
Log Off	220
Observe in Detail	137
Transfer Data	219
Complex Actions	
Attack	230
Compile Sprite	234
Control Device	220
Crash Program/OS	223
Data Search	219
Decrypt (without key)	225
Detect Hidden Node	225
Disarm Data Bomb	224
Edit	218
Intercept Traffic	223
Intercept Wireless Signal	225
Jam Signal	225
Log On	220
Reboot	221
Redirect Trace	224
Repair Icon	219
Run Program or Agent	227
Shut Down a Sprite	236
Spoof Command	224
Track User	219

USING DATA SEARCH SKILL

Your Data Search skill represents your ability to track down information online, whether you're sorting through a single database or mining the entire Matrix. Though everybody in 2070 knows the basics of using a search engine, there is so much data online that filtering the wheat from the chaff—or

even knowing where to start—is often a challenge. Data Search reflects your skill in refining search parameters, correlating hints, unearthing hidden sources, and utilizing special search tools. Use it to track down Mr. Johnson's real identity, the latest online rumors about Ares, a mob goon's phone number, or the specific paydata file you were hired to snatch.

Most Search actions are handled as an Extended Test using your Data Search skill + Browse program. The gamemaster sets the threshold and interval based on how easy or difficult he wants the information to be, as suggested on the Search Table. The gamemaster may also modify the dice pool or threshold to account for additional factors, such as familiarity with the target, or how secret/protected the data is. Once you've found what you're looking for, you don't need to search for it again—unless the information has been relocated or deleted, of course.

You can also run Browse on a particular node or device and set it to alert you if what you are looking for turns up. In this case, the gamemaster secretly conducts a Data Search + Browse Test to see if it works. If you don't want to maintain a connection to that node, you can run a Browse-equipped agent (p. 228) instead.

In some cases, Data Search actions may be handled using other programs. If you wanted to pick out a particular person's PAN in a crowded club, for example, you'd roll Data Search + Scan program. If you want your commlink to alert you if it picks up any wireless smartlink signals in the vicinity, make the same Data Search + Scan test as you run that program and set it to auto-scan. Likewise, if you've tapped someone's commlink and want to auto-monitor their calls/messages for certain keywords or details, use Data Search + Sniffer program.

Note that good old-fashioned legwork via the Matrix with contacts and the like is handled as a standard social interaction, not a Search Test.

TRACK MODIFIERS TABLE

Dice Pool Modifier	Situation
–Rating	Target running Stealth program,

Threshold Modifier	Situation
+1	Each hit on a Redirect action
–2	User's connection jammed open by Black IC

SEARCH TABLE

Threshold	Difficulty
2	Easy
4	Average
8	Hard
16	Extreme

Interval	Search Area
1 Initiative Pass	Same device
1 Combat Turn	Same network
1 Minute	Entire Matrix

OTHER MATRIX ACTIONS

Standard Matrix users may also take advantage of the following Matrix actions.

Logging On/Off

Logging on to a node with the proper passcodes does not require a test, but it does require a Complex Action (accessing a node without authorization requires hacking, see p. 221). Logging off is a simple matter of severing your connection with a Simple Action. The only time logging off is difficult is when Black IC is involved (see p. 232).

Note that in order to log on to a wireless node, the user must be within the node's Signal range and vice versa, or else the user must leapfrog to the node through other nodes.

Jacking Out

Rather than terminating your Matrix session at any time by logging off or turning off the commlink, you can "jack out" by taking off the trodes, pulling the plug on your datajack, or otherwise separating yourself from the commlink. This won't necessarily disrupt the Matrix connection (though connections may time out and end after long periods of inactivity), but it will disconnect you from your persona (which is just a sitting duck in the meantime). Jacking out is a Free Action.

Jacking out is usually a last resort measure taken by hackers prevented from logging off by a Black IC program (see p. 231).

Note that technomancers can jack out, but it is a matter of mentally severing their wireless link rather than pulling wires.

Controlling Devices

You can control all sorts of Matrix-enabled devices remotely through the Matrix, from simple automatic security doors and elevators to drones and agents to entire automated factories full of robotic assemblers—virtually any device that can be electronically accessed. Note that you must first gain access to the device before you can control it.

At the gamemaster's discretion, some control tasks may be simple enough that no test is necessary, such as opening a locked door. Some tasks may require an appropriate skill to be used—controlling a repair drone to remotely fix a car, for example, may call for a Mechanic + Command Test. Remotely controlling a drone would take a Command + vehicle skill Test, and so on.

Note that remotely controlling a drone in this matter is different from rigging a drone (requiring you to "jump into" the drone with full VR and "become" the drone) or issuing commands to a drone (in which case it acts on its own accord).

Issuing Commands

While online, you can issue commands to an agent (p. 227), drone (p. 238), sprite (p. 234), or other device under your control with a Simple Action. Note that you can issue the same command to multiple agents, drones, or sprites at once with the same action; different commands, however, require separate actions.

Note that agents and drones will only take orders from their controlling persona, unless another persona spoofs an order (see *Spoof Command,* p. 224). If the controlling character chooses, he can instruct the agent or drone to receive orders from other specified personas.

Reboot

A persona or node can shut down and reboot, but the process takes time. Make an Extended System + Response Test (10, 1 Combat Turn) to determine how long. Initiating a reboot is a Complex Action. A rebooted persona starts again in its personal node, not wherever it was in the Matrix when it rebooted.

Rebooting is more complicated for technomancers, as they cannot simply shut their brains off. In order to reboot, a technomancer must sever his Matrix connection completely and make an Extended Logic + Willpower Test (10, 1 hour) while fully resting (no physical, draining, or Matrix activity). After this recovery period has passed, the technomancer may reconnect to the Matrix with his living persona's attributes fully restored.

HACKING

No shadowrunning team can expect to get by for long without a hacker (or technomancer) on their side. Hacking is called for whenever you wish to manipulate the programming of computers and electronics—especially Matrix nodes—in ways that are not authorized.

Hacking is centered around defeating a node's firewall and breaking in. System security likewise focuses on employing intrusion countermeasures (see p. 228) to keep hackers out. If you successfully bypass security and infiltrate a node, that system will generally treat you as a legitimate user and will not challenge everything you do. You will need to stay alert so that you do not run afoul of security hackers and patrolling IC (see *Hacked!—Once Inside,* p. 222) or accidentally trigger an alarm (see *Intruder Alerts,* p. 222). If you raised an alert while breaking in, however, then the system is aware of your intrusion and will actively interfere with your activities while directing IC and/or security hackers your way, and may take even more drastic measures to block your hacking attempts.

HACKING AND ACCOUNTS

Hackers can gain passcodes to accounts in many ways: stealing them, shoulder-surfing, or sniffing traffic online (see p. 224). Hackers can copy passkeys if they have the actual passkey or its schematics. Counterfeiting a key requires that the encryption be broken first. It then takes a Hardware + Logic Extended Test (10, 1 day). Hackers can also manipulate accounts on nodes they have compromised with an Edit action (p. 218).

Note that many systems periodically require their users to change account passcodes for security reasons, so passcodes rarely last forever. Likewise, any accounts linked to security anomalies will typically be locked out until an investigation determines they are safe.

If a hacker wants to get into a node but has not acquired a passcode, then he must break in.

BREAKING IN

There are two methods a hacker may employ to break in: on-the-fly hacking and probing for weaknesses.

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 without alerting the node's security—or you simply may not care if you trigger an alarm. Hacking on the fly tends to be a brute-force affair—success is more important than subtlety or finesse.

To hack on the fly, you spend a Complex Action and make a Hacking + Exploit (Firewall, 1 Initiative Pass) Extended Test. This will get you personal account access; if you want security-level access, increase the threshold by +3, or +6 for admin access. If you beat the threshold, you have bypassed the security and now have access to the node.

Each time you make a test to hack in, however, the target node also gets to make a free Analyze + Firewall (Stealth) Extended Test. If the node detects you—whether you hack in or not—an alert is triggered (see *Intruder Alerts,* p. 222).

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 timeframe, identifying system flaws that can be exploited for access.

Probing is handled as an Extended Hacking + Exploit Test with a threshold equal to the target's System + Firewall. The interval is 1 hour if done in VR, 1 day if done by AR. This will get you personal account access; if you want security-level access, increase the threshold by +3, or +6 for admin access. Once you reach the threshold, you have found a crack in the system's defenses that you can exploit to gain access. Using this exploit takes a Complex Action, but automatically succeeds. At the gamemaster's discretion, such exploits may even work repeatedly (serving as an effective back door into the system), unless the node is somehow alerted to the weakness. Such back doors may also not last forever, as security upgrades or regular system audits may close off that access route.

Similar to hacking on the fly, the target node gets one free Analyze + Firewall Test when you make the actual intrusion. The threshold for this test equals your full Stealth program rating. If the node detects you, an alert is triggered (see *Intruder Alerts,* p. 222).

Glitches: If you glitch while conducting your probing, the target node is alerted to your reconnaissance attempts. At the gamemaster's discretion, you may need to start over, the node may be prepared for your exploit attempt (receiving a bonus

on its detection test), or you may automatically trigger an alert when you break in.

HACKED!—ONCE INSIDE

A hacker who has successfully broken into a node undetected can go about his business like any user with the appropriate account privileges (p. 215). This does not mean, however, that you have free rein to run amok—you must be on guard against security hackers, patrolling IC, glitches, and other defenses:

Security Hackers: High-security systems will employ security hackers 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: Highly secure systems might employ IC (p. 228) to wander a node, scan users, and otherwise guard against interlopers. 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.

Glitches: At the gamemaster's call, a hacker who rolls a glitch while intruding on a node has inadvertently given away his presence to the system's firewall. The node may send IC or a sec hacker to investigate, or may immediately go on alert and call out the cyberdogs.

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. 226), secret nodes, data bombs (p. 226), red herring files, and anything else the gamemaster devises. In some cases, IC programs may be encrypted 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.

INTRUDER 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.

For gamemasters who want to randomly determine what a system's alert response is, refer to the Random Alert Response table, p. 223.

Active Alert

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 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.

Launch IC Program

Once an alert is triggered, the node will typically launch IC programs to attack or interfere with the intruder. The gamemaster determines which programs the node has on hand, 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). See *Intrusion Countermeasures,* p. 228).

If the intruder has been 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, a node may attempt to sever the hacker's connection by shutting down the port through which he is accessing. On some isolated high-security nodes or hand-held devices that do not often rely on remote access, *all* outside connections may be severed.

In order to sever a connection, the node immediately makes an Opposed Firewall + System Test against the hacker's Exploit program + Hacking skill. 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 Reset

As a last resort, many nodes will simply reset themselves or shut down in order to purge an intruder before he wreaks too much havoc. Shutting down and rebooting takes an Extended System + Response Test (10, 1 Combat Turn).

Anyone accessing the node when it shuts down is logged off; all active programs are saved and shut down.

USING HACKING SKILL

Aside from directly breaking into systems, there are many other potential uses for Hacking skill. When you are directly interacting with a device, make Hacking Tests using Hacking skill + Logic. If you are utilizing a hacking program, makes tests using Hacking skill + program rating.

Following are a few specific Matrix actions that call for Hacking skill.

Crash Program/OS

You can attack active programs that don't fight back in cybercombat (like IC or sprites do) with a Crash action. Want to disable a combat drone's targeting program? Crash its Gunnery autosoft. Want to force a node to shut down? Crash its OS.

To crash a particular program or device OS, make a Hacking + Attack (Firewall + System, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test. When you reach the threshold, the target program crashes. Attempting to crash a node's OS will automatically trigger an alert.

Some programs that crash may automatically restart. If an OS crashes, the entire device shuts down and undergoes a reboot. Any users accessing the device are logged off and all active programs shut down. Rebooting takes a number of full Combat Turns equal to the System rating.

Personas, IC, agents, and sprites may not be crashed—they must be defeated in cybercombat.

Some IC programs will attempt to crash a hacker's programs rather than engaging in cybercombat.

Disarm Data Bomb

In order to disarm a Data Bomb program (see p. 226) you must first have detected the bomb (see *Matrix Perception,* p. 217). Once detected, the Data Bomb can be defused.

Defusing is an Opposed Test pitting Hacking + Defuse vs. the Data Bomb Rating x 2. If you succeed, the Data Bomb is defused and the file or device may be ac-

RANDOM ALERT RESPONSE

1D6 Roll	Response
1	Launch Track IC
2	Launch Attack IC
3	Launch Blackout or Black Hammer IC
4	Scramble Security Hacker
5	Terminate Connection
6	System Reset/Shutdown

NETWORK SECURITY

Though wireless networks are easier, they are also a security vulnerability. While it's true that most megacorps prefer to avoid cable spaghetti, they do use "cold storage" wired systems in order to isolate them from outside wireless networks and intrusion. In order to access such networks, a hacker needs to gain access to a physical jackpoint or terminal. Likewise, some megacorps employ wireless networks but contain them within wi-fi-inhibiting wallpaper and paint (see p. 256)—specially designed to prevent wireless radio signals from passing through—and so a hacker needs to get inside the walls to wirelessly access the network.

Not all networks are configured as mesh networks—many corporate systems, in fact, retain a traditional tiered network structure. In a tiered structure, some systems can only be accessed through another system first, with the most secure systems hiding behind several layers of security. These networks employ a wide variety of tricks to limit access, including high-security traffic chokepoints or vanishing, teleporting, secret trap-door, or one-way access nodes. Some of these systems and networks are only accessible from private grids or are entirely isolated from the Matrix.

Urgent Message...

WHAT EVERY RUNNER NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HACKING

Any runner team that fails to practice good data security is going to get hacked. Just as the team's hacker can infiltrate Mr. Johnson's commlink, trace that snitch's access code, seize control of that police drone, or disable that assassin's smartlink, any hacker-aided opposition will seek to do the same to them. <Insert Evil GM cackle here.>

The first lesson is: any wireless device can be hacked. Cyberlimbs. Smartlinked guns. Commlinks. Drones. Cameras. Refrigerators. If it has an active wireless connection, it's vulnerable. You can always temporarily or permanently disable wireless features, but it may mean a substantial loss of functionality, putting you at a disadvantage.

The following security hints and tips are recommended to all denizens of the shadows, player character and NPC alike.

- **Don't advertise**—PANs have their uses, but they're also detectable. No covert ops team worth its rep is going to sneak up on a target with their PANs active—they'd be toast to anyone keeping an eye on the airwaves. Likewise, social networking might be a nice way to get a booty call, but runners should know better than to broadcast personal details that a snooper can use against them. Fake details, on the other hand ...
- **Limit your vulnerabilities**—Wireless devices are neat, but if they're not well protected, they're a hacker's next meal. If you need a device, beef up its IC (that's why hacker teammates and contacts are good to have). If you don't need it, turn it off.
- **Don't leave tracks**—Everywhere you or your PAN go, you leave a datatrail. That evidence can be used to pin you to a particular location at a particular time and in the vicinity of specific objects or people. Spoof your datatrail, or have a hacker do it for you.
- **Fake ID is your friend**—Even if active mode isn't required, running with a legit-looking ID might keep you from standing out in a crowd. Just don't rely on it for too long, or it might become a liability.

cessed. If you fail, the Data Bomb activates, inflicting Rating boxes of Matrix damage. Depending upon its settings, the Data Bomb may also trigger an alert and/or destroy the file it was protecting. Once defused, a Data Bomb program is inactive and no longer protects the file/device until it is restored.

Intercept Traffic

In order to intercept traffic between any two nodes or users, you must first have access to a node that the traffic passes through. For example, to intercept a comcall between a Mr. Johnson and his lackey, you either need to compromise one of their commlinks or gain access to the Matrix nodes that the comcall passes through (which could be a challenge unto itself). Note that this action only applies to traffic passing through a wired medium; for wireless traffic, see *Intercepting Wireless Signal,* p. 225. The gamemaster may also require you to succeed in a Computer + Browse Test to locate the traffic flow you seek to intercept.

To eavesdrop, make a Hacking + Sniffer Test. The hits you score are the threshold for anyone to detect your tap with a Matrix Perception Test. Taps of this nature are difficult to detect. In order for someone to detect interception of his wired traffic, he must make a Matrix Perception Test in the specific node on which the Sniffer program is running.

Intercepted communications can be copied/recorded without any additional tests. If the hacker wishes to block some parts of the traffic or add in his own, he must make a successful Computer + Edit Test (see *Edit,* p. 218). If the hacker wants to insert faked traffic, so that it looks like it comes from one party or the other, he must beat the recipient in an Opposed Test between his Sniffer + Hacking and the target's Firewall + System.

Note that some communications may be encrypted. In this case, a Decrypt action (p. 225) is necessary to capture and decode the traffic.

Redirect Trace

A Redirect action comes in handy when someone is attempting to trace your originating node (see *Track,* p. 219). By redirecting, you send a flurry of spoofed signals out in the hope of confusing the Track program. Each net hit scored on an Opposed Hacking + Spoof vs. Computer + Track (System + Track if launched by a node) adds 1 to the trace's threshold.

Note that you can only Redirect a trace in progress. You may take multiple Redirect actions against the same trace.

Spoof Command

Use the Spoof Command action to transmit forged instructions to an agent or drone controlled by another user. In order to spoof orders, you must first complete a successful Matrix Perception Test on the persona you are impersonating in order to gain its access ID.

To spoof commands, you must beat the agent or drone in an Opposed Test between your Hacking + Spoof and the target's Pilot + Firewall. If successful, the target drone or agent believes the orders came from its controlling persona. .

Spoofing the Datatrail

Most users are oblivious to invisible datatrail logging (see p. 216); hackers, however, prefer to eliminate such traces. Any hacker worth his name will either spoof his commlink's access ID on a regular basis; this requires a Hacking skill + Spoof program (2) Test. Alternately, you can modify the hardware itself to supply a bogus code with a Hardware + Logic (2) Test. Note

that eliminating the access ID entirely is not an option, as most nodes will refuse access to unidentified devices; access ID must be spoofed instead.

Hackers & Editing

Note that many hackers use their Edit program to eliminate any records of their tampering or illicit activity on a node. To do this, the hacker first needs to locate the node's security logs (requiring a Data Search action), and then edit them to remove all traces of his activity.

Depending on your account privileges, Edit may also be used to create, change, or delete accounts on a particular node. Hackers are fond on making back doors (hidden accounts) into systems they have hacked this way, so they can get inside later with having to hack in again. Edit may also be used to alter subscription lists (see *Linking and Subscribing*, p. 212).

Use Hacking skill + Edit for unauthorized file tampering.

USING ELECTRONIC WARFARE SKILL

Electronic Warfare pertains to the use of communications technology, from wireless devices to cryptography. Want to locate someone's hidden PAN? Break the encryption on a drone's system? Jam a corporate strike team's communications? Electronic Warfare is the skill for the job.

When dealing hands-on with communications technology, make tests using Electronic Warfare + Logic. When utilizing programs, use Electronic Warfare + program rating.

Electronic Warfare skill plays a particular role in the following Matrix actions.

Detecting Wireless Nodes

Locating a particular active or passive wireless node within range (or all of them, for that matter) takes only a Free Action, no test required. Commlinks routinely scan for new nodes, so finding one is just a matter of looking it up. Finding a particular node in a crowded area might be more difficult: make an Electronic Warfare + Scan (variable, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test against a gamemaster-determined threshold based on the difficulty of finding and selecting out the node in question.

Finding a wireless node in hidden mode (see p. 211), however, is more challenging. Even if you know what you're looking for, you must still succeed in an Electronic Warfare + Scan (4) Test. If you're just scanning for hidden nodes in general, or trying to pick the hidden nodes out from the non-hidden one, make the same Extended Test noted above but with a much higher threshold: 15+.

Encryption and Decryption

Files, signals, and devices may all be encrypted with a Simple Action . If you have the proper key, decrypting takes only a Simple Action. Without a key, you must employ a battery of advanced sampling, pattern-matching, and brute-force attacks to bypass the encryption. Make a Decrypt + Response (Encryption rating x 2, 1 Combat Turn) Extended Test to break the encryption.

Note that some encryption schemes may incorporate IC as a second line of defense.

Intercepting Wireless Signals

Wireless traffic is broadcast through the air, so anyone within range of a signal can pick it up, whether they are connected to the transmitting party or not. Thus you can eavesdrop on the wireless connections of anyone whose Signal range reaches you. This makes it possible for you to even intercept traffic within a specific network—such as the PAN traffic between Mr. Johnson's commlink and other devices on his network.

To perform an Intercept Wireless Signal action, make an Electronic Warfare + Sniffer (3) Test. Once the signal is intercepted, you can monitor the traffic and even copy/record/forward it without making any more Intercept Wireless Signal actions. If you want to block out some parts of the traffic or add in your own, you must make an Edit action.

There is no way to detect interception of a wireless signal.

Note that wireless communications are usually encrypted, so you'll need to decrypt the signal *before* you can intercept or capture the traffic.

Jamming

Jamming—also known as electronic countermeasures—requires special hardware that is heavily restricted (see p. 320). Jammers come in two varieties: area jammers and spot jammers. Area jammers broadcast over a large area (based on their Signal attribute), effectively blanketing out all wireless nodes in that area. Spot jammers concentrate their jamming in a narrow angle, which makes them very effective against individual targets. Jammers are opposed by electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM), which filter out jamming signals. Jamming a wireless node cuts off its Matrix connection unless it is hardwired to a Matrix gateway.

Initiating jamming is a Complex Action. Any device with a Signal rating less than the jamming device's Signal rating is overwhelmed. Note that ECCM (see p. 227) increases a protected device's Signal rating for jamming comparison purposes.

Note also that jamming can be either selective (targeting specific frequencies) or a barrage attack that seeks to interfere with all frequencies.

PROGRAMS

Programs are the software tools that you use to make things happen in the Matrix. Programs come in many types: Attack programs for demolishing icons, Exploit programs to hack in to a protected system, Armor programs to protect against Matrix attacks, Browse search routines to locate the hottest paydata, and so on.

Programs have variable ratings, normally in the range from 1 to 6, though some cutting-edge or military-grade software can rank higher. A program's rating is used to determine how effectively the program accomplishes its intended function.

Remember that a device cannot run a program at its full effect at a rating above its System rating (A Rating 5 program run on a System 3 device operates as if it were Rating 3). Additionally, if a device is running more programs at once than its System rating, reduce the Response on that device by 1 per (System) programs (ie, a System 5 device running 10 programs at once suffers –2 to its Response).

The skill used with the program to make tests is listed in parentheses after the program's name below. Note that if a node, agent, IC program, or sprite is running the program, substitute System (rating) for skill.

COMMON USE PROGRAMS

These programs find common use among all users and nodes in the Matrix.

Analyze (Computer)

Analyze programs gather data about other "things" in the Matrix—nodes, users, programs, etc.—by issuing queries, analyzing system resources, performing registry look-ups, and so on. Use Analyze for Matrix Perception (see p. 217) and for detecting hacking attempts (p. 221).

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. 219).

Command (misc.)

Command programs allow the user to control a device through the Matrix, whether it be a surveillance camera, a drone (p. 238), an agent (p. 227), or an electronic system.

Edit (Computer/Hacking)

Edit is a combination word processor, graphic design tool, and layout and video/animation editor. You can use it to create, alter, and remove files of any media type: text, graphics, video, trideo, etc. Edit sees common usage in the corporate world, but hackers use it for their own subversive ends. Use Edit for the Edit action (p. 218).

Edit can also be used as a file transfer, text messaging, videoconferencing, and email program. You can use a Transfer Data action (p. 219) to transfer data and files of any media type: text, graphics, video, trideo, etc.

Encrypt (Electronic Warfare)

Encrypt programs utilize various cryptographic schemes and ciphers to secure files, access nodes, and communications between nodes. Encrypted items are accessed with the proper passcode (see *Authorized Access,* p. 214); otherwise they are gibberish. Use Encrypt programs for the Encrypt action (p. 225).

Multiple files may be archived and encrypted together.

Reality Filter (Response)

A Reality Filter program translates a node's VR simsense sculpting (see *Virtual Reality,* p. 228) into the metaphor of your choice. In order to determine which system's metaphor dominates, make an Opposed Test pitting Reality Filter + Response versus 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 OS 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 Detecting Wireless Nodes (p. 225).

HACKING PROGRAMS

The following programs are generally only used by hackers and security specialists. In some jurisdictions, these programs may be illegal without proper licensing. Hackers use these programs to exploit security flaws and attack icons. IC programs use them against intruders (see *Intrusion Countermeasures,* p. 228).

Armor

Armor programs are software redundancy systems that protect icons from attacks that cause Matrix damage. See *Cybercombat,* p. 230.

Attack (Cybercombat/Hacking)

Attack programs are hostile code carriers that attempt to kill processes, introduce random input, create buffer overflows or program faults, and otherwise make a program/icon crash. See *Cybercombat,* p. 230.

Biofeedback Filters

Biofeedback filters are software routines that monitor for and prevent dangerous simsense signals. Hackers specifically use biofeedback filters as a defense against Black Hammer and Blackout programs (see *Cybercombat,* p. 230).

Note that technomancers have an inherent Biofeedback Filter complex form equal to their Charisma.

Black Hammer (Cybercombat/Hacking)

Black Hammer samples the command transactions between the target and his commlink and injects dangerous biofeedback responses into the target's simsense interface. These aggravated BTL-level signals may overload the target's neural connections and in turn render him unconscious, trigger psychological disorders, brainwash him, or cause death from stroke, heart failure, respiratory paralysis, aneurysm, or neurotransmitter autotoxicity—and those are just a few of the possible effects. For more details, see *Cybercombat,* p. 230.

Black Hammer is intended as a weapon against hot-sim full-VR hackers; against cold-sim VR users it only inflicts Stun damage. It has no effect on programs, agents, IC, or sprites, nor will it affect AR users.

Blackout (Cybercombat/Hacking)

Blackout is a nonlethal version of Black Hammer—it causes Stun damage rather than physical. For more details, see *Cybercombat,* p. 230.

Data Bomb

Data Bombs are a specialized form of reactive attack program. A Data Bomb is attached to a specific file or device and set to activate if someone accesses the file/device without authorization. When triggered, Data Bombs "explode" and

attempt to crash the icon that illegally accessed the file/device. Data Bombs may also be instructed to erase the file, if the owner chooses.

Only one Data Bomb may be attached to a particular file or device. Data Bombs may be attached to icons that are also protected by Encrypt or Scramble programs. You can detect a Data Bomb with a successful Matrix Perception Test (see p. 217).

You can defuse Data Bombs simply by entering the correct passcode (unfortunately, the person who set the Data Bomb is usually the only person who knows the passcode). Without the passcode, you can only disable a detected Data Bomb with a successful Disarm Data Bomb action (p. 223). Undetected Data Bombs cannot be defused.

Data Bombs inflict a number of boxes of Matrix damage equal to their rating. Once triggered, the Data Bomb program crashes.

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 Decrypt actions (p. 225).

Defuse (Hacking)

The sole purpose of Defuse programs is to deactivate Data Bombs that are protecting files or devices. See *Disarm Data Bomb,* p. 223.

ECCM

Electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM) filter out jamming signals that attempt to disrupt a wireless connection. ECCM adds its rating to a protected device's Signal rating when defending against jamming (see p. 225).

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. Exploit programs are used for hacking in without authorized access (p. 221).

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. 219).

Note that Medic has no effect on technomancers, since they do not have a Matrix Condition Monitor. Technomancers may use the Medic Complex Form to repair other icons, though, such as personas, agents, or sprites.

Sniffer (Hacking/Electronic Warfare)

Use Sniffer programs to intercept data traffic and wireless signals and scan/capture the information. Sniffer programs are the ultimate Matrix spying utility, used for the *Intercept Traffic* (p. 224) and *Intercept Wireless Signals* (p. 225) actions.

Spoof (Hacking)

You can use Spoof programs to generate false access IDs (see p. 225) and forge misleading data packets with the intent of confusing Track programs. Use Spoof for the Redirect action (p. 224).

Stealth

Stealth is a clever hacker program that attempts to make the hacker as "invisible" as possible to other system processes by obfuscating his activities, erasing system tracks, and mimicking authorized traffic. Stealth hides the hacker from the Firewall's watchful gaze as he breaks into a system (see *Breaking In,* p. 221). Stealth also protects the hacker from prying Analyze actions (p. 217) and track attempts (p. 219).

Track (Computer)

Track programs systematically analyze a user's connection and follow the trail of packets 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. Track is used for the Track action (p. 219).

LOADING AND USING PROGRAMS

In order to activate a program, the user must first have the program available (either on his commlink or on one of his networked devices). The program must then be loaded into the persona's memory and run, which takes a Complex Action. Running too many programs at once may affect Response (see p. 212).

AGENTS

Agents are semi-autonomous programs capable of using other programs. Regular Matrix users employ agents as assistants or search-bots, while hackers also use them as hacking aides, decoys, watchdogs, or even weapons platforms. Agents exist independently of the user in the Matrix, and are the equivalent of Matrix drones. They are capable of piloting themselves to a degree and can comprehend complex orders.

Agents have a Pilot attribute just like drones (see *Pilot Programs,* p. 213) that determines just how "smart" the agent is. Pilot acts as the agent's brain, interpreting orders.

Agents have their own built-in Firewall attribute, equal to their Pilot rating. Agents use the Response attribute of whatever node they are run on; 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 into your persona like other programs (taking a Complex Action), allowing the agent to accompany you to any nodes you access. Agents can also access other nodes independently if instructed to and if they either have the passcodes or are carrying an Exploit program and can hack their own way in (as independent icons). Agents loaded into your persona have the same datatrail, so Track programs that go after an agent will trace back to your own point of origin.

PROGRAM COSTS AND AVAILABILITY

Type	Cost (up to Rating 3, in ¥)	Cost (Up to Rating 6, in ¥)	Availability
Common Use	Rating x 50	Rating x 100	—
Hacking	Rating x 500	Rating x 1,000	12R
Agents/IC/Pilot	Pilot rating x 1,000	Pilot Rating x 2,500	Rating x 3
System	Rating x 200	Rating x 500	—
Firewall	Rating x 200	Rating x 500	—
Autosofts	Rating x 200	Rating x 500	Rating x 2

If you wish for your agent to operate in the Matrix independently, you must load it on a particular node separate from your persona. The agent will continue to operate in the Matrix even if your persona goes offline. In this case, the agent doesn't count toward your persona's active program limits like running programs do, but it does count as a subscriber toward your subscription limit (see p. 212).

See *Issuing Commands,* p. 221, for details on sending orders to agents.

Payload

Agents can be loaded up with copies of your programs so that the agent may employ them on its own. If an agent is acting independently, any programs it's carrying must be active, and so may affect its Response (see p. 212). Any program run by an agent is limited by the Pilot rating.

INTRUSION COUNTERMEASURES

Though the term intrusion countermeasures (IC) is widely used to describe any of the defenses a node employs against intruders, it specifically refers to a specialized type of agent program that is used to defend a system. For all game purposes, IC programs are the equivalent to agents and function the same. IC programs typically are loaded with some of the following programs to employ against intruders: Analyze, Attack, Black Hammer, Blackout, and Track.

When an intruder alert is triggered, the node will launch an IC program and direct it to engage the intruder(s). Once launched, IC programs act independently of each other and the node. Each IC program has its own icon and Initiative (see *Cybercombat,* p. 230). IC programs use their own Pilot rating in place of Computer, Hacking, or Cybercombat skill.

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.

Note that nodes are careful not to run so many IC programs at once that it affects their performance (see *Response,* p. 212).

SOURCE CODE AND PIRACY

Most legally-purchased programs are sold with built-in copy protection, so that the program cannot easily be duplicated without an access code. Hackers have invented many ways of circumventing these methods, however, to the point where piracy is the rule rather than the exception.

If a character wishes to duplicate a program that is copy-protected, he needs to break the protection. This requires an Extended Software + Logic Test with a threshold between 10 and 20 (gamemaster's discretion) and an interval of 1 hour.

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 (VR) simsense of the Matrix. Your physical perceptions in VR are overridden by the Matrix's sensory information. Rather than experiencing the real world around your meat body, you only experiences the electronic simulation of the Matrix.

A simsense module is required to access full VR. The sim module is a commlink accessory that you access with a datajack or trode net. Simrigs (both worn and implanted) and cranial commlinks also contain sim modules. As a safety precaution, sim mods override your motor functions while you are fully immersed in VR, 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. If you concentrate, you can still perceive through your meat senses while in VR, but it's very distracting and you suffer a –6 Perception Test dice pool modifier.

VR 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 trid. VR is also more anonymous and thus is an excellent medium for conducting shady deals or simply socializing without having to overcome barriers raised by looks, metatype, social class, and so on. VR sex is almost as good as the real thing, and your partner(s) can look any way that pleases you. On a more platonic note, just moving through the Matrix's specially sculpted VR landscapes is an interesting way to pass the time—like living in a video game. 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.

VR users can access multiple nodes simultaneously, just like AR users (see *Accessing Multiple Nodes,* p. 218).

VR ACCESS MODE

Virtual reality is a drastically different experience than AR. Someone interfacing with augmented reality while he walks down the street operates at different speeds from someone tearing through VR landscapes with his mind alone. Most fully virtual users utilize a legal simsense interface, which is dubbed "cold sim" on the streets. Hackers who want that extra edge utilize an illegally-modified "hot sim" interface instead, risking their neural pathways for a little extra speed.

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 with cold sim full-VR, 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 levels 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 brain-kicking 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 potentially be translated into lethal amounts of 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 hot sim full-VR, 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 an exceptional +2 dice pool bonus to *all* Matrix tests while in hot sim mode, due to your hypersensitized state.

To modify a sim module so that it can be run in hot sim mode, you must make a 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, see p. 250). Hot sim also makes you vulnerable to the lethal aspects of Black IC (p. 232).

The drawback to hot sim is that it can be as addictive as BTL use (see *Substance Abuse,* p. 247). If the gamemaster feels a character is using hot sim to much, she can call for an Addiction Test.

Switching Modes

It takes a Free Action to switch from augmented reality (or offline mode) to virtual reality, and vice versa. You can also switch between cold and hot sim with a Free Action, if your commlink is properly modified.

Note that if you switch to virtual reality in mid-Combat Turn, you do not receive extra Initiative Passes for going virtual during that Combat Turn. Likewise, if you switch from VR to physical/augmented reality, you immediately lose any extra Initiative Passes from virtual reality that Combat Turn.

Jacking Out

Jacking out of a full VR session (with hot or cold sim) is a jolting experience. The rapid cutoff of the simsense signal can cause the hacker to experience mild disorientation called dumpshock—see *Dumpshock,* p. 231, for effects.

VR MATRIX PERCEPTION

In VR, you become your persona icon. Icons are flexible and easily changed on the fly, so you can essentially look like anything you want. 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.

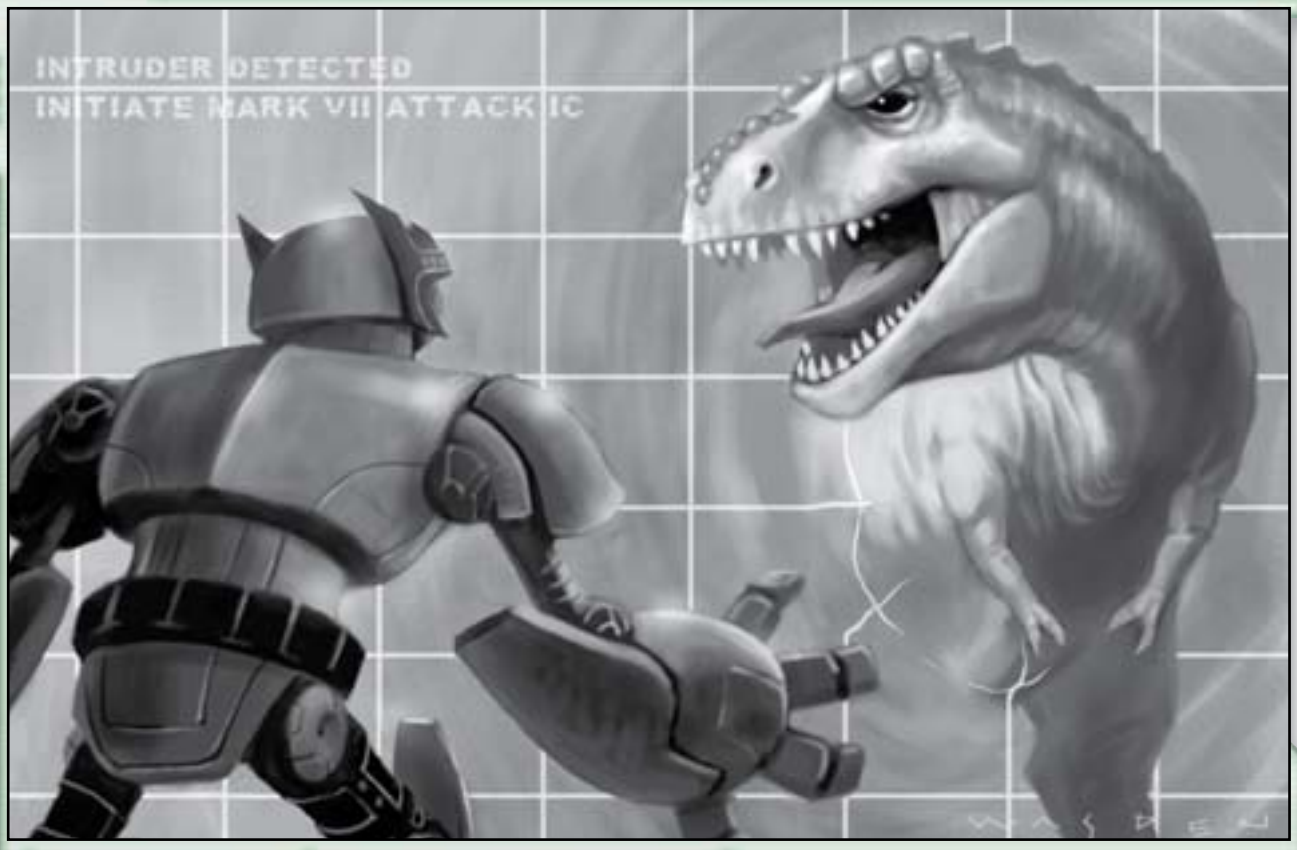
In VR, you "exist" wherever your persona is within the Matrix. You'll start off in the virtual representation of your own commlink/terminal and from there "move" to other nodes. Physical distance is meaningless within the Matrix—it's all a matter of commline connections, available memory, switching systems, and transmission rates, not actual meters and kilometers. Getting to a node on the other side of the world is an instantaneous affair.

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. 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. 217).

How "real" is full VR? Most of it looks computer-generated and –drawn. No matter how astounding—even photo-realistic—the level of detail, it is still obviously computer-created. There are some sections of the Matrix that are virtually indistinguishable from the real world—known as *ultraviolet* nodes—but those are rare and dangerous places.

The virtual landscape can be anything the programmer wants it to be. While certain systems usually have their iconography based on a specific metaphor (a medieval castle, for example, where background programs appear as serfs, IC appears as guardian knights, and the email server is represented by a falconer whose raptors send and receive messages), it is also possibly for the user to establish his own "reality filter" and to experience the data in whatever way he sees fit (see *Reality Filter,* p. 226).

Perceiving the VR Matrix in its full glory can be overwhelming to the senses at times. That's why you filter out the unnecessary background processes in a system, reducing the sensory clutter. Other icons may be hidden—they are "there," but you won't see them either because they are inactive or because your programs are not good enough to detect them. IC programs, for example, often hide or portray themselves as innocuous icons—until you trigger them. You can take advantage of this disguise game as well, using Stealth programs to make your persona invisible or disguise it as an authorized program or process.



CYBERCOMBAT

Whether you run afoul of Matrix gangers or trigger an intruder alert and sic IC or a security hacker on your tail, cybercombat will inevitably ensue. Cybercombat can take place separately from, or concurrent, with actions in the real world.

Cybercombat follows the same procedure as other combat. Cybercombat occurs in real time, so it follows the same three-second Combat Turn.

MATRIX INITIATIVE

If cybercombat is occurring at the same time as RL combat, Matrix combat Initiative and actions should be integrated with the RL action. Nothing thrills a hacker like cracking open a secure network while his shadowrunner comrades blast away at security guards all around him.

Augmented Initiative

If you're using augmented reality, you're acting at regular meat-body speeds—use your physical Reaction and Initiative as normal (see *Initiative,* p. 132). You can choose between interacting with the physical world or the augmented world (the Matrix) with each action.

Virtual Initiative

If you're operating in cold sim virtual reality, your Matrix Initiative equals your commlink's Response + your own Intuition attribute. You also get an extra Initiative Pass (two total).

If you're running with hot sim in virtual reality mode, your Matrix Initiative equals your commlink's Response + your own Intuition attribute + 1. 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're rigging (see *Rigging and Drones,* p. 238) and interacting with the physical world through 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 (with a hefty –4 dice pool modifier because you're still bombarded with VR signals).

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 spending an Attack Complex Action to target another icon with a hostile program, such as Attack, Black Hammer, or Blackout.

To attack another icon, make an Opposed Test. Hackers attack using Cybercombat skill + attack program rating. Agents, IC, and sprites attack using their rating + attack 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 spend a Complex Action during cybercombat to go on "full defense," same as with regular combat (see *Full Defense,* p. 151). 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 Matrix damage inflicted by a 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 just inflict Matrix damage to the target icon. Black IC programs attack users through their simsense link, however, so they inflict damage directly to the user's Stun or Physical Condition Monitor. Black IC programs also have other effects, noted under *Black IC Attacks,* 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 Matrix Condition Monitor.

MATRIX CONDITION MONITOR

The Matrix Condition Monitor measures the amount of Matrix damage an icon can take. This Condition Monitor has a number of boxes equal to 8 + (System ÷ 2, rounded up). Note that technomancers do not have a Matrix Condition Monitor (see p. 233).

When all the boxes on the Matrix Condition Monitor fill up, an icon crashes. If your persona icon crashes, you are immediately disconnected from the Matrix. If you were operating with a VR interface, you suffer dumpshock when this happens.

Dumpshock

Anyone who is dumped from the VR Matrix suffers a nasty system shock. The base Damage Value for dumpshock is 5S for cold sim users, 5P for hot sim users. Resist dumpshock damage with Willpower + Biofeedback filter rating.

If you are dumpshocked, you will also suffer disorientation in addition to the damage. For (10 – Willpower) minutes you will suffer a –2 dice pool modifier on all actions.

BLACK IC ATTACKS

Black Hammer and Blackout are programmed to 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 and difficult to jack out.

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 (Willpower + Biofeedback Filter) vs. (Black IC rating + Response) Test. If the Black IC scores more hits, it prevents the user from jacking out. Users who jack out immediately suffer dumpshock.

If Black IC fills the character's Condition Monitor and knocks him 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 (see p. 244). Overflow Physical damage represents increased levels of brain damage. At the gamemaster's discretion, if the user survives the experience, he may suffer aftereffects such as neurological damage that produc-

EXAMPLE CYBERCOMBAT

Marauder 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. With 2 nets hit, Marauder is inflicting 6 DV (4 + 2) on the IC. The IC makes a resistance test roiling only its Rating 4 (it's not carrying 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.

Now the IC gets to strike back. It tries to smack Marauder with a Blackout program, rolling Rating 4 + Blackout 4 (7 dice with the wound). The IC gets lucky this time, scoring 4 hits. Rolling his Response 5 + Firewall 3 (8 dice), Marauder only gets 3 hits, so the Black IC gets through.

Marauder is facing 5S DV from the Blackout, resisted with his Willpower 3 alone (he's not running with a Biofeedback Filter program). He rolls 1 hit, reducing his damage to 4 Stun boxes. The Black IC also jams open his connection, preventing Marauder from logging off.

On his next action, Marauder decides to try jacking out. An Opposed Test is made between the IC's Blackout 4 + Response 3 and Marauder's Willpower 3. Not surprisingly, the IC wins, preventing Marauder from pulling the plug. If he doesn't beat the IC in direct combat, he's toast.

es memory lapses, hallucinations, tremors, phantom pain, migraines, or similar conditions.

MATRIX COMBAT SUMMARY

Attack:	
Persona:	Cybercombat + attack program
Agent, IC, sprite:	Rating + attack program
Defense:	Response + Stealth
Full Defense:	+ Hacking (persona) or rating (agents, IC, sprites)
Damage boxes inflicted:	Attack program + net hits
Damage Resistance:	
Attack:	System + Armor, hits reduce damage
Blackout/Black Hammer:	Willpower + Biofeedback Filter, hits reduce damage

SIMULTANEOUS COMBAT IN MULTIPLE NODES

It is possible that an unfortunate hacker who is accessing multiple nodes simultaneously may come under attack in different nodes at once. In this case, the hacker merely rolls Initiative once—it applies for 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.

Also keep in mind that any Matrix damage inflicted in one combat affects his persona in all combats.

TECHNOMANCERS

The Matrix teems with message archives and chat logs filled 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 cyberdecks, commanding it with their wills alone. A new phenomenon had evolved in the Sixth World—but unlike other paranatural events, this one was rooted in technology. Was this a new stage in metahuman evolution? Signs of a sinister meddling in the brains of children by artificial intelligences? Or was it a subconscious mystical Awakening brought about by so many metahuman minds interacting with an artificial reality? Those who studied it only found more questions than answers, and even otaku viewpoints contradicted each other.

Before anyone could get a firm grasp on the situation, it took another leap forward with the Crash of '64 . 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, but many others survived ... only realizing later that their minds were 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 been born—only this time they were no longer just children. Most of the young otaku of old had also undergone a transformation, and they found that their powers no longer faded with age. This new breed rechristened themselves as *technomancers*—specialists in manipulating the Matrix with nothing more than their minds.

These new technomancers had a sixth sense about them that surpassed the abilities of the previous otaku. 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.

In fact, the neural pathways and brain chemistry of technomancers are altered to such an extent that they can reach out and tap in—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 ear. Perhaps significantly, technomancers who are removed from this digital background hum tend to get grumpy and agitated.

RESONANCE

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 helps determine the ratings of his living persona. The attributes of this persona cannot exceed his Resonance rating (so a technomancer with Resonance 3 and Willpower 5 has a living persona Firewall of 3, not 5).

To be a technomancer, a character must purchase the Technomancer quality (p. 80) at character creation.

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 (see p. 62) 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—essentially it is an organic commlink with sim module in the technomancer's head. This living persona has attributes just like a regular persona, each based on the otaku's personal attributes and Resonance.

The Living Persona Table defines the ratings for a technomancer's living persona. Note that none of the Living Persona attributes can exceed the technomancer's Resonance.

Note that when technomancers immerse themselves in full-VR, they are always considered to be running with hot sim (see p. 229). The speed bonus for hot sim is already calculated into their Response and Initiative, but keep in mind that they also receive +2 to all full-VR Matrix tests as well.

Technomancers have no form of organic storage memory whatsoever, so if they want to download a file, they need to mentally transfer it to a physical storage device.

LIVING PERSONA TABLE

Persona Attributes	Value
Firewall	Willpower
Response	Intuition (+1 in full VR)
Signal	Resonance ÷ 2, round up
System	Logic

Other Ratings	Value
Biofeedback Filter	Charisma
VR Matrix Initiative	(Intuition x 2) + 1
VR Matrix Initiative Passes	3

Technomancers and Condition Monitors

Since a technomancer's Living Persona is generated by his brain, technomancers do not have a separate Matrix Condition Monitor—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 automatically treated as Stun damage. If a technomancer is knocked unconscious, his Living Persona automatically crashes.

TECHNOMANCER SKILLS

Aside from the Resonance skills that technomancers use to handle sprites (see p. 119), 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, after all, exercise these skills through mental gymnastics and an intuitive feel for the functioning of the machine world—they don't learn to use electronics so much as they learn to make devices do what they want.

This means that 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 inevitably 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.

COMPLEX FORMS

Technomancers don't use programs the way hackers do (though 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 (see p. 263).

For simplicity, Complex Forms are identified by the programs their functions mimic. For each program available (see p. 225), there is an equivalent Complex Form. Note that some programs have different effects when used as a Complex Form, as noted in their individual descriptions. Also, agents or any programs with a Pilot attribute may not be used as a Complex Form (that's what sprites are for, see below). Note that non-technomancers cannot use complex forms.

Complex Form Ratings

Complex Forms have ratings just as programs do, chosen during character creation or bought/improved with Karma during gameplay. A complex form's rating may not exceed the technomancer's Resonance.

A technomancer's complex forms can be used without limitation; running too many at once does not affect Response.

Note that all technomancers have an inherent Biofeedback Filter complex form as part of their living persona, equal to their Charisma (they may not learn that form separately).

Learning Complex Forms

Technomancers must learn 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 (see p. 235).

The technomancer must expend 2 Karma point and succeed in an Intuition + Resonance (5, 1 day) Extended Test. Instructors can make an Instruction Test (p. 123) to add extra dice to the learning test. If successful, the technomancer learns the complex form at rating 1. The test to improve an existing

complex form by 1 point is the same, but the Karma cost equals the improved rating.

Any further improvement of a complex form uses the same cost and procedure as improving an Knowledge skill (p. 264).

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 Resonance + Software Test. Each hit scored on the test counts as one rating point for the Complex Form. If the complex form is created from scratch, the net hits equal the rating. If the threading is improving a complex form's rating, the hits add to the rating. The technomancer can choose not to use all of the hits he scores. No threaded complex form can having a rating of more 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 and so he suffers a –2 dice pool modifier to all tests for each sustained complex form.

Threading is an exhausting process, and causes Fading (see p. 237).

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. 227). Each sprite has a rating that is equivalent to the Pilot rating on an agent. For more details on the five types of sprites technomancers may compile, see p. 236.

Compiling Sprites

To create a sprite, the technomancer first chooses the type of sprite (see *Types of Sprites,* p. 236) and the rating he wants for the sprite. He then expends a Complex Action. Compiling the sprite is an Opposed Test, pitting the technomancer's Resonance + Compiling against the sprite's rating. Each net hit scored by the technomancer allows him to demand one task from the sprite.

A technomancer can only have one unregistered sprite in his service at a time; if he wants more, he needs to script a sprite for longer service (see *Registering Sprites,* p. 235).

Compiling sprites is a draining task; technomancers suffer the effects of fading (p. 237) each time they compile one.

Sprite Tasks

Sprites can be asked to undertake jobs referred to as *tasks.* A task is continuous service the technomancer asks, cajoles, or demands from the sprite. The number of tasks owed by the sprite depends on the number of hits gained by the technomancer on his Compiling Test.

Sprites will perform the tasks they owe for up to 8 hours or until they complete all tasks. After 8 hours, sprites de-rez and fade away to static, no matter how many tasks they still owe. The only way to keep a sprite around for longer is to task it (see *Registering Sprites*).

Sprites will only take tasks from the technomancer who compiled them, unless another technomancer spoofs an order (see *Spoof Command,* p. 224). Note that 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.

Continual use of a specific power, whether on a single target of group, counts as only one task. If the parameters of a task are changed, another task is used. Engaging opponents in cybercombat only counts as one task, regardless of the number of foes involved.

Sprites must remain with the technomancer. If the technomancer leaves them behind in a node or loses online access, the sprite fades away until the technomancer calls them back. 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 that it either has the passcodes to or can hack its way into with an Exploit complex form. Remote tasks forfeit any other 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, however, he loses contact with his sprites. In this case, the sprites continue to operate. If the technomancer comes back online, he must make 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 full-VR "meditation" session with the sprite, disconnecting himself from all other peripherals. Registering requires a number of hours equal to the rating of the sprite. At the end of the procedure, the technomancer makes an Opposed Test pitting his Resonance + Registering against the sprite's rating x 2. The technomancer needs 1 net hit to register the sprite, while additional hits add 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 Matrix, until the technomancer calls them back again (each taking a Simple Action).

Registered sprites may be a drain on the technomancer's mental resources, if the gamemaster chooses, in the same way as bound spirits might affect a magician (see *Bound Spirits,* p. 178).

In addition to the standard tasks for which a sprite can be used, registered sprites can be used for the following:

Remote Tasks: Registered sprites conduct remote tasks just like unregistered sprites, but 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 add 3 dice to the technomancer's Armor complex form for a maximum of 3 Combat Turns.

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 in cybercombat, 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 (see *Learning Complex Forms,* p. 233).

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, except that each hit (not just each past the first) adds another owed task, and the sprite cannot go uncontrolled.

Urgent Message...

UNCONTROLLED SPRITES

Similar to spirits, most sprites resent an attempt by a technomancer to script it and force it into long-term servitude. If during the registering procedure the technomancer is knocked out from Fading or rolls a critical glitch, the sprite goes uncontrolled in the same manner as an uncontrolled spirit (p. 180). An uncontrolled sprite owes no further tasks to the technomancer. Though sprites are not (usually) as vengeful as spirits and will not attempt to kill the technomancer who tried to register them, they do tend to have a mischevious streak and will take the opportunity to wreak whatever havoc they can.

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 Software + Decompiling versus the targets sprite's rating (+ 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 de-rez 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 compiled the sprite.

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 power 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
R	R + 1	R + 1	R x 3	3

Skills: Computer, Data Search, Hacking
Complex Forms: Analyze, Encrypt, Stealth, Track, Transfer
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
R	R + 1	R	R x 3	3

Skills: Cybercombat, 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
R	R	R – 2	R x 2	3

Skills: Computer, Data Search, Decrypt
Complex Forms: Browse, Edit, Transfer
Powers: Steganography, Watermark
Optional CFs: Defuse, Encrypt, Sniffer, Stealth, any linguasoft (see p. 321)

Fault Sprite

Fault sprites are designed to instill code errors and cause programs to fail.

Pilot	Response	Firewall	Matrix INIT	IP
R	R + 2	R + 1	R x 3	3

Skills: Cybercombat, Hacking
Complex Forms: 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
R	R	R + 2	R x 2	3

Skills: Computer, Electronic Warfare, Hardware
Complex Forms: Command
Powers: Diagnostics, Gremlins, Stability
Optional CFs: Decrypt, Edit, Medic, Transfer, any autosoft (p. 239)

SPRITE POWERS

The following powers are available only to sprites, as noted in the individual sprite descriptions.

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 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, and so on. Use the net hits to benchmark the depth of the data the cookie accumulates (1 hit = bare outline, 4+ = detailed report). The cookie will end at a period pre-determined by the sprite when it is placed, immediately

transferring the accumulated data to a pre-determined access code (the sprite or the technomancer).

Cookies may be detected with a Matrix Perception (4) Test and removed with a Computer + Edit (2) Test once identified.

Diagnostics

The Diagnostics power allows the sprite to evaluate the inner workings of an electronic device. The sprite must be accessing the device in question. The sprite can then convey this information and assist someone using or repairing the device. Make a sprite rating x 2 test; each hit adds 1 die to the character's test to use or repair the item.

Electron Storm

This attack allows the sprite to engulf a target icon in a sustained barrage of corrupting signals. The sprite must first successfully hit the target in cybercombat; the sprite then swallows the target in a hail of digital pulses. With the first attack and each time the sprite gets an action, it inflicts (rating) DV 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 inside the device, or in another node to which the device is subscribed. Make an Opposed Test between the sprite's rating x 2 and the device's System + Firewall (or just Device rating x 2). If the sprite wins, the device suffers a glitch (see p. 55). 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 in the hashed file's node; if it leaves, the file reverts to normal. If the sprite is killed, however, the hashed file is permanently corrupted and becomes worthless. Courier sprites often hash files that they are entrusted with, decrypting them once they have safely reached their destination.

Steganography

The sprite can conceal a file or piece of data within a node in such a way as to make it invisible to searches and data mining. Data obfuscated this way is often hidden inside other items of seemingly irrelevant information.

Concealed files cannot be found by standard searching. A Matrix Perception (4) Test is required to detect an obfuscated file within another 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 (both standard glitches and those induced by the Gremlins or Accident powers). Stability 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, the alert is delayed for (rating ÷ 2, round up) Combat Turns.

Watermark

The sprite can "tag" a Matrix object or piece of data 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.

MATRIX SIGNATURES

Any uses of Resonance leave a Matrix signature on anything they affect; this signature is only detectable by other Resonance beings (technomancers and sprites) with a Matrix Perception (3) Test. This Matrix astral 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, as noted on p. 130). With five or more hits, the technomancer or sprite also gets an impression of what effect created the signature (the complex form used or the type of sprite, for example).

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—specifically, when he threads a complex form (p. 234) or compiles a sprite (p. 234). 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 Damage 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 rating of the threaded complex form exceeds the technomancer's Resonance, the damage is Physical rather than Stun.

For compiling 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 compiling/registering is

successful or not. If the sprite's rating is greater than the technomancer's Resonance, the damage is Physical rather than Stun.

Netcat threaded a complex form, scoring 4 hits and raising it from 4 to 8. Netcat's Resonance is 5, so she's facing Fading equal to 4P. She rolls her Willpower 4 + Resonance 5 (9 dice) and gets 3 hits, so she takes 2 boxes of Physical damage.

SUBMERSION

Submersion strengthens the link between the technomancer and the Matrix 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 his 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.

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.

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.
- **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 AND DRONES

Hackers (and technomancers) who focus on rigging drones and vehicles tend to favor different gear and programs than regular system hackers. Riggers don't usually focus on tweaking their commlink to be a hacking machine *par excellence,* though a high Firewall is essential for keeping hostile hackers out and preventing other riggers from hijacking their drones. Riggers also don't usually spend the time or money to buy up or program their own top-notch hacking utilities, preferring instead to focus on a good Signal strength, good Scan, Command, Encrypt, and Sniffer programs, and of course, plenty of drones with amped Pilot, Response, and Firewall attributes of their own. Finally, riggers tend to focus less on Hacking and Software skills, relying heavily on Electronic Warfare and Hardware instead.

DRONES

Nearly any kind of vehicle—matchbox-sized cars, dwarf-sized 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 the rigger adaptation that provides drones with a Pilot program, which enables the drone to act independently of its controller to a limited degree.

All drones that are incapable of carrying passengers are usually automatically pre-adapted for rigger control. Passenger vehicles or larger passenger drones are not usually pre-adapted, but can be adapted quickly by the manufacturer, a mechanic, or even a rigger character (see *Rigger Adaptation,* p. 341).

Controlling Drones

To manipulate a drone, you must first have accessed it and linked to it as a subscriber (see p. 212). Actively subscribed drones count toward your persona's subscription limits. See *Issuing Commands,* p. 221, for details on instructing drones.

Drones acting on their own use their own Pilot and autosoft (see p. 239) ratings for all necessary tests, and act on their own Initiative (see p. 239).

A rigger can choose to have multiple drones subscribed as a single device. This allows the rigger to have more devices actively subscribed, but is limiting since all the drones must receive the same orders. Alternately, a rigger can choose to issue orders to a drone and then unsubscribe it and trust its dogbrain to carry out the orders.

If instructed to, drones can subscribe to each other and share data, allowing them to coordinate attacks and other actions.

Jumping Into Drones

Riggers may also take a Complex Action and "jump into" a drone via full-VR. In this case, 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 still issue commands to other subscribed drones.

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 own skill and attributes.

If a jump-piloted drone takes damage, however, a rigger operating with hot sim also risks injury from dangerous biofeedback. 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 and immediately suffers the effects of dumpshock (see p. 231).

Rigging Security Systems

It is possible for the devices in a security system (cameras, maglocked doors, tripwires, fixed gun-drones, and other sensors and sec-measures) to be rigger-adapted and subscribed to a central node so that a rigger 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.

Drones and Sensors

When observing through a drone, a rigger rolls Sensor (rather than Intuition) + Perception. Drones operating on their own simply roll Sensor + Clearsight autosoft (or just Sensor if they don't have the autosoft).

Drone Initiative

Like other programs, the Pilot drone-brain acts at fast digital speeds. Drones are hampered, however, by their physical shells, and so act slightly slower. Drone Initiative equals Pilot rating + Response, and they receive two extra Initiative Passes (three total).

A drone directly controlled by a jumped-in rigger, however, acts on the rigger's Initiative. If a rigger jumps into or out of a drone, both continue to act with the same Initiative Score.

RIGGER ACTIONS

The following actions pertain specifically to riggers. Riggers can perform other combat and Matrix actions as well while rigging (see *The Action Phase,* p. 135, and *Matrix Actions,* p. 220).

Activate/Deactivate Sensors (Free)

A rigger may activate or deactivate sensors for a single drone. Activated sensors come online at the start of the next Combat Turn.

Activate/Deactivate ECCM (Free)

A rigger may activate or deactivate ECCM for a single drone. Activated ECCM comes online at the start of the next Combat Turn.

Arm/Disarm a Weapon System (Free)

A rigger may order a single drone to arm or disarm one of its weapon systems. A drone may have only one weapon system armed at any one time. Switching weapon systems, however, only requires one Free Action.

Call Up a Status Report (Free)

A rigger may monitor the position, heading and speed, damage report and/or current orders of a single drone.

Actively Subscribe a Drone (Simple)

A rigger may add or drop a drone from active subscription.

Jump into/Leave a Drone (Simple)

A rigger takes direct control of one drone in full-VR mode, or leaves it.

Fire a Weapon System (Complex)

A rigger may fire an armed weapon on any single drone (see *Gunnery* and *Sensor Targeting,* p. 162.) If the rigger is directly controlling the drone, he cannot perform this action with other drones.

RIGGER ACTIONS

Free Actions
Activate/Deactivate Sensors
Activate/Deactivate ECCM
Arm/Disarm a Weapon System
Call Up a Status Report

Simple Actions
Actively Subscribe a Drone
Issue Command
Jump into/Leave a Drone
Observe in Detail

Complex Actions
Fire a Weapon System
Jam Signal
Spoof Command

AUTOSOFT PROGRAMS

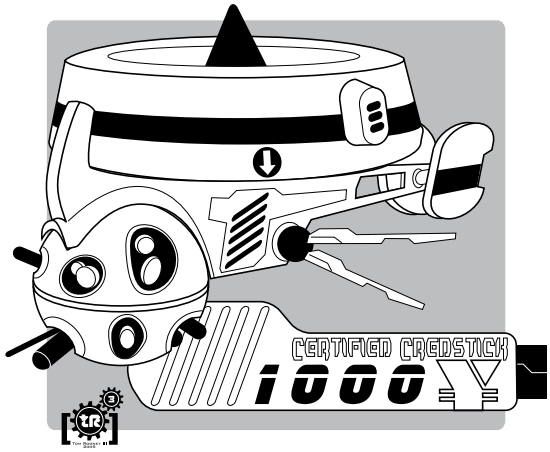
Autosofts are specialized programs that assist Pilot programs in undertaking tasks that their basic Pilot programming does not cover. Just because you've added a machine gun to your standard rotodrone, for example, doesn't mean that the drone knows how to identify, acquire, and shoot at targets. Autosofts fill in the blanks and allow riggers greater leeway with what commands they can issue. In essence, autosofts provide drones with specific skills so that they may make the appropriate skill tests.

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 for Sensor Tests (see p. 162).

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 can also take a Complex Action to go on full defense (see p. 151) against an incoming attack.



Electronic Warfare

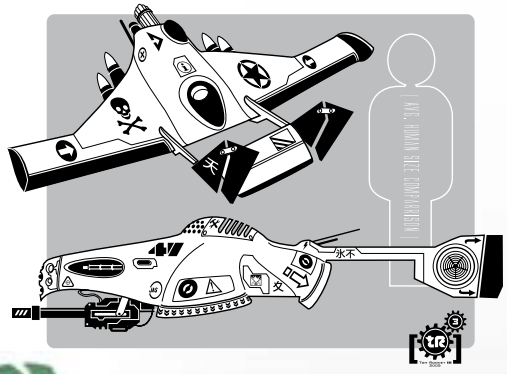
This provides the drone with an in-depth knowledge of radio communications and the use of electronic warfare against them. A Pilot with this autosoft can intercept, decrypt, jam signals, and take on other actions made possible by the Electronic Warfare skill (see p. 225).

Maneuver (Vehicle Type)

Maneuver autosofts are the equivalent of vehicle skills—they assist a Pilot to maneuver itself better. 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 rolls Pilot + Maneuver for Vehicle Tests (see p. 159).

Targeting (Specific Weapon)

Each Targeting autosoft mimics a particular ranged weapon attack skill, such as Targeting (Pistols) or Targeting (Longarms). This program instructs the drone on how to use and fire the appropriate rigger-modified and drone-attached weapon. A shooting drone rolls Targeting + Pilot for ranged combat attacks (see *Gunnery,* p. 162).



COMMLINK CUSTOMIZATION

Most hackers raise their noses at using an unmodified, off-the-shelf commlink. Why be part of the consumer herd when you can upgrade your box and blaze your own trail?

BUYING UPGRADES

Increases to Response and Signal can be purchased separately at the prices given on the Hardware Upgrades Table. The prices for higher-rated Firewall, System, and other programs are listed on the Program Costs and Availability Table (p. 228).

BUILDING YOUR OWN HARDWARE

If a hacker wants to build his own hardware from scratch, he must follow the rules for *Using Technical Skills to Build and Repair* (see p. 125).

The Build Hardware Table provides some sample thresholds and interval periods. Parts costs are always half the cost of buying a hardware upgrade.

CODING YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

True hackers always write their own code (or they will, at least, never admit to using someone else's). Programming software is handled like other build tasks, as noted under *Using Technical Skills to Build and Repair,* p. 125).

The Coding Software Table provides some sample thresholds and interval periods.

HARDWARE UPGRADE COSTS

New 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

BUILD HARDWARE TABLE

Commlink Component	Threshold	Interval
Response Chip	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

. . . RUNNING THE SHADOWS . . .

"I'll give you 800 nuyen for the bug," Jones said, setting the insectoid drone down after a minute's appraisal. The dapper dwarf had scowled at its condition, but he'd also hummed to himself. A sure sign of interest.

"900. It's worth more than that, even scuffed," Horse said. He'd never cared for the stereotype, but for negotiations, he didn't have a problem playing the role of "stoic Indian."

"Many Matrix sources say 1K," Raimee said absently from her seat on the back of the couch as she searched the Matrix. "Blue Book says 900, though." Squirt, the troll on the couch below her, grunted; the technomancer's hand movements had accidentally jostled the autodoc working on his gunshot wound.

"It's tough to move right now. Maybe if I wait, sure, but I was under the impression you needed the money now," Jones said, arching an eyebrow and indicating the team's safehouse. The converted warehouse was big enough for the team, including Squirt, as well as Banshee's vehicles and drones. It wasn't palatial, but cozy enough for them to lay low for about a week while Federated-Boeing looked for them, at least.

"Take the money, Horse, before Raimee kills me," the troll said. He grimaced and waved his hand at the chip that still lay between the dwarf and Horse. "That there's more important, anyway. Don't let Jonesy grab that for less than five K on top of the original price."

The dwarf scowled again. "Horse, you didn't tell me you were letting Squirt do the talking."

A clatter resounded through the warehouse. Everyone turned to the source; Banshee, her arms covered with grease and scratches, had thrown her wrench down in disgust.

"He don't need to. We checked the place out, but you didn't tell us about the new biometrics on the maglocks they got. If I'd known, I could've studied up on them and brought better tools," the elf said, pointing a long finger at Jones. "That's what brought the heat down, and now we're asking for more. Your screwup, not ours."

While Banshee was right, Horse wished at that moment that he could silence the elf. He looked at Raimee, but there was no help there; the technomancer was hyper-focused on erasing their data-trail and laying down false trails, if need be. And since Banshee had spoken up in Squirt's defense (and her own, said a voice in his head), *there was no way that the troll would deny what she said. Horse shrugged.*

"She's right. But," he said, watching the fixer's face go impassive, "I'm not putting the blame on you, I'm putting it on Johnson. Whoever he is, I think he can spare another five, don't you? He seemed to want those drone specs badly enough."

"I think so. He didn't tell me who he worked for, but I found out anyway—it's MCT, and that information and four extra K is what I'll give you," Jones said, slapping his palm down on the table.

"Agreed." Horse glanced at Banshee, who nodded back. Yeah, that would bear investigating ... later.

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.

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. 152; 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.

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 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.

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.

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 above.

HEALING MODIFIERS

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

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. 329) and autodoc drones (p. 341) 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. 200.

PHYSICAL DAMAGE OVERFLOW

Characters who exceed their Physical Condition Monitor and enter into overflow damage (see *Exceeding the Condition Monitor,* p. 153) 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. 201) 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.

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 (see p. 317) offers complete protection unless breached (by an attack causing damage), while chemical protection (p. 317) gives a bonus equal to its rating to the Toxic Resistance Test.

Ingestion toxins must be eaten by the victim. They generally take longer to have an effect. Digestive expansion bioware (p. 338) gives a bonus of +2 to the Toxic 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. 334) is immune to its effects. Chemical protection gives a bonus equal to its rating to the Toxic Resistance Test.

Injection toxins must be injected into the target's bloodstream. Similar to contact toxins, they may be coated on 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 Toxic 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.

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, or as otherwise explained 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 nauseous 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.

TOXIN PROTECTION

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
Nephritic Screen	All toxins, diseases	+Rating
Pathogenic Defense	Diseases	+Rating
Respirator	Inhalation	+Rating
Toxin Extractor	All toxins	+Rating
Tracheal Filter	Inhalation	+Rating

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.

> *Twitch is trapped in a cloud of CS/Tear Gas with Power 6. 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 4 hits. This reduces the Power of the gas to 2 (6 – 4). Under the Effects listing for CS gas, it says that the toxin inflicts Stun damage and nausea, so Twitch takes 2 boxes of Stun Damage and suffers a nausea modifier of –1 for the next 20 Combat Turns.*

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. Not 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: Stun Damage, Disorientation
Description: 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).
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
Description: 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
Description: 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: Stun Damage, Disorientation
Description: 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: Stun Damage, Nausea
Description: 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 (see p. 318) 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
Description: 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.

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. 80) 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. 80).

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 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 (see p. 84), lower pain tolerance (see p. 82), slurred speech, and so on.
- Stun damage that cannot be healed.

ADDICTION THRESHOLD

Sample Substance	Threshold
Hallucinogenics, Dreamchip BTLs	1
Stimulants, Moodchip and Personafix BTLs	2
Narcotics, Tripchip BTLs	3

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. 80). 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
Description: 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. 78).

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
Description: 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
Description: 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
Description Threshold: 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. 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 (see p. 245).

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.

Kamikaze

Duration: 10 x 1D6 minutes
Effect: +1 Body, +1 Agility, +2 Strength, +1 Willpower, +1 Initiative Pass, High Pain Tolerance 3
Description: 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
Description: 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 (see p. 245) as she is inflicted 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
Description: 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. 78). 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
Description: 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. 78). 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
Description: 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
Description: A psychedelic hallucinogen, zen is popular among those looking to escape reality or seeking trance-like states.

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 features 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

Description: 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

Description: 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

Description: 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

Description: 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 cut them 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, 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. 256) 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*, p. 253). Rules for climbing over barriers can be found on p. 115.

FENCING TABLE

Wire	Threshold	Damage
Barbed	1	4P
Concertina	1	5P
Monowire	3	8P
Electrified	2	5S (Electrical damage, see p. 154)

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 fending 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. 157. Plumbing, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems are often found with in 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 Fence 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.254). 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. 117) 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 (see p. 117) 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. 157), and are typically augmented with locks (p. 255), alarms, and/or sensors (p. 254).

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 extraterritoriality 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, 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. 271.

Security magicians tend to be rare, and are only typically found on site at important secure sites; bound spirits (p. 180) 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 (sec hackers/riggers) are more common, and may serve as the focal point for 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. 205.

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 (see p. 323); apply modifiers as appropriate from the Build/Repair Table, p. 125. 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 (see p. 254).

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 re-arrange 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). **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.

CHEMICAL DETECTION MODIFIERS

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	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

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 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 flashbang grenades (p. 313).

How well any of these cameras or sensors may be spotted will depend partially on 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, apply negative dice pool modifiers to the Perception Test equivalent to the cover modifiers used in ranged combat (–2 partial, –4 good, –6 hidden).

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, above.

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).

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. 326) add their rating in dice to this test; their rating may also be used in place of Lockpicking skill.

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. Re-assembling 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 sequencer (see p. 327) 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. 326) 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. 326) 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 scanners is to coerce an authorized user to apply their 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. 326). Retinal prints may also be duplicated with the retinal duplication cybereye accessory (p. 333). 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. 332) 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. 238).

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 a olfactory scanner (see p. 326) may be alerted by their gear. See p. 244 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. 185). 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. 183).

Some sites with security magicians on hand utilize the Mage Sight fiberoptic system (see p. 326).

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. 185). 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 p. 222).

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. 321); 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 of 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. 225.

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 he'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. 263), 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 fol-

lowing 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 a Notoriety point:

- 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 she 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, gunbunny 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 known 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.

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. 83).

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 & 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 no share transaction data, and do not report to government authorities. Likewise, many criminal syndicates have their own black credit institutions 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).

CERTIFIED CREDSTICK TABLE

Credstick Type	Maximum Funds
Standard	5,000¥
Silver	20,000¥
Gold	100,000¥
Platinum	500,000¥
Ebony	1,000,000¥

FAKE ID

In 2070, 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. 322, 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!

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.

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. 83), roll only 1D6. Also roll 1D6 die 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.

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

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 when 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.

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) between adventures; the character cannot simultaneous 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

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 3
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

(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.

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.

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 3. For example, if a character wants to improve her Agility from 4 to 5, the cost is 5 x 3, or 15 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. 78). 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 may use Karma may for initiation (p. 189) and bonding foci (p. 190), just as technomancers may use Karma for submersion (p. 238).

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.

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. 172.

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. 233.

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.

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. 272 and p. 276) 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 kil 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 (www.shadowrunrpg.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.

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 adven-

ture, 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, 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. 270.)

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.

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 ele-

ment 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, 25mm-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 FanPro 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.

. . . FRIENDS AND FOES . . .

Ivan's face broadened in delight when he saw the street witch. "Alexandra, priyatenisha! *It is so good to see you again!"*

Alexandra smiled briefly before gasping for air in the Russian ork's embrace. She had forgotten after all these years how strong Ivan's cybernetically enhanced clutch could be. "Aw, you know I couldn't stop in Seattle without paying a visit, you old gangster. So how's retired life treating you?"

"I survive, somehow. It is a struggle to get through the day, when you don't have to worry whose price is on your head today." Alexandra smiled in genuine gladness at her old friend's humor. The luxurious decorations around the office told her how Ivan was truly faring.

"Please, Alex, do sit down. Let me pour you a drink." As Black Ivan turned to the cocktail tray on the table behind him, Alexandra's eye caught a glimpse at the ornament on his desk. It was a dragon claw, now converted into a small basket for holding small items. "Ivan, don't tell me you've still got ***that*** *eyesore around?"*

"A trophy of battle, won by fair means," protested Ivan with mock indignation. The street witch chuckled quietly as she accepted her glass. "What shall we drink to, dear Alexandra?"

"To old friends."

The twinkle in Ivan's eyes dimmed, as the memories of departed comrades crossed their minds. Ivan turned away briefly.

"—and new opportunities," Alexandra hastily added. She silently cursed herself for re-opening old wounds.

The ork smiled again as he clinked his glass. "Za vashche soodba."

The alcohol blossomed in flavor as it passed down Alexandra's throat. This was genuine Rodnik vodka, imported from the Russian motherland, not the cheap soy rot one would find on the streets. Considering Ivan's connection with the Russian Vory mobs in Seattle, Alexandra expected nothing less.

Ivan's breath exploded in a loud pah *as he savored his drink. "So, Alexandra, what brings you back to Seattle?"*

"Actually, Ivan, I need a favor." Alexandra swirled her glass as she carefully chose her words. "I'm laying over en route to some biz in Vladivostok, and I was wondering if you could hook me up with some people you know over there?"

"But of course," answered Ivan, as he pulled out his commlink. "After all, what are friends for?"

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, while others may want to harm them. And some aren't even metahuman to begin with ...

This section deals with *non-player characters* (NPCs). It includes information on *contacts,* the people the characters know who can help them through the course of the game. Additionally, the section covers critters, non-metahuman beings, and spirits.

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 rules provide guidelines for gamemasters in resolving these cases.

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.*

Because they are very similar to one another, grunts have 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. Specialist 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 book-keeping you should 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.

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.

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 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

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

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, 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 may 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 skill 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.

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.

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	CM
3	2	2	4	1	2	1	2	6	4	1	10

Skills: Clubs 1, Intimidation 2, Unarmed Combat 1
Gear: Clubs, 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	CM
3	3	3	4	2	3	2	2	6	6	1	10

Skills: Humanis Policlub (Street Knowledge) 2, Intimidation 3, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 2
Gear: Streetline Special

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	CM
3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	5.8	5	1	10

Skills: Clubs 2, Etiquette (Street) 3, Pistols 1, Unarmed Combat 2
Cyberware: Hand Razors
Gear: Streetline Special

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	CM
3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	5.7	7	1	10

Skills: Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 4, Pistols 2, Thrown Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat 3
Cyberware: Retractable Spur
Gear: Ares Predator, Molotov cocktail (4P Fire damage)

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 corps 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	CM
3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	6	7	1	10

Skills: Dodge 2, Pistols 1, Shortarms 3, Unarmed Combat 2
Gear: Armor Vest, Fichetti Security 600, H&K 227, Stun Baton

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 additional 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	CM
3	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	6	3	7	1	10

Astral Initiative/IP: 8/3
Skills: Assensing 3, Astral Combat 1, Pistols 1, Conjuring Group 3, Sorcery Group 3
Gear: Armor Vest, Beretta Model 101T
Spells: Detect Life, Light, Physical Barrier, Powerbolt, Silence, Stunball

Lone Star Police Squad (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 is a shadowrunner's most common adversary.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	Init	IP	CM
3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	6	8	1	10

Skills: Clubs 3, Law Enforcement (Professional Knowledge) 3, Perception 2, Pistols 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Gear: Armor Jacket, Colt American L36, Defiance Super Shock, Stun Baton

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	CM
3	4	4 (6)	3	4	5	3	4	4.3	9 (11)	1	11

Skills: Clubs 3, Infiltration 2, Intimidation 3, Law Enforcement

(Professional Knowledge) 4, Leadership 2, Perception 3, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 4
Cyberware: Reaction Enhancers 2, Cyberarm, Smartlink
Gear: Armor Jacket, Browning Max-Power with Smartlink, Defiance Super Shock, Stun Baton

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	CM
3	5	4	3	3	4	3	4	6	8	1	10

Skills: Blades 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 3, Pistols 3, Shortarms 3, Unarmed Combat 3
Gear: Ceska Black Scorpion, Lined Coat, Knife or Sword

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 filled in other syndicates, exercising their well-honed martial arts skills and magically-enhanced abilities.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	M	Init	IP	CM
4	6	5 (6)	5	3	4	3	3	6	4	9 (10)	2	10

Skills: Athletics group 3, Close Combat group 5, Con 3, Dodge 4, Feng Shui (Academic Knowledge) 4, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Pistols 2
Gear: Remington Roomsweeper, Weapon Focus 1, Lined Coat
Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Critical Strike 2, Great Leap 2, Improved Reflexes 1

Red Samurai Detachment (Professional Rating 5)

The Red Samurai are the elite paramilitary forces belonging to the megacorporation Renraku . They have 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	CM
4	5	5 (6)	4	3	4	3	4	3.8	9 (10)	2	10

Skills: Athletics group 2, Blades 3, Dodge 4, Etiquette (Corporate) 3, Firearms group 5, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Unarmed Combat 4
Cyberware: Cybereyes with Flare Compensation, Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 1
Gear: Assault Rifle, Katana, Medium Security Armor

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	CM
4	6	5 (7)	4	4	5	4	5	2.7	10 (12)	3	11

Matrix Initiative: 10
Skills: Athletics group 2, Data Search 2, Electronics group 3, Demolitions 3, Dodge 5, Etiquette (Corporate) 4, Firearms group 5, Infiltration 3, Perception 3, Unarmed Combat 4
Cyberware: Datajack, Image Link (Retinal Modification), Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 2
Gear: Armor Vest, Commlink (System 4, Response 5, Signal 4), Fichetti Security 500
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 seasoned combat veterans.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS	Init	IP	CM
4	6	5 (7)	4	5	6	4	5	2.6	11 (13)	3	11

Skills: Athletics group 3, Demolitions 3, Dodge 4, Firearms group 5, Perception 4, Stealth group 6, Unarmed Combat 5
Cyberware: Flare Compensation (Retinal Modification), Commlink (Response 6, System 5, Signal 3), Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 2
Gear: Form-fitting Body Armor, Grapple Gun, H&K 227-S, Smoke Grenades (2), Thermographic Smoke Grenades (2).
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	CM
4	6	5 (7)	4	5	6	5	6	2.6	11 (13)	3	11

Matrix Initiative: 12
Skills: Athletics group 3, Dodge 4, Electronics group 6, Firearms group 5, Perception 5, Stealth group 6, Unarmed Combat 4
Cyberware: Flare Compensation (Retinal Modification), Commlink (Response 6, System 5, Signal 3), Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 2
Gear: Form-Fitting Body Armor, H&K 227-S
Programs: Analyze 4, Armor 5, Blackout 4, Browse 3, Exploit 5, Scan 3, Stealth 4, Track 4

PRIME RUNNERS

Every once in a while, player characters will encounter a memorable NPC who is their match, or better. These individuals may also reappear now and again over the course of several adventures. These special characters are called *prime runners.*

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

Prime runners are signature characters that appear over the course of an adventure. If an adventure could be thought of as an action movie, a prime runner is 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.

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. 72). 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).

Inferior: These prime runners are less powerful than the PCs. Inferior PCs 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. 264).

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.)

CONNECTION RATING TABLE

Connection	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.

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 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 (p. 279) 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.

FLESHING OUT CONTACTS

Making contacts into fully realized characters—"fleshing them out"—is the key to getting the most from them. To achieve this, gamemasters (with some input from the players) must spend a little time creating a background for each of their players' contacts.

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.

LOYALTY RATING TABLE

Loyalty 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.

A contact might also turn the tables and ask a runner for a favor. 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.

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. 58). 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.

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 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 Contact Rating Table 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. 301.) 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.

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. 281).

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.

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.

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, longtime 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: Infro broker, 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.

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.

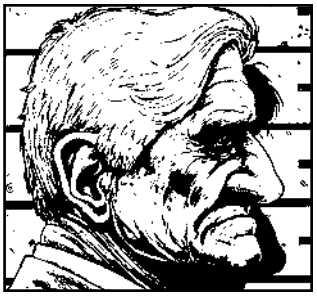
Fixers live and die by their connections. They know everybody, or at least it seems that way. Think of the fixer as a combination employment agency, procurement firm, and all-purpose fence: they earn their keep by what they know, who they know, and how well they can broker deals between people who need 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

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 plenty of crowds 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

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 group 4, Etiquette 3 (Magical +2), Negotiation 4, Perception 2, Sorcery group 4

Knowledge Skills: Magical Background 8, 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. 108).

Most Awakened critters possess a Magic skill, 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. 181). 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.

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. 195). 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. 182).

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.

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, 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.

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. 154) 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 in the same way as characters using astral perception (see *Astral Perception*, p. 183.)

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. 140) using the critter's Agility + Exotic Ranged Weapon to attack. The attack's DV equals the critter's Magic, and is treated as Cold, Electricity, or Fire damage (see p. 155), 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: Touch • 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. 155), 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. 155).

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. 244). Armor does not protect against this attack, but other protective gear might (see the Toxin Protection table, p. 245). 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. 62. 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. 80). 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 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 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.

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.

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. 202.

Innate Spell

Type: A • Action: Complex • Range: per 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.

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 critter's Magic.

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.

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. 245). Armor does not help resist this damage, but respiratory protection will (see the Toxin Protection table, p. 245). 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 if 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 Quickness equal to the hits scored on a Magic + willpower Test, similar to the Magic Fingers spell (p. 203).

Regeneration

Type: P • Action: Auto • Range: Self • Duration: Always

A critter with Regeneration rapidly heals any Physical 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 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 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.

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. 108) 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. 245) 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 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. 80).

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

SEARCH MODIFIERS TABLE

Situation	Dice Pool Modifier
Target hidden by Concealment power	–concealer's Magic
Target hidden behind mana barrier	–barrier's Force

Situation	Threshold Modifier
Target is more than a kilometer away	+ kilometers
Target is a nonliving object or place	+5

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. 62).

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. 83).

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.

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

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.

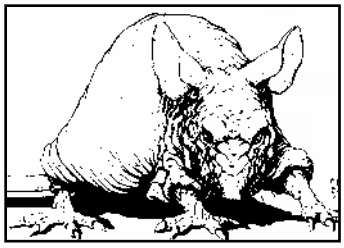
B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	M	Init	IP
7	5	6	5	3	3	1	3	4	6	4	9	2

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. 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 then 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.

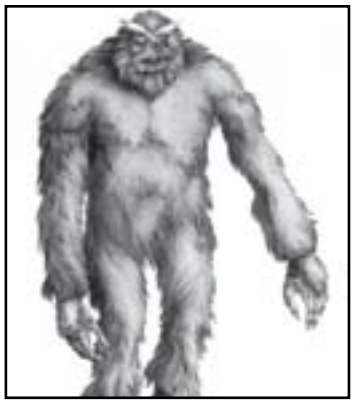
Nagas are far more intelligent than most reptiles. They can learn various behaviors ranging from verbal and somatic cues to sophisticated activities in a very short time. Many paranaturalist and Awakened-rights groups maintain that nagas are sentient. Their ability to cast spells tends to support this 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



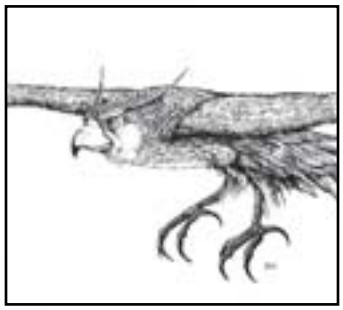
This gigantic humanoid stands almost 3 meters tall, yet weighs only 300 kilograms. Sasquatches are typically covered with black or dark brown body hair, but older sasquatches have silver-tipped fur. Curious and peaceful by nature, sasquatches fight only when attacked. The United Nations officially recognized 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 (Trade Knowledge) 5, Artisan 4, Athletics 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.

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. 245).

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 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 group 2, Infiltration 3, Intimidation 3, Perception 3, Sorcery 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. 79).

SPIRITS

Spirits are sentient denizens of the astral plane. The spirits described below may be summoned by magicians (see *Conjuring,* p. 176). 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	Fx4	F–3	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx5	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	Fx2	F+2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx3	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

Spirits of Earth

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	M	Init	IP
F+4	F-2	Fx2	F+4	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx3	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	Fx3	F-2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx4	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	Fx2	F-2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx3	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), Movement, Psychokinesis

Spirits of Water

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	EDG	ESS	M	Init	IP
F+2	F	Fx2	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	Fx3	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. 276), and gen-

erally 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 group 6, Exotic Ranged Weapon 6, Flight 6 (Swimming 6 for leviathans), Perception 6, Sorcery 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 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

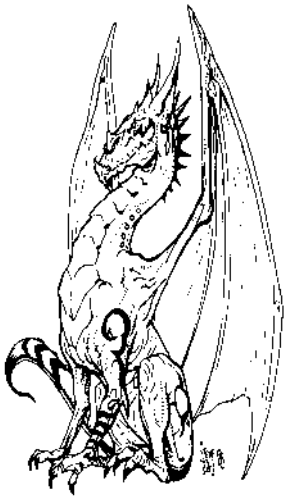
Leviathans, or sea dragons, are found in deep saltwater habitats. A leviathan's serpentine head and body measure approximately 25 meters in length. It has four stubby limbs equipped with powerful webbed claws. Though they have opposable thumbs on their forelimbs, leviathans have poor manual dexterity. 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 10

Additional Innate Powers: Hardened Armor (+12), Metahuman Form, Mystic Armor (+12), Twist Fate

. . . STREET GEAR . . .

When Franz Stengel came home, the evening sun bathed his face in a serene light, and the warm summer breeze of the departing day caressed his skin. Thanks to his personal AR filter, it was always summer when he came home, even when he worked overtime and arrived close to midnight on a stormy November night, like this one.

Zeiss-Uhu-209 cybereyes with image link, recording unit, and low-light vision—1,500 nuyen. Sony Emperor commlink with portable trodenet—750 nuyen. Lusiada-TempoImagi Virtual Weather ARE software—100 nuyen.

The sec-cams' facial recognition 'ware at his tenth-floor apartment saw him coming and opened the door, filling the air around him with the salty smell of the ocean and the distant roar of the waves. As the door closed behind him, his ARE settings took over and his other life began. He hung his rainwear on a rack, took the meal that the auto-cook had prepared for him out of the combo fridge/oven and walked to the window. From here, he could take in the ocean breeze with deep breaths and enjoy a great view over the beach of Isle de Esmeralda, his team's secret hideout. He could make out his virtual girlfriend, Iruka, lying on a deckchair close to the water, bathing in the sun. Apparently she had come home early from her day job and decided to spend some time relaxing.

Proteus-Enviro 6.01D Wall Space ARE software—50 nuyen. FanPro Ltd. Shadowrun MMORPG—50 nuyen.

"Okaeri! Okaeri!" The squeaky voice came from one of the cabin's corners, where Fuuridigoru had set up his nest. The tiny baby dragon looked very much like Teclador, a character from the Armalion Saga tridshow. He was blue instead of green, though, could breathe fire, and spoke perfect Japanese—in a very childlike way, of course.

"Tadaima! Ich bin zu Hause." Franz noticed that he was still in his Saeder-Krupp wageslave persona. Time to change. He ate his sliced curry soysages with fries, washed them down with a nutrient drink, and sat down in his chair, closing his eyes and putting his body to rest as he logged on. Thanks to his state-of-the-art sleep regulator, he could spend half the night gaming and still be ready for another 14-hour workday tomorrow morning.

Renraku-Petto-Kawaii Personal Pet ARE software—100 nuyen. Langenscheidt Japanese lingua soft—500 nuyen. Barytech-Wolke7 Sleep Regulator—10,000 nuyen.

Franz—now Takano Natsunokun, wanted shadowrunner—got up from his chair and stretched his augmented limbs. Fuuridigoru flew through the room and landed on his open palm.

"Hoi, Fuuri! Missed me?"

"Miss-Miss!"

"Right. Well, let's see what the others are up to." Natsunokun grabbed his weapon, took his pet, and left the room in search of adventure: it was just another night running the virtual shadows.

ALL SALES ON FETISHES ARE FINAL!
CYBERWARE
NU SPLEEN
VAT
50 CAL AMMO
KILL SOFTS (USED)
GUN
501
CRUSH CRUSH
TUF
MODERN SHAMANISM
PRINCIPIA MAGICKA
BASIC MAGIC 2053 EDITION

"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 2070.

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. 130, 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 more.

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 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

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 (see *Armor Penetration,* p. 152). 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 (see *"Availability,"* p. 301). 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. 303.

Blast: This is the amount the blast weapon's Damage Value is reduced per meter of distance from the explosion's point of origin (see *Explosives,* p. 315).

Capacity: Some sensor packages and cyberware can be equipped with a range of subsystems. A Capacity value is listed for these that indicates 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 stand-alone 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 (see *Concealing Gear,* p. 301).

Continued on page 301

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 (p. 302) lists a selection of items and the standard modifiers they 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).

AVAILABILITY & 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 2070 has advanced to the point where records of legal purchases are almost always kept,

GEAR RATINGS *(Cont.)*

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 (see *Street Values,* p. 302). Cost is also subject to local supply and demand, so the gamemaster should feel free to adjust it accordingly for certain settings.

Damage Value: 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. 152.

A notation of (f) following the DV means that the weapon's damage and AP is precalculated for flechette ammunition (see p. 313). A notation of (e) indicates the weapon inflicts Electricity damage (see p. 154).

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 attribute, 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; only the highest amount is applied to the character's essence in full, the lesser amount is applied at half it's value to the character's Essence (see *Essence,* p. 61).

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 (see *Firearms* , p. 142). 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)

Continued on page 302

Urgent Message...

GEAR RATINGS *(Cont.)*

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 (see *Recoil,* p. 142). Numbers in parentheses refer to full recoil compensation that only applies 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. 212).

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 (see p. 260) 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.

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, p. 303).

If a character is willing to expend a little bit more cash, she can increase her chances of finding a willing buyer and expediting the sale. 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.

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. 280, 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

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, microgrenade, flash-pak, jammer, minidrone
+0	Heavy pistol, taser, grenade, goggles, commlink
+2	Machine pistol, medkit, club
+4	SMG, stun baton, sword
+6	Assault rifle, katana

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 right) as a guideline.

AVAILABILITY INTERVAL

Item's 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%

IMPLANT GRADES

Grade	Essence Cost Multiplier	Cost Multiplier
Standard	x 1	x 1
Alphaware	x 0.8	x 2
Betaware	x 0.7	x 4
Deltaware	x 0.5	x 10

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.

Characters may hire a fence or other contact to sell the item for them. See *Swag,* p. 280, 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. 302.

LEGALITY

To operate 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 (see p. 333). 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 caught with 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 (with the exception of cultured bioware, see p. 339). When purchasing implants of other grades, apply the Essence Cost and Cost adjustments as noted on the Implant Grades table (above).

Note that cyberware accessories must be of the same grade as the implant they are added to.

Urgent Message...

COMMON COSTS

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	.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	
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)	
Vending machine meal	2¥
Fast food meal	5–10¥
Breakfast or Lunch	10–15¥
Dinner	20–25¥
Dinner at fancy restaurant	100–200¥
Entertainment	
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	
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

Continued on page 289

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

In 2070, 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 (see *RFID Tags,* p. 320). Many non-wireless items are tagged to identify the owner if stolen, while other 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. 214 of *The Wireless World.*

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 (see p. 321).

GEAR LISTING

The following selection of items are available through fixers, fences, black market shops, online sites, and lore shops.

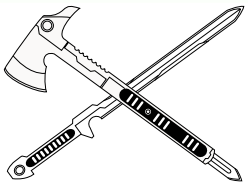
MELEE WEAPONS

Melee weapons are the basic hand-to-hand fighting implements still in use today (see *Melee Combat,* p. 146). This list does not include impromptu weapons created from material on hand (see Melee Weapons Table, p. 149, 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. 338.

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 three blades mounted in a forearm sheath 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.

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 2x4 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 (see p. 154). 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

COMMON COSTS *(Cont.)*

Parking (1 hour)	6¥
Parking (all day)	25¥
Car rental (1 day)	100¥
Car rental (1 week)	500¥
Air travel	.1¥ per 1 km
Suborbital/semiballistic flight	.5¥ per 1 km
Local flight	1¥ per 1 km
Rail fare	.2¥ per 1 km
Bus fare	.1¥ per 1 km
Bus/Rail 1-month pass	250¥
Body Fashion	
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.

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					
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					
Pole Arm	2	(STR/2 + 2)P	–2	4R	1,000¥
Monofilament Whip	2	8P	–4	12F	3,000¥
Unarmed					
Shock Glove	—	5S(e)	–half	3R	200¥

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 himself and must resist the whip's standard Damage Code.

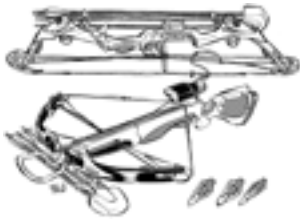
Pole Arm: This spear-like weapon usually features an axe-head or similar blade and has become quite popular with trolls and other large individuals, even though it's not easy to handle.

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 (see p. 154) 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. 144.

Bows: A traditional longbow of fiberglass or wood, or a modern compound-and-pulley bow. Reloading the bow takes one "Ready Weapon" Action (p. 137).

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 to determine the weapon's range and damage.

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 (see p. 244).

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 inflict Electricity Damage (see p. 154) 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.

Bows	Damage	AP	Availability	Cost
Bow	(STR Min +2)P	—	2	Rating x 100¥
Arrow	—	—	2	5¥
Injection Arrow	—	—	8R	50¥
Crossbows				
Light	3P	—	2	300¥
Medium	5P	—	4R	500¥
Heavy	7P	–1	8R	750¥
Bolt	—	—	2	5¥
Injection Bolt	—	—	8R	50¥
Throwing weapons				
Shuriken	(STR/2)P	—	2	30¥
Throwing knife	(STR/2 + 1)P	—	2	20¥

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. 255). It is a common weapon among those on society's bottom rung.

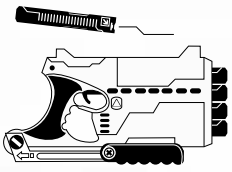
Light Pistols

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.

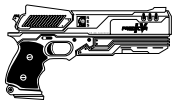
Hammerli 620S: Sleek and stylish, the Hammerli offers the range of a heavy pistol within a light pistol casing (use Heavy Pistol ranges, p. 139). It also includes integral gas-vent and smartgun systems.



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 (see *Shotguns,* p. 144).

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.

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.

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							
Raecor Sting	6P(f)	+2	SS	—	5 (c)	6R	350¥
Streetline Special	4P	—	SS	—	6 (c)	4R	100¥
Light Pistols							
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) x 4	10R	2,000¥

HK 227X: The SMG of choice for many corporate and military security forces. The HK227X 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, laser sight, and a detachable folding stock.

Ingram Smartgun X: This smartgun upgrade features gas-vent 2, a smartgun system, a sound suppresser, 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

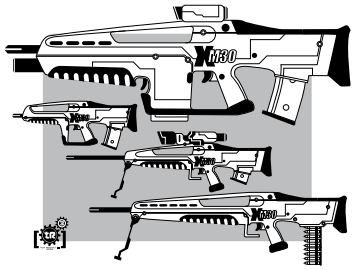
Use the Automatics skill when firing assault rifles.

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.

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 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.

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)	+2					
Ruger Super Warhawk	6P	–2	SS	—	6 (cy)	3R	250¥
Machine Pistols							
Ceska Black Scorpion	4P	—	SA/BF	(1)	35 (c)	8R	550¥
Steyr TMP	4P	—	SA/BF/FA	—	30 (c)	8R	600¥
Submachine Guns							
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¥

Sniper Rifles

Use the Longarms skill when firing sniper rifles.

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. Its barrel is highly sensitive: if bumped after being assembled(which tends to happen when it's being used in standard combat situations outside its intended sniper role), a –1 dice pool modifier is applied to all of its attack rolls.

Walther MA-2100: The chosen sniper rifle of the Confederated American States Army, the MA-2100 is designed to military specifications. It is free of the design instabilities common to other sniper rifles—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 p. 144.

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).

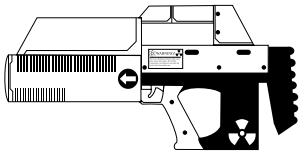
Remington 990: The Remington includes an imaging scope and a rigid stock with shock pad. It can fire regular slug or flechette ammunition.

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 (see *Using Toxic Substances,* p. 245).

Fichetti Pain Inducer: This non-lethal weapon uses a microwave laser 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 (see p. 245) with a Power of 8. The target resists with Body + half 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



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**	**Avail**	**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							
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							
Mossberg AM-CMDT	9P(f)	+2	SA/BF/FA	—	10 (c)	12R	1,000¥
Remington 990	7P	–1	SA	(1)	8 (m)	4R	550¥
With flechettes	9P(f)	+2					

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.

Machine Guns and Assault Cannons

Use the Heavy Weapons skill when firing these weapons. They suffer from double Recoil modifiers (see *Recoil,* p. 142).

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 comparitively 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 that used as the primary weapon in small tanks. It comes with a smartgun system and rigid stock with shock pad, though these are hardly enough to compensate for its tremendous recoil. Fortunately, the weapon's firing rate is quite low.

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 Yakosoku 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.

FIREARM ACCESSORIES

Most firearm accessories must be attached to a particular mount (see the *Gear Ratings* sidebar, p. 301). 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 at-

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¥
Light Machine Guns							
Ingram White Knight	6P	–1	BF/FA	5 (6)	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	12F	2,000¥
Medium Machine Guns							
Stoner-Ares M202	6P	–2	FA	—	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	12F	4,500¥
Heavy Machine Guns							
Ultimax HMG-2	7P	–3	FA	3 (10)	50 (c) or 100 (belt)	15F	7,500¥
Assault Cannons							
Panther XXL	10P	–5	SS	(1)	15 (c)	20F	5,500¥
Grenade Launchers							
Ares Antioch-2	Grenade	—	SS	—	8 (m)	8F	600¥
ArmTech MGL-12	Grenade	—	SA	—	12 (c)	10F	2,000¥
Missile Launchers							
Aztechnology Striker	Missile	—	SS	—	1 (ml)	10F	1,000¥
Mitsubishi Yakusoku MRL	Missile	—	SA	—	8 (m)	20F	12,000¥

tached 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 (see p. 301).

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. 323.

Laser Sight: This device projects a laser beam to produce 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 (see Quick Draw, p. 137).

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 (see below) 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 (see p. 240) at Rating 3.

Smartgun System: The smartgun system connects a firearm or projectile weapon directly to a user's smartlink (see p. 323). 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

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	Barrel/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

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. 323).

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.

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, below.

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 weapons 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 and decrease the effectiveness of Ballistic armor (AP –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 2 to weapon's DV and has an AP of –2. It follows all other standard explosive rounds rules.

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	Insert belt
Fill Belt	Complex Action	Insert (Agility ÷ 2) rounds into belt
Drum (d)	Complex Action	Insert drum

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 +2). 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 energy over a larger-than-normal area. Gel rounds add +2 DV but have an AP of +2 against armor. Gel rounds inflict Stun damage and are resisted with Impact armor. Gel rounds reduce the target's Body by 2 when checking for knockdown; see *Knockdown,* p. 151.

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 are actually 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.

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 cylinder-shaped, while aerodynamic models are rings or disks with superior range capabilities. Minigrenades are specifically designed for use with grenade launchers (either the standard version). 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. 310). 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. 145. 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 (see p. 246). 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. 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 containing 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. 146, 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 (see p. 311) 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.

Ammunition, per 10 shots	Damage Mod.	AP Mod.	Armor Used	Availability	Cost
APDS	—	–4	B	16F	70¥
Assault Cannon	As Cannon	As Cannon	B	16F	450¥
Explosive Rounds	+1	–1	B	8F	50¥
EX-Explosive Rounds	+2	–2	B	12F	100¥
Flechette Rounds	+2	+2	I	2R	100¥
Gel Rounds	+2 (Stun)	+2	I	4R	30¥
Regular Ammo	—	—	B	2R	20¥
Stick-n-Shock	6S(e)	–half	I	5R	80¥
Tracer	—	—	B	5R	75¥
Taser Dart	As Taser	–half	I	2	50¥

Grenades	Damage	AP	Blast	Avail	Cost
Flash-Bang	6S	–3	10m Radius	6R	30¥
Flash-Pak	Special	—	Special	4	200¥
Fragmentation	12P(f)	+2	–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					
Anti-Vehicle	16P	–2/–6*	–4/m	20F	1,000¥
Fragmentation	16P(f)	+2	–1/m	16F	500¥
High Explosive	14P	–2	–2/m	20F	750¥
Missiles					
As Rocket	As Rocket	As Rocket	As Rocket	+5	+Sensor rating x 500¥

* AVR/AVMs have an AP of –2 against people, –6 against vehicles.

Explosives, per kilogram	Rating	Availability	Cost
Commercial	Rating 3	8R	100¥
Foam	Rating 4–15	12F	Rating x 100¥
Plastic	Rating 4–15	16F	Rating x 100¥
Accessories			
Detonator Cap	—	8R	75¥

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives are primarily used to damage structures. Characters use Demolitions skill to prepare explosives, measuring how well they target 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. 157, 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 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 2070 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.

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. 148.

Actioneer Business Clothes: These discreetly-armored "power suits" are still tres 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. 323.

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 of action but surprisingly protective with light-weight densiplast and liquid reactive armor. Features a built-in music-player and biomonitor (see p. 329).

Clothing	Ballistic/Impact	Availability	Cost
Clothing	0/0	—	20–100,000¥
Feedback Clothing	—	+8	+500¥
Leather Jacket	2/2	—	200¥
Armor			
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			
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	200Y
Thermal Damping	—	10F	Rating x 500¥
Helmets and Shields			
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

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 (see *Toxin Protection,* p. 245). 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.

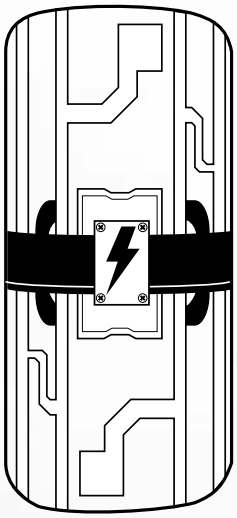
Fire Resistance: Fire-retardant, heat-resistant, and nonflammable materials protect the wearer against Fire damage (see p. 155), adding its full rating to the armor value.

Insulation: Thermal fibers, insulating layers, and heat-retentive materials protect the wearer against Cold damage (see p. 154), adding its full rating to the armor value.

Nonconductivity: Electrical insulation and grounding materials protect the wearer against Electricity damage (see p. 154), 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. 154) 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.

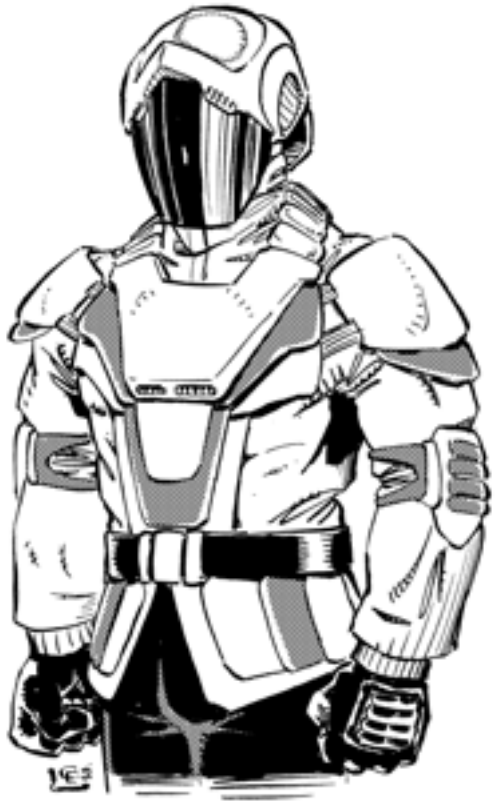


Helmets and Shields

Helmets and shields do not count as separate pieces of armor; instead, they modify the rating of worn armor by their rating (see *Armor and Encumbrance,* p. 149).

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 (see p. 154). The taser shield holds 20 charges; when attached to a power point, it reloads one charge per 10 seconds.

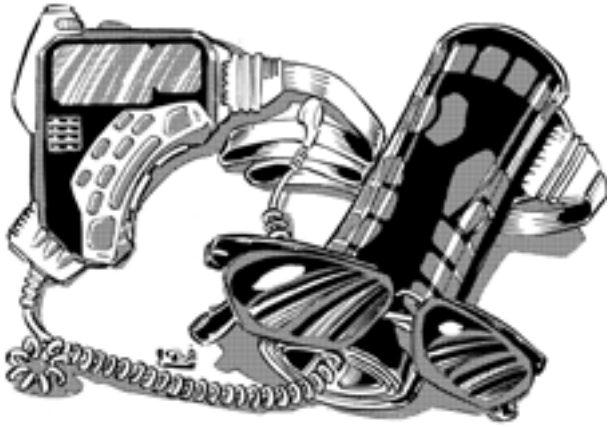
ELECTRONICS

For complete coverage of the Matrix attributes used by electronics equipment, see p. 212.

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 and Networking,* p. 210. 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 fea-



tures: music player, 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 ASIST interface that controls the simsense experience. It translates computer signals (simsense data) into neural signals, allowing the user to directly experience simsense programs and virtual reality (see *Virtual Reality,* p. 228). 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 (see p. 229). It is possible to modify a sim module to allow the user to experience hot sim (p. 229) and BTLs (p. 250) with a Hardware + Logic (10, 1 hour) Extended Test, but this also makes the user more vulnerable to Black IC programs.

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. 323.

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 (see *Biometrics,* p. 255). 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.

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. 326). Tag data can be erased with a tag eraser (p. 320) 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 a sensor (see *Sensors,* p. 325) 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.

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¥
Accessory	**Device Rating**	**Availability**	**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¥+
Modified 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			
Electronic Paper	1	—	20¥
Holo Projector	3	—	200¥
RFID Tags (per 20)			
Standard RFID Tags	1	—	1¥
Security Tags	3	4	100¥
Stealth Tags	3	6	5¥

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 (see below), 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 (see p. 318). The transceiver's Signal rating is equal to its Device rating.

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. 318).

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 2070, 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. 225.

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.

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.

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. 335); 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).

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¥

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 publics' 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 disorder, amnesia, flashbacks, mania, synesthesia (sensory crossover), and, in some cases, death due to malnutrition, dehydration, or suicide. (For more details, see p. 250.) 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"

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 200¥	Rating x 500¥
Storage Media	**Availability**	**Cost**	
Datachip	—	1¥	
Data Software			
Datasofts (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 10¥	
Mapsofts (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 5¥	
Tutorsoft (Rating 1–5)	—	Rating x 500¥	
Skillsofts			
Activesofts (Rating 1-4)	8	Rating x 3,000	
Knowsofts (Ratings 1–5)	4	Rating x 1,000	
Linguasofts (Rating 1–5)	2	Rating x 500	
Simsense			
Sim Recordings	—	5–200¥+	
BTL Recordings	4F	20–200¥+	
VR Games	—	50¥	
ARE Programs			
Virtual Surround Music	—	50¥	
Wall Space	—	50¥	
Virtual Pet	—	100¥	
Virtual Person	—	150¥	
Virtual Weather	—	100¥	
Miracle Shooter™	—	50¥ + 10¥ per month	

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. 258.

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 hold 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, p. 260).

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 (see p. 216), and/or biometric authorization. All transactions are encrypted (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).

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 4)F	Rating x 1,000¥

Tools	Availability	Cost
Kit	—	500¥
Shop	8	5,000¥
Facility	12	100,000¥

Fake License: For those who don't want to go through the standard legal channels, a fake license can be obtained for all kinds of restricted items (see *Legality,* p. 303) 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. 83). Most runners don't 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. 258.

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 tools 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 modifier (see the Build/Repair Table, p. 125). At the gamemaster's discretion, certain specialized tools or unusual parts may need to be acquired separately.

VISION ENHANCERS

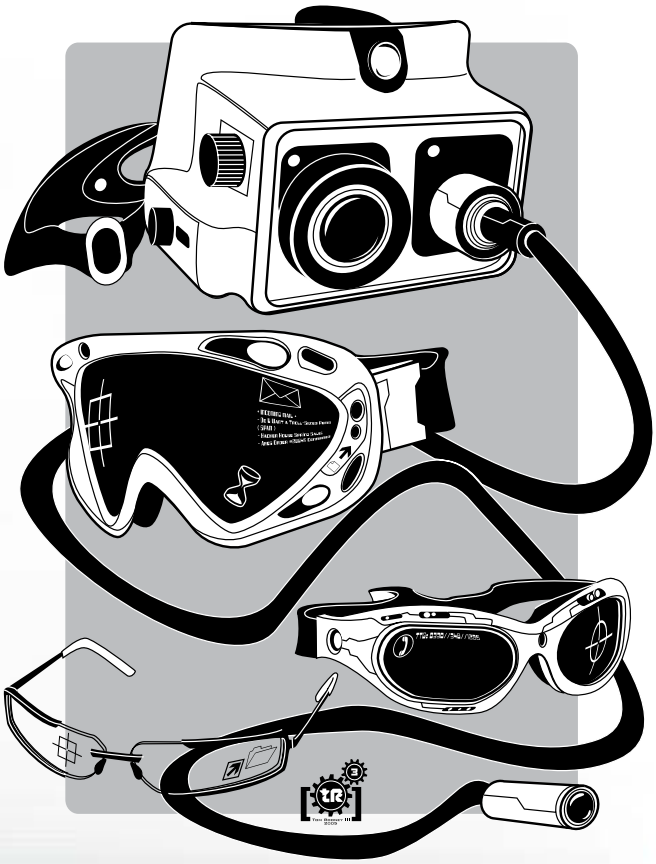
From hip sunglasses to protective goggles to chic monocles, basic vision enhancers come in several common forms. *Binoculars* are handheld, with built-in vision magnification; *contact lenses* are worn directly on the eyes; *goggles* are relatively large and robust devices that cover the eyes and are strapped to the head; *glasses* are lightweight frames worn on the bridge of the nose; *monocles* are worn on a headband with a flip-down arm, or on a chain; and *imaging scopes* are sometimes mounted on weapons (see p. 311). All such devices have wireless capability, though they may also be directly wired via fiberoptic cable (except contacts).

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. 311) 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's 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 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. 141.

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.

Endoscope: This is a 1-meter fiberoptic cable, of which the first 20 centimeters are made up of myomeric rope (p. 329) 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. 329) 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.

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

Vision Enhancement	Avail	Cost
Binoculars	—	100¥
Contact Lenses	6	50¥
Glasses	—	25¥
Goggles	—	50¥
Endoscope	8	250¥
Monocle	4	25¥
Periscope	3	50¥
Mage Sight Goggles	12R	2,000¥
Enhancements		
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¥

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. 318; 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. Each package has a sensor range that indicates the limits of the sensor's reach (see the Signal Rating Table, p. 212), though some specific sensors have their own maximum ranges.

Each package has a Capacity rating; the total Capacity rating of the individual sensors may not exceed the package's Capacity rating. If more than one sensor in a package applies to a Sensor Test, 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: The most common sensor, cameras can capture still photos, video, or trideo (including sound). Cameras may also be upgraded with vision enhancements (see p. 323).

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. 255.

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

Audio Enhancer	Availability	Cost
Earbuds	—	10¥
Headphones	—	50¥
Enhancements		
Audio Enhancement (Rating 1–3)	+2	+ (Rating x 100)¥
Select Sound Filter (Rating 1–3)	+8	+(Rating x 200)¥
Spatial Recognizer	+6	+100¥

Sensor Packages	Capacity	Signal
RFID	1	0
Micro	1	2
Handheld/Minidrone	3	3
Mounted/Small Drone	5	4
Large Drone	8	4
Vehicle	12	5

Sensor Functions	Capacity	Availability	Cost
Atmosphere Sensor (Rating 1–3)	[1]	2	Rating x 25¥
Camera	[1]	—	100¥
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¥
Microphone	[1]	—	50¥
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¥

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. 255.

Microphone: A standard omnidirectional audio pick-up that can be upgraded with audio enhancements (p. 324)

Motion Sensor: This sensor uses ultrasound to detect drastic changes in the ambient temperature caused by movement. See p. 254.

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. 331).

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 its location. Treat the scanner as if it were a Sniffer program (see p. 227) equal to its rating; see p. 225 for rules on detecting and intercepting wireless signals.

SECURITY DEVICES

For more details on security systems, see p. 251.

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. 255.

Maglock: Maglocks are electronic locks with a variety of access control options, from keypads to passcards to biometrics. For more information, see *Maglocks,* p. 255.

Restraints: Standard metal restraints (with mechanical or wireless-controlled lock) have Armor/Structure ratings of 12 (see *Barriers,* p. 157). 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

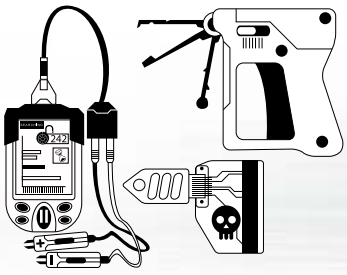
Autopicker: This lockpick gun is a quick and effective way of bypassing mechanical locks. The autopicker's rating added as a dice pool modifier to the Locksmith + Agility Test to pick the lock (see p. 125), or used in place of Locksmith skill if the character lacks it.

Cellular Glove Molder: This device will take a finger or palm print and mold a "sleeve" that can be worn to mimic the print (see *Print Scanners,* p. 256).

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 (see *Maglocks*, p. 255). 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 hasn't 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. 255.

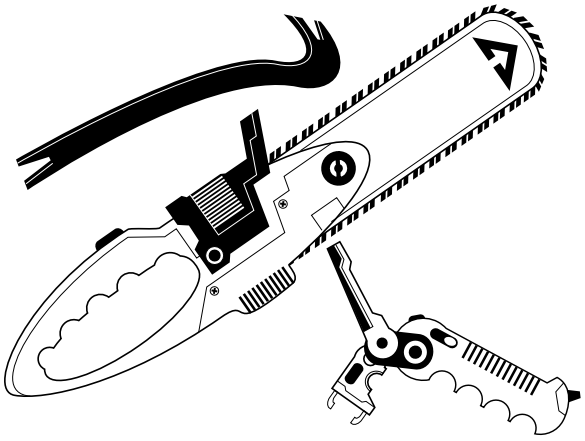
Maglock **Sequencer:** An electronic device required to defeat keypad-maglocks (see *Maglocks,* p. 255).

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

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		
Metal	—	20¥
Plasteel	6R	50¥
Plastic (per 10)	—	1¥
Containment Manacles	6R	200¥

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.

CHEMICALS

Rules for combat chemicals and other toxic substances can be found on p. 244.

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 (see *Chemical Protection,* p. 317). 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. 154).

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: Completely covers the user's face and filters out toxic substances. It provides a bonus of +2 on toxic resistance tests against gas substances (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245). Cannot be combined with a 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, kneepads and slip-on soles. A character using them is treated as if she were performing assisted climbing (see p. 115). 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 wire-

B&E Gear	Availability	Cost
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

less 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 (see p. 317) and protects contact and inhalation vector toxins (see Toxin Protection, p. 245). 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.

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 (see p. 155).

Magnesium Torch: Activate for 5 minutes of bright torchlight.

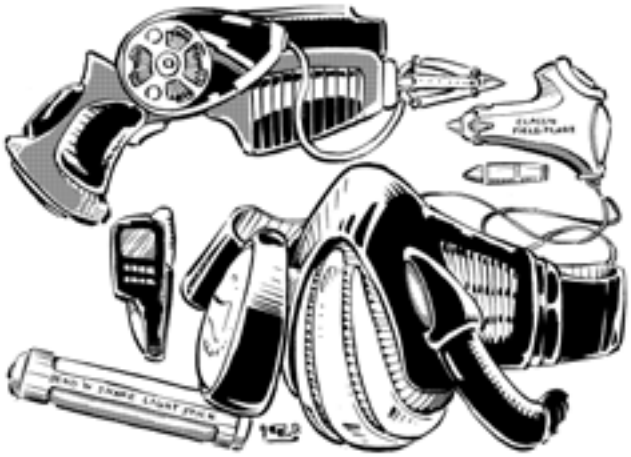
Rappeling Gloves: These gloves are made of a special fabric that allows the wearer to get a tighter grip on a grapple line, giving her a +2 Strength bonus on all tests to hold her grip on the line. These gloves are necessary in order to use ultrathin microwire.

Respirator: A respirator is a filtering device worn over the mouth and nose that protects against inhalation-vector toxins (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245). The respirator adds its ratings to toxin resistance tests.

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.



Survival Gear	Avail	Cost
Chemsuit (Rating 1–6)	Rating x 2	Rating x 100¥
Climbing Gear	—	200¥
Diving Gear	6	2,000¥
Gas Mask	—	100¥
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 2	Rating x 100¥
Survival Kit	4	100¥

Grapple Gun		
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)

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.

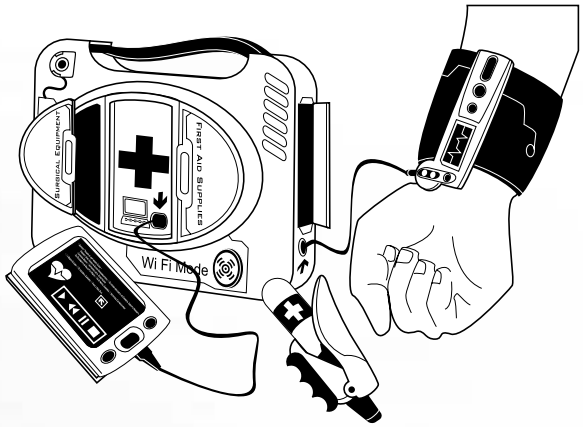
BIOTECH

For details on healing, see p. 242.

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 (see p. 244).

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 shock handling blood loss, and of course performing resuscitations). The medkit's rating adds to the dice pool of all First Aid Tests, and 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, as does High Threat Response (HTR) service. In the latter case, the client (or her heir) is expected to pay medical bills up to and including death compensation 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 pser 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.

Utility Chemicals (per dose)	Avail	Cost
Glue Sprayer	2	150¥
Thermite Burning Bar	16R	500¥
Combat Chemicals (per dose)		
CS/Tear Gas	4R	20¥
Cyanide	16F	450¥
Gamma-Scopolamine	14F	200¥
Narcoject	8R	50¥
Nausea Gas	6R	25¥
Neuro-Stun	12R	60¥
Pepper Punch	—	5¥
Seven-7	20F	1,000¥

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 (see p. 245) 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. 78) 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 (see *Physical Damage Overflow,* p. 244) 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 = Disguise skill). They may also be copied from a biometric scan (rating = 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 2070. 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 (see p. 210), popular with hackers and salarymen on the go.

Biotech	Availability	Cost
Biomonitor	—	300¥
Disposable Syringe	4	10¥
Medkit (Rating 1–6)	—	Rating x 100¥
Medkit Supplies	—	50¥
DocWagon Contract		
Basic	—	5,000¥ per year
Gold	—	25,000¥ per year
Platinum	—	50,000¥ per year
Super-Platinum	—	100,000¥ per year
Slap Patches		
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		
Latex Face Mask	8	500¥
Nanopaste Disguise		
Small Container	12	500¥
Large container	16	1,000¥

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.

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. 313). 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 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 not 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 (see *Scanners,* p. 254). 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 (see p. 318), 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 can 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. 324).

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

Headware	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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¥

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 (see p. 256).

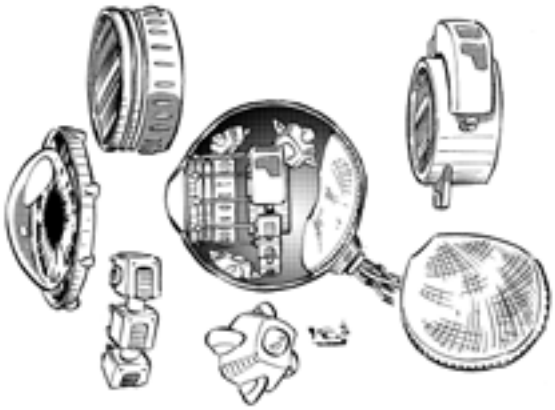
Eyeware

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.

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 (see p. 323).

Image Link: An implanted version of the image link enhancement (see p. 323).

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 sypball 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. 341). 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

Eyeware	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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]		63,000¥
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¥
Cosmetics				
Protective Covers	—	—	—	100¥

* Included in the Cybereyes basic system.

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 (see *Biometrics,* p. 255).

Smartlink: An implanted version of the smartlink enhancement (see p. 323).

Thermographic Vision: An implanted version of the thermographic vision enhancement (see p. 324).

Vision Enhancement: An implanted version of vision enhancement (see p. 324).

Vision Magnification: An implanted version of the vision mag enhancement (see p. 324).

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 (see p. 324).

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 (see p. 324).

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 (see p. 325).

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.

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 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

Earware	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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.

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. 305), 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. 328.

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 (see p. 244)–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 compatible with other Initiative-boosters.

Simrig: This is an implanted version of the external sim module (see p. 318).

Bodyware	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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
Plastic Bone Lacing	—	(STR/2 + 2)P	—
Aluminum Bone Lacing	—	(STR/2 + 1)P	—
Titanium Bone Lacing	—	(STR/2 + 3)P	—

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 (see p. 320) 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.

Cyberlimbs

In today's world of streamlined bioware, the use of cyberlimbs is sometimes viewed as crude and outdated, if not outright medieval. 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. Cyberskulls and –torsos are included in this category, though they are in fact shells rather than full replacements.

Cyberlimbs cannot hold any bioware, nor any cyberimplants that take up Essence rather than Capacity.

Each of a character's cyberlimbs gives her 1 extra damage box on her Physical Condition Monitor.

Obvious Cyberlimbs: These implants are immediately recognizable as artificial unless the character covers them with clothing. In some cases, they are glaringly obvious and outlandish, though 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: All cyberlimbs come with Body, Strength, and Agility attributes of 3. These values can only be augmented by cyberlimb enhancements—enhancements from other cyber- or bioware systems have no effect. Cyberlimb enhancements use up the Capacity of the cyberlimb they enhance. The bonus to the enhanced value equals the rating of the enhancement. Only characters with a cybertorso can have cyberlimb enhancements with a rating higher than 3.

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).

Armor: Armor installed on cyberlimbs is both Ballistic and Impact armor.

> *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.*

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. 311) 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. 311), 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 (see p. 116), 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. 335) 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.

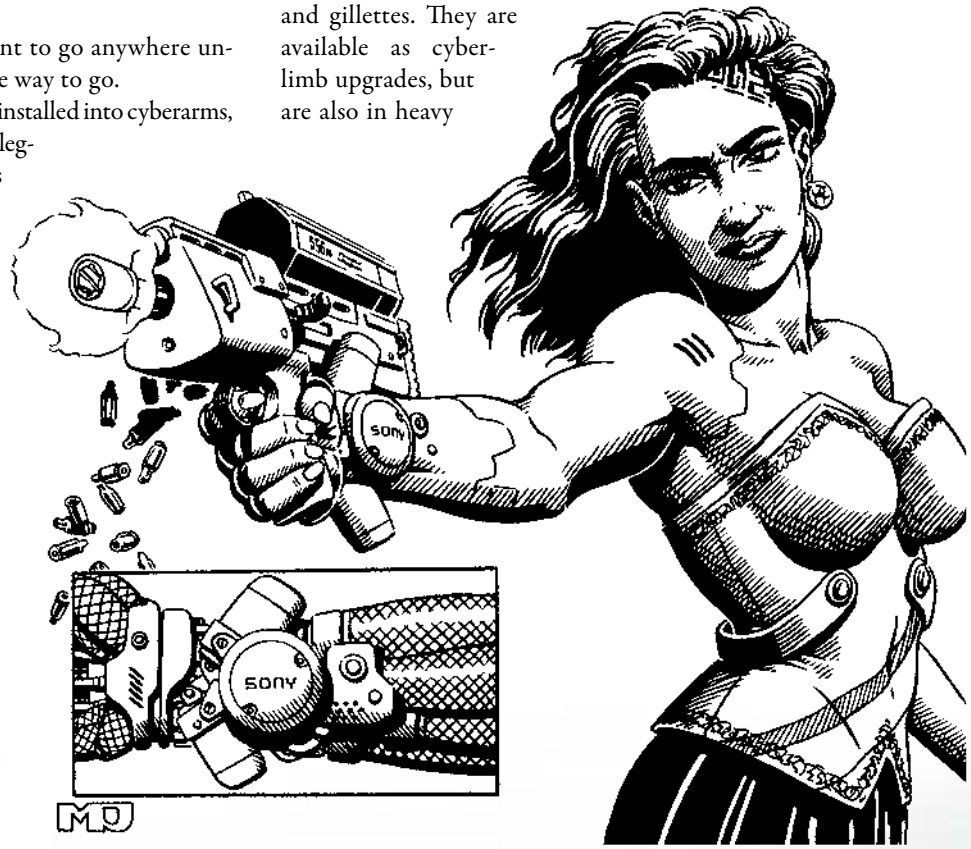
Cyber-Implant Weapons

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 stealthy 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 (see p. 311). Laser sights, silencers, and sound suppressors are also available; other weapon accessories (like gas-vent systems) cannot be installed.

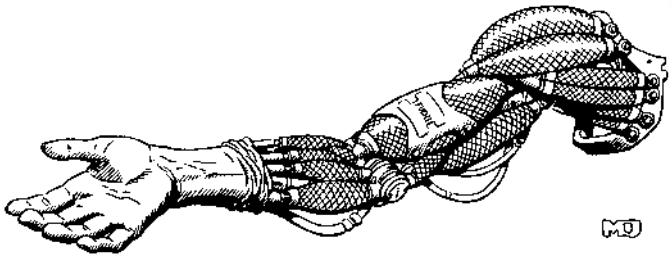
Cyber Melee Weapons: Cyber melee weapons are the classic toys of razorboys and gillettes. They are available as cyberlimb upgrades, but are also in heavy



Cyberlimbs	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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¥
Skull	0.75	2	16	15,000¥
Cyberlimb Enhancements				
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)	Rating x 250¥

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 (see p. 154) and have 10 charges (each); when plugged in they recharge at a rate of one charge per 10 seconds.



Cyberlimb Accessories	Essence	Capacity	Availability	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]	6	2,000¥

Cyberguns				
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¥

Cyber Melee Weapons				
Handblade (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¥

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)
With Flechettes	9P(f)	+2				
Cyber Microgrenade Launcher	as grenade	—	SS	–2/meter	—	2 (m)/6 (c)

Blades	Reach	Damage	AP
Hand Blade	—	(STR/2 + 2)P	—
Hand Razors	—	(STR/2 + 1)P	—
Shock Hand	—	6S(e)	–half
Spurs	1	(STR/2 + 3)P	—

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. 130) 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 are 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 deal Physical damage in unarmed combat.

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. 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 (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245).

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

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	—

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.

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 provides 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 (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245).

Platelet Factories: Platelet factories increase the body's ability to handle 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 a bonus of +1 to the user's Body, Agility, Reaction, and Strength attributes. 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 (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245).

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 (see *Toxic Substances,* p. 245).

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 adds its rating to the user's Logic attribute.

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¥

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. Adds 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 (see p. 329). 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 a +1 dice pool bonus to 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.

MAGICAL EQUIPMENT

Foci, Magical Supplies, Fetishes, and **Spell Formulae** are described in *The Awakened World,* p. 163.

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		
Conjuring Materials	(Force x 2)	Force x 1,500¥
Magical Lodge Materials	(Force x 2)	Force x 500¥
Biofiber	(Force x 3)	Force x 100¥ per sq. meter
Fetishes		
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. 158.

Rigger Adaptation: When added to a vehicle, this "black box" allows a character with a control rig (see p. 331) to rig the vehicle (see *Rigging and Drones,* p. 238), 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.

Groundcraft

Dodge Scoot: This electric-powered scooter is perfect for whizzing down city streets.

Harley-Davidson Scorpion: This bike is a classic, heavy-bodied road hog.

Yamaha Growler: A durable off-road cycle, popular with thrill-seekers.

Suzuki Mirage: This racing bike is a fast street machine whose slick styling makes it a favorite with go-gangs.

Honda Spirit: A sleek three-wheeled two-seater with an electric engine, the Spirit is popular with commuting sprawl dwellers.

Mercury Comet: This standard sedan is famous for its reliability.

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.

Eurocar Westwind 3000: A sleek, low-slung speed machine. This turbocharged luxury car offers improved suspension and high performance—at a price.

GMC Bulldog Step-Van: An armored van favored by delivery drivers and shadowrunner teams.

GMC Everglades: This general-purpose air-cushion vehicle can be easily converted from a passenger to a cargo craft.

Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1: The Patrol-1 is the most common urban patrol car in use today.

GMC Beachcraft: The Beachcraft is a swift, lightly armed patrol hovercraft.

Ares Citymaster: This urban riot-control vehicle functions as a mobile command post. Features a chemical seal, life support (20 man-hours), and small turret.

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.

Vulkan Electronaut: A 2-person minsub available in a wide selection of utility models.

Vehicle Modifications	Availability	Cost
Rigger Adaptation	4	2,500¥
Weapon Mounts	8F	2,500¥

Aircraft

Cessna C750: This dual-prop craft can carry passengers or serve as a surveillance plane.

Ares Dragon: This solid-built, versatile helicopter can be fitted with extra cargo containers.

Hughes Stallion: This workhorse utility helicopter can be fitted to carry cargo, though it slows the vehicle down.

Northrup Wasp: This one-person rotorcraft was designed for police service. Comes equipped with one weapon (LMG or smaller).

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.

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.

Lockheed Optic-X: The wings on this VSTOL stealth craft fold up for easy transport.

GM-Nissan Doberman: The Doberman is a perimeter-patrol crawler drone equally effective during daytime or nighttime conditions. Comes equipped with one weapon (LMG or smaller) and Clearsight 3 and Targeting 3 autosofts.

MCT-Nissan Roto-Drone: The Roto-Drone is a simple, no-nonsense rotor-wing drone design.

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.

CrashCart AutoDoc: The autodoc is a mobile stabilization unit—it immediately stabilizes any character hooked up to it (see p. 244). The AutoDoc is equipped with a Rating 4 medkit.

Steel Lynx Combat Drone: A hardened ground-combat machine. Carries one weapon (LMG or smaller), and is equipped with Defense 3 and Targeting 3 autosofts.

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									
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	—	20,000¥
Eurocar Westwind 3K (Sports Car)	+3	20/60	240	3	10	6	1	—	85,000¥
Trucks									
GMC Bulldog Step-Van (Van)	0	5/10	90	2	16	8	1	—	35,000¥
Hovercraft									
GMC Everglades (Hovercraft)	+1	10/20	120	2	14	6	1	4	25,500¥
Military and Security Vehicles									
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									
MT Sea Nymph (Yacht)	–3	10/20	45	2	18	6	1	—	17,000¥
SC Otter (Sport Cruiser)	+1	5/10	45	1	12	6	1	—	12,500¥
Vulkan Electronaut (Minisub)	0	5/10	30	2	12	10	2	10	158,000¥
Winged Planes									
Cessna C750 (Twin-Prop Airplane)	–1	20/90	340	2	18	4	—	8	164,000¥
Rotorcraft									
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									
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¥

A

Academic knowledge, 76, 127, 128
Acceleration, 159
Accident power, 286
Account privileges, 216
Accounts, 208
Acid damage, 154
Acid stream, 197
Acquaintance loyalty, 279
Action, 60
  declaring, 132
  resolving, 132
Actioneer business clothes, 315
Action Phase, 60, 132, 135-38
Activate focus, 168, 191
Active Alert, 222
Active Detection spells, 198
Active PAN, 211
Active skills, 63, 74-75, 106
  Combat, 110-13
  Magical, 113
  Physical, 113-16
  Resonance, 119
  Social, 120-21
  Special, 127
  Technical, 123-24
  Vehicle, 125-26
Activesofts, 320
Active targeting, 162
Addiction, 80
  test, 247-48
  threshold, 248
Adept, 19, 77, 164, 186-89
  powers, 85, 187-89
  quality, 62, 77
Adrenaline Pump, 338
Advertising, 46, 47
Aeronautics Mechanic, 123
Agent, 227-28
  Initiative, 231
Agility, 60-61
Aid Sorcery, 178
Aid Study, 178-79, 236
Aimed shot, 142
Airburst Link, 310-11
Aircraft, 341-42
Air engulf, 288
AK-97 Assault Rifle, 308-9
AK-97 Carbine, 307-8
Alamos 20,000, 29, 30
Alarms, 253
Allergy, 80-81, 290
Alphaware, 64, 303
Amazonia, 29
Ambidextrous, 77
Ambushing, 156
Ammunition, 144, 300, 312-13
Analyze
  Device spell, 198
  program, 217, 226
  Truth spell, 198
Ancients, 49
Animal Control power, 286
Animal Empathy quality, 77
Anonymizer nodes, 214-15
Antidote, 246
  patch, 330
  spell, 200
Anti-tamper systems, 255
Anti-vehicle rockets, missiles, 314
APDS Rounds, 312, 314
Aptitude, 77
AR. See Augmented reality
Archery, 110
Area spells, 173, 195
Ares Macrotechnology, 24, 30, 32, 42
  Antioch-2, 310
  Citymaster, 341-42
  Dragon, 341-42
  Predator IV, 307-8
  S-III Super Squirt, 309, 310
  Viper Slivergun, 307-8
Armor, 148-49, 202, 300, 315-17
  clothing, 315-16
  and encumbrance, 149
  jacket, 315-16
  modifications, 316-17
  power, 286
  programs, 226
  vehicle, 157
  vest, 315-16
Armorer, 123
Armor Penetration (AP), 52, 152-53, 300
ArmTech MGL-12, 310
Arrow/ARO (augmented reality object), 39, 209, 215
Artificial intelligence (AI), 215
Artisan, 123
ASIST (artificial sensory induction system technology), 26, 215
Assassination. See Wetwork
Assault cannons, 310
  rounds, 312, 314
Assault rifle, 308-9
Assensing, 113, 182
  table, 183
Assist Operation, 235
Astral Beacon quality, 81
Astral Chameleon quality, 78
Astral combat, 113, 184
Astral detection, 184
Astral forms, 183-84
Astral Form power, 287
Astral movement, 183
Astral Perception, 168, 182
Astral Perception power, 187
Astral plane/world, 20, 166, 181-86
Astral projection, 169, 183-85
Astral signatures, 182-83
Astral tracking, 184-185
Atmosphere sensor, 325
Attack programs, 226
Attribute, 60-62
  astral, 184
  Awakened, 164
  boost, 187
  improvement, 264
  -only tests, 54, 130
  purchase, 73-77
  ratings, 62
  spirit, 164
Audio Enhancement, 324-25, 333
Audio enhancers, 324-25
Augmented reality (AR), 159, 206, 209-10, 215
  gloves, 318, 320
  interaction, 209-10
  Initiative, 230
  modifiers, 208
  overlays, 19, 22
  software, 321-22
Aurelius, Leonard, 32
Authorized access, 215-16
Autodoc, 244, 341-42
Automated gun systems, 256
Automated security systems, 253, 256
Automatics, 111
Automotive Mechanic, 123
Autopicker, 326-27
Autosoft programs, 239-40, 321
Availability, 63, 300, 301-3
Awakened, 29, 40, 166, 167
  attributes, 164
Awakening, 16, 25
  second, 32
Aztechnology, 26, 31, 42
  Crawler, 341-42
  Striker, 310
Aztlan, 31, 33, 42, 26

B

B&E. See Breaking and entering
Bad luck, 81
Balance Augmenter, 333
Ballistic armor, 149
Ballistic shield, 316, 317
Ball Lightning, 197
Banishing, 113, 166-67, 180
  foci, 191
Barghest, 292
Barriers, 157-58, 252
  Mana, 185-86
Bartender, 282
Base skill, 63, 106, 109
Basic passcodes, 215
Bear, 192
Beat Cop, 282
Beginner, 108
Betaware, 64, 303
Better-Than-Life (BTL), 16, 21, 26, 36, 48, 215, 250-51, 321
Big Brother, 39
Binding, 113, 167, 180-81
  foci, 191
  power, 287
Binoculars, 323-24
Biofeedback filters, 226
Biofiber, 256, 340
Biometric reader, 318, 319
Biometrics, 255-56
Biomonitor, 329, 330
Biotech, 329-30
Bioware, 52, 64, 84, 338-40
  cultured, 339-40
  grades, 303
Bipod, 310-11
Black Forest Troll Kingdom, 50
Black Hammer, 226, 231-32
Black market, 38, 302-3
Blackout, 226, 231-2
Blades, 111, 305
Blandness, 78
Blast, 300
Blind fire, 141
Bliss, 248-49
Blogger, 282-83
Body, 61
  fashion costs, 305
  modifications, 46, 64
Bodyshops, 38
Bodyware, 333-35
Bonding, 191
Bone Density Augmentation, 338
Bone Lacing, 333-34
Bound spirits, 178-79
Bow, 306
Brainbenders, 246-51
Break off, 161
Breaking and entering (B&E), 21, 221, 326-27
Breath scanners, 256
Browse program, 226
BTL. See Better-Than-Life
Buddy loyalty, 279
Build/Repair, 125
Build Hardware Table, 240
Build Point,
  Cost summary table, 88
  System, 72
Bunraku puppets, 48
Burnout, 81, 248
Burst-fire mode, 142-43

C

CalFree, 32, 34
California, 28, 29
Called shot, 135, 142, 149-50
  against vehicles, 162
Call spirit, 168
Camera, 325
Camouflage suit, 315-16
Capacity, 300
  carrying, 300
Captain Chaos, 22
Cardreaders, 255
CAS (Confederation of American States), 28, 32
Cast spell, 169
Cat, 192-93
Catalyst stick, 328, 329
CATco, 32
Cat's Eyes, 338
Cellular scanners, 256
Centering, 168, 189
Cerebral Booster, 339
Cermak Blast, 30
Certified credsticks, 259, 260, 322
Ceska Black Scorpion, 307-8
Cessna C750, 341-42
Chameleon suit, 316
Change gun mode, 136
Changelings, 50
Change linked device mode, 135
Chaos, 201
Chaotic World, 201
Character
  attributes, 60-62
  background, story, 87
  building a shadowrunner, 72
  concept, 60
  finishing touches, 86-87
  improvement, 263-65
  metatype, 60
  metatype choice, 72-73
  sample, 72, 89-104
Character Record Sheet, 52, 60, 72
Charging, 148
Charisma, 61
  -linked skills, 120-123, 130
Chase combat, 158, 160-61
Chemical detection, 254
Chemical protection, 316-17
Chemicals, 244-50, 329
Chemical seal, 316-17
Chemsniffers, 254
Chemsuit, 327-28
Chicago, 30
Chisel, 326-27
Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-1, 341-42
Cinema, 46
Clairaudience spell, 198
Clairvoyance spell, 198
Clearsight autosoft, 239
Climbing, 113, 115
  gear, 329
Clothing, 315-16
Clubs, 111, 305
Codeblock, 81
Codeslinger, 78
Coding software table, 240
Cold damage, 154
Cold sim, 215, 229
Colloton, Angela, 34
Colt America L36, 307
Colt Manhunter, 307, 308
Combat, 132, 138-140
  actions, 137
  Active skills, 110-13
  chemicals, 330
  Paralysis, 81
  sequence, 139-40
  spells, 172, 195-97
Combat axe, 305
Combat Sense adept power, 187
Combat Sense spell. 198-99
Combat Turn, 59-60
  sequence, 132
Command
  issuance, 221
  program, 226
  spirit, 168
Commcodes, 208, 214-15
Commercial explosives, 314–315
Commlink, 19, 63, 206, 210-11, 215, 259, 317-19, 330-31
  accessories, 214, 318-319
  customization, 240
Communications, 320
  Countermeasures, 320
Compiling, 119, 234-35
Complex Action, 60, 137, 138
Complex Form, 86, 215
  technomancers, 233-34
Composure, 130
Compulsion power, 287
Computer skill, 123, 218-20
Con, 120-22
Concealability, 300-2
Concealable holster, 311
Concealment power, 287
Concentration, toxin, 245
Condition Monitor, 52, 65, 86, 153
  exceeding, 153
  grunts, 272
  Matrix, 213, 231
  vehicle, 158
Confusion power, 287
Confusion spell, 201
Conjuring, 166-67, 176-81
Connection rating, 64-65, 86, 278
Connection termination, 223
Contact lenses, 323-24
Contact toxins, 244
Contacts, 64-65, 86, 278-85
  availability, 279
  favors, 280, 281
  fleshing out, 278-79
  legwork, 279-80
  networking, 280
  playing, 281-82
  swag, 280
  using, 279-81
Containment systems, 256
Control Actions, 202
Control Emotions, 203
Controlling devices, 220
Control Rig, 215, 331
Control Thoughts, 203
Cookie, 236-37
Corporate Court, 16, 41, 43
Corporate Security Unit, 275
CorpSec lieutenant, 275
Corrosive Spit power, 287
Cosmetic Modification, 333-34
Costs, 301-3
Counterspelling, 113, 166, 175-76
  foci, 191
Courier runs, 21
Courier sprite, 236
Cover, 141
Crack sprite, 236
Cram, 249
Cranial Bombs, 331
Crash of '29, 27, 31, 38
CrashCart, 38
CrashCart AutoDoc, 341-42
Crashing, 161-62
Crash program, 223
Crash Virus, 27
Credit account, 322-23
Credsticks, 36, 259, 260, 322-23
Critical glitch, 56
Critical Strike, 187
Critical success, 59
Critter
  attributes, skills, 285-86
  combat, 291
  movement, 286
  ordinary, 291
  powers, 286-90
  weaknesses, 290-91
Cross Applied Technologies, 32
Crossbow, 306
Cultured bioware, 64, 339-40
Cure Disease spell, 200
Cut off, 161
Cutters, 49
Cyberarm, 335-37
  Gyromount, 335, 337
  Slide, 335, 337
Cybercombat, 123, 230-32
Cyberears, 333
Cybereyes, 332
Cyberguns, 336, 337
Cyber Holsters, 335, 337
Cyber-Implant Weapons, 336, 337
Cyberlimbs, 26, 335-37
  accessories, 335, 337
  enhancements, 336

Cyber Melee Weapons, 336, 337
Cyberspace Designs Dalmatians, 341-42
Cybertechnology, 123
Cyberware, 52, 64, 84, 332-38
  grades, 303
  scanner, 254-55, 325

D

Damage, 152-55
  application, 140, 153
  initiative and, 132, 134
  passengers and, 162
Damage Codes, 52, 152
Damage Compensator, 340
Damage resistance, 231
  glitches, 153
  test, 140, 153
Damage Value, 52, 63, 152
  gear, 300
  spells, 196-97
Damaging barriers table, 158
Damper, 333
Dark King, 193
Data Bomb, 223-224, 226
Datachips, 320-322
Datajack, 331
Data Lock, 331
Data search, 123
Data Search Skill, 220
Datasoft, 320
Data software, 321
Data sprite, 236
Datasteals, 21
Datatrail, 208, 216-17
Daviar, Nadja, 31, 32, 49
Deactivate focus, 168
Dead Man's Trigger, 67, 154
Dead Zone, 210, 215
Death Touch, 197
Declare counterspelling protection, 168
Decompiling, 119, 236
Decrease Attribute, 200
Decryption, 225, 227
Deep Resonance, 33
Deepweed, 249
Defaulting, 54, 110
Defense, 239
Defense modifiers, 150-51
  table, 151
Defiance EX Shocker, 306
Defuse, 227
Delayed actions, 60, 134-35
Delta Team, 24
Deltaware, 64, 303
Demolitions, 124
Dermal Plating, 335
Detect Enemies, 199
Detect Individual, 199
Detection spells, 172, 198-99
Detective, 278
Detect Life, 199
Detect Magic, 199
Detect Object, 199
Detonator cap, 315
Detox, 200
Deus, 33-34
Device, 215
Device rating, 213, 214, 301
Devil rat, 292
Diagnostics, 237
Dice, 54
  modifiers, 54-55
  pool modifier, 54
  pools, 52, 54
  rolls, 52
Dietary requirement, 290-91
Difficulty Table, 56
Digestive Expansion, 338
Direct Combat spells, 196
Directional microphone, 325
Direction Sense
Direct Neural Interface (DNI), 215
Disarm Data Bomb, 224
Disguise, 113-14, 330
  using, 118
Dismiss spirit, 169
Disorientation, 245
Displays, 270
Disposable syringe, 329
Distraction runs, 21
Diving, 114
  gear, 327
DNA scanners, 256
DocWagon, 38,
  Contract, 329
Dodge, 111
Dodger, 33
Dodge Scoot, 342
Dog, 193, 291
Doors, 252
DOT (digital object tag), 39, 215
Double jointed, 78
Dracoforms, 295-97
Draco Foundation, 31
Dragonslayer, 193
Dragonspeech, 296
Drain, 62, 167, 174, 175
  attribute, 170
  simplifying, 195
  summoning, 179-80
Drain Value, 167, 195
Drama, Karma, 263-64
Dreamchips, 250
Drones, 215, 238-40, 341-42
  gunnery and, 162
  initiative, 239
  jumping into, 239
  sensors, 325
Drop
  object, 135
  prone, 135
  sustained spell, 168
Drugs, 246-51
Dual natured power, 287
Dumpshock, 231
Dunkelzahn, 25, 29, 265, 295
  Ares and, 30
  Ghostwalker's resemblance to, 33
  power of, 31
  will of, 31-32
  Wuxing and, 43
Dunkelzahn's Rift, 32
Duration
  powers, 286
  spells, 195
Dwarf, 60, 65-66

E

Eagle, 193
Ear Recording Unit, 333
Earth engulf, 288
Earware, 333
Eastern dragons, 296
ECCM. See Electronic counter-countermeasures
Echo, 215, 238
Echo Mirage, 27, 30, 33
Edge, 52, 56, 61, 67-68, 73, 79
  burning, 68
  great dragons, 297
  group, 274
  initiative and, 134
  points, 67
  regaining, 68
Editing, 218-219, 225
Edit program, 226
Effect, toxin, 245
Eject smartgun clip, 135
Eld, Michael, 30
Electricity damage, 154
Electron storm, 237
Electronic counter-countermeasures (ECCM), 225, 227
  activate/deactivate, 239
Electronic paper, 318
Electronics, 317-320
  accessories, 319, 320
Electronic Warfare, 124, 225, 240
Elemental attack power, 287
Elemental effects, 196
Elf Poser, 81-82
Elite, 109
  grunts, 274
Elven nations, 29, 66
Elves, 60, 66
Eminent domain, 24
Encryption, 225, 226
Encumbrance, 300
Endoscope, 324
Energy aura power, 287
Engagement range, 161
Engulf power, 287-88
Enhanced Articulation, 338-339
Enhanced Perception, 187
Enhanced senses power, 288
Entertainment, 44-48, 201
  costs, 304
Equal prime runner, 277
Erase astral signature, 169
Erika, 34, 43
Escape artist, 114, 115-16
ESP Systems, Inc., 26
Essence, 61, 73
  cost, gear, 301
  drain, 288
  loss, critter, 291
Etiquette, 120, 121
  glitches and, 121
  modifiers, 122
  using, 121
EuroWars, 28-29
Evasive driving, 161
Evo Corporation, 31, 42
Exceptional attribute, 78
EX Explosive Rounds, 312
Exotic Melee Weapon, 112
Exotic Ranged Weapon, 112
Exotic weapons, 305, 306
Expert, 109
Exploit, 227
Explosive foam, 315
Explosive Rounds, 312
Explosives, 315
Extendable baton, 305
Extended Test, 58-59
  difficulties, 58
  notation, 58-59
  quick, 59
Extractions, 21
Eye Recording Unit, 332
Eyeware, 332-333

F

Faces, 18-19
Facial recognition scanners, 256
Facility, 323
Fading, 33, 215, 237-38
Fake ID, 260-61
Fake license, 303, 323
Fake SIN, 38, 303, 323
Falling damage, 154-55
  table, 154
Fashion, 46-47
Fatigue damage, 155
Fault sprite, 236
Favor-for-a-friend job, 281
Favors, 280-281
  rating table, 281
Fear power, 288
Feathered serpents, 296
Federated Boeing Commuter, 341
Feedback clothing, 315
Fencing
  gear, 303
  table, 252
Fetishes, 172-173
Fichetti Pain Inducer, 309-10
Fichetti Security 600, 307
Fingertip Compartment, 334
Firearm, 142-44, 306-11
  accessories, 310-12
  reloading, 312
  second, 141
Fire automatic weapon, 138
Fireball, 197
Fire-Bringer, 193
Fire damage, 155
Fire engulf, 288
Fire resistance, 317
Firewall, 213, 215
  upgrade, 238
Fire weapon, 136
First aid, 124, 242
First impression, 78
Fix, getting, 248
Fixer, 17-18, 283
  gear availability and, 302
Flamethrower, 197
Flare Compensation, 188, 323, 332
Flash-Bang Grenades, 313
Flashlight, 327
Flash-Pak, 313
Flats, 47
Flechette Rounds, 313
Flexible signatures, 189
Flight, critters, 286
Fling, 203
Floating, 119
Flying Horse, Winona, 49
FN HAR, 308
Foci, 191-92
Focus
  activation, 191
  bonding table, 191
Focused concentration, 78
Food, 36
  costs, 304
Forbidden gear, 303
Force, 62, 164, 171-72
Forearm snap-blades, 305
Forged ID, 260-261
Forgery, 124
  using, 124-25
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 16
Fragmentation grenades, 313
Fragmentation rockets, missiles, 314
Free Actions, 60, 135-36
Friend for Life loyalty, 279
Fuchi Industrial Electronics, 27, 30-31, 43
Full-auto mode, 143-44
Full body armor, 316-317
Full defense, 138, 151

G

Game
  basics, 16-17
  playing, 52
  rules, 52, 54
  settings, 19-20
Gamemaster (GM), 52
  adding color, 269
  adventure creation, 267-70
  approval of, 87
  complications and, 269
  fairness, 266
  flexibility, 266
  information, 265-66
  integrating new team members, 270
  kindness of, 266-67
  knowledge, 266
  prep time, 269-70
  realism of, 266
  secrets, 270
  story control by, 17
  tips for, 270
  toughness, 266
Gamma-scopolamine, 246
Gangs, 49, 269
Gas delivery systems, 256
Gas grenade, 313-14
Gas mask, 327, 328
Gas-vent system, 311
Gateway, 215
Gavilan, David, 30
Gavilan Ventures, 32
Gear, 63, 84-85
  availability, buying, 301-3
  carrying, 300
  concealing, 301
  legality, 303
  ratings, 63, 300
  size customization, 300-1
Geiger counter, 325
Gel Rounds, 313
Geo-tagging, 215
Gesture, 135
Ghost Cartels, 49
Ghosts in the machine, 216
Ghostwalker, 32-33, 34
Ghoul Liberation League, 50
Ghouls, 40, 292
Glasses, 323
Glitches, 55-56
  addiction, 248
  binding, 180-81
  climbing failure and, 115
  contact-related tests, 281
  detection spell, 198
  etiquette and, 122-23
  Extended Tests and, 59
  fencing gear, 303
  gear availability, 302
  hacker, 222
  healing, 242, 244
  initiative and, 134
  probing target, 222
  spellcasting, 174
  summoning, 179
  surprise and, 156-57
  vehicle test, 159
Glue sprayer, 327
GMC
  Banshee, 341-42
  Beachcraft, 341-42
  Bulldog Step-Van, 341-42
  Everglades, 341-42
GM-Nissan Doberman, 341-42
Goblinization, 26-27
Goggles, 323
Got Your Back loyalty, 279
Government, 268
GPS (global positioning system), 210, 318, 327, 328
Graff-Beloit, Wilhelmina, 30-31
Grapple Gun, 328, 329, 334
Great cat, 291
Great dragons, 297
Great Ghost Dance, 25, 26
Great Leap, 187
Gremlins, 82, 237
Grenade damage table, 146
Grenade launchers, 310
Grenades, 145-46, 313-14
Grid, 216
GridGuide, 36
Groundcraft, 341-42
Grunts, 272, 274-76
Guard power, 288
Gunnery, 126, 162
Guts, 78, 263
Gymnastics, 114
Gyro Stabilization, 142, 312

H

Hackers, 19, 206
Hacking, 124, 208, 221-25
  data security, 224
  devices, 253
  programs, 226-27
  skill, 223-25
Haeffner, Kyle, 31, 34
Hairstyles, 46
Halley's Comet, 32, 50
Halloweeners lieutenant, 275
Halloweeners Street Gang, 275
Hammerli 620S, 307

Hand blades, 336-37
Hand of Five, 30
Hand of God, 277
Handheld sensors, 325
Handling rating, 158-59
Hand razors, 336-7
Haptics, 209, 216
Hardened Armor power, 288
Hardware, 124
Hardware upgrade costs, 240
Harley-Davidson Scorpion, 341-42
Hash, 237
Hazmat suit, 328
Headjammer, 319
Headware, 330-32
Heal, 200
Healing, 242, 244
  modifiers, 244
Health, 242, 244-47
Health spells, 172, 199-201
Heavy machine guns, 310
Heavy pistols, 307-8
Heavy Weapons, 112, 142
Hell hound, 292
Helmets, 316-17
Hermetic tradition, 164, 168, 170
Hestaby, 33
Hibernate, 200
Hidden arm slide, 311
Hidden PAN, 211
High explosive grenades, 313
High explosive rockets, missiles, 314
High lifestyle, 85, 261
High Pain Tolerance, 78
Hikita, Dr. Hosato, 26
Hit, 55
HK 227X, 308
HK MP-5 TX, 308
HK XM30, 308, 309
Hold-outs, 307
Holding one's breath, 119
Holo projector, 318
Home ground, 78-79
Honda Spirit, 341-42
Hooding, 21
Horizon, 42
Horse, 291
Hospitalized lifestyle, 262
Hot sim, 216, 229
Housing costs, 304
Howling Coyote, Daniel, 25, 29
Huang, Sherman, 43
Hughes Stallion, 341-42
Human, 66, 60
Human-looking, 79
Humanis lieutenant, 275
Humanis Policlub, 8-9, 27, 29, 35, 40, 50
  Goon Squad, 275
Humor, Karma, 263-64
Hush, 202
HVAC, 252-53
Hydraulic Jacks, 336

I

IC programs, 223-24
Ice Sheet, 203
Icon, 211-12, 216
Identification, 258-61, 322
Ignite, 203
Illusion spells, 201-2
Image link, 323, 332
Image magnification, 141
Imaging scope, 311, 323
Immunity to age, 288
Immunity to normal weapons, 288
Immunity power, 288
Impact armor, 149
Imperial Japan, 32
Implant
  grades, 305
  healing and, 199
  resonance and, 233
Improved Ability, 187
Improved Physical Attribute, 187-88
Improved Reflexes, 188
Improved Sense, 188
Incompetent, 82
Increase Attribute, 200
Increased magic, 189
Increased Reflexes, 200
  Cost, 188
Indirect Combat spells, 196
Industrial Mechanic, 124
Infection power, 289
Inferior prime runner, 277
Infiltration, 114
Infirm, 83
Influence power, 289
Influence spell, 203
Infrared lighting, 252
Ingestion toxins, 244-45
Ingram Smartgun X, 308
Ingram White Knight, 310
Inhalation toxins, 244
Initiate powers, 189-90
Initiation, 164, 189-90
Initiative, 52, 61, 73-74, 132, 134-35
  Edge and, 134
  glitches and, 134
  Passes, 60, 61, 132, 134
  score, 59-60, 132
  switching, 134
  timed items, 135
Injection arrows/bolts, 306
Innate Spell power, 289
Insect spirits, 40
Insert clip, 136
Instant powers, 286
Instruction, 121
  using, 123
Insulation, 318
Intelligence, 52
Intercept, 136
Interception, 151
Intercept Traffic, 224
Interests, 76
  knowledge skills, 128
Interface, 206, 208
Internal Air Tank, 334
Interruptions, 59
Interval, 58
Intimidation, 121-22
  modifiers, 120
Intruder alerts, 222-23
Intrusion countermeasures (IC), 19, 216, 228, 231
Intuition, 61, 111, 113, 114-15, 123, 129
Invisibility, 201-2
Irritant, 181

J

Jacking out, 220, 229
Jackpoints, 216
Jammer, 321
Jamming, 225
Japanese Imperial State, 24-25
Jazz, 249
Job, 2-9. 14
Judge intentions, 130
Jumping, 116, 117
Jurisdiction, 303
Just Biz loyalty, 279

K

Kamikaze, 249
Karma, 62, 65, 172, 176, 263-64, 277
Karma Points, 109
Katana, 305
Kinesics, 188
Key lock, 255, 325-26
Keycard copier, 326
Keypads, 255
Killing Hands, 188
Kit, 322
Knife, 305
Knight, Damien, 30, 32, 42
Knight Errant Security, 30, 42
Knights of the Red Branch, 30
Knockdown, 151-52
Knockout, 197
Knowledge skills, 63, 72, 106, 127, 128
  table, 129
Knowsoft, 320

L

Landscaping, 251-52
Language skills, 76-77, 106, 128-30
Lanier, Miles, 32
Large smuggling compartment, 336
Laser microphone, 325
Laser range finder, 325
Laser sight, 141, 311
Latex face mask, 330
Launch IC program, 223
Leadership, 121-22
  modifiers, 120
Learning
  complex forms, 265
  spells, 265
  time, 264
Legality, gear, 303
Legendary, 109
Legwork, 279-80
Leviathan, 296-97
Levitate, 203
Lieutenants, 274
Lifestyle, 65, 85, 261-63
  buying, 262-63
Lifting and carrying, 130
Light, 203
Lighting, 252
Light machine guns, 310
Lightning Bolt, 197
Light pistols, 307
Light stick, 328
Limited spells, 172-73
Lindstrom, Charles C., 27
Line of sight (LOS), 195, 286
Lined coat, 315
Lingos, 129
Linguasoft, 321
Linked attribute, 54
Linked passcodes, 216
Linking, 212
Living Persona, 216, 233
Loaned services, 178
Loaned Tasks, 235
Local area network (LAN), 216
Lockheed Optic-X, 341-42
Lockpick set, 326
Locks, 255
Locksmith, 124, 125
Lodges, 168
Lofwyr, 29, 33, 43
  Saeder-Krupp buyout, 31
Logging on/off, 220
Logic, 61, 111, 123-24, 130
Lone Eagle ICBM launch, 24
Lone Star Security Services, 24, 27
  iBall, 341-42
  lieutenant, 275-76
  Police Squad, 275
Lone Star Security Services, 27
Long Haul, 249
Long shots, 55
Longarms, 112
Low-altitude vehicle (LAV), 21
Low lifestyle, 85, 261
Low-light sensors, 254
Low-light vision, 325, 334
Low Pain Tolerance, 83
Loyalty rating, 64-65, 278
  table, 279
Lucky, 79
Luxury lifestyle, 85, 261

M

Machine guns, 310
Machine pistols, 307-8
Machine sprite, 236
MAD scanner, 325
Mafia, 48-49, 268
Mafia consiglieri, 283
Mage, 19, 62
  sight goggles, 324
Magic, 39-40, 45, 52, 61-63, 73, 111, 113, 163-64
  actions, 168-69
  active skills, 113
  basics, 164
  equipment, 341
  healing by, 244
  lodges, 167-68
  noticing, 168
  resistance, 79
  resources, 85-86
  security, 256
  services, 178-79
  theories, 166
  traditions, 169-71
  use, 164, 166-69
Magic Fingers, 203-4
Magician, 19, 79, 164
Maglock, 255, 326
  passkey, 326
Magnesium torch, 328
Magnetic anomaly detectors (MADs), 254
  scanner, 325
Mana, 164, 166-67
  barriers, 185-86, 204
  illusion, 201
  lodges, 185
  powers, 286
  spells, 195
  storms, 25
Manaball, 197
Manabolt, 197
Maneuver, 161, 240
Manifesting, 184
Manipulation, 172
Manipulation spells, 202-4
Maps, 270
Mapsoft, 320
Marine Tech Sea Nymph, 341-42
Marking systems, 256
Mask, 202
Masking, 190
Mass Confusion, 201
Materialization, 289
Matrix Perception Tests, 217-18
Matrix, 19-20
Matrix 2.0, 38, 216
  actions, 208, 219
  attacks, 230
  attribute ratings, 52
  attributes, 212-13
  basics, 206, 208-9
  clubs, 44-45
  combat, 208
  combat summary, 232
  Condition Monitor, 231
  Crash, 33-34, 35, 42
  damage, 231
  Initiative, 230
  jargon, 215
  perception, 217-18
  perception, technomancers, 233
  programs, 320-21
  security, 256-57
  signatures, 237
  tools, 208
  topology, 206
  using, 217-21
  VR perception, 229-30
MCT Fly-Spy, 341-42
MCT-Nissan Roto-Drone, 341-42
Meat, 216
Mechanic, 284
Media magic, 39-40
Medic, 227
Medical care, 38
Medicine, 124, 242, 244
Medium machine guns, 310
Medkits, 244, 329
Megacorporations, 16
  presence of, 40-41
  rise of, 22, 24-25
Melee, 138, 152
  combat, 141, 146-48, 150-51
  combat weapons, 148
  damage, 148
  modifiers table, 148
  weapons, 304-6
  weapons table, 149
Memory, 130
Mental attributes, 61, 73
Mental manipulations, 202
Mentor spirit, 79, 192-95
  archetypes, 192-95
  modifiers, 192
Mercenary, 278
Mercury Comet, 342
Merrow, 293
Mesh network, 39, 216
Meshed, 216
Metahuman, 60, 65-67
  characteristics table, 65
  form, great dragons, 297
Metamagic, 189-90
Metaplanes, 20, 185
  access, 189
  realm, 166
Metatype
  attribute table, 73
  choosing, 72-73
Micro flare launcher, 328
Microphone, 325
Micro sensors, 325
Micro-transceiver, 319
Microwire, 328
Middle lifestyle, 85, 261
Mild Addiction, 80, 248
Military organizations, 268
Millimeter wave detection systems, 254-55
Mimicry, 289
Mindlink, 199
Mind Probe, 199
Miniwelder, 326
Miracle Shooter, 322
Miscellaneous electronics, 318, 319
Missile launchers, 310
Missile Parry, 188
Missiles, 146, 314, 314
Mist Form power, 289
Mitsubishi
  Nightsky, 341-42
  Yakusoku MRL, 310
MitsuhamaComputerTechnologies, 34, 42, 43-44
Mnemonic enhancer, 339
Mob Control, 202
Mob Mind, 203
Mob Mood, 203
Moderate Addiction, 80, 248
Modes, 301
Modifiers, 54, 55
MOM (Mothers of Metahumans), 50
Monetary exchange, 36, 38
Monocles, 325
Monofilament chainsaw, 328-29
Monofilament sword, 305
Monofilament whip, 305
Moodchips, 250
Moon Maiden, 193
Morgan, 33
Mossberg AM-CMDT, 310
Motion sensors, 254, 327
Motivations, 263, 267
Mountain, 193
Mounts, 301-2

Movement, 138, 289
critters, 285-86
Moving vehicle, 141
Mr. Johnson, 2-4, 6-8, 14, 18, 281, 284
Multiple spells, 173
Multiple targets, 142
Mundanes, 164
Murky Link, 79
Muscle
augmentation, 338
replacement, 334
toner, 338
Music, 45
Myomeric rope, 328
Mystic adept, 79, 164, 186-87
quality, 62
Mystic Armor, 188, 289

N

Naga, 293
Nakatomi, Shikei, 30
NAN. See Native American Nations
Nanopaste disguise, 330
Nanopaste trodes, 318
Nanosecond Buyout, 30
Narcoject, 246
Native American Nations (NAN), 25-26, 29, 32, 34
Native Americans, 24
Natural Hardening, 79
Natural Immunity, 79-80, 188
Natural Weapon, 289
Nausea, 245
Nausea gas, 246
Nautical Mechanic, 124
Navigation, 114
using, 116-17
Navy SEALs, 268
Negative Health spells, 199-200
Negative qualities, 80-84, 265
Negotiation, 121
modifiers, 120
NeoNET, 30, 34, 42-43
Nepean Act, 24
Net hits, 56
Network, 38-39, 216
security, 223
Networking, 210-11, 280
NeuroFilter, 238
Neuro-Stun, 246
Niche clubs, 44
Night of Rage, 30
Nightlife, 44-45
Nightwraith incident, 28-29
Nitro, 249-50
Node, 216
access, 218
defenses, 222
Nonconductivity, 316
Northrup Wasp, 341-42
Notation, 57
Notoriety, 257
Novacoke, 250
Novatech, 32, 33, 34
Novice, 108
Noxious Breath, 289
NPC (non-player character), 265-66, 268, 272, 274-78, 285
files, 270
Nuyen, 85
starting, 87

O

Objectives, 267
Object Resistance table, 174
Observe in detail, 137
Obvious cyberlimbs, 335
Ocular drone, 332
Off-hand weapon, 142, 148
O'Kennedy, Seamus, 29
Olfactory booster, 331
Olfactory sensor, 325
Operating system (OS), 216
Opposed Combat Test, 138
Opposed Intuition, 130
Opposed Test, 52, 57, 121-22
against group, 57-58
modifiers, 57
notation, 58
Opposed Vehicle Test, 161
Opposition, 267-68
Optical enhancements, 324
ORC (Ork Rights Commission), 50
Organized crime, 48-49, 268
Organleggers, 49-50
Orichalcum Rush, 43
Ork, 60, 66-67
Poser, 83
ORO, 26
Orthoskin, 338
Overcasting, 172
Overclocking, 238
Overdosing, 248
Oxygenate, 200

P

Pain editor, 339
Pain Resistance, 189
Palming, 114
PAN (personal area network), 19, 39, 46, 206, 210, 216, 224
modes, 211
Panther XXL, 310
Parachuting, 114
Paracritters, 292-94
Paralysis, 245
Paralyzing Howl, 289-90
Passcodes, 215-16
Passive detection, 198
Passive PAN, 211
Passive targeting, 162
Passkeys, 216
Pathogenic defense, 338
Patrolling IC, 222
Payload, 228
Payments, 262
PC (player character), 52
Penetration, toxin, 245
Pepper Punch, 246
Perception, 114, 155
using, 117
Perception Test
modifiers, 117
thresholds, 117
Periscope, 311, 324
Permanent powers, 286
Persona, 206, 208, 211-12, 216
Personafix, 250-51
Personnel, 253
Petrify, 204
Phantasm, 202
Pheromone scanners, 255
Photographic memory, 80
Physical attributes, 61, 73
Physical Barrier, 204
Physical body, 184
Physical damage, 152, 242
overflow, 244
Track, 65
Physical illusion, 201
Physical powers, 286
Physical searches, 301
Physical security, 251-53
Physical skills, 113-14
Physical spells, 195
Pick up object, 137
Pilot, 158, 216
Aerospace, 126
Aircraft, 126
Anthroform, 126
Exotic Vehicle, 126
Ground Craft, 126
programs, 213
Watercraft, 127
Pistols, 112
PJSS Elephant Rifle, 308, 309
Plastic explosives, 314
Platelet factories, 338
Pole arm, 305
Police, 268
Politicians, 268
Poltergeist, 204
Positive qualities, 77-80, 265
Powerball, 197
Powerbolt, 197
Power foci, 192
Power toxin, 245
Premise, 267
Pressure mesh, 254
Pressure pads, 253-54
Prime runner, 276-77
creation, advancement table, 277
Printer, 318
Print scanners, 256
Probing target, 221-22
Professional, 108
Professional knowledge, 76
skills, 128
Program, 225-28
costs, availability, 228
loading, using, 227-28
Projectile weapons, 145-46, 306
table, 145
Prophylaxis, 200
Protective covers, 332
Proximity wire, 253
Psyche, 250
Psychokinesis, 290
Public Awareness, 257, 258
Pueblo Corporate Council, 34, 42
Punch, 197
Put down object, 137

Q

Qualities, 63, 77-84
Quick draw, 137
holster, 313
Quickening, 190
Quick Healer, 80
Quickness, 52

R

Raecor Sting, 307
Racism, 50
Radio, 46
Radio signal scanner, 325
Rads, 268
Ram, 161
Ramming damage table, 160
Range
Detection spell, 198
powers, 286
Ranged combat, 140-42
defense, 142
modifiers table, 140
summary, 147
Ranger Arms SM-4, 309
Rapid Healing, 189
Rappeling gloves, 328
Rappelling, 115
Rat, 193-94
Raven, 194
RCI-Unisys, 27
Reach, 147, 302
Reaction, 61, 111, 126-27
Reaction enhancers, 334
Ready weapon, 137
Reality Filter, 226
Real Life (RL), 216
Rebinding, 181
Reboot, 221
Recoil, 142
compensation, 142, 302
Red Samurai
Detachment, 276
lieutenant, 276
Redirect Trace, 224
Reduced senses, critter, 291
Re-Education and Relocation Act, 24
Reflex enhancers, 61
Reflex recorder, 339
Regeneration, 290
Regional Telecommunication Grid (RTG), 216
Registering, 119
Regular ammo, 312
Regular loyalty, 279
Religions, 40
Reload firearm, 138
Remington 990, 309
Remington Roomsweeper, 307, 308
Remote service, 178
Remote Tasks, 235
Remove clip, 137
Renraku Computer Systems, 31-33, 43
Stormcloud, 341-42
Repair icon, 219
Reputation, 257-58
Resist Pain, 200-201
Resistance
to pathogens/toxins, 80
to spells, 195
Resonance, 52, 62, 73, 111, 232
increased, 238
Link, 238
realms access, 238
Resource assignment, 84-86
Respirator, 328
Response, 212, 216
Restraints, 325, 326
Restricted gear, 303
Restricted skills, 75
Retinal duplication, 334
RFID (radio frequency identification) tags, 39, 46, 47, 210, 218, 317-19, 325, 329
Rigger, 19, 218
actions, 239
Rigging, 208-9, 238-40
Ring of Fire, 32
Riot shield, 317
Ritual Spellcasting, 113, 166, 174
Rockets, 146, 314, 315
Roleplaying, 17
addiction, 248
Karma, 263
mentor spirit, 192
Roll Initiative, 132
Roper, Ken, 30
Ruger 100, 309
Rule of One, 52
Rule of Six, 52, 56, 67
Rule tweaking, 69
Running, 114, 117-18, 136
modifiers, 138
shadows, 241-42
Ryumyo, 25

S

Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries, 30-31, 42, 43
Saito, General, 32
Salish-Shidhe, 29, 34
Samuvani Criscraft Otter, 341-42
Sap, 305
Sapience, 290
Sasquatch, 293
Satellite link, 318
Scale, 267
Scan, 226
Scanners, 253, 254-56
Scatter, 145, 146
Scent, improved, 188
Scorched, 83
Sculpted system, 218
Sea, 194
Sea dragons, 296-97
Search, 290
Seattle
Arcology, 43
Metroplex, 27, 303
Police Department strike, 27
Security cameras, 254
Security devices, 325-26
Security hackers, 222
Security system, 251-57
rigging, 239
Security tags, 319
Seductress, 194
Select sound filter, 325, 333
Semi-trained grunts, 272
Sensitive Neural Structure, 83
Sensitive System, 83
Sensor, 159, 253-54, 327
activation, deactivation, 239
drones and, 239
function, 324
packages, 324
tags, 319
targeting, 162
Tests, 162
Seoulpa Rings, 49
Sequencer, 255, 327
Seretech, 22, 24
Service costs, 304
Setting, 267
Seven-7, 246-47
Severe Addiction, 80, 248
Sex trade, 47
Shadow, 181, 204
activity, 20-21
Shadowing, 114
Shadowrunner
actions of, 17-18
types of, 18-19
Shaman, 62
Shamanic tradition, 164, 168,170-71
Shapechange, 204
Shark, 194, 291
Shatter, 197
Shiawase, Hitomi, 33
Shiawase Corporation, 22, 24, 43, 70
Kanmushi, 341-42
Shielding, 190
Shields, 318-19
Shift perception, 169
Shiloh Launch Facility, 24
Shock gloves, 306
Shock hand, 336
Shock pad, 311
Shop, 322
Shotguns, 144, 310
Shuriken, 306
Signal, 212-13, 218
rating, 302
rating table, 212
Signature table, 162
Sikorsky-Bell Microskimmer, 341-42
Silencer, 311
Simdeck, 45
Sim module, 45, 214, 318, 331
Simple Actions, 60, 136-38
Simrig, 218, 318, 334
Simsense, 16, 26, 45-46, 209, 218, 320, 321
vertigo, 83
Simultaneous combat, 232
SIN (system identification number), 16, 21, 29, 31, 36, 38, 41, 210, 258-59, 303
SINless consequences, 259
SINner, 83
Sioux Nations Wildcats, 268
Sirrush, 296
Skill, 54, 63, 105-6
acquisition, 74-77
groups, 52, 63, 75, 106, 109-10, 264
improvements, 264
ratings, 63, 109
ratings table, 107-8
types, 75
using, 109
Skillsofts, 320
Skillwires, 334
Skinlink, 318

Skin pocket, 338
Slang, 47
Slap patches, 330
Sleep regulator, 339
Smart firing platform, 311
Smartgun system, 311
Smartlink, 323, 332
Smartlinked weapon, 141
Smarts, 263
Smoke, 314
Smugglers, 19
Smuggling, 21
Smuggling compartment, 334
Snake, 194
Sniffer, 227
Sniper rifles, 309, 310
Social Active skills, 120-21
Social modifiers, 120, 121
Social situation, 120
Software, 124, 319-22
Somatic tradition, 63
Sony Cybersystems, 27
Sorcery, 62, 164, 167, 171-76
Sound dampening, 188
Sound detectors, 254
Sound link, 333
Sound suppressor, 311
Source code, 228
Sovereign American Indian Movement (SAIM), 24
Sovereign Tribal Council, 25, 29, 34
Spam Zone, 210, 218
Spare clips, 313
Spatial recognizer, 325, 333
Speaking, 136
Special Active skills, 127
Special attributes, 61-62
Specialists, 272
Specialization, 63, 75-76, 109, 264
Speed, 159
  toxins, 245
Speed loader, 313
Spell binding, 179
Spell, 85, 171-73
  categories, 172
  characteristics, 195
  defense, 175-76
  foci, 191
  formula costs, 172
  learning, 172
  Resistance, 189
  sustaining, 179
Spellcasting, 113, 164, 166, 173-74
  foci, 191
Spiders, 19, 218
Spikes, 49
Spirit, 85-86, 294-95
  Affinity, 80
  attributes, 164
  Bane, 83
  combat, 177
  foci, 191
  forms, 176-77
  magic and, 169-70
  range, 178
  roleplaying, 179
  services, 177-78
  summoner link, 177
  types, 176
Spirits of air, 294-95
Spirits of beasts, 295
Spirits of earth, 295
Spirits of fire, 295
Spirits of man, 295
Spirits of water, 295
Spoof, 227
Spoof Command, 224-25
Spoof Datatrail, 225
Sport rifles, 309, 310
Sports, 45
Sprinting, 137, 138
Sprite, 86, 218, 234-37
  compilation, 234
  decompiling, 236
  Initiative, 231
  powers, 236
  registering, 235-36
  tasks, 234
  technomancer link, 235
  types of, 236
  uncontrollable, 236
Spurs, 336
Squatter, 85, 261
Squatting, 36
Stability, 237
Stabilization, 201, 244
Staff, 305
Standard goods, 301
Standing up, 137
Static Zone, 210, 218
Status report, 239
Stealth, 202, 227
  rope, 328
  skills, 118
  tags, 319
Steel Lynx Combat Drone, 341-42
Steganography, 237
Steyr TMP, 308
Stick-n–Shock, 313
Stimulant patch, 330
Stock operating systems, 215
Stonecutters' Guild, 50
Stoner-Ares M202, 310
Storage media, 320
Storage memory, 212
Storms, 32
Street, 85
  costs, 303
  gear, 298, 300
  index, 52
  Knowledge, skills, 76, 127-38
  lifestyle, 261-62
  samurai, 19
  values, 302
Street Cred, 257-58
Street Doc, 278, 284-85
Streetline Special, 307
Strength, 61, 111, 113, 114, 130
Structure
  hits, 21
  rating, 157
Stuffer Shack, 42, 50
Stunball, 197
Stun baton, 305
Stunbolt, 197
Stun damage, 152, 167, 242
Stun Damage Track, 65
Subduing, 152
Submachine guns, 308, 309, 311
Submersion, 238
Subscribing, 212
Substance abuse, 247-48
Subsystems, 334
Subvocal microphone, 318
Success Test, 56, 57
Summoning, 113, 166, 179-80
  foci, 191
  watchers, 181
Summon spirit, 169
Superhuman prime runner, 277
Superior prime runner, 277
Suppression, 237
Suppressive fire, 144
Suprathyroid gland, 338
SURGE, 32, 50
Surprise, 155-57
  effects, 156
  glitches and, 156-57
  tests, 155-56
  within combat, 156
Survival, 114
  gear, 327-28
  kit, 328
  knife, 305
  test table, 118
  using, 118
Sustain Complex Form, 235-36
Sustained effects, 174, 176
Sustained powers, 286
Sustaining foci, 191
Suzuki Mirage, 341-42
Swag, 280
Swimming, 114
  using, 118-19
Sword, 305
Symbiotes, 338
Synaptic booster, 339
Synthacardium, 339
Synthetic cyberlimbs, 335
System, 213, 218
  reset, 223
  upgrade, 238
System Identification Number. See SIN (SIN)

T

Tactical combat, 158, 160
Tag eraser, 319
Tags, 218
Tailchasers, 21
Tailored pheromones, 339
Taking aim, 137
Talismonger, 285
Tamanous, 49-50
Target
  number, 55
  probing, 221-22
Targeting, 162, 240
Tasers, 306
Taser shield, 316, 317
Task difficulty, 58
Task time, 58
Taste booster, 333
Taste, Improved, 188
Team lifestyle, 263
Teamwork tests, 59
Tear gas, 246
Tech-wiz jobs, 19
Technical security, 253-56
Technical skills, 123-25
Technomancer, 80, 206, 210, 218, 232-38
  fading, 237-38
  matrix signatures, 237
  resources, 86
  skills, 233
  sprites and, 234-37
  submersion, 238
TerraFirst!, 24
Terrain table, 160
Tests, 54
Test types, 56
Texas Ranger Assault Teams, 24
Text phrase, 136
Thermal dampening, 318
Thermal smoke, 313
Thermite burning bar, 327
Thermographic sensors, 254
Thermographic vision, 323, 332
Threading, 234
Threshold, 56, 58
  modifier, 54
  spells, 195
Throwing knife, 306
Throwing weapon, 112, 137, 306, 307
Thunderbird (t-bird), 21, 194, 293-94
Time, 59
Timed items, 135
Tir na n'Og, 29, 30, 66
Tir Tairngire, 29, 33, 42, 50, 66
  Ghost lieutenant, 276
  Ghosts, 268, 276
Tools, 322-23
Tooth compartment, 331
Touch link, 334
Touch-only attack, 148
Toughness, 80
Toxic substance use, 245-46
Toxin extractor, 339
Toxin protection, 245
Toxin Resistance Test, 245
Toxins, 244-47
Tracer rounds, 312
Tracheal filter, 339
Track, 219
  modifiers table, 220
  program, 227
Tracking, 114-15
  using, 119
Sword, 305
Traditions, 62-63, 164, 169-71
Trained grunts, 272, 274
Tranq patch, 330
Transfer data, 219-20
Transponder-embedded keys, 255
Transportation, 36
Transys Neuronet, 26, 34, 42
Trauma patch, 330
Travel costs, 304-5
Treading water, 119
Treaty of Denver, 25-26, 32-33
Triad lieutenant, 276
Triad Posse, 276
Triads, 49, 268
Trickster, 194
Trideo, 46
Trip beams, 253
Tripchips, 251
Tripod, 313
Trodes, 218, 320
Troll, 60, 67
Turn to Goo, 204
Tutorsofts, 320
Twist Fate, 297

U

UCAS (United Canadian and American States), 28, 29, 32, 34, 258-59, 303
  Dunkelzahn as president of, 31
  Mafia in, 49
UGE (unexplained genetic expression), 25, 50, 65
Ultimax HMG-2, 310
Ultrasound, 323-24
Ultrasound sensor, 331
Ultraviolet lighting, 252
Unadapted geat, 301
Unarmed attack, 138
Unaware, 108
Unconsciousness, 153
Uncontrolled spirits, 180
Uncouth, 83
Uneducated, 84
Uneducated critter, 291
United Oil Industries, 24
Universal Brotherhood, 29, 30
Untrained, 108
Untrained grunts, 272
Urban explorer jumpsuit, 315
Use complex object, 138
Use skill, 138
Using simple object, 137-38
Utility chemicals, 328
Uzi IV, 308

V

Vampire, 294
Vector, 244-45
Vehicle, 341-42
  Armor, 158
  attacks against, 161
  attributes, 158-59
  Body, 158
  combat, 158-62
  damage, 161-62
  Initiative, 158
  skills, 125-27
  Tests, 159
  Test threshold table, 159
Venom, 290
Veteran, 109
Vibration detectors, 254
Virtual person, 321
Virtual pet, 321
Virtual reality, 159, 218, 228-30
  access mode, 228
  gaming, 321
Virtual surround music, 321
Virtual weather, 321
Visibility
  impaired, 142
  modifiers, 117
  table, 140
Vision enhancement, 326, 332
Vision enhancers, 323-24
Vision magnification, 324, 332
VITAS (virtually induced toxic allergy syndrome), 25, 27
Vogel, Arthur, 32
Voice Control, 189
Voice modulator, 331
Voice recognition systems, 256
Vory, 49, 268
VTOL/VSTOL, 341-42
Vulkan Electronaut, 341-42

W

Wall space, 321
Walther MA-2100, 309
Wards, 185
Watcher spirits, 181, 295
Watercraft, 341-42
Water engulf, 288
Watermark, 237
Weak Immune System, 84
Weapon,
  foci, 191
  range table, 140
  system, arm, disarm, 239
  system, fire, 239
Weather Control power, 290
Wendigo, 294
Western dragon, 297
Wetwork, 21
White noise generator, 310
Wi-Fi, 218
  detection, 257
  negation, 256-57
Wicca, 40
Wide Area Network (WAN), 218
Will to Live, 80
Willpower, 61, 111, 113, 114, 130
Windows, 252
Winterknight, 33-34, 42
Wire clippers, 327
Wired reflexes, 334
Wireless, 205-6
  connectivity, 304
  node detection, 225
  Signal Interception, 225
Wires, 252
Wise Warrior, 194
Withdrawal, 248
Wolf, 194-95, 291
Wound
  Levels, 52
  modifiers, 153-54
Wounded, 150
Wuxing, Incorporated, 32, 43

Y

Yakuza, 49, 268
Yamaha
  Growler, 341-42
  Pulsar, 306
  Sakura Fubuki, 307
Yamana, Korin, 30
Yamatetsu Corporation, 31, 42
Year of Chaos, 25

Z

Zen, 250
Zone Defense Force, 32
Zones, 209-10
Zurich-Orbital Habitat, 31, 41

BUILD POINT COST SUMMARY TABLE

Property	BP Cost
Metatype	
Dwarf	25
Elf	30
Human	0
Ork	20
Troll	40
Attributes	
Physical and Mental	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Edge	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point)
Magic	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Adept, Magician, or Mystic Adept Quality)
Resonance	10 per Attribute Point (except the max point; must possess Technomancer Quality)
Maximum Attribute value	25 for final Attribute Point
Skills	
Active Skills	4 per Skill Point
Knowledge Skills	2 per Skill Point (start with [Intuition + Logic] x 3 for free)
Skill Groups	10 per Group Point
Specializations	2 per Active specialization; 1 per Knowledge specialization
Positive Qualities	
Adept	5
Ambidextrous	5
Animal Empathy	10
Aptitude	10
Astral Chameleon	5
Blandness	10
Codeslinger	10
Double Jointed	5
Exceptional Attribute	20
First Impression	5
Focused Concentration	10 or 20
Guts	5
High Pain Tolerance	5 to 15
Home Ground	10
Human Looking	5
Lucky	20
Magician	15
Magic Resistance	5 to 20
Mentor Spirit	5
Murky Link	10
Mystic Adept	10
Natural Hardening	10
Natural Immunity	5 or 15
Photographic Memory	10
Quick Healer	10
Resistance to Pathogens/Toxins	5 or 10
Spirit Affinity	10
Technomancer	5
Toughness	10
Will to Live	5 to 15
Negative Qualities	
Addiction	+5 to +30
Allergy	+5 to +20
Astral Beacon	+5
Bad Luck	+20
Codeblock	+5
Combat Paralysis	+20
Elf Poser	+5
Gremlins	+5 to +20
Incompetent	+5
Infirm	+20
Low Pain Tolerance	+10
Ork Poser	+5
Scorched	+5 (+10 for hackers/technomancers)
Sensitive Neural Structure	+5 (+10 for hackers/technomancers)
Sensitive System	+15
Simsense Vertigo	+10 (+15 for hackers/technomancers)
SINner	+5 or +10
Spirit Bane	+10
Uncouth	+20
Uneducated	+20
Weak Immune System	+5
Resources	
Gear	1 per 5,000¥ (max 50 BP)
Spells	3 per spell (max 2 x Spellcasting/Ritual Spellcasting)
Spirits	1 BP per service owed (max = Charisma)
Bonding Foci	1 per Force Point (max 5 x Magic)
Complex Forms	1 per rating point (max forms = Logic x 2)
Sprites	1 BP per task owed (max = Charisma)
Contacts	Connection rating + Loyalty rating

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ACTIONS TABLE

FREE ACTIONS	PAGE
Activate/Deactivate Sensors	239
Activate/Deactivate ECCM	239
Alter/Swap Icon	211
Arm/Disarm a Weapon System	239
Call a Shot	135, 149
Call Up a Status Report	239
Centering	168, 189
Change Linked Device Mode	135
Deactivate Focus	168, 191
Declare Counterspelling Projection	168, 175
Detect Active/Passive Node	225
Drop Object	135
Drop Prone	135
Drop Sustained Spell	168, 174
Eject Smartgun Clip	135
Gesture	135
Intercept	135, 151
Jack Out	220
Run	136, 138
Speak/Text Phrase	136
Terminate Data Transfer	219

SIMPLE ACTIONS	PAGE
Activate Focus	168, 191
Actively Subscribe a Drone	239
Analyze	217
Call/Dismiss Spirit	168, 176
Call/Dismiss Sprite	235
Change Gun Mode	136
Command a Spirit	168, 176
Deactivate Program or Agent	228
Decrypt (with key)	225
Fire Weapon (SS, SA, BF)	136
Insert Clip	136, 312
Issue Command	221
Jump into/Leave a Drone	239
Log Off	220
Observe in Detail	117, 136
Pick Up/Put Down Object	137
Quick Draw	137
Ready Weapon	137
Remove Clip	137, 312

SIMPLE ACTIONS (cont.)	PAGE
Shift Perception	168, 182
Sprint	137, 138
Stand Up	137
Take Aim	137
Throw Weapon	137
Transfer Data	219
Use Simple Object	137

COMPLEX ACTIONS	PAGE
Astral Projection	169, 183
Attack	230
Banish Spirit	169, 180
Cast Spell	169, 173
Compile Sprite	235
Control Device	220
Crash Program/OS	223
Data Search	220
Decrypt (without key)	225
Detect Hidden Node	225
Disarm Data Bomb	224
Edit	219
Erase Astral Signature	169, 182
Fire Automatic Weapon	138, 142
Fire Mounted/Vehicle Weapon System	138, 162, 239
Full Defense	138, 151
Intercept Traffic	224
Intercept Wireless Signal	225
Jam Signal	225
Log On	220
Melee/Unarmed Attack	138, 146
Reboot	221
Redirect Trace	224
Reload Firearm	138, 312
Repair Icon	219
Run Program or Agent	228
Shut Down a Sprite	235
Spoof Command	224
Summon Spirit	169, 179
Track User	219
Use Complex Object	138
Use Skill	138

CRITTER ACTIONS TABLE

AUTOMATIC ACTIONS	PAGE
Armor	286
Astral Form	287
Dual Natured	287
Energy Aura	287
Enhanced Senses	288
Hardened Armor	288
Immunity	288
Infection	289
Mystic Armor	289
Regeneration	290
Sapience	290
Venom	290

COMPLEX ACTIONS	PAGE
Accident	286
Animal Control	286
Binding	287
Compulsion	287
Confusion	287
Corrosive Spit	287
Elemental Attack	287
Engulf	287
Essence Drain	288
Fear	288
Guard	288
Influence	289
Innate Spell	289

COMPLEX ACTIONS (cont.)	PAGE
Materialization	289
Mist Form	289
Movement	289
Natural Weapon	289
Noxious Breath	289
Paralyzing Howl	289
Psychokinesis	290
Search	290
Weather Control	290

SIMPLE ACTIONS	PAGE
Concealment	287
Mimicry	289

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SHADOWRUN

NAME/ALIAS: _____

METATYPE: _____ AGE: _____ SEX: ___ NUYEN: _____ LIFESTYLE: _____ TOTAL KARMA: _____

CURRENT KARMA: _____ STREET CRED: _____ NOTORIETY: _____ PUBLIC AWARENESS: _____

PERSONAL DATA

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES	MENTAL ATTRIBUTES	SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES	SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES
BODY:	CHARISMA:	EDGE:	CURRENT EDGE POINTS:
AGILITY:	INTUITION:	ESSENCE:	ASTRAL INIT:
REACTION:	LOGIC:	INITIATIVE:	MATRIX INIT:
STRENGTH:	WILLPOWER:	MAGIC/RESONANCE:	INIT PASSES:

ATTRIBUTES

ACTIVE SKILLS			ACTIVE SKILLS			KNOWLEDGE SKILLS		
SKILL NAME	RTG.	ATT.	SKILL NAME	RTG.	ATT.	SKILL NAME	RTG.	ATT.

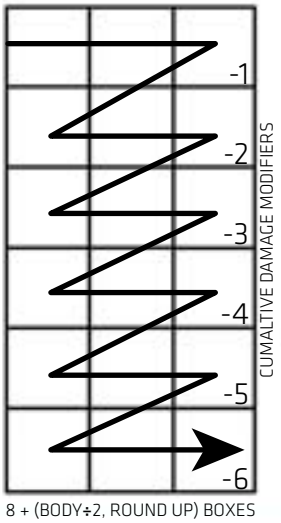
SKILLS

QUALITY NAME	TYPE

QUALITIES

DATAPIC

PHYSICAL DAMAGE TRACK



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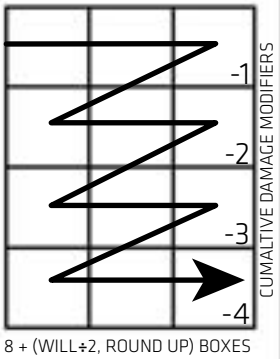
STUN DAMAGE TRACK



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SHADOWRUN

CONTACT NAME	LOYALTY RTG.	CONN. RTG.

CONTACTS

WEAPON	DAMAGE	AP	MODE	RC	AMMO

RANGED WEAPONS

IMPLANT	RATING	ESSENCE	NOTES

CYBERWARE/BIOWARE

WEAPON	REACH	DAMAGE	AP

MELEE WEAPONS

VEHICLE	HANDLING	ACCEL	SPEED

PILOT	BODY	ARMOR	SENSOR

VEHICLE

ARMOR	BALLISTIC/IMPACT	NOTES

ARMOR

COMMLINK: _____

RESPONSE: _____ SYSTEM: _____

FIREWALL: _____ SIGNAL: _____

PROGRAMS: _____

COMMLINK/PROGRAMS

SPELL	TYPE	RANGE	DURATION	DAMAGE VALUE

SPELLS

SPIRIT [SPRITE]	FORCE	SERVICES	BOUND/UNBOUND [REGISTERED/UNREGISTERED]

SPIRITS/SPRITES

NAME	RATING

ADEPT POWERS/COMPLEX FORMS

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MAP OF NORTH AMERICA CIRCA 2070

NATIONAL CAPITAL
CITY
SPLIT CITIES
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
NOTEWORTHY AREA
STATE BOUNDARIES
(U.S.A. circa 1990)

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