

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

SPARE CHANGE
EDITION



the role playing game

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The Role Playing Game

SPARE CHANGE EDITION

WARNING

This Book Contains The Following:

drugs 	crime 	violence 	sex & alternative lifestyles 	extreme political ideas 
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The questionable elements in this book are:

 idealized/encouraged	 presented neutrally players must decide	 demonized/prohibited
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NOT RECOMMENDED

for people with

POOR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

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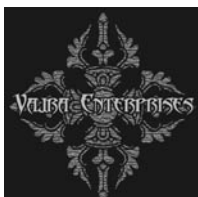
This book has been voluntarily rated:

BURN IMMEDIATELY

Special Note

To minimize danger of fatal head explosion, do not read this book in its entirety. Read "In Brief" sections to get a general idea of the setting and game, then go back to read in depth for specific reference.

Thank you for your cooperation.



FATES WORSE THAN DEATH the Role Playing Game
SPARE CHANGE EDITION
is published by Vajra Enterprises, Eureka California

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About This Special Edition

Fates Worse Than Death: Spare Change Edition is a scaled down or “light” version of Fates Worse Than Death the RPG. It is distributed as a free product by Vajra Enterprises and is not intended for resale.

The Spare Change Edition contains only the rules, character creation options and game setting information of interest to players playing Street People characters (those living on the streets without legitimate homes or jobs). The full edition of Fates Worse Than Death is 464 pages and includes all the information herein as well as information for Well and Indie characters.

Fates Worse Than Death has a MSRP of \$35.95 and can be purchased at www.FatesWorseThanDeath.com or at your local game retailer.

A Basic Overview of the Game

"If there is knowledge, it lies in the fusion of the book and the street."

-Studs Terkel

Style- The setting is dark, desperate and fast-paced, but characters are encouraged to never forget the values they hold important. In the city, one's worth is measured by being true to whatever values you hold dear: honor, altruism, friendship, family, personal growth, etc. The city is mostly lawless, and even though that makes it a dark and dangerous place, it also gives the people within it freedom to find what is important to them in life and seek it out. The sense of hope in the middle of the darkness is meant to heighten the tension of the game: as the name implies, characters have more than simply staying alive to worry about.

Background- In 2080, the island of Manhattan is now a large inner city, a ghetto where people go when they can not or will not live in a gated community, a corporate employee living center or an expensive private city. Large numbers of people among the city's population are insane, retarded, criminals, homeless or extremists. Others are merely trying to do the best with the life that has been dealt to them.

Tech Level- In 2080, many amazing discoveries have been made: genetic engineering, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, limited nanotechnology, mental programming (forced restructuring of neural networks to create "computer programs" inside the human mind), psychic energy, etc. but these technologies have done little to improve the state of the world. Instead, they introduce a new horde of terrible possibilities: What if a serial killer could copy his own mind in to other people's bodies? What if Virtual Reality companies could offer a world to live in that is wholly superior to ours? What if you could gain incredible power over the minds of others, but at the loss of your own sanity?

Power Structures- Corporations are sophisticated and influential, but their power is kept in check by a wary public and government. Gated Communities are self-sufficient economic units that use brain scans to screen people and drain away the most productive members of society. Those who can't get in to corps or gated communities languish in inner cities, where the police and government have little power. The Drug Lords are a consolidated group of drug dealers seeking a monopoly on drugs. They are violent and always creating more addictive drugs. The street gangs, having lost their ability to sell drugs, have slowly turned towards more lofty goals and have become popular with a wider range of people. The gangs sometimes fight the Drug Lords and other forces of evil, but they are more

often distracted by inter-gang warfare and internal struggles. The Black Market is a decentralized web of criminals and traders who can get anyone anything for the right price.

Dangers- The game has no set "enemy" to battle. Every individual and group has its own motivations and needs. It may be rare that characters will find themselves teaming up with a serial killer or fighting against charity workers, but it can happen if the right combinations of forces collide. Of the deaths that happen in the city, the majority are caused by gang warfare, riots, serial killers, plagues, animal attacks, murder during a mugging or burglary, murder by homeless "crazies" and deaths related to drug addiction.

Player Characters- Characters in this special edition will all be Street People: homeless people, many of whom were born on the streets without birth certificates; most are trained from birth in their families' skills of survival. Many characters will belong to gang-like street families, though they need not have a violent or criminal nature. Other characters do not belong to any family and rely on wits, skill and luck (instead of the threat of vengeance by a family) to protect themselves from the drug lords and other criminals.

Character Creation- The character has a pool of points to buy attributes with and a pool of points to buy skills with. Characters must choose a Character Class which represents their current place in society. This character class sets the cost (per level) in skill points of skills in each skill category. Character class also sets available funds and may give access to special advantages, disadvantages and skills. Advantages and disadvantages are used to round out the character. Any type of character creation points (skills points, attribute points, money, points from advantages and disadvantages) can be traded for each other via a simple formulae.

Game Mechanics - All mechanics are based on a simple system: The sum of attribute + skill or other factor + 1d20 must be equal to or higher than the difficulty of the proposed action. Opposed rolls are made when two actions are in conflict with each other: each party tries to get more above their difficulty than the other party. Fighting is made up of opposed actions (moves) with different difficulties and effects. In combat, for each round each character gets one action to make against an enemy and one reaction if someone else does something to them.

A Message From The City

"Listen up punky, 'cause this here's the crib sheets. This here's your study guide for not getting really horrible shit done to you next time you walk out your front door.

I feel like I must clarify a few things, since most of what you know about the city was probably told to you by corporate newscasters. The problem is, these fuckers that told you what a horrible urban chaos nightmare the city is, they live in nice happy little corporate living centers where you have to pass a fucking McEthics and McSanity test before they let you past the main gate. These fuckers have never been in the city and every time these fuckers talk some poor middle-aged welfare couple in to never leaving their apartment, their corp's VR service makes a little more money.

Here in the city we've got all the tried-and-true urban problems: crime, litter, plagues, riots, economic exploitation, cults, prostitution, drugs, corruption, crazy people. We've also got a few new problems that we just created: we've got a serial killer who replicates himself by kidnapping people and copying his mind over theirs. We've got these checkpoints at every way on to the island - they're supposed to keep guns out of the city but what they really do is make it so that only rich and powerful criminals have guns and the cops and gangs have to fight the bad guys with nightsticks and switchblades. We've got these vicious drug lords who have a monopoly on street drugs and have created some shit so addictive they can hold you down and inject you with it and now they own you. We've got a drug that eats parts of the brain so addicts become packs of howling cannibalistic animals.

Yup, this city is one dangerous fucked up shithole. It's got all the crime and gang violence of an anarchy, all the exploitation of a corporate capitalism and all the impotent bureaucracy of a self-serving government - and that's what's so great about it. Step out your front door and within an hour you might be saving someone's life from some major evil fucker. Whatever skill you have, there's someone in trouble right now that could use your help, even if it's just the skill of standing there with a knife and some magazines taped to you as armor and pretending that you ain't scared shitless.

You might be under the impression that in order to survive in the city you've got to be an incredibly tough bastard. Well, that's one way to do it. Another way is to be such a good person that not many people want to do you in, and those that do think twice about it when they see how many people would be really pissed if something happened to you. Most people go for the middle ground and join a gang. Contrary to what you may have heard, most gangs live by a code

of "don't fuck with us and you'll be alright," which is a lot better than some people in the city will give you. And if there's one thing the gangs do well it's finding interesting shit to be in to. Whether it's navigating mazes of rooftops, trying to become immortal by passing down your memories or getting infected with symbiotic diseases resurrected from prehistory, the gangs are the 31 flavors of cool probably-illegal shit you could do that might possibly make you that much more of a badass.

One thing that will get you killed (or worse) faster than anything else is stereotypes. You are fucked if you think a kid can't be a cold-blooded killer, a dude with spikes implanted in his skin has gotta be a dangerous asshole or that an old homeless guy is useless and powerless. Not only will you not see the bad shit coming, you won't recognize the potential allies, benefactors and wisdom that might help you survive.

Also, don't get cocky. After you've been around the block a few times you might think you know the city. You don't, nobody does, because there's not just one city. There's hundreds of interconnected cities going on simultaneously. Gangs and their little struggles aren't the only game in town: there's homeless extended families, pushers, moles, black-corp operatives, artists, old war criminals, shut-in citizen's groups, corrupt government employees, start-up business owners, black market traders, sex industry workers and exploiters, addicts and more, each with their own goals, internal struggles and the power to fuck you up if you happen to get caught in the middle of their shit.

And to those of you out there who would rather have everyone in the city be a bunch of mindless frightened little shut-ins who blow all our money on VR, alcohol and rent, who vote for whoever runs the most commercials and who let the criminals take whatever they want as long as they don't kill us, I've got a special message for you:

Forget it. There's thousands of us. We're organized and decentralized. Nobody tells us what to do or what to want. We push every boundary we can think of looking for ways to become better. We're working with a couple centuries experience dealing with the worst that the urban world has to offer. And we're not afraid of anything you can throw at us because the worst fate we can possibly imagine is being like you."

Katherine "Blackheart" Nikonov,
Needle Punk,
Jan 1, 2080
New York City

Cyberpunk vs. Fates Worse Than Death

Cyberpunk is a literary genre that first began in the early 1980s in the works of authors such as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson and movies such as Blade Runner. Although Fates Worse Than Death takes much from the cyberpunk genre, it is not just a generic cyberpunk setting. Those who are only familiar with cyberpunk conventions will have a hard time playing in the Fates Worse Than Death universe. However, since cyberpunk is the closest “genre” to Fates Worse Than Death, here is a short list of differences to get cyberpunk fans acquainted with the Fates Worse Than Death game universe:

Cyberpunk	Fates Worse Than Death
The “ Urban Sprawl ”, an unending, unvaried and unknowable stretch of solid city containing every sort of culture, economy, lifestyle and organization within its breadth.	Game focuses on the island of Manhattan, detailing its boundaries and what can be found within it, including its specific and unique organizations and culture.
Most characters are lone wolves who travel the world giving only temporary loyalty to those who pay them (or the occasional good cause).	Most characters have an important and well-defined place in city society with duties and non-selfish motivations.
Usually no psychic phenomenon, or if there is it is usually a wildcard: rare freaks who can make people’s heads explode.	Well defined and explained psychic abilities with clearly defined limits.
Urban populations are constantly growing, changing, and moving, leaving little focus on tradition and history.	Manhattan population is small, stable and some people live as their grandparents had, giving a sense of tradition, age and maturity to the city.
Distinction between the powerless majority of people who are just trying to survive and the powerful minority who have special skills or resources. The powerful tend to be the main players, with the powerless as a sort of background.	Focus on the idea that everyone is quite skilled at what they do, no matter what their economic status is, and that everyone is powerful and dangerous in their own way.
Focus on the media , on corporate advertisers creating pop culture, on who is famous, on being flashy and stylish and having ‘style over substance’.	The street population of the city is basically ignored by and ignores the media. There is no real pop-culture and people become known for their deeds, not for looking cool.
VR is a gateway to adventure and a playground for the world’s master hackers.	VR is an addictive escape for shut-ins, disdained by the street population. Real hackers are as likely to use a text-only interface.
Guns are common and used liberally.	Guns are rare (screened for at city entrances), used mainly by the richest criminals. The most common weapon is a knife.
Life is cheap and the death of a person usually has few consequences.	Life is cheap to some, very important to others. Each individual has many interconnections and nearly every death has consequences.
Philosophy is irrelevant, people spend their days concerned with how to survive.	Many have carved a niche for themselves in city society and have time to ask themselves questions such as “why am I here?” and “what do I want to do with my life?”
Police force is a brutish paramilitary force.	Police force is a bunch of idealistic teens who are under-equipped, under-skilled and act more like a gang than a military organization.
Gangs are short-sighted, violent, self-destructive, crazy criminals who are addicted to and sell drugs. This vision of gangs is generally based on post-crack (1980s and after) US urban street gangs.	Gangs are more-or-less “normal” people who have banded together for self-protection. Some gangs have lofty goals and ideals. Although they do have problems with violence, overall the city is a better place for their presence.
Cybernetic implants and replacements are powerful, flashy chrome and tend to turn people in to robot monsters.	Implants are either biological or small, unobtrusive electronics. They extend human capabilities but are rarely able to make people superhuman.
City is portrayed as a bright, noisy, bustling marketplace 24 hours a day.	The city is darker and quieter with a smaller population density (especially with many shut-ins) and few motor vehicles. At certain times of day the streets are almost empty.
Integration of computer chip technology in to brains creates human-computer links and lets human be programmed.	Neural restructuring techniques allow the brain itself to be changed, reprogrammed, even copied. Unobtrusive hand-jacks allow integration with computers.
Dreary, blighted dystopian setting symbolic of characters’ own sense of being lost and having no control over their lives.	Dreary, blighted dismal setting as a counterpoint to and testing ground of social and individual growth.
Not as much focus on drama, suspense and terror because characters don’t have much to lose in the first place.	Characters are given something worth trying to hold on to, making drama, suspense and terror possible.
Violence typically portrayed as the most important form of social and political persuasion, and most stories usually have at least one skilled fighter (usually a neutral party, hired and used as a tool by the PCs).	Violence is one of many tools available to characters, which can be beneficial if used wisely or disastrous if used poorly. Often, threats of violence are more useful than violence itself.
Massive difference in education, social power and culture between rich and poor characters.	Really rich people exist but are seldom seen. Most PCs range between what would be called middle class and very poor today. Culturally, they are more alike than different.
Exploration of what is human through invasive electromechanical implants turning people in to machines.	Exploration of what is human through neural restructuring, biotechnological manipulation, drugs with permanent psychological effects, etc.
Complete lack of social support net . There are hardly any social services except those designed to keep the capitalist system going.	There is a massive welfare system that supports most of the city, though many people do fall through the cracks. This is a system that benefits corps and government (see p.176).
Corporations are a cross between governments and organized crime agencies, who regularly and directly interfere in the lives of the characters.	Corps have a lot of power (mostly economic) but they can’t afford to piss-off the government and their influence on the lives of characters is usually subtle and from afar.
History usually dotted with several Vietnam-esque wars with limited nuclear activity.	Periods of global corporate rule, ecological crises, global anti-corporate violence (and occupation by anti-corporate terrorist armies) leading to restructuring of economies and governments.

Tips For Survival in the City

"You've got to keep an open mind man. Hell, if ten impossible things didn't happen here every day, I'd leave." -**Terry Neiss, Freak**

"No matter who you are, you've got something someone else wants. Even if you're some homeless addict with nothing but poor health, an empty stomach and a few rags on your back, there's some other poor fuck who's lost enough of his mind that he sees you as a nice tasty source of protein. What I'm saying is that there ain't no time when you don't have to watch your back." -**DeeNa O'Keen, Good**

"Just because it looks like a human doesn't mean it is. Technology is humans manipulating nature, and now humans can manipulate themselves until they aren't even human anymore." -**3Day Jones, Freelancer**

"Hard shells often hide soft interiors. People with real power often have reason to hide that power." -**Kelly Crane, Immortal**

"In the city you can't get a good thing without making some sacrifice. Power is the intelligence and wisdom to time things so that the strengths work for you and the weaknesses hit you when you can handle them." -**Octavius Selgado, Needle Punk**

"If you're a rabbit, when some big bastard fucks with you, you hide in a corner. If you're a wolf, you'll use your last dying breath to slam a screwdriver into his face. And in this city the wolves can smell the difference." -**Amtrak Bill, Hummingbird**

"Never fight anyone on their own turf, they'll seriously mess you up." -**Hy Kenn, Arcadian**

"Sometimes something or another will shift the balance of power in the city, and that's when you've got to watch out, because the city is a dynamic system and it will use any and all of its resources to restore equilibrium, including you." -**Gretta Bakker, Math Addict**

"I once saw a homeless crazy guy: no pants, covered in fingernail scratches, skin blue from cold, eye infected, talking incoherently and smoking a cigarette. Here's a guy who can't speak in a complete sentence or put on pants, but somehow he gets a cigarette and lights it. The point is: if you want something badly enough, you'll find a way to get it. The only question is, are you willing to pay what it will cost you?" -**Pinky Lulu, Hungry**

"You know how I face death every day? I just keep in mind that there are eight hundred things worse than death. Well, eight hundred I know about, there are probably more." -**Victoria McKenna, Sat Jumper**

"If you beat down every person who crosses you, you'll blend in with everyone else out on the street. If you do something that lets people know there's something goin' on in your head, like be polite to old people, then people might take notice of you." -**Charles Reston, Tea Drinker**

"Never outsource for something you can possibly do yourself. You're only taking money from your growth base and putting it in to theirs." -**Margarie Hesh, Y1**

"Every person you meet, imagine that their life is at least as hard as yours, and treat them with that much respect." -**Jack Vandenburg, Jack**

"A scar, worn proudly, lets others know that you will let nothing get in the way of doing what you think is right. Most of us are born with perfect flesh, the scars are the only things we've truly earned." -**Crick Crack, Animalist**

"Usually they don't want to kill you, they just want to give you a good beating. Learn to tell the difference. I know that no one wants to take a beating, but sometimes you just can't help it and you're better off if you forget about fighting back and just concentrate on making sure that none of your vital organs get ruptured."

-**Magoro Karmine, Volunteer**

"To survive you gotta have more friends than enemies. The problem is most people start one down because they've never learned to be their own friend."

-**Poplar Corrigan, Sex Worker**

"If you're fighting someone who has dreadlocks or braids, you may be tempted to grab one of them and yank the person's head down in to knee-range, but don't do it unless you have good gloves on, because if that person is smart they'll have some barbed wire wrapped up in there and it will fuck up your hand."

-**Rick "Ripper" Pasquale, Night Shift**

"Your first duty in a battle is to keep the enemy from remaking the battlefield to suit their skills. Don't let the Dragons set up their fog-and-lightning machines, don't let the Omniscients break all the lights, don't let the Water Rats flood the area. If the enemy gains control of your environment, leave."

-**Green-Hat-Man, Hunter**

"I've seen Skin Borgs cry and charity workers backhand old people. Don't believe the stereotypes, ever." -**Fex Preuss, Hummingbird**

"Figure out what it is you most want to hear and if someone tells it to you, they're probably lying. That's what good liars do: they know people don't question what they wanted to hear."

-**Jack Omoka, Jack**

"Don't think your actions have no consequences. Kill some crazy homeless guy: maybe you'll get away with it, or maybe he's got some homeless kid who will spend a decade tracking you down and put a knife in your back." -**Linda Capri, Gambler**

"You wanna survive? If you see me, run." -**Carmin Chee, Skin Borg**

Chapter One - Character Creation

The stranger had knocked down the apartment door. He knocked Tabitha's father senseless with one punch. He found Tabitha hidden in the bathroom, curled up in a ball in the tub. Only practice had kept Tabitha from whimpering in fear. Then, instead of killing or raping her, he had talked to her in a kind voice.

He told her that her older sister had died in a gang war with some gang called the Drug Lords. He told her that if she came with him, her sister's gang would take care of her, let her join the gang, train her to fight and do other things. He said that someday she would be able to take revenge for her sister's death.

Tabitha remembered the last time she had seen her sister. She had tried to explain that gangs weren't all like the news said. She said that some gangs weren't about drugs, crime or bullying. She said that some gangs were just friends or people with mutual interests who had made a pact for mutual protection. Tabitha's sister had cried, had promised that as soon as she had saved up enough to get an apartment that Tabitha could come live with her. Before Tabitha's sister left she had another private talk with Tabitha's father. Tabitha had made out the word "castrate" among the shouting. That had kept Tabitha's father out of her room at night for at least a month.

Tabitha looked up at the stranger. He had a kind voice but he dressed like a killer. Tabitha didn't want to join a gang, she didn't want to fight in any wars or seek revenge against anyone. She was afraid of the streets, of all the terrible things the news said awaited innocent people when they stepped outside their doors.

Yet it was a way out...

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Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 - Character Concept

Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

Step 2 - Personality Variables

Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Step 3 - Attributes

Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Step 4 - Socioeconomic Class

In this edition, you are a Street Person. Choose a subtype (reason you're on the streets).

Step 5 - Choose Character Class

Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Step 6 - Choose Skills

Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

Step 7 - Buy Equipment

Available money set by character class.

Step 8 - Bonus Characteristics

PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

Step 9 - Character Advancement

Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

An Introduction to Point Based Character Creation

Imagine you have exactly \$1000 to buy a computer. You go to some computer manufacturers and find a \$1000 computer you like. You could go ahead and just buy it (this would be the quick, easy, non-tech-savvy way to do it). Or you can mess around with the configuration. You might decide you want more memory, but to do that you'll have to give something up - you might have to take a smaller monitor to free up the money. This option takes a little longer, but in the end you get a computer which is better suited to your needs.

You have the same choices during character creation. The simplest option is to follow steps 1 through 7 and use just the points and options you are given. If you really want to customize your character you can, but keep in mind that for every extra advantage you can give your character, you must take some disadvantage of equal value. We keep track of this equality using Bonus Points. Everything you do that hurts your character gives you Bonus Points and you can use these Bonus Points to get things that help your character.

See the section on Bonus Characteristics for a complete listing of what you can do to gain or spend Bonus Points.

STEP ONE - CHARACTER CONCEPT

In Brief: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

First of all, create a character concept. Character concept includes name, gender, appearance, and more ephemeral aspects of who your character is. The GM may ask you the following questions to get a better sense of who your character is. Even if he or she doesn't ask these questions, it is a good idea that you know the answer to them.

-Values: What does the PC do that he or she thinks is valuable? Does the PC have some ultimate goal or project? Does the PC feel that simply enjoying life as it happens is enough to justify his or her existence?

-Family: Where is the PC's family? Are they dead? Does the PC hate them and never speak to them? Does the PC love his or her family but thinks they could never understand the PC's lifestyle? Does the PC have family that live by the same lifestyle as he or she does? If the PC is in a gang, are the PC's family in the same gang or a different gang (possibly even an enemy gang)?

-Drugs: What are your PC's feelings on drugs? Does he or she abstain? Does the PC think others should abstain? Does the PC use illegal drugs when he or she thinks they serve a useful purpose? Does the PC use illegal drugs for enjoyment, to deal with life, or because the PC thinks they will improve him or her in some way?

-Gender/Sex: What is the PC's gender? What is your PC's sexual preference? Heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual? Is your PC a transsexual (seeking or having received gender reassignment surgery)? Is the PC looking for a monogamous relationship, does he or she sleep around, or is the PC abstinent? What does the PC find attractive in a man/woman? Does the PC have any kinks? Does the PC ever wish to have children? Does he or she wish to raise that child in the city lifestyle? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.161) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)



Violence: Does the PC pick fights? Does he or she avoid violence whenever possible? Does the PC see violence as a way to express anger, a powerful tool, or the only way out of a few terrible situations? Has the PC ever killed someone and, if so, how does he or she feel about it?

-Ethnicity: What is the PC's ethnic background(s), or does the PC even know? Does the PC have connections to some culture other than average American culture? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.161) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)

-Body Modification: How does the PC feel about improving his or her body through technological means (implants, genetic engineering, plastic surgery, etc.)? Does the PC have modifications already? If the PC had enough money, would he or she get some?

-Style: What personal style (hair, clothes, jewelry, tattoos) does the PC have?

-Self Improvement: What does the PC wish to change about himself or herself? Is there anything that you, as a player, wish to change about the PC but the PC is oblivious to this flaw? (Note: it is to your benefit to give the PC room for personal growth since personal growth during an adventure is a good way to earn experience points).

-Fear: What is the worst fate your PC can possibly imagine? Is it something visceral (being tortured, catching a disfiguring disease, being paralyzed) or is it something abstract (losing hope, dying having done more harm than good, living life controlled by others)?

STEP TWO - PERSONALITY VARIABLES

In Brief: Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Personal Ideals

Name three personal ideals that your PC starts the game with. This is some quality that the PC either hopes to achieve or thinks he or she has achieved. Choose descriptions that are simple yet precise ("efficiently and dynamically reallocates own attentional resources" is too complicated, "smart" is too simple). Try not to put states of worldly achievement (e.g. incredibly rich) but instead put the personality variables that the PC thinks makes this achievement possible (e.g. Ladder Climber, Ruthless Bastard and Streetwise Cynic). The PC will gain extra experience when he or she does something good that falls in-line with a personal ideal (see p.11).

Some example Personal Ideals are:

Charismatic Leader- The PC wants to be someone who is adored, looked up to and obeyed because of the force of his or her personality.

Clever Ideas- The PC wants to be the one who comes up with creative plans that save the day.

Compassionate Do-Gooder- The PC wants to care about other people's problems and to let that caring drive the PC to action.

Consumed Artist- The PC wants to be ruled by his or her creative impulses and to pour everything he or she is in to art.

Cool Under Pressure- The PC wants to be the one who does not get frazzled or carried away by stressful and hectic situations.

Crazy Daredevil- The PC wants to be the one willing to take risks that nobody else is willing to take.

Dependable Friend- The PC wants to be the buddy that friends know they can go to for help no matter what the crisis is.

Driven Overachiever- The PC wants to be the one who works harder than everyone else and achieves more.

Efficiently Organized- The PC wants to weave order out of the chaos of life and always be on-top of everything.

Humble Clown- The PC wants to be someone who never takes himself or herself or anyone else too seriously.

Improvement Seeker- The PC wants to be someone who never stops trying to root out flaws and improve himself or herself.

Indispensable Skill- The PC wants to have skills so important that the people in the PC's life couldn't get by without the PC.

Insightful Observer- The PC wants to be the one who pays attention when others aren't and notices important details.

Interesting Life- The PC wants to have a life so interesting that people will be captivated and awed by the stories.

Inviolable Will- The PC wants to be someone who never lets others dictate what the PC thinks, feels or believes.

Knuckle-Down- The PC wants to be the one who does unpleasant things (things nobody else can stand to do) because those things need to get done.

Ladder Climber- The PC wants to be the one who knows how to rise through the ranks and to be constantly doing whatever it takes to get ahead.

Line Drawer- The PC wants to be someone who will draw a line and if someone crosses it the PC will fight that person even with his or her last dying breath.

Lying Manipulator- The PC wants to be the one who can play people like instruments via an intricate web of lies.

Mature Wisdom- The PC wants to speak with the voice of experience.

Mysterious Stranger- The PC wants to keep his or her true motives and abilities secret, to have people wonder but know little about the PC.

Mystery Solver- The PC wants to be the one who keeps gathering information until all the pieces come together and the truth is discovered.

Neutral Mediator- The PC wants to be the one who stays neutral and objective in order to help people solve their problems.

Obsessed Perfectionist- The PC wants to be the one who is unsatisfied until everything it is absolutely perfect.

One-Of-The-Crowd- The PC wants to fit in, to be thought of by his or her peers as being just like them.

Outrageous Loudmouth- The PC wants to be willing to speak out and say things that are shocking, unpopular and that other people are afraid to say.

Philosophically Enlightened- The PC wants to understand the nature of the universe better than most people.

Pleasantly Nice- The PC wants to be nice to be around and to have people like him or her.

Principled Optimist- The PC wants to be the one who refuses to give up hope that humans are good and can make the world a better place.

Proud to be Different- The PC wants to be unashamedly different from those around them and from what is expected of them.

Proven Right- When the battle of philosophies, ideologies and religions is decided, the PC wants to triumph as the one who was right all along.

Radical Values- The PC wants to completely reject the mundane values that society tried to imprint on everyone (such as fitting-in, material possessions, etc.)

Rational Skeptic- The PC never wants emotions or wishful thinking to get in the way of logic or realism.

Respectfully Polite- The PC wants to treat everyone with the courtesy and respect usually reserved for the very powerful.

Revolutionary Hero- The PC wants to be an instrumental agent of change, someone who makes the world a better place.

Righteous Warrior- The PC wants to battle for what is right no matter what the odds.

Scary Evil- The PC wants to be into such scary things (like drugs, violence, occult, sexual fetishes) that "normal people" are afraid of the PC.

Secret Knower- The PC wants to know all the cool secrets that normal people don't get to know.

Self-Controlled- The PC wants to have flawless control over his or her emotions and impulses at all times.

Selfless Martyr- The PC wants to make tremendous sacrifices for the good of other people.

Self-Sufficient- The PC wants to be someone who never depends on anyone else for his or her survival or well-being.

Sex Object- The PC wants to be the object of sexual desire and the bringer of sexual satisfaction.

Simply Content- The PC wants to want nothing more than what he or she has at the moment.

Spiritually Pure- The PC wants to be free from sin in the eyes of his or her deity(s).

Streetsmart Cynic- The PC wants to be the one to recognize the worst in people and not let those people use the PC or pull the PC down with them.

Unflinchingly Honest- The PC wants to be totally honest with himself and herself and with other people, for truth's sake alone.

Vengeful Bastard- The PC wants to be someone nobody messes with (or quickly learns not to) because the PC is so mean.

Vigilantly Prepared- The PC wants to be prepared for whatever might happen, to never be caught without equipment or a plan.

Well Balanced- The PC wants to be moderately good at everything – not too logical, not too emotional, not too nice, not too mean, etc.

Witty Banterer- The PC wants to have something funny or clever to say for any situation.

Worldviews

Name three worldviews for your PC. This is an overarching philosophy that describes how the PC approaches attempts to understand the universe and the things that happen in it. The PC will gain extra experience points when he or she follows the tenants of a worldview and arrives at a correct (or otherwise useful) conclusion.

Some example Worldviews are as follows:

Absolutist- For the most important things in life there are no grey areas, no excuses, no maybes.

Animalist- Philosophies are meaningless, the only thing that gives the universe meaning is our animal drives.

Buddhist- All the things that we think are important and cause us suffering are only important because we imagine they are.

Common Sense- The universe is mostly simple and people already know most of the answers (if they don't over-think it).

Darwinistic- Those who can compete the best will survive and prosper.

Distraction- A lot of stuff is too horrible to think about, so find something you can keep your mind occupied with.

Egocentric- Things in this universe are only important inasmuch as they effect the PC.

Fanatic- There is one truth, the PC knows what it is, and anyone who says otherwise is insane or evil.

Fate- The universe and the rich and powerful decide what is going to happen, the best we can do is play along.

Game Theory- For every situation, learn the rules, determine the optimum strategy and hope you win the gamble.

Goth Poetry- Life is tragedy. If we admit that we are better off dead, at least we're being honest.

Hedonistic- The best thing we can do with our lives is to experience as many pleasures as possible.

Holistic- The only good solutions to problems are those that consider mind, body, spirit and community.

Humor- Life is a farce and those who don't laugh at it will get nothing out of it.

Intellectual- The person with exposure to the most facts and ideas is the person most likely to understand what's going on.

Introspective- Knowing yourself is the first step to knowing anything.

Punitive Justice- When someone does something bad they should be punished, when someone does something good they should be rewarded.

Moderate- Any philosophy, lifestyle or rule is bad if you take it too far.

Nietzschean- Some people are equipped to be in charge, those that aren't try to usurp power with meaningless concepts.

Paranoid- Lack of evidence or an obvious motive does not mean they aren't out to get you, just that they're very good at it.

Pessimistic- Depending on people to be good or situations to turn out for the best is stupid and dangerous.

Ponderer- If you think about something long enough, you'll find there are more factors to be considered than you first assumed.

Postmodern- Almost everything people do, say or create is based on a set of flawed assumptions and prejudices.

Relativist- No quality is absolute, it all depends on what frame of reference you look at it from.

Responsibility- Everyone depends on everyone else – if you refuse to do your part or do it poorly you will hurt other people.

Revolutionary- Things won't change themselves – you've got to risk it all fighting for what you believe in.

Scared- Bad things come from every angle and the only way to prevent horrible things from happening is to be constantly on guard.

Scientific- There are absolute truths about the universe which can be discovered and verified through observation and logic.

Social- What people think about you and what role you play in their lives makes you what you are.

Spiritual- There is some divinity in the universe and certain actions and attitudes bring us closer to it, others take us farther away.

Superstitious- There are dangerous forces and rules of the universe beyond current human understanding.

Taoist- Being in harmony with the nature of things is better than fighting against them.

Utilitarian- Thoughts, philosophies and ideas only have value inasmuch as they help you achieve your current goals.

Changing Personality- The PC can change Personal Ideals and Worldviews whenever he or she has some time to re-evaluate identity and belief. If this is a positive change, the GM may even reward experience points (see p.47).

STEP THREE - ATTRIBUTES

In Brief: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (80 points total) to distribute between the eight attributes listed below.

1 represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

10 represents the average for a healthy young person.

20 represents the highest a person can achieve without special training.

You must buy at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on each attribute. Other character creation options can subsequently increase an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Some advantages, disadvantages and character classes modify attributes. If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. Modifications can also make an attribute negative. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

Sub-Attributes- You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot so the player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep ahold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8

strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

Agility (AGY)- This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when a character needs to move silently, keep his or her balance, scale a wall or get through a small space.

Good/Poor Balance: ± 3 to save vs. loss of balance.

Good/Poor Precision: ± 3 to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.

Good/Poor Climbing: ± 3 to any climbing roll.

Good/Poor Prowling: ± 3 to any prowling roll.

Awareness (AWR)- This represents the ability to notice things going on around one as well as things going on in one's own mind. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but the ability to be aware of important details. Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at psychic manipulation.

Good/Poor Introspection: ± 3 to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.

Good/Poor People Sense: ± 3 to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

Charm (CHM)- This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or something that saves the day.

Good/Poor Self-Confidence: ± 3 to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

Friendly/Unfriendly: The character is ± 3 to all first impression rolls to present themselves as a friendly or likeable person.

Good/Poor Seduction: ± 3 to any seduction roll.

Good/Poor Actor: ± 3 to any acting roll.

Good/Poor With Children: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving children.

Good/Poor With Animals: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving animals.

Good/Poor With Authorities: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

Good/Poor With Simple Folk: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

Good/Poor With Outcasts: ± 3 to any CHM roll involving convincing people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

Endurance (END)- This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

Good/Poor With Heat: ± 3 to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

Good/Poor With Cold: ± 3 to any save vs. hypothermia.

Good/Poor At Disease Contraction: ± 3 to any save vs. disease contraction.

Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases: ± 3 to any save vs. disease progression.

Good/Poor Lung Capacity: ± 3 pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

Intelligence (INL)- This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, abilities with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

Quick/Slow Thinker: ± 3 to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

Good/Poor Memory: ± 3 to any roll to remember or memorize something.

Good/Poor Skepticism: ± 3 to any roll to figure out deception, illusion, hallucination, etc.

Speed (SPD)- This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5	SPD	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	$\frac{1}{2}$ blunt	1	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	

Good/Poor Jumping: ± 3 to any jumping roll.

Good/Poor Kicking: The character does kick damage as if they had ± 3 SPD.

Good/Poor Long-Distance Running: ± 3 to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

Good/Poor Sprinting: ± 3 to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

Strength (STH)- This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with hand to hand weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to dmg.	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	3	4	5

Good/Poor Back: ± 3 to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

Good/Poor Hands: ± 3 to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

Good/Poor Bulk: ± 3 to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

Good/Poor Punching: The character does punch damage as if he or she had ± 3 STH.

Willpower (WIL)- This represents the ability to resist emotions or discomfort and the strength of one's sense of self. WIL is used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control. Psychics also use this attribute for manipulative actions.

Good/Poor Drug Resistance: ± 3 to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

Good/Poor With Drug Effects: ± 3 to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

Weak/Strong Stomach: ± 3 to any save vs. nausea.

Good/Poor With Distracting Pain: ± 3 to save vs. distracting pain (see p.55).

Good/Poor With Shocking Pain: ± 3 to any save vs. shocking pain (See p.55).

Good/Poor Temper: ± 3 to any save vs. anger.

Good/Poor Sense of Self: ± 3 to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.

Health Attributes

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

Body Points (BDY) represent the amount of blunt damage a character can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to Blood).

Blood Points (BLD) represents the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

Incapacity (INCY) represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Using Health Attributes (p.55) for more information.

STEP FOUR - SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS

In Brief: In this edition, you are a Street Person. Choose a subtype (reason you're on the streets).

Choose your character's current socioeconomic status. This choice will limit your choice of character classes. Choose one of the following three classes, then choose an appropriate subtype. Some subtypes give or cost Bonus Points (see p.35).

Street Person

The PC has no legal source of income. The PC survives on whatever money he or she can make in the "black" or "grey" markets. The PC might live in a cheap residential hotel, might squat in an abandoned building or the PC might drift from location to location, not knowing where he or she will sleep next.

Choose one of the following subtypes:

Fugitive- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC was born a US citizen, but has given up his or her identity and fled to the city in order to escape from either the law (will be put in prison for life if caught) or by some powerful organized crime agency (will be tortured and executed if caught). The PC is afraid to offer any proof of identity or citizenship and so cannot get public assistance or a legitimate job.

Hard Luck- Costs 7 Bonus Points. This is the largest class of Street People. The PC is perfectly eligible for welfare, but he or she has fallen on such hard times (usually drugs, mental disease or both) that the PC was unable to keep up with the paperwork necessary for welfare. The PC has

Getting on Welfare

-First, the PC must get a bank account (for people with bad credit, this can cost up to \$500).

-Second, the PC must complete all the on-line paperwork for welfare (if the PC can't borrow someone's internet access he or she might have to pump \$20 of change in to a paycomputer in order to get all the forms filled out).

-Third, then the PC must arrange it so they are at a videophone at certain times in order to do face-to-face interviews with a social services agent.

Any interruptions in this process will delay the process of getting welfare for another month.

ended up on the streets and had to find a way to make a living as a Street Person. If the PC can get his or her act together, the PC can become a Well again.

Illegal Alien- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC has a birth certificate and citizenship in some other country and is in this country illegally, with no real hope of gaining legitimate US citizenship. The PC has the same restrictions as an Unborn, except that if the character is caught and turned in to the INS, the PC will be placed in jail until he or she can be deported.

Runaway- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC is an underage (16 or younger) runaway from home. The PC might be from the city, but more often it is some place outside of the city. The PC left to either escape from parents or the lifestyle or his or her parents. The PC can not get a legal job, welfare or a bank account. When the PC turns 18 (after at least 2 level advancements) the PC can try to go through the process to get on welfare. If the PC is ever picked up by law enforcement, the PC will be returned to his or her parents.

Stolen Identity- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC was a perfectly normal Well or Indie who had his or her identity stolen completely. Any records that the PC had as proof of his or her identity were destroyed. Now the PC has the same legal status as an Unborn. If the PC can find proof of identity (which may entail finding and raiding the apartment of the identify thief) and can hire an attorney, the PC can push through court orders to get his or her records fixed.

Unborn- Costs 0 Bonus Points. This is the second largest category of Street People in the city (after Hard Luck) and the fastest growing. The PC was born on the streets to a homeless midwife. The PC was never given a birth certificate or any other proof of identify and is now permanently ineligible for such. The PC is not considered a citizen of any country. The PC can not get a legal job or any form of public assistance.

Fuzzy Categories of Socioeconomic Class

When judging whether someone is a Street Person, Well or Indie, people tend to take in to account source of income and lifestyle. Between Wells and Indies, amount of income seems to be the most important consideration. Workers are thought of as Wells, despite the fact that they do not receive public assistance, because they make the same amount of money as most Wells. Between Street People and Wells, source of income and legality of housing is most important. Street family elders may work less, eat better and live in more luxurious housing than most wells, but they are still considered street people because they do not have a legal source of income nor legal housing.

STEP FIVE - CHARACTER CLASS

In Brief: Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Based on your socioeconomic class, choose a character class from the list below. Character class is not permanent; it is currently what occupation and/or

group of people your character currently aligns himself or herself with. Character class can be changed during game play (see Disciplines, p.49). Character class sets the cost for skills, the amount of available funds, access to special skills, advantages and disadvantages.

Character Classes In Brief

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Street People Families

Black Meds: Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Crackers: Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Drakes: Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Insomniacs: Use a drug which gives psychic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Keepers: Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Water Rats: Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city.

Non-Family Street People

Addicts: Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Gamblers: Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Jacks: Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Runners: Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Sex Workers: Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Thieves: A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

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Well Gangs

Animalists: Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Bleeders: Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Freaks: Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Humankalorie: Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Hummingbirds: Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Hungry: Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Immortals: Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Math Addicts: Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Mem Junkies: Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Needle Punks: Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Night Shift: Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Orphans: Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Roofers: Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Risen: Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Siders: Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Skin Borgs: Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Technophiles: Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Non-Gang Wells

Cornerpunks: Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Freelancers: Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Goods: Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Neos: Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Workers: Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Indie Gangs

Arcadians: Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Boarders: Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Dragons: Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the "dragon" of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Omniscients: A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Purists: Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Sexologists: Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Tea Drinkers: Reviving the ancient Indian "Soma" drink which gives psychic powers.

Non-Gang Indies

Eccentrics: Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Hunters: Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Night Walkers: Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Sat Jumpers: Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Traders: The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Utopia Children: Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Volunteers: Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

YIs: Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

STEP SIX - CHOOSE SKILLS

In Brief: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each character class has a list of skill costs. Each category of skills has a cost; that cost represents the cost (in skill points) to buy one level in any skill from that category. These costs are based on how easily characters of that class have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves. Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastery at the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 (mastery) without special permission from the GM. Each level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites. One or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken.

For example: *an Arcadian character, who can buy BIO skills for 5 points each, buys 3 levels of Emergency Medicine. This costs 15 skill points and gives him a skill level of 3, meaning he will have +8 on all rolls using this skill.*

See the section on using skills (p.59) for more information.

Skill Costs: A Complicated Example

Marvin is a Roofer. The player wants Marvin to be able to speak an incredible number of languages fluently. The skill Foreign Language is a SOC skill, and so the player looks up and sees that Roofers can buy SOC skills at 8 points per level. The player gives Marvin the Private School advantage, which gives -3 to SOC skill costs (min. 4). The player also gives Marvin the Multilingual advantage which gives -2 to skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 2). Finally, the player buys three levels of the skill Linguistics. The description of linguistics states that for each level in the skill the PC gets -2 to the skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 1). For three levels, Marvin should get -6 (min. 1).

The player takes the lowest minimum (min. 1, the minimum from the Linguistics skill) and applies all the bonuses (-3 from Private School, -2 from Multilingual, -6 from Linguistics = -11 in total). Since the bonuses would bring the skill cost below the lowest minimum, the player uses the lowest minimum (1). For Marvin, during character creation, SOC skills in general cost 5 points per level and Foreign Language costs 1 point per level. The player buys Marvin 10 languages at level 5 each for 50 skill points. At level 5, Marvin has a good chance of speaking these 10 languages without an accent.

After character creation, Marvin can continue to buy levels of Foreign Language skills using Experience Points. However, the Private School advantage states that the bonuses to skill costs are during character creation only (since they represent things the PC learned during childhood). The bonuses from Multilingual and Linguistics do not have this limitation. But, even without the -3 from Private School, Marvin still has a skill cost of 1, so there is no change. Later on, though, Marvin gets mixed up with drugs, gets seriously addicted, hits the streets and his character class switches from Roofer to Addict. Addicts have a SOC skill cost of 12, and so with the -9 from Multilingual and Linguistics, Marvin has a skill cost of 3 Skill Points per level.

Skill Description Features

The attribute this skill generally uses (roll Attribute + 1d20 +4/skill level above 1 and try to match the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do with the skill)

Nanomedicine (INL)- Prerequisite: Nanobot Programming (1). The PC can use nanotech tasks to treat medical problems. See p.406 for more.
Easy (10): Use nanobots to search for and destroy parasites in a bloodstream.
Moderate (20): Use nanobots to diagnose and repair internal tearing.
Hard (30): Reconstruct a severely damaged face using nanobots.

A skill PCs must have before they can buy this skill (and the number of levels of the prerequisite skill the PC must have).

A series of examples showing things PCs might do with a skill at different difficulties.

Special Skills

These are skills that are not normally available to the majority of player characters. Within the city there is usually only one group that is capable of teaching these skills, and the price of this learning is usually membership in the group. It may be possible to travel outside the city to find such skills. For instance, the Sexologists are a gang within the city who are the only people in the city who know and teach special psychic techniques involving sexual intimacy. A PC who wanted to learn these skills would have to: (1) Be a Sexologist OR (2) Make a special deal with the Sexologists OR (3) Find some other group in outside the city that will teach comparable skills.

The Special Skills are:

Drakes' Drake Poisons (INL)
Drakes' Drake Poison Immunity (END)
Gamblers' Read Tell (AWR)
Sex Workers' Bad Trick Sense (AWR)
Water Rats' Tunnel Surfing (AGY)



Athletics (ATHL)

Acrobatics (AGY)
 Bicycle (AGY)
 Climbing (AGY)
 Hold Breath (WIL)
 Running (SPD)
 Skates (AGY)
 Sports (AGY)
 Swimming (END)

Bio/Medtech (BIO)

Acupuncture (INL)
 Addiction (INL)
 Diagnosis (INL)
 Emergency Medicine (INL)
 Forensic Pathology (INL)
 Pharmacology (INL)
 Physical Therapy (INL)
 Plastic Surgery (INL)
 Psychotherapy (INL)
 Psychopharmacology (INL)
 Surgery (INL)
 Veterinary Medicine (INL)

Combat (CMBT)

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 Archery (Combat)
 Assassin: Armed (Combat)
 Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)
 Boxing (Combat)
 Club (Combat)
 Fencing (Combat)
 Florentine Sword (Combat)
 Immobilization (Combat)
 Kickboxing (Combat)
 Knife Fighting (Combat)
 Knife Throwing (Combat)
 Razormouth (Combat)
 Self-Defense Weapons (Combat)
 Shiv (Combat)
 Slam (Combat)
 Specific Weapon Training (Combat)
 Staff Fighting (Combat)
 Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)
 Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)
 Subway Fighting (Combat)
 Sword and Shield (Combat)
 Tae Kwon Do (Combat)
 Water Combat (Combat)
 Wrestling (Combat)

Creative (CRTV)

Blacksmithing (INL)
 Brewing (INL)
 Carpentry (INL)
 Cooking (AWR)
 Gardening (INL)
 Graphic Design (INL)
 Music (AWR)
 Photography (AWR)
 Sculpture (AWR)
 Storytelling (CHM)
 Visual Arts (AWR)
 Weapon Making (INL)

Information (INFO)

Computer Modeling (INL)
 Cryptography (INL)
 Information Smuggling (INL)
 Math (INL)
 Mnemonics (INL)
 Money (INL)

Military (MIL)

Biological Weapons (INL)
 Brainwashing (INL)
 Demolitions (INL)
 Interrogation (CHM)
 Military Tactics (INL)
 Poisons (INL)
 Torture (INL)

Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)

Belief Attack (WIL)
 Calm Attack (WIL)
 Control Attack (WIL)
 Emotional Attack (WIL)
 Hallucination Attack (WIL)
 Pain Attack (WIL)
 Physiological Control (WIL)
 Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)
 Suggestion (WIL)

Psychic Sensory (PSYS)

Clairsentience (AWR)
 Mediumship (AWR)
 Mind Reading (AWR)
 Precognition (AWR)
 Psychic Sense (AWR)
 Psychometry (AWR)

Tech (TECH)

Anonymity (INL)
 Bomb Disarming (INL)
 Chemical Analysis (INL)
 Copy Protection (INL)
 Data Pirating (INL)
 Denial of Service (INL)
 Internet Browsing (INL)
 Jellynailing (INL)
 Linework (INL)
 Microelectronics (INL)
 Network Protocols (INL)
 Network Security (INL)
 Operating Systems (INL)
 Payphones (INL)
 Production Chemistry (INL)
 Programming: Application (INL)
 Programming: Virus (INL)
 Programming: VR (INL)
 Sniffing (INL)
 System Crashing (INL)
 System Prowling (INL)

Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Alarm Systems (AWR)
 Auto-Theft (INL)
 Disguise (CHM)
 Escape Artistry (AGY)
 Forgery (INL)
 Impersonation (CHM)
 Lock Picking (AGY)
 Pocket Picking (AGY)
 Prowling (AGY)

Sociological (SOC)

Corporations (INL)
 Foreign Language (INL)
 History: City (INL)
 Law: Basic (INL)
 Law: Criminal (INL)
 Legends (INL)
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 Social Work (INL)

Street (STRT)

Animal Training (CHM)
 Card Counting (INL)
 City Knowledge (INL)
 Drug Resistance (WIL)
 Gambling (INL)
 Graffiti (INL)
 Herbal Medicine (INL)
 Hypnosis (CHM)
 Light Sleep (AWR)
 Mechanics (INL)
 Moneysaving (INL)
 Needles (AGY and Combat)
 Plumbing (INL)
 Poison Tolerance (END)
 Seduction (CHM)
 Sleight of Hand (AGY)
 Street Drugs (INL or AWR)
 Tracking (AWR)
 Trading (INL)
 Wilderness Survival (INL)

Alphabetical Index of Skills

Name	Attrib.	Section
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Addiction	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Aikido	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Alarm Systems	AWR	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Animal Training	CHM	Street (STRT)
Anonymity	INL	Tech (TECH)
Archery	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Assassin :Armed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Assassin: Unarmed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Auto-Theft	INL	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Belief Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Bicycle	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Biological Weapons	INL	Military (MIL)
Blacksmithing	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Bomb Disarming	INL	Tech (TECH)
Boxing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Brainwashing	INL	Military (MIL)
Brewing	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Calm Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Card Counting	INL	Street (STRT)
Carpentry	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Chemical Analysis	INL	Tech (TECH)
City Knowledge	INL	Street (STRT)
Clairementence	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Climbing	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Club	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Computer Modeling	INL	Information (INFO)
Control Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Cooking	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Copy Protection	INL	Tech (TECH)
Corporations	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Cryptography	INL	Information (INFO)
Data Pirating	INL	Tech (TECH)
Demolitions	INL	Military (MIL)
Denial of Service	INL	Tech (TECH)
Diagnosis	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Disguise	CHM	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Drake Poison Immunity	END	Drakes (Ch. 4)
Drake Poisons	INL	Drakes (Ch. 4)
Drug Resistance	WIL	Street (STRT)
Emergency Medicine	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Emotional Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Escape Artistry	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Fencing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
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Foreign Language	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Forensic Pathology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Forgery	INL	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Gambling	INL	Street (STRT)
Gardening	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Graffiti	INL	Street (STRT)
Graphic Design	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Hallucination Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Herbal Medicine	INL	Street (STRT)
History: City	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Hold Breath	WIL	Athletics (ATHL)
Hypnosis	CHM	Street (STRT)
Immobilization	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Impersonation	CHM	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Information Smuggling	INL	Information (INFO)
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Kickboxing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Knife Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Knife Throwing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Law: Basic	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Criminal	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Legends	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Light Sleep	AWR	Street (STRT)
Linework	INL	Tech (TECH)
Lock Picking	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Math	INL	Information (INFO)
Mechanics	INL	Street (STRT)
Mediumship	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Microelectronics	INL	Tech (TECH)
Military Tactics	INL	Military (MIL)
Mind Reading	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Mnemonics	INL	Information (INFO)
Money	INL	Information (INFO)
Moneysaving	INL	Street (STRT)
Music	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Needles	AGY/ Combat	Street (STRT)
Network Protocols	INL	Tech (TECH)
Network Security	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Oratory	CHM	Sociological (SOC)
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Payphones	INL	Tech (TECH)
Pharmacology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Physical Therapy	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Physiological Control	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Plastic Surgery	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Plumbing	INL	Street (STRT)
Pocket Picking	AGY	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
Poison Tolerance	END	Street (STRT)
Poisons	INL	Military (MIL)
Precognition	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Production Chemistry	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: Application	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: Virus	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: VR	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Psychometry	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
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Sleight of Hand	AGY	Street (STRT)
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Social Work	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Specific Weapon Training	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Sports	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Staff Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Storytelling	CHM	Creative (CRTV)
Street Drugs	INL/AWR	Street (STRT)
Street Fighting: Armed)	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Street Fighting: Unarmed)	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Subway Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Suggestion	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Surgery	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Swimming	END	Athletics (ATHL)
Sword and Shield	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
System Crashing	INL	Tech (TECH)
System Prowling	INL	Tech (TECH)
Tae Kwon Do	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Torture	INL	Military (MIL)
Tracking	AWR	Street (STRT)
Trading	INL	Street (STRT)
Tunnel Surfing	AGY	Water Rats (Ch. 4)
Veterinary Medicine	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Visual Arts	AWR	Creative (CRTV)
Water Combat	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Weapon Making	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Wilderness Survival	INL	Street (STRT)
Wrestling	Combat	Combat (CMBT)

Vehicle Skills In Brief

Unlike normal skills, which list an easy, moderate and hard action that can be done with the skill, vehicle skills list a number of maneuvers that can be made with the skill. Each maneuver has its own difficulty. See the section on Vehicle Skills (p.60) for more.

Athletics (ATHL)

Acrobatics (AGY)- The PC has been trained in doing physical tricks involving swinging, jumping, rolling, balancing, etc. Primarily for the purposes of amusing others. Additional STH based rolls may be necessary for some stunts. Acrobatics adds +4 to jumping rolls per level.

Easy (10): Do cartwheels.

Moderate (20): Swing off of a fire escape, somersault in midair and land on feet.

Hard (30): Backflip off a building and land on a telephone wire.

Bicycle (AGY)- The PC has trained at riding on various terrain with racing and mountain bikes. Gives the following maneuvers (with +4 for each level after the first - see Vehicle Skills, p.60).

Jump (20): Jump the bike over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): By leaning over almost to the point of touching the ground, the PC can make tight turns.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tire, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Climbing (AGY)- The PC has trained in climbing with or without climbing tools.

Easy (10): Climb an old brick wall bare-handed.

Moderate (20): Climb a cliff face using climbing tools.

Hard (30): Climb a cliff face using no tools.

Hold Breath (WIL)- The PC has trained his or her body and mind such that the PC can hold his or her breath for a very long period of time (see p.56 for more on Oxygen Deprivation).

Easy (10): Hold breath for 2 rounds before END loss begins.

Moderate (20): Hold breath for 8 rounds before END loss begins.

Hard (30): Hold breath for 1 minute before END loss begins.

Legendary (40): Hold breath for 4 min. before END loss begins.

Running (SPD)- The PC has learned a very efficient stride and knows just how much energy to spend to maintain maximum speed throughout different length runs.

Easy (10): Run a burst at +1 SPD -or- run a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Run a burst at +2 SPD -or- run a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Run a burst at +3 SPD -or- run a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Skates (AGY)- The PC has trained in using roller-skates, rollerblades and motorized skates. PC can also use ice-skates or skis at additional difficulty. Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (20): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Rails (30): Ride on very thin things like railings or small ledges.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sports (AGY)- The PC has learned every popular physical sport in the city, including basketball, soccer, football, handball and tennis. To determine the outcome of the game, each player must make either a sports skill roll (easy difficulty) or AGY rolls (moderate difficulty). The opposed winner wins the game.

Swimming (END)- The PC is skilled at swimming for speed, distance and agility.

Easy (10): Swim at ¼ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Swim at 1/3 SPD -or- swim a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Swim at ½ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Bio/Med (BIO)

Acupuncture (INL)- Originally a traditional treatment from Asia, this has become an accepted (if not commonly used) form of modern medicine.

Easy (10): Ease pain from a damaged nerve.

Moderate (20): Ease nausea.

Hard (30): Completely anesthetize someone for surgery.

Addiction (INL)- The PC has studied the medicine and biology of addiction and various therapies for addiction.

Easy (10): Name the withdrawal effects of a commonly abused drug.

Moderate (20): Prescribe pharmaceutical therapy to help someone get over a drug addiction.

Hard (30): Determine what a person was addicted to by examining his or her neurons with a scanning-tunneling microscope.

Diagnosis (INL)- By examining a patient the PC can tell what disease a patient has and how bad they have it. A full examination includes observing physiological differences, getting a medical history, asking the patient to describe what they are feeling and doing medical tests.

Easy (10): Diagnose a disease by doing a full examination (see above).

Moderate (20): Diagnose without doing any tests.

Hard (30): Diagnose without tests, a history or communicating with a patient.

Legendary (40): Diagnose a rare disease by looking at a photo of a clothed patient.

Emergency Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in keeping patients alive long enough to get them to a hospital (or to a Black Med's home).

Easy (10): Clean and dress wounds (prevent additional bleeding and reduce chance of infection).

Moderate (20): Intubate a patient to make sure that air can continue to flow in to the lungs.

Hard (30): Do emergency surgery to reduce intracranial swelling.

Forensic Pathology (INL)- The PC knows how to examine a corpse using various tests to determine the cause and circumstances of death as well as the person's health during life.

Easy (10): Determine what caused a person's death.

Moderate (20): Determine what drugs a person has used over the past five years of his or her life.

Hard (30): Determine how many seconds it took for an injury to kill a person and what they were capable of (physically and mentally) during that time.

Pharmacology (INL)- The PC has studied the use of pharmacological treatments (drugs) for various diseases. The PC knows the side effects and possible interactions of pharmaceuticals. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis) is the prerequisite for any pharmacological treatment.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for pain.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for a late stage auto-immune disease infection.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a serious drug interaction.

Physical Therapy (INL)- The PC knows how to help people recover from serious injuries and illnesses. Therapy primarily involves exercises and stretching.

Easy (10): Help a patient recover from a stab wound to the thigh.

Moderate (20): Help a patient recover from a year in a coma.

Hard (30): Help a patient recover from serious brain damage.

Plastic Surgery (INL)- Prerequisites: Surgery (1). The PC has studied the use of advanced surgery techniques to change people's appearances.

Easy (10): Slightly improve someone's appearance.

Moderate (20): Make someone look completely different.

Hard (30): Do a complete sex change operation.

Psychotherapy (INL)- The PC has trained in helping people overcome psychological problems and traumas using various forms of therapy (talk therapy encourages people to discover their own feelings and mental processes, cognitive therapy teaches people to avoid illogical or harmful thoughts, role-playing therapy helps people prepare to deal with real-life situations and exposure therapy helps people deal with fears by slow exposure to the source of the fears).

Easy (10): Help a patient overcome a mild phobia.

Moderate (20): Help a patient deal with the psychological effects of a recent severe trauma.

Hard (30): Help a patient overcome a sexual fetish.

Legendary (40): Help a patient discover that he or she is paranoid and delusional.

Psychopharmacology (INL)- Prerequisites: Pharmacology (1). The PC has been trained in the use of pharmaceuticals to treat psychological problems. One of the major problems encountered in psychopharmacology is finding a treatment that has so few side effects that a patient can be convinced to stay on it.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for anxiety.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for schizophrenia.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a patient with manic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and a sexual fetish.

Surgery (INL)- The PC has been trained in the surgical treatments of illnesses. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis) is the prerequisite for any surgical treatment.

Easy (10): Remove a bullet from a thigh without causing additional bleeding.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a vat-grown heart.

Veterinary Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in the diagnosis, surgical and pharmacological treatment of common animal ailments. The PC can also treat humans at higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Splint a broken bone.

Moderate (20): Treat a common communicable disease.

Hard (30): Open-heart surgery.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a vat-grown heart.

Combat (CMBT)

Aikido (Combat)- This 20th century martial art was designed for non-violent self-defense. Gives the following moves with bare hands and feet only:

+4 to Disarm

+4 to Grab (Pain)

+0 to Knockdown

+4 to Dodge

+4 to Flip

+0 to Parry

Archery (Combat)- The PC has trained in using bows and crossbows for sport and for combat. Gives the following maneuvers with bows and crossbows:

- +4 to Simultaneous Draw and Strike (bows only)
- Double Aim (takes 2 actions, +10 to next action)
- +0 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Assassin: Armed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with weapons designed for that purpose (knives, garrotes). For assassin training using firearms, see Sniper (p.2#). Gives the following maneuvers:

- +4 to Grab (Strangulation) with garrote weapons.
- +0 to Special Action: Jugular Attack (Requires 1/2 or more bladed damage handheld weapon. If successful, victim loses 4 BLD per round until dead. AWR + AGY vs. 40).
- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed) with knives

Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with bare hands alone. Gives the following maneuvers with hands and feet:

- +4 to Grab (Strangulation)
- +0 to Special Action: Neck Breaking (Requires a hold on the victim's head. If successful, instant paralysis and death. STH + AGY vs. 40)
- +4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)

Boxing (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting with bare or gloved fists.

- +4 to Parry with forearms
- +0 to Strike with fists
- +4 to Blinding Strike with fists
- +0 to Knockout Strike with fists
- +4 to Pain/Stun Strike with fists

Club (Combat)- The PC has trained with all manner of clubs, including stick with nail, nightstick, pipe, baseball bat, telescoping baton and skullcrusher. Gives the following plusses with club weapons only:

- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)
- +0 to Wing
- +0 to Strike

Fencing (Combat)- The PC has trained in sport fencing. Gives the following plusses with fencing swords (or with other swords at -8):

- +8 to Parry
- +0 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- +4 to Jump

Florentine Sword (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting using two swords.

- No penalty for using paired swords.
- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Strike.
- +8 to Split Reaction: Parry and Simultaneous Strike

Immobilization (Combat)- This martial art is usually taught to police officers and security guards. The PC learns actions to take-down and immobilize opponents without hurting them. Gives the following actions:

- +8 to Grab (Pain)

- +4 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +0 to Grab
- +0 to Knockdown
- 4 to Crippling Attack
- 4 to Disarm

Kickboxing (Combat)- Gives the following actions with feet:

- +4 to Wing
- +4 to Parry
- +4 to Knockaway
- +0 to Strike

Knife Fighting (Combat)- This is one of the most common combat skills taught in the city. Gives the following actions with knives and daggers:

- +8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +4 to Jump
- +4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
- +0 to Dodge

Knife Throwing (Combat)- The PC has trained in throwing knives, daggers, tomahawks and throwing glass. Gives the following actions when throwing only:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- 4 to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Razormouth (AGY and Combat) This is a skill usually taught in prison where having a concealed weapon readily available 24 hours a day can save your life. Practitioners learn to keep a razor blade in their mouths and move it around quickly. They can subtly spit it in to their hands for use as a weapon or, if hands are incapacitated, can hold it between their teeth and slash at enemies with their heads.

Easy (10)- Talk with a razor in mouth without being cut.

Moderate (20)- Sleep with razor in mouth.

Hard (30)- Half-swallow razor so it will not be seen on a search of the mouth.

This is also a combat skill with the following actions:

- +0 to Slash Attack
- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)

Combat Skills In Brief

Each combat skills lists plusses to combat actions and reactions (described on p.70) with a certain set of weapons. At level 1 in the skill, the PC only gets the plusses listed. Ignore any plusses that give +0 or a penalty. For every additional level of the skill, add +4 to each one of these plusses (meaning that the zeroes and negatives will eventually become plusses).

For instance, at level 1 a skill might give +4 to Strike, +0 to Parry and -4 to Vital Strike with a weapon. At level 1, the only plus that really counts is the +4 to strike. At level 2 the PC will get +8 to strike, +4 to Parry and +0 to Vital Strike (now only the Vital Strike does nothing). At level 3: +12 to Strike, +8 to Parry, +4 to Vital Strike.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).



Self-Defense Weapons- Gives the following plusses with blinding powder, kubotans, pepper spray, and tasers.

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Blinding Strike
- +0 to Crippling Attack

Shiv (Combat)- This skill, usually taught in prison, trains the PC in using small concealed, homemade poking weapons (including shiv and sharpened railroad spike) and making surprise attacks on victims' vital organs. The PC gets the following plusses:

- +4 to Vital Strike
- +0 to Blinding Strike
- +0 to Crippling Strike
- +0 to special action: Extra-Vital Attack (Requires shiv or small dagger capable of at least 1 bladed damage. Success is an attack that pierces the spine, heart or temples and does 5 bladed damage. STH + AGY vs. 40)
- special action: Invisible Aim (The PC takes aim mentally, even while the weapon is still concealed, giving +4 to the next action.)
- +2 per level to initiative during surprise attacks only with shivs and small daggers

Slam (Combat)- This style of combat originated in the most violent corners of the city dance club and live music scene. Tightly packed people learned how to hurt people and how to avoid being hurt. Because many attacks involve elbows (which are harder to grab and pin than fists), Slam is a good counter to martial arts like Immobilization. Gives:

- +2 per level to actions with hands and feet while blinded
- +0 to Stomp
- +0 to Knockdown with elbows
- +6 to Paired Pain/Stun attack with elbows

+2 to Parry with forearms

+0 to special action: Blind Swing (Takes no blindness penalties. Does the same damage as a normal punch. STH + AGY +1d20 vs. 30)

+2 per skill level to STH feats to push through a crowd or avoid being pushed by a crowd.

Specific Weapon Training (Combat)- The PC has trained in one hand weapon that is not covered by any other skill (including fire axe, karits, pickaxe, pike, sledgehammer, tiger claws or whip). Gives the following:

- +4 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike -or- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack (choose one)
- +4 to Parry -or- +2 per level to initiative (choose one)

Staff Fighting (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with staves or with pole weapons being used as staves:

- +8 to Parry
- +0 to Strike
- +4 to Split Action Jump and Strike

Street Fighting (Armed) (Combat)- The PC has been trained in rough-and-tumble, no-rules, do-anything-to-win fighting using whatever objects are available that can be used as weapons. Gives the following plusses using improvised weapons (see p.72) or cheap weapons (baseball bats, chains, crate cutters, daggers, kitchen knife spears, knives, pipes, rippers, sharpened sticks, shivs, skullcrushers, stick with nails, swinging rocks, swords (rusty saw) and throwing glass):

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Simultaneous Strike
- +4 to Crippling Attack
- +0 to Slash
- 4 to Vital Strike (Bladed and Blunt)

Street Fighting (Unarmed) (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with hands and feet only:

- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +4 to Crippling Attack
- +4 to Blinding Attack
- +0 to Knockdown
- +0 to Stomp

Subway Fighting (Combat)- Because so many confrontations happen in subway cars, some fighters spend hour practicing on subway cars. This skill gives the following combat actions:

-special action: Propelled Jump Kick (Requires the subway car to be accelerating or decelerating such that it is pushing the PC forward towards the target. Success means the PC makes a powerful jump-kick that does full kick damage and is a knockdown attack. SPD + AGY vs. 25)

-special action: Swing Kick (The PC grabs a handrail and uses it to swing at his or her enemy, doing a powerful kick. If successful, victim takes two blunt damage. SPD + AGY vs. 25.)

+4 to Jump, only when the PC is jumping behind a vertical handrail pole (the PC avoids the attack by putting the pole between themselves and the opponent).

+4 per level to save vs. loss of balance, only on subway cars.

Sword and Shield (Combat)- The PC has trained at using a sword (or machete) in one hand and a shield in the other. Gives the following plusses:

- +4 to Parry
- +8 to Split Action Parry and Simultaneous Strike
- +0 to Knockaway

Tae Kwon Do (Combat)- One of the most popular martial arts in the world, nearly synonymous with Karate. Focuses on dropping opponents swiftly and efficiently using only hands and feet. Gives the following plusses while unarmed only:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike with fists and feet
- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
- +0 to Split Action Jump and Strike (kick)
- +0 to Parry (with the back of the hand)

Water Combat (Combat)- The PC has trained at fighting underwater. Gives the following plusses:

- No penalty to fighting underwater.
- +4 to Grab
- +0 to Knockaway

Wrestling (Combat)- Gives the following plusses:

- +0 to Grab
- +4 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +4 to Knockdown
- +4 to Tackle
- +0 to Flip

Creative (CRTV)

Blacksmithing (INL)- The PC can make artful or useful things out of metal using a hammer and anvil or moulds. PC can not make weapons with this skill.

- Easy (10): Create a simple metal tool.
- Moderate (20): Create a precise tool or weapon.
- Hard (30): Create machinery parts.

Brewing (INL)- The PC can make alcoholic beverages through fermentation.

Easy (10)- Make a bad tasting beer with enough alcohol to get drunk (and kill any bacteria in the water).

Moderate (20)- Make a tasty beer or a bad tasting brandy.

Hard (30)- Make a tasty brandy or an award winning beer.

Carpentry (INL)- The PC has learned how to build and modify buildings and other large structures.

Easy (10): Build a small temporary shelter that can withstand a storm.

Moderate (20): Build a full house over the course of several months.

Hard (30): Build a sea-worthy sailing ship.

Cooking (AWR)- The PC can cook in various styles.

Easy (10): Make a tasty meal in a well-stocked restaurant kitchen.

Moderate (20): Make a delicious meal in an Indie's kitchen.

Hard (30): Make a delicious meal made from food scrounged from a Well's fridge.

Legendary (40): Make an award-winning meal made entirely out of half-rotten food scavenged from dumpsters and cooked in tin-foil over a fire.

Gardening (INL)- The PC can grow and nurture crops for food, medicine, poison or decoration. Although this skill gives knowledge of different plants and what conditions they need to grow, it gives only a little knowledge of how to use the plants.

Easy (10): Grow plants in a greenhouse with grow-lights.

Moderate (20): Grow plants in an air-conditioned house with a small grow-light.

Hard (30): Grow plants in cracks in the asphalt.

Graphic Design (INL)- The PC is trained to use software to create beautiful or compelling images. With modern technology, computer generated images can be printed on just about anything: paper, cloth, wallpaper and even skin.

Easy (10): Create a pleasant background for an internet site.

Moderate (20): Create a good-looking company logo.

Hard (30): Create a piece of art that could be framed and sold, using only public domain images.

Music (AWR)- The PC can compose, read, write, play and improvise music. Choose one primary instrument (including voice) that the PC specializes in and up to three secondary instruments that the PC can play at -8.

Easy (10): Play a popular old tune.

Moderate (20): Make up an entertaining song (given hours of practice).

Hard (30): Make up an entertaining song (on-the-fly).

Legendary (40): Compose and play a hit song.

Photography (AWR)- The PC knows how to capture the exact look, feel and details of a scene that the PC wants to capture. The PC is also acquainted with how to maintain and use various photographic, developing and printing equipment.

Easy (10): Use studio lighting to photograph someone looking very nice.

Moderate (20): Capture the beauty of a dark alley.

Hard (30): Capture the action of a twilight battle using a cheap camera.

Sculpture (AWR)- The PC can carve beautiful or useful things out of rock or wood or form them out of clay.

Easy (10): Make a wooden doorstop.

Moderate (20): Make a useful pot out of clay.

Hard (30): Carve a stone statue that is a perfect likeness of someone.

Storytelling (CHM)- The PC can tell entertaining and engaging stories.

Easy (10): Entertain small children.

Moderate (20): Entertain young adults.

Hard (30): Entertain battle-weary veterans.

Visual Arts (AWR)- The PC has trained at painting, drawing and sketching.

Easy (10): Paint a pleasing picture.

Moderate (20): Draw a recognizable sketch of a person from memory.

Hard (30): Draw an illustration which is almost as detailed and realistic as a photograph.

Weapon Making (INL)- Prerequisites: Blacksmithing (2). The PC has trained in making weapons out of wood and metal.

Easy (10): Make a Sharpened Stick.

Moderate (20): Make arrows.

Hard (30): Make a sword.

Legendary (40): Make a superb samurai sword.

Information (INFO)

Computer Modeling (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (1). The PC knows how to use computer software to model real world systems. This is a great aid in all forms of engineering and for predicting the behavior of systems.

Easy (10): Model the aerodynamics of a vehicle design.

Moderate (20): Model the ecosystem in a fishbowl.

Hard (30): Model weather patterns or the stock market.

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). The PC knows the theoretical math behind modern cryptographic techniques and code-breaking techniques. The PC can analyze, modify and create cryptographic or code breaking algorithms (see p.65 for more).

Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.

Moderate (20): Aided encryption or decryption (p.65).

Hard (30): As part of a research team, discover new cryptographic techniques after months of research.

Information Smuggling (INL)- The PC is acquainted with all the various things that data can be hidden in, from the static in a music recording to the thread pattern in the cloth inside a shoe.

Easy (10): Hide information in a data file or computer chip.

Moderate (20): Hide information in a manufactured product.

Hard (30): List all the items on a smuggler's person that might contain hidden information.

Math (INL)- The PC has studied the various forms of mathematics and statistics that are behind modern science and computer technology.

Easy (10): Calculate the compound interest on a loan.

Moderate (20): Understand the parabolic equations behind cryptography.

Hard (30): Understand the fractal equations behind Artificial Intelligence.

Mnemonics (INL)- The PC has learned various tricks and techniques to be able to remember large amounts of information very accurately.

Easy (10): Hear a long phone address and remember it for days.

Moderate (20): Memorize the configuration of a chessboard and remember it for days.

Hard (30): Memorize several pages of a book (as fast as it can be read) and remember it verbatim for weeks.

Legendary (40): Memorize a 1000 digit cryptographic key and remember it for months.

Money (INL)- The PC understands the complex world of international currencies, banks, electronic money transfers, investments and taxes. Business owners use this skill to conduct international business. Criminals use it to launder money and create tax shelters. Hackers use it to tap in to electronic money transfers and steal (or create) money.

Easy (10): Explain what happens, step by step, when you pay for something on-line.

Moderate (20): Create a tax shelter.

Hard (30): Set up a bank.

Military (MIL)

Biological Weapons (INL)- The PC is familiar with the creation, deployment, effects of and defenses against chemical and biological weapons (most of which are strictly illegal throughout the world).

Easy (10): List the vectors of Markoff's Disease.

Moderate (20): Recognize the early stage effects of Harmon.

Hard (30): List the ingredients to make nerve gas. manufacturing nerve gas. manufacturing nerve gas.

Brainwashing (INL)- Prerequisites: Interrogation (1), Torture (1). The PC has learned how to use sleep deprivation, hunger, pain and intimidation to break someone's psychological resistance. Over the course of several days (or weeks) resistance is brought down to a point that the victim can be forced to say and subsequently to believe anything that the PC wants. Each day, the victims can make a moderate (20 difficulty) opposed WIL roll to avoid having their psychological defenses broken down any further (each opposed success by the victim delays the brainwashing by one day). Difficulty is based on what resources the brainwasher has and how quickly the brainwashing needs to be done.

Easy (10): Brainwash somebody over the course of 2 months, using a full staff, several different types of psychoactive drugs and a subliminal analyzer.

Moderate (20): Brainwash somebody over the course of 4 weeks using a few doses of Compliance Drops and an assistant.

Hard (30): Brainwash someone in one week with no assistance or special equipment.

Demolitions (INL)- The PC has learned how to manufacture, wire and place explosives for maximum effect. This skill does not teach how to disarm explosives (see Bomb Disarming, p.28).

Easy (10): Place a Shaped Charge to destroy the hinges on a tank door.

Moderate (20): Make a pipe bomb.

Hard (30): Bring down a large building (without harming surrounding buildings) using several sticks of dynamite and radio detonators.

Interrogation (CHM)- The PC has learned to combine psychological pressure with methods of lie detection to convince a person to tell the truth. There are many tricks to interrogation: One is to lie and convince the victim that the PC already knows the truth but the victim may benefit by telling his or her side of the story. Another trick is to manipulate the victim in to lying and then ask the right questions to trap the victim in a lie. The PC's manner (usually yelling constantly at the victim) prevents the interrogated from collecting his or her thoughts enough to lie well or figure out when the interrogator is lying. Some interrogation borders on mild torture or brainwashing: without ever touching the victim, the PC manipulates the victim's environment such that it slowly wears down the victim's will power.

Easy (10): Yell at someone to disrupt his ability to lie or detect lies (-7 to CHM & INL rolls).

Moderate (20): Manipulate someone in to letting herself be trapped in a lie.

Hard (30): Convince a person that telling the truth is to his advantage.

Military Tactics (INL)- The PC has studied military strategy, both in theory and in practice. The obvious application in the city is to help plan and execute battles between groups of people (typically gangs) so that the PC's side is more likely to achieve its goals.

Easy (10): Draw up a battle plan and explain it to a group of soldiers.

Moderate (20): Assess the military capabilities of a group of fighters by observing them.

Hard (30): From a vantage point where the battlefield can be seen, use radios to give orders to combatants and react to changes in the situation.

Poisons (INL)- The PC is well versed in the origin, use, effects and treatment of poisons. Note that this skill imparts very little knowledge of the secret Drake poisons (see the Drake Poisons skill, p.122).

Easy (10): Find something under a Well's sink that, when put on a blade, will make that blade more likely to kill.

Moderate (20): Manufacture Black Market Food Poison (p.102) from household chemicals.

Hard (30): Recognize a common poison by examining a dead body.

Torture (INL)- The PC has learned how to apply extreme amounts of pain to an individual without permanently injuring them, killing them or making them go unconscious. Victim gets an opposed WIL roll to resist the torture.

Easy (10): Force someone to do or say something when he has no real reason not to.

Moderate (20): Force someone to betray her country or friends.

Hard (30): Force someone to do or say something that will cause his own death.



Psychic Skills in Brief

Manipulative- Use WIL. When a psychic skill roll manipulates another person, that person gets two rolls: First is an opposed AWR roll (moderate difficulty) to sense that the manipulation is happening. If the victim notices the manipulation, he or she can make an opposed WIL roll (moderate difficulty) to block the psychic manipulation. Manipulative psychic skills use 2 pooled END per round (just like running or holding one's breath). Manipulative skills have modifiers listed on p.60. It is easiest to manipulate people by touch and when the PC is also effected by the manipulation. It is hardest to target a single individual at a distance.

Sensory- Use AWR. Sensory skills are made moderately more difficulty by the presence of a large crowd (psychic static). Sensory skills also increase in difficulty the farther away the thing or person being sensed is (like manipulative skills, touch is best).

Psychic Manipulative (PSY:M)

Belief Attack (WIL)- When the PC uses this skill, whatever the victim is hearing, reading or thinking (including thoughts implanted via the suggestion skill) will be believed as if the victim was certain they were true. Once the psychic influence ends, the PC can shed the beliefs the same way they would any other firmly-held false beliefs: by logically examining them. The difficulty is based on how likely the victim would be to believe the statement without the psychic influence. If a person already strongly believes something else, then both beliefs co-exist at once and the victim will follow the belief which best meets his or her drive for self-preservation.

Easy (10): Make a person believe "Potato chips are healthier than french fries."

Moderate (20): Make a person believe "Your friends are going to betray you."

Hard (30): Make a person believe "You can fly and jumping out of windows is fun."

Calm Attack (WIL)- PCs with this skill can force a depression of the central nervous system that leads to calmness, sleep or even unconsciousness. Difficulty is based on how excited the victims are and how much they want to stay awake (typically when people realize a psychic is trying to make them fall asleep, their desire to stay awake increases greatly). This skill can also be used to give people plusses to save vs. strong emotions or the effects of central nervous system stimulants (just as a good sedative would).

Easy (10): Make a tired, bored person fall asleep -or- Give +5 to save vs. fear/anger/stimulant effects.

Moderate (20): Make a person who has no real reason not to go to sleep take a nap -or- Give +10 to save.

Hard (30): Make someone who is trying to stay awake (like a security guard) fall asleep -or- Give +15 to save.

Legendary (40): Make an opponent fall asleep during combat -or- Give +20 to save.

Control Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to gain temporary control over a victim's motor functions. Note that since the PC is not receiving kinesthetic feedback from the victim's body and does not see things from the victim's point of view (unless they have very high levels of Clairvoyance) any action the PC makes through another person's body is very clumsy (-10 AGY).

Easy (10): Make someone's hand twitch just enough to make them miss a pistol-shot.

Moderate (20): Make someone drop a weapon.

Hard (30): Gain control of both arms for 1 action.

Legendary (40): Gain complete control of a victim's entire body (victim can make opposed WIL rolls every round).

Emotion Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to excite emotions in others that the PC is currently experiencing himself or herself. To make a person experience an emotion the PC is not experiencing is +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Make a person feel an emotion weakly.

Moderate (20): Make a person feel an emotion at a moderate level.

Hard (30): Make a person feel an emotion so strongly that they must make a save vs. emotion to avoid doing something stupid.

Legendary (40): Paralyze a person with euphoria or dysphoria.

Hallucination Attack (WIL)- The PC can make other people see, hear, smell and even feel things that aren't actually there. Note that the realism of these hallucinations depends, in part, on the PC's powers of imagination.

Easy (10): Make someone hear a soft murmur or see a faint shadow or glow.

Moderate (20): Make someone see a transparent image or hear a faint noise.

Hard (30): Make someone see and hear a person so vividly that he or she thinks the person is real.

Legendary (40): Blind and deafen someone with an obfuscating hallucination.

Pain Attack (WIL)- The PC causes another person to feel physical pain. The victim must make an opposed save vs. pain.

Easy (10): Annoying pain (no save necessary).

Moderate (20): Distracting -or- shocking pain (see p.55).

Hard (30): Distracting and shocking pain.

Legendary (40): Distracting and shocking pain and the victim's eyes hurt so much she can not keep them open.

Physiological Control (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to send messages to his or her own body or other people's bodies to trigger normal physiological actions. The scope of this skill is a lot like that of the Body Control mental program.

Easy (10): Make someone sweat.

Moderate (20): Make someone's immune system spend more energy fighting a particular disease (+7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Hard (30): Reduce blood flow to an injured area (no post-battle BLD loss).

Legendary (40): Reduce someone's blood pressure fast enough to make that person faint.

Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)- The PC has trained in defending himself or herself against psychic attacks. For every level of the skill, the PC gets +4 to the reaction Mental Block (p.71) and +4 to AWR rolls to notice that the PC is being psychically manipulated. The PC can also defend other people from psychic attacks (at +20 difficulty).

Suggestion (WIL)- The PC can implant ideas in people's heads. The victims do not necessarily believe these ideas (see belief attack) but if they fail their AWR rolls they will believe that the ideas came from their own minds and will consider them accordingly. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the idea.

Easy (10): "Skin Borgs are dangerous."

Moderate (20): "I should try looking in the box."

Hard (30): "A true anarchist does not try to destroy the government - a true anarchist refuses to recognize that there is a government and treats law enforcement the same as they do anyone else."

Psychic Sensory (PSY:S)

Clairsentience (AWR)- The PC can sense what another person is currently sensing. The PC must declare who they are trying to pick up senses from and what senses.

Easy (10): Get brief flashes of vision or sound.

Moderate (20): See exactly what a person is seeing -or- hear exactly what a person is hearing.

Hard (30): Experience all of a person's five senses.

Mediumship (AWR)- Prerequisites: Clairsentience (1). The PC can communicate with "ghosts" (leakage of psychic energy through subatomic wormholes that sometimes occurs during death).

Easy (10): Sense the presence of a ghost, experience brief flashes of the person's sensations of death.

Moderate (20): Hear the thoughts of a ghost, experience the full experience of the person's death.

Hard (30): Communicate telepathically with a ghost.

Mind Reading (AWR)- The PC can sense psychic energy coming from another person's mind that indicates what they are feeling and thinking. Can be used in combination with manipulative psychic skills to force people to think or remember specific things and thus psychically interrogate people.

Easy (10): Tell what emotions a person is experiencing.

Moderate (20): Hear occasional words from what the person is thinking.

Hard (30): Hear everything a person is thinking.

Precognition (AWR)- Prerequisite: Clairsentience (1). The PC is constantly 'open' to psychic communication coming from subatomic wormholes (that lead to other times and places) from his or her own mind or from the minds of others. As with mediumship, it is a matter of pure chance whether there will be an open wormhole and whether it leads to the future or past.

Easy (10): The faint impression of an object or a descriptive quality (e.g. "door" or "wet").

Moderate (20): Brief flashes of vision or hearing.

Hard (30): Full info from all senses for up to 5 seconds.

Psychic Sense (AWR)- PCs with this skill can "see" the psychic energy that comes from most vertebrate nervous systems (and, to a lesser degree, from decaying organic waste, burning plastic and some other rare chemical reactions). Most psychics see psychic energy as a faint glow or aura. The most useful aspect of this skill is the ability to sense people: to see them through walls or in the dark, to tell how active their nervous systems are, tell if they are using or are under the influence of psychic skills, and to distinguish between people by their psychic 'accent.'

Easy (10): In the dark, tell if there is another human in the room -or- tell if someone is using psychic powers.

Moderate (20): In the dark, see a person well enough to fight at only -7 penalty -or- tell how stimulated someone's nervous system is.

Hard (30): In the dark, fight a person at no penalty -or- distinguish between people by their psychic signatures.

Legendary (40): See what areas of a person's brain are most active.

Psychometry (AWR)- Prerequisites: Mind Reading (1), Clairsentience (2). Some types of matter (mostly organic matter that still has natural fats and oils, like wood, lawn clippings, desiccated corpses) can briefly pick up and resonate back psychic energy they have been exposed to, much like a rock that was near a fire may radiate heat for a short period after the fire has been removed. The PC has learned to sense those weak echoes and gain some sense of what has happened near an object in its recent past.

Easy (10): Tell if someone has been psychically attacked or has died near the object within the last hour.

Moderate (20): Sense a strong emotion that happened nearby the object within the last 24 hours.

Hard (30): Get flashes of sight and sound that someone experienced near the object in the last 24 hours.

Tech (TECH)

Anonymity (INL)- The PC knows how to access the internet without leaving any traces that could be used to track back to the user. This is typically done through free (but poorly advertised) anonymous re-sender servers operated by privacy advocates.

Easy (10): Send an anonymous email for a \$5 fee.

Moderate (20): Make an anonymous videophone call for free.

Hard (30): Access full-immersion VR -or- send money anonymously for free.

Bomb Disarming (INL)- The PC has learned how to disarm explosives. In combination with the surgery skill, this skill can be used to remove death borgs.

Easy (10): Dispose of a pipe bomb.

Moderate (20): Remove a death borg (requires surgery roll).

Hard (30): Disarm a briefcase nuke.

Chemical Analysis (INL)- The PC has learned to analyze the chemical makeup of samples.

Easy (10): Analyze a simple chemical using a handheld spectrograph.

Moderate (20): Analyze a complex chemical using a handheld spectrograph -or- analyze a simple chemical using a kid's chemistry set.

Hard (30): Analyze a mixture of complex chemicals using a handheld spectrograph.

Copy Protection (INL)- Prerequisite: Programming: Applications (1). The PC knows about the tricks that software companies use to prevent illegal copying and piracy and the tricks that software pirates use to defeat copy protection.

Easy (10): Determine what piracy group has broken copy protection on a piece of software.

Moderate (20): Write standard copy protection in to an application -or- break standard copy protection.

Hard (30): Break copy protection on classified R&D stage corporate software.

Data Pirating- Prerequisite: Internet Browsing (2). The PC has learned where people go on the internet when he or she wants to get pirated software and data. This includes knowledge of software trading rings, file sharing networks, and offshore pirated software net sites. When PCs use the skill to find pirated software, the amount of time it takes them depends on the level of success (success of 1 would be several days, success of 10 would be near instantaneous). A new character starts with \$1000 in pirated data per skill level, anything else must be pirated during gameplay.

Easy (10)- Find a \$10 (black market value) piece of pirated data for free on the net.

Moderate (20)- Find a \$250 piece of data.

Hard (30)- Find a \$1500 piece of data.

Legendary (40)- Find a \$3000 piece of data.

Denial of Service (INL)- Prerequisite: Network Protocols (1). The PC knows how to overload computers and network connections by flooding them with false requests or garbage packets. Such attacks are often 'distributed': the hacker takes over several computers and uses all of them to attack at once.

Easy (10): Slow a small net-site server to a standstill using fifty computers.

Moderate (20): Slows someone's internet connection to a standstill using ten computers.

Hard (30): Slow a major ISP's mail server using one computer.

Internet Browsing (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find anything on the web quickly, efficiently and cheaply. The PC also knows generally what types of things are available on the net, what are the technological and economic mechanisms that make them available and what are the motivations of the people who put them there. Please note that this skill only includes finding publicly available resources, it does not include anything that would require hacking or piracy to get.

Easy (10)- Find a recipe for Anise-White Chocolate Sauce.

Moderate (20)- Find the full text of a Victorian era treatise on the criminal underworld.

Hard (30)- Find the number of residents in a city housing complex for the year 2013.

Legendary (40)- Find a security camera picture of a friend picking his or her nose.

Jellynailing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). This is the art of forcing software to run on computers with less power, different hardware or a different operating system than the software was designed for. This usually involves running the program through an emulator (another program that executes the commands of the original program as if they were operating on a different system). No matter the skill of the user, the program will be slower (approximately twice as slow for each level the hardware is inadequate by).

Easy (10)- Run software intended for a slightly faster computer and a different operating system.

Moderate (20)- Write a translation matrix to run software using the wrong piece of hardware.

Hard (30)- Run modern software on a computer from a century ago.

Linework (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to network connections at connection closets and switch boxes.

Easy (10): Tap in to an apartment's network connection at the locked switchbox on the street.

Moderate (20): Pirate an unauthorized network connection from a switchbox.

Hard (30): Reconfigure a network connection closet to create a new network leg.

Microelectronics (INL)- The PC is fluent in the circuitry and microchips that power every modern electronic device. The PC can repair most electronic devices (given the correct parts).

Easy (10): Repair a computer by determining what part is not working and ordering a new one.

Moderate (20): Lay out a microchip design in a CAD program.

Hard (30): Alter the functioning of an electronic device by breaking off one of its microchips.

Network Protocols (INL)- The PC understands the hidden header information attached to every data packet that gets sent out on a network. The packet tells what the data is, who sent it, how it was routed, where it is going to, among other things. The PC also knows secret network queries and commands that network administrators use to diagnose network problems.

Easy (10): Probe a network to find out what type of network it is and what other networks it had access to.

Moderate (20): Send a packet from one network node so it looks like it's coming from another node on the same network.

Hard (30): Get a complete list of nodes on a network.

Network Security (INL)- The PC understands how to configure networks, servers and workstations to resist intrusion by hackers. The amount of success on a roll increases the difficulty for a hacker to find a hole in a network or station's security.

Easy (10): Configure a personal workstation to resist hack attempts.

Moderate (20): Configure a server to resist hack attempts.

Hard (30): Configure an entire network to resist hack attempts.

Operating Systems (INL)- The PC understands how to configure, repair and use operating systems (the programs that run on a computer and create an interface for running other programs). For every level in the skill the PC must choose an operating system that they specialize in (OpenFree/OpenCert, OpenMicro, Amicus, Mainframe 10 or GuildOS). The PC is at +10 difficulty to any OS he or she hasn't specialized in.

Easy (10): Hide files from casual searches -or- find hidden files.

Moderate (20): Configure an OS so it runs faster and crashes less.

Hard (30): Repair an operating system that has been trashed -or- run a command the current account does not normally have privileges to run.

Payphones (INL)- The PC is versed in the workings of payphones and paycomputers. The PC knows how to hack in to these machines (typically by getting in to the circuitry and crossing a few wires) to get free access or even spare change. This skill also works on vending machines at a higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Make free phone calls.

Moderate (20): Free paycomputer internet access.

Hard (30): Get a payphone to collect change and then drop it in to the coin return for the hacker.

Programming Skill Roll Failures

0 to -2: The program has several small errors in it which are not immediately apparent. For every 10 minutes of use the program has a 1 in 20 chance of crashing.

-3 to -4: For every 5 min. of use the program has a 1 in 6 chance of crashing.

-5 to -9: The program has so many errors in it that the PC can not run it for more than a few seconds at a time without it crashing.

-10 or less: The program will not run at all.

Production Chemistry (INL)- The PC has studied techniques for the manufacture of chemicals.

Easy (10): Recognize what type of chemicals a rig is set up to produce.

Moderate (20): Create a god-killer manufacturing lab from household and mail-order equipment.

Hard (30): Create a sibosin manufacturing lab.

Programming: Application (INL)- The PC knows how to program complex user interfaces that lets the average user take advantage of the computer's processing powers.

Easy (10): Create a graphing calculator.

Moderate (20): Create a full-featured word processor.

Hard (30): Create a programmer's suite for easily creating new applications.

Programming: Virus (INL)- The PC is familiar with the tricks utilized by viruses, worms, trojans and time-bombs.

Easy (10): Create a trojan that resembles a short VR movie but, when run, deletes files.

Moderate (20): Create an email virus which, if it can trick people in to running it, will send itself to others on the same network.

Hard (30): Create a worm which will hack in to network nodes and reproduce itself.

Programming: VR (INL)- The PC is familiar with programming of VR interfaces, movies, games or multiplayer VR universes.

Easy (10): Create a short (non-interactive) full immersion VR movie.

Moderate (20): Create a simulated training environment to teach kickboxing.

Hard (30): Create a massive game world for hundreds or thousands of players to interact, have adventures and meet pseudo-intelligent NPCs and villains.



Sniffing (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to the packets of data flowing through a network or an internet router and to search through the packets for a particular sender, receiver or data strings. Once found and isolated, packets can be read, blocked or modified. Note that most important information being sent across the internet is encrypted, so decryption rolls may be necessary to peek in to someone else's communication.

Easy (10): Find and read packets sent to a particular address.

Moderate (20): Find and read packets with a particular word in them.

Hard (30): Intercept and edit packets before they reach their destination.

System Crashing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows what to do with a system to make it stop working.

Easy (10): Make one particular program on a system stop working so that it has to be shut down and re-started.

Moderate (20): Make the whole computer locked up so that it must be manually rebooted.

Hard (30): Crash a computer such that it will not boot up afterwards without hours of repair work by someone with high levels in the Operating Systems skill.

System Prowling (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows all the tricks on how to do things on a computer without leaving any traces and without the system's manager being able to see that they are doing it. A hard (30) opposed Operating Systems roll can be used by a system manager to notice system prowlers (just as an opposed AWR roll can be used against prowling).

Easy (10): Erase the history of what internet sites one has browsed on a computer.

Moderate (20): Stop a system from registering that a particular user is currently logged in.

Hard (30): Create an administrator account on a computer that none of the other administrators can see.

Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Alarm Systems (AWR or INL)- The PC knows all about the various electronic alarm systems that protect buildings from thieves. The PC can recognize alarm systems (AWR) and determine how to bypass or disable them (INL). Sometimes AGY rolls are also required to disable or bypass the alarms without setting them off. See p.181 for information on different types of alarm systems.

Easy (10): Recognize a motion detector -or- Bypass infrared beams.

Moderate (20): Recognize a door sensor -or- Move very slowly past a motion detector.

Hard (30): Recognize pressure sensitive floor plates -or- Dress up in trash to fool a human-recognition computer.

Auto-Theft (INL)- The PC knows the various tricks for opening vehicles and hot-wiring them. Note that because there are few running cars in the city (and those that do run are gas guzzlers that very few people can afford to use) this skill is not as useful as it once was. Today it is as often used to break in to the vehicles people are living in to steal their possessions.

Easy (10): Open a door on a very old car using a long flat piece of metal.

Moderate (20): Hotwire an old car.

Hard (30): Hotwire a new car with a security system.

Disguise (INL)- The PC is familiar with the physical aspects of disguise: clothing, makeup, wigs, latex masks, platform shoes, etc. The PC can make himself or herself or someone else look different.

Easy (10): Make a young male look unrecognizable, even by close friends.

Moderate (20): Make a young male look like an old male or a young woman.

Hard (30): Make a person look exactly like another person (requires latex masks). The disguised person must use the Impersonation skill to act or sound like that person.

Escape Artistry (AGY)- Prerequisite: Lock Picking (2). The PC has learned the various techniques that stage magicians use to escape from various enclosures. Most of these escapes involve having a lock pick hidden on one's person and using contortion to retrieve it and get in to a position where a lock can be picked.

Easy (10): Escape from a pair of handcuffs.

Moderate (20): Escape from a straight-jacket.

Hard (30): Escape from a steamer-trunk wrapped in a chain with a padlock.

Forgery (INL)- The PC knows how to forge signatures, ID cards and other paper based documents. Most

attempts at forgery require an investment in equipment (ink, printers, lamination, etc.) which can range from a few bucks (for a cheap ID) to several thousand (for counterfeiting money).

Easy (10): Copy a signature.

Moderate (20): Create a photo ID.

Hard (30): Create counterfeit money.

Impersonation (CHM)- The PC learns to adopt the mannerisms, posture, accent and voice of another. The PC can try to impersonate someone's voice over the phone or, with a very good disguise, in person. The difficulty is based on how much contact the PC will have with those being fooled (walking by and waving 'hi' to someone is easier than having a long conversation) and how well those being fooled know the person being impersonated (close friends would be more difficult than casual acquaintances).

Easy (10): Wave hello to a casual acquaintance.

Moderate (20): Shout a few words at a co-worker.

Hard (30): Speak a few sentences with a friend.

Legendary (40): Have a long conversation with a lover.

Lock Picking (AGY)- The PC knows how to open locks, typically by putting tension on the lock and raking each pin in the lock (with a pick) until they stick in the proper position. This skill can be used in combination with the Microelectronics skill to pick electronic locks.

Easy (10): Pick the lock on a cheap filing cabinet.

Moderate (20): Pick a door lock.

Hard (30): Pick the lock on the change box on a payphone.

Pocket Picking (AGY)- The PC has learned how to put his or her hand in a person's pocket without the person noticing and to remove whatever is found there. The victim gets an opposed (moderate) AWR roll to sense the theft. Victims can also use common sense (e.g. knowing to check their pockets after someone has bumped in to them). Different pockets have different difficulties: a pocket inside a jacket or a pocket on tight jeans would be much harder than large external pockets on a bulky overcoat.

Easy (10): Bump in to a person, almost knocking him over, and remove one item from an external overcoat pocket.

Moderate (20): Walk past someone and pull something out of her pants pocket as the two pass.

Hard (30): While sitting next to someone on a subway, slit a tight jeans pocket with a razor blade and remove the contents.

Prowling (AGY)- The PC has practiced sneaking up on people, moving silent, quickly finding hiding places, crawling through shadows and blending in with the environment. Gives +4/level to prowling rolls (p.52).

Sociological (SOC)

Corporations (INL)- This is a study of the modern corporations of today.

Easy (10): Name all major multinationals and the major subsidiaries of each.

Moderate (20): Name banned corps, their locations and major sources of revenue.

Hard (30): Name and give brief biographies of the board of directors of a major multinational.

Foreign Language (INL)- The PC must take separate levels of this skill for each language he or she wishes to learn. Note that some languages are so similar that one language skill may be used to substitute for another at increased difficulty (e.g. substitute Foreign Language: Latin for Foreign Language: Italian at +20 difficulty).

Easy (10): Read and write text in the given language.

Moderate (20): Speak slowly about common things.

Hard (30): Have a normal-paced conversation.

Legendary (40): Speak with perfect, accent-less fluency.

History: City (INL)- The PC has studied the history of New York city and it's surrounding areas.

Easy (10): List the different names the city has had (e.g. New Orange, New Amsterdam).

Moderate (20): Tell what years a skyscraper was built in.

Hard (30): Determine what was on any given block 200 years ago.

Law: Basic (INL)- The PC has studied the basic principles of American and World law: where laws come from, what courts judge what cases, how cases are brought in front of a court, who can practice law in what situations, what the general legal remedies are for every type of legal problem and the general procedures for legal actions.

Easy (10): File an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief.

Moderate (20): File a complaint against an immoral lawyer with the state bar.

Hard (30): Research all relevant laws and cases for a given legal question.

Law: Criminal (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC has studied the criminal justice system and how to prosecute or defend a person who has been accused of committing a crime.

Easy (10): List the elements of murder.

Moderate (20): Figure out whether the 'deal' the district attorney is offering a criminal defendant is a good deal or not.

Hard (30): Get the evidence obtained from a bad (not quite legal) police search thrown out.

Legends (INL)- The PC has studied various myths and legends from around the world and various theories about the origins of these myths.

Easy (10): Tell who was the Greek god of thieves.

Moderate (20): Describe the various pictures distributed on the internet that are claimed to be Jeffrey Hernandez still alive.

Hard (30): Name the different types of vampires the Gypsies believe in and how to kill them.

Oratory (CHM)- The PC has been trained to speak before an audience, to speak persuasively to different types of people and to use cues from the audience to gauge which persuasive tactics are working and which aren't.

Easy (10): Write a speech designed to work on a particular audience (+4 to persuasion rolls).

Moderate (20): Notice when a strategy isn't working and change gears (PC can re-roll a bad persuasion roll).

Hard (30): Predict the arguments an opponent will make and pre-argue against them (-7 to the opponent's persuasion roll).

Social Work (INL)- The PC is acquainted with the various human services available via city, county, state and federal government programs. The PC understands

the massive (and largely corrupt) bureaucracies that provide these services and how to actually get people to the services meant for them.

Easy (10): Help someone fill out the paperwork to get on welfare.

Moderate (20): Help someone get on disability.

Hard (30): Help a mentally ill homeless person get in to a group-home.

Legendary (40): Get grant money to start a small new agency.

Street (STRT)

Animal Training (CHM)- The PC has learned to care for and train animals to serve useful functions. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the task and the natural 'trainability' of the animal.

Easy (10): Keep a dog alive and keep it from going feral.

Moderate (20): Train a dog to fetch thrown objects.

Hard (30): Train a dog to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Legendary (40): Train a cat to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Card Counting (INL)- Prerequisite: Gambling (1). The PC has learned to remember the values of cards that have been played to determine what cards are most likely to come up next and give a small (but in the long run very significant) advantage over other players.

Easy (10): Gain a +4 advantage in blackjack.

Moderate (20): Gain a +7 advantage in poker.

Hard (30): Gain a +7 advantage in poker when multiple decks are used.

City Knowledge (INL)- City knowledge is knowledge of the geography, culture, philosophy, sociology, economy and recent history of the city. Anything that a person learns by sole virtue of the hours he or she has spent on the streets is city knowledge.

Easy (10)- Figure out whose turf the PC is on by looking at graffiti -or- Navigate by finding common land marks.

Easy/Moderate (15)- Find the closest black market trader to the PC's home.

Moderate (20)- Figure out what turf the PC is on by looking at the cross streets.

Moderate/Hard (25)- Recognize the leaders of every city street gang by sight.

Hard (30)- Give any information listed anywhere in the PC Groups chapter -or- Recite the complete subway timetables.

Hard/Legendary (35)- Recognize, and tell the exact location of, some random alley by a photograph.

Legendary (40)- Figure out where in the city the PC is by smell alone.

Special Note: This skill is based on time spent on the streets and so follows different rules for skills advancement. Unless otherwise noted in the character class or an advantage/disadvantage, the PC gets 1 free level of this skill on starting the game and 1 free level for every 4th level advancement. The PC can not ever have more than 1 level of this skill per experience level.

City Knowledge Levels		
XP	Free	Max.
Level		
1	1	1
2	1	2
3	1	3
4	1	4
5	2	5
6	2	6
7	2	6
8	2	6
9	3	6
10	3	6
11	3	6
12	3	6

Drug Resistance (WIL)- The PC has been high on many types of drugs and has learned to resist their effects and act normal when necessary.

Easy (10): +1 to lost attributes, +4 to save vs. drug side effects.

Moderate (20): +2 to lost attributes, +7 to save vs. drug side effects.

Hard (30): +3 to lost attributes, +10 to save vs. drug side effects.

Gambling (INL)- The PC knows how to play various games of chance (mainly dice or card games). When playing a game the PC makes an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) roll against their opponents (who can make gambling skill rolls or hard (INL) rolls).

Graffiti (INL)- Not all gang members know how to read or write gang graffiti. The most basic messages (e.g. 'this is Risen turf') can be read by anyone with the City Knowledge skill. However, to read and write any complex messages, the graffiti skill is necessary. Note: Literacy is not required for this skill.

Easy (10)- Read an obituary written by a member of the PC's character class.

Moderate (20)- Read a battle description written by a member of another character class.

Hard (30)- Piece together a 30 year history of an area by examining different layers of graffiti.

Herbal Medicine (INL)- The PC knows how to use herbs, especially those which are grown in various indoor or outdoor gardens throughout the city to treat medical problems. These herbs are typically turned in to tea or alcohol extracts for consumption.

Easy (10): Treat headaches.

Moderate (20): Treat the symptoms of a flu.

Hard (30): Treat a major infection.

Hypnosis (CHM)- The PC can put willing people in to an altered state of consciousness where they are highly open to suggestion. There are many things hypnosis can not do: memories can not be made more accurate (although they may be made to seem more accurate), a person can not be forced to do something they truly don't want to do, attributes can not be increased (e.g. a person can not be made more agile). Hypnosis has had some success at revealing blocked memories, but it just as often causes the hypnotized person to make up completely fictional memories.

Easy (10): Help someone fall asleep.

Moderate (20): Give someone +4 to save vs. drug cravings.

Hard (30): Uncover blocked memories.

Light Sleep (AWR)- The PC has trained himself or herself to sleep warily such that any sign of danger will wake him or her.

Easy (10): Awaken if someone turns a light on.

Moderate (20): Awaken if someone is walking around by the PC's bed.

Hard (30): Awaken if any one of several roommates awakens.

Mechanics (INL)- The PC knows how to analyze, maintain, repair and create mechanical systems.

Easy (10): Sabotage a garage door opener by sticking something in a gear.

Moderate (20): Repair an old fashioned pocket watch -or- Repair an automobile transmission.

Hard (30): Engineer and build a secret elevator to a basement.

Money Saving (INL)- In the game, characters get money per week which is equivalent to whatever they make (from work, welfare, crime, etc.) minus whatever they spend on housing, food, clothes, etc. This skill allows the PC to save money and add to his or her weekly spending money. This skill must be used actively: for each week the character wants to use it, the character must spend about 4 hours comparison shopping, clipping coupons, etc. (as appropriate for the character class).

Easy (10): Increase free money per week by 5%.

Moderate (20): Increase free money per wk. by 15%.

Hard (30): Increase free money per wk. by 25%

Needles (AGY and Combat)- This skill represents experience using syringes.

Easy (10): PC gives himself or herself an intravenous injection.

Moderate (20): Draw blood painlessly.

Hard (30): Find a vein on a long-term drug addict and give an intravenous injection.

Legendary (40): Draw a drop of blood without the victim noticing (opposed AWR roll).

Needles is also a combat skill that gives the following (at +4 per level) when using syringes only:

+0 to Wing

+0 to Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Plumbing (INL)- The PC is familiar with the repair, maintenance and installation of plumbing. Among the homeless, this skill is highly valued because it allows water to be illicitly 'pirated' in to abandoned buildings.

Easy (10): Clean out a clogged pipe.

Moderate (20): Pirate water from a street line.

Hard (30): Create a hot water heater from old metal trash cans.

Poison Tolerance (END)- The PC has given himself or herself small doses of poisons and gained a limited tolerance to many poisons. This skill is not as complete or strong as the poison tolerance that Drakes instill on their own starting at a very young age.

Easy (10): Take three quarters the normal effects of Black Market food poison.

Moderate (20): Take half the normal effects of Black Market Knife Poison.

Hard (30): Take half the normal effects of Drake Fungus poison.

Seduction (CHM)- Every level of the skill gives +4 to seduction rolls (p.54). The PC can also use this skill to notice body language cues that tell how easy it would be to seduce someone and how well the PC is doing at a given seduction (moderate difficulty).

Sleight of Hand (AGY)- The PC has trained himself or herself to manipulate small objects so quickly that it can not be seen. A common trick is to direct a person's attention to one hand while the other is doing the actual change.

Easy (10): Make a penny "disappear" by palming it and dropping it in to a pocket.

Moderate (20): Replace one playing card with another (from a sleeve) while tapping the deck.

Hard (30): Make 10 lit cigarettes disappear by waving one's hand over them.

Street Drugs- Uses AWR or INL. This is an overall familiarity with common street drugs – how much they cost, what their effects are, what people act like when they are on them, etc. INL is used for remembering facts, AWR is used for recognizing things.

Easy (10): Name the going price for a drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug the PC currently has in his or her own bloodstream (AWR).

Moderate (20): Name the common withdrawal effects of a drug (INL) -or- Determine a drug's purity by looking at and tasting it (AWR).

Hard (30): Determine the street sale potential, if any, of a prescription drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug a person is on just by looking at them (AWR).

Tracking (AWR)- The PC has learned to follow the signs that show that an animal or human has passed through. This skill is most useful in wilderness areas (like the Hole) where mud can show tracks, but it can also be used in urban areas. Tracks grow significantly harder to follow the older they get (generally +1 difficulty per hour after they were made). Tracking can also be used to determine information about the people or animals being tracked: how fast were they going, did they have a limp, did they stop often, etc.

Easy (10): Track a large man who ran through the hole bleeding.

Moderate (20): Track a child who was exploring an abandoned building (by looking at disturbed dust).

Hard (30): Track a rat through the hole.

Trading- (INL)- This skill is a detailed knowledge of how much every item or service is worth to what group (people without this skill only know what something is worth to them personally).

Easy (10): Identify the general worth of a black market item.

Moderate (20): Identify what group in the city would be willing to pay most for a black market item.

Hard (30): Determine what other inner cities one could travel to get the best markup on a black market item.

Wilderness Survival (INL)- The PC knows how to find food, clean water and shelter in wilderness environments (including that of the hole). The PC must roll for each day in the environment. Difficulty is based on how much food, water and shelter is available in the environment.

Easy (10): Survive in the Hole during summer.

Moderate (20): Survive in the Hole during winter.

Hard (30): Survive in the desert.

STEP SEVEN - CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

In Brief: Available money set by character class.

Starting Equipment

As a Street Person, the PC will get free equipment and services to start:

- A room in an abandoned building that can be locked from the inside or outside with a padlock.
- A padlock.
- Several candles and a lighter.
- Old sheets and blankets for use as a bed.
- Several buckets: for drinking water, for washing water and for elimination.
- One outfit with shoes, gloves and a jacket.
- A few cans of food and a pan for cooking in.

Purchasing Equipment

The PC starts with an amount of money listed in the PC's character class description. Buy equipment and services listed in Chapter Three: The Market. The GM may disallow some purchases that would be unreasonable for the PC (especially those items that are listed as "Unavailable").

Be sure to note which equipment is being stored at home (or hidden somewhere else) and which equipment the PC regularly carries on his or her person. Check encumbrance, p.54 for more. The weight of equipment a PC can carry without minuses is STH times 5 lbs.



STEP EIGHT - BONUS CHARACTERISTICS

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages listed below, you can adjust the PC (by gaining and spending Bonus Points) in the following ways:

Extra or Fewer Attribute Points: 1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

Extra or Fewer Health Attribute Points: 3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Points

Extra or Fewer Skill Points: 1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

Extra or Fewer Money: 1 Bonus Point = \$125.

Example: *A PC starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), \$375 less than normal (-\$375 = +3 BP) but starts with 13 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 90 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. For instance, a player may the PC to have the Art Patron advantage, only to have that Art Patron killed during the first five minutes of game play, meaning that advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted. On the other hand, the PC may save someone's life and gain the equivalent of Ally: Outgroup within five minutes of game-play. A PC might start with Addiction: Opiates, and declare in the first minutes of game play that she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, he or she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give special advantages and disadvantages to the PC regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Advantages

Ally: Ingroup (5 BP)
 Ally: Outgroup (3 BP)
 Ally: Parents (3 BP)
 Ambidextrous (2 BP)
 Androgynous (1 BP)
 Art Patron (3 BP)
 Contact: Locals (3 BP)
 Contact: Wise (2 BP)
 Drug Resistant (4 BP)
 Dumpster Stomach (2 BP)
 Ethnic Group (4 BP)
 Experienced (5 BP)
 False Identity (5 BP)
 Free Surgery (5 BP)
 Good Rep (4 BP)
 Innate Talent: Brawler (15 BP)
 Innate Talent: Creative (10 BP)
 Innate Talent: Math (4 BP)
 Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (5 BP)
 Innate Talent: Psychic (15 BP)
 Innate Talent: Technical (8 BP)
 Instructor (10 BP)
 Low Sleep Need (2 BP)
 Minister (2 BP)
 Multilingual (2 BP)
 Pain Experienced (2 BP)
 Part Time Job: Below Board (4 BP)
 Physically Attractive: Minor (2 BP)
 Physically Attractive: Major (6 BP)
 Potential Genius (10 BP)
 Prison Baby (10 BP)
 Prison Experience (5 BP)
 Sense of Direction (1 BP)
 Special Armor (2 BP)
 Special Computer (2 BP)
 Special Pet (3 BP)
 Special Weapon (3 BP)
 Stone Face (1 BP)
 Training: Corporate (3 BP)
 Training: Drug Lords (4 BP)
 Training: Military (5 BP)
 Vampirism (5 BP)
 Word (5 BP)

Disadvantages

Addiction: Alcohol (10 BP)
 Addiction: Amphetamines (17 BP)
 Addiction: Chomper (25 BP)
 Addiction: Escape (10 BP)
 Addiction: God Killer (25 BP)
 Addiction: Inhalants (15 BP)
 Addiction: Mauler (30 BP)
 Addiction: Maxin (10 BP)
 Addiction: Multi-Drug (10 BP)
 Addiction: Nicotine (5 BP)
 Addiction: Opiates (17 BP)
 Addiction: Slave (30 BP)
 Addiction: Trace (30 BP)
 Allergy: Deadly (4 BP)
 Allergy: Incapacitating (2 BP)
 Bad Rep (4 BP)
 Blind (10 BP)
 Chronic Pain (2 BP)
 Clumsy (2 BP)
 Colorblind (1 BP)
 Crush (1 BP)
 Deaf (5 BP)
 Debt: Life Debt (1 BP)
 Debt: Loan Shark (1-5 BP)
 Debt: Restitution (2 BP)
 Drug Sensitivity (2 BP)
 Enemy: Ex (2 BP)
 Enemy: In Gang (4 BP)
 Enemy: Parents (2 BP)
 Enemy: Stalker (2 BP)
 Epilepsy (2 BP)
 ESL (2 BP)
 Fried (4 BP)
 Gang Outcast (10 BP)
 Gang Probation (2 BP)
 Haunted (2 BP)
 Hemophilia (4 BP)
 High Sleep Need (1 BP)
 Hunted: Colin (8 BP)
 Hunted: Corporation (5 BP)
 Hunted: Drug Lords (10 BP)
 Hunted: Federal Government (5 BP)
 Hunted: Gang (4 BP)

Hunted: Police (6 BP)
 Hunted: Serial Killer (3 BP)
 Illiterate (8 BP)
 Inexperienced: City (5 BP)
 Inexperienced: World (8 BP)
 Institutionalized (4 BP)
 Learning Disability (3 BP)
 Lookalike (1 BP)
 Malnourished (5 BP)
 Memory Gaps (1 BP)
 Missing Arm (5 BP)
 Missing Eye (5 BP)
 Missing Leg (5 BP)
 Mute (7 BP)
 Night Blindness (3 BP)
 No Healthcare (2 BP)
 Obese (2 BP)
 Old (15/decade BP)
 Only Parent (10 BP)
 Parole (4 BP)
 Perv Bait (2 BP)
 Physically Unattractive: Minor (2 BP)
 Physically Unattractive: Major (4 BP)
 Poor Hearing (2 BP)
 Poor Vision (2 BP)
 Pregnant (15 BP)
 Recovering Addict (3 BP)
 Sickly (4 BP)
 Street Mouth (1 BP)
 Stupid Relatives (3 BP)
 Terminal Illness (17 BP)
 Thin Bones (2 BP)
 VD: Annoying (2 BP)
 VD: Deadly (20 BP)
 Virgin (1 BP)
 Weird Brain (1 BP)
 Young (7/yr. BP)

Advantages

Ally: Ingroup (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- An older member of the PC's character class has taken a liking to the PC. The ally is older, more skilled and more powerful than the PC. The ally looks after the PC by giving advice and by trying to keep the PC out of trouble.

Ally: Outgroup (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC starts the game with an NPC who is a friend or ally and is a different character class from the PC. The ally will try to help the PC whenever possible (so long as it doesn't hurt or put the ally in danger) and the PC may be required to return the favor every once in a while. When choosing this advantage, be sure to note what group the ally belongs to and what the nature of the relationship with the PC is.

Ally: Parents (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitation: PCs in street families can not purchase this advantage since they already have it. Unlike most young people in the city, the PC's parents both know what the PC does on the streets and try to support the PC. The PC's parents live in the city, are of the same socioeconomic class as the PC, and are good for the occasional loan, emotional support, place to crash, advice and other similar favors.

Ambidextrous (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is almost equally comfortable using either hand for precision tasks. PC suffers only a -2 penalty for using paired weapons.

Androgynous (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Given the right makeup, clothing and perhaps a little padding, the PC looks equally normal, attractive and convincing as a male or female. PCs with this advantage and a Physically Attractive advantage do not lose the advantage while crossdressing.

Art Patron (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must have at least 3 levels in a creative skill. The PC has a wealthy fan of his or her art who is willing to buy it at more than the normal market price and who is willing to do other little things to help the PC make it as an artist. Gives +\$75/wk. for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art.

Contact: Locals (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The character knows a lot of people around the neighborhood. This includes neighbors, black market traders, local shop/restaurant/bar owners and neighborhood homeless people. They all know the character, know that he or she is an 'alright' person and will make some attempt to let the character know if they see something of interest going down.

Contact: Wise (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC knows somebody who has had a lot of experience living in the city (has the skills City Knowledge (5) and History: City (2)) and 15 levels in other skills from diverse fields. The contact also has wisdom born of experience and will almost always give useful advice.

Drug Resistant (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry is such that psychoactive drugs have less of an effect on them than they do on the average person. Gives +7 to save vs. drug effects. Does not help save vs. drug addiction and cravings.

Dumpster Stomach (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC grew up eating food which had not been properly handled and refrigerated. The PC has developed, over the years,

a very impressive tolerance to food poisoning and other forms of food contamination. The PC gets +10 to save vs. diseases and toxin effects from bad food.

Ethnic Group (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must take either the Bilingual advantage, the ESL disadvantage or 3+ levels of Foreign Language skill. Whatever other organization or class the PC belongs to, he or she also belongs to a small community of immigrants living in the city. The PC has spent all or some of his or her youth in the city. The PC understands American and City culture better than most of his or her fellow immigrants. Thus the PC is often called on to interpret for or represent his or her people. This additional duty does not go unrewarded: the PC can expect favors and free stuff from older member of their community, who realize what a valuable resource the PC is (even if they are secretly afraid of how much of the city has rubbed off on the PC).

Experienced (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has been around on the streets for a while before finding his or her place in the world and has a lot more city experience than most other level ones of the same class. The PC starts with one extra level of City Knowledge. The PC also gets a little more respect than some of his or her younger peers.

False Identity (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has spent years establishing a false identity. This identity has a fake ID, sparse (but believable) credit and rental history and a bank account. What the PC doesn't have is the capstone of a false identity: a birth record that would establish citizenship and allow the PC to get welfare or a legitimate job under that name.

Free Surgery (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- At some point in the PC's past he or she had access to a surgeon willing to do work free of charge. During character creation the PC can purchase any body modification and pay no surgery costs.

Good Rep (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Deserved or not, the word among the PC's social circle (in other words, the PC's character class) is that the PC is someone special. Whatever is valued in the PC's circle (e.g. toughness, kindness, intelligence, bravery, loyalty, etc.), that's what people associate with the character's name. This rep will last about a year before most people forget about it.

Innate Talent: Brawler (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has been getting in fights since he or she was a little kid and fighting comes natural to the PC. The PC gets +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to initiative, and a +3, a +2, and a +1 to any actions or reactions of the character's choice (the pluses can not be put on the same action or reaction).

Innate Talent: Creative (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- This advantage gives no pluses to creative skill costs and give no pluses to skill rolls. However, when the PC does succeed at a creative skill, the effect is beautiful or evocative in a way that no one else in the world could produce. For example: A PC with the cooking skill and decides to create a new recipe for Fajitas, that recipe will be as good as tasty or horrible as the roll dictates, there will not be any Fajita recipe in the world like it.

Innate Talent: Math (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC is a mathematical prodigy. Gives -2 to Information skill costs (min. 2) and +4 to all Computer Modeling, Physics, Cryptography and Math skill rolls.



Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a brain that is wired very unusually. The PC has the potential to be a very powerful psychic, but using this ability causes severe neurological side effects. The PC can purposefully limit his or her powers (-10 to psychic skill rolls) with no side effects. When using his or her full potential the PC gets +7 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills), +5 pooled END for psychic purposes, but the PC suffers from one of the following side effects. The PC can choose multiple side effects (the advantage costs 2 BP less for each additional side effect, minimum cost of 1 BP).

Pain: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she gets an incredibly painful headache. The PC must make hard (30 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain (see p.55). The headache lasts 2d4 hours.

Fainting: The next round after the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she must make a hard (40 difficulty) save vs. unconsciousness (see p.52).

Psychosis: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she must make a hard save vs. hallucinations and delusions. The hallucinations and delusions are bizarre in quality and last 1d4 minutes.

Depression: After each time the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she falls in to a deep depression. The PC feels a lack of pleasure and interest in anything he or she normally enjoys or finds exciting. The PC feels that everything is going terribly wrong (even if everything is actually going well). The PC must make hard saves vs. dysphoria to get out of bed each day. The PC suffers from full sleep deprivation (p.56) no matter how long he or she stays in bed. The depression lasts for 2d6 days.

Seizures: The next round after using a psychic skill, the PC make a moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. seizure (see p.57).

Innate Talent: Psychic (Costs 15 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Can not be taken together with the Painful Psychic advantage. The PC has a natural talent for psychic skills. The PC gets +4 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills), +4 END for use in psychic abilities and -4 to all psychic skill costs (min. 5).

Innate Talent: Technical (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- The way the PC thinks makes it easier for the PC to understand how technology works and how to interface with it. Gives -4 to Tech skill costs (min. 5) and +4 to Tech skill rolls.

Instructor (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has a very skilled mentor who is willing to help train the PC free of cost. Choose one of the following:

Doctor: -4 to Bio/Med Skill costs (min. 4), -2 to Intellectual (min. 6).

Fighter: -4 to Combat (min. 5), -2 to Athletics (min. 7), -2 to Military (min. 7).

Thief: -4 to Thief/Espionage (min. 5), -2 to Street (min. 5).

Hacker: -4 to Tech (min. 4), -3 to Information (min. 5), -2 to Intellectual (min. 5).

Artist: -4 to Creative (min. 3), -2 to Sociological (min. 5).

Psychic: -6 to Psychic: Exotic (min. 15), -6 to Psychic: Manipulative (min. 10), -6 to Psychic: Sensory (min. 10).

Academic: -4 to Intellectual (min. 4), -4 to Sociological (min. 4).

Low Sleep Need (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has never needed as much sleep as the average person. The PC is happiest with about 6 hours of sleep per night and can sleep only 4 hours for several nights in a row with no detectable loss of abilities.

Minister (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is an ordained minister of a generally recognized church. The PC can marry people, gain access to places the general public can't (especially as a chaplain in hospitals, prisons, disaster scenes) and gets some measure of respect from members of that church. Note that being ordained does not guarantee employment at any church.

Multilingual (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was raised hearing and speaking two languages. Because of this, the pathways in the PC's brain have formed such that the PC can more easily learn new languages. The PC can choose 2 languages to be completely fluent in. Skill costs for Foreign Language and Kalor Language are -2 (min. 2).

Pain Experienced (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point in his or her past, the PC experienced quite a lot of pain for quite a while. The PC has learned how to handle pain and act normally while in pain. Gives +5 to save vs. pain.

Part Time Job: Below Board (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has a job that never gets reported to any government agency. The job doesn't pay much but the PC doesn't need to pay taxes, provide proof of citizenship or have public assistance adjusted because of the extra income. The PC works 4 hours a day 5 days a week and will be fired if he or she misses 3 shifts in a month. The PC can also be fired (or put on an unpaid vacation) if the employer thinks authorities might be investigating. The PC gets +\$35/wk. The most common below-board part-time jobs in the city: assistant to a black market trader, maid, exotic dancer and light manufacturing.

Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her more attractive to people who are interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Attractive: Major (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her

very attractive to those with an interest in the PC's gender. Gives +8 to seduction rolls.

Potential Genius (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's brain is wired differently from other peoples' such that the PC has incredible mental potential. The cap for the PC's INL is raised from 20 to 25.

Prison Baby (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC spent much of his or her early childhood in prison, being raised by a parent who was a prisoner there. The PC might have stayed with a parent or parents (in a segregated area of the prison), all the way until age ten. After ten the PC would have been forced to go to a foster home, orphanage or juvenile prison. The PC has been exposed to a lot of dangerous criminals and has had access to a lot of criminal skills. If prison is the "university of crime" then the PC is like a child who grew up attending university classes. The PC gets Back to Wall (3) (see text box), Light Sleep (2), Shiv (1), Razormouth (1), Law: Criminal (1), -4 to Combat skill costs (min. 3), -6 to Thief/Espionage (min. 3), -4 to Military (min. 3). Prison babies typically have quite a few prison tattoos and a surgery scar on his or her rib cage (from the tracking and control device).

Back to Wall (AWR)- A special skill taught only in prisons. The PC has learned to habitually keep his or her back to something at all times.

Moderate (20): the GM must inform the PC of any time his or her back is exposed

Prison Experience (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has spent time in prison where he or she had the opportunity to pick up a lot of useful criminal skills. Gives -2 to CMBT skill costs (min. 4), -4 to THIE (min. 4), -2 to MIL (min. 4). The PC can buy levels in the special skill Back To Wall (see text box) and the skills Shiv and Razormouth for 4 skill points per level.

Sense of Direction (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an inherent ability to sense what direction he or she is facing. Roll this as an AWR feat with a difficulty based on the number of cues available (things like being indoors, being hit in the head or being in another part of the world would increase the difficulty).

Special Armor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC gained possession of a suit of armor that he or she would have never been able to afford otherwise. The PC might have found it, inherited it, won it in a card game, taken it off of a dead body, etc. Choose from Historical Reproduction Plate Armor (p.93), Modern Chainmail (p.93) or Spiked Armor: Poison (p.94).

Special Computer (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was lucky enough to come across a very high-level computer at some point in his or her past. The computer is no longer as top-of-the-line as it was years ago, but it still considerably powerful and the PC has been using it so long that he or she is very good with it (+7 to skill rolls using the computer). Choose from: Laptop: Military, Desktop: Developer; Palmtop: Combo or Laptop: New.

Special Pet (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has a trained animal that has been the PC's loyal friend and companion for many years. The PC has the pet specially trained (choose 5 commands the pet knows) and the PC and the pet communicate well. Choose from Dog, Chimpanzee, Horse or Eagle.

Special Weapon (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC was lucky enough to gain possession of a very special weapon which was much better than the PC could have any hope of getting a hold of at that period in his or her life. Because the PC has trained almost exclusively with this weapon, he or she gets +4 to any roll using the weapon. Choose from:

Skullcrusher: As per p.107, but by virtue of a very sharp rock, does an extra 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed).

Bow (Compound): As per p.106 but +2 ft. FR, +100 ft. MR. The bow is also made of a nearly indestructible material which can be used to parry or as a 1 blunt damage weapon.

Sword (Broadsword): As per p.107 but it is weighted and balanced perfectly (no hard strike).

Sword (Katana): As per p.153 but because of incredible sharpness: +1 bladed damage and +2 to the pierces-as damage.

Stone Face (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Since he or she was born, emotions have never registered very strongly on the PC's facial expressions, body language, voice or physiology. The PC's emotions are just as strong as anyone else's (though the PC may have trouble convincing people of that fact). +10 difficulty to any attempt to detect lies or emotions in the PC.

Training: Corporate (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been in a corporation and has learned in the best corporate training programs. Gives -4 skill costs (min. 3) to one of the following (choose only one): Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual, Tech or Sociological. The PC gets Corporations (1).

Training: Drug Lords (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was once a member of the Drug Lords' organization and learned a lot about how the Drug Lords work (the PC does not know where any of the lords live, nor who really runs the Drug Lords). The PC gets -4 to the following skill costs (min. 3): Pistol, Addiction, Production Chemistry, Street Drugs. The PC also starts with \$1000 worth of drugs, armor and weapons.

Training: Military (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has been trained in a military organization. The PC gets -4 to Athletics skill costs (min. 3), -3 to Combat (min. 4), -4 to Military (min. 3). PC gets Rifle (1).

Vampirism (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has become infected with Mitochondrial Vampirism, an ancient disease (recently resurrected by archeologists) that may have been responsible for some elements of vampire myths. Gives +4 INCY, +4 BLD, +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD. The PC must eat 10 times the amount of sugar that normal people do, more if the PC has been doing heavy activity or have been oxygen deprived. For computing hunger damage, six hours of "normal" activity counts as a day, 15 minutes of heavy activity counts as a day and 1 minute

of oxygen deprivation counts as a day. Note that fats and carbohydrates can be converted by the body in to sugars, but this takes so long that the PC may starve to death in the meantime. Sugary food is converted in to glucose (blood sugar), and consuming (or taking intravenously) glucose is faster still.

Word (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a reputation within his or her class, and even beyond that, of being someone who can be trusted to be honest and to keep his or her word. This advantage will evaporate quickly if the PC acts inconsistently with this reputation.

Disadvantages

The Catch-All Rule

If a disadvantage doesn't have the potential to cause problems for the PC, the GM can choose to give fewer (or no) Bonus Points for it. For instance, it is ridiculous for an Addict PC to take the Bad Rep disadvantage with the "Liar/Backstabber" choice because all addicts already have that rep. The PC and the GM should work together to either lower the point value of the disadvantage (the PC might decide that, because of the PC's particular situation and life goals, that disad is worth 1 point) or to make the advantage worse to match the points awarded (the GM might rule that the PC is so infamous a liar and backstabber that his or her very name is used in all city social circles as a slang term for lying and backstabbing).

Addiction: Alcohol (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to alcohol (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.85 for the drug profile of alcohol. The PC has been using alcohol daily for 1 year so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.85). Note: It costs an alcoholic approximately \$35/wk. to buy enough alcohol to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Amphetamines (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to amphetamines (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.86 for the drug profile of amphetamines. The PC has been using amphetamines for 6 months so far and suffers from ulcers and malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY), see p.86 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an amphetamines addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough amphetamines to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Chomper (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to chomper (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.87 for the drug profile of chomper. The PC has been using chomper for 6 months and suffers from lost hair and teeth (-5 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-6 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects) and Anemia (-1/2 BLD), see p.87 for more long term effects. Note: It costs a chomper addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough chomper to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Escape (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to escape (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.88 for the drug profile of escape. The PC has been using escape for 6 months so far and suffers from blunted personality (PC's feelings and opinions are not very strong), insomnia (1 in 6 chance each night of not being able to sleep) and poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls), see p.88 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an escape addict approximately \$140/wk. to buy enough escape to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: God Killer (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to God Killer (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.88 for the drug profile of God Killer. The PC has been using God Killer regularly for 6 months so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.88). Note: It costs a God Killer addict approximately \$70/wk. to buy enough God Killer to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Inhalants (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to inhalants, which are a number of commonly available chemicals (paint, airplane glue, etc.) which displace oxygen going to the brain and causes euphoria and dissociation. Inhalants costs about \$2/dose (though they are most often shoplifted) and a typical addict must use 2 doses a day

to prevent cravings. The PC suffers steady brain damage: -1 AWR, -1 AGY, -1 INL, -1 WIL for every 6 months of daily use. The PC has been abusing inhalants for about 3 months. Inhalants have a Craving Difficulty of 15.

Addiction: Mauler (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to mauler (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.89 for the drug profile of mauler. The PC has been using mauler for 3 months and suffers from brain damage (-3 INL). See long term effects, p.89. Note: it costs a mauler addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough mauler to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Maxin (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to the smart drug Maxin (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.90 for the drug profile of Maxin. The PC has been using Maxin for 1 year so far and suffers from weakened bones (-1 BDY). See long term effects, p.90. Note: It costs a Maxin addict approximately \$140/wk. to buy enough Maxin to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Multiple Addictions

The PC can not take more than one of the following addiction disadvantages for points. To create a PC who does any drug he or she can get a hold of, take the Addiction: Multi-Drug disadvantage.



Addiction: Multi-Drug (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is not addicted to any one particular drug. He or she has a psychological addiction to being intoxicated. The PC's basic problem is that he or she can not deal with living life in a sober state. The PC lost or never developed the psychological mechanisms to deal with unfiltered reality. The PC can stand to be sober for short periods, typically while he or she is doing something to keep busy (like hustling money to get drugs). When evening rolls around and nothing stands between the PC and examination of his or her life, the PC must make a craving roll (WIL + 1d20 vs. 20) to avoid finding some intoxicant. The PC will use whatever he or she can get a hold of: alcohol, marijuana, god killer, hallucinogens, inhalants, pain killers, amphetamines, etc. He or she may blow all available cash on week-long drug binges which leave the PC with debt, health problems and social problems (that are almost as good of a distraction as intoxication). Typical multi-drug addicts can spend as little as \$35/week on drugs (though a typically multi-drug addict will spend more on better drugs when he or she has the money).

Addiction: Nicotine (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically addicted to nicotine (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.87 for the drug profile of nicotine. The PC has been smoking for 2 years and suffers from emphysema (-1 END) and increased risk of cancer and stroke. See long term effects, p.87. Note: It costs a smoker approximately \$15 to \$49/wk. (depending on what they smoke) to buy enough tobacco to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Opiates (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to opiates (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.90 for the drug profile of opiates. The PC has been using opiates for 6 months so far and suffers from a poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), see long term effects, p.90. Note: it costs an opiate addict approximately \$56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Slave (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Slave (which has a craving difficulty of 35). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.91 for the drug profile of Slave. The PC has been using Slave for 1 year so far and suffers from weight loss (-1 BDY), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects). See long term effects, p.91. Note: It costs a Slave addict approximately \$56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal.

Addiction: Trace (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Trace (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.57 for addiction rules and p.91 for the drug profile of Trace. The PC has been using Trace for 1 year so far and suffers from damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-1 AGY) and reddish skin. See long term effects, p.91. Note: it costs a trace addict approximately \$49/wk. to buy enough Trace to avoid withdrawal.

Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has a serious sensitivity to some common food item (e.g. peanuts, wheat, eggs, milk, soy, shellfish, tomatoes, fish). If the PC ingests even a little he or she will be incapacitated within 10 minutes and will die within 1 hour without medical attention.

Allergy: Incapacitating (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Like the Deadly Allergy, except the health problems the PC suffers more-or-less prevent the PC from doing anything (must make a 30 difficulty roll to do anything) but will not kill the PC. The reaction could be blinding headaches, convulsive vomiting or asthma.

Bad Rep (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- In the circles the PC runs in (the PC's character class) the PC's name is associated with something bad. The story may or may not be true, but if it isn't true there is no way the PC can prove his or her innocence. The only hope for the PC is to do so many good things that the bad thing is forgotten about. Choose one of the following that is believed about the PC.

Traitor/Snitch: The PC knowingly betrayed those he or she was supposed to be loyal to.

Uncontrollable/Dangerous: The PC did not take orders, listen to reason or consider the safety of comrades in a way that hurt others.

Stupid/Irresponsible: The PC was asked to do something that a small child could do, but the PC acted without thinking about the consequences and failed terribly.

Liar/Backstabber: The PC has pretended to be a friend while secretly hurting his or her supposed friends just to get ahead.

Naive/A Liability: The PC showed a total lack of street smarts, city knowledge or common sense.

Blind (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's eyes do not work at all. After character creation the PC can get cloned eyes for about \$2,500 or implants which serve most of the same functions of eyes for less.

Chronic Pain (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has some old injury that causes him or her to experience pain for about half of waking hours. The PC must make an easy (10) save vs. distracting pain about half the time and is at -10 to save vs. psychological addiction to pain-killer drugs. The PC's injury can probably be fixed with about \$1000 of surgery. The PC can also get a Pain Blocker mental program, but sustained use of one of these programs has its own disadvantages.

Clumsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- When the PC is not paying attention to what he or she is doing the PC drops things, knocks things over, bumps in to things, etc. At least once in a game session, while the PC is not trying to be careful, he or she will make some clumsy movement (a hard AGY roll can help the PC recover from or lessen the damage done).

Colorblind (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with pupils that are unable to distinguish between a broad range of colors. Most likely, the PC can not see a difference between colors containing red and colors containing green. The PC can get new eyes for about \$2,500 but will have to learn how to understand the new information they give.

Crush (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC is in love with someone who doesn't return those feelings. The PC may eventually get over the PC's feelings (taking 6 months to a year) or may be able to finally woo the subject of his or her affections.

Deaf (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC was born without any ability to hear. The PC can get implants which let him or her hear but will have to spend years learning how to hear.

Debt: Life Debt (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- Someone saved the PC's life; someone who had absolutely no duty to do so. The PC owes a major debt to this person. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay this debt, he or she will gain a bad reputation among the PC's social circles.

Debt: Loan Shark (Gives 1 Bonus Point per \$1000, max. 5)- The PC owes money to some criminal, typically a black market trader who makes money giving loans to the desperate. The PC is past due on the loan and the loan shark has sent out thugs with the job of getting the money, valuables or seriously hurting the PC. The more money that is owed, the more thugs the loan shark is willing to send. Some loan sharks will spend \$2000 hiring thugs to get back \$1000, just to make sure everyone knows that they can't renege on a debt. In the end, most loan sharks would rather kill the PC than let him or her get away without paying back a debt.

Debt: Restitution (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Members of gangs or street families only. At some point the PC committed some crime against or otherwise hurt another person. The PC's elders have decided that the PC must do whatever he or she can to repay the damage done. The PC must do whatever he or she can to help the victim, save something which would practically be suicide. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay the victim, he or she faces serious punishment from gang/family elders. It is up to the elders to decide when the debt has finally been repaid (the elders are likely to err on the side of overpaying).

Drug Sensitivity (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry and neurology is such that the PC is extremely sensitive to psychoactive drugs of all types. Gives -7 to save vs. drug effects (does not effect addiction and craving saves).

Enemy: Ex (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has an ex-lover who has a major problem with the PC being alive and happy. The Ex is not angry enough to actually kill the PC. However, the Ex knows the PC's friends and family, knows secrets about the PC and will generally make life difficult for the PC.

Enemy: In Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: PCs in gangs only. A powerful member of the PC's gang does not like the PC and will attempt to sabotage the PC

by whatever means are accepted within the gang (e.g. in the Risen the normal thing to do with an enemy is try to rip them open, in the Sexologists the normal thing to do to an enemy is to slowly turn public opinion about the PC around by convincing friends and lovers that the PC is no good). The enemy may even break the gang's own rules if the enemy thinks he or she can get away with it.

Enemy: Parents (Gives 2 Bonus Point)- The PC's parents have a serious problem with the PC's current lifestyle and will do whatever they can to sabotage the PC and force the PC to live as they do. The tactics used will vary according to parent. Some parents may try to blackmail the PC by suddenly withholding money the PC depends on. Some parents may hire cult deprogrammers. Some parents may try to physically capture the PC and haul him or her off the streets.

Enemy: Stalker (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is being stalked by some person who believes that he or she is deeply in love with the PC. The hope that the PC may someday return this love is the only things that has any meaning in the stalker's life. The stalker will ignore any evidence or reasoning that might take away this hope and may even delude themselves in to believing things to keep this hope alive (like that the PC is sending secret love messages or that the PC and the stalker are married). In general the stalker is more annoying than dangerous, but when stresses mount in the stalker's life, the stalker can become dangerous and might even decide that the pair would be better off together in the afterlife. The stalker has no special powers or training but is dangerous because he or she has memorized volumes of information about the PC.

Epilepsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC suffers from occasional seizures (about once a week). The PC loses consciousness and may make strange sounds or movements. The seizure lasts about 1 minute and it can take up to an hour to recover full AWR, INL and AGY. Anti-epileptic medications (covered by Indie and Well health insurance) can reduce the occurrence of seizures to about once a month, and anti-epileptic mental programs (10 MMUs, \$250 +\$250 installation) can eliminate the disorder.



ESL (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC speaks some non-English language fluently and has only recently started to learn English. The PC must buy levels of Foreign Language: English to be able to read, write, speak or understand any English at all. Because the PC is immersed in English, after character creation the PC can buy skill levels in English at -6 skill cost (min. 1).

Fried (Gives 4 points)- The character has used too many hallucinogens and has permanently changed the structure of his or her neural networks. This damage is so widespread it is impossible to repair via mental programming. The character suffers from the following deficits: -5 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions. One round penalty before they can use any skill or ability that utilizes abstract thought (for instance: a PC wants to use his math skill, he must spend a round trying to summon the right state of consciousness). Flashbacks (hard difficulty hallucinations or delusions) triggered by sensory stimuli. The PC does not know what sensory stimuli will cause a flashback (GM chooses 5 triggers) but may be able to figure out over time what they are.

Gang Outcast (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Gang members PCs only. The PC is currently not considered a member of the gang that is the PC's character class. The gang will not seek revenge for crimes committed against the PC and will become very angry if the PC masquerades as a member of that gang. Character creation is normal, but when the PC starts earning XP he or she does not have the skill costs and access to special skills that correspond with that character class (because the PC can no longer go to fellow PCs for training). Instead, the PC should use the skill costs and income of Freelancers (if the PC is a Well) or Eccentrics (if the PC is an Indie). At level 1, adventure 1, the PC has two choices: seek another path as another character class (see Disciplines, p.49) or try to get back in to the good graces of the gang that originally trained the PC.

Gang Probation (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Gang PCs only. The PC has done something wrong. The PC was allowed to stay a member of the gang but on probationary status. The PC is being very closely watched by his or her gang elders. If the PC screws up in any way he or she will not be shown any mercy, will not be given a warning or another chance. The PC will simply be removed from the gang (see Gang Outcast). If the PC behaves flawlessly for one experience level, the probation will end.

Haunted (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC gets occasional flashes of sensation of himself or herself dying violently. These sensations all seem to point to some possible future event. If this really is a 'ghost' event (see p.203) then it means there is some very serious danger in the PC's future. What the PC has visions of will happen unless the PC can gain enough knowledge and wariness from these visions to survive the event. Unfortunately, the sensations the PC receives do not tell much and it may be hard to know when the danger is coming.

Hemophilia (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body does not produce clotting factors that let ruptured blood vessels close up. If injured, the PC keeps bleeding (losing half

the original damage again every minute) until the PC dies or has the severed arteries repaired or cauterized. The PC can take drugs that will alleviate the symptoms (\$5/day, free with Indie and Well health care) so that the PC stops bleeding after 2 minutes (injuries only do double damage). The disease can be cured with \$1000 worth of genetic therapy.

High Sleep Need (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC needs more sleep than most people. The PC is most comfortable sleeping 12 hours a night and will suffer sleep deprivation damage if he or she gets any less than 10 hours.

Hunted: Colin (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The self-reproducing serial killer Colin (see p.178) wants the PC dead. Knowledge of the PC varies among Colins (since Colin has no central interchange of information). A small percentage of Colins have never heard of the PC. The majority know the PC's name, character class and they want the PC dead, but nothing else. A minority know the PC personally: they know the PC's face, where the PC hangs out and whatever they have been able to discern by snooping around (Colins can learn quite a lot, since they take over people's bodies and masquerade as their victims). Colin's motivation may seem like rage, but really it's about reputation: Colin wants people to see him as a god, and he's not much of a god if he can't take out a single enemy. If Colin catches the PC he will kill the PC in an especially sadistic way and make sure that, when the body is found, everyone knows that it is Colin who did it.

Hunted: Corporation (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is wanted by a major multinational corporation. The corporation wishes to find the PC and prosecute the PC in criminal and civil courts for some crime against the corp. The corp has professional skip-tracers looking for the PC and data analysts combing the corporate databases for any sign of the PC. All the PC has to do is put his or her name and address on a "win a boat" contest entry slip at some fast food place (which is a subsidiary of the corp) and the next day there will be corporate security agents at the PC's front door. If the PC is found he or she will face a multi-pronged legal attack that can last for years. As soon as the corp finds the PC they will put the PC under 24 hour a day surveillance (so the PC can not escape again). The corp will not do anything illegal to get the PC (though some independent contractors might be tempted to bend the rules in order to get a bonus for catching the PC).

Hunted: Drug Lords (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available for Goods, Hungry and Night Shift, who are already enemies of the Drug Lords. The PC is an official enemy of the Drug Lords. Most likely the PC did something to the Drug Lords and the Drug Lords feel they have to kill the PC in order to get the message across that nobody gets to do that to them. The PC's vitals (name, gender, ethnicity, age, character class) have been distributed to the city's pusher gangs. Any pusher gang who kills the PC gets a \$10,000 reward. Many pusher gangs let addicts in on this opportunity (the addict might get a few thousand if he or she kills the PC, the pusher gang gets the rest) which means there are thousands of people in the city out looking for the PC. If a Drug Lord gets any info on the PC's whereabouts, he or she will immediately send a Dagger team (p.192) out to get the PC.

Hunted: Federal Government (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is on the “most wanted” lists of the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies. The PC has a federal agent working 8 hours a day on finding the PC. The PC’s picture and vitals are regularly seen on the internet, especially by cops and bounty hunters. There is a \$20,000 reward for the PC’s capture. Fortunately, Federal Agents have little knowledge of the city and, since they aren’t allowed to bring in guns, are fairly weak on the streets. The agent’s hope is to track down the PC via internet research and phone calls (the same way skip tracers do), corner the PC with a couple of agents and Night Shift officers, and have the National Guard on speed-dial if the PC puts up armed resistance. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- One city gang has named the PC in particular as one of its enemies. The gang is looking to kill the PC. Anyone who tries to protect the PC will become, to a lesser degree, an enemy of the gang. While its thirst for vengeance remains unfulfilled, the gang’s memory will be quite long indeed. When choosing this disadvantage, be sure to note which gang and why they are so mad at the PC.

Hunted: Police (Gives 6 Bonus Points)- The city police department is out to get the PC and are under such pressure to catch the PC that even the corrupt Day Shift officers (who normally care more about graft than fighting crime) are out looking for the PC. The day shift’s experience and control of resources, combined with the Night Shift’s bravery and knowledge of the streets makes the police department a dangerous enemy, capable of powering through any area of the city (with the National Guard ready to step in if they meet armed resistance) in search of the PC. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Serial Killer (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- An ordinary serial killer (not a Colin) wants the PC dead. Perhaps the PC is “the one who got away” or is someone who bullied the serial killer as a child. The PC doesn’t know much about the serial killer. The PC might have caught a brief glimpse of the serial killer’s face or heard the serial killer’s voice during an aborted attack, but the PC does not know the killer’s name and address and would have a hard time picking him or her out of a crowd.

Illiterate (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The PC can not write or read any language. Later in the game the PC can learn to read by buying the equivalent of 5 levels in an Intellectual skill. While the PC can not read he or she has the following increased skill costs: +10 to Bio/Med, +20 to Information, +15 to Intellectual, +15 to Tech, +10 to Sociological, +5 to Military. If the PC is a Well, the PC will likely experience long periods of loss of welfare and homelessness because he or she will have to depend upon friends and social workers to complete the regular paperwork necessary to stay on welfare.

Inexperienced: City (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available to Utopia Children, who already have this disadvantage. The PC has received the same training as others in his or her character class, but has practically no city knowledge. The PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill. The PC does not know basic things like

what a Skin Borg is (unless he or she is a Skin Borg, or is a member of a gang currently at war with or in an allegiance with the Skin Borgs). This disadvantage does not make the PC naive or stupid.

Inexperienced: World (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- For some reason the PC is an adult but has practically no knowledge of the city or the modern world in general. The majority of people with this disadvantage were raised in bizarre cult communes. The PC doesn’t know simple things like what a police officer is, how to use an ATM machine or why it is wise to lock one’s door at night.

Institutionalized (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has grown up in the care of the state. He or she was not lucky enough to be in the state orphanage when the children rebelled. Instead, the PC has been shuffled around between juvenile detention facilities, foster homes, group homes and even mental hospitals across the state. These facilities are kind of like storage facilities for kids nobody wants. They do nothing to help the kids develop in to productive adults and the state only provides as much education as they have to avoid being charged with criminal neglect. The PC starts with -3 CHM (poor social skills development), +2 to skill costs for Bio/Med, Creative, Information, Intellectual and Social skills (during character creation only). The PC has a general ignorance of things most Wells and Indies take for granted (like how to make a budget, how to look for a job, how to handle disputes with a landlord, etc.).

Learning Disability (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC’s brain is wired in such a way that some things are incredibly difficult for the PC to learn. Choose the type of learning disability as follows:

Math: +2 to Bio/Med, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs, +4 to Tech skill costs, +8 to Information skill costs.

Reading: +3 to Tech and Military skill costs, +6 to Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs.

Spacial: +8 to Athletic, Combat skill costs. +4 to Creative, Street and Military skill costs.

Lookalike (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- There is some person who looks enough like the PC that the PC is commonly mistaken for this person and visa versa. The lookalike sometimes gets in to trouble, which gets the PC in trouble.

Malnourished (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- In the past the PC was badly malnourished and this has had a lasting negative impact on the PC’s health. The PC suffers from a permanent -1 BLD, -1 BDY (the max. caps for these attributes suffer from the same penalties). The PC is -4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -4 to seduction rolls because of things like missing teeth, thin hair, etc. (this can be removed with plastic surgery).

Memory Gaps (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has periods of his or her life that can’t be remembered at all. Common causes are drug use, head injuries and mental program malfunction. The danger here is that something dangerous from the PC’s past might show up and the PC won’t recognize it coming.

Missing Arm (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC is missing one arm. For STH rolls that normally require both arms, the PC's STH is half (round down). For \$250 the PC can purchase a strap-on electromechanical prosthetic that looks more-or-less normal and can be used for simple tasks (turning a doorknob, smoking a cigarette) but is not strong, fast or precise enough for things like fighting, lock picking, etc. For \$2500 the PC can have a new arm cloned and attached.

Missing Eye (Gives 5 Bonus Points) The PC is missing one eye. A new one can be cloned and put in for \$1000. With one eye missing the PC is -7 to AWR rolls requiring peripheral vision or precise judgment of distance.

Missing Leg (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC can get a solid prosthetic (nothing more than strap-on leg-shaped plastic) for \$75, crutches for \$25 or a non-electronic wheelchair for \$100. Walking with a solid prosthetic or crutches reduces PC's SPD to 1. Wheelchairs make the PC's max. SPD equal to half his or her STH. For \$450 the PC can buy an electromechanical prosthetic leg that can move and let the PC walk at normal SPD or run at max. 5 SPD. For \$2500 the PC can get a new leg cloned and attached.

Mute (Gives 7 Bonus Points)- The PC can not speak or make anything other than coughing and gagging noises. The PC can have an electronic voicebox installed for \$450.

Nightblindness (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC sees very poorly (-10 to AWR rolls) in low light. PC is partially blinded (-5 to actions/reactions) in the light of a room lit with a 15 watt bulb and fully blinded (-10 to actions/reactions) in light so dim that a normal person could not read a book. The PC can get this condition removed with \$1000 worth of genetic therapy.

Obese (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is so overweight that it impairs his or her abilities and causes health problems. The PC is -10 to all jumping, sprinting, climbing rolls and +10 to rolls where weight is an advantage (tackle, pin, ramming). The PC is -7 to save vs. heat exhaustion and +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Depending upon the PC's STH, standing or walking may be a tiring activity (uses pooled END).

Old (Gives 15 Bonus Points per decade after 50)- The character starts the game much older than most of his or her peers. Age not only has physiological effects but changes the way characters are viewed by others. Many people assume that older people are weak and can be pushed around. For each decade after 50, the character gets a cumulative -2 STH, -2 END, -2 SPD, -1 AGY, -1 BLD and -1 BDY.

Only Parent (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is the only caregiver of a very small child that the PC is legally and psychologically attached to. If the child dies, the PC will be so psychologically distraught that he or she will be unable to complete normal day-to-day duties effectively (in other words, forget about playing the character as a normal PC for quite a while). The child starts at 3 to 5 years old. Create a mini character sheet for the child. The PC may be able to get others to watch the child, but this

will either cost money (see Daycare, p.97), mean asking for a favor (which will eventually have to be repaid) or will put the child in a moderately dangerous situation. As the PC grows older and wiser, so will the child. For every experience level the PC gains, the child will age 1 year, will gain 4 attribute points and 50 skill points. By the time the PC reaches level 10, the child should be old enough to take care of himself or herself and even to be a PC. Because of extra costs from the child, the PC's income is reduced by \$25/wk. for Street People, \$50/wk. for Wells and \$75/wk. for Indies

Child NPC Creation

Step 1 – Name, Age, Gender, Description

Step 2 – Create attributes by splitting up 35 attribute points with the following maximums: AGY: 10, AWR: 7, END: 7, INL: 6, STH: 5, WIL: 7. The NPC also has 1 BLD, 1 BDY and 3 INCY.

Step 3 – Use 100 skill points to buy skills as follows: 40 skill points for one level of any skill the parent has, 10 skill points for one level in a "child feat" (this is a CHM, INL, AWR or WIL feat that most adults can do but most children that age can't). Example: a child might start with Beg For Food (1), Find Home (2), Recognize Members of Mommy's Gang (1), Give Self Injection (2), Skill: Calm Attack (1).

Step 4 – Equip child (use money from PC's starting pool).

Parole (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC is out on parole from prison. The PC is out conditionally: there are a set of rules and if the PC breaks them the PC is given a five minute hearing and shipped back to prison (for about 6 months). The PC must meet a parole officer weekly and the parole officer may drop by unannounced (1 in 20 chance each day). Because the PC is homeless, he or she must wear a tamper-proof tracking device which allows the parole officer to find the PC. Most characters on parole are given regular urine tests to make sure they are using no drugs or alcohol and they are not allowed to associate with criminals or gangs. There may be other conditions depending upon the PC's crime (a hacker might not be allowed to own a computer, a burglar might not be allowed to own tools, etc.)

Perv Bait (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Something about the way the PC looks, dresses or acts has a strong tendency to attract people with an unhealthy attitude towards sex and relationships, including some people who are dangerous. The PC attracts people that the PC really doesn't want attracted to them. The PC has no idea what it is about him or her that attracts these people (otherwise he or she would change it). The PC faces the risk of losing faith in sex and relationships altogether as they are again-and-again burned by partners who seem nice but end up having something seriously wrong with them.

Physically Unattractive: Minor (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which tend to make him or her less attractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Unattractive: Major (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which have a very strong tendency to make him or her unattractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -8 to seduction rolls.

Poor Hearing (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without aid, the PC's hearing is very poor (-10 to hearing based AWR rolls).

Poor Vision (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without prescription glasses, contact lenses or some other special aid, the PC is almost blind. If the PC is nearsighted, he or she can see close-up things okay (well enough to recognize a person's face at 1 ft.) or if the PC is farsighted he or she can see far away things okay (well enough to recognize a building). Prescription glasses cost \$40. Corrective surgery (\$500) can restore the PC's vision to normal.

Pregnant (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC has recently become pregnant. The PC has a strong desire to give birth to the baby and raise it. The pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks and is broken down in to three trimesters. The disadvantages faced by the PC vary according to trimester:

-1st Trimester (weeks 1 to 13): "Morning sickness" (-10 to save vs. nausea). Difficulty sleeping and fatigue (-2 END, -4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Emotional lability (-5 to save vs. fear, anger and other emotions).

-2nd Trimester (weeks 14 to 27): PC will begin to be visibly pregnant (-4 to save vs. loss of balance). Hormonal changes are generally positive: effects on skin and hair may make the PC more attractive to some (+2 to seduction rolls), anxiety is reduced (+4 to save vs. fear). Strange food cravings. Forgetfulness and trouble concentrating (-2 INL). Trouble dissipating body heat (-4 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

-3rd Trimester (weeks 28 to 40): Poor sleep. The PC is very large (-10 to save vs. loss of balance, back pain, walking around will use pooled END). Breath is short (-4 END). Occasional contractions throughout this trimester (20 difficulty distracting pain). Increased need to urinate. Fatigue (-4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Trouble dissipating body heat (-7 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

During the entire pregnancy the PC must be careful to avoid harm coming to the baby. During the first trimester, the baby is most sensitive to toxins and poisons (takes double damage the PC takes). As the baby gets bigger, it is less vulnerable to toxins but it becomes bigger and thus more vulnerable to physical injury: Any random injury to the PC has a 1 in 20 chance of hitting the baby during the first trimester, 1 in 10 during the second trimester and 1 in 6 during the third trimester. At all times the baby has AR 20 PR 2 bladed 2 blunt from the PC's body. Assume the baby has 0 BDY, 1 BLD, 1 INCY.

If the PC carries the pregnancy to term and gives birth, the PC will then have the Only Parent disadvantage (p.45).

Recovering Addict (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been a psychological addict of some drug and has recently quit. The PC has been clean for about 2 months and experiences cravings every 11 days or

any time the PC is under psychological stress. The PC is at -10 to psychological addiction rolls for any drug. The PC has a psychological void in his or her life that was once taken up by the drug. This void manifests as things like insomnia, depression, boredom, lack of goals in life, etc. The PC also experiences various health problems depending upon what drug the PC used. Choose one of the following as the drug the PC used:

Name	Craving Difficulty	Health Problems
Alcohol	15	Brain damage (-2 INL, -2 AWR, retrograde and anterograde amnesia at 4 difficulty to save), liver damage (-2 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Amphetamines	20	Ulcers, malnutrition (-1/2 BLD, -1/2 BDY)
God Killer	30	Emphysema (-2 END), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR)
Mauler	30	Brain damage (-2 INL)
Opiates	20	-2 to save vs. disease progression and mortality.
Slave	35	Weight loss (-1 BDY), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Trace	30	Damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease progression and contraction) and arthritis (-1 AGY)

Sickly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with a susceptibility to many types of diseases. The PC has had more serious illnesses by their teens than most people do in 80 years. The PC starts with -7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -10 to save vs. shock. The PC regains lost END and heals from injuries half as fast.

Stupid Relatives (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC's relatives (parents, siblings, even children) have an annoying habit of getting themselves in trouble and running to the PC for help.

Street Mouth (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has never learned how to speak in any way other than using street slang, a thick New York accent and many profanities. If the PC tries to talk like a non-street dweller, he or she will most likely stutter and be nearly unable to communicate. The PC can learn to speak in other ways, but it will take time and effort (PC must spend skill points as if buying 2 levels in a Sociological skill).

Terminal Illness (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC has a non-contagious illness that there is no known cure for and that will eventually cause the PC's death. The PC's only hope is to stave off death with expensive medications (and even more expensive nanobot treatments) and hope for a cure to be discovered (and either pass FDA scrutiny or get on the black market). The only other possibility is if the PC can gain enough money to be transferred in to a new body (see p.209). The PC must roll once on the random symptom table every week if un-medicated or every month if on medication (\$75/wk.).

Random Symptom Table (All minuses are permanent and cumulative)	
01-05%	Weight loss (-1/2 BLD)
06-10%	Muscle loss (-1 SPD, -1 STH)
11-25%	Tiredness (-2 END)
26-30%	Hair loss, splotchy skin (-4 to seduction rolls)
31-35%	Dizziness (-4 to save vs. loss of balance)
36-40%	Pain sensitivity (-4 to save vs. pain)
41-50%	Nausea (-4 to save vs. nausea)
51-55%	Clammy skin (-4 to save vs. hypothermia)
56-65%	Weakened immune system (-2 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality)
66-70%	Cloudy eyes (-2 to vision based AWR rolls)
71-75%	Ringing in ears (-2 to hearing based AWR rolls)
76-80%	Calcium loss (-1 BDY)
81-85%	Loss of sex drive (+10 difficulty to be seduced)
86-90%	Light sensitivity (-4 to vision based AWR rolls in bright lights)
91-95%	Odor (PC emanates an odor characteristic of the very ill, -10 to seduction rolls)
96-00%	Dementia (-1 INL, -1 AWR, -1 WIL)

Thin Bones (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has very weak bones, usually as a result of bad genes or poor nutrition. PC is -2 BDY and has a max. cap of 3 for BDY.

Weak Stomach (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC's stomach is especially sensitive to irritants. -10 to save vs. nausea. Spicy foods, acidic foods or stress will cause heartburn (easy save vs. distracting pain).

Venereal Disease: Annoying (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has a disease which is spread via intercourse (contraction difficulty 10 for protected sex, 20 for unprotected sex). There is no known cure for this disease, only expensive pharmaceuticals which suppress the effects. The disease causes off-and-on swelling and burning/itchy rashes on the genitals, painful urination, increased risks of cancer and infertility.

Venereal Disease: Deadly (Gives 20 Bonus Points)- The PC has a sexually transmitted disease (contraction difficulty 15 for unprotected sex) for which there is currently no cure. Every month the PC must make a save vs. disease progression (difficulty 30). The PC can buy expensive drug cocktails (covered under Indie healthcare, \$100/wk. on the black market) that will give +7 to save vs. disease progression. Unlike normal diseases, a successful save does not lessen the disease's effect, it only staves off progression. For each failure, the PC suffers from cumulative $-\frac{1}{4}$ BLD, -2 to save vs. contraction and progression of other diseases and -1 to whatever is highest among STH, SPD, END. For every given experience level there is a 1 in 10 chance that a cure for that particular strain will be discovered (it will take at least 2 years after that to

get FDA approval). The very rich have other treatments available. Nanotech treatments can find and destroy most of the disease organisms (return PC to a state of early infection). Transfer in to a new body (p.209) is a complete cure.

Virgin (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC has never had sexual intercourse with another person (or even a realistic simulation of one in VR). The PC has a general idea of how it is done, but has no way of knowing if he or she can do it well or if he or she will enjoy it.

Weird Brain (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an abnormal brain anatomy. This disadvantage does not effect abilities in any way, but because the anatomy is different, any attempt to put a mental program in the brain is extremely dangerous. The program will probably not work and there will probably be a loss of abilities. Other radiochemical neural stimulation based technologies (e.g. full immersion VR) will not work reliably on the PC.

Young (Gives 7 Bonus Points per year below 16)- The "normal" starting age for most character classes is 16 to 21. If a PC starts the game younger than this, he or she is likely to be treated differently. A young character is likely to be treated with less respect: thought of as not as tough, not as wise and not as dependable as an older peer. For each year younger than 16, the PC gets -4 Attribute Points and $-\frac{1}{2}$ health attribute point.

STEP NINE - CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In Brief: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Level One, Adventure One

At the first adventure using a new character the PC is at Level One, Adventure One. What that means is that the PC has just gained Level 1 status in his or her character class. The PC is no longer a trainee and is (just barely) a full fledged member of that character class. This does not mean that the PC has had no life or experiences, just that this is the first time the PC has been able to stand on his or her own two feet as a member of some community that can be found on the city streets. Many people never reach level 1 and whatever time they spend on the streets they depend on someone else.

The average age for a character at level one, adventure one varies by socioeconomic class. For Street People the average starting age is 16. For Wells the average starting age is 19. For Indies the average starting age is 21.

Gaining XP

Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of a gaming session, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

Completing Adventure Goals: Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

Staying Alive: In some adventures, the PCs are thrown in to dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

Making Friends: With PCs with different beliefs, gangs, economic status, etc. it is a commendable achievement when two PCs become good friends and will be awarded. (5 XP)

Discovering Secrets: The game world has a lot of secrets: who controls the Drug Lords, what's up with the moles, etc. Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

Personal Growth: This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. For example, a Skin Borg bent on being the biggest badass on the block could realize that violence is not always the best answer, an obsessed gang member who wants to kill all Roofers could decide that peace is an option or a completely selfish character may decide that it feels good to help others out. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

Good Roleplaying: GMs can experience points to players who show empathy for or commitment to the psychology and worldview of their PCs by doing something that fits very well with that character. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). (2 XP)

Making The World A Better Place: The PC will earn XP any time he or she helps some person or people (or even animals). This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means, e.g. eliminating a serial killer and therefor saving the lives of anyone that serial killer would have otherwise preyed upon. (1 to 10 XP)

Benefiting Gang/Group/Cause: Whenever the PC does something that benefits the PC's group, gang or cause, the GM will award XP. (1 to 10 XP)

Clever Plan: Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is clever and also works (has good effects) the GM will award XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Worked Well As Group: The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (2 XP)

Worldview Success: If the PC comes to an important and correct conclusion by following the tenants of one of his or her Worldviews (see p.12), the PC should earn (depending on how helpful the conclusion was). (2 XP)

Personal Ideal Success: If the PC succeeds in a way that shows that he or she is progressing towards or has reached a Personal Ideal (p.11) the PC will earn XP. (2 XP)

Losing XP

Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero.

Failing at Adventure Goals: The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

Splitting Up Group: If the PC chose to split up the party and it did not benefit the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Making the World a Worse Place: Anything that hurts people (or animals) or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Player Character Death: If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (10 XP)

Spending XP

Generally, XP can be spend as soon as it is received. The only exception is when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have improved in that way. Example: *The PCs are fugitives, on the run from an angry gang and hiding in abandoned buildings. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Nanoengineering. However, since she had no study materials or time to study, the PC must wait to get the skill.*

The PC can buy the following with Experience Points:

Skill Points: 2 XP = 1 Skill Point

Attribute Points: 10 XP = 1 Attribute Point. Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 20. Negative sub-attributes can be removed (at a cost of 1 attribute point each) but positive sub-attributes cannot be purchased.

Health Attribute Points: 30 XP = 1 Health Attribute Point. Health Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 6.

Level Advancement

In addition to spending XP, also you should keep track of how much the PC has earned in total so far. When the PC has earned 100 XP, whether the XP has been spent or not, the PC advances an Experience Level. For the most part, Experience Levels are simply an easy way of keeping track of how much experience the PC has. The following is what people tend to think about people of various experience levels:

Level Zero: Immature, untrained, skill-less, a dependent. About 30% of people on the streets at this level.

Level One: Inexperienced, Green. 30% of people at this level.

Level Two and Three: Moderately experienced, "average." 23% of people at this level.

Level Four to Six: Veteran, Experienced. 10% of people at this level.

Level Seven to Ten: Very experienced, gang elder. 4% of people at this level.

Level Ten to Thirteen: Wise and powerful, unborn family elder, gang leader. 2% of people at this level.

Level Fourteen or more: City legend, historical figure. 1% of people at this level.

Level Advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. One experience level might take six months to two years to achieve. Certain things are "timed" based on Experience Levels, such as: the growth of a child (see Only Parent, p.51), the increase in a Trader's level of contacts (p.325), the patience of investors in a Y1's startup (p.333), the increase in a Nightwalker's lifetime viewers (p.315) and the age grades of a Humankalorie (p.215).

The PC also gains 1 free level of the special skill City Knowledge (p.37) for every 4 level advancements (at level 5, 9, 13, etc.). The PC can buy levels of this skill with XP but can not buy more levels than his or her current experience level.

Disciplines

A PC's character class is what the PC does every day. For some, a character class is a means of making a living (e.g. Night Walker, Gambler), for some it is a means of protection or a group to belong to (e.g. Dragons, Orphans), for some it is the PC's hobby, duty or goal (e.g. Volunteer, Hunter). With each character class comes a discipline: while the PC is spending his or her days being the character class, the PC is also learning to be a better member of that character class.

For example: *Vorchag is a member of the Bleeders. He spends his evenings doing his duty to the Bleeders and to his master: he fights in gang wars, he runs errands and goes on missions for his master, etc. He also seeks training to become a better Bleeder: he learns special psychic skills that only his Bleeder elders can teach him, he learns traditional psychic skills, he invests in special Bleeder equipment, etc. Being a Bleeder is both his current Character Class and his current Discipline. When he gains 100 XP he will advance a level as a Bleeder.*

However, a PC can choose to have a different discipline from his or her character class. There are certain things that must be worked out during the game: First, the PC must gain access to teachers of the given discipline. The PC may also have to get certain equipment (e.g. to study to be a Boarder, one must have a slipboard). Second, the PC must deal with any social consequences of studying to be one thing while being another (the people in the PC's character class might have a problem with the PC studying to be something else and the people the PC is studying with might have a problem with the PC continuing to spend his or her days as the PC's character class). If the PC can deal with these various problems and can gain 100 XP, the PC can go up a level as that discipline. While the PC has another discipline, he or she gets the skill costs (and access to special skills) associated with that discipline.

Once a PC has gained one level in a discipline, the PC has all the knowledge and skills to switch to that as his or her character class. Again, the problem of gaining permission to be that new character class (and to leave the old character class) must be dealt with in-game. Once a PC is a new character class he or she gets the income, lifestyle and duties associated with that character class.

For most character classes, the PC must have at least one level as that character class to be a full member of the class. The PC does not always have a choice in the matter, though: a PC may be forced to adopt a character class before gaining a level in it. Assuming the class will accept the PC, the PC will operate as a level 0 member of the class. At this level, the PC does not have the same duties, benefits and opportunities as other members of the class – the PC is something like an apprentice. The PC earns half the income of that character class.

There are also a few special disciplines that do not have a character class associated with them. Think of these as an optional specialty. EMT (emergency medical technician) is one such discipline: there is no exclusive character class called EMT. If Vorchag the Bleeder gains a level as an EMT, he is now a Bleeder with special medical training and the option to get a good-paying part time job. This is a good option for PCs who want to keep their current character classes, but want to have some special training that sets them apart from the other people in their classes.

Some disciplines available to PCs are:

Animal Trainer- The PC learns to breed, raise, care for and train animals. Some Street People take this up as a way to make a little extra money (it's not lucrative enough to do as a full time career) and/or to provide trained animals for their street families. Indies and Wells sometimes take this up, but usually just as a hobby, not a moneymaking enterprise.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a master (level 4 or better) animal trainer willing to take on the PC as a student (such as service might be worth \$15/wk. in the street community). The PC must also have a safe place where he or she can keep animals.

Skill Costs: ATHL 8, BIO 7, CMBT 12, CRTV 7, INFO 12, MIL 12, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 12, THIE 10, SOC 12, STRT 7. The skills Veterinary Medicine (p.21), Tracking (p.34) and Animal Training (p.32) have a skill cost of 5.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Animal Training (3), Veterinary Medicine (2), must own at least 4 animals and First Aid Kit: Black Med. For level 2, Must have Animal Training (4), Veterinary Medicine (3) and must own at least 6 animals.

Special Opportunities: At any level, the PC can buy baby animals for ¼ their Untrained cost. The PC buys animal food in bulk, so pays half the per week cost for feeding animals. At level one the PC can make extra money training and selling animals (gives +\$15/wk.). At level two the PC has gained some fame as an animal trainer and can make +\$20/wk.

Negotiator- Every once in awhile, gangs or other powerful city residents try to settle their differences through talking instead of violence. In these cases, the parties who are trying to work things out sometimes call on those within their ranks who are skilled at negotiating or they hire someone from outside the group to negotiate for them. The PC is training to be one of these negotiators, and will learn skills that will also make him or her a useful messenger, translator, peacemaker or mediator.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned negotiator (at least level 3) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 12, BIO 10, CMBT 14, CRTV 7, MIL 12, PSYM 15, PSYS 10, INFO 7, TECH 10, THIE 7, SOC 5, STRT 7. The PC can get the skills Storytelling, Internet Browsing, Oratory, Foreign Languages, Money, Information Smuggling, Law: Basic and Interrogation for 4 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Oratory (2), Interrogation (1), Foreign Language (1). Must have CHM of 7 or better. For level 2, the PC must have Oratory (4), Interrogation (2), Foreign Language (2). The PC must own either Hearing Aid, Voice Stress Analyzer or Subliminal Analyzer. Must have CHM of 11 or better.

Special Opportunities: A PC may be hired for occasional sporadic jobs. The more credibility the PC gains as a negotiator (by negotiating honestly and fairly) the more likely the PC is to be hired. A negotiation can pay anywhere from \$5 to \$1000. Negotiating jobs for the PC's own gang will earn nothing more than extra respect and gratitude. The PC can never hope to make a living negotiating. Even the city's best negotiators never work any more than once every few months.

Pit Fighter- There are places in the city where people fight for money (see p.192) and some Street People with few other prospects take up fighting in these arenas to make a little extra cash. The money earned by even the best street fighters is never enough to make it a career. At best it is a brutal part time job that leaves almost everyone in it scarred and disabled (or dead). Wells and Indies occasionally take this up, but they are usually mentally ill.

Discipline Requirements: The PC can either find a trainer (level 3 or greater Pit Fighter) willing to train the PC (usually in exchange for 50% of anything the PC earns while being trained) or the PC can train himself or herself in the ring (if this is the case, the PC will start most adventures with some injury gained in the ring).

Skill Costs: ATHL 5, BIO 12, CMBT 8, CRTV 8, MIL 15, PSYM 40, PSYS 40, TECH 20, THIE 12, SOC 20, STRT 8. The skills Boxing, Kickboxing, Slam, Street Fighting: Armed, Street Fighting: Unarmed and Wrestling cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (3) or 6 levels total unarmed combat skills, must have min. 10 STH, min 10 AGY. For level 2, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (2) and 8 levels total of unarmed combat skills, must have min. 13 STH, min. 13 AGY.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, The PC can make an extra \$15/wk. by working the nightly pit-fighting circuit without too much of a chance of serious injury (the PC has learned when it is best to fake being knocked out). At level 2, the PC has gained a bit of notoriety and can make +\$30/wk. At level 3, the PC can make +\$45/wk. but has gained such notoriety in the pit fighting circles that he or she may encounter people during non-work hours who want to challenge the PC.

Professional Artist- Some people manage to gain limited notoriety, social connections and a handsome bit of extra cash with some creative skill. These include mainly poets, musicians, painters, graffiti artists and VR samplers. The key making it as an artist is not skill or talent (a lot of people have a lot of that), it's learning to work within the art community and gain status.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must spend 20 hours a week working on his or her particular art form.

Skill Costs: ATHL 15, BIO 15, CMBT 15, CRTV 3, INFO 12, MIL 15, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 10, THIE 15, SOC 7, STRT 13. The skill Graffiti costs 4 points/level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, level 5 in any one Creative skill.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can make \$75 for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art. At level 2, the PC can make +\$100. At level 3, the PC can make +\$150 and can use his or her influence over the city art scene to have a noticeable impact on city culture and politics.

Torturer- Many gangs feel it is an unfortunate necessity to have at least one person in the gang who is able to get information out of a person by any means necessary (a minority of gangs would never do this and have no need for torturers). Torturers are respected but often looked at with distaste (and a little fear) even by fellow gang members. Even those who aren't looked at with distaste find it is easier to get along with people if they say nothing about the details of their trade around other

people. Those torturers who are not total sociopaths tend to be very lonely people. This loneliness is why so many of them seek out students they can train (and thus create a new generation of torturers).

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned Torturer (level 2 or greater) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 10, BIO 10, CMBT 10, CRTV 10, INFO 10, MIL 7, PSYM 20, PSYS 20, TECH 15, THIE 15, SOC 15, STRT 15. The skills Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology, Immobilization, Brainwashing, Torture, Interrogation, Poisons, Needles and Seduction cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, must have Torture (3) and own \$50 worth of tools. For level 2, must own a Torture Kit and one dose of Compliance Drops.

Special Opportunities: If the PC belongs to a gang that currently condones this sort of thing (gang's attitudes on this subject have been known to change) at level 1 the PC may be asked by his or her gang to do them a favor.

A Complex Advancement Example- *Vorchag starts the game as a level 1 Bleeder. His character class and discipline are both Bleeder. He participates in several adventures and gets a lot of XP. He spends the XP based on the skill costs of the Bleeder: he gets some psychic skills, including skills that only Bleeders can learn. He soon gains 100 XP and is now a Level 2 Bleeder.*

Vorchag grows dissatisfied with the Bleeders. He has a friend who is a Sexologist and he starts training to be a Sexologist. He now has Bleeder as his current character class and Sexologist as his current discipline. His income, duties and lifestyle are that of a Bleeder, but his skill costs are that of a Sexologist. As he gains XP he spends them on special Sexologist skills. However, before he can gain 100 XP, Vorchag's gang elders find out that he is studying with the Sexologists. Feeling that this is a conflict of interest, Vorchag's teacher orders him to stop his associations with the Sexologists. Vorchag refuses and it is only with luck, clever maneuvering and the help of his friends that he survives the incident. He is now considered an enemy of the Bleeders and has ceased to be a Bleeder as his character class. The PC asks the Sexologists to take him in, and he manages to talk them in to it. His character class is that of a Sexologist, but he is a Level 0 Sexologist, a mere trainee and not a full member of the gang. The PC is not allowed to have sex with anyone except his Sexologist teachers and he is not allowed to go out by himself and act on behalf of the Sexologists. Because the PC is so controlled and spends so much of his time studying, he has little opportunity to go out and make money (his weekly income is cut in half). After a few adventures he has gained another 100 XP and he goes up a level as a Sexologist. He is now a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist whose character class and discipline are both Sexologist.

Vorchag now decides that he wants to get a job as an EMT. He puts aside the money for VR training courses, invests in equipment and learns medical skills. Now his character class is Sexologist and his discipline is EMT. The Sexologists don't mind: they would love to have another person around with emergency medical training. At Vorchag's next level advancement he becomes a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist and Level 1 EMT. He remains a Sexologist (there is no EMT character class) but he is a Sexologist with skills who has the option of getting a nice paying part-time job.

Chapter Two - Organic Rule Components

His face was oily, his scalp itched, his socks were stiff with dried sweat, his eyes burned, his back and wrists ached, his hands trembled, his mouth was dry and bitter, his empty stomach felt acidic, and someone kept calling his name.

This was the most important hacking job of Twink's life. He had blown every bit of cash he had on a big bag of fast food, and had traded some computer equipment for some uppers and smart drugs. After breaking in to the switch box and giving it internet access, he took residence in the old abandoned rowhouse. There he sat crosslegged on the floor, amidst a layer of white dust, and he hacked.

The lights of day filtering through the boards, illuminating the ubiquitous dust particles, had come and gone more times than he had bothered to count. He had long ago finished the last cold, soggy french-fry. He had long ago drunk the last drop of luke-warm soda, diluted by the melted ice and barely held in by the water-logged paper cup. He had long ago pissed and shit it all out in the far corner, and now there was nothing left in him but stomach acid, smart drugs and uppers

The damn firewall just wasn't giving. Thankfully he was hacking via anonymous resenders, since network security kept finding him and cutting off his IP address. He had tried every security hole he knew and then went and looked up a hundred more, but the firewall quietly rebuffed every attempt.

When he first started hearing the voices calling his name, they were faint, sounding like they were coming from somewhere behind him. He hadn't been able to find the source and wondered if they were hallucinations caused by the uppers. Over time they grew louder and Twink found it harder to believe they weren't real. Everything around him seemed dangerous, like every board and rusty nail and scrap of paper was conspiring to destroy him. The world, he knew innately, was too dangerous and terrible place for the voices to be just a hallucination. He wondered if it was psychics trying to drive him insane, or whether someone had put some sort of mental program in his brain without him knowing it.

Then he realized the source of the voice: his laptop. It was no longer his, it worked for them. It steamed with evil intelligence, a supernatural awareness. 'You're a failure,' it seemed to tell him, 'You'll never find out what happened to your friends, you'll never see them again, and it will be all your fault.'

"Shut up!" Twink screamed, grabbing the laptop and jerking to his feet. "Shut up!" he repeated over and over again as he flung the laptop as hard as he could against the wall...

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BASIC MECHANICS

Rolls are made during game play for one specific reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

**Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die)
Vs. Action Difficulty**

For instance: Sam wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Sam has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Sam has special gloves that gives him +8 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +8 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (Sam only needs to roll a 3 or better).

Sample Difficulties

- 0- Automatic Success
- 5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)
- 10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)
- 15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)
- 20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)
- 25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)
- 30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)
- 40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

Dual Attribute Rolls- Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty, $END+WIL/2$ is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll 8 + 1d20 vs. 20.

Opposed Rolls- When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (success minus difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do something as simple as a punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 1
opposing
Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 2

Deliberate vs. Chance- GM's decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

Chance Actions: An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll involving leaping from one building and grabbing on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

Deliberate Actions: The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might

just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

Savings Rolls - Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

Opposed Savings Rolls- Occasionally, characters will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if they succeed (meet their difficulty) they will fail if they do not succeed at a level greater to or equal to the level that their opponent succeeds their difficulty.

Example: *Sam hits Carl with a knockout strike. Carl beat his difficulty by 5. Now Sam not only has to beat the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

USING ATTRIBUTES

Agility (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

Balance- Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

Climbing- Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

Landing- Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.56). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.
 20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.
 30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.
 40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

Prowling- AGY is also used for prowling (attempting to move through an area while not being noticed). The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for PC.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for PC by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

Awareness (AWR)

Noticing- Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small needle mark on his neck). AWR should not be used for a substitute for directed attention: if a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

Manipulation- An AWR roll is also made when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind (typically this will be a psychic). The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC's success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and now can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WILL roll).

Charm (CHM)

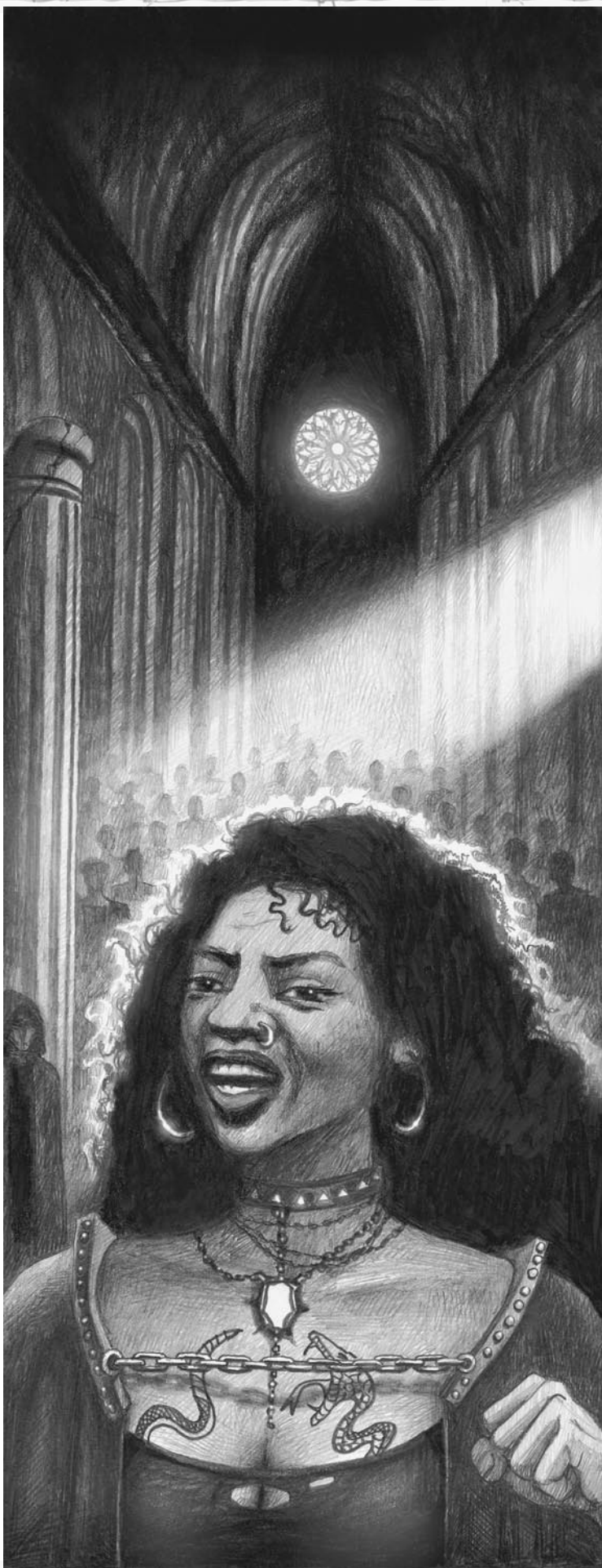
Acting- Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put one some sort of act to fool other people.

Acting difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Making people think you're bored.
- 20 (Moderate) Making people think you're in pain.
- 30 (Difficult) Making people think you're not scared.

First Impressions- CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll comes off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by. Instead of trying to come off as likeable, PCs can also try to modify their first impressions in other ways, e.g. to come off as tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/nothing-to-be-worried-about.

Persuasion- CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing their case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument which makes a lot of sense might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions might have a difficulty of 30. Note: Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone wouldn't/would agree with it.



Seduction- Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the victim wants to have sex with the PC. How and if the victim will act on those desires is up to the GM or player. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

Endurance (END)

Pooled Endurance- Endurance is used as a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

Exertion: Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

Oxygen Deprivation: Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

Mortal Injuries: Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.55).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END. Using psychic manipulation skills removes 2 END per round.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at any roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tim has 9 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with poison gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END (one from exertion, one from oxygen deprivation, one from mortal injuries), which means he has 3 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (which is currently 3).*

Fatigue- END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: Juan has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or higher he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4. The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.

Rest- When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Juan loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 20 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (incapacity) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END multiple times, the PC will be very tired (have aggregate minuses to END) until the next day.

Health- END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.56) and Symptoms/Effects (p.57) for more.

Disease- END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Disease (p.58) for more.

Intelligence (INL)

Speed of Thought- Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.68).

Skills- Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.59) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4/ skill level above the 1st vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

Speed (SPD)

Leaping- SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance (in ft.) times two, so a ten foot leap would have a 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

Running- SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. For convenience's sake, we use SPD as its own measurement of speed and we list everything in the game as having a SPD, from a car to a PC to a tidal wave. If you need to determine miles per hour, it is approximately SPD divided by 2.

Strength (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

Strength Feats- Strength is also used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10, so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift (a poorly grippable object or an object with poor balance would have a higher difficulty). Some example STH feats:

STH Feat Difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.
- 20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door
- 30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.
- 40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

Encumbrance- STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour.

Example: Nyorbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 7 x 5lbs. or 35 lbs. If Nyorbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Nyorbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.

Willpower (WIL)

Mind Control- WIL is used for opposed rolls involving attempts at psychic manipulation (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the psychic) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). Note that in order to resist psychic manipulation, the PC must first realize that someone is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.53).

Resistance- WIL is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL bases saves to resist, among other things, pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, euphoria, etc. See p.57 for a list of symptoms and effects of drugs/diseases/poisons and the consequences for failing saves against them.

Pain- One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

Shocking Pain: This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 loses his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction (see Actions and Reactions, p.70), meaning that the PC not only cannot act, but cannot defend himself or herself for one round.

Distracting Pain: This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction).

Example: Logos fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Logos now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.

Drug Cravings- WIL is also used to save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug) after becoming addicted. See Drugs (p.57) for more.

HEALTH ATTRIBUTES

In Brief- Blades remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. There are many types of damage which may cause pain, may cripple the PC, but don't move the PC significantly closer to being dead and so they do not remove BLD, BDY and INCY. The two main types of damage are blunt and bladed.

Blunt Damage- Blunt damage comes from that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed, being rammed by a vehicle also do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is doubled. So, if a person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).

Bladed Damage- Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also do damage to BLD.

0 BLD- When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he

or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

Incapacity- When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. Blunt damage does double damage to INCY. All further damage that would have done damage to BLD instead does damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As long as a PC still has INCY points left, he or she can still act normally, so long as the PC still has pooled END. As soon as a PC reached 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated (either by reaching zero INCY or zero END), the PC has his or her INCY + END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

Armor

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

Armor Rating (AR) represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC.

Protection Rating (PR) represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Lake has a leather vest with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.71) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

Multiple Layers- When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

Armor Piercing- Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

Non-Damaging Attacks- There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the "would be" damage to less than this then the strike doesn't work.

OTHER TYPES OF DAMAGE

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

- BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
- Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/point of damage).
- Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
- Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Crippling Damage: ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.70) for more.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs) times number of stories. E.G. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

- Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
- Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
- Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.57).
- Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all of the following:

- Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
- Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
- Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins to END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

Radiation: For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.73). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Example: *Inferno* is trying to stab *Hoshi* in the nuts with an ice-pick (a pain/stun strike). *Hoshi* is wearing a leather motorcycle outfit that has AR 10, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. *Inferno*'s difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 32, meaning he succeeds by 7. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor's PR is subtracted.

Had this been a normal strike, the ice-pick would have done 1 bladed (pierces armor as 3). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 3 bladed (pierces as) damage, and the result is 0. No damage gets through, and the strike has no significant effect on *Hoshi*.

DRUGS, DISEASE AND POISONS

Symptoms/Effects

Some drugs, diseases and poisons do simple damage to BLD, just like being stabbed. The majority, however, have effects or symptoms that hit people with different intensities (depending on how much of the drug or poison they've taken or how bad they have the disease). Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved (e.g. red puffy skin). Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause "exhaustion" and reduce STH and SPD by 5). Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against at 10 difficulty). Failing a save might mean the PC is incapacitated, or it may even kill the PC.

The following lists some common symptoms/effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.56) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Drugs

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

- Normal dosage effects (a normal person taking one dose of the drug).
- Overdose effects (the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose).
- Withdrawal effects (the effects when the drug exits the user's system)
- Long term effects (the general effects of the drug for a habitual user)
- Long term withdrawal effects (the effects of withdrawal after habitual use)
- Tolerance (how much more a long term user must use to get the same effect)

Addiction- Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

Physiologically Addictive: Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

Psychologically Addictive: The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day to day life) without the drug.

Saving vs. Addiction- Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

Disease

Cravings- Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Some drugs do have special “triggers” which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it’s been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

Example: *In order to keep hacking despite the pain from her injuries, Lulu starts popping pain pills. The pain pills have a Physiological Addiction Difficulty of 5, a Psychological Addiction Difficulty of 1 and a Craving Difficulty of 20. Cravings for this drug can also be triggered by pain or anxiety. Lulu ends up taking 10 doses in the course of several days. At the end of that period the GM makes her save vs. Physiological Addiction (at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +10 (the 10 doses). Lulu fails and is now physiologically addicted to pain pills. She must also make a save vs. Psychological Addiction (at WIL + 1d20 vs. 1 +10). She fails at this roll. Now she is physiologically and psychologically addicted.*

When she tries to stop using not only does she experience the withdrawal effects listed for the drug, but within 1 day she must two saves vs. cravings at WIL + 1d20. She succeeds at both, and so her next craving will not be for two days. Two days later, she saves again and succeeds, it will now be four days until her next craving. Four days later, she saves again and succeeds. Eight days later, she saves again and succeeds. Before the next craving period, 20 days will have passed, which means she must no longer save vs. physiological cravings. Sixteen days later she saves only once, and succeeds. It will now be 32 days until her next craving.

Unfortunately, though, before that time she is badly cut by some barbed wire and is in a great deal of pain. This triggers an immediate craving. This time, Lulu fails, and she is now forced to drop whatever she is doing and seek out some pain pills. She succeeds, getting the pain pills. After the one dose she took wears off, she decides to quit again. She must make another save vs. physiological addiction (this time at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +1 (one dose)). She succeeds, and only has to deal with a psychological addiction. However, her craving periods are now reset and she will experience another craving within 24 hours.

Contraction- When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing body fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

Progression- Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). However, if the PC succeeds at a save, the disease is “halted”: it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.

Treatments- Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms (most over-the-counter medications work in this way).

Immunity- Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

Example: *Marcos was stabbed in a battle and the wound was exposed to an infection. The infection has a Disease Contraction Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Speed of 12 hours, can be treated by antibiotics, and has the following symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.*

12 hours after being stabbed, Marcos makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. He fails, he now has 1x symptoms. He is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting (at difficulty 10). 12 hours later must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). He fails, and now he has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and he must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Marcos only has 8 SPD, he can now not even stand. Marcos’ friends finally get him some antibiotics, which give +8 to save vs. disease progression. After another 12 hours he saves again at END (7) +8 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds: the disease is not halted, but he is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and fails, but since the disease is halted nothing happens, he remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds, now his symptoms are reduced to 1x. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.

SKILLS

In Brief- Skill + 1d20 +4/level above the 1st vs. difficulty.

Basic Skill Use

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Skills are generally things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone really does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the character class (see p.17). For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

- (1) **Interest:** Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low.
- (2) **Hobby:** Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (+4 to skill rolls)
- (3) **Pursuit:** Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (+8 to skill rolls)
- (4) **Study:** Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (+12 to skill rolls)
- (5) **Expertise:** This is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the skill. Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. (+16 to skill rolls)
- (6) **Mastery:** This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. A person with Mastery in a skill will rarely, if ever, meet a person as skilled or knowledgeable as them. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (+20 to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Physics (3). Tim wants to calculate the radioactive decay of a batch of toxic waste. The GM says that this will be a moderate (20) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs. 20.*

Skills & Time

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Corporations to realize that a certain person is the CEO of a major corp) or weeks (e.g. using Carpentry to build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

Working Together

Two PC with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

Books

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes significantly longer than using the skill unaided (twice as long if the text is in a mental program, three times as long if it is in a searchable computerized format, four times as long if it is in printed form). There are three types of books:

Introductory Texts: Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

Reference Texts Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

Introductory/Reference Texts: Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available (for many skills a book would be useless).

Combat Skills

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

Example: Fenn has Knife Throwing (4). The skill lists the following plusses when throwing knives or similar weapons:

- +2 per level to initiative
- +4 to Strike
- +0 to Vital Strike
- 4 to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

Because Fenn has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of these, so Fenn's actual plusses are:

- +8 (+2 x 4) to initiative
- +16 (+4 +12) to Strike
- +12 (+0 +12) to Vital Strike
- +8 (-4 +12) to Blinding Strike
- No penalty for targeted strikes.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Psychic Skills

In Brief- Psychic skills can manipulate (uses WIL, can be sensed with AWR and resisted with WIL, uses 2 END) or sense (uses AWR, disrupted by crowds) nervous systems. Animals harder.

Psychic Manipulation- Psychics can manipulate their own nervous systems, or the nervous systems of other people or animals. Psychic manipulation is rolled using WIL. Each psychic action uses 2 END.

When a psychic tries to manipulate another person, that person can make an opposed AWR roll (20 difficulty) to try to sense the manipulation happening. If the victim's success beats the psychic's, the victim realizes that he or she is being manipulated. An AWR roll is not necessary if the effects of the manipulation are obviously psychic (e.g. the psychic takes control of someone's arm and makes that person stab himself).

If a person realizes that he or she is being manipulated, the person can make an opposed WIL roll (20 difficulty) to try to resist the psychic manipulation. If the victim's success is greater than the psychics, the victim resists the manipulation.

Psychic manipulation rolls work best when the psychic is touching the victim. The farther away the target is, the harder it is to manipulate him or her (-1 per foot). A psychic can also choose to effect everyone in range (including himself or herself), which will make the roll easier (+10) but may mean that the psychic will have to resist his or her own manipulation.

Example: *Matt has Belief Attack (2). Matt is surrounded by a gang of addicts, one of whom has him pinned against a wall and is going through his pockets. Matt yells "I've got the plague" and makes a Belief Attack skill roll to make everyone believe it. He decides to target everyone, including himself. Matt rolls WIL (17) +4 (skill) +10 (everyone in range effected) +1d20 vs. 20 (the GM decides this is a moderately believable idea). He rolls 2, meaning he gets 33 vs. 20, a 13 success. Matt knows he is being manipulated, so doesn't need to make an AWR roll to tell he is being manipulated, but he does have to resist the manipulation. He must roll WIL (17) + 1d20 vs. 20 and get better than 13 success. If he fails he will believe he has the plague. The addicts, on the other hand, can not resist unless they realize they are being manipulated. They must make an AWR + 1d20 vs. 20 roll. The psychic going through Matt's pockets (touching him) has to beat 13 difficulty. Matt had -1 per foot on his success against the other addicts, and since they are all 4 ft. away they must get at least 9 success (29 on their WIL + 1d20 rolls). Only one makes the AWR roll, but she fails at resisting the attack. The addicts all run off to look for someplace to wash themselves off.*

Psychic Sensation- Like manipulation rolls, using psychic senses is easiest when the psychic can touch the source of the psychic energy. For each foot away the target is, the psychic gets -1 to the roll. Psychic sensation is made difficult by large crowds (because people put out a lot of psychic "noise" which can drown out one specific sensation). For every four people around the psychic, the psychic suffers a -1 penalty to rolls.

Example: *Matt is in a crowd of 100 people and wants to read the mind of someone 5 ft. away. Matt is at -25 (from the crowd) and at -5 (5 ft.) to his roll*

Animals- Psychic skills depend on natural systems within the psychic's nervous systems connecting with natural systems within another nervous system (or by-products of that nervous system). The more different the

two nervous systems are, the harder the roll. A psychic using a skill on an animal takes the following penalty:

Non-Human Primates: -4
Non-Primate Mammals: -10
Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Fish: -20
Insects, Jellyfish, Shellfish, etc.: -40

Vehicle Skills

Normal skills list example things that a person with that skill could do at each level of difficulty (an easy thing, a moderate thing, a hard thing, etc.) Vehicle skills list a number of "maneuvers" that a person with that skill can do, each with a corresponding difficulty. For example, one of the maneuvers that people with the motorcycle skill get is "Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments." Maneuvers are rolled as a normal skill roll, but they have two special modifiers: maneuverability and speed.

Maneuverability: A rating of a particular vehicle that tells how good or bad it is at complex maneuvers. Maneuverability is expressed as a plus or minus to maneuvers done with the vehicle.

Speed: For some maneuvers (jumping, stairs), going fast is good, but for the majority of maneuvers going too fast makes the maneuver harder. Unless the GM decides that this is a fast maneuver, the difficulty for the maneuver is whichever is higher: the difficulty listed in the skill description or the current SPD of the rider.

Example: *Rakesh, who has Motorcycle (3), is chasing after someone on his motorcycle and is confronted with a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he will have to make a sharp turn or hit a wall. Rakesh is going at 30 SPD when he hits the stairs. The GM decides that Rakesh will not take a SPD penalty while going down the stairs. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (the maneuverability of the motorcycle) + 1d20 vs. 20 (the difficulty listed for Stairs in the Motorcycle skill description). Rakesh makes it easily. At the bottom of the stairs is the sharp turn, and the GM says that he will make Rakesh take the SPD penalty. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (maneuverability) + 1d20 vs. 30 (his current SPD).*

Maneuvers as Combat- The maneuvers Ram, Trample and Swerve can be used as combat actions and reaction. They can be opposed by other combat actions and reactions by people on foot. **Example:** *Rakesh wants to use the Trample maneuver to hit Lew (who is on foot). On Rakesh's action, he makes a Trample maneuver roll. As a reaction, Lew dodges. Rakesh succeeds by 5, Lew succeeds by 7, thus the dodge is successful.*

Non-Skills

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does. **Example:** *Flagg has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Flagg what he does. Flagg decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result...*

Unless they have some special disadvantage, PCs are expected to be able to do a certain number of normal things, including: read, eat, dress, keep clean, stay afloat, use a pistol, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

Psychic Modifiers

Manipulation Rolls

Manipulating target remotely:	-1/ft.
Everyone in range effected:	+10

Sensory Rolls

Touching the source:	-0
Sensing remotely:	-1/ft.
Being in a crowd:	-1/4 people

HACKING

In Brief:

Step 1: Homework – Talk to people, search the internet, sneak around to find out anything you can.

Step 2: Getting In – Find a hole in a firewall, use a virus, get in through a computer you've already hacked (privileges, sniffing) or use non-hacking methods.

Step 3: Once You're In – Better success at getting in = better privileges (more power). Can up privileges by hacking the OS. Can crash computer, try not to be detected, lock out other users, do more research.

System Security – Can setup the firewall well. Can monitor for intruders. Have home-field advantage (can almost always beat intruders once found).

Homework

In Brief: Roll Internet Browsing and/or CHM and/or success at sneaking the building vs. organization's secrecy rating. If successful, roll on table to see what you learned.

This is the term hackers use to describe everything that happens before attempting to hack the target system. Homework is research to find out as much as possible about the system.

There are three ways to do homework:

Internet Research: The PC scours the net for any information that has been posted in public places about the system. Roll Internet Browsing skill roll vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Social Engineering: This is when the PC tries to con someone out of information about the company. The most difficult type is cold calls (calling up a member of the organization and pretending to be someone with a legitimate right to knowledge about the organization and the target system). An easier way is finding network administrators in a bar after hours and pretending to be a

potential sex partner who find their job very interesting. PCs must role-play getting a hold of and talking to members of that organization. Roll CHM + 1d20 vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Sneaking Around: Hackers use thief skills to enter the offices of the organization or homes of employees looking for anything that might give some clue as to how to get in (old passwords written on slips of paper, old software data cards, printouts of internal memos, old broken computers with hard drives that information can be scavenged from). Dumpsters are a common target of hackers doing this type of homework. Roll 1d20 plus a number signifying how far the hackers were able to intrude (10 if they just got a few bags of trash, 20 if they got in to the home of a network administrator, 30 if they were able to wander around the offices of the organization) vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

For each successful homework roll, the PC gets one of the following (roll on 1d100):

01-20: The physical location of the system or network and what physical security measures protect it. (Useful info if hackers must resort to an on-site hack attempt).

21-40: Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)

41-60: The type of system, software running on it, and security setup. (+10 to Finding a Hole)

61-80: The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)

81-00: Information about the internal structure of the company (which can be used to help hackers impersonate company employees). (+10 to any further social engineering rolls).

Tech Skill and Hacking: What They Are Good For

Anonymity- This skill allows a hacker to avoid being tracked back to his or her location by sending commands to the target system anonymously.

Copy Protection- When hackers steal programs off of the system that they have hacked, this skill allows them to break the copy protection on the programs so they can use or sell them.

Date Pirating- This skill is used to get hacking tools without having to pay for them on the black market.

Denial of Service- This skill is used to disable a system without having to actually have access to it.

Internet Browsing- This skill is used for researching the publicly available information that will help the PC figure out the best way to attack a system.

Jellynailing- This skill allows PCs to run their programs on a target system or to run programs stolen from a hacked system on their computer, despite hardware incompatibilities.

Linework- This skill allows hackers to physically tap in to networks to hack them from the inside.

Network Protocols- This skill is used to map networks and to masquerade as another network node (send data from one station, but make it look like it came from another station).

Network Security- Hackers with this skill can get a better sense of the security on a target system, and they can also secure their own computer against counter-attacks.

Operating Systems- Once inside a computer, this skill allows a PC to manipulate the operating systems and do things the account doesn't normally have privileges to do.

Payphones- This skill is used to hack in to paycomputers, which are convenient places to stage an attack from.

Programming: Applications- The PC can write hacking tools which automate some of the aspects of hacking a system and allow the hacker to do several things at once. In extreme cases, hackers can also use this skill to decompile a security program and comb through it for holes that might let a hacker in.

Programming: Virus- This skill allows PCs to write programs which they can send to some user. If they can trick that user in to running the program (and if the program is good enough to bypass the computer's anti-virus programs) the program can open up backdoors to let the PC in to the system.

System Crashing- This skill is used to break computers. The whole point of the hack might be to sabotage a system, or crashing might be incidental (a system might be crashed to distract or disable network security or to cover the hacker's tracks).

System Prowling- This skill is used to let the PC keep system administrators from noticing the hacker's presence during or after the hack.

Cryptography- (an Info skill) Used when the PC gains access to some file or taps in to some communication that is encrypted. The PC uses the cryptography skill to help a code breaker program break the code and give the PC access to read or change the data.

Getting In

In Brief- Find a password, scam someone in to giving it to you (CHM+1d20 vs. secrecy rating), 'eavesdrop' on someone logging on to the computer (must break encryption), hack in to another computer that has privileges on target computer.

There are several ways to gain access to a system:

Getting a Password- This is the most common method and the one that requires little or no technical skills. The PC simply finds out someone's password and logs in using it. There are nearly as many scams to get people's passwords as there are scams to get people's money. One of the most common is Shoulder Surfing: spying on someone who is logging in to a system in a public place and watch what keys they are hitting. Some hackers have gone as low-tech as getting a password by threatening to hit a user with a brick.

Social Engineering- This is a very specific type of scam to get passwords. The hacker gets a hold of some user, pretends to be someone else in the organization and tricks the user in to giving out his or her password. Many companies and government agencies spend thousands or millions on campaigns to teach users not to give their passwords to anyone, but all it takes is one naive person.

Knowledge of a structure of the organization is vital to Social Engineering (see Homework) because it helps the hacker pretend to be a member of the organization. With good sound and video samples, Social Engineers can even use the Puppet program (p.80) and the Impersonation skill (p.31) to masquerade over videophone as someone the victim knows (even as the victim's own boss) which makes it much easier to get a password.

To try to get a password via Social Engineering, role-play the interaction with the victim, then roll 1d20 + CHM (and any plusses or minuses the GM rewards for a very convincing or not very convincing scam) vs. the organizations Secrecy Rating. A failure of 1 to 5 means that the victim won't give out the password. A failure by more than 5 means that the victim will report the incident to Network Security.

Sniffing- On any network, data being sent from one computer to another passes through several nodes. This data includes people logging in to systems on a network. If the PC can gain control of a computer which is in a network between the system and the person logging in to the system, the hacker can capture that user's password. On an internal network this can be as simple as hooking up a palmtop computer to a network port (using the Linework skill). On the internet, this means gaining control of an Internet Router that is intermediate between the system being hacked. Internet Routers are very powerful machines that help route information around the internet (every company or organization that has direct access to the internet, instead of buying it from somewhere else, has an internet router). See p.66 for an example Internet Router.

Once the PC has a computer which is on the network, the PC must use the Sniffing skill (and Sniffing software) to find a person logging in. The problem now is encryption. Most logins that take place over the internet (and even some that take place on internal networks) are encrypted, which means that once the PC has captured the login he or she has to break the code (see cryptography) to use it. For instance, one very paranoid system might have Remote Login Encryption Strength 20 for their internal network and Remote Login Encryption Strength 40 for internet logins.

Sibling Attack- Some computers "trust" other computers. For instance, an organization might use a single logon server that processes logins for any computer on the network. If that server says a person's password is legitimate, every other system on the network trusts that server and lets the person in. A hard Network Protocols roll can tell the PC what servers trust what other servers. If it is too hard for a PC to hack in to one server, they might be able to hack in to another server and then gain automatic access to the first server.

Virus/Trojan/Worm- The PC writes some malicious program and sneaks it in to the network. The PC might send it as an email attachment, or mail a data card to someone in the company, or infect a home computer of a user. The PC must then wait until the program gets on to the target system. Then the program will try to run and will try to open up a backdoor that lets the PC log directly in to the system. The only thing that can stop it is the system and network's anti-virus setup. Roll the Programming: Virus skill roll vs. the systems Virus Protection Rating.

On-Site Attacks

In Brief: Much easier to hack when in the building or at the machine.

There is a considerable advantage to being in the same building as the system the PC is trying to hack. If a computer isn't connected to the internet (or any other network that goes outside the building) it might be the only way the PC can hack in to the system. By entering the building and tapping in to the internal network with a portable computer, the PC can completely bypass the external firewall. The PCs can also do things like look for passwords scribbled down on pieces of paper, distract network security by doing things like pulling fire alarms, or even going to the system itself. If the station has an account logged on to it, the PC is in without needing to hack it at all. If not, PCs with high levels in the Operating System and Jellynailing skill can reboot the system in a hacker OS, run the normal Operating System in an emulator that gives them control over what it does, and gain control of the system that way. The only thing that can go wrong with this is if the Operating System is encrypted (very few are set up this way) so that some external decryption key needs to be entered before the operating system can even run.

How Long Does Hacking Take?

In Brief: An Evening

Hacking can be fairly quick if the hacker can get in easily. The more steps a hacker has to go through to get in to a system, the longer it will take. Generally, the more success the hacker gets on a roll, the quicker the hacker does that thing.

-Homework can take hours to weeks, depending on how much homework the hacker wishes to do.

-Breaking encryption (e.g. when Sniffing) can take from seconds to months, depending on the success at breaking the encryption (see p.65)

-Finding a hole takes about an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Raising privileges takes about half an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Most other things a hacker would want to do (looking for file, homework, putting in backdoors, crashing) that requires a skill roll takes about fifteen minutes.

-Most other things a hacker would want to do that don't require a skill roll (copying a file, logging in to a database, etc.) take only 1 or 2 minutes.

Finding a Hole- This is the form of hacking that has changed little in a hundred years. There are programs designed to give some people access to a computer and deny it to everyone else. These programs are never perfect and so every system has holes. Some holes are errors in the program, others are mistakes made by the people setting up the security setup, others are mistakes by users who choose passwords that are too easy to guess. Every day, new security holes are discovered and knowledge of them spread throughout the hacker community and every day software companies are creating new patches to close these security holes.

The word Firewall has a very specific technical meaning, but it is often used more generally to describe all the various attempts to plug up security holes around a system or network. In most security-minded organizations, the entire network has a firewall protecting the network from attacks coming in from the internet (a network firewall) and if hackers get past that they have to deal with firewalls protecting the individual computer which is the target of the attack (a system firewall).

To find a hole in a computer or network firewall, make an Operating Systems or Network Security skill roll with a difficulty equal to the firewall's strength. The PC could also use the following skills at +10 difficulty: Network Protocols, Internet Browsing, Programming: Applications. The PC could also use the following skills at +20 difficulty: Data Piracy, Programming (any), System Crashing, System Prowling, Payphones, Copy Protection.

A failure of 1 to 5 means that the user's attempts were simply blocked by the firewall. A failure of 6 or more means that the firewall recognized that there is an attack in progress, it immediately notifies system security.

Once You're In

In Brief- Hackers get in with a level of control equal to the success on the roll that got them in. They can improve their privileges (OS vs. 30), crash the computer (System Crashing skill roll), lock out other users, cover his or her tracks (System Prowling skill roll), put in backdoors, or do more homework.

Privileges- When a PC gets in to a system with one of the methods listed above, he or she has a username and password of an account on the system. Not all accounts are equal: some have privileges to do things that others can't. Each system will have a list of things that users can do with each level of privileges. If PCs get in using a Sibling Attack (see above) they will have access equal to whatever access they have on the sibling. Otherwise, the level of privileges is based on the amount of success on the roll that the PC got in with:

1-5: User (Typically has access to only limited areas of the computer. The PC can run most programs but can not change anything). Gives -10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

6-9: Superuser (Typically can control the accounts of users, install and run programs, but can not make system wide changes).

Without Getting In

The main focus of this section is on gaining access to computers. There are, however, certain things that a hacker can do to a computer without gaining any sort of access:

Denial of Service- The PC brings a computer or its connection to its knees by flooding it with false requests. Denial of Service attacks rarely do permanent damage to a system, but it is sometimes enough to temporarily disable it. See p.29 for more.

Virus / Trojan / Worm- Without the PC ever gaining access to a station, a well written virus, trojan or worm can wreak all kinds of havoc on the PC's behalf.

Sniffing- Sometimes it isn't even necessary to get in to a system if all the PC wants to do is eavesdrop on the communication between that system and other computers. The PC only needs to be able to hack in to an intermediate network node, then the PC can see anything going across and only has to worry about breaking possible encryption in the communication.

10+: Admin (Has complete control of everything on the computer, including the other administrator accounts). Gives +10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

If the hackers wants to do something that his or her current privilege level will not allow, there are two options: the PC can attempt to run a command at a higher level with a hard Operating Systems roll, the hacker can make a legendary Operating Systems roll to try to raise his or her privileges one level, or the hacker can try to hack in again with a different account (but this time with +10 to getting in because the hacker has already been inside the system and knows a lot more about what to expect).

Crashing- One options for hackers inside a system is to try to crash the system. A PC can crash individual programs, crash the whole computer so it will stop working until someone can physically reboot it, or the hacker can try to trash the computer so bad that it will not work again without hours of repair. Use the System Crashing skill (or the Operating Systems skill at +20 difficulty). If the PC's goal here is to destroy data be aware that many organizations back up their important data to solid memory that is kept offline, which means there's no way to get rid of the data other than finding where it is stored and physically destroying it (such as the Freedom Army did with the corporate AIs during the Freedom Wars).

Lockout- Sometimes hackers will attempt to change all the passwords on a system so that only they have access to it. The obvious response from system administrators is to remove the computer from the network, force their way in to the operating system (reinstalling the OS if necessary) and regaining control.

Prowling- Blatant and direct attacks like crashing the computer or trying to lockout the users often fail because the system administrators have physical access to the computer and the hacker does not. Most hackers find they can do what they want for longer if they keep themselves and their actions hidden. Hackers can make an opposed System Prowling roll (vs. the administrator's Network Security roll) to cover their tracks and not alert administrators of their presence.

Backdoors- Another thing hackers like to do in a system is to put in a backdoor, some invisible security flaw that only they know about which will allow them to get back in to the system whenever they like. The PC can make a moderate Operating Systems or Network Security roll to leave a backdoor and an opposed System Prowling roll to try to hide the backdoor so that it will never be discovered. The ultimate security response to this is every time a computer has been hacked in to, wipe the memory completely and rebuild it from scratch. Fortunately for hackers most systems either aren't important enough to warrant this kind of effort or the owners can't afford to have the system be down for as long as this would take.

More Homework- When a hacker gets on to one computer in a network, they can often snoop around on that machine and find out information about other computers on the network. For each machine in a network a PC gets Admin access on, the PC can roll once on the homework success table (p.61).

System Security

In Brief- Can prevent/stop hackers by: good firewall setup (Network Security, Cryptography skill rolls), monitor for intruders (Network Security skill roll vs. System Prowling). Found hackers can be easily cut off.

The amount of security on a network and on a system varies widely. At the low end, there are very many systems that have no staff dedicated solely to security and a system admin that doesn't know much about security at all. On the other end of a spectrum are very important government and corporate networks that have a network "war room" where a whole team of security administrators watch the network for intruders (and have the power to log on to any system on the network as administrator and snuff out an account being used by a hacker).

Security Setup- The first way a security administrator can protect a network or system from hackers is through skillful setup. It is the administrator's Network Security skill roll that sets the network and system firewall difficulties. It is the administrator's Cryptography skill roll that sets up the encryption strength for remote logins. It is the administrator that makes sure a system doesn't need to trust any other systems (unless absolutely necessary) and that each level of privileges can't do any more than it needs to.

Monitoring for Intruders- Every system has a rating representing how much of the time a network security administrator is monitoring the network and the systems on it looking for hackers, and how skilled the admin(s) are. For every experience level, assume that the security admins have one level of Network Security, Operating Systems and Cryptography. If a system has "30% monitoring by level 3 Admins" then a hacker makes a percentile roll. If the roll is 30 or less, then there is an Admin currently monitoring the network at the time that the hacker is trying to hack in.

If a hacker is unlucky enough to be on or trying to get on a system or network while it is being monitored, the hacker's only hope is to make an opposed moderate System Prowling skill roll vs. a moderate Network Security skill roll by the security admin. If the security admin wins the opposed roll (or succeeds uncontested) he or she has noticed the hacker. If the security admin wins by 1 to 5 points, he or she has a suspicion that the account logged in is that of a hacker (and not a legit user) but will probably try to check and make sure first. If the security admin succeeds by more than 5, he or she is instantly sure that this is a hacker at work.

Dealing With Intruders- Most security administrators have Admin accounts on every computer on the network, including the computer running the network firewall. If they identify an intruder, it only takes a second for them to log on to the firewall machine and block the intruder's network address. The hacker can try to get in coming from another network address, but before the hacker can do that a good administrator will change the password on the account the hacker was using or find and patch the security hole. The only chance the hacker has of fighting back is to make a first strike (cutting off the Admin's access). This strategy doesn't help for long, because a security admin can simply walk over to a machine to log-on in person or, failing that, shut it down.

Possible Systems on a Network

Billing Server- Has a dedicated connection to a bank, allowing the company to do on-line sales. Hackers on these systems can debit or credit accounts.

Database Server- Runs some large shared database (e.g. a database of customers, or of work orders, etc.)

File Server- For storing files so that people on different computers can access them. May store documents, accounting spreadsheets, program source code, etc. depending on what department it is used for.

Firewall Server- This computer runs the external firewall. Hackers on this system can create backdoors in the firewall and can cut any station off from the network.

Internet Router- This computer is connected to an internet service provider and provides internet access for the entire network. Hackers on this system can sniff any connection from outside the network, and can block any connection.

Logon Authority Server- Keeps accounts and passwords so that a person can have one logon that works on multiple machines. Hackers on this system can access any account.

Mail Server- Handles routing of all email within the network, coming from the internet or going out to the internet. Hackers on this system can read people's email and control who gets what email.

Memory Archive Server- Makes solid state backups of data from other servers. Hackers on this system can search through old backups, and can see any data on any system that gets backed up.

Netsite Server- Runs the netsite that people can access from the internet. Most net sites provide information to the public, but others let people pay to access data/services or let employees log-in remotely.

Network Gateway- Adds an additional buffer of protection (beyond just a firewall) between a network and the internet. Users must log-on to (or hack in to) this machine before they can even try to access a machine on the network.

Phone Server- Routes incoming calls to the proper person. Monitors and records calls. Hackers on this system can control who can make and receive phone calls and can eavesdrop on any calls.

Security Admin Workstation- The workstation that security personnel use to monitor and administrate the network. Hackers on this system can make security admins blind to intrusions or block their attempts to cut off hackers.

User Workstations- Individual users within the company log-on to the network (and to other machines on the network) from these machines. By far the most common machines on a network.

VR Server- Runs a multi-user virtual reality program (see p.198).

Cryptography

Today, every code is breakable, but the amount of time it takes to break the codes depends on several factors:

Encryption- Modern encryption is done via computer programs that can take any sort of data (text, sound, video, pictures, computer programs, etc.) and encrypt them. Each piece of encryption software has a strength which tells how hard the codes are to break. Most encryption programs are used by people who know nothing about cryptography. Skilled cryptographers can help the program out by selecting options which best match the current situation. To add to an encryptions strength, roll a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography skill roll and add the success (if any) to the encryption strength.

Unaided Decryption- This is where encrypted data is fed in to a computer program which tries to break the code. The program is left alone to make all its own decisions with no help from the user. To determine the success of the code breaking:

**Code Breaker Strength x Available Power
+ 1d20 vs. Encryption Strength**

Aided Decryption- This is where the PC uses his or her knowledge of encryption and of the particular code being used to help point the code breaker in the right direction. Make a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography roll and add the success, if any, to the code breaker's roll.

Modifiers to Code Breaking

- Small Sample Size -5
- Large Sample Size +5
- Knowing What Encryption Software Was Used +5
- Knowing What Type of Data is Encrypted +5
- Using Old Code Breaking Software -1/month
- Having Part of the Unencrypted Message +5

Cryptography Success- Unlike other tasks, with code breaking it isn't a matter of succeeding or failing, but a matter of how long it will take the code breaker to crack the code. Every code breaker will succeed within some finite amount of time, the success merely determines whether it can do it fast enough to be of any use to the PCs.

- 50: Longer than the lifetime of the universe.
- 40: 10,000 years.
- 30: 100 years.
- 20: One year.
- 10: One month.
- 0: One week.
- 1: One day.
- 3: One hour.
- 5: 30 minutes.
- 10: 30 seconds.
- 20: One second.
- 30: Instantaneously.

Example: *Marla wants to be able to log-on to her server from a remote location, but she doesn't want people grabbing her password as it goes across the net, so she sets up encryption. She buys software that makes 30 strength encryption, and she makes a cryptography roll to set all the right settings. She has Cryptography (2) and rolls INL (15) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. She succeeds by 7 and thus adds 7 to the strength of her encryption.*

Kimberly grabs Marla's log-on as it passes over the network. She has a computer with 6 power and a code

breaking program with a Code Breaking Power of 2. She has Cryptography (4) and makes a skill roll to aid the decryption. She rolls INL (14) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20. She beats the difficulty by 15. Her roll for decryption is: Code Breaker Strength (2) x Available Power (6) +15 (aided decryption) +1d20 vs. Encryption Strength (27).

She rolls 6 on 1d20. Altogether that's 33 vs. 27. She beat the difficulty by 6, meaning it will take 30 minutes for her to break the code.

Types of Encryption

Public Key- This type of encryption uses special keys that everyone makes public for anyone who wants to send them the message. The key is sort of like a deposit-box on a bank: it's easy to put information in (encrypt it) but only the key's owner can take information out (decrypt it). This technology allows people to send encrypted messages to people they've never meet and is the most common technology used on the Internet. The advantages is that it is easy to use, the disadvantage is that it is not as strong as other types of encryption.

One-Key- This is the oldest form of code. Both the party receiving and the party sending the message share a key which is used both to encrypt and decrypt the message. The advantage of this method is that it is very powerful, the disadvantage is that the two parties must meet at some point to exchange keys (a potential security hole).

Evolving- An evolving code is one where each message that is sent changes the key. The key is thus always changing and thus if a person manages to crack the code today, the key may be entirely different tomorrow. The advantage is that code breakers must keep track of every single exchange or lose the key. The disadvantage is that if the legitimate target of the encoded message misses even a few characters, they can no longer decrypt the message.

A Simple Hacking Example

Kimberly and her friends have an enemy trapped inside a small office building on Fourth Ave. Before they go in, Kimberly wants to look really quickly to see if she can find a blueprint for a building. Kimberly is working on a little Palmtop Communicator with a cellular internet connection. Kimberly makes an Internet Browsing roll to see if she can find the blueprints in some publicly available place on-line. Although she succeeds at her skill roll, the GM says that the blueprints aren't publicly available, but Kimberly does find the architects that created the building. There is a special "clients only" area of their netsite that Kimberly thinks might have the blueprints. There is no network firewall protecting the netsite server, which means Kimberly can attack it directly. Kimberly tries to find a hole in the system firewall of the server. The server has a System Firewall Strength of 20 and is running OpenCert. Kimberly has Operating Systems (2) with OpenFree/OpenCert as one of her specialties. Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds by 7, meaning she gets in with SuperUser privileges. With this level of privileges she can easily get in to the client directory and pull out the blueprints for this building.

A Complicated Hacking Example

6:00PM: Kimberly and her friends desperately need to find the address of the last "client" visited by an escort working at 36F Escorts. Kimberly sends Talula and Marshall to go raid the dumpster of the 36F Escorts building. She sends Jack Monroe to call up 36F Escorts pretending to be interested in a job and to try to get as many details as possible about the network. Meanwhile, she stays at home and tries to find anything she can about the company via the internet.

A Sample Network: 36F Escorts

36F Escorts is the city's largest escort service. They have about 30 employees in their administrative office in downtown Manhattan (this does not include the escorts, who rarely see the office). They have one full-time computer tech, Marla Morrone, who works 9-5 Monday through Saturday and carries a pager when she is off duty. Marla's sister Jenny is an escort and whenever there is any hint that Jenny might be in trouble, Marla immediately leaves the office to check on her.

Access: Connected to the Internet.

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 7% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 10

Mail/Phone Server: This computer handles email and routes phone calls to the various call-center workstations.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 17

Privileges

User: Check email and phone stats.

Superusers: Change email and phone settings.

Admin: Edit email in mailboxes.

Billing Computer- This computer has a direct connection to the company's bank. The call center and the net site take credit card information and forward it to this computer which verifies credit info and bills customers.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (Internal) 40 (External) (a login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: Call Center DB

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: Get billing reports.

Superusers: Manually credit or bill credit card accounts.

Admin: View full billing record (including hundreds of saved credit card numbers).

Call Center DB- This computer runs a custom database created by Marla to run the call center. There are full records of every customer, every escort and a calendar of every meeting since the system went up three years ago. When a customer calls in, the call taker records his or her preferences, when they want someone and the computer suggests an escort. The call taker makes an appointment and the database calls the escort.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 25

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 20

Privileges

User: Input and retrieve customer info, view escort info, enter and cancel appointments.

Superusers: Edit escort info.

Admin: Delete records and appointment history.

Marla's Workstation- This is Marla's office computer, from which she administers all other servers. She only turns it on while she is at work.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: GuildOS

Power: 15

Privileges

User: Run programs, access the internet.

Superusers: Add and remove software.

Admin: Delete system files. Edit user accounts.

Net Site Server- Runs the public net site (3D.36F-escorts.com.us) which advertises the company, gives a price list and links to the call center's phone address.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 25

Privileges

User: Make changes to the net site contents. View traffic stats.

Superusers: Turn the net site off and on.

Internet Router- A small router with a connection to NYRLAN that gives internet access to every computer in the office.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: View firewall settings. View internet traffic.

Superusers: Packet sniffing. Block internet addresses. Turn on or off the network firewall.

Administrator: Edit packets.

User Workstations- 15 computers in the call center are used by call takers. They log-on to the Call Center DB and enter calls.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 7

Talula and Marshall end up grabbing two bags of trash out of the dumpster without getting caught. The GM says that the two bags of trash are worth 10 points. Talula and Marshall roll 10 + 1d20 vs. the Organization Secrecy Rating of 36F Escorts (10). They succeed and roll on the homework success table, getting "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)." Meanwhile, Jack Monroe makes a CHM (17) + 1d20 vs. 10 (secrecy rating) roll to get info from someone over the phone. The person is quite happy to talk about the computer network in the office. Jack rolls on the homework table and gets "Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)" Kimberly rolls 1d20 + INL (14) +8 (from having Internet Browsing (3)) vs. 10 (secrecy rating). She succeeds and gets "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)," which is useless because Talula and Marshall already found the same thing.

8:00PM: Having done all the homework they have time for, they decide it is time to strike. It is 8 pm, and they know (from their homework) that Marla, the company's computer tech (and sole security admin) has gone home for the day. They set up in an abandoned building across the street from the 36F building and Kimberly goes to work. First she must get past the network firewall. Out of all the skills she could use, she figures that Operating Systems is her strongest skill. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) vs. 15 (the Network Firewall Strength). She easily beats it and now has access to any computer on the network.

8:15PM: She has to figure out which server has the escort's appointments on it (the Call Center Database). Since Jack Monroe got "Location on internal network" Kimberly gets +10 to her roll. Kimberly makes a moderate Network Protocols skill roll at INL (14) +10 (from homework) vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds and finds the system.

8:30PM: Now Kimberly tries to find a hole in the firewall of the Call Center DB. The system runs Mainframe 10, which Kimberly does not have a specialty in, so she would be at +10 to her difficulty if she used Operating Systems. Instead she decides to use Internet Browsing (at +10 difficulty, because this is not the best skill to use to find a hole, see the list on p.63). So, she rolls INL (14) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (the System Firewall Strength) +10 (because she is using Internet Browsing). Kimberly fails by 7, meaning that not only did she not get in, the firewall will be notifying the system administrator. They figure Marla should be getting a page right now, wherever she is.

9:00PM: Realizing that she has to hurry, Kimberly looks for another system she can break in to more easily. She makes a moderate Network Protocols roll to get a list of every station on the network and the operating system of each. She finds a system called MailPhone that is running OpenCert (an OS she does specialize in). She rolls to find a hole in the firewall of that machine, using Operating Systems. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength). Kimberly succeeds by 7. That means she is in as a superuser. Looking to see what she can do, Kimberly finds that she can change people's phone and mailbox settings, but that doesn't do her too much good.

9:30PM: They see a woman striding quickly towards the building with a frown on her face. Fearing that it is Marla, the system admin, Jack Monroe goes down to stall

her. Jack pretends to be someone Marla knows and starts reeling off some bullshit about money Jack owes her, not letting Marla get a word in. While this is happening, Marla decides that she needs better privileges. She figures that she's not skillful enough to raise her privileges, but she can try hacking in again and hope to get a better account. She's at +10 to hack in again because she's already seen the inside of the system. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +10 (has already been inside) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength)). She succeeds by 12, meaning she gets in as an Admin. She now has access to everyone's mail and saved phone messages. The GM rules that because she succeeded by so much, she got in very quickly, in only 15 minutes. Kimberly downloads all the email and voicemail messages for their missing escort, hoping that might help.

9:45PM: Kimberly decides to try to hack in to one of the workstations of one of the call center operators. Her thought is this: they're probably logged in to the Call Center DB, so if she can gain control of one of their machines, she can get access to it. The workstations are running OpenCert, so Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (the System Firewall Strength). She succeeds by 1, giving her user privileges. The GM says that with that success it will take half an hour to find the hole. While she is in the middle of doing this, Marla, the security admin, finally gets sick of trying to tell Jack that she's in a hurry. She tries to step past Jack and when Jack gets in her way she calls one of the security guards in the building. Jack doesn't want to tangle with the security guard and leaves. Talula, who is watching out the window, tells Kimberly. Kimberly doesn't have the System Prowling skill, so there's nothing she can do to hide from Marla, she just has to hope that she can find what she needs before Marla finds her. Marla goes in, talks to the shift manager, logs on to her workstation, and makes a Network Security roll to find the intruder. Since Kimberly is not prowling, it only takes a moderate success on the skill roll. Marla makes it easily, and finds the hacker on a superuser account on the Mail/Phone Server and a user account on one of the Call Center Workstations.

10:15PM: As Marla logs in to the Internet Router to cut off the network address Kimberly is coming in through, Kimberly is seizing control of the Workstation. The employee at the station watches in confusion as icons start moving without his control. If he was smart, he would simply pull the plug on his computer, but fortunately for Kimberly he is not very smart. Kimberly opens up the window for the appointment database and searches for the missing escort's last appointment. Kimberly pulls up the last appointment, but before she can save the information, Marla cuts off the internet connection. Kimberly is now locked out of the network, and Marla is busy resetting the passwords on the compromised accounts, monitoring for further attempts, and finding and patching the security holes that Kimberly used to get in. Kimberly could try to get on the internet via a different address and hack in again, but it will be next to impossible with Marla watching like a hawk. Instead, Kimberly makes an INL roll to see if she can remember what flashed by on the screen before she was cut off. She remembers a name. Maybe that will be enough...

See Also

Some Computer Systems (p.223) for systems that can be hacked in to.

Internet Geography (p.196) for a general description of the internet.

FIGHTING

In Brief

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds through a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to him or her. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon, and environmental variables.

Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure in to various combat maneuvers:

AGY- Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/reaction.

AWR- Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting quickly to sudden movements.

INL- Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

SPD- Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

STH- Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

WIL- Helps PCs resist pain and to take hits (allowing themselves to be hit so they can make unopposed strikes against the opponent).

Initiative

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an $AWR + INL + 1d20$ roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

Surprise- The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

A Combat Round

A combat round is a period of time during which each participant gets one action and one reaction. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against them at any time during the round.

Converting Actions & Reactions- Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

- Wait and use their one action at the end of the round.
- Give up their action for that round in order to gain an extra reaction (no penalty).
- Turn a reaction in to an action (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

Range

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions) can be used to get in to the proper range.

Range 0: Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

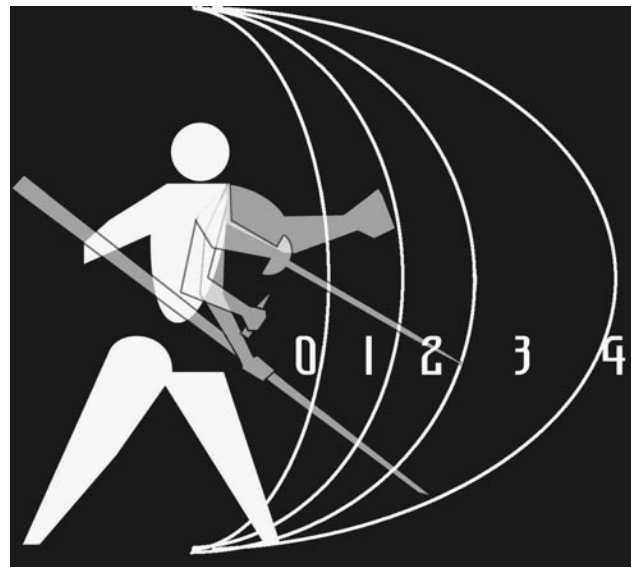
Range 1: Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

Range 2: Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

Range 3: Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

Range 4: Projectile weapons.

Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons. Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the opponent must use an action to step forward).



Noncombat Actions

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

Draw- Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

Aim- Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without their aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

Rise- Rise to standing from a prone state.

Jump- Move a specified number of units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range, above.

Resolving Combat

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like any other attempt to do anything (that the GM decides requires a dice roll) the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like all opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing action (a reaction) and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.

Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:
Strike (Handheld)

Defender's Reaction:
Dodge

The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.

Attacker's attributes:
STH+AGY = 23

Defender's Attributes:
AWR+AGY = 30

Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.

Attacker's 1d20 roll:
14

Defender's 1d20 roll:
5

Attackers add to their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.

Attacker's Roll vs.
Difficulty:
Total of 37 vs. difficulty
25

Defender's Roll vs.
Difficulty:
Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 roll are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.

Attacker's Success:
37 - 25 = 12

Defender's Success:
35 - 25 = 10

Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).

Modifiers

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers are:

Aim	+4 to action	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
Blinded (Full)	-15 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
Burst	-4 to action	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
Extended Action	+5 to action	The character puts his or her whole body in to an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most actions/reactions	See Improvised Weapons (p.72) for more.
Leaning	-10 to actions/reactions	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, he or she is at -10 to their roll for any action or reaction.
Mounted	-4 to actions	Penalty only applies when the animal/vehicle is moving. Note that in order to hit opponents, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
Paired	-4 to action	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
Prone	-8 to actions/reactions	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are -8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.71).
Simultaneous Action	-20 +WIL to action	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. -20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute.
Split	-10 to actions/reactions	The character splits one action in to two actions or one reaction in to two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
Targeted	-4 to action	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
Underwater	-8 to actions/reactions	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do ½ damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can only move at 1 SPD underwater.

Combat Actions

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.21).

Area Attack

Goal- Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

Roll- INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 25 + size of area in feet.

Weapon- Any that can shoot more than once per action.

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

Blinding Strike

Goal- Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.72) for more.

Crippling Attack

Goal- Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

Disarm

Goal- Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

Grab

Goal- Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

Grab (Pain)

Goal- Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

Grab (Strangle)

Goal- Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim takes 1 BLD damage per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD returns one per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

Grab (Wrestling)

Goal- Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break hold victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both his or her arms).

Knockaway

Goal- Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make an opposed moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling.

Knockdown

Goal- Knock the opponent to the floor.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.69 for more on prone fighters.

Knockout

Goal- Knock the victim unconscious

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of doing significant blunt damage

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

Pain/Stun

Goal- Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim loses his or her next action and reaction.



Slash

Goal- Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed success by the attacker.

Stomp

Goal- Do 2x damage to victim's lower than the attacker.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

Strike (Handheld)

Goal- Do damage to the victim.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

Strike (Projectile)

Goal- Damage to the target.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

Weapon- Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.72).

Tackle

Goal- Knock both the attacker and the attackee to the ground.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Body

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

Vital Strike (Bladed)

Goal- Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

Vital Strike (Blunt)

Goal- Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

Weapon- Any weapon that does blunt damage

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. spine, temples).

Wing

Goal- Damage easy to hit, but non-vital parts.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage which gets through the armor is cut in half.

Reactions

Dodge

Goal- Sidestep the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

Entangle

Goal- Stop and trap the weapon.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

Flip

Goal- Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

Roll- AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

Drop

Goal- Drop below the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

Jump

Goal- Jump out of weapon's range.

Roll- SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

Mental Block

Goal- Resist attempted mind control (especially psychic attacks).

Roll- WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

Parry

Goal- Block the attacker's weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what. If you block a knife blade with your bare hands, for instance, you will take some damage (though not as much damage as you would have taken otherwise).

Actions	Reactions
-Each character gets only one per round.	-Each character gets only one per round.
-Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.	-A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
-Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.	-A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 +WIL).
-Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.	-If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.

Projectile Weapons

Range- When making any action with a projectile weapon, add to the normal difficulty the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft.: for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is an extra point of difficulty. A target 60 ft. away would be at +12 difficulty to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

Cover- A character who lies flat, facing their enemy (reducing their profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

Fighting Non-Humans

Machines- Non-Biological opponents do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. One machine, for example, may be able to take 4 blunt or 9 bladed damage before it stops working.

Size- Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

Special Attacks- Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance, a blinding strike would be silly against an animal that does not depend upon its eyes, a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human, etc. Without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible.

Swarms- A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with

size	to hit
Bee	-20
Rat	-10
Cat	-5
Human	0
Horse	+5
Elephant	+10
House	+20

AR 10 could only be attacked by half the swarm at once. A character with an AR of 5 could only be attacked by three-fourths of the swarm.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

Weapon Specific Difficulties

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. Some weapons are designed so that some actions/reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

Slashing Weapons: Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven to flesh do only ½ a point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

Thrown Objects: Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that is was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs.	3 ft.	½
3-5 lbs.	3 ft.	1
6-10 lbs.	2 ft.	2
11-20 lbs.	1 ft.	3
20-99 lbs.	½ ft.	4
100+ lbs.	½ ft.	1 dmg/20lbs.

Blinding Substances: Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will fully blind the opponent (-15 to all actions/reactions) for a length of time depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

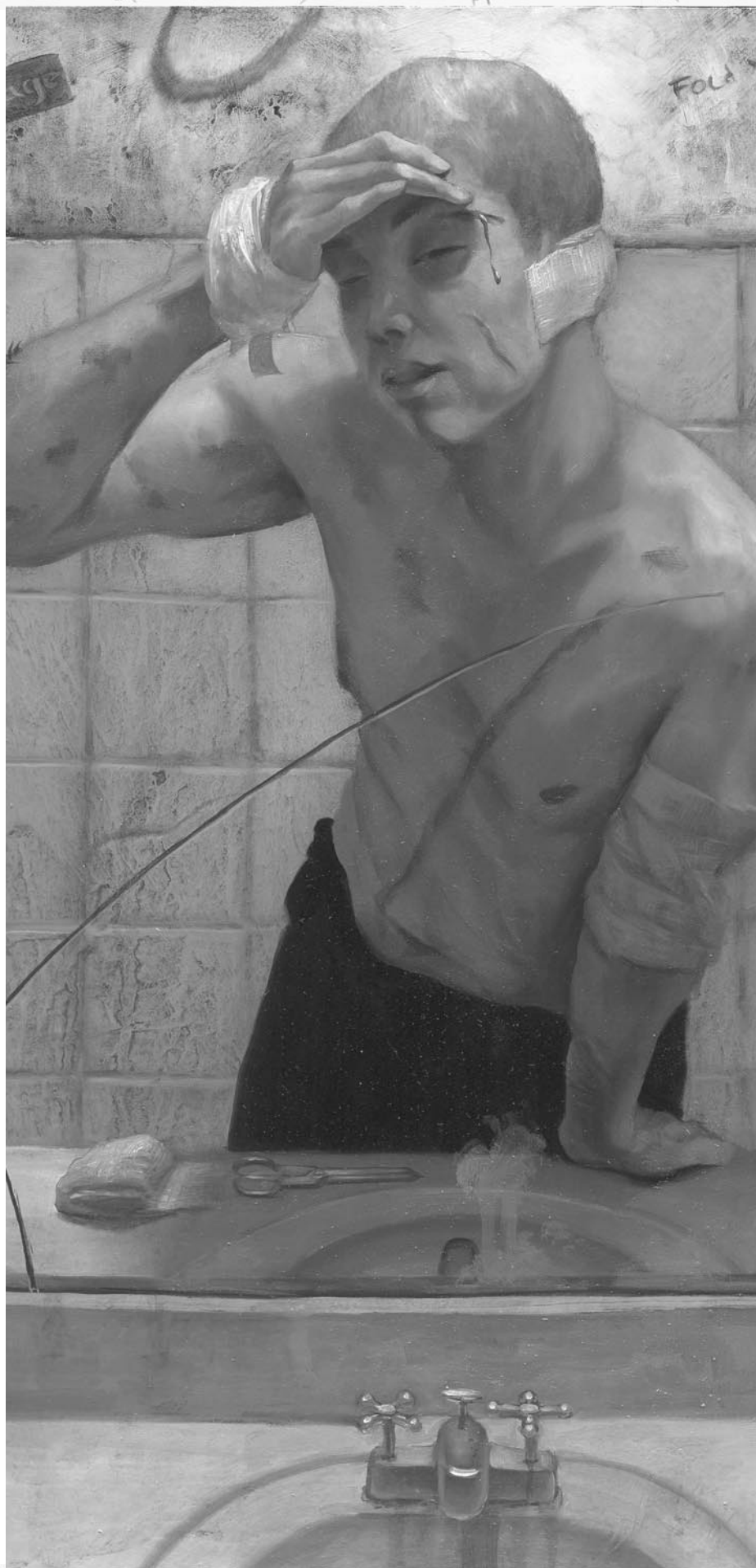
After Combat

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. Proper medical care will eliminate the three following effects. Inadequate care (care given too late, without proper equipment or without the proper skills) only reduces the following effects.

Bleeding- For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another $\frac{1}{2}$ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (tourniqueted, cauterized, stitched up).

Pain- When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

Infection- Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.57) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat medically. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.57 for more on fighting diseases): Disease Progression Rating: 20. Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours. Treatments: Antibiotics. Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.



Simple Combat Example

Rusty and Juanita are in a fight:

Rusty: 12 AWR, 8 AGY, 10 INL, 6 SPD, 14 STH, 7 WIL, 3 BLD, 5 BDY, 4 INCY. No combat skills. Has a hunting knife (range 0-1, damage: 2½ bladed). No armor.

Juanita: 8 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 INL, 16 SPD, 4 STH, 8 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY. Kickboxing (2) (gives +8 to wing, +8 parry, +8 to knockaway, +4 to strike with her feet). No weapons. Her kicks do 1½ blunt damage. No armor.

GM- Roll initiative.

Rusty- (rolls INL (10) + AWR (12) + 1d20) 28

Juanita- (rolls INL (13) + AWR (8) + 1d20) 23

GM- Rusty, you get the first action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm doing a split action, I'm moving in to range 1 and doing a strike at Juanita with my knife.

GM- Juanita, are you reacting?

Juanita- I'm going to dodge.

GM- Okay, roll. Remember, Rusty, since you split your action you're -10 to each action. The jump in to range will succeed automatically, but you're -10 to hit.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 27, that's 2 success.

Juanita- (rolls AWR (8) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 26. Only one success.

GM- Okay, the knife hits you Juanita, and does 2½ damage to your BLD. Okay, Juanita, now it's your action.

Juanita- I'm going to make a strike with my feet.

Rusty- I'll block with my arm.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeeded by 8.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeed by 12.

GM- Okay, Rusty parries the kick. Next round. Rusty, your action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm going to make a strike against Juanita with my knife.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your reaction?

Juanita- Um... I'll parry with my leg.

GM- You realize that since you're parrying a bladed weapon, even if you succeed your leg may be injured? You might lose BLD or even have the leg crippled?

Juanita- Yeah, but it won't be as bad as if I get stabbed, right?

GM- Right.

Juanita- Okay, I'll do it.

GM- Okay, roll.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 3 success.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 30. Five success.

GM- Okay, let's see, you kick the blade out of the way, but your ankle is grazed. Take... ½ BLD damage.

Juanita- Okay. I'm at 1 BLD now.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your action.

Juanita- I'll do a knockdown, with my feet.

Rusty- I'll let her kick me and do a simultaneous strike.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 30). Two success.

Rusty- (rolls (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25). Five success.

GM- Okay. Juanita, you take another 2½ damage to your BLD. Rusty, your knocked on the ground.

Juanita- My BLD is zero now, and I'm down to 2½ INCY.

GM- Well, you've just been mortally wounded. From now on you'll be losing a point of pooled END every round. Rusty, it's your action.

Rusty- I'll get up.

Juanita- While he's doing that, I'm going to run away.

Complex Combat Example

Raul and Tyra vs. Hammerhead and Ying.

Raul:

Attributes: 14 AWR, 6 AGY, 4 END, 16 INL, 9 SPD, 3 STH, 15 WIL, 5 BLD, 3 BDY, 4 INCY.

Skills: No combat skills.

Weapons: Tech Sword (range: 1-2, damage: 6 bladed (pierces armor as 8), easy strike, easy vital strike) and Riot Shield (gives +10 to parry).

Armor: None.

Tyra:

Attributes: 17 AWR, 12 AGY (including the AGY penalty from her armor), 7 END, 6 INL, 12 SPD, 8 STH, 12 WIL, 3 BLD, 4 BDY, 3 INCY.

Skills: Street Fighting (1) (gives +4 to Pain/Stun Attack, +4 to Simultaneous Strike, +4 to Crippling Attack).

Weapons: Sharpened Stick (range: 2, damage: 2½ bladed, hard strike) coated with Black Market Knife Poison (within 1 round after being stabbed: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls)).

Armor: Trash Armor (AGY Penalty: -4, AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt).

Hammerhead:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 END, 7 INL, 13 SPD, 17 STH, 14 WIL, 2 BLD, 4 BDY, 6 INCY.

Skills: No combat skills.

Weapons: Improvised Slashing Weapon (1 bladed damage, -8 to any actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash).

Armor: Nanopadded Armor (AR 10, PR 2 bladed 7 blunt 2) and Modern Chainmail (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Ying:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 14 AGY, 8 END, 12 INL, 5 SPD, 7 STH, 18 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY.

Skills: Knife Throwing (3) (gives +6 to initiative, +12 to strike, +8 to vital strike, +4 to blinding strike, no penalty for targeted strikes).

Weapons: 5 throwing daggers (FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft, damage: 2 bladed).

Armor: None.

-The Situation: They are in an alley, Raul and Tyra on one side, Hammerhead and Ying on the other, 10 ft. apart.

-Initiative: Ying (who gets +6 to initiative from the Knife Throwing skill) gets 34, Raul gets 32, Tyra gets 26, Hammerhead gets 23.

-Round 1: Ying's Action. Ying declares that he is throwing a dagger at Tyra (a strike). Tyra reacts by ignoring the strike and running at Ying full speed. Ying rolls AGY (14) + INL (12) +12 (strike) -10 (she is 10 ft. away and the dagger has a Functional Range of 1 ft.) + 1d20 vs. 25. He succeeds by 8. This is not enough to bypass Tyra's armor (she has AR 8) and all of the dagger's damage is absorbed by the armor. Since she ran at Ying, Tyra is now in range 2.

-Round 1: Raul's Action. Raul decides to hold his action – he wants to see what Hammerhead is going to do.

-Round 1: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is going to make a pain/stun strike against Ying with her (poisoned) sharpened stick. Ying declares that he will do a Jump, jumping back 1 range level, to avoid the strike. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, she succeeds by 8. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 2. Ying is stabbed in a tender spot with the stick, and must make an opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20. He gets 31, succeeding by 11, which beats Tyra's success, which means he doesn't lose any actions. He is now also at range 3, out of Tyra's weapon range. The stick has, however, punctured his skin, and starting next round he will take poison damage.

-Round 1: Hammerhead's Action. He decides to do a split action jump in (running in to range to hit Raul) and pain/stun against Raul. Raul declares that he will react by dodging. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) - 10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 1. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Raul must make an opposed save vs. pain. Raul rolls WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 20 and fails by 2. Raul will lose his next action (the one he saved).

-End of Round. Since everyone has been fighting, everyone loses 1 pooled END (Raul has 3, Tyra has 6, Hammerhead has 12, Ying has 7). At the start of this next round, Ying will take damage from the poison. He takes 1 BLD damage, must save vs. vomiting (rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20, he succeeds), must save vs. shock (rolls END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20 and succeeds), and is +7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch or vision based AWR rolls and -7 to all actions and reactions.

-Round 2: Ying's Action. Ying declares he is making a strike against Tyra with a knife. Tyra declares that she will react by dodging. Ying rolls INL (12) + AGY (14) +12 (skill) -6 (he is 6 ft. away) -7 (poison effect) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra rolls AWR (currently 13) + AGY (12) + 1d20 vs. 25. She succeeds by 2. Ying's strike hits her, and bypasses the armor and does full damage. Tyra loses 4 BLD.

-Round 2: Raul's Action. Raul declares he is going to make an extended strike against Hammerhead with his Tech Sword. Hammerhead declares that he is going to make a simultaneous Disarm strike, trying to knock the weapon out of Raul's hand. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +4 (the Tech Sword has an easy strike) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 4. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + WIL (14) (because it is a simultaneous strike) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20 (because it is a simultaneous strike), he fails. Since Raul's success on his strike is 4, less than the AR of either of Hammerhead's armors, the PR of both armors is removed from the damage of the sword. The sword does 6 bladed, but pierces as 8. Hammerhead's armors has a PR of 3 bladed and 2 bladed. Altogether, 3 bladed damage pierces Hammerhead's armor. Since Hammerhead's BLD is only 2, he loses all his BLD and 1 INCY point. Since he has received a fatal injury (is at 0 BLD) he will lose an additional 1 point of pooled END each round.

-Round 2: Tyra's Action. Tyra is out of range, so she decides to do a split action jump in and extended wing against Ying. Ying declares that he will react with a jump out. Tyra rolls INL (6) + AGY (14) +5 (extended) -10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 20, she succeeds by 7. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) -7 (poison effects) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Ying takes half damage from the stick (loses 1 BLD) and takes another dose of poison. Starting next round he will be taking double the poison effects.

-Round 2: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he is going to disarm Raul. Raul declares that as a reaction he will do a simultaneous strike against Hammerhead. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) + WIL (15) (because he is doing a simultaneous action) -10 (this is his next reaction after an extended action) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20, he fails. The sword falls from Raul's hand.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead loses an additional point because he is at 0 BLD. Now Raul has 2, Tyra has 5, Hammerhead has 11, Ying has 6. Since the Ying has been stabbed twice, he has two doses of poison in them and double the effect.

Ying takes 2 BLD damage, reducing him to 0 BLD. He must save vs. vomiting at difficulty 40 (he fails and will spend all round vomiting), save vs. shock at difficulty 40 (he fails, now all his attributes are halved), and he is -14 to touch/vision AWR rolls and -14 to all actions/reactions.

-Round 3: Ying's Action. He decides to make a football tackle against Tyra, though he will be at -20 (from vomiting) and -14 (blindness) and so can only succeed by rolling a 20. Tyra decides to ignore him and dash in to weapon's range of Hammerhead. Ying fails.

-Round 3: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is bending down to pick up his weapon. Since he is not acting against any opponent, nobody gets a reaction.

-Round 3: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is making a pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is dodging. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, and succeeds by 6. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra's attack misses Raul.

-Round 3: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he will make a Disarm strike against Raul. Raul has no reaction left. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 5. Raul drops his sword again.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead and Ying lose 2 because they are both at 0 BLD. So, now Raul has 1, Tyra has 3, Hammerhead has 9, Ying has 4. Ying loses 2 INCY to the poison. He fails his save vs. vomiting.

-Round 4: Ying's Action. He doesn't take any.

-Round 4: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is going to grab his weapon and jump backwards out of weapons range. Since this is a slightly complicated maneuver, the GM makes him make a moderate AGY roll (AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 20). Raul fails. The GM declares that Raul got the weapon but didn't make it out of weapon's range.

-Round 4: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares she is going to make an extended pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to split his reaction, use one half to parry the strike, and save the other half for later. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) +5 (extended) vs. 25, and succeeds by 12. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Tyra's poisoned stick hits Raul in a soft spot. Raul must now make a moderate opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 9, which is 3 less than Tyra's success, which means he loses his next action. He will also take poison damage starting next round.

-Round 4: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead has a 2 damage punch, and he declares that he is going to make an extended knockout strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to use the second half of his split reaction to parry. Hammerhead rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 30. He succeeds by 9. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, and succeeds by 5. Now Raul must make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls the average of his WIL (15) and END (currently 1), which is 8, + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 1, which is 8 less success than Hammerhead's knockout. Raul goes unconscious.

-Post Battle: Ying is vomiting and blind and will be dead by the beginning of the next round. Raul is unconscious and poisoned, he will die before he wakes up. Hammerhead has been mortally wounded by Raul's tech sword. At the beginning of next round he will have only 7 pooled END left, which means only 7 rounds to get medical attention before he goes unconscious. Tyra has been seriously wounded, she is down to 1 BLD and if she doesn't get her injuries treated they will bleed and she will lose another 2 points of BLD ($\frac{1}{2}$ point per point of injury) within 15 minutes, which will put her at 0 BLD. If Hammerhead and Tyra find a way to live through the next 15 minutes, unless they get quality medical care they will have to deal with pain (they will have to make saves vs. distracting pain, Hammerhead at 15 (3 damage x 5 difficulty) and Tyra at 20 (4 damage x 5 difficulty)). They will also have to save vs. disease progression to avoid their injuries becoming infected (both at 30, since the difficulty is damage x 10 with a max. of 30).

Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get in to a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.
2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.
3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical action and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).
4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).
5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.
6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.
7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons range of each other.
8. Instead of calculating and rolling for every effect of a poison on an NPC opponent, just give the opponent a flat penalty to all actions and reactions. E.G. instead of the huge list of symptoms of Drake Fungus Poison, just say that each dose does 1 BLD damage and gives -10 to all rolls.
9. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.

Chapter Three - The Black Market

Caroline knew she had made many mistakes: taking the swing shift at the factory, not asking someone to walk home with her, trying to run from those muggers, running home instead of to a public area, not calling the police before they had a chance to cut her internet line. Perhaps her worst mistake had been to think she could wear the old plate mail armor her uncle had left her. The hinges on the door were about to give way, there was no time to change any of it, she could only stand her ground and fight.

Any second they would come pouring in, and she might have the advantage for a few seconds while they were surprised by the armor. Maybe she could hit one or two of them with her kitchen knife in that time. She would be lucky if the knife blade didn't snap the first time she hit someone with it. If she couldn't hurt them within a few breaths they would find the plates hanging loose and stab her in the holes. If her helmet got hit it would twist and she would be blind.

Even the banging on the door was drowned out by her panicked breath echoing in the helmet. She could smell her breath and the acidic odor of the metal. She could feel hot tears on her cheeks as she wept in fear...

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Legality types are as follows:

Permit: It is legal for ordinary people to have and use this item so long as they have some sort of permit, prescription or other proof of permission to have the item. Examples: prescription drugs (must have a prescription), software suites (must be registered with the software company as a valid user), pepper-spray (must have a certificate of training in the safe use of pepper spray).

Licensed: Only a small group of professionals licensed by the city, state or federal government are allowed to possess, carry and use such items. Examples: pharmsynths (only certain emergency medical personnel operating in situations where access to pharmaceuticals is limited are able to use these), mental installers (only licensed hospitals and doctor's offices can own mental installers, and they are commonly audited to make sure they are using them legally), firearms (only the National Guard can bring firearms in to the city, only in a state of emergency, and only if those firearms have security chips that only allow those guardspeople to fire them).

Forbidden: These are items which there is almost no legal way to own, possess or carry. Examples: illegal street drugs with no prescription use (unless being held by cops as evidence in a criminal trial), bioengineered diseases (unless kept in Centers for Disease Control labs for study), nuclear weapons (unless kept by the US military).

Example: Tom is caught with a Blood Plug. Blood Plugs have a legality of Permit (\$500 fine). Unless he can provide a prescription or show that he is an ambulance driver or some other licensed medical practitioner, he might be sentenced to pay up to \$500, depending on what kind of mood the judge is in. If Tom can't pay, he'll probably have to spend some time in the city jail. On the other hand, if Tom was caught with the bioengineered disease Harmon, which has a legality of Forbidden (Life Without Possibility of Parole), his only hope is to beg for clemency if he ever wants to see the outside of a prison again.

Introduction

This chapter is a compendium of things that are, or might at some point, be available on the legitimate and black markets. Although player may use this section for equipping PCs during character creation, it is also meant as a reference for, among other things, what a villain might spend money on. The presence of something in this chapter does not imply that PCs can buy it, should; buy it, or have any ethical excuse for buying it.

Legality Ratings

The prices listed in this chapter represent the black market price for items. Most items, if bought through legitimate items, would be 2 to 10 times more expensive. It is illegal to possess any stolen merchandise. The prosecutor does not need to prove that a person knew an item was stolen, only that the item was stolen. Some items listed in this section are illegal for ordinary people to possess whether or not they can be proven to be stolen.

The legality of an item is listed as the type of legality (under what circumstances it is legal to have the item) followed by the maximum penalty for possessing the item.

Value Buy- Look for this symbol to find items that are an excellent value for street people PCs.



DATA

Applications

Applications are computer procard.

AI Firewall- This program monitors all network traffic coming in and out of a computer and blocks anything it thinks is suspicious. It notifies the user whenever it cuts off access and the user can override the decision. In hacking terms (see p.61) the program adds +10 strength to a firewall. Interface: Graphical. UF 2. Uses Power 4. Size 5 ZB. Costs \$50.

AI Secretary- This program acts as a personal assistant, making appointments, keeping calendars, storing and organizing files and answering the phone to take messages. The secretary has a configurable human voice and appearance. The secretary has some language recognition (can understand simple plain-text questions and commands). It has routines for intelligent net research (it can do research on the net to find answers to questions). Typical commands that a secretary program could follow:

- "Get me any files I have on that RNN deal from last summer."

- "Call SRC, schedule an appointment with one of their account execs ASAP. Bump any non-critical appointments if necessary."

- "Carla's coming over for dinner next Thursday at eight. Call me and remind me to come straight home so I can clean up."

- "Go on-line and find out what the best price is on canned tuna fish by the crate."

- "Go on-line and find me a short definition of 'post-modern art'."

Interface: Text/Speech. Size 50 ZB. UF 0. Uses Power 5. Costs \$200.

CAD Suite- Allows users to design any sort of manufactured item and test it in a virtual environment. Can be used to design anything from a screw to a skyscraper. Interface: VR. UF 2. Size 20 ZB. Uses Power 4. Costs \$200.

Application Features

Interface: How the program is accessed.

Text/Speech: The program takes commands and responds in simple text. If hooked up to hardware with speakers and built in voice recognition, users can operate this software purely by voice.

Graphical: The PC sees a graphical environment in which icons representing program functions are moved and manipulated via a pointing device. Some text input (typing or voice recognition) is used but it is minimal.

VR: The program has a full Virtual Reality interface. The program's controls are represented as a 3D environment in which objects can be grabbed and manipulated.

Size: How much memory a program takes up on a computer's hard drive when installed.

UF: User Friendliness – how much skill is needed to use the program.

UF 0: Anyone can use the program without any special skills, knowledge of training.

UF 1: Users must either read the reference manual packaged with the software or must have one skill level in an applicable skill in order to use this program.

UF 2: Users must have at least 1 skill level in Operating Systems and 1 skill level in an applicable skill to use the program.

Uses Power: How much computer power (a feature of computer hardware) the program requires and eats up while running. A computer can run multiple programs at once so long as it has enough power (e.g. a power 5 computer can run a power 5 program or a power 3 and power 2 program.) A few programs use variable power: they can work at any power level, but work better the more power is put in to them.

Pirating Data

The following costs are the costs that people typically pay a Black Market trader for a program, an information file or the code which will be installed in someone's head as a mental program. Instead of paying a black market trader to procure the data, people with good internet skills can attempt to find free copies. The Software Pirating skill is the best skill to use for this purpose. Internet Browsing can also be used, but at higher difficulty. Also, members of the groups Technophiles, Crackers and Arcadians tend to share pirated data. So, for any piece of data, there is a chance that a member of these groups will have easy access to it. Since, on the black market, the rarer an item is the more it costs, difficulty for finding a piece of data is listed according to its black market value:

Black Market Value of Data	Software Pirating	Net Browsing	Technophile	Cracker	Arcadian
	skill roll difficulty		chance of availability		
\$5	10	20	95%	99%	75%
\$20	13	35	90%	95%	65%
\$80	17	30	75%	90%	50%
\$200	20	35	50%	85%	25%
\$600	23	40	25%	75%	10%
\$1000	17	45	15	50%	7%
\$1500	30	50	7%	30%	5%
\$2000	33	55	5%	25%	1%
\$2500	37	60	2%	10%	1%
\$3000	40	65	1%	5%	1%

Code Breaker (Latest)- This is the latest and hottest code breaker to hit the market, with techniques for dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Has a code breaking power of 2 (see Cryptography, p.65). It will quickly go out of date, becoming Code Breaker (Older) within 4 months. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs \$1,000.

Code Breaker (Military)- This code breaker was designed by secret corporate labs working on commissions for the worlds' superpowers. The greatest minds in encryption spent years creating these schemes and subsequently had their memories of that time wiped. Every existing copies of these code breakers are hotcoded (see p.195) to make them uncopyable. Thus the number of copies of these code breakers in the world is permanently fixed. The code breaking schemes are so novel and don't exist anywhere else and so the program only loses 0.5 power per year. The software is permanently locked in a small box the size and shape of a brick which plugs in to a computer via a normal I/O Jack. The box has a 7 year uranium battery and if that ever fails the code is lost forever. Weighs 5 lbs. Code Breaking Power: 3. Interface: VR. Size 0 ZB. UF 2. Uses Variable Power. Legality: Licensed (10 yrs. Prison). Costs \$10,000.

Code Breaker (Older)- This code breaking program is several months out of date and thus has a hard time dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Code Breaking Power: 1. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs \$100.

Cryptography Lab- This software suite allows those versed in the mathematics of cryptography to analyze encryption and decryption schemes and to create new schemes. Interface: Graphical. Size 40 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75.

Data Salvage and Repair Suite- Attempts to retrieve and reconstitute as much data as possible from damaged or wiped memory sources. Useful for forensics (e.g. looking for deleted files) or trying to salvage data after a hacker or virus attack. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$5.

Denial of Service Program- This tiny program floods a target system with false requests, the goal being to slow or block any legitimate traffic coming to and from that system. For most systems, 1 instance of the program is enough to make the target spend 1 power dealing with fake requests. E.G. 5 copies of this program running on 5 systems can bring a 5 power computer to a halt. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500 fine). Costs \$20.

DNA Analysis Suite- A selection of advanced software for analyzing genes or whole genomes. Users can do things like simulate what an adult human might look like based on their DNA, find and analyze genetic modifications, and see the effects of genetic engineering on a simulated cell. Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 2. Uses 10 Power. Costs \$500.

Encryption Software Suite (Advanced)- Uses the newest and best encryption techniques (the same ones banks use

for electronic money transfers) and gives the user several options for configuration of the encryption scheme (allows for encryption to be aided with a skill roll, see p.65). Creates one-key codes at 50 strength (normal) 55 strength (evolving) and public-key codes at 40 strength (normal) 45 (evolving). The user must subscribe to a service that provides weekly updates in order to keep the encryption methods up to date (or encryption strength will degrade by -5 ever month). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$200 +\$15/week for updates.

Encryption Software Suite (Basic)- One of many packages that allow users to encrypt files, messages or data streams. Each encryption creates a key (a string of several thousand characters) which can be stored on the computer or in some sort of data storage (e.g. a Data Key, p.83). The software can create a one-key code with a strength of 30 and a public-key code with a strength of 20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 15 ZB. UF: 1. User Power: 1. Costs \$20 +\$5/week for updates.

Face Recognition Software- Can search through thousands of pictures per minute or analyze video streams looking for one or more faces. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power per video stream. Costs \$10.

Language Translator Program- This program automatically determines the language of text or audio and provides translation to and from the owner's language. Comes with the 20 most common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic). Additional language matrices available as 1 ZB files. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 30 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75 +\$5 per language file.

Linguistics Suite- Analyzes large samples of spoken or written languages. Uses AI routines to identify language grouping and influences and even to create translation matrices for unrecorded languages. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 100ZB. UF 2. Uses 5 Power. Costs \$200.

Media Editing Suite- Software for editing and manipulating pictures, video and sound. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100.

Media Forensics Suite- Created for forensic scientists to extrapolate information from media evidence. Has tools to do anything from isolating background noise in a recording, to enhancing blurry images in a photo, to searching for invisible signs of forgery in a video, to determining what kind of camera was used to take a picture. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 2. Uses 3 Power. Costs \$250.

Music Program- Compose and record completely realistic sounding music using simulated musicians and singers. Also has AI musicians who can accompany live music. Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$150.

Office Suite- All the software needed to create, organize and share multimedia documents, presentations, calendars, databases, forms and spreadsheets. Interface: Graphical. Size: 15 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$50.

Port Scanner- This program scans through every possible address on a network. For every response it tries to map what type of computer it will find. Note that a well-configured firewall will block a port scanner and alert network security immediately. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 1 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$5.

Programmer's Suite- A selection of programming tools (documentation, pre-generated code snippets, translators, emulators and debuggers) that allows users to create computer programs quickly and reliably. Gives +4 to programming skills rolls and doubles the speed of programming. Interface: Graphical. Size: 2 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$300.

Puppet Program- This software captures someone's image and voice and creates a virtual "puppet" that looks and sounds like the person and will do anything the user commands. The puppet is controlled by a controller in a VR interface whose every word, movement and expression is mimicked. Interface: VR. Size: 7 ZB. UF 1. Uses 5 Power. Costs \$200.

Reverse Engineer- This program analyzes the code of other programs to try to help the user determine how it was made (e.g. using which programming language and programming tools). The program will decompile source-code and create program diagrams (the first step to figuring out what the code does and how to change it). Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100.

Script Kiddie Suite- When directed at a particular network, these programs look for any known holes in the firewalls. Most skilled hackers do not use this sort of software (other than to distract network security while they make a real attempt to get in). The program can find holes in a firewall (see p.63) at 10 + 1d20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$20.

Security Package- Although all modern operating systems come with built-in security, many users prefer to supplement this with third party security packages which include virus checkers, firewalls and account administration programs. In its default configuration, the program creates a 20 strength firewall (see p.63). These programs are typically used by people who have no computer security skills (people with security skills can do a better job configuring their firewalls without using a program). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$100.

Subliminal Analyzer- This program surreptitiously inserts itself in to a VR interface or videophone stream. It flashes subliminal images at the target and gauges the psychological reaction by measuring things like voice stress, breath rate and pupil dilation. When used in full immersion VR it is about half as accurate as the Subliminal Analyzer Goggles and when used in a videophone stream it is about one quarter as accurate. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$75.

Trojan (Logic Bomb)- This Trojan, once it is run, waits until a pre-set time and then runs some command or commands programmed in by the hacker. The command(s) can be anything from changing a file, to sending an email, to wiping the entire hard drive. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$10.

Trojan (Spy)- If a hacker can run this software on a system or trick a user in to running it, the software "disappears" and runs silently on the system. The program records everything that users do on the system (including what passwords and encryption keys they enter) and sends back discrete reports to its master. Takes a moderate Operating Systems skill roll to discover and another to disable the Trojan. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$10.

Virtual Machine- This software creates a simulated computer inside the user's own computer. The user can control every aspect of this virtual machine. A virtual machine could be used to run another operating system (to use software that couldn't normally be used on that computer), to analyze how a program works, or even to practice breaking an operating system using the System Crashing skill. The virtual machine runs at -2 power. Example: A power 10 computer running GuildOS could run a virtual OpenCert machine as if it were a power 8 machine. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs \$100

Visual Arts Suite- Software for creating 3D or 2D art, illustrations or logos. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs \$10.

Voice Recognition Software- Can search through audio or video recordings or streams for a specific person's voice print or for specific keywords. Can listen to 1 hour worth or pre-recorded sound in 5 minutes, or can listen to up to 10 live audio streams at once. For instance, a computer running this software could be hooked up to a radio scanner, could monitor 10 audio bugs and will trigger an alarm any time it hears the word "bomb." Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 3 Power. Costs \$10.

VR Editing Suite- Tools for designing static or interactive VR simulations. Also includes tools for modeling VR constructs from real people, places, animals and objects captured on still images or video. The suite can create self executing VR "games" (although nothing near the complexity and realism of the huge VR worlds that most VR addicts inhabit). Interface: VR. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 7 Power. Costs \$400.

VR Training Programs- These small simulations put the user in a VR world where they can practice some skill or task to perfection. There are training programs for everything from karate to cake baking. Every 4 hours spent using one of these programs reduces the skill cost to buy a skill by 2 (minimum 2). Each different skill and each different level within that skill requires its own unique module. Interface: VR. Size: 10 ZB. UF 0. Uses 5 Power. Module costs are:

	Level 1 or 2	Level 3 or 4	Level 5
Athletics (ATHL)	\$200	\$300	\$400
Bio/Med (BIO)	\$250	\$350	\$500
Combat (CMBT)	\$650	\$800	\$1000
Military (MIL)	\$650	\$800	\$1000
Tech (TECH)	\$150	\$300	\$450
Thief/Espionage (THIE)	\$350	\$500	\$650
Sociological (SOC)	\$90	\$120	\$250

Information

These are pieces of data which contain stored human knowledge for humans to reference. Most information comes in the form of text and pictures and can be printed in a paper volume, stored on a computer or even implanted in one's brain as a mental program.

Books- These are reference materials that can be used to supplement a pre-existing skill (Ref), substitute for having a skill (Intro) or both (Intro/Ref). See the section on Using Skills (p.59) for more info. Books can be bought either as paper volumes, computer programs or mental programs. Paper books come in 1 or more hard-bound paperback volumes (½ lb. each). Computer programs require 1 Power to run and take up a 1 ZB of storage space. Mental programs use up MMUs as listed below, and require an additional installation cost.

Skill	Type	Cost	Paper Vols	Mental Program	
				MMUs	Installation Cost
Acupuncture	Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Anonymity	Intro	\$20	1	4	\$80
Biological Weapons	Intro	\$30	1	4	\$80
Bomb Disarming	Intro/Ref	\$30	1	4	\$80
Chemical Analysis	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Copy Protection	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Corporations	Intro/Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Denial of Service	Intro	\$25	1	4	\$80
Diagnosis	Intro/Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Forensic Pathology	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Forgery	Ref	\$30	1	4	\$80
Gun Repair	Intro	\$15	1	4	\$80
Herbal Medicine	Intro/Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
History: City	Intro/Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Information Smuggling	Intro	\$20	1	4	\$80
Law: Basic	Intro/Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Law: Criminal	Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Legends	Intro/Ref	\$25	3	12	\$240
Linework	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Microelectronics	Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Money	Intro	\$10	1	4	\$80
Network Protocols	Ref	\$20	2	8	\$160
Network Security	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Operating Systems	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Pharmacology	Ref	\$35	3	12	\$240
Plastic Surgery	Ref	\$20	1	4	\$80
Poisons	Intro/Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Production Chemistry	Ref	\$30	3	12	\$240
Programming: Application	Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Programming: Virus	Ref	\$25	1	4	\$80
Programming: VR	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
Psychopharmacology	Ref	\$15	1	4	\$80
Social Work	Intro/Ref	\$10	1	4	\$80
Surgery	Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160
System Crashing	Intro	\$30	1	4	\$80
Veterinary Medicine	Intro/Ref	\$25	2	8	\$160

City Map- A street map of the city with notes on landmarks and places of interest. Costs \$2.

Super City Map- A 3D street map with blueprints taken from the Dept. of Urban Planning, as well as known owners of various buildings and tons of demographic information per city block (crime rate, power consumption, reported TB cases, etc.). Costs \$200.

Operating Systems

Non-Tech characters can skip this section: if you buy a computer it comes with some version of OpenMicro (if it is a handheld) or OpenCert (if it is a laptop or desktop) installed on it. These are probably the only operating systems you ever have or ever will use.

An operating system is a computer program. It is the program that comes on automatically whenever a computer is turned on. The operating system connects to various hardware devices (monitors, keyboards, speakers, microphones, mental stimulators, net connections, etc.) and allows the user to interact with the machine. The operating system lets users run and control various applications.

Techie characters can choose the operating system of their computer devices. Different operating systems have different advantages and disadvantages. Although most programs come in forms compatible with every major operating system, some programs were originally written for a certain operating system and any other version is just a cheap copy. For example: all the professional media editing programs were designed in Amicus and later ported to other operating systems. The Amicus versions are still the best, and so Amicus users who own a Media Editing Suite get +4 to skill rolls using this program.

The different operating systems available are:

OpenFree- Open was the first major operating system created after the end of the Freedom Wars. Based on the most popular pre-Freedom War operating system (which passed in to the public domain). It was updated and repackaged by a group of programmers paid by the restoration committee and released free to the public. Now that the restoration committee is gone, programmers around the world use their spare time to create new updates to OpenFree. Since there is no central authority deciding which updates are best or which are necessary, running an OpenFree system that works well can be very hit-or-miss.

All the Open operating systems are highly graphical and user friendly, making them the easiest to use of any operating systems. Program controls are a variety of 3D objects which can be picked up, spun around, fit in with other components. The operating system has built in interactive help. While this is very nice for basic level users, it eats up a lot of computing resources. Open does so much at once that it tends to crash a lot.

Pros: Easy to use. Free.

Cons: Not very powerful. Doesn't always work with all modern software. Users typically spend a lot of time searching for patches and components.

Control Type: Graphical/VR

Costs \$0.

OpenCert- Several corporations cooperate on a UN mandated "Open Standards and Certification Committee." This committee decides on standards for commercial versions of the Open operating system. This means that each corporation can write and sell their own version of Open, but each is certified so that a program written in one will work on all of them. Getting certification costs millions but corporations who make versions of OpenCert make their money back. The OpenCert versions compete

with each other, each one claims to work better or have better features (in reality they are mostly the same). Corporations that manufacture and sell computers typically ship those computers with their version of OpenCert on them. OpenCert installations have many important copy protection features to make sure that their users pay for them, and hackers around the world fight a constant battle to find ways to break these features.

Like OpenFree, OpenCert is a huge memory hog. Unlike OpenFree, millions of corporate programmers keep the OpenCert code reliable and secure.

Pros: Easy to use. Compatible with all Open software. Many features.

Cons: Memory and power hog. Expensive.

Control Type: Graphical/VR

Costs \$100 (comes free with any laptop or desktop computer).

OpenMicro- This is a scaled down version of Open for use on handheld computers (palmtops, watches, glasses). It is simpler and has less features so it can run on a much less powerful computer. Like OpenCert, it is made according to standards so that any software written for use with OpenMico can work on any handheld.

Pros: Works on handheld computers.

Cons: Not as many features, can't run large applications.

Control Type: Graphical/Text/Speech

Costs \$50 (comes free with any handheld computer).

Amicus- Amicus was created in-house for a VR Programming company before the Freedom Wars and fell in to the public domain after the Freedom Wars. Amicus is simple, powerful, has a quick and aesthetically pleasing interface, and is the operating system of choice for graphic designers, electronic musicians and VR programmers. All of the really sophisticated software packages for sound, graphics and VR are created for use on Amicus. Amicus is not very flexible and although it can be used for non-design purposes, it is not as good as other operating systems.

Pros: +4 to graphics, sound and VR rolls. Quick and precise interface.

Cons: Costly, non-graphic/sound/VR programs harder to find.

Control Type: Graphical

Costs \$75.

Mainframe 10- This operating system is designed specifically for use on large servers and corporate mainframes. The purpose of this operating system is to run server software applications smoothly and reliably

with easy recovery from backups in the case of a problem. Mainframe is seldom used on desktop computers. Since the OS is not designed to be used often, it has a very basic interface (though it is very precise).

Pros: Runs servers reliably and powerfully (+10 difficulty to crash a computer, +10 to Operating Systems rolls to repair a computer). Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert).

Cons: Requires at least 1 level in Operating Systems (specializing in Mainframe 10) to use.

Control Type: Text/Speech

Costs \$150.

GuildOS- This is the official operating system created by the Hacker's Guild. The Guild creates new updates every year and releases them for free. The GuildOS operating system has special built-in features, most of which were added in order to create a community of criminal computer hackers and to resist several attempts to wipe out the operating system:

-Built in 30 strength one-key encryption which can encrypt all the files on the hard drive (user must have a data key to access the computer).

-An emulator that can run OpenCert programs (at -2 power).

-Ability to mimic OpenCert (a person booting up the machine and casually examining it will think it's a normal OpenCert machine with nothing special on it).

-Decentralized anonymous file sharing. Each instance of GuildOS that is connected to the network creates a file sharing node. Each node anonymizes other nodes (so nobody can track down the actual source of a file or piece of info). Users must share data in order to get data.

-Decentralized knowledge tree where GuildOS users put information about every imaginable technical question. Like the file sharing, users must give in order to get and the originator of knowledge can be anonymous.

-Thousands of on-line chat rooms where hackers chat anonymously about any given topic.

Pros: Free. Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert). Requires a Hard Operating Systems roll to install GuildOS. Built in encryption and emulation. Built in file sharing, chat and knowledge tree (+15 to Data Pirating and Internet Browsing rolls). Users can easily control every aspect of the operating system (gives +10 to Anonymity, Copy Protection, Jellynailing and Operating Systems rolls).

Cons: Illegal. No safety controls (one mis-typed command can destroy the OS). Requires at least one level in Operating Systems (specializing in GuildOS) to run.

Control Type: Text/Speech

Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine)

Costs \$0.

INFO TECH

Info Tech Features

Battery Life: All portable devices come with built in rechargeable batteries. Batteries can be recharged at any AC outlet and typically take less than 10 minutes to fully charge.

Input: Whatever devices are built in to the hardware to allow it to take commands from a user. Additional input options can be purchased and attached to the device.

Output: The device's built in to hardware to allow it to display information to the user. The most common output devices are visual displays (LCD screens) and speakers.

Power: Any device capable of running applications has a power rating. Applications use up a certain amount of power while running. For example: a laptop with 7 power could run a program that uses 3 power and a program that uses 4 power simultaneously, but could not run a program that uses 8 power.

Memory: Any device capable of storing data or applications has the amount it can store (in ZBs) listed.

Phone Addresses

There are no more "phone numbers" since all phones are simple computers that send and receive sound data over the internet. Instead of a number, the user has an address assigned by their internet service provider. For instance, Kim Ibn'Fazar, who gets her internet through NYR-LAN, might have a phone address of KIFazar@Manhattan.NYR-LAN.com.us. It is only rarely that people have to remember an address because most phones can access public and personal address books.

Cellphone (Used)- An old cellphone, barely compatible with modern networks. It can only do voice, there is a lot of packet loss (static), it is incapable of encryption, it hardly works at all inside buildings, and batteries only last for about 2 hours worth of talking. Costs \$15 +\$5/week for a cellular account (see p.97).

Cellular Modem- This small device, which can plug in to the access port on any modern computer, allows the computer to access the internet through any of the city's cellular networks. Will create a medium speed connection (good enough for everything but full-immersion VR). Costs \$50 +\$5/week for a cellular account (see p.97).

Data Card- This is the modern equivalent of a data disk. It is the size and shape of a business card, designed to fit in to a wallet. It can be bent, scratched or written on without destroying the data inside. Memory: 2 ZB. Costs \$5.

Data Key- Small key shaped object, holds up to 1 ZB of data and can be plugged in to a standard I/O Jack for most computers. Data keys are typically used to hold encryption keys. Costs \$5.

Data Key (Security)- Like the data key, but data is held in hotcoded form (any attempt to take apart the key to get out the memory chip will destroy the data). The key only makes the data available if the owner's thumb is pressed to the key and a secret code word is whispered in to it. If the wrong code word is used three times, the data on the key deletes itself. Many paranoid people have permanently lost access to everything on their hard drives because they lost the key, broke the key, lost a thumb or forgot the password. The higher quality banks issue these keys to their customers instead of ATM cards. Costs \$75.

Data Recorder- This very simple device has data jack inputs and records everything that comes in through the inputs. Up to 10 days worth of live streams from just about any input device can be recorded and retrieved later. Battery Life: 10 days. Costs \$100.

Desktop (Homemade)- This computer is made entirely from parts scavenged from the trash. Because some of the parts are old and on the edge of going bad, every week there is a 1 in 20 chance of the computer breaking. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 7. Memory: 30 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$100.

Desktop (New)- A new, high-end computer. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 15. Memory: 60 ZB. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$3,000.

Desktop (Used)- A used computer that was new about 5 years ago. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 6. Memory: 25 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$200.

Language Translator- About the size and shape of a wallet, this computer contains voice recognition and translation software for 20 common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic - the most common languages spoken in the city) with a data card slot for adding in other languages. It automatically determines what languages are being spoken and translates between them. Batteries last 8 hours. Costs \$200 +\$10 per language card.

Laptop (New)- A new, high-end laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 12. Memory 40 ZB. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$4,000.

Laptop (Used)- An old used laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 5. Memory 20 ZB. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs \$400.

Line Tap (Fiber-Optic)- A small device for tapping in to fiber-optic lines without interrupting them. Costs \$45.

Line Tap (Direct)- A set of devices that looking like nail-clippers with wires attached to them. When they are clamped on to a wire they push metallic contacts in to the core of the wire, allowing the user to splice in to communication lines without interrupting them. Costs \$10.

Line Tap (Inversion)- Superconducting pads that can be placed on a wall. It uses electromagnets and electromagnetic sensors to tap in to the data lines inside the wall without actually touching them. Costs \$150.

Mental Stimulator (Basic)- A small arch which the top of the head is inserted in, small enough to be strapped to a bed or the head of an easy-chair. This device uses Radiochemical Neural Stimulation (p.208) to allow a computer to directly interact with the user's motor and sensory areas. Users must wear a small dermal patch which puts the necessary chemicals in to their bloodstream. Typically, this machine is used to put the users in to a full-immersion VR simulation. The device is not precise enough to create a "photorealistic" simulation (there is a noticeable blurriness in a simulation which distinguishes it from real-life). The device is also physically incapable of shooting radio-beams in to many areas of the brain (it's not possible to do things like activate pleasure centers or stop the heart). VR Fantasy companies rent these devices to their regular subscribers, and those found on the black market have typically been stolen from subscribers during house burglaries. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs \$300.

Pager-  A tiny hunk of old technology that can clip on a belt. Passively receives unencrypted radio signals, can receive phone addresses, text or short (up to 30 second) voice messages. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs \$20 +\$1/wk. for service.

Palmtop (Combo)- This palmtop computer is packed with every available feature (All the features of Language Translator, Palmtop: Wayfinder, Palmtop: Communicator, Video Camera: Cheap and Radio Scanner). Battery Life: 36 hours. Power 3. Memory: 10 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$400 +\$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Communicator)- A small palmtop computer with a built-in cellular modem so the owner can make phone calls or surf the internet from anywhere there is cellular service. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 3. Memory: 7 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$100 +\$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Linework)- This palmtop is designed for network hardware techs who need to be able to tap in to LANs and diagnose problems. Comes with built all three types of Line Taps built in and preloaded Sniffer software. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Weighs .7 lbs. Costs \$200.

Palmtop (Organizer)- The size and shape of a wallet. This small computer is used for taking notes, keeping addresses and calendars and storing reference materials. Input: Touch sensitive screen, voice input, digital camera. Output: Small color LCD, sound. Can synchronize with other computers within 10 ft. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 5 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$25.

Palmtop (Wayfinder)- A small computerized device the size of a wallet with a built in GPS and street maps for the entire world. The device shows the user where he or she is on a map and can give spoken directions to get to any street address. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 3 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Printer- An old peripheral device which prints full color text and images on pieces of paper. Costs \$20 +\$10 for a 1000 page ink cartridge.

Repeater- Small bell shaped handheld device, can adhere to almost any surface. Amplifies and relays radio and cellphone signals. The repeater is used to get signal to cellular or radio based devices in places like underground tunnels, the center of a large building, etc. Battery Life: 24 hours. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$100.

UPS (Small)- About the size and shape of a shoebox, this device plugs in to a wall and keeps a battery charged. In the event of a loss of power, this battery can power one normal electronic device (e.g. a computer) for 1 hour. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

See Also

Cellular Service (p.97)
Paycomputer (p.98)
Payvidphone (p.98)
Time on a Code Breaker (p.99)
Time on a Supercomputer (p.99)



Chemical

Chemical Features

Administered: How the drug is taken. Note that intravenous injections take a skill roll (using the skill Needles or most Bio/Med skills).

Effects: What the effects are of one dose of the drug. The effects are grouped by how long they last. Effects that can be saved against have the difficulty to save listed after them. E.g. "+7 STH, Vomiting (10), Unconsciousness (20) for 2 hours" means that for two hours the user gets +7 STH, must save vs. vomiting at 10 difficulty and vs. unconsciousness at 20 difficulty. Unless stated otherwise, users only have to make one save vs. each drug effect during the entire period of effects.

Withdrawal Effects: What effects the user experiences when the chemical starts to exit the user's system (unless stated otherwise, this is when all the Effects cease). The amount of time that Withdrawal Effects lasts is listed.

Tolerance: How much more of the chemical a user must use after having taken many doses. E.g. "+10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%)." means that for each month of daily use, the user must take an aggregate 10% more to get the same effects, with a maximum possible tolerance of +50%.

Addiction: When there is a possibility that a drug may be psychologically and/or physiologically addictive, the difficulties are listed here. Users must save vs. addiction based on the listed difficulties with +1 difficulty for each consecutive dose. The difficulty to resist drug cravings and any special circumstances which will trigger cravings is listed. E.g. Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15 means that if a PC uses 7 doses in a row he or she must make a roll of WIL + 1d20 vs. 22 or become psychologically addicted to the drug. See p.58 for the complete rules of addiction.

Long Term Effects: These are the additional effects on a user who uses the drug a lot over a long period of time. Length, frequency and effects are listed. E.g. the effects of using the drug 10 times within 24 hours might be listed, or the effects of using a drug daily for one year might be listed.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: These are the additional effects of withdrawal on a user who has been using the drug a lot over a long period of time.

Interactions: If there are any potential changes of effect when this chemical is taken along with other chemicals, they are listed here.

Overdose: Each chemical may have several overdose ratings. "Overdose (2x)" may list the effects of taking two doses at once, "Overdose (4x)" may list the effect of four doses.

Alcohol- One of the oldest medicinal and recreational drugs. In ancient times, weak alcoholic beverages were the only liquids people could drink without fear of bacterial and parasitic infections. Today, alcohol is the number one recreational drug and number one drug of abuse. Liquor stores are among the most profitable businesses in the city. In its purest form alcohol can be burned and it can be used as a disinfectant.

Administered: Orally as a liquid (can also be snorted or taken as an enema).

Effects: +4 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-2 AGY), slower reactions (-2 to INL rolls based on speed of thought), pleasant buzz for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: The next day, sensitivity to stimuli (-10 to save vs. pain/dose), nausea (10 difficulty/dose), headache (10 difficulty/dose) for 6 hours.

Tolerance: +1% for every dose (max. +500%). Note that tolerance disappears when liver damage sets in (see Long Term Effects).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 15, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by anxiety).

Long Term Effects: For every two years of daily use: brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR), permanent Retrograde Amnesia and Anterograde Amnesia (at 2 cumulative difficulty), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Long Term Withdrawal: After 1 month or more of daily use the user experiences delirium tremens: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), Panic (20), confusion (-10 INL), Insomnia (30), fever, sweating, Seizures (10), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (2x): Vomiting (20), +10 to save vs. fear, +6 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL), loss of inhibitions for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (30), Coma (20), Seizures (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (8x): Coma (30), Seizures (30) for 6 hours. Liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Costs \$1/dose for pruno (home-brewed alcohol made from canned fruit, bitter tasting, found in prisons and some wino encampments).

Costs \$1/dose for fortified wine or beer (wine or beer with extra alcohol added, this is the most common drink of winos because it provides the most alcohol per dollar).

Costs \$2/dose for canned beer, beer on tap, or a shot of liquor (at a bar or convenience store).

Costs \$5/dose for good quality beer, wine or other alcoholic beverage.

Costs \$15/dose for very high quality alcoholic beverage.

Costs \$10/dose for absinthe (an illegal alcoholic drink that also had mild psychedelic properties comparable to herbal psychedelic, p.89).

Amnesiant

Administered: Intravenously

Effects: Retrograde Amnesia (40), -4 INL, -2 AGY, blurred vision (-4 to vision based AWR rolls) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dry throat, Headache (20) for 1 day.

Overdose Effects (2x): -6 INL, -4 AGY, Seizures (20).

Overdose Effects (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Seizures (30), permanent brain damage (-4 INL, loss of memories and skills).

Long Term Effects: For every 5 doses: Brain damage (permanent -1 INL).

Amphetamines- A prescription drug and drug of abuse since the 1930s.

Administered: Orally as pills (also sniffed, smoked and injected).

Effects: Excitement, pleasure, +10 to save vs. loss of consciousness for 5 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dysphoria (10), anxiety (-4 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (20) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20.

Long Term Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Hallucinations (20 +10/additional dose), Delusions (20 +10/additional dose). After 1 month of daily use: ulcers, malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Dysphoria (20), Anxiety (-8 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (30), Trembling (-5 AGY) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal Effects plus Difficulty Breathing/Irregular Heartbeat (-10 END) for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (20), Coma (20) for 5 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose.

Antibiotics

Administered: Orally as pills

Effects: +8 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections.

Overdose Effects (4x): Nausea (20).

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing antibiotic resistant strain. For every course of antibiotics which is not completed the chance increases to 10%.

Costs \$50 for a full 2 week course (\$500 during a bacterial plague outbreak).

Anti-Nauseant

Administered: Intramuscular Injection

Effects: +15 to save vs. nausea for 4 hours

Costs \$10/dose.

Anti-Psychotic- A cocktail of drugs meant to treat hallucinations, delusions, bizarre thinking and inappropriate emotions that can be brought on by schizophrenia, a severe manic episode, stimulant drug induced psychosis or severe psychological trauma.

Administered: Orally as pills or intra-muscular injection.

Effects: +10 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, mild sedation, Dysphoria (10). Lasts 24 hours.

Long Term Effects: Because the pills have an anhedonic (loss of ability to feel pleasure) effect, regular users must make weekly WIL rolls (10 difficulty) to continue taking the drug willingly.

Overdose (2x): -5 AWR, -5 INL, +20 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, Dysphoria (20) for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Tardive Dyskinesia (permanent -4 AGY due to brain damage), Stupor (20) for 24 hours.

Costs \$10/dose.

Anti-Shock- A drug that helps keep the body from going in to shock after a physical trauma or systemic infection.

Normal Dose: +10 to save vs. trauma or anaphylactic shock for 2 hours.

Costs \$15/dose.

Anti-Viral- A cocktail of drugs that interferes with the reproduction of viruses.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +7 to save vs. disease progression from viral diseases.

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing anti-viral resistant strain.

Costs \$35 got a full 7 day course.

Saving Vs. Drug Effects

When a chemical lists an effect with a difficulty next to it, users must save vs. that effect. E.G. if a certain dose of a drug causes Seizures (20) the user must save vs. seizures at difficulty 20 or suffer seizures. What follows are the attributes used to save and the effects of a failed save:

Anaphylactic Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.56) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Anxiolytic- These pills are designed to help people with panic disorders by reducing anxiety and stress.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 to save vs. fear for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by fear or worry).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 month of daily use: -10 to save vs. fear.

Overdose (2x): +10 to save vs. fear, -3 AGY, -2 INL, -2 AWR, -5 to save vs. unconsciousness for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Coma (10) for 24 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$7/dose.

Awake Inhaler

Administration: Inhaled orally.

Effects: +15 to save vs. unconsciousness/coma (if patient is already unconscious he or she can make a save to wake up), nervousness (-7 to save vs. fear), shaking (-4 AGY), difficulty paying attention (-7 to most INL based skill rolls) for 10 minutes.

Withdrawal Effects: Tiredness (-4 END) for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Difficulty breathing (-10 END), muscle cramps (-10 AGY), Hallucinations (10) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Seizures (30) for 20 minutes.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$100 for a 10 dose inhaler.

Blood Plugs- A metal vial with a strong, thick needle. The blood plugs contains a variety of stimulants, sugars and oxygenated chemicals.

Administration: Injection directly in to the heart (requires skill roll).

Effects: +3 BLD, +2 END, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness for 1 hour.

Overdose (2x): No additional effects.

Bought From: Pharmacy (with Prescription), Black Market Traders, Needle Punks, Black Meds.

Legality: Permit (\$500 fine)

Costs \$75

Bright- This drug increases the sensitivity of sensory neurons and stimulates the parts of the brain that interprets sensory stimuli. Unpleasant sensations become more unpleasant, pleasant sensations become more pleasant and all sensations become much more acute.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 AWR, -7 to save vs. pain/nausea, sensitivity to loud sounds, bright lights, strong smells, etc. for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Painful hypersensitivity (must save vs. pain for any sensory stimuli), hallucinations (30) that things are vibrating for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (30) for 2 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 consecutive doses: -4 AWR for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every week of daily use (max. +400%).

Interactions: Doubles the effects of hallucinogens.

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$15/dose

Caffeine

Administration: Orally

Effects: +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 2 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every year of regular use, max +100

Addiction: Physiological addiction difficulty 1, craving difficulty 5 (cravings triggered by sleep deprivation).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. unconsciousness, Headache (10) for 2 days.

Overdose (2x) +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (4x): Shaking/cramps (-4 AGY).

Costs \$0.75/dose for a large cup of coffee (a cup of hot coffee in a paper cup is also a good way to warm up your hands after a long cold night on the streets).

Costs \$1.50/dose for an espresso shot.

Costs \$0.50/dose for a caffeine pill (usually used by stressed out corporate employees whose stomachs are too sensitive for coffee).

Costs \$0.25/dose for a teabag full of green tea and guarana (herbs with as much caffeine and caffeine-like chemicals as coffee).

Costs \$1.00/dose for a large caffeinated soda from a convenience store.

Chomper- The first drug created by the Drug Lords. Chomper is no longer aggressively marketed. Most Chomper addicts are now dead or have become Hungry (see p.153).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Pleasurable mood swings, anxiety reduction (-7 to save vs. fear), grinding of teeth for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: After 16 hrs. without using the drug: shortness of breath (-5 END), Panic (20), vertigo (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Headache (20) for 4 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Hair/teeth loss (-5 to seduction rolls), liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects per month of daily use), anemia (-1 BLD/year of daily use).

Overdose (2x): Endocrine collapse (certain parts of the endocrine system necrotize, death within 4 hours unless given an experimental endocrine control implant).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose from Drug Lords.

Costs \$20/dose from Black Market Traders and Goods.

Cigarettes- Cigarettes contain nicotine which has a mild calming effect (although the effect is mostly from breathing deeply, not from smoking) and is a weak anti-psychotic (which is why so many schizophrenics self-medicate by smoking). Cigarettes can be used in self-defense by burning opponents (hard blinding, hard pain/stun). Cigarettes have the following drug profile:

Effects: +2 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 1 hour.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of regular use (max +200%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 20 (cravings triggered by stress or any activity which was previously always followed by a cigarette).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/2 yrs. Smoking), increased risk of cancer and stroke.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. fear, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, headache (20), food cravings.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20) for 1 hour.

Costs \$3/12 doses for roll-your-own (usually smoked by homeless people because it is the cheapest and requires the smoker to have a lot of free time).

Costs \$5/12 doses for generic pack (usually smoked by wells and people on minimum wage because they are the cheapest ready-to-smoke cigarettes).

Costs \$7/12 doses for reservation cigarettes (usually smoked by traditionalists or the paradoxical health-conscious smoker because they are pure tobacco with no additives, genetic modifications or pesticides).

Costs \$7/12 doses for clove cigarettes (usually smoked by Indies because they are trendy and don't smell as objectionable as most other cigarettes).

Compliance Drops- Usually used to drug someone before a kidnapping, rape or robbery. Also used as a "truth serum."

Administration: Orally as tasteless liquid.

Effects: Confusion (-10 AWR, -10 INL), Sudden Amnesia (20), anxiety (-10 to save vs. fear), timidness (-10 WIL, must make INL or WIL rolls to avoid following any order), physical weakness (-10 STH, -10 SPD, -5 AGY), Anterograde Amnesia (20) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (20), blurry vision (-10 to AWR based rolls), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (40), Coma (30), Pulmonary Arrest (20) for 4 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

Contraceptive Pills- Available for men or women. One pill lasts 30 days. Costs \$25/dose.

Escape- Originally designed as a psychiatric drug for short-term treatment of emotional trauma, now a major street drug. Escape addiction is a little like suicide: all the bad things in the abuser's life cease to matter, but so do the good things. Abusers sleep-walk thought life, driven by the habit of self-preservation but not caring about anything. Because of their inability to feel pleasure, the Hungry are immune to most addictions, but not to Escape addiction.

Administration: Orally as pills or smoked as powder.

Effects: Depersonalization (feeling that everything one experiences is happening to somebody else, +15 to save vs. anger/fear/pain/euphoria/dysphoria), -5 WIL for 24 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: None.

Long Term Effects: Steady, slow loss of personality and ability to sleep, poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls per year of use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Catatonia (20), coughing blood (2 BLD damage).

Overdose (4x): Catatonia (40), coughing blood (8 BLD damage).

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

General Anesthetic- Used to make a patient unconscious and unresponsive to pain during surgery. Requires a medical skill roll to apply the right dosage (see underdose and overdose).

Administration: Intravenously.

Effects: Unconsciousness (50), immunity to pain,

Anterograde Amnesia of events immediately preceding administration, for 1 hour.

Overdose (1.25x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Attack (30).

Underdose (0.75x): Stupor (40), extreme pain may cause the body to go in to shock.

Long Term Effects: Mild brain damage: -1 INL for every 10 uses.

Costs \$50/dose.

Glucose- Blood sugar. It is injected when a patient is in danger of going in to convulsions from diabetic insulin shock or in danger of metabolic collapse in patients with mitochondrial vampirism. Costs \$5/dose in a pre-loaded syringe.

God Killer- Displaced crack cocaine in 2061 as the #1 illegal drug in the city and was only recently displaced by the "new generation" drugs. There are still a huge number of god killer addicts in the city, and most violent burglaries, muggings and robberies are committed by people under the influence of god killer who are stealing to feed their god killer habit. God killer causes an intensely pleasurable stimulant rush and an equally pleasurable feeling of megalomania and invulnerability (see p.188 for more).

Administration: Smoked.

Effects: Intense pleasure and excitement, +15 to save vs. pain/fear/unconsciousness, Delusions (30) (delusions are of grandeur, megalomania, solipsism, invulnerability) for 3 hours.

Overdose (2x): Psychotic rage (30), +4 STH, +4 INCY, immunity to pain, Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), psychotic rage (40).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/yr. of use), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL and -1 AWR per 2 yrs. of use).

Withdrawal Effects: Anxiety (-7 to save vs. fear) for 24 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for 1 month: Panic (30).

Tolerance: +10% per month of regular use (max +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 30 (cravings triggered by feelings of helplessness or low self esteem).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$7/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market traders, Goods.

Hallucinogen- For the most part this is a recreational drug (though there are those that use hallucinogens for religious, psychic, psychological, artistic or philosophical purposes).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Hallucinations (20), +4 AWR, +2 INL for 5 hours.

Long Term Effects: For every 10 uses, permanent -1 to save vs. Hallucinations/Delusions.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (20), Delusions (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (4x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (20).

Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose

Herbal Abortifacient- A matchbox full of ground herbs is swallowed whole. 75% chance of causing an abortion during early pregnancy. The mixture causes Vomiting (30), fever, weakness (-1 BLD, -10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 1 day. Costs \$10/dose.

Herbal Aphrodisiac- A packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, which contains mild stimulants, mild euphorants, inhibition reducers and herbs that increase the flow of blood to the extremities. It does not cause love and only increases sexual desire if there was some amount of sexual desire to start with. Gives +4 to seduction rolls against the drinker. Costs \$3/dose.

Herbal Cleanser- A packet of herbs which, when drunk as tea, causes the drinker to run a mild fever, sweat a lot and urinate a lot. Increases the speed that toxins are flushed out of the body. Costs \$4/dose.

Herbal Emetic- A packet of dried, chopped leaves and roots. When swallowed whole, they cause immediate vomiting (30 difficulty to save). Costs \$1/dose.

Herbal Psychedelic- This collection of herbs has many of the same effects of a hallucinogen but with no actual hallucinations. The user experiences mild euphoria (+2 to save vs. pain/fear), increased psychic senses and attention to details (+4 to psychic and fine detail AWR rolls, -4 to other AWR rolls), unusual and creative thoughts (+4 to creative skills rolls) and difficulty keeping attention on one line of thought (-4 to most INL based skill rolls) and susceptibility to other hallucinogens (-8 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions) for 3 hours. Costs \$5/dose.

Herbal Sedative/Painkiller- A paper packet of herbs grown in vacant lots by Black Meds. The herbs are made in to a tea, which tastes strongly of peppermint and other bitter herbs. Includes valerian, poppy, skullcap and chamomile. Prescribed for sleeplessness (+4 to save vs. insomnia), anxiety (+4 to save vs. fear) and pain (+4 to save vs. pain). Mildly addictive (0 addiction difficulty, 10 craving difficulty). Costs \$1/dose.

Herbal Stimulant- A small packet of herbs to be made in to tea. The main stimulant chemicals are caffeine and ephedra (a chemical related to amphetamines, although much weaker). The tea is often prescribed for symptom relief for flues and colds, to help a person stay awake, or occasionally to combat mild depression. Gives +4 to save vs. unconsciousness/dysphoria and +1 END for 4 hours. Costs \$1.

Herbal Vermifuge- A large packet of herbs, makes a cloudy bitter tea. When drunk the tea helps to flush parasites out of the digestive system (+4 to save vs. disease progression for parasites). Costs \$3/dose.

Herbal War Drugs- This is one of the most exotic herbal preparations the Black Meds sell. This preparation is only found in the city (it is a unique mix of herbal traditions, including Zulu, Cree and others). The perpetrations comes in two parts: a small packet of herbs is chewed like chewing tobacco, and rags which have been dipped in herbal extracts are wrapped around the legs and dampened with alcohol. The combination makes the user feel excited, stronger, braver and slightly numb. Gives +1 STH, +1 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, +4 to save vs. pain/fear for 4 hours. The next day the user suffers from -4 END. Costs \$10/dose.

Herbal Withdrawal Tea- A small packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, contains herbs which help lessen the effects of withdrawal from common drugs. Contains mild sedatives, euphorants and painkillers (the idea is to sleep through as much of withdrawal as possible). Gives +4 to save vs. drug cravings. Costs \$2/dose.

Herbal Wound Cleanser- A bleached sock stuffed with herbs, should be dampened and put over a wound to decrease the chance of infection. +4 to save vs. disease contraction from injuries. Costs \$5/dose.

Hummingbird- This drug semi-permanently increases the user's metabolism so that they are in a constant energetic state (except when taking short naps).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Feeling of stimulation and energy, +1 INL, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, +4 to save vs. hypothermia.

Long Term Effects: After taking 30 doses in 2 months: +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD, +8 to save vs. hypothermia, double damage from starvation. Effects disappear within 1 month after discontinuing use of Hummingbird.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (10).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$20/dose.

Ipecac- Causes immediate vomiting when swallowed. Costs \$5/dose.

Local Anesthetic- Used for numbing body parts.

Administration: Injected in to tissues.

Effects: Insensitivity to pain in given area for 1 hour.

Overdose Effects (2x): Dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Light-headedness (-4 INL), Vomiting (10) for 1 hour.

Costs \$5/dose.

Love Drops- Some people use this drug consensually to enhance their experiences. Others illicitly slip it in to drinks to increase the chances of compliance to sexual advances. Note that, in the culture of the streets, drugging someone without their knowledge is a crime worthy of death.

Administered: Orally as a clear, tasteless liquid.

Effects: Feelings of love, empathy, sexual desire, loss of inhibitions, -2 WIL, -2 AWR, -2 INL, +10 to seduction rolls for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (10), tiredness (-4 END) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (20), shortness of breath (-10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 2 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$15/dose.

Mauler- A major drug of abuse, one of the new-generation drugs created by the Drug Lords, marketed aggressively (by holding people down and forcing them to take it) and sold almost exclusively by the Drug Lords. Mauler is best known for its long term addicts, who spend most of their days roaming the streets in packs in an irrational, animal-like state. It is sold as small squares of paper with complex symbols on them (designed to make counterfeiting the drug harder).

Administration: Paper held under tongue.

Withdrawal Effects: Burning-itching sensation on skin (save vs. distracting pain, 20 difficulty).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Steady loss of ability for rational thought. For every month of regular use user suffers -1 INL. By 2 years the user is mostly irrational, operates via habit and instinct.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for at least 1 week: Burning-itching (must save vs. pain at 40 difficulty or the user will do serious damage to himself or herself by scratching).

Overdose (2x): Loss of blood pressure (-10 END, -5 INL, -5 AGY, -5 STH, -5 SPD), loss of body heat (-15 to save vs. hypothermia).

Overdose (4x): Coma (30), loss of body heat (-30 to save vs. hypothermia).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$5/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$20/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Maxin- The most powerful smart drug to date. Although its effects are generally unpleasant, some people became psychologically addicted to it because they dislike feeling "stupid" then they are not on the drug.

Administration: Inhaler.

Effects: +6 INL, +1 WIL, +1 AWR, excitation (+4 to save vs. unconsciousness), irritability (-4 to save vs. fear/anger/pain/nausea) for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (20), Stroke (20).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40), Stroke (40).

Long Term Effects: Weakened bones (-1 BDY/yr. of daily use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20. Cravings triggered by any activity which requires high INL.

Withdrawal Effects: Pleasant sedation (-8 to save vs. unconsciousness).

Long Term Withdrawal: User is plagued by constant feelings of being mentally impaired.

Interactions: Mixing with other smart drugs will overstimulate the brain and decrease INL.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$50 for 10 dose inhaler.

Minty Eye Drops- An import from Japan, a tiny plastic bottle containing saline with mint and herbal extracts that are absorbed in to the bloodstream and make the user feel enlivened and alert. Gives +2 AWR, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 15 minutes. Costs \$10 for 12 doses.

Non-Opiate Painkillers- These pain-killers are not as powerful as opiate painkillers, but they are non-addictive and have fewer side-effects and are thus available over-the-counter.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +4 to save vs. pain.

Interactions: Can cause liver damage when combined with alcohol.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20).

Costs \$0.25/dose.

Opiates- Used as a painkiller and a drug of abuse. Despite improvements in pharmaceutical technology, Opiates are still the best pharmaceutical way to relieve pain.

Administration: Orally as pills (some abusers snort or inject it).

Effects: +10 to save vs. pain, +5 to save vs. fear, -3 INL, -3 AGY, euphoria (10) for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Difficulty sleeping, -4 to save vs. pain/fear.

Tolerance: +10% per week of daily use (max +200%).

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: weakened immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain), Insomnia (30), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 7 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 5, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): +16 to save vs. pain, +7 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, euphoria (20), unconsciousness (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (10), fluid in lungs (-10 END).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose.

Sedative- A generic sedative used to treat panic, psychosis, rage and insomnia.

Administration: Intramuscular injection.

Effects: +7 to save vs. fear/anger, +3 to save vs. pain, drowsiness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. insomnia), +4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions.

Tolerance: +10% for each month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 week of daily use: Insomnia (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (30), -4 INL, +10 to save vs. fear/anger.

Overdose (4x): Coma (30).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$3/dose.

Sibosin- This new drug eliminates the need for sleep without the stimulation and addictive potential of amphetamines. It has been made illegal because of instances of permanent inability to sleep (commonly followed by mental illness and suicide). It is illegal and is used by the street family the Insomniacs to give them increased psychic powers.

Administration: Orally as a little yellow pill with a terrible bitter aftertaste.

Effects: Inability to sleep, no damage from sleep deprivation, inability to become inured to details (must make saves vs. continual annoyances), +5 to psychic WIL rolls for 48 hours. Each time the drug is used there is a 1 in 20 chance of the effects becoming permanent (see p.123 for discussion of what happens next).

Long Term Effects: Any person who uses the drug for multiple days in a row gets +7 to psychic WIL rolls and must make WIL rolls to avoid mutilating their own bodies (at a difficulty of 10 per day, max. 30).

Overdose (2x): Same as normal effects, but increased (1 in 6) chance of permanent effects.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose for Insomniacs (who get special volume-discounts), \$40/dose for anyone else.

Slave- The newest drug from the Drug Lords and a major bid to replace God Killer. Slave is probably the most addictive drug ever created (hence its street name).

Administration: Smoked (white pellets in a glass pipe).

Effects: Mellow excitement (user feels giddy but doesn't want to do anything), +7 to save vs. fear, -7 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: What users call "the uglies": everything the user experiences, remembers or thinks about seems unbearably awful. Loss of willpower (-5 WIL). Lasts 1 week.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 40, Craving Difficulty 35.

Long Term Effects: Weight Loss (-1/2 BDY, -1/2 BLD per year of regular use), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects per year of regular use).

Overdose (2x): Diarrhea, Vomiting (30).

Overdose (4x): Brain swelling (if untreated will progress to seizures, brain damage and death).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Smart Drugs- A combination of sugars, vitamins and drugs that increase brain activity.

Administration: Orally as pills or sugary drinks.

Effects: +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (2x): +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, trembling (-2 AGY).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose.

Soma- A collection of herbs and mushrooms which, in ancient India, was made in to a tea for use as a pro-psyche hallucinogenic sacrament. It was rediscovered in 2075 and is gaining popularity on the black market. Soma makes a milky-greenish tea which tastes bitter and awful to those who have not "gained a taste for it" yet. In the city, the Tea Drinkers control most of the sources of soma for the city, so it is expensive to buy from anyone other than them.

Effects: Hallucinations (10), +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls, -2 to most INL based skill rolls for 4 hours.

Long Term Effects: After 1 year of daily use, gives semi-permanent +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating hallucinations and delusions (mostly of leaving the body and flying, bizarre patterns, of meeting mythical and archetypal figures and of transcending time and space) at 30 difficulty to save, +6 to AWR based psychic rolls, +4 to WIL based psychic rolls, -4 to INL based skill rolls for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (20), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (30), Euphoria (30) for 6 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$10/dose from a Tea Drinker.

Costs \$20/dose from a Black Market Trader.

Synth Blood- A self-warming pack of synthetic blood with an attached IV, used to replace blood in the field and often stolen from the backs of ambulances. Must be administered intravenously. Returns up to 4 BLD or INCY. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$100.

Thor-O-Zine- Invented in the city and considered the best cocktail of war drugs available anywhere.

Hyperstimulates the nervous system while reducing the ability to feel pain. Users feel something much like a small dose of God Killer: the feeling of invulnerability and great power, especially physical power.

Administered: Intravenously in the tongue.

Effects: Cramping of the tongue and jaw muscles (causing difficulty speaking), +10 to save vs. fear, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. pain, +3 AGY, +2 INL, +4 STH, +3 END, +2 SPD, +2 INCY for 30 min.

Withdrawal Effects: Weakness (-2 STH, -2 END), -7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 2, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Muscle Cramps (-7 AGY), Seizures (20), +6 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$50/dose.

Trace- One of the drugs created and marketed by the Drug Lords. Because only certain pushers are allowed to sell Trace and because Trace addicts have a distinctive look, addicts the Drug Lords want to "keep an eye on" are put on Trace (hence the name).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Sedation (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness), Euphoria (10) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headaches (40), poor hearing and vision (-7 AWR) for 48 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Weakened immune system (-1 to save vs. disease contraction/progression per 3 months daily use), arthritis (-1 AGY per year of daily use), skin turns reddish.

Overdose (2x): Paralysis (20), difficulty breathing (-10 END)

Overdose (4x): Paralysis (40), Pulmonary Arrest (20).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs \$10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Zombine- This 'war drug' is a cocktail of different drugs, mostly illegal street drugs. It was previously the most popular war drug cocktail in the city before the Needle Punks crated Thor-O-Zine. It is valued for its ability to make users immune to pain and able to exert more physically, yet it has a short period of effectiveness and a crippling withdrawal.

Administration: Smoked as powdery white clumps.

Effects: Rapid heartbeat, +12 to save vs. pain, dissociation (+7 to save vs. fear/euphoria/ dysphoria), -4 to save vs. anger, increased vigor (+3 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (2x): Cardiac Arrest (10), paralyzing dissociation (30, like euphoria or dysphoria except instead of feeling good or bad the user just doesn't care), +20 to save vs. pain, increased vigor (+4 STH, +4 END, +5 INCY) for Lasts 20 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), paralyzing dissociation (30), muscle cramps (-10 AGY) for 30 minutes.

Withdrawal: Headache (20), weak and aching muscles (-2 STH, -2 END), Blurred vision (-10 to vision based AWR rolls), muscle tremors (-2 AGY) for 4 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 4, Craving Difficulty 15.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs \$40/dose.

Non-Chemical

Auto-Blood Test- Shaped like a flat pen with an LCD test readout on the side. Draws blood from a fingertip and tests for glucose level, 75 common drugs, 90 common toxins, disease indicators, 50 common diseases and other blood factors (oxygenation, red blood cell count, white blood cell count, electrolyte balance, etc.) Gives +7 to medical diagnosis skill rolls. They are supposed to be one-use only, though some wise old Black Meds have figured out how to open them up, clean them out and re-use them. Costs \$3/ea. or 50 for \$100.

Autosyringe- Small electronic device, loads vials of liquid and injects a pre-set amount. It senses arteries and injects in to them automatically (no skill roll required for intravenous injection). It is so quick it is usually painless (moderate AWR check to even feel the prick). Automatically disinfects itself after each use. Costs \$75.

Carry Board- A lightweight board with handles for immobilizing and carrying wounded patients. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$150.

First Aid Kit (Black Med)-  Made entirely from scavenged materials, typically comes in an old plastic case. Contains bleached rags, carpet needles, nylon thread, a sports-bottle of distilled water, a scalpel (made of a shard of razor blade melted in to a toothbrush handle), tweezers, duct tape, a vial of rubbing alcohol, a small flashlight, short metal rods (for splints), 1 dose Herbal Wound Cleanser, 2 doses Herbal Sedative/Painkiller, 1 dose Herbal Stimulant, 1 dose Herbal Febrifuge, 1 dose Herbal Emetic. Lets PCs use the Emergency Medicine skill at -7. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs \$60.

First Aid Kit (EMT)- A large plastic box which opens to reveal many shelves (like a tackle box) containing various tools that a trained Emergency Medical Technician might find of use. Includes everything in First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional) as well as: industrial scissors (for cutting off clothes), tracheotomy kit, intubation tube, intubation air pump with small oxygen bottle, body stats monitor (monitors breath, body temp, EKG, blood oxygenation), stomach pump, liquid stitches, sterilization spray, defibrillator, neck brace, cling film, blood oxygenator, 5 Auto Blood Tests, camera probe, handheld suction device, 4 units of Synth Blood, Anti-Toxin Kit, Plastic Restraints, 4 doses Anti-Shock, 2 Blood Plugs, 2 doses Glucose. Weighs 25 lbs. Costs \$250.

First Aid Kit (Minor)- A tiny kit designed for use by people with no medical training to deal with minor (non life-threatening) injuries. A small pocket-sized plastic box contains aspirin, bandages, gauze, disinfectant wipes. Costs \$10.

First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)- This kit is designed for people who have taken a first aid course and want a kit to keep in their home, office or vehicle but will, in all likelihood, never use it. This is a briefcase sized metal

box containing bandages, gauze, medical tape, butterfly bandages, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, heat pack, cold pack, gloves, CPR mouth-guard, eyewash, scissors, tweezers, anti-shock pills, ipecac, non-opiate painkillers. The kit has no equipment for surgical procedures. PCs with emergency medicine can perform easy (10 difficulty) tasks with this kit. Weighs 12 lbs. Costs \$75.

Instacast- A foil packet containing a thick flexible bandage. When wrapped tightly around an injury it hardens within 5 minutes in to a thick cast (PR 4 bladed 5 blunt). Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$50.

Liquid Stitches- Designed for first aid kits, this is a tiny tube filled with a pharmaceutical skin glue. A wound should be cleaned and closed as cleanly as possible, then the tube run over the wound. The tube applies the glue and seals it by blowing heated air on to it. When the cap is replaced it sterilizes the tip with a burst of steam so it is ready to be used again. The glue allows oxygen in and flakes off naturally after a couple of weeks. The only downside is that if foreign particles are trapped inside the wound by the glue, they will almost certainly cause an infection (unless the glue is removed and the wound cleaned). Returns up to ½ a point of lost BLD per bladed weapon injury. Costs \$35.

Sterilization Spray- A tiny aerosol canister, contains powerful antiseptic chemicals which will kill most bacteria and virii on the surface of items. The antiseptic chemicals evaporate or break down in to component parts in seconds. The spray can even be used safely on food (although it leaves the surface of food tasting bitter). If sprayed on skin it will cause irritation and if sprayed in eyes or inhaled can cause burning pain (distracting pain at 20 difficulty to save). Although it is painful, it can be sprayed in to wounds to help prevent infection. One canister has enough spray to cover 30 square feet. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Sterilizer- This battery-powered device can sterilize surgical tools and syringes in 15 seconds. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Surgical Kit- A nylon pouch with a shoulder strap. When unzipped and laid open there are surgical tools and supplies (each in a sterile wrapping). Has tools which can be used as 2 bladed weapons. Allows PCs to use the Surgery skill at -7. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$75.

Syringe- Requires a skill roll to hit a blood vessel. Costs \$1/ea. or \$10 for 25.

See Also

Blood Test, p.97
Seed Pack, p.100
Weapons: Chemical, p.102

PROTECTION

Protection Features

Heat Factor: This is a simultaneous bonus to save vs. hypothermia and penalty to save vs. heat stroke.

AGY Penalty: The penalty to all AGY rolls while wearing this item.

AR: Armor Rating, this is the amount of the body that the armor covers and the amount of success that an enemy must make on a strike to hit some hole in the armor. See p.56 for more.

- AR 20: Full body protection with no weak spots.
- AR 15: Full body protection with some weak spots.
- AR 12: Face completely exposed.
- AR 10: Head completely exposed.
- AR 7: Head, neck, hands, feet completely exposed.
- AR 5: Only body, thighs, upper arms covered.
- AR 4: Only torso and hips covered.
- AR 3: Only torso covered.

PR: Protection Rating, how much of each type of damage the armor protects from. If an armor protects from 6 bladed damage, then a strike that does 10 bladed damage that hit the armor would only do 4 bladed damage to the wearer.

Anti-Psychic Cap- A flexible plastic cap filled with a thin layer of a gelatin known to interfere with psychic manipulation. The wearer and any psychic targeting the wearer gets +10 difficulty to psychic skill rolls. Costs \$250.

Biohazard Suit (Basic)- A thick rubber airtight body suit with excellent air filtration. So long as the suit is removed properly, it protects completely from all diseases and most toxins. Sweat in the suit puddles in the feet. AGY penalty: -1 (-4 to fine motor skills because of thick gloves). Heat factor: +10. AR 20, PR 1 bladed. Costs \$200.

Cloak (Fighter)-  Homeless fighters designed this cloak to keep them warm but let them be ready to fight at a moment's notice. This cloak goes over the shoulders, wraps around the wearer and fastens with velcro. As a fighter draws a weapon, the cloak is torn open and falls to the floor. The cloak has rocks sewn in to the hem, so the fighter can grab it and swing it at enemies (to entangle weapons), to blind opponents (by covering thier heads), or swung as a strike (1 blunt damage, range 3). Heat Factor: +6. Costs \$20.

Cloak- A long cloak with a hood and internal pockets. This was common wear for psychics in the 40s and 50s and is still sometimes associated with psychics today. Heat Factor +6. Costs \$10.

Condoms- 4 for \$1

Dust Mask- A cloth face mask that protects from particulates in the air. They must be disposed of or they get clogged up and smelly. Costs \$0.25.

Ear Plugs- A molding foam protects the ears from loud sounds. Costs \$2.

Fingerless Gloves- Used by people who want to keep their hands as warm as possible while leaving their fingers free for anything that requires fine manipulation (picking locks, typing, rolling cigarettes). Costs \$2.

Fire Blanket- A reflective, heat-resistant blanket that can be quickly unfolded and wrapped over the body to survive a fire. Can also be used to hide from infrared sensors. PR 10 burn damage. Costs \$40.

Gasmask- Protects from almost all inhalation based chemical and biological attacks. Costs \$50.

Historical Reproduction Chainmail- Long shirt made of metal rings with metal plates over arms and legs. Weighs 30 lbs. AGY penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +4. AR 6, PR 3 bladed 2 blunt. Costs \$350.

Insect Repellent- A spray containing multiple chemical signals that repel common pests (especially fleas and mosquitoes, a major plague vector). Lasts 8 hours. Enough for 20 applications. Costs \$5.

Kevlar Vest- This antique (30 to 100 yr. old) vest predates secondary nanotech. It provides good protection from normal (non-armor piercing) bullets, but it is heavy and doesn't cover the whole body. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +8. AR 5, PR 6 bladed, 1 blunt. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$200.

Latex Gloves- Cheap, thin, disposable. Costs \$1/pair or \$10 for 20.

Modern Chainmail- Cheaper than nanotech armor, yet still light and flexible. This suit of clothing (long sleeved shirt and pants) is made up of interlaced rings of thick grey high-strength plastic. Weighs 10 lbs. Heat factor: +2. AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Costs \$500.

Motorcycle Outfit- A black leather jacket, chaps, boots and a motorcycle helmet. Heat factor: +7. With helmet: AR 10 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 5 knockout 5 skid 2 fall. Without the helmet: AR 7 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 4 skid 2 fall. Costs \$150.

Outfit (Clubwear)- New, trendy clothing, in some particular style, appropriate for a dinner party or going out to a club. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs \$75.

Outfit (Fetish)- An outfit designed to appeal to people of a particular minority sexual aesthetic. Gives +8 to seduction rolls towards those people. Costs \$100.

Outfit (Formal)- A formal outfit, including a tie, that might be appropriate for a business meeting. It is the right size, but not tailored. Costs \$100.

Outfit (Grunge)-  An outfit of clothing, including shoes and a hat, bought from thrift stores and homeless scroungers, appropriate to the current weather. It is made to be comfortable, durable and warm, not to be stylish (many holes and stains). Costs \$5.

Outfit (Jogging)- Sneakers and grey sweats. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Military Surplus)- A full outfit, including boots and a hat, from military surplus stores. Mostly olive green and cammo. Gives +4 to prowling in greenery. Costs \$25.

Outfit (Raincoat)- A thin plastic raincoat, with hood, which can be folded up small enough to fit in a pocket. Heat Factor: +2. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Scrubs)- Cheap disposable clothing as a doctor or nurse might wear. Does not include shoes. Costs \$5.

Outfit (Uniform)- A uniform as a security guard or fast food worker might be required to buy. When bought in thrift stores, they usually still have the patches from their companies on them.

Costs \$10 for service industry.

Costs \$25 for security.

Phonebook Armor-  Layers of magazines, phonebooks and other salvaged paper products are strapped together with duct-tape in to a suit. The suit covers the torso, hips and thighs. It is usually hidden under clothing (it provides the best protection when an enemy isn't expecting the person to be wearing armor). The suit is moderately flexible while giving good protection from blunt and bladed damage. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +5. AR 5 PR 2 blunt and 2 bladed. Costs \$10.

Phonebook Armor (Glass)- Like phonebook armor except that sharp pieces of glass are glued in to the armor. This type of armor is most effective when hidden under frumpy and ill-fitting clothing, where the glass isn't seen. If an opponent punches the wearer there is a 1 in 4 chance of being hit with glass, if the opponent grabs or tackles the wearer it is almost certain the opponent will be cut. Being cut with glass does ½ bladed damage and people not expecting to be cut must make a save vs. shocking pain. Costs \$30.

Protective Gloves- These look and feel like normal leather gloves, but inside them is a layer of secondary nanotech fibers which protect the hands from any cutting damage, even from very fine needles. PR 6 bladed 3 burn. Costs \$95.

Prowling Suit- A dull black body suit with gloves, shoes (selected for their quietness), and a face mask. Gives +8 to prowling in darkness. Costs \$50.

Ski Goggles- Dark glasses that completely enclose the eyes, giving total protection from eye attacks (PR 1 blunt 2 bladed) and reducing the effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs \$5.

Spiked Armor- Black leather jacket and pants with sharp spikes all over them. Gloves have spikes on the knuckles (+1 bladed damage to punch). Anyone trying to hit, tackle or grab the wearer will probably take damage (½ bladed). Heat Factor: +5. AR 10 PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs \$95.

Spiked Armor (Poison)- Black leather jacket, pants and a mask covered with spikes. Inside the suit is a network of puncture-resistant tubes that carry poison (from a canister on the belt) to the tip of each spike. When activated, a tiny droplet of poison appears on the end of each spike almost instantly. Any time the armor is punctured and bladed damage done to the wearer, there is a 1 in 20 chance the users will take ½ dose of poison from a severed line. A canister of poison the equivalent of Black Market Knife Poison (p.102) costs \$50, the equivalent of Drake Pain Juice costs \$30. Heat Factor: +6. AR 12, PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs \$500.



Sunglasses (Cheap)- Thrift store or convenience store dark glasses with black plastic frames. Reduces effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs \$0.50.

Sunglasses (Electronic)- Designer frames and shatterproof, glare resistant lenses covered with a coating that reacts to electricity by becoming darker. A tiny (invisible) photocell senses bright lights and darkens the glasses accordingly. AR 5 for eye attacks, PR 4 bladed 2 blunt. Blinding lights are incapable of effecting the wearer. Costs \$30 (+\$75 for prescription lenses).

Sunscreens- Odorless, waterproof, SPF 100. Enough for 20 applications. Costs \$5.

Trash Armor- Plate armor made by homeless craftspeople out of whatever pieces of metal or plastic they could scrounge up, drill holes through, and attach to a denim bodysuit with fishing line. Weighs 70 lbs. AGY Penalty: -4. Heat factor: +10. AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt 3 burn. Costs \$150.

Trash Suit- Pieces of actual trash sewn to a body suit, covering every part of the body, so that the wearer can walk around normally, but if the wearer drops and curls up in a ball he or she looks like a heap of trash. Good for

defeating human-recognition alarm systems. Weighs 15 lbs. AGY Penalty: -3. SPD Penalty: -3. AWR Penalty: -3. Heat factor: +5. AR 5, PR ½ bladed, ½ blunt. Costs \$50.

Trenchcoat- A thick, ankle-length coat; waterproof, with large internal pockets. Costs \$35.

Uniform- An actual uniform, purchased from the black market, of a police or national guard officer. Legality: Licensed (\$500 fine). Costs \$100.

Wetsuit- Designed to keep people warm in cold water. Heat Factor: +10. AR 7, PR 1 bladed 3 skidding. Costs \$100.

Winter Coat- A thick, waterproof coat with a hood that goes down to mid-thigh. Heat factor: +7. Costs \$10.

See Also

Steel Toed Boots, p.107

Weapons: Self-Defence, p.105

SENSORY

Audio Bug- A tiny electronic device, about the size and shape of a pen cap, that broadcasts unencrypted audio up to 100 ft. Battery life: 48 hours. Costs \$50.

Binoculars- Old-style non-electronic binoculars. Can fold up to fit in a pocket. Costs \$7.

Bug Sweeper- A tiny keychain device that, when on, emits a tone when it is near a radio transmitter of any kind. The stronger the transmission, the louder it gets. Costs \$30.

Digital Camera (Cheap)-  About the size of a lighter. Optical viewfinder, auto focus, weak flash, can take up to 100 pictures before the internal memory becomes full. By holding the shutter, it is possible to take a jerky silent movie of a scene. Will output to any computer. Costs \$5.

Directional Microphone- A handheld device with a parabolic cup and a very sensitive sound sensor, used for eavesdropping in a particular direction. Can hear whispers at up to 150 ft. Costs \$75.

Hearing Aid- A tiny device that fits almost invisibly in one ear. Senses and amplifies sounds to a desired level. Uses smart amplification (so that quiet sounds are amplified more, loud sounds less). A person with normal hearing can hear people whispering 20 ft. away. Costs \$45.

Microscope- Small, handheld device, the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Magnifies any object it is placed over up to 1000X. Costs \$20.

Motion Alarm- A black box the size and shape of a pager. Can be stuck to most walls and ceilings. It scans a wide cone for movement and will either sound a loud alarm or cause a keychain to vibrate. Batteries Life: 48 hours. Costs \$15.

Nightvision Goggles (Cheap)- Old, thick, heavy, blinded by bright lights, with a 2 hour battery life and a monochrome black and green display. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$25.

Psychic Tracking Bug- A small plastic disk about the size of a silver dollar. When a glass capsule inside it broken, a chemical reaction starts that creates psychic energy, enough for those with psychic senses to track the location of the bug. The chemical reaction lasts 16 hours. Since it is non-metal, non-electronic and does not use radio waves, normal bug sweepers can't find it. Costs \$150.

Radiation Detector- Watch sized device, detects radiation, tells its type, intensity and the directions it is coming from. Costs \$100.

Radio- Small electronic device about the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Typically bought from a thrift store or salvaged from the trash, this lets users listen to the few analog (non-internet) radio stations, most of which are run by teenage music-philers out of their bedrooms. Costs \$2.

Radio Scanner- A small handheld device that can tune in to and listen to analog or encrypted digital communications on any radio frequency (including cellular). Simple encryption sequences can be programmed in. Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs \$20.

Security Camera (Cheap)-  About the size and shape of a stubby marker, this camera is cheap and easily concealable. It transmits images unencrypted via radio to a radius of 50 ft. Video is grainy, black and white, with no sound. Bright lights or darkness blinds the camera. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs \$20.

Security Camera (Fake)- An empty shell with a glowing red light that looks like a security camera. Takes an easy Photography or Alarm Systems skill roll to tell otherwise. Costs \$50.

Sound Recorder- A device about the size and shape of a pen that can record and play back up to 24 hours worth of audio and can transfer the recordings to a computer. Costs \$7.

Tracking Bug- About the size and shape of a pen cap, sends out regular pulses that can be easily used to triangulate the position of the bug (with an advanced Radio Scanner) up to 10 miles away. Battery Life: 3 days. Costs \$50.

Videocamera (Cheap)- About the size and shape of a small drink bottle, the camera saves digital movie files on internal memory, which can then be transferred to a computer or reviewed from the viewfinder. Takes about 16 hours of video. Costs \$40.

Voice Stress Analyzer- This small keychain sized device listens to all speech with high quality sensors and vibrates when it detects inaudible cracks in the voice which are indicative of someone trying to consciously control their voice tone (which could indicate acting, nervousness, impersonation or lying). The analyzer vibrates harder the more stress it senses. It can be used with phone conversations, but is much less accurate. Costs \$50.

See Also

Auto-Blood Test p.92
Bright p.87
Flare, p.100
Flashlight (All), p.100
Line Tap: Inversion, p.83

SERVANTS

These are human bodies, animals and robots that people purchase for use as servants.

Biological

Biological servants come from two primary sources. The first is animal breeders and trainers (most of whom are homeless) who train an animal for a specific purpose and then sell it. The second is animal bodies that are grown to maturity in vats with no formation of neural networks (in other words, no consciousness or personality). The grown body is given a mental program, a sort of artificial intelligence that allows it to perform the basic functions of life and follow the commands of its owner.

Biological Servant Features

Attributes: These are the typical attributes for an animal of this type. Only certain attributes are listed here (attributes like INL, CHM and WIL are non-existent or inconsequential).

Natural Abilities: Any special natural abilities of an animal, like a prehensile tail or natural armor.

Senses: Different AWR scores are listed for each important sensory modality (e.g. an animal might have 20 AWR when it comes to hearing, but only 3 when it comes to sight).

Attacks: The basic attacks of an animal are listed here. The attributes used and difficulties of various actions and reactions are different from that of humans, so a simple attribute-free difficulty is listed here (e.g. strike at 1d20 vs. 2).

Feeding Costs: This is the weekly cost to keep the animal alive (not including medical care).

Training/Mental Programs: Each type of training or mental program an animal might have is listed here. Each has its own unique price. Each has a number of commands that the animal can be expected to know. The gist of the commands is given, but the commands themselves are not necessarily spoken words (they may be unique passwords, or whistles, or communicated by pulling on a rein).

Dog- A large dog of indeterminate breed. The dog is the most commonly used servant in the city, both trained and with mental programs, and more commercial mental programs have been written for the dog than any other animal.

Attributes: END 10, SPD 15, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage)

Feeding Costs \$7/wk.

Trained, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'attack', 'heel', 'stop', 'grab' (a grab attack). Costs \$150.

Trained, Guard: Knows 'stay', 'he/she's okay', 'heel', 'quiet', 'attack'. Will bark if strangers come by, will attack if strangers get too close. Costs \$100.

Trained, Bloodhound: Knows 'smell', 'track', 'point', 'heel' and 'stay'. Costs \$300.

Trained, Assistant: Knows 'fetch' (with point), 'heel', 'stay', 'get help.' The dog can also guide visually impaired people around obstacles. Costs \$150. Trained, Dogfighting: Knows 'kill' (Vital Strike against other dogs at 1d20 vs. 6), 'watch out' (Jump Out at 1d20 vs. 5), 'stop' (stop fighting), 'finish him' (attack on the throat of an incapacitated opponent), 'stay', 'heel'. Costs \$300.

Mental Program, Leash: Acts like a normal dog, can even be trained, but a mental program running in its brain responds to the commands (as codewords): sleep (dog falls asleep), like (dog likes intensely whoever it is looking at when the word is said), hate, stay (dog can not leave a 10 ft. radius). Costs \$175.

Untrained: A young dog with no particular training. Costs \$75.

Housecat

Attributes: END 5, SPD 13, BDY 1, BLD 3, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 10 (no darkness penalty), Smell AWR 15, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Clawing (a pain/stun attack) at 1d20 vs. 3.

Feeding Costs \$3/wk.

Training, Pest Killer: Will prowl around its home area killing mice, pigeons, birds. Costs \$5.

Pigeon- An intelligent scavenger bird, one of the most numerous birds in the city.

Attributes: END 3, SPD 10, BDY 0, BLD 1, INCY 1.

Senses: Sight AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Feeding Costs \$1/wk.

Mental Program, Spy: Acts like a normal pigeon, but unable to leave the area it is placed in. Records anything it sees and hears (data retrieved through a jack hidden under the feathers) up to 1 hour of sound and video. Knows 'heel', 'stay', 'sleep.' Costs \$150.

Training, Homing: When released it returns to its home coop (often with a message attached). Costs \$20.

SERVICES

After Battle Bath- A tradition among unborn street fighters: after a battle they reward themselves (or are rewarded by family elders) by paying someone to draw them a hot bath (either with pirated hot water or water heated over a fire) which is filled with herbs that relieve pain, help disinfect cuts and relax the bather (they also smell pleasant). Gives +4 to save vs. disease contraction from cuts and scrapes. Costs \$7.

Animal Boarding- For anything up to a large dog size (bigger animals must be taken to stables outside the city) costs \$3/day.

Apartment (Tenement)- A cramped one-room apartment in a very old tenement building. Steam heating (no AC). See p.174 for more. Costs \$350/mo.

Background Check (Credit)- A quick credit report (takes less than a minute) shows info pertaining to the financial solvency or insolvency of a person. The more info given (legal name, pseudonyms, current and previous addresses) the more accurate the returned info. Costs \$25/ea. Or \$20/wk. for unlimited checks.

Band Account (Offshore)- This bank account requires no official identification, thus it is perfect for unborn and fugitives who want to make non-cash money transactions. Costs \$3/wk.

Blood Test- Available at any medical clinic. Gives a rundown of poisons, drugs, pollutants and indicators of disease, explained by a nurse. Takes about 10 minutes. Costs \$25.

Bloodhound Powder- Given a sample of a person's DNA, black market traders with bloodhound powder machines can manufacture a small vial of powder. When the buyer snorts the powder, he or she can suddenly smell the target and anything the target has touched. The user can smell the target at 50 ft. (with no wind) or anything the person has touched at 5 ft. Costs \$150.

Bus Ride- A bus leaving from the bus terminal in Brooklyn costs: \$30 (within 100 miles), \$50 (anywhere in the Eastern half of the US) or \$100 (anywhere in the Western half of the US, or in Mexico or Canada).

Car Rental- A licensed driver can rent a gasoline powered car (equivalent to Car: Used) with an alarm system and \$5,000 liability insurance for \$25/day.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Hacked)- A Cracker programs a cellphone or cellular modem to access someone else's cellular service. Each week that the cellphone is used there is a 1 in 20 chance that the piracy will be discovered and action taken (in most cases, service will simply be shut off, though occasionally private security is sent to find the pirate and deliver him or her to the police). Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine). Costs \$20.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Legal)- Allows cellphones and cellular modems to access the internet. Unlimited usage for \$5/wk.

Cellular Connection (Broadband, Hacked)- Like a basic hacked cellular connection, a Cracker reprograms a broadband cellular modem with someone else's account. Each week the connection is used, there is a 1 in 10 chance of the cellular company finding the piracy. Legality: Forbidden (\$500 fine). Costs \$30.

Cellular Connection (Priority, Hacked)- This cellular account is reserved for corporate and government officials. The idea is that these accounts have special priority over all accounts, so that in an emergency when all available cellular transponders are busy, the cellular phone or modem can automatically get through. Every time the account is used, there is a 1 in 20 chance of the intrusion being detected and appropriate measures being taken by the federal government. (Note: A cellphone can be programmed to switch back and forth between using two different accounts). Legality: Licensed (2 yrs. prison). Costs \$100.

Data Storage- This is the cost to store data on some internet server so that it can be accessed from anywhere on the internet by anyone who has the PC's password. Costs \$1 per 5 ZB per week.

Daycare (Unborn)- A reputable homeless person who will watch a child for a day. Only street people know who are the "sure thing" unborn caregivers (those who would never exploit or abuse a kid and who would fight tooth and nail to protect a kid under their care). It takes decades to build up this kind of rep, and many street person PCs may have been watched at some point in their past by a reputable caregiver. Costs \$7/day for street people or \$25/day for wells and indies.

Denial of Service- A handful of young city Crackers are paid to hammer some network node with false requests and other attacks in order to effectively block this node's internet access. Costs \$20/hr.

Drink (Alcoholic)- One shot, a small mixed drink, or a pint of beer from a bar or restaurant or bottled from a liquor or grocery store. Equals one dose of alcohol (see p.85). Costs \$2.

Drink (Non-Alcoholic)- Purified water, juice or soda at a vending machine or restaurant. Costs \$0.50.

Gasoline- There are two recharge stations in the city that sell gasoline (at Houston and Broadway, Downtown and by the on ramp to the George Washington Bridge in Inwood). It can also be purchased in 5 gallon containers from many black market traders. Being doused and set on fire does 8 burn damage per round. Costs \$7/gallon.

Hotel (Homeless)- This is the cost to stay for the evening in a private room in an abandoned building that is maintained by homeless people. The room has candles for lighting, a trash furnace for heat, a bucket of (relatively) clean water, a pile of blankets on the floor for a bed, and a bucket with an air-tight lid for a toilet. The rooms typically only lock from the inside. If the PC has no way of gauging the honesty of the homeless innkeeper, there is about a 1 in 6 chance of staying at a place where the owners will attempt to rob the guest. Common scams include: entering through a secret door while the guest is sleeping, using a wire hook to snag possessions from a hole in the ceiling, dropping large rocks on the guest from a hole in the ceiling, poisoning the drinking water, etc. Costs \$3/night for street people, \$10/night for Wells and Indies.

Meal (Fast-Food)- Full meal from a cheap fast food place or a vending machine. Costs \$4.

Medical Care (Ambulance)- An ambulance will stabilize the patient and transport him or her to the appropriate medical facility. Because there is a shortage of ambulances, ambulances arrive in 1d6 x 1d6 x 1d6 minutes. Costs \$50/hr.

Medical Care (Black Med)- Medical care or services from a member of the Black Med street family. See P.112 for more.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	\$1	\$10	\$20
Treating a small infection or wound	\$2	\$15	\$30
Large infection or wound	\$5	\$20	\$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	\$10	\$50	\$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	\$30	\$100	\$200
Problem requiring major surgery	\$50	\$200	\$300

Medical Care (Outpatient, Drug Rehab)- The patient goes in to a clinic once a day for a medical checkup, an injection of drugs to help with withdrawal and cravings, and up to 15 minutes of counseling on request. Gives +5 to save vs. cravings. Costs \$50/day.

Mercenary (Addict)- An addict is paid to travel with the employer and help the employer fight enemies. The addict will flee if he or she is wounded or faces a superior military force. Costs \$100/day.

Typical Addict Merc

Level 2 Addict

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 5, CHM 4, END 6, INL 8, SPD 10, STH 9, WIL 5, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Appearance- A thin homeless person with a slightly wild look in his or her eyes. Wearing torn, greasy rags. Body is covered with sores and/or needle tracts.

Motivations- To make a buck so he or she can buy drugs.

Methods- The addict merc is not particularly brave or skilled. He or she depends upon ambushes or in outnumbering an enemy. They attack whoever their boss says to attack and run when the situation starts looking dangerous.

Special Equipment- Skullcrusher (range 1-2, 3 blunt damage, pierces as 6).

Special Skills- Street Fighting: Armed (1).

Typical Attack- Will do a crippling attack with the skullcrusher (trying to take out a person's knees or elbows) at STH (10) + INL (8) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 8). As a reaction will do a Jump Out at SPD (10) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25 (+10 for every additional range level) or 1d20 vs. 7.

Mercenary (Dioxyl-Drake)- A young Drake from the family that creates and uses the psychic-disrupting Dioxyl Ash. The Drake will only fight psychics. The Drake carries two hot dioxyl ash pipes (see p.123) and has at least one level in Street Fighting: Armed or Club. Costs \$300/day.

Mercenary (Drake)- A young Drake, hired as a bodyguard or to fight alongside the employer. Drake elders need to know what cause the young Drake will be fighting for and will not allow the Drakes to become associated with something really reprehensible. The cost also goes up drastically if the Drakes might get in trouble with a powerful group (e.g. the Drug Lords). The young drake has several pieces of throwing glass (FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. ½ bladed damage) poisoned with Drake Fungus Poison (causes -10 STH, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance), Vomiting (20) and 1 BLD damage). The Drake typically has at least one level of the skill Knife Throwing. Costs \$250/day.

Mercenary (Insomniac)- A young Insomniac with psychic skills is hired to follow employers in to battle and use psychic skills to debilitate and confuse the enemy. Insomniac elders will not let an Insomniac fight for a completely reprehensible cause. Costs \$250/day.

Net Hosting: Personal- Space on an internet server with enough bandwidth and space host most personal or hobby net sites, including message boards. Costs \$2/wk.

Paycomputer- Running a very limited form of OpenCert, the user can access the internet, run programs or use a datacard. After the session is done, the whole computer is wiped and the OS is re-installed from read-only solid memory (to clean up any changes or damage done to the OS). Input: touch screen, keyboard, voice recognition. Output: screen, speakers. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Costs \$1/minute.

Typical Insomniac Merc

Level 1 Insomniac

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 10, CHM 7, END 10, INL 9, SPD 9, STH 9, WIL 15, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- A young homeless person, wearing very little clothing, with several self-inflicted scars and a weary look in his or her eyes.

Motivations- To make money to support his or her family.

Methods- The Insomniac is not being paid to fight, he or she is being paid to mess up the enemy using psychic skills so that the employer can kill the enemy. If someone tries to come after the Insomniac physically, he or she will run.

Special Equipment- Shield (Hand-Nails) (gives +5 to parry).

Special Skills- Emotion Attack (2) or Hallucination Attack (2) or Pain Attack (2).

Typical Attack- Will make a Pain Attack skill roll to cause the victim to suffer shocking pain at WIL (15) +10 (Sibosin effects) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +9 vs. 0). The victim can make an opposed save vs. pain (if victim fails by <10, loses next action, if victim fails by 10+, loses next action and reaction). If physically attacked, will parry with the shield at STH (9) +AGY (9) +5 (shield) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 2).

Fighting Alongside

Mercenaries like it better when they fight with (rather than at the direction of) an employer. That way they know that the employer is not sending them in to a battle that the employer himself or herself is not willing to risk. When an employer refuses to fight alongside a mercenary, the charge typically doubles.

Payvidphone- Usually found outside minimarts, liquor stores, fast food places, and in the lobbies of office buildings. Costs \$0.25 for a 5 minute call to any voice or vid address in the world.

Prostitution- The cost for sexual services varies considerably based on the skills and physical characteristics of the sex worker, the type of sex acts preformed, the location and duration of those acts. Costs can range from a quarter for a quick sex act in a back alley to five thousand for a weekend with a high-class escort. A 'typical' sex act (see p.146) costs \$10.

Runner- The cost to hire a street person Runner to take a message or package to any part of the city. Costs \$0.10/block for normal speed (delivers within 8 hours) or \$25 for rush (delivery within 30 minutes).

Secretary Subscription- The PC pays a weekly cost for the services of a secretary AI (p.78) on a host server. The secretary is running 24 hours a day and can be accessed from anywhere on the internet. Costs \$5/wk.

Servant (Addict)- This is the cost to hire an addict to follow the employer around and do manual labor, run errands or anything else (save fighting). Note that addicts are usually unreliable and may try to rob employers if they think they can get away with it. Costs \$2/hr.

Servant (Jack)- Jacks are professional beggars who have a reputation for doing anything to make a buck, from singing and dancing, to manual labor, to acting as a tour guide. This is the cost to hire a Jack to do whatever the employer can think of for the Jack to do (save fighting). Costs \$4/hr.

Servant (Skilled Street Person)- A level 1 Black Med, Cracker, Drake, Gambler, Insomniac, Keeper, Runner, Thief or Water Rat is paid to follow the employer around and use their particular skills and knowledge to aid the employer in whatever his or her goals are. The street

person will not fight on behalf of the employer, will not do anything degrading or dangerous, and will not work on behalf of causes that his or her family elders think of as reprehensible. Costs \$10/hr.

Storage (Locker)- Put in money, get a key card. You must pay every 48 hours or the key card will be revoked and the locker will unlock to the world. At any subway station a 1' by 1' by 2' locker is available (with a 1 in 20 chance of it getting broken in to). At SafeLock (a chain with 2 city locations) 2' by 2' by 3' lockers are available in a well-lit climate controlled building with video surveillance and occasional security guard drive-bys. Subway locker costs \$1/48 hours, SafeLock locker costs \$2.50/48 hours.

Storage (Shed)- A 5' by 5' by 8' shed in a converted office building. Open 24 hours with on-site security. Sheds open with a password and electronic key. Costs \$20/mo.

Subway Ride- See p.211 for more info. Costs \$1.50 to get in to the system.

Tattoo- Full color tattoo, either done by an artist with a needle or by a computer-controlled laser. Costs \$5/square inch.

Time on a Code Breaker- This is the cost for remote access to a very powerful computer designed especially to break codes. The code breaker is located outside the city, but remote access software lets users have full control as if they were sitting at the computer itself. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. The computer guesses codes at Power 75 and can do other tasks at Power 20. Memory: 500 ZB. Costs \$200/minute.

Time on a Supercomputer- This is the per minute cost to run programs on a supercomputer. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. Computer has Power 50, 5000 ZB memory. Costs \$1,000/minute.

TOOLS

Backpack- Costs \$10.

Bolt Cutters- Long handles allow a lot of pressure to be put on thick, high-strength blades. Designed to cut padlocks, chain-link fences, even some metal bars on windows. Because of its awkward balance it makes a poor weapon (1 bladed or 1 blunt damage, very hard strike, hard entangle) but if a weapon can be caught between the blades, the fighter holding the bolt cutters can use an action to snap it. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

Bottled Water- A small plastic bottle of filtered water. Costs \$0.50.

Camping Net- This lightweight net can hold up to 750 lbs. and is large enough to be set up as a comfortable hammock. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$75.

Camping Tent- A canvas bag holding a folded up waterproof tent. With practice the tent can be setup and taken down in 5 minutes. Tent can hold up to 4 people (although not comfortably). Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$35.

Carpentry Tools- Includes tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons (See Improvised Weapons, p.72). Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$50.

Carving Tools- A small pouch of tools used by artists for carving in wood or stone. Has tools that can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 bladed slashing weapons. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$40.

Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Simple)- Made from scavenged household items and a few special-ordered parts, this collection of heaters, condensers, flasks, filters, drips, separators, etc. fills several cardboard boxes and can be setup by someone with the Chemical Synthesis skill to manufacture simple chemicals (including most drugs). Costs \$200.

Climbing Rope- High quality rope that a mountain climber or spelunker might use. Has a burn and cut-proof nylon sheath (takes 3 bladed or 5 burn damage to cut the rope). Can hold 500 lbs. Has moderate bounce. Weighs 1 lb./10 ft. Costs \$1/ft.

Burglary Tools

An old law makes it a misdemeanor (\$500 fine or 30 days in jail) to carry "burglary tools". Burglary tools are anything a prosecutor can convince a judge was being carried for use in a burglary, even something as simple as a screwdriver. Overworked judges at the criminal courts building are willing to take the prosecutor's word that someone is a 'known burglar' and thus any tool they were carrying must have been a burglary tool.

Computer Repair Tools (Portable)- Small tool kit with a few commonly needed parts. Allows use of the Microelectronics skill to repair computers or computerized devices. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$25.

Computer Repair Tools (Shop)- A large box of tools with many spare parts. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Gives +4 to Microelectronics repair rolls. Weighs 45 lbs. Costs \$200.

Crowbar- Metal bar for prying things open. Can be used as 2 blunt 1 bladed weapon (range 1). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$45.

Dock Rope- Thick old rope, usually hemp, salvaged from old docks (usually by Water Rats). It is starting to decompose but is still strong and durable enough for many purposes. Can hold up to 250 lbs. Takes 2 bladed or 3 burn damage to cut the rope. Weight 1 lb./5 ft. Costs \$1/5ft.

Duct Tape- 50 ft. roll. Costs \$2.

Emergency Cooling Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes ice cold and stays cold for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +5 to save vs. heat exhaustion. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$5.

Emergency Heat Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes very warm and stays warm for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$5.

Fishing Line- A 100 ft. spool of nylon line. Takes hard (30) strength feat to break. Can hold up to 100 lbs. Weighs ½ lb. Costs \$15.

Flare- Burns with a bright red or green light for 1 hour, illuminating up to 20 ft. Can be held in the hand. Does 2 burn damage when used as a weapon. Costs \$5.

Flare (Underwater)- Like the flare, but it is designed to work underwater. Costs \$15.

Flashlight (Keychain)- A tiny flashlight with an ultra-bright LED. Can illuminate up to 10 ft. Battery lasts 1 hr. Costs \$3.

Flashlight (Small)- A small rechargeable flashlight that fits in the palm of the hand (and can clip on to the handlebars of a bike). Batteries last 2 hours. Can illuminate up to 50 ft. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$2.

Handcuffs- 20 difficulty to pick. Takes 50 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs \$20.

Hip Flask- Costs \$25.

Instrument (Acoustic)- An old beat-up non-electronic instrument, the type homeless people often play for spare change in their off-hours. Guitar, bongos, harmonica, sitar, saxophone, etc. Costs \$20.

Lighter (Disposable)- Plastic butane lighter, can burn for up to 10 minutes straight (prone to melting or exploding if left on too long). Costs \$0.50.

Lighter (Electronic)- Rechargeable, high-powered infrared heaters focused on a point, can easily ignite wet wood in high wind. Costs \$10.

Lock Picks (Homemade)- A short rake and tension bar made from street sweeper bristles and other odd bits of metal. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at -4. Costs \$5.

Lock Picks (Professional)- A tiny leather pouch with well crafted tools for picking just about any kind of mechanical lock. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at no minuses. Costs \$50.

Makeup Kit- A small kit that can fit in a purse, with everything needed for most styles of makeup. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Nutrient Bar- Lasts up to 5 years unrefrigerated. Contains protein, sugar, carbohydrates and vitamins. Most people could survive on four of these per day if they had to. Costs \$2.

Padlock (Cheap)- 20 difficulty to pick, takes 6 bladed or 6 blunt damage to break. Costs \$5.

Padlock (Expensive)- 40 difficulty to pick, takes 15 bladed or 15 blunt damage to break. Takes a hard strength feat to open it with a bolt cutter (and will ruin the bolt cutters). Costs \$80.

Pheromones- Made either for men or women, these chemically engineered pheromones have no consciously perceivable scent (except perhaps to Sexologists or Animalists) but they tend to trigger a strong sexual attraction in any person attracted to the wearer's gender who comes within 5 ft. +8 to seduction rolls. Lasts 4 hours. Costs \$20/dose.

Plastic Restraints- Thick plastic restraints that can be quickly closed around wrists and ankles, can only be released by cutting them. Takes 40 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs \$2/ea. or 20 for \$20.

Plumbing Repair Tools (Portable)- A small box with tools for repairing plumbing problems. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons. Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$40.

Rope Saw- A flexible saw-on-a-chain that rolls up in to a tiny package (can easily fit in a pocket). Used mainly by campers. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Can be used as a 1 bladed improvised slashing weapon. Costs \$25.

Seed Pack- Suitable for planting in a garden. Common plants are \$3, rare plants are \$15, illegal plants (e.g. marijuana, peyote, opium poppies) are \$25. Double the cost for live plants (easier to grow than seeds, +5 on gardening rolls). Double the cost for plants genetically engineered to grow outside in the city (frost resistant, pollution resistant, low light).

Spray Paint- A normal can of spray paint. Can be used as a blinding weapon. Costs \$10.

Steel Thermos- Can be used as a blunt weapon (range 1, 1 blunt damage). Weighs 1 lb. empty, 4 lbs. full. Costs \$35.

Torture Kit- A small leather pouch filled with tools scavenged from other purposes (medical tools, repair tools, cleaning instruments). The tools are specially selected to look as wicked and horrible as possible. Allows a PC to use the Torture skill with no minuses. Contains tools which can be used as 1 bladed damage slashing weapons. Costs \$250.

Vehicle Repair Tools (Portable)- A box of tools with many spare parts. Allows someone to use the Mechanics skill to repair vehicles at -7. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$50.

Water Purifying Canteen- A small canteen with a built in water-purifier. Costs \$70.

Wristwatch- A cheap digital watch on a plastic band. Receives date and time from official broadcasts. Has an alarm. Waterproof to 35 ft. Costs \$1.

See Also

Biotech: Non-Chemical, p.92
Chain, p.106
Crate Cutter, p.106
Fire Axe, p.151
Line Tap: All, p.106
Machete, p.106
Pickaxe, p.106
Repeater, p.84
Rope and Grapple, p.101
Sledgehammer, p.107

TRANSPORT

Transport Features

Power: If a battery based vehicle, lists the battery life. If gasoline powered, lists miles per gallon.

Speed: Lists the vehicle's maximum speed (on the same scale as the attribute SPD).

Acceleration: How much speed a vehicle can pick up in a round. If a vehicle has acceleration 5 and speed 20 then it can reach its max. speed in 4 rounds.

Maneuverability: The maneuverability rating is added to any maneuvers attempted in the vehicle. See p.60 for more.

Damage Capacity: How much damage a vehicle can take before it stops working.

Available Upgrades: The cost for each upgrade that can be added on to a vehicle. See the Full Version of the game for details about these upgrades.

Bicycle- An old bicycle, probably stolen.

Speed: Rider's SPD x 2

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.

Costs \$75.

Car (Used)- An old pre-war automobile, of the type that litter the streets of the city (except running).

Power: 30 miles/gallon gasoline.

Speed: 70

Acceleration: 15

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.

Available Upgrades: Air Filters \$100, Air-Bags \$150, Autodrive \$350, Bullet Proofing \$1,000, Defroster \$75, Fire Suppression \$100, Floodlight \$75, GPS \$20, Intelligent Suspension \$200, Live Tires \$1,500, Mirrored Windows \$75, Nightvision Windshield \$100, Noise Dampeners \$150, PA \$75, Ram Spikes \$150, Telepresence \$200, Theft Alarm \$75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) \$150, Winch and Cable \$180.

Costs \$1,000.

Diving Bell-  An old wooden, metal or plastic barrel or trash can, outfitted with a window, internal handles and detachable bags of rocks on the bottom. The bell has the same buoyancy as water, so it can be pulled along with a diver as a portable oxygen station (about 45 minutes worth of oxygen). The diver holds on to the handles, breathes the air in the bell, their legs dangle in the water. Costs \$35.

Electric Bicycle- An old used bicycle outfitted with a small electric motor. The user can pedal or use the motor.

Power: Battery charge lasts 15 miles

Speed: Rider's SPD x 2 or 10 (motor)

Acceleration: 2 (motor)

Maneuverability: +4

Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.

Costs \$150.

Inflatable Raft- A small canvas satchel containing a self-inflating raft that can hold up to 6 people. Costs \$75.

Rope and Grapple- 30 ft. of climbing rope on a sturdy metal hook. Gives +8 to Climbing rolls. Costs \$75.

Skateboard- A small low-tech skateboard.

Speed: Rider's SPD.

Maneuverability: -4

Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.

Costs \$15.

Wheelchair- A simple non-electronic wheelchair. PCs can move in the wheelchair at half their STH. \$100

See Also

Bus Ride, p.97
Car Rental, p.97
Gasoline, p.97
Subway Ride, p.99

WEAPONS

Chemical

Black Market Food Poison- A vial of clear liquid bought from a black market trader for putting in a person's food or drink. The liquid is some toxic chemical, typically a pesticide, herbicide, cleaning product or industrial solvent. They are seldom truly tasteless (takes around 20 difficulty AWR roll for an unsuspecting person to detect them, more or less depending upon how bland the food or drink is). Because each vial is made from different toxins, the effects are random and death is not certain. Effects are as follows (roll percentile for each batch):

01-50%: Within 1 minute of ingestion: burning sensation in mouth and throat, Vomiting (30), diarrhea, stomach cramps (20 difficulty distracting pain), weakness and light-headedness (-5 STH, END, INL) for 24 hours.

41-55%: Within 30 minutes after ingestion: headache, Vomiting (10), chills for 2 hours. Within 1 week after ingestion: Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (20), memory loss for 1 week, permanent neurological damage (-10 AGY, -5 INL, -5 AWR).

56-85%: Within 15 minutes: Headache (20), spasms (-10 AGY), weakness (-7 END, -7 STH) and sensitivity to bright lights for 48 hours. Within 1 hour: Paralysis (20), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

86-00%: Within 5 minutes: painful cramping and muscle constriction, starting with the face and moving throughout the body, causing distracting pain, loss of AGY, muscle strains and joint dislocation. Complete paralysis within 30 minutes. Pulmonary Arrest (50) within 1 hour.

Costs \$30/dose.

Black Market Knife Poison- A small packet of bitter-smelling gummy substance designed to be put on knife blades, arrow heads, darts, shivs or any other weapon which will pierce skin. Different toxins are used (including snake venom, chemical solvents, pesticides, plant toxins). Because they use different recipes, the effects and deadliness of these poisons are unreliable. Effects are as follows (roll percentile):

01-15%: Within 1 round of being stabbed: Paralysis (20). Within 2 rounds: Paralysis (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Within 3 rounds: Paralysis (50), pulmonary Arrest (50).

16-30%: Within 5 rounds of being stabbed: inability of blood to coagulate (any bladed injury causes ½ BLD damage per round) for 8 hours.

31-70%: Within 1 round: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls) for 24 hours.

71-00%: Within 1 round: severe shortness of breath (-10 END), lightheadedness (-5 INL, -5 AGY), vertigo (must make easy (10) saves vs. loss of balance) for 10 rounds.

Costs \$75/dose.

Chlorine Cocktail- This is typically two glass bottles duct-taped together. They contain common cleaning agents which, when mixed together, produce copious amounts of chlorine gas. The Cocktail is typically smashed against a wall or ground inside an enclosed area. When chlorine gas gets in the eyes it causes blindness (-7 to actions/reactions), pain (moderate (20) distracting pain) and eyes take weeks to heal. When inhaled, causes burning sensation in nose and throat (moderate (20) distracting pain), coughing and

corrosive burns to the lungs (4 END damage for each round exposed to the gas). One Cocktail can fill a 400 ft² room with gas in a matter of seconds. Costs \$50.

Dagger (Freedom Army)- This dagger was created decades ago by Freedom Army scientists for assassination of enemy leaders. There are a number of them left in the city. The dagger is thin and tapered, made of a teflon coated alloy designed to pierce armor. Inlaid in to the blade are a number of thin black strips containing a powerful paralytic anesthetic agent. Upon being stabbed, the black strips dissolve and the drug enters the blood stream. The anesthetic acts so quickly that some victims don't even realize they've been stabbed. A second later, the paralytic hits the heart and lungs and the person dies of lack of oxygen. The dagger can be used about 10 times before the black strips dissolve completely. Comes with a waterproof sheath. Dagger does 2 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6). Easy Vital Strike. No pain/stun or slash. One round after damage is done, complete paralysis (80 difficulty to save). Costs \$750 with ten stabbings left, \$600 with 5 stabbings, \$500 with 2 stabbings, \$300 with no stabbings left.

Drake Blood Poison- This is the only poison that the Drakes will tell people how it is made. They do so to make people fear it and thus to make it a valuable deterrent. The Drakes keep small rusty iron pressure cookers on a constant low heat, incubating the contents in an anaerobic (no oxygen) environment. Blood and feces are the main ingredients in the incubator, and there are several strains of highly toxic organisms have been breeding in the pressure cookers for years.

Appearance: Thick black liquid with a terrible stench. Sold in plastic baggies.

Administration: 2x effects if placed in a wound or on anything that pierces skin (full effects in 4 rounds), 1x effects if ingested (full effects in 5 minutes).

1x Effects: Over-stimulation of skeletal muscles causing rigid posture, a terrible grimace, and cramps (-7 AGY), coughing and vomiting blood (-1 BLD), large boils filled with clear fluids around the area where the poison entered the body, vomiting, diarrhea (thirst damage unless massive amounts of fluid are taken), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Headache (30), must make a save vs. disease progression (20 difficulty) or suffer 1 BLD damage per level of the disease. Symptoms last 48 hours.

2x Effects: High fever causing delirium (-10 AWR, -10 INL, Delusions (20), Hallucinations (20), -15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), throat and tongue swells so that it is difficult to talk, swallow or breathe (-7 END), red rash and boils covering the body, vomiting and diarrhea (thirst damage without intravenous fluids), meningitis (swelling of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord causing headaches, vomiting, stiff neck, joint pain, dislike of bright lights, and seizures), coughing and vomiting blood, 1d20 BLD damage.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Stupor (30), Seizures (30), severe bleeding from all body orifices (-3 BLD), body turns bright red with boils rising immediately, throat swells (tube must be put down the throat or the victim will choke to death), severe meningitis (causing brain damage), 4d6 BLD damage.

Treatment: Intravenous liquids, gastric lavage (cleaning out digestive system with water), immersion in cool water (to keep down fever), broad-spectrum antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and treatment with oxygen can ease the symptoms.

Costs \$40 for 4 doses.

Drake Deliriant Poison- Made from the ground seeds and liquid extracts of weeds growing in vacant dirt lots in Drake territory (fences prevent people from viewing exactly what is growing in these fields, but the poisonous weed Jimsonweed has been positively identified). This poison is used for multiple purposes. Although deadly in high doses, in lower doses it interferes with people's minds, causing delirium and frightening delusions. People poisoned by the drug are often confused, and although the accuracy of anything they say is suspect, they sometimes reveal pieces of information that they would not otherwise reveal.

Appearance: A small square of folded paper containing a sticky, clumpy brown powder, with a consistency much like brown sugar, smelling strongly of weeds and grass.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 3 minutes), inhaled (2x effects within 2 rounds), stuck to a weapon (with honey) that will pierce skin (2x effects within 2 rounds), or dissolved in alcohol and sprayed in someone's face (the poison enters the bloodstream via mucous membranes in the face, 2x effects within 10 rounds).

1x Effects: Blurred vision (-7 vision based AWR rolls), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), increased strength (+2 STH, +1 END), confusion (-15 INL), Delusions (bizarre, 30 difficulty to save), Obfuscating Hallucinations (primarily reliving memories from the past as if they were currently happening, 20 difficulty to save), Sudden Amnesia (30), Retrograde Amnesia (20). Symptoms peak within 30 minutes, and slowly drop off, not disappearing completely for 1 week.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), fever (-15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), severe thirst (double damage from thirst), Vomiting (20), Stupor (30), Cardiac Arrest (20), symptoms taper off and disappear in 2 weeks.

4x Effects: Coma (30), Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (30). Symptoms disappear in 3 weeks.

Treatment: Sedatives and anticonvulsants can be used to decrease symptoms.

Costs \$30 for 4 doses or \$100 for a plastic spray bottle with 10 doses in it.

Drake Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash- This is the fresh ash from a special plastic that the Drakes gather and burn. The ash releases random psychic energy, a sort of "static" that can disrupt psychic skills. Dioxyl ash has a half-life of about one hour (every hour after it is burned, its potency is reduced by half).

Appearance: Black paste in an old sardine can.

Administration: Can be wiped on the forehead of a psychic (to disable that psychic) or on the forehead of someone trying to resist a psychic.

1x Effects: -2 to all psychic skill rolls.

2x Effects: -4 to all psychic skill rolls, slight dizziness (-5 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-5 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

4x Effects: -8 to all psychic skill rolls, dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

8x Effects: -15 to all psychic skill rolls, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance at 20 difficulty), Unconsciousness (20).

Treatment: Effects go away as soon as the ash is washed off.

Costs \$200 for 4 doses.

Drake Fungus Poison- This is the mysterious poison that the Drakes use to make their own bloodstreams and bodily fluids poisonous. Nobody but the Drakes know the fungus it comes from or exactly how it is made. Because it is tasteless and kills without leaving any outward signs of what happened, it is an ideal poison for murder. The Drakes sell their Fungus Poison, but they keep the price high (to dissuade people from buying it in order to analyze it, experiment with it or try to build their own immunity).

Appearance: The poison comes as a clear, sticky, nearly flavorless liquid, sold in pen caps topped with chewing gum. A dose is about one drop.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 2 minutes), absorbed through mucous membranes (e.g. 1x effects within 4 minutes if put in someone's eyes). Weapons that will pierce skin can be coated with the poison. Effects happen within 2 rounds. Typically causes 2x effects if it is a small weapon (razor, piece of glass, knife) or 4x effects if it is a larger weapon (machete, kitchen knife spear).

1x Effects: Weakness and pain in muscles (-5 STH), numbness (-5 to AWR rolls for touch), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 minutes.

2x Effects: Weakness (-10 STH), thick tongue (difficulty speaking or swallowing), numbness and blurred vision (-7 to AWR rolls), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Vomiting (20), and irregular heartbeat (1 BLD damage) for 1 hour.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Unconsciousness (20), cyanosis (bluish tone to the skin), Cardiac Arrest (30) for 2 hours.

8x Effects: Paralysis (30), Seizures (30), Unconsciousness (40), Cardiac Arrest (40) for 4 hours.

Treatment: No known treatment besides artificial respiration and heart-rate regulation.

Costs \$50 for 4 doses.

Drake Glass Poison- Drakes can develop very little immunity to this poison and they are in a lot of danger of accidentally poisoning themselves while manufacturing it. Thus, only the most careful Drakes are allowed to create it and the prices are high. Drake Glass Poison is made with ground glass and irritants (such as poison ivy) designed to make a victim scratch whenever they get any on their skin. Scratching is only a vehicle to get the real poison (the source of which is unknown, though many believe it is insect venom) into the bloodstream. This poison is renowned for its subtlety (you can kill someone by putting it on their doorknob) but it is also easy to defeat (a victim only has to avoid scratching and wash the area).

Appearance: Thick white powder in a small folded square of paper.

Administration: Put on anything that a person will touch. The first effects are itching, and if the victim scratches then microscopic abrasions are opened in the skin that let the poison in to the bloodstream. Depending on how much they scratch and how much of their body came in contact with poison, the victim may suffer 1x to 4x effects within 1 minute after scratching.

1x Effects: Spreading numbness around the area where the poison entered the body (+10 to save vs. pain), paleness, tingling in extremities, weakness (-5 STH), slowed heartbeat (-7 END), chills, Vomiting (10), difficulty breathing and swallowing, Pulmonary Arrest (20). Symptoms last 24 hours.

2x Effects: Loss of blood to extremities (will lose fingers and toes if a vasodialator is not given), extreme weakness and numbness throughout the body (-10 AWR, -10 STH), Vomiting (20), short shallow breaths (-10 END), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Symptoms last 48 hours. Even if the victim survives, there will be permanent neurological damage (-7 to touch based AWR).

4x Effects: Loss of bladder and sphincter control, extreme drop in body temperature (Hypothermia at 30 difficulty to save), paralysis of diaphragm (Pulmonary Arrest at 50 difficulty to save), Cardiac Arrest (30), Coma (40), severe and permanent neurological damage.

Treatment: Vasodialators (to re-open closed blood vessels), artificial respiration and keeping the patient warm will reduce damage from the poison.

Costs \$200 for 4 doses.

Drake Knockout Drops- This is the Drake's most non-lethal product (though they are careful to tell people that there is always a chance of death when using it).

Appearance: A slimy, clear fluid. Sold in pen caps sealed with chewing gum.

Administration: Put in to food or drink. Effects (1x per dose) within 5 minutes after ingestion.

1x Effects: Drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness), dizziness (-15 to save vs. loss of balance). Effects last 4 hours.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), Vomiting (20), Pulmonary Arrest (10), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Anterograde Amnesia (15). Effects last 8 hours.

4x Effects: Unconsciousness (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30), Seizures (30), Vomiting (30). Effects last 12 hours.

Interactions: The Knockout drops have a synergistic effect with alcohol, doubling the effects of the knockout drops. Highly acidic food and drinks will break down the chemicals, halving the effects.

Treatment: Heavy doses of stimulants will cancel most of the effects.

Costs \$25 for 2 doses.

Drake Suicide Poison- This is the poison that Drakes give to people who ask for something "painless" (which usually means they are going to commit suicide). Note: There are tales of young Drakes taking pity on depressed customers and selling them something other than suicide poison (depending on the story it might be a powerful hallucinogen, an aphrodisiac, or just dirty water). Drake elders deny that any Drake ever sells anything other than what the customer asks for.

Appearance: Milky, reddish liquid in a tiny piece of sponge, wrapped in duct tape.

Administration: Swallowed, effects peak within 10 minutes.

1x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), numbness (+10 to save vs. pain), twitching eyes and lips, slowed breath and

heartbeat (-10 END). If victim goes unconscious, Coma (20) and if victim goes in to a coma, Cardiac Arrest (20).

2x Effects: Numbness and euphoria (+15 to save vs. pain), Unconsciousness (30), Coma (30), Cardiac Arrest (30).

4x Effects: Coma (40), Cardiac Arrest (40).

Treatment: Heavy doses of central nervous system stimulants can prevent heart failure. If no medication is available, anything that can be done to help the victim stay awake will reduce the chance of death.

Costs \$50 for 4 doses.

Drake Pain Juice- A clear viscous fluid, looking much like Drake Fungus Poison. The juice is loaded with concentrated capascins (the stuff in pepper spray) as well as an herbal extract that helps block painkillers (including natural endorphins). If the fluid gets in to any cut, does an aggregate 10 difficulty to save distracting pain (feels like burning). Ingesting the fluid cause mouth pain and vomiting. Getting it in the eyes causes 30 difficulty distracting pain and blinds the victim. Costs \$5/dose.

Poison Ring- This looks like a normal (although gaudy) ring. It has a hidden compartment which can be filled with a powder or liquid poison. When a tiny stopper is removed, the ring only need be tipped over food or drink to drop poison in to it. Costs \$30.

Explosives

Explosives Features

Explosives have a range increment. To determine the damage taken by a victim, count the number of range increments away that person is. For each range increment, reduce the damage by half. So, if an explosion does 20 burn damage, has a range increment of 5 ft. and the victim is 15 ft. away, the victim takes $2 \frac{1}{2}$ burn damage (20, divided by 2 at 5 ft., divided by 2 at 10 ft., divided by 2 at 15 ft.).

Detonator- Penny-sized electronic device for setting off explosive charges. Can be set on a timer or to respond to an encoded radio signal. Cost \$2.

Matchhead Bomb- A small incendiary bomb, about the size of a pack of cards, made mostly from match heads. Usually used for starting fires. Uses a fuse. Does 6 burn damage (range increment 2 ft.). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$80.

Molotov Cocktail- A glass bottle filled with some flammable liquid (typically gasoline). It is used as a quick arson tool (light and throw against the building you want to burn) or as an anti-tank weapon (the idea is to engulf the tank in flames and cause it to overheat). It makes a poor hand-to-hand combat weapon since it can fail to shatter when it hits the victim. Any object hit with a burning Molotov Cocktail (which shatters) takes 5 burn damage per round for 5 rounds (or until the fire is extinguished). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$40.

Pipe Bomb- A homemade bomb made from a length of pipe filled with explosive materials. A fuse is cut to the desired time. Metal shards from the pipe do the majority of the damage. Weighs 1 lb. Does 1d10 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), 4 burn damage, range increment 4 ft. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs \$250.

Self-Defense

Self-Defense Weapon Features

Pain- Most self-defense weapons do pain to the enemy. Saves vs. pain are made on WIL + 1d20 vs. the difficulty listed. The effects of a failure depends on the type of pain and the amount of failure:

Shocking Pain (failed by 1-9): Loses next action.

Shocking Pain (failed by 10+): Loses next action and reaction.

Distracting Pain: -1 to all rolls for each point the character failed by.

Electricity- When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

-Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)

-Cardiac Arrest (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage)

-Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Example: *Barry tries to grab a National Guardsperson's shield during a riot. The shield blasts him with 3 points of electrical damage. Barry must save vs. paralysis (difficulty 60), must save vs. unconsciousness (difficulty 30), must save vs. Cardiac Arrest (difficulty 15) and takes no burn damage.*

Barbed Wire Snips- Lengths of old (slightly rusty) barbed wire, harvested and sold by homeless scavengers. Useful for hiding inside anything soft an opponent might grab during combat (like a deadlock). Grabbing barbed wire without expecting it causes Shocking Pain (30). Costs \$10/10 snips.

Blinding Powder- Manufactured by homeless people (Drakes and others) as a cheap substitute for pepper-spray. This powder is made up of sand and caustic chemicals that cause painful burning sensation when thrown in someone's eyes. Powder can be thrown in a range of 5 ft. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. A successful blinding strike partially blinds (-7 to all actions/reactions) and is Distracting Pain (30). Costs \$7 for a bag of 3 handfuls.

Kubotan- These are small metal rods, small enough to fit in pockets, usually with a blunt point at the end. This is a self-defense weapon. Too small to do any real damage with but the blunt point is excellent for causing pain when it is slammed in to a joint or the face. Range: 0. Damage: ½ blunt. Easy pain/stun, easy blinding. Costs \$5.

Pepper Spray- A tiny canister which can be kept in a pocket or even put on a keychain. It has a safety lock. When used, it sprays a blast of capsaicin (the chemical which makes peppers hot) which can blind and incapacitate. One canister has enough for 5 attacks. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. Damage: on a successful blinding strike, victim is partially blinded (-7 to actions/reactions) must save vs. Distracting Pain (30) and if the victim breathes he or she will suffer from severe nose and throat pain, coughing (-10 END) and Vomiting (20). Legality: Permit (\$500). Costs \$20.

Personal Sonic Alarm- A small keychain device that, when activated, emits a piercing and painful wail (distracting pain (20)) that can be heard up to a mile away. Costs \$20.

Shield (Hand)- Pieces of scrap wood lashed together to make a primitive shield. The shield is about 3 ft. in diameter. Gives +5 to parry. PR of 3 bladed 3 blunt (shield can be destroyed completely by 6 damage). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$15.

Shield (Hand-Metal)- Like the wood shield but made of scrap metal, making it stronger and lighter. Gives +8 to parry. PR of 5 bladed 4 blunt. Costs \$50.

Shield (Hand-Nails)- Like the wooden shield, except with long nails driven through all around the shield. Gives +5 to parry, +4 to pain/stun attack. PR 3 bladed 3 blunt. Costs \$25.

Taser- Small handheld device with two pointed metal prongs. Can zap a person up to 5 times per battery. Range: 0-1. Damage: 3 electrical. Costs \$150.

Traditional

Traditional Weapon Features

Range: Every weapon has a range within which it will work. See p.68 for more on moving in and out of range. If a weapon has range 1-2, it can be used normally if the opponents are 1 or 2 range levels apart. However, if the opponents are three range levels apart the weapon is too short to hit and if the opponents are 0 range levels apart the opponent is too close to do full damage. Ranges are as follows:

Range 0: Touching (biting, head butts, knives).

Range 1: Arm's Length (punches, kicks, knives)

Range 2: 4 ft. (swords, clubs)

Range 3: 6 ft. (whips, chains, lances)

Some weapons might do different things at different ranges. A lance, for instance, might do bladed damage if used at one range (where the blade can hit the enemy) and blunt damage if used at another range (where the enemy can only be hit by the pole).

Damage: The amount of damage done by the weapon on a normal strike.

Special Actions/Reactions: The design of some weapons makes it easier or harder to do certain actions and reactions. Example: If a sword gives "easy strike" then the holder gets +4 whenever making a strike with it. These actions and reactions are listed with the following nomenclature:

Very Easy: +8 on rolls.

Easy: +4 on rolls.

Hard: -4 on rolls.

Very Hard: -8 on rolls.

Pierces As: When a weapon is good at piercing armor, this is the amount of damage to use when calculating how much damage surpasses armor. Note that the max. damage that can hit the human inside the armor is the normal damage listed.

Baseball Bat- An old wooden or hollow metal bat. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$20.

Bear Trap- Spring loaded metal trap with a chain on it. Takes only 10 pounds of pressure to spring the trap. Does 1 bladed damage and traps the leg that set it off. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs \$100.

Blowpipe- A 3 ft. long white PVC tube for blowing darts with. Takes 1 round to load a dart in the tube. FR 2 ft. MR 30 ft. Does 0 bladed damage (pierces as 2). Costs \$25 +\$4/dart.

Boot Blades- Small strong blades that are attached to the toes of boots. Adds 2 bladed damage to a kick. Costs \$20 each +\$15 for spring loaded.

Bow (Archery)- A cheap plastic bow, typically left over from some pre-war gym class. Comes with a leather quiver. Takes 1 action to draw an arrow. FR 5 ft. MR 100 ft. Damage: 2 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$25 +\$5/arrow.

Bow (Compound)- A complicated hunting bow, using high-tech materials to make it lightweight and powerful. FR 7 ft. MR 250 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$125 +\$7/arrow.

Chain- A length of chain of the right size for combat. Can be used for entangling. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$7.

Chain (Heavy)- This is a length of chain heavier and shorter than that typically used in combat. It is so heavy that only the strongest fighters in the city can use it effectively (takes a moderate strength roll to use without a penalty). Range: 1-2. Damage: 4 blunt. Very hard strike, very hard vital strike. Weighs 65 lbs. Costs \$25.

Crate Cutter- A small folded piece of metal contains a razor blade. Designed as a multi-purpose cutting tool. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash. Costs \$7.

Crossbow- Takes 2 actions to load the bow (or 1 action with a hard strength feat). 2 handed. FR 7 ft. MR 350 ft. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs \$250 +\$7/bolt.

Dagger (Throwing)- A dagger designed and weighted to be thrown. FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage 2 bladed. Costs \$49.

Dagger- A knife designed for stabbing through the ribcage and in to the heart. Damage: 2½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs \$35.

Fire Axe- A red painted axe from the fire-hose alcove of some office building. These are plentiful on the black market (being the first things rioters would steal during every major riot in the last 100 years). Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Hard strike, easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$40.

Harpoon- A heavy metal spear designed for piercing the thick flesh of sea creatures and holding them on a hook. Weighs 25 lbs. Requires moderate (20 difficulty) STH feat to use without penalties. Removing violently (once it has pierced flesh) does 5 ragged bladed damage. FR 5 ft. MR 75 ft. Damage: 6 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard Strike. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs \$100.

Kitchen Knife Spear  - The blade from a small kitchen knife is tied in to the split end of a stick. The result is a primitive, but highly effective, spear. The spear is mainly used for throwing, but in a pinch it can be used as a hand-weapon. When thrown: FR 2 ft. MR 40 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. When used as a handheld weapon: Range: 2. Damage: 2 blunt (when bashing) or 3 bladed (when stabbing). Easy parry, easy slash. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$8.

Knife (Combat)- This knife is crafted specially for fighting with. It is best at slashing-type attacks. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Easy slash, easy wing. Costs \$35.

Knife (Hunting)- A large knife with a serrated back side and a hollow handle (containing matches, fishing hook and line, sharpening stone and water purification tablets). Range 0-1. Damage: 2½ bladed. Costs \$30.

Knife (Kitchen)- A large bread knife. Each time it hits an opponent there is a 1 in 20 chance of the blade breaking. Range 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Costs \$3.

Knife (Switchblade)- A spring loaded knife designed to be concealed in the palm and opened in an instant for surprise attacks. Range: 0. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy slash, easy wing, easy vital strike. Costs \$45.

Machete- A rounded sword-like blade designed for chopping through thick foliage. Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Nightstick- One handed weapon made from plastic or fiberglass. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Very easy parry. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$40.

Pen Knife- What looks like a fancy metal pen conceals a strong, sharp blade which is just long enough to pierce the ribcage and heart. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash, easy vital strike. Costs \$45.

Pickaxe- Range: 2. Does 3 bladed damage (pierces as 6). Hard strike. Costs \$100.

Pike- A long sharpened stick or rod, braced against the ground, used to impale oncoming enemies. More useful for mass combat than person-to-person combat. Range 3. Damage: 5 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Easy vital strike. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs \$50.

Pipe- An old metal pipe, scavenged from a hole in the ground, or a piece of rebar scavenged from a ruined building. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$4.

Quarterstaff- A 6 ft. long straight piece of wood. Range 1-3. Damage: 2 blunt. Easy parry. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs \$20.

Railroad Spike- An old metal railroad spike sharpened to a sharp point. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs \$5.

Razor Ring- A part of a razor blade welded to a brass ring. The idea is to wear the razor inside, keeping it hidden and doing a surprise attack on someone's jugular vein with it (see the Assassin: Armed skill, p.22). Range: 0. Damage: ½ bladed. Costs \$30.

Ripper- Like the shank, this weapon was first designed by prisoners and is now manufactured by homeless people from trash. The ripper is a piece of ragged scrap metal with a handle on it, designed to cut and tear flesh. While the shank is a weapon of assassination, the ripper is a tool of intimidation. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 ragged. Easy pain/stun, easy slash. Costs \$35.

Sharpened Stick- A 2.5 ft. long stick, fire-hardened and sharpened to a point. Range: 2. Damage: 2½ bladed. Hard strike. Costs \$2.

Shiv-  This is a small sharp object (usually a piece of glass, plastic or scrap metal) sharpened to a point on one end and wrapped up in cloth (as a handle) on the other. It is just long enough to pierce the heart if driven in to the body with enough force. This is a traditional assassin's weapon, especially in prison. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 3). Hard strike, easy pain/pain stun. Costs \$2.

SSkullcrusher-  A long tree branch, forked at the end, with a heavy pointed stone or piece of concrete lashed to the end. The pointed end on the rock makes the skullcrusher excellent for breaking shields, doing damage through armor and crushing skills. Range: 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt damage (pierces as 6). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$30.

Sledgehammer- A very powerful weapon, yet its size makes it difficult to use. Requires moderate STH feat to use without penalty. It can be raised over the head (one action) and brought down for a double-damage smash attack. Range: 2. Damage: 4 blunt (pierces armor as 6). Very hard strike, very hard vital strike, very hard parry. Weighs 14 lbs. Costs \$40.

Steel Toed Boots- These boots are made for working in dangerous situations (PR 6 bladed 6 blunt to the feet) but they are also very good for kicking and stomping. Adds 1 blunt damage to kicks or stomps. Weigh 3 lbs. Costs \$70.

Stick With Nail-  This is either a large tree branch or a board, with a long nail through one end. The Stick With Nail is the perfect weapon to use against someone wearing phonebook armor (p.94) as the nail can penetrate the armor. Range: 2. Damage: 3 blunt, 1 ragged (pierces armor as 4 bladed). Easy pain/stun. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$15.

Swinging Rock- A rock or chunk of concrete tied to the end of a length of cord. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs \$6.

Sword (Broadsword)- A replica medieval sword. It is very heavy, two-handed and designed to cleave through armor. Takes an moderate (20) STH feat to use without penalty. Range: 1-3. Damage: 5 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard strike. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Sword (Fencing)- A thin, flexible stabbing-sword that focuses on speed vs. power. Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed. Easy parry, easy vital strike. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs \$60.

Sword (Katana)- A replica of a Japanese samurai sword. Range: 1-2. Damage: 5 bladed. Easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$100.

Sword (Rusty Saw)- This blade is made from an old hand saw, cut in to a blade and reinforced to make it less flexible, connected to a makeshift handle. The sword is designed to look quite nasty, although it is not the most efficient weapon to use in battle. It is used to grab a hold of and tear skin open. Range 1-2. Damage: 2½ ragged. Hard strike, easy pain/stun, easy slash. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs \$75.

Swords

Newcomers to the city are often surprised to see the large number of people, especially Well gang-members, carrying and using machetes and swords. There are three basic reasons for this:

First, guns are too expensive for most gang members to afford, thanks to a severe gun ban which has continued from the Freedom War days.

Second, swords were the number one weapon (until the invention of guns) because they are very effective weapons. They give longer range than a knife, they move faster than a club and they are sharp and heavy enough to pierce rudimentary (leather or phonebook based) armor.

Third, many people in the city, especially wells, grew up in VR fantasy worlds where swordplay was common. Although real combat and VR combat has significant differences, the numerous battles fought in VR were enough to make swords the easiest weapons for young street punks to learn to use.

Telescoping Baton- A metal tube that can fit in a pocket. When it is swung, it telescopes out in to a full sized baton. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Easy pain/stun attack. Weighs 1.5 lbs. Costs \$100.

Throwing Glass-  A 2, 3 or 4 pointed "star" made with sharp shards of glass hot-glued together. FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: ½ bladed damage. Costs \$2.

Tiger Claws- A pair of wristbands with three claws each curving over the fist for bladed punching and clawing attacks. Adds 2 bladed damage to a punch. Easy slash attack. Costs \$45.

Tomahawk- Although made of steel, it is shaped and balanced exactly like the original Native American throwing axe. This ancient design gives it portability, accuracy and power that few weapons can rival. When thrown: FR 3 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage: 4 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Very easy vital strike. When used as a hand weapon: Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 1 lb. Costs \$150.

Whip- A leather whip, usually sold in sex shops. Range: 3. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy pain/stun attack. Costs \$35.

See Also

Carving Tools, p.99
Crowbar, p.100
Flare, p.100
Phonebook Armor: Glass, p.94
Spiked Armor, p.194
Spiked Armor: Poison, p.194
Torture Kit, p.101



Chapter Four - PC Groups

Amin and his fellow gang members stood and waited, breathing heavily. A few blocks down the street, the Omniscients turned the corner and came in to view. The Omniscients were coming at them at a brisk walk, not running. The walls suddenly brightened as someone behind Amin started up the floodlight. They had thrown together a shielded floodlight at the last minute, knowing how the Omniscients liked to break street lights and fight in the dark. For the tenth time in the last few minutes, Amin checked the sharpened machete in one hand and the makeshift shield attached to his forearm. He raised them slightly, in his head he ran through the basic block and strike pattern he had practiced. This would be his first battle.

He raised his machete as the Omniscients came nearer. The first ranks of the two gangs raced in to battle and Amin rushed forward, looking for someone to take on. He saw that some of the Omniscients were hanging back. Watching his sides, making sure nobody attacked him from behind, he pushed his way through the fray towards them. Something seemed odd about them - they didn't seem interested in joining the battle. As he got closer he noticed that some of them looked old and dirty, with the leathery skin of a homeless person. They were dressed in Omniscient clothing but didn't have any visible implants. Amin saw scars - not the random zigzags of accident scars but the clean rows of something done on purpose. Amin stopped in his tracks - it had to be Insomniacs, hired by the Omniscients, dressed up as Omniscients so they wouldn't be targeted.

Amin inhaled to scream out "Insomniacs" but when he tried to speak he found his vocal cords paralyzed. He could feel his arm moving, and he felt the cold metal of the machete touch his throat...

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Non-Player Character Groups

These are elements of the city's population that are a significant portion of the city population but they are not appropriate as player characters.

Children- Adults in the city tend to think of children as being in the same group as their parent's (e.g. that's a shut in kid, that's a Drake kid). Despite this, kids have their own needs, lifestyles and social groupings. Not appropriate as PCs because their self-sufficiency and ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.177 for more info.

Colins- Colin is a serial killer who kidnaps people and uses mental installer technology to copy his mind over theirs, thus reproducing himself. Not appropriate as PCs because they are not unique characters with unique personalities and because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.179 for more info.

Cultists- These are members of one of the city's many cults. Not appropriate as PCs because their ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.183 for more info.

Crazies- This is the most common slang term for homeless people who are unable to get by in any social group because of a mental illness. Not appropriate as PCs because they have little or no control over their own actions.

Drug Lords- Generically, this is any employee of the Drug Lords organization, from the rich and powerful lords, to lowly street pushers, to chemists working in production labs. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.190 for more info.

Hostel Patients- At any given time, there are very many people in the city who are patients at government run hostels. These are usually very old people or people in the terminal stages of incurable diseases. Inappropriate as PCs because they seldom leave these hostels and have very little autonomy.

Non-Player Character Groups (continued)

Serial Killers- These are people who kill other people to satisfy their own emotional needs. They are generally loners and not part of any social grouping. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs.

Violent Criminals- These are groups of bullies who prey on those weaker than them in order to get money. Most are young God Killer addicts with troubled childhoods who live in a nexus between addiction, mental illness and plain evil. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.190 for more info.

Visitors- At any time there are people travelling through the city. Some are tourists with a sense of adventure, other are business people staying in one of the city's cheap hotels. Some people come to the city from private cities, gated communities and corporate living centers in order to take advantage of drugs, prostitution, gambling and other forms of illegal entertainment. Not appropriate as PCs because they don't stay long in the city.

Shut-Ins- These are Wells and Indies, who are afraid of the city. The majority spend all day in Virtual Reality fantasy worlds. Not appropriate as PCs because they avoid the streets whenever possible.

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STREET PEOPLE FAMILIES

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard working, clever, loyal, responsible, specialized, humble, unprejudiced, realistic, patient, willing to do unpleasant things.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, uneducated, opportunistic, short-sighted, dishonest criminals and thieves.

Street People who have formed themselves in to large extended families are better off, by a large degree, than most other street people. The members of families have pacts of mutual self-defense and revenge similar to gangs, with the same deterrent effect. In fact, many wells and Indies see the families as nothing more than "homeless gangs," although being in a family has many more benefits than being in a gang.

Street People vs. Homeless

Many Street People don't like to be called homeless. Most have homes which they are quite proud of. Their homes are decorated, defended, and are quite comfortable places to sleep or just hang out. Some homes even have pirated electricity or running water.

The word "homeless" is usually used to refer to someone who does not have an income and does not have a safe place to sleep at night. The real homeless are usually nomadic, switching from place to place as something goes wrong with the last place they slept. The worst off homeless people do not even have time to seek a place to live: they sleep wherever they are when exhaustion overtakes them.

Street Poetry and Music

For more than a century, poetry has been the primary form of artistic expression of the homeless in the US. The reason is simple: poetry is one form of art that doesn't require expensive equipment and supplies or massive amounts of training. If people can memorize their poetry, they don't even need a pencil and paper.

Street poetry in the city does not resemble other art scenes. There are no stars of poetry, no homeless people reproduce the poetry of another, and nobody bothers to analyze another person's poetry: they hear it, enjoy it, and forget about it soon afterwards. The poetry scene is thus incredibly egalitarian, everybody on the street, whether they have ever written a poem before or not, is equal. There is also little impetus for anyone to refine or perfect their art.

Poetry reading is seldom organized. Some street people read poems around campfires when they are bored and there is nothing else to do. Some write poems on scraps of paper and leave them lying around: someone might read them, or they might not. Occasionally, some well-meaning Indie from outside the city will gather a bunch of street poetry and publish it on the net, and it may enjoy some small success outside of the city (mostly for the unflinching emotional honesty, not for the poetic skill) but that success seldom reaches back to the people on the streets.

Some poems are put to music and sung. Some are stories, funny or sad, about the poet or people the poet knows. Some are pure descriptions of the feelings of the poets. Some have a political flavor: demands for rights and respect and jobs. If street poetry has any use, besides keeping street people entertained during boring hours, it is in getting street people used to saying, loudly, how they feel and what they want (a skill that too few of them have).

Street musicians in the city can not make enough money to make a living, yet when someone walks down the major avenues of the city in the evenings, one can still hear the vigorous playing of street musicians. These street musicians are street people who have spent all day pursuing their real livelihood, and when it is time to relax, they get out their instruments, get together with their friends and play music. They always have a hat out in case someone wants to give them money, and they do get a significant amount of spare change, but even if they didn't they would probably still be playing music somewhere.

Most street people don't have anyone watching their backs. If they don't hit a good dumpster, they starve for that night. If they get sick, nobody is there to take care of them. When they leave whatever abandoned spaces they have claimed as their own, nobody is around to keep their stuff safe. If they are attacked, they can call for help but it is likely that nobody will come. The families, on the other hand, live as large collectives that watch out for each other in ways that even Indies and wells envy.

Families take over whole blocks, creating neighborhoods they can walk in safely. Abandoned buildings are taken

Den Mothers and Fathers

Not all unborn family members engage in the trade typical for that family, yet they usually do something to help the survival of the family. Some come in to the family by common law marriage. Others grew up in the family, but felt their skills and talents lent to them doing something other than the family's occupation. When young, these people are usually errand and message runners. When they become older, many become "den mothers" or "den fathers" who spend all their time making sure that the spaces that the family lives and works in are running smoothly. Den mothers and fathers usually have quite a lot of authority because they are responsible for everything from keeping quarters sanitary to resolving disputes between family members.

Food

Street people get food from four basic sources:

-First, food handed out at soup kitchens or by outreach workers.

-Second, homeless people buy food at fast food restaurants (street people become adept amateur nutritionists, finding out what foods satiate them the longest at the lowest price).

-Third, scrounging through dumpsters. There is quite a lot of food in dumpsters: for every five pounds of food that is prepared and served in the city, approximately one pound of food is thrown out. How the food is thrown out makes a major difference. In some restaurants (with employees that know how things work on the streets), cooked food being thrown out is put in to plastic bags separate from uncooked meat and other trash. In the worst case scenario, restaurant employees are under orders to sabotage their garbage to discourage scrounging. They mix food in with other garbage and even sprinkle on cleaning products or rat poison.

-Fourth, a few people hunt and gather for food. Only the Keepers have been able to gain a significant portion of their nutrition this way, but other street people occasionally supplement their diet with the occasional pigeon or fruit from a tree growing in someone's yard.

over and turned in to street people mansions. They are guarded all the time, so family members can leave their possessions lying around. When family members come home, they have a luxury few street people have: the ability to relax. They can let their guard down, kick off their shoes, chat with friends and family, eat a warm meal, and when they are lucky they can even take a hot bath.

The families also have developed a culture of being homeless. People born in the families are born homeless and are trained from an early age on the skills that they will need to survive on the streets. The major families each have some special skill or ability that helps them make money and makes them an invaluable resource to other city groups. Since they are trained from birth to do one thing, they are incredibly apt, experts whose knowledge and skill cannot be rivaled.

For all that the members of Street People Families have, the one thing they don't have is hope. They will never be anything other than homeless criminals. They are only able to exist in the city because it is a sort of blind spot in the vision of society. Were the economy to ever improve, the streets made safe, the trash cleaned up, organized crime agencies destroyed, ordinary people convinced to leave their apartments, the street people families would be like a rat's nest that has been suddenly uncovered: forced to scatter.

Unborn

N., Street slang for someone who was born in the US, but was not born in a hospital and does not have a birth certificate. Unborn are usually the children of homeless people and are born with the help of homeless midwives. Since they do not "exist" in any government database, it is almost impossible for the Unborn to get a legitimate jobs or get on public assistance, and most grow up resigned to the idea of being a homeless criminal for all of their lives.

Black Meds

In Brief- Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, quick thinking, compassionate, resourceful, never denying anyone help.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Barbaric, ignorant, unethical, arrogant, afraid to admit ignorance.

Other Names- Street Doctors, Black Market Doctors, Rusty Scalpels.

Origin- The 2040s were a very hard time for the city, and people found themselves homeless in increasing numbers. Hospitals were required by law to provide emergency care for the indigent, but economic crises, natural disasters and plagues made going to a hospital dangerous and unrewarding. A homeless person going to a hospital for medical treatment might be mistakenly thrown in a plague ward, or might die under a tent in the hospital parking lot before a triage nurse could even get around to seeing the homeless person.

Fortunately for homeless people, a significant amount of medical knowledge had made its way to the streets. Many people with significant medical training had become homeless. Many immigrants still practiced indigenous healing practices. The homeless in New York started practicing medicine on each other. Many homeless people were soon more comfortable with homeless midwives than with hospitals, and the children born on the streets to these midwives were the first major group born in the United States without birth certificates, a group that would later become known in city slang as the unborn.

Even as the homeless medics gave birth to the unborn, they were teaching medical knowledge to other homeless people. They blended together modern science, ancient traditions, and new improvisations to create a form of medicine that could be performed with equipment scavenged from the trash. The street medics had their own children on the streets and taught them their medical techniques.

When the Freedom Army took control of the city, medical volunteers did their best to treat the city population, but their supplies were severely limited. Many homeless people with street-medicine knowledge volunteered, and many were inducted into the Freedom Army's medical corps.

After the Freedom Wars, most homeless medics lapsed back in to homelessness. Continuing to practice medicine on the streets, they gained loyal patients from throughout the city. The post-war gangs also found that they sometimes needed medical services outside of a hospital, and their money helped the homeless medic families become successful. The homeless families traded knowledge and supplies and they were the first street families to join in to mutual self-defense pacts. Over the course of a nearly a generation, the connections between the families became so close that some started to consider themselves to be all one family. They clustered around the Bowery (the part of the city with the highest population of homeless people) so they could defend themselves more easily.

Timeline

2045- First HDNA virus outbreak (will become worst plague in human history).

2047- 25 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2050- Freedom Army attacks.

2054- Nuclear explosion in central park is beginning of end for Freedom Army.

2057- Manhattan reopened to habitation.

2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2070- Medic families join together in self-defense pact.

2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Black Med children hang around when their parents are performing medical care and they become familiar with many medical problems and medical procedures at an early age. Black Med children are allowed to view everything that goes on, from consultations, to amputation, to death and burial of patients. The average Black Med child can distinguish syphilis from other venereal diseases at the age of seven. Young Black Meds are often asked to help out in many ways, including handing tools to elders in the middle of a surgery. With some exceptions, young Black Meds are not allowed to touch patients until they reach their teenage years. During their early teenage years, elders try to have someone watching them whenever they are working on a patient, though during busy times young Black Meds sometimes have to work alone. Black Meds are usually allowed to make house calls by themselves at around fifteen to seventeen.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is still a junior member of the household, is still considered a student, is still required to consult with an elder when he or she is in any doubt, but the PC is allowed to deal with patients and make house calls on his or her own.

Lifestyle- Homeless people have many more medical problems than non-homeless people. They are exposed to many more diseases, are much more likely to be injured, have poorer nutrition, and have a harder time keeping wounds clean. Many homeless people are homeless because of medical problems and physical disabilities. Altogether, significant medical problems are the norm for homeless people, and people without medical problems are rather rare. Even though there is one Black Med for every 23 street people (including addicts and homeless "crazies") the Black Meds are kept very busy.

When homeless people are sick or injured, many are well enough to walk across the city to the Bowery, where they seek out any building with a red cross on it. Those who can not walk may be lucky enough to have friends strong enough to carry them. Most homeless people don't have friends that strong and they must send someone to go get a Black Med. Any adult Black Med can make a house call (there are no specialists). Any adult Black Med will take on any medical problem. Black Meds will also treat animals (especially the pets of other street people).

As soon as the Black Med gets a good idea what the problem is and what steps must be taken to fix it, the Black Med asks about payment. Unless the patient is truly on the edge of death, the following discussion sounds much like any other haggling taking place for goods or services in the city. Black Meds ask for less from poorer clients than they do from wealthier ones. Black Meds are more likely to take IOUs from street people and people they know than they are from others. If the client can't pay and the Black Med is unwilling to take an IOU, the Black Med usually requires an agreement from the patient that he or she will

stay and work off the debt once he or she is returned to health. Street People, especially, are often very happy to agree to this arrangement. Once the patient is cured, the Black Med household puts the patient to work in any way they can think of: the patient cleans, does manual labor, watches children, helps during dumpster diving runs, and sometimes even helps the Black Meds defend themselves. The Black Meds are the final arbiter of how much work it takes to pay off a debt, though they rarely get more than their money's worth from these arrangements.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	\$1	\$10	\$20
Treating a small infection or wound	\$2	\$15	\$30
Large infection or wound	\$5	\$20	\$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	\$10	\$50	\$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	\$30	\$100	\$200
Problem requiring major surgery	\$50	\$200	\$300

The Black Meds use many methods to treat patients, including many methods that legitimate medical personnel would never consider. They use stolen pharmaceuticals (though their supply is very limited and they use them sparingly). Over the counter drugs, which have been shoplifted, are used much more commonly. The Black Meds also grow herbs and use them in teas, tinctures and poultices. Most injuries and infections are treated using soap stolen from public restrooms (to clean the area), a bucket of tap water (to rinse it), alcohol or a hot knife (to sterilize it), a sewing needle and thread (to stitch it up) and boiled rags (to bandage it). Patients are asked to take out their own stitches when the wound is healed. Surgery is avoided whenever possible, since the Black Meds know the terrible possibilities of infection. When surgery is performed, it is usually to remove a foreign object from a wound or to drain an infection, and it is usually with little or no anesthetic (a belt of whiskey is the most common anesthetic used). Caesarians are never preformed unless the mother is already dead (the risk of infection is too high). Acupuncture, massage, hypnosis and psychic physiological manipulation are used occasionally, though not every Black Med has these skills. When Black Meds believe a patient doesn't have an actual problem, they readily give out placebos (usually horrible tasting, though useless, herbal teas).

Black Meds know that there is a limit to their abilities. City hospitals are required to treat the indigent who are in imminent danger, and Black Meds sometimes decide that the best thing to do is patch someone up enough to the point that they will survive the trip, then help the person make it to the city hospital.

The Black Meds are famous for having an attitude of "If you don't like how I do things, you can go crawl off and die." The patient has no choice as to treatment options, they must take whatever the Black Med gives them. Black Meds find it hard to make life-or-death decisions every day without a bit of megalomania, even if it is a pretend megalomania that goes away at the end of the day. Some Black Meds, however, take the megalomania to heart and think of themselves as infallible. If Black Meds think a patient would want to be euthanized, they do it (usually

by suffocating the patient). When a patient does die, the Black Meds make every attempt to bring the body back to the loved one's friends and family, but if they can't find any friends and family they usually use the body as a teaching tool for young Black Meds, then bury it in a small non-denominational ceremony. The Black Meds don't have to worry about malpractice lawsuits, though they have occasionally had to defend themselves when they were blamed for a patient's death.

It is rare that Black Meds have serious enemies, but when they do they will typically refuse the enemy treatment, or may even pretend to treat an enemy and then kill them. Black Meds also kill patients who they find out are serial killers, child molesters or other people that the Black Meds feel are beyond salvation. Black Meds could use their medical knowledge to do a lot of horrible things to enemies (torture, surgical mutilation) but they seldom do, usually because they have been battling pain for all their lives and find the idea of purposefully creating more to be distasteful. Some Black Meds keep samples of diseased fluids from plague victims they treat. They have never had occasion to use them, but the implication is obvious: if some group seriously hurts the Black Meds, the Black Meds will fight back using biological weapons.

There are no ethical standards for Black Meds and no review of a Black Med's actions beyond the eldest in the household. Black Meds are often forced to make life-or-death decisions with no guidance but their conscience. In these cases, a bit of megalomania is good: it allows for a Black Med to make a decision and carry through with it, rather than freezing up. Black Meds are commonly thrown in to situations where multiple people are wounded and they only have time to save one person's life (and will often choose to treat the friend rather than the stranger). Sometimes people will refuse needed treatment because of fear, because it is painful, because of religious objections of for other reasons. Black Meds sometimes allow people to go off without treatment, but sometimes will force unwanted treatments on people, especially if they think people are mentally ill or are the victim of cult brainwashing. Other times, patients will try to purchase treatments for themselves that the Black Meds think are unwise. These people are often mentally ill and believe that they have diseases or have problems with their physical appearance that they don't have. Like Sex Workers, Black Meds entertain each other with stories of the weird things they are asked to do. Black Meds sometimes refuse and sometimes do not, depending upon how much money they are offered and how they feel about the patient. A common excuse given by Black Meds for performing questionable acts is "if I didn't do it, he/she would have just found someone else who would, at least this way it's my family that gets fed."

Sometimes Black Meds are asked to do something that is unquestionably unethical. They may be paid to sabotage the treatment of another patient. They may be paid to torture or surgically mutilate someone. They may be paid to give people implants against their will. Although most Black Meds will refuse, customers keep asking until they find a Black Med who will. Black Meds who do this sort of thing keep it strictly secret (or risk ostracism by other Black Meds). Some Black Meds make a regular practice of taking on these very unethical jobs, others are just desperate for cash and fall prey to temptation.

When they are not performing medicine, Black Meds spend most of their time making or acquiring medical supplies. Black Meds often trade with other street people, trading medical services for over-the-counter drugs and medical supplies that the street people have shoplifted. Some skilled Thieves even raid pharmacies and trade prescription drugs. Teenaged Black Meds are often sent to jump the barbed wire fence compounds in the backs of hospitals. They quickly bust open the locks on the biohazard dumpsters, grab gray plastic bags and run before the security guards can get there. At home, they and their families carefully sift through the trash looking for anything that can be salvaged, soaked in bleach and re-used. Biohazard waste that is not reused is often kept for use in traps. Black Meds also make their own medical supplies. They tear up rags, boil them, bleach them and use them as bandages. They sometimes even make scalpels by snapping razor blades and melting them in to the end of toothbrushes (a technique some black med probably learned in prison decades ago). Many older Black Meds have tiny gardens growing in backyards where they grow medicinal herbs which they harvest and sell or trade to other Black Meds.

Social Structure- The basic unit of Black Med life is the household. A household typically has one or two members who are considered the wisest doctors in the household, and everyone else in the household works for the wisest as assistants. In a typical household, children run errands (take messages, borrow supplies from other households), adolescents and teens make house calls, carry non-ambulatory patients on makeshift stretchers, and do basic intake of patients. Young adults handle the majority of cases, doing basic surgery and treatment for minor problems. The oldest and wisest Black Meds take over whenever a problem is complicated. If their hands are too unsteady with age to perform surgery, they watch and direct a younger surgeon. Some household members do not have any medical skills, but they help out in other ways: manufacturing bandages, helping keep the household clean, etc.

Advancement- Advancement in the Black Meds is a slow process of seeing case after case until one develops a body of medical wisdom. The longer a Black Med has been practicing, the more weight their medical opinion holds. Starting a household and being the patriarch or matriarch of the family is also a means of gaining respect and influence.

Population- There are about 1,300 Black meds, making them the largest street family.

External Relations- Black Meds are generally thought of as soft: they are not skilled at combat and the worst they typically do to enemies is threaten to withhold medical treatment. This is perhaps an illusion: since nobody has made a serious attempt to wipe out the Black Meds, nobody knows how vicious they can get.

Street People Families: The Black Meds are the oldest and best known of the street families. They literally and figuratively helped give birth to the other street families. In so much as there is a homeless community, the Black Meds are the glue that hold it together. Whenever there is a serious threat to the Black Meds, other street people (including addicts) help out, if only out of a selfish desire for self-preservation. The Black Meds often take favors in exchange for treatment, and every Black Med household is owed at least one favor by each of the major families. If they called in all their favors, no homeless group

would have as much political or military power. They have few reasons to use this power though: they have no real enemies and few needs beyond salvaged and stolen medical equipment.

Crackers: The Black Meds share turf with the Crackers and have a very close relationship with them, often trading services and favors.

Jacks: If there is any homeless group that the Black Meds do not like it is Jacks because Jacks sometimes give medical advice and even attempt medical procedures, usually with no real medical knowledge.

Indies: Almost all Indies pay for medical insurance which gives them faster and better medical care than the Black Meds can. Most Indies will find some occasion to hire or buy things from the other street families, but rarely ever deal with Black Meds. Some Indies don't even know that Black Meds exist. The Purists know that there are a bunch of homeless doctors and many have nightmares of a dirty homeless person cutting them open.

Traders: Most Black Meds have a strong relationship with a black market trader who refers clients to the Black Med. Both the Black Med and the Trader find this an advantageous relationship.

Volunteers: Volunteers also provide basic medical services for street people, often with a vastly different style from the Black Meds. Volunteers usually see only the mistakes that the Black Meds have made, or cases where the patient never went to a Black Med treatment. Volunteers rarely hear about the cases that Black Meds treated successfully and so few believe that there is quality medical care available on the streets. There are sometimes clashes when a street person is begging to be taken to the Black Meds while a Volunteer is trying to arrange for an ambulance to pick them up.

Needle Punks: Black Meds sometimes buy drugs from Needle Punks. When they have clients who can afford it, the Black Meds sometimes even write prescriptions and send people to the Needle Punks as if the Black Meds were doctors and the Needle Punks were pharmacists. The Needle Punks, on the other hand, rarely ever need anything from Black Meds (their medical problems are very different from what the Black Meds know how to deal with) and don't often think of the Black Meds.

Wells: When Wells go to get illegal implants, they often go to state healthcare doctors who take bribes to do illegal surgeries, but when they can not find a doctor or can not afford the bribes, they often go to Black Meds. The Well groups who get the most implants, the Animalists, Freaks, Risen and Freelancers, are common visitors to the Black Meds.

Goods: Of all the Wells, it is the Goods who are most familiar with the many varied services of the Black Meds. Goods often need to call in Black Meds to help when a homeless client is suffering from an OD, withdrawals or other medical problems relating to drug use.

Military Style- When Black Meds fight, which is rare, they tend to rush in, slash at enemies in places which will incapacitate them, then immediately run away. They grab their wounded as they run, scattering, hiding and providing medical care for their wounded. When the wounded are either patched up and ready to fight again, or stabilized and put in a safe place, the Black Meds meet at a pre-arranged spot to plan their next strike. Although they are poor fighters and have little strategy, the Black Meds' quick response to injuries means that they suffer fewer fatalities in a battle than other groups.

Than Death

The Black Med's biggest weakness is their insistence on taking all of their wounded with them when they retreat, which can severely slow them down. They also depend on being able to find safe hiding places nearby where they can treat their wounded. This is no problem when they are fighting in the Bowery, but when fighting elsewhere they often have to depend on street people seeing them and guiding them to hiding places.

In one famous battle with the Math Addicts, the Black Meds fought with the Math Addicts until several of the Math Addicts were badly wounded. Even as the battle raged, Black Med elders formed a truce with the Math Addicts: if the Math Addicts would cease their aggression, the Black Meds would treat the Math Addict wounded. Although proud of this victory, most Black Meds assume that other enemies would not be as rational or trusting.

Typical Weapon- A scalpel with a Drake poison smudged on it is a common weapon.

Turf- Almost all of the Black Meds live in the Bowery. Those who don't are close enough that they can flee to the Bowery in times of danger. The Bowery is in the Southeast corner of downtown, hugging the sunken city. The part of the Bowery that the Black Meds live in is bordered on the North by Houston street and on the South by the ruins of the Brooklyn bridge. In the late 1800s, the Bowery was a bustling theater district. In the beginning of the 20th century commerce moved out and the Bowery became a run down skid row, home to hundreds of flophouses. It stayed mostly a skid row, despite a few minor periods of gentrification in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Today the Bowery is the most run down

part of town with the most abandoned buildings. The few surviving commercial enterprises in the Bowery are cheap residential hotels and liquor stores. Since there is no commerce here, the city government has no incentive to keep street lights running or keep the roads repaired, and the result is something that looks like a post-apocalyptic city. The Bowery has the city's highest concentration of homeless people. The Black Meds and Crackers share the area, living interspersed with each other and other street people. Most Black Meds live inside old abandoned hotels. Inside the Bowery, the Black Meds live interspersed with Crackers and other street people. Most live in abandoned hotels scattered throughout the turf.

Distinguishing Features- Black Meds often wear a red cross on their clothing, usually made from scraps of red cloth. Their clothing is often covered with many old blood-stains. Black Meds can sometimes be recognized by the cleanliness of their hands. The Black Meds wear simple clothing and hairstyles with nothing hanging down that might accidentally get in to a wound.

Symbols- Black Meds paint red crosses on the buildings where they live so that people know where to go when they are seeking medical care. They occasionally even make crosses out of bloody bandages.

Slang

Aunt Mary: n., a way to call for help by an elder without alarming a patient (e.g. "get Aunt Mary" means "get anyone you can as fast as you can.")

Bleed: n. any ruptured blood vessel with blood flowing from it.



Circling: v., short for “circling the drain” – about to die.

Gomer: n., a person who does not need or wouldn’t benefit from treatment.

Jennie: n., a female patient seeking gynecological treatment.

Pincushion: n., a patient with multiple stab wounds.

Black Med Combat- This combat skill represents a form of combat that has been made possible by the Black Med’s familiarity with anatomy and with cutting human flesh. To learn this skill, corpses are tied to posts and young black meds slash at them. Elder black meds give feedback on each slash, telling what it would have done to a live person. Black Med combat focuses on cutting the body in places which are easy to hit, not usually protected by armor, but will incapacitate an enemy. Gives the following plusses (with an additional +4 per level above the first) to the following combat actions with scalpels, razor blades or very sharp knives only:

+4 to Crippling Attack

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack

+0 to Blood Strike (Special Maneuver, INL+AGY vs. 30, does damage as per a normal strike but the cut continues to bleed: ½ BLD damage per round for 6 rounds or until the injury is tourniqueted).

Skills

Free Skills: Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Herbal Medicine (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 4, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Black Med Combat costs 5 skill points per level.

Income- \$250 +\$17/wk.

Special Equipment- Free First Aid Kit: Black Med. PC can purchase medicinal herbs at half their normal price.

Suggested Skills- Acupuncture, Bomb Disarming, Diagnosis, Emergency Medicine, Herbal Medicine, Hypnosis, Gardening, Needles, Pharmacology, Physical Therapy, Running, Surgery.

Suggested Equipment- Alcohol, Auto-Blood Test, Dust Mask, Hip Flask, Latex Gloves, Syringes and all the herbal medicines (p.89).

Suggested Reading- Death Borgs, Disease, Implants.

Crackers

In Brief- Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, practical, intelligent with many technical skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cruel, arrogant, cynical, braggarts. Vandals and blackmailers.

Other Names- Street Hackers, Homeless Hackers, Paycomputer Crackers, Shoulder Surfers.

Origin- Hacking gained popularity in the 1980s when dial-up bulletin boards put together teenagers with a desire to explore the computer systems owned by others. Hacking quickly became a sophisticated subculture, which became increasingly feared as computers and computer networks became a bigger part of people’s lives. Although most hackers were teenagers concerned with exploring and going where they weren’t supposed to, criminals soon learned many of their techniques. In New York, for example, criminals would hang around payphones and use stolen calling card numbers to give people unlimited calls to foreign countries for only a few dollars. During this period, hackers would often create the techniques and those techniques would slowly filter down to the underworld.

The degree to which computers were important to people’s lives (and thus the degree to which computer hackers were feared) increased steadily in the late 20th and early 21st century, peaking in the 2030s. As internet connections became cheaper, more homeless people got on the internet and used it to communicate and seek means of survival. Ubiquitous wireless networks let homeless people (who knew how hack) get on to the internet from any part of any urban area. Homeless people remained very well connected until the 2040s, when population growth and global economic crises caused a terrible internet slowdown. The internet slowdown made much of the technology of the 2030s unusable and most homeless people forgot about the internet.

The internet itself was destroyed by terrorist bombing around the globe in 2050. It was not restored until 2060, after the Freedom Wars. There was a short lived economic boom in the city as techs were needed to route new fiber optic lines (or salvage old ones) and to setup new computer systems using the new open-source operating systems released by the restoration committee. In the years after the Freedom Wars, thousands were employed as techs in the city. Then the gated community movement started achieving goals and people started leaving the city to go live in gated communities. The bottom dropped out of the city economy and many of the techs that had helped rebuild the city found themselves homeless. These homeless people found they could gain access to the internet by hacking paycomputers, and they soon taught these skills to other homeless people. Hacking gave some homeless families an edge and insured their growth and prosperity.

The most skilled homeless hackers quickly got to know each other and most became friends, sharing knowledge and tips. As the hackers became older and became the elders of large families of hackers, they found utility in joining the families together for mutual self-protection. By 2075, all of the city’s major hacking families had joined together in to one large group, supporting each other, known as the Crackers.

Timeline

1982- Internet begins.

2040s- Internet slowdown, tech criminals steal tech from corps and experiment on themselves.

2050- Freedom Wars begin, internet destroyed.

2060- Internet restored.

2061-2065- Massive exodus from the city.

2075- Last cracker family moves to the Bowery.

Becoming- Elder siblings are forced to take younger siblings with them on hacking jobs so that the younger siblings can watch and learn the trade. Young kids are given old pieces of equipment and encouraged to play with them and learn as much as possible. By the time Crackers are ten or eleven, they are allowed to go out in to the city in

small groups to hack payphones in order to get change. By the time they are fifteen, Crackers are expected to start doing more sophisticated hacking jobs and to make enough money to support not only themselves but also their families.

At level one, adventure one, a Cracker is part of a small cabal of hackers their own age who travel around making money for the family by hacking.

Lifestyle- Most Crackers go for the quick and easy score. Payphones and paycomputers are the biggest targets for Crackers. Sometimes they rig the machines to get change out of them. Other Crackers hack the machines so they can get free service, then they sell unlimited free service to passers-by at a low cost. They shoulder surf at pay computers, getting people's logins to pay-for-use sites and selling them to other people. They steal parts from broken pay computers and salvage parts from dumpsters to make cheap computers that they sell to Wells.

Crackers can also be seen with tiny homemade computers hooked up to network router boxes on the streets. They sabotage the internet lines going in to buildings then offer to fix the problem for a few bucks. They tap network lines, recording phone conversations and blackmailing callers.

Other ways Crackers make quick cash are: They extort small business owners with threats of denial of service attacks on their public servers. They peddle cracked software and illegally copied porn on street corners. They hire themselves out to help thieves defeat security systems. They forge their own barcodes using cheap printers (or sometimes even by hand). These barcodes code for cheap products, and they take them in to stores and stick them on expensive products. If the clerk doesn't notice, a Cracker can pay a couple of bucks for hundreds of dollars worth of stuff which they can use or sell.

There are also the "big-time" hacking jobs which most people associate with hackers. Most Crackers do not generally live on big-time hacking jobs. Also, they require quite a large investment of time and money before any profit is seen, whereas most crackers need money right away. Finally, a hacker's ability to get in to a system is as much a matter of luck as it is skill, and street people don't like to risk their time, money on effort on anything that is not a sure thing.

It is usually the best, the most skilled and the most wealthy Crackers who attempt "big-time" jobs. Sometimes they are paid to get in and do a specific thing on a computer or network (steal a particular piece of data, change a particular network, or bring a particular system down). Other times, they hack in to a system hoping to find data they can sell. Sometimes they are trying to push money in to a bank account of theirs. Whatever the specific goal, big hacking jobs are the result of weeks of research and

"leg-work" and no matter how much work Crackers put in to a job they might not get in.

Social Structure- Younger Crackers, especially those who have not yet started families, typically form themselves in to cabals. Cabals are groups of 4 to 6 Crackers who work together whenever they find a big hacking job to do. Childhood playmates often grow up to be Cabal members, and lovers and siblings are often in the same cabal with each other. People tend to be in Cabals with Crackers of similar skill levels. Cabals usually dissolve when Crackers start raising families and the extended family becomes a more important grouping.

The Crackers are not as closely knit as the other street people families. The Crackers are not all connected

by blood or marriage, and Cracker households feel less familial obligation towards each other. An elder from one family has little authority over Crackers from another family. On the other hand, the Crackers are very well connected via the internet and the Cracker elders are in constant communication with each other. When some Cracker family has a need, all the other Crackers know about it and there will almost always be some Cracker elder willing to volunteer the services of a child or grandchild to help out.

Advancement- Most Crackers never become "big time" hackers. They practice the basic scams the family makes its money on. They become street-savvy, wise and respected members of the community without ever breaking in to some corporate server. A few cabals will make it big, however, making enough money to invest in better equipment and giving them enough free time to attempt big jobs. To stay on top, Cabals have to be on the internet nearly every waking hour, keeping up with every little development in the world of operating systems and computer networks. When cabals do make it big time it is usually only for a few years. After a few years, they start having children and forming families and they can no longer stay cutting edge. Instead, they lapse back in to scrounging change from payphones and peddling pirated data on street corners.

Cracker elders are a powerful resource for the Cracker community because they are a wealth of hoarded data. Most of this data isn't about the latest security holes or network protocols, it is about people. Elders have spent decades hoarding data, often with highly eccentric filing systems which only they know how to use. When a young Cracker wants to know about the internal structure of a company (so they can call up and pretend to be an employee), or when a Cracker stole some piece of data and doesn't know who to sell it to and how much it is worth, or when a Cracker needs info about the habits of a network security admin, they go to their elders. By hoarding secret data that has been stolen over the decades, Crackers often know quite a lot of the city's secrets.



Population- There are about 1,100 Crackers. About 330 (30%) are adolescents and teenagers who group together in Cabals, making money for their families. About 385 (35%) are adult Crackers who have started families and spend as much time keeping a household going as they do messing with tech. About 165 (15%) are grandparents and great-grandparents who do little hacking but preside over a hoard of information and contacts. At any given time only about 55 (5%) of Crackers are attempting "big-time" hacking jobs.

External Relations- To most people in the city, Crackers are blackmailers and some even think of them as "computer terrorists." Most people only hear about Crackers when Crackers destroy some service those people are using (or are falsely accused of destroying the service). Of all the Street People, Crackers are the best able to make their feelings known to the rest of the world, including their feelings of alienation and hatred for the society that condemned them to a life on the streets. Most unborn are born homeless and don't know anything other than what it is like to be homeless, but the Crackers make a living understanding and infiltrating the world of the rich and powerful. They quickly learn that those with money and power seldom deserve it, and many Crackers end up speaking with a spite towards the comfortable that puts people (especially those old enough to remember the Freedom Wars) on edge. People know that a Cracker can easily mess up their lives in ways that they don't know how to defend from, and that scares people.

Black Meds: The Crackers have a very strong relationship with the Black Meds: they both live in the Bowery together, often neighbors and occasionally roommates. There is quite a lot of intermarriage and mixed households. Crackers and Black Med households often trade services. Politically, though, the Black Meds distance themselves from the Crackers. Crackers get in to a lot of trouble as they steal, invade and blackmail, and the Black Meds don't want to be asked to answer for the crimes of Crackers.

Street People: Crackers have very good relations with other Street People. The Street People, who don't depend on information systems (such as bank accounts) to survive, have nothing to fear from the Crackers. Instead the Crackers give Street People access to information and worldwide communication that they would not otherwise have. Some street people have never been on the internet except using paycomputers hacked by some Cracker (with a Cracker helping them to navigate the net). Crackers often work together with other Street People, especially with thieves, who get them in to places the Crackers can not get via networks alone.

Traders: Cracker elders in particular spend a lot of time creating and maintaining contacts with black market Traders. Traders come to Crackers when someone needs a hacker for hire, and Crackers come to Traders when they need to sell some piece of data they stole off a system.

Arcadians and Technophiles: These two Indie groups often engage in computer hacking, but their reasons are vastly different from those of the Crackers. The Arcadians do it to gain an edge over other people and the Technophiles do it out of passion for technology. Both see the methods of the Crackers as crude and destructive, and they sometimes alert system managers to the presence of Crackers, creating bad blood.

Sat Jumpers- Sat Jumpers would be a great asset to the Crackers if they weren't too fixated on loyalty to their jobs to take a good bribe. Crackers often spend time

seeking out the rare Sat jumpers who will take some cash in order to give up a password or insert a piece of code in to a satellite. Most Sat Jumpers refuse to take bribes, and do so with an obvious distaste that pisses off most Crackers.

Night Walkers and Y1s: These Indies depend on the internet for their livelihood and often run afoul of the Crackers. Knowing how desperately they need their internet connections, Night Walkers and Y1s are common victims of the "I heard your internet connection is down, I can fix it for \$20" ploy. Unlike VR Addicts, who are usually too naive to know that they are being had, Y1s and Night Walkers often figure out the extortion and try to get back at the Crackers.

Law Enforcement: Crackers seldom gain the attention of the Night Shift, who have few computer skills and are too busy worrying about serial killers and drug gangs to think about petty computer crimes. Night Shift often have an attitude towards Crackers of "I'd kick your ass if I knew what it was you were doing." Occasionally, when some city government site is being hacked and network administrators track down the Crackers, the Night Shift are asked to go grab the offenders. Sometimes the FBI become involved, though usually by the time they can make it to the city the Crackers are done and gone. The Crackers only really worry about corporate security forces, who let very little stand in the way of keeping their multi-billion dollar systems secure. When corps get a physical location on Crackers they may send city security guards (usually well Freelancers) or they may send elite corporate operatives. The corps try to catch the Crackers in the act, and use an army of corporate attorneys to put the Crackers in prison for life. Crackers doing big-time jobs live in fear of armies of corporate employees tracking them down.

Military Style- The Crackers are fairly unsophisticated in military matters. When forced to battle, they stand side by side to form a wall or circle and advance on the enemy, stabbing with their screwdrivers or whatever weapons they have.

Typical Weapon- A sharpened screwdriver.

Turf- Crackers live scattered throughout the area known as the Bowery, which they share with the Black Meds and many non-family street people and addicts. The Bowery is bordered by Houston street on the North and the Manhattan base of the Brooklyn Bridge on the South. The Bowery is famous as a skid row and has the highest concentration of street people of any place in the city. See the Turf section of the Black Meds for more info.

Distinguishing Features- Crackers look mostly like other street people: they wear scrounged clothing, usually in multiple layers. They tend towards black clothing when they have a choice and many wear sunglasses. On occasion, Crackers dress up as if they are field techs (tool belts, polo-shirts with company logos, fluorescent safety vests) so they can hack in to payphones and network lines with less chance of getting caught.

Symbols- A screwdriver is a common symbol for Crackers.

Slang

Big Time: adj., 1. attempting to hack in to an important computer system to make money, 2. cabals who attempt such jobs regularly.

Cabal: n., A small group of hackers who regularly work together whenever they find a big job.

Cracked: adj., An illegally copied piece of software or data with the copy protection software removed.

Owned: adj., hacked in to and controlled by a hacker.

Pirated: adj., Illegally copied software or data.

Leg Work: n., Any part of preparing for a hacking job that is done in person (e.g. raiding dumpsters, eavesdropping on network security personnel in their after-work hangouts, etc.)

Skills

Free Skills: Operating Systems (1), Payphones (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 5, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 5, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$250 +\$15/wk.

Special Equipment- \$5000 in pirated data (including software, information and the installation coding for mental programs).

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Copy Protection, Corporations, Cryptography, Data Pirating, Denial of Service, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Linework, Lock Picking, Money, Network Protocols, System Crashing, System Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Code Breaker: Latest, Computer Repair Tools: Portable, Crowbar, Data Cards, Denial of Service Program, Port Scanner, Programmer's Suite, Script Kiddie Suite, Trojan: Spy.

Suggested Reading- Corporations, Hacking (p.61), Hidden, Information Technology, Some Computer Systems (p.223).

Drakes

In Brief- Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest traders if treated well, efficient killers if pushed.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, dangerous, reckless, cowards, unethical assassins.

Other Names- Poisoners, Poison Sellers, Toxics.

Origin- In the chaos and disasters of the 2040s, many people found themselves on the streets of the city alone, homeless, separated from their friends and family, often from their culture and homeland. One lone immigrant on the streets was Jacob Drake. As early as 2047 he was supporting himself by making and selling poisons. He recognized poisonous weeds growing in cracks in the pavement and empty lots, he gathered them, ground them up, and made highly concentrated tinctures. Jacob Drake was also known to poison enemies. By the standards of the city's homeless people, Jacob Drake was very successful. He made enough money to support himself and eventually a common-law wife and several children. His wife and children joined him in the business.

The Freedom Wars disrupted almost everything in the city, but not the Drake's business. When the Freedom Army took control of the city, they tried to disarm its populous. They swept the city for guns with high-tech sensors. People were desperate for some of self-defense and they paid or traded whatever they could for potent poisons they could stick on the end of a knife. The Drakes even sold to some of the rebels fighting the Freedom Army.

Jacob Drake died shortly after the end of the Freedom Wars. His wife and children carried on with the family business, and they learned more sources of poison and what they were good for. They followed one practice that Jacob Drake had taught them: to always take very tiny bits of the poisons they made so that they would have some partial immunity should they accidentally poison themselves. The rule was to start with a dosage that is certain to be safe, then take more and more until the person gets sick. The Drakes discovered one poison, which they made from a fungus, which had a massive potential for immunity. Drakes taking the poison had to take more and more to get sick. After months of taking the poison, they found that they could take doses of the poison that would kill an ordinary person. After years of taking

the poison, one young Drake took as much as he could stand and fed some of his blood to a rat, killing it. The Drakes had discovered a way to make their blood, saliva and even their breath poisonous to others.

As people fled the city to live in gated communities and corporate living centers, the city became more and more lawless. The Drakes were able to start operating out in the open. Their name had been well-known among the city's homeless community for years, but now non-homeless people in the city began to hear about the Drakes and came to buy poisons from them. The Drake family grew very rapidly: a young Drake would marry another homeless person and teach everyone in the spouse's family how to manufacture and sell poisons.

Drakes are always searching for new poisons they can manufacture cheaply. Two years ago, one Drake read an article on the internet about a plastic that, when burned, created a sort of psychic "static" capable of disrupting the use of psychic skills. A group of the Drakes learned how to scrounge this plastic from trash heaps and burn it in the furnace of their buildings. Smearing themselves with the ash, these Drakes could sabotage psychics just by being present. With growing numbers, a healthy trade in poisons, and now the ability to take on psychics, Drakes became one of the most powerful street families in the city.

In 2079. The Sat Jumpers, an Indie group (who was then trying to act like a gang) had gotten in a war with the Drug Lords and was about to be destroyed. The leader of the Sat Jumpers paid \$75,000 (\$75 for every Drake) to help them fight the Drug Lords. The Drakes joined the fray, using the same tactics they used in their own self-defense, and were able to make the Drug Lords back off with very few Drake casualties.

Timeline

2040- Jacob Drake sells poisons in the city.

2042- Jacob Drake marries Eun Hoang

2050- Freedom army invasion of the city.

2055- Last Freedom army soldiers flee the city.

2055- 5 members of Drake family.

2057- Jacob Drake dies.

2060- Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride (Dioxyl-BVC) invented.

2061- Drakes start taking fungus poison.

2063- 59 member of Drake family.

2065- Drakes discover they can make their blood poisonous.

2060- 703 members of the Drake family.

2078- Scientists discover psychic disrupting properties of Dioxyl-BVC ash.

2078- Tammy Drake reads about Dioxyl-BVC ash.

2079- Drakes hired by Sat Jumpers to fight Drug Lords.

2079- Eun Drake dies.

Becoming- Women are not allowed to ingest or work with poisons while pregnant or while breast-feeding. After being born, Drake babies are started on tiny doses of Drake poisons. The doses are slowly increased (with each step up causing short periods of illness). At around five, young Drakes are taught to defend themselves against non-Drakes by finding pieces of broken glass (which can be found nearly everywhere in the city), putting poison on them and stabbing enemies. Young Drakes are taught to cut themselves and use their own blood as poison if they do not have anything else. It is hard, but most young Drakes eventually learn to cut themselves. Drake children keep small doses of the Drake fungus poison, but otherwise they are not allowed to prepare or handle Drake poisons (because they might accidentally poison themselves). They are often asked to work in the fields however: weeding, watering and harvesting plants.

At around twelve, young Drakes begin to be instructed on how to handle poisons carefully. They watch their parents or older siblings make poisons, and eventually they are allowed to do it themselves. They are taught the effects and dosages of each poison and are eventually allowed to sell.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is considered old enough to manufacture and sell poisons and to go out on the streets without an escort.

Drake Ethics

Many people in the city think that by selling murder weapons, Drakes are responsible (in part) for the murder of innocent people. The Night Shift, in particular, would like to hold Drakes responsible for every murder committed using Drake poisons.

The Drakes do not see their acts as unethical. They know that innocent people are sometimes killed by their poisons, but they also know that innocent people are sometimes helped. The Drakes see poison as a great equalizer, letting those too poor to afford fancy weapons or too weak to use them stand on equal footing with the rich and strong. The Drakes speak proudly of battered wives who have poisoned their husbands, or disabled street people who fended off whole pounder gangs with the threat of a poisoned blade. Often the threat or even the mere possibility that someone will use poisons against an exploiter is enough to prevent that exploitation. Drakes will sometimes give special deals to those they suspect are being abused and exploited.

Although they readily admit that much evil is done with their poisons, they feel that the city is, overall, a better place for their presence

Lifestyle- The Drakes sell a product that is not needed often, but when it is needed it is very valuable to the people buying it. Fortunately, the cost of producing poisons is not high for the Drakes: they grow most of what they need and, with more than a thousand Drakes, labor is plentiful. If a Drake can sell one dose of poison in a day it is considered a good day. At any time of day, Drakes can be seen hanging around on street corners in Drake territory and in other parts of the city, waiting to sell. They carry tiny packages of poison hidden in their clothing. People come from all over the city (and occasionally from outside the city) and pay cash to get a tiny package of poison. The buyer rarely knows what poison they want, they simply explain what they want it to do. They may say, for instance "I want something I can slip in someone's food that they can't taste" or "I want something I can put on my knife so that anyone I cut will die." The price is haggled for, and the Drakes usually get \$20 to \$30 from poorer looking clients several hundred from richer looking clients. The customers don't just buy poison: they buy advice on exactly how to use the poison, exactly what the effect will be, and sometimes even what to do if the client accidentally poisons himself or herself.

Drakes try to avoid hearing anything which would tell them how the poison will be used. As long as they don't know what will be done with the poison, they can stay ethically neutral. If they find out what a poison will be used for (e.g. a client blurts out that he wants to kill his mother) then the Drake feels morally responsible for what is done with the poison.



The Drakes have seven basic poisons that they create and sell on a regular basis. These are the poisons that they know they can get the ingredients for, at little or no cost, year after year. The most important and widely produced poison is that which Drakes make from juice squeezed from a fungus. The Drakes do not know the scientific name of the fungus, and they do not let non-Drakes see it. The Drakes make thousands of doses of this poison every day, most of which they consume themselves to keep their blood toxic. In order to create this fungus, they have huge grow boxes in dozens of abandoned houses, with hundreds of hours of labor per day put in to feeding them, keeping them warm, harvesting them, then compressing and distilling the juices.

The Drakes also collect other non-standard poisons, in case they run in to a client with a very special need. These may be poisons that they made, stole or traded for. The average elder might have 20 to 50 different poisons and will know the exact effects and dosages of each. The Drakes rarely have a client who needs these exotic poisons, but when they do they typically charge hundreds of dollars.

Young Drakes are expected to be assassins in times of war. Instead of defending themselves in face-to-face battles, the Drakes sneak around enemy territory, stabbing people in the back and poisoning the food of enemies. Sometimes people will come to the Drakes looking to hire them as assassins. Sometimes if the "cause" is good enough (e.g. killing the leader of an especially violent pounder gang), the Drake elders will endorse the project. They are wary of getting in to a war with a superior military force and will often charge money for their services in proportion to the might of the enemy.

There are some Drakes, however, who will take any assassination job, no matter how unethical. These Drakes must operate in secret or face ostracism. They typically work through black market traders, never meeting their clients.

Sometimes Drakes are paid to consult about poisons. When someone in the city is murdered by poison, Drakes are often paid to look at the body and figure out what poison was used. The information a Drake gives (how the poison was administered, how long it would have taken) is sometimes vital in solving murder mysteries.

Social Structure- The core unit of the Drakes is a household. A household is an extended family living and working together in an abandoned building. Within the household, jobs are divided up according to skill and ability, and the majority of teens and young adults are given the job of going out and selling poisons. The household is typically led by the eldest people in the household, even though these people may not have the most knowledge of Drake poisons. In some households there are two leaders: one controls the workings of the household and relationships between household members, the other leader controls the household's dealings with other households and the outside world.

Drake households are more than just neighbors – they are connected by blood or marriage to every other household. Households are provide help to each other whenever it is needed and to support the family as a whole.

There are a large number of elders in the Drake family, and most of them are the parents and grandparents of people who married in to the family. These elders are respected for their wisdom and knowledge. Though living long lives has taught them how to run a household and survive

A Typical Drake Household

The Yanna and Marcellus Drake household lives in a small abandoned townhouse, with poisonous fungi growing in the basement, and poisonous weeds growing in the small back yard. The eldest members are Yanna and Marcellus, both in their sixties, who run the household. Living with them is Uncle Paul, Yanna's younger brother. Three of Yanna and Marcellus' five children live with them, along with their three spouses and five grandchildren. The grandchildren range in age from 2 to 12. Yanna and Marcellus' oldest son, Kurro, is married to Lisa Drake, a granddaughter of Jacob Drake, who lives in their house. When she married Kurro eight years ago, she taught the family how to create and sell poisons, thus turning them in to Drakes. Pinky Drake, the ex-boyfriend of Yanna and Marcellus' dead daughter, sleeps in the house most nights and helps out whenever he can.

on the streets, they haven't been making and selling Drake poisons for very long. The Drakes who have the most experience being Drakes are the five children of Jacob and Eun Drake (aged 30 to 38). Despite their youth, these five are considered respected elders. They are each the head of a household and every Drake owes them. When a Drake household isn't pulling its weight, the children of Jacob talk to them, sometimes even threaten to kick them out of the family.

Jacob Drake's wife, Eun Drake, married again after Jacob died. Many of Jacob Drake's children disliked Eun's new husband and disliked their half-brothers and sisters. Tammy Drake, who discovered dioxyl ash, is a daughter of Eun Drake and her new husband. Tammy trained her family in gathering dioxyl-plastic, and the furnace that she burned the plastic in was in her family building. The dioxyl burning Drakes have, thus, always thought of themselves as slightly separate from the other Drakes. The majority of Drakes aren't related by blood to Jacob or Eun, and they don't care one way or another. It is the children of Jacob who view the dioxyl-Drakes with a bit of suspicion and perhaps dislike. Despite this, the dioxyl-Drakes always cooperate in the livelihood and the self-defense of the Drakes, and the Drakes have always protected the dioxyl-Drakes as they would any other Drake.

Advancement- The most common way to advance within the Drakes is to gain experience, start a family, move out and found a household. Anyone who becomes well known as accomplished in some skill (e.g. as an accomplished warrior, an accomplished diplomat) will often be called upon for favors and will gain many owed favors in turn.

Population- There are about 1000 Drakes, only about 25 are actually descended from Jacob Drake, the founder of the family. About 200 are the family Tammy Drake and manufacture dioxyl ash.

External Relations- The attitude of most indie and well groups towards the Drakes is dislike, distaste and distrust tempered by a tolerance. The tolerance comes from need: Indies and wells seldom need poison, but when they do they usually go to Drakes. Indies and wells recognize that poison is an important type of self-defense, though they often fear and dislike the Drakes' methods. The gangs that rely on military and personal strength are the most critical of the Drakes because they know that poison is a sort of equalizer, the perfect weapon for the physically weak. The Animalists, Humankalorie, Hummingbirds, Roofers, Risen and Skin Borgs depend on might rather than sneak attacks. They are the most critical of the Drakes, calling them cowardly assassins. Even members of these groups visit the Drakes occasionally.

Purists: The Purists have an incredible distaste for the Drakes. To the Purists, the idea of poisoning oneself is tantamount to spiritual suicide. The Purists avoid the Drakes whenever possible. For their part, the Drakes know they would have an incredibly hard time poisoning a Purist and so they try to avoid conflicts.

Street People: Street People are more respectful of the Drakes. One reason is because street people are traditionally apowerless and depend on poisons for self-defense. Another reason is because they realize the value of doing anything, even morally questionable activities, to make money to take care of one's family.

Night Shift: The Night Shift almost never buy poisons from the Drakes. They investigate murders committed with Drake poisons and hold the Drakes responsible for all of them. The Night Shift like to harass Drakes whenever they can, and only the danger of getting up-close to a Drake keeps them from being more trouble to Drakes.

Psychic Gangs: The dioxyl-Drakes, with their psychic-disrupting ash, are thorns in the sides of the psychic gangs (Insomniacs, Bleeders, Immortals and Tea Drinkers). The Drakes don't often pick fights with these gangs (like other street families, they don't have time to start wars) but the dioxyl-Drakes do hire themselves out as mercenaries and bodyguards to other groups who are fighting with psychics. The Bleeders have an additional reason to dislike the Drakes: the Drake's poisonous blood makes it dangerous for the Bleeders to do anything to them.

Military Style- Drakes always prefer assassinating enemies to fighting them in outright battles. In times of war, hundreds of Drakes may prowl through enemy territory, looking for lone enemies they can hit from behind with an instant poison, or watching to see where enemies live so they can break in to their homes later and poison their food. When Drakes are confronted by an actual battle they cluster together, creating a small zone of flying shards of glass that most enemies are afraid to come near. If any of their members are wounded, they are dragged to the center of the cluster. If any Drakes are killed, they are picked up and used as shields. The cluster of Drakes will try to move away from the enemy as quickly as they can. The target is usually an alley, where a few brave Drakes can hold off the enemies while the rest run away.

Typical Weapon- Shards of glass coated with poison. The glass is either held in one's hand, thrown, or launched from a home-made slingshot.

Turf- The Drakes occupy a small piece of turf in what used to be called the East Village, directly North of the Bowery. This part of town was a hip home to artists and political radicals during the 1960s, but drugs and crime turned it in to a skid row almost as bad as the Bowery. Drake turf is South of 8th Street, North of Houston, East of 2nd Avenue and West of Avenue A. The only real landmark in Drake turf is the Orpheum Theatre, an old Yiddish playhouse turned off-Broadway theater, now abandoned. Directly East of Drake turf is St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, a very old (though oft rebuilt) church with one of the largest soup kitchens in the city.

Distinguishing Features- Many Drakes wear wide-brimmed hats. Most wear clothes with long sleeves that hide their hands (this helps them slip poisons in to things without being seen). A few wear clothing with pieces of broken glass glued to the outside of their clothing (this helps persuade people not to mess with them, especially when they are recognized as Drakes). Otherwise, they wear normal street people clothing: whatever they can scrounge from the trash or stitch together from the remains of old clothing.

Symbols- Specks or droplets spilling from a hand (with pinched fingers) are common graffiti symbols for Drakes. Perhaps because of this graffiti, pinched fingers pointing down have become a common hand-symbol for poison.

Slang

Children of Jacob: n., the direct descendents of Jacob Drake, who are the most persuasive elder in the family.

Dioxyl: n., (from Dioxyl-Butylene-Vinyl-Chloride), 1. the plastic that can be burned to create psychic disrupting ash, 2. the Drakes who create and use this ash.

Skills

Free Skills: Drake Poison Immunity (2), Drake Poisons (2)

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 24, PSY:S 28, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skills Drake Poisons and Drake Poison Immunity cost only 7 skill points per level.

Drake Poisons (Uses INL)- This is like the Poisons skill (p.126), except the emphasis is strongly on the poisons used by the Drakes, how they are made and what they do. There is some knowledge of non-Drake poisons, but it is sparse and there is little knowledge of the biological mechanisms of their action. The secrets of Drake poisons are guarded.

Easy (10): Recognize a Drake poison by sight.

Moderate (20): Make Drake Fungus Poison.

Hard (30): Recognize a Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.

Legendary (40): Recognize a non-Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.

Drake Poison Immunity (Uses END)- This skill represents the Drake practice of taking tiny doses of their own poisons in order to build up an immunity should they ever accidentally poison themselves. Note that some poisons are easy to build and immunity to, others are hard: Drake fungus poison is easy, Drake deleriant, knockout drops, pain juice and suicide poison are moderate and Drake blood and glass poisons are hard. This skill also works against non Drake poisons but at +10 difficulty.

Very Easy (5): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.

Easy (10): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.

Moderate (20): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Deleriant.

Hard (30): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Blood Poison.

Income- \$250 +\$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The PC has access to up to 5 doses of each Drake Poison and Blinding Powder (p.105) per week, 1 dose of Drake Dioxyl-BVC ash per week, and 20 doses per day of Drake Fungus Poison for personal ingestion. The PC can get much more poison if expecting to make a big sale (though will have to share the profits). The PC can pay a dioxyl-Drake to prepare a Dioxyl Ash Pipe (see p.123) for \$5 (or an equivalent IOU). PCs can buy Homemade Slingshots (FR 1 ft., MR 30 ft., do 1 bladed damage with a piece of sharp glass) for \$20.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Poisoned Bloodstream: (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC has gained a massive immunity to Drake fungus poison and takes daily doses. The doses the PC takes are thousands of times more than is necessary to kill a person, and enough can be found in their blood, tissues and bodily fluids at any given time to be deadly.

-Saliva or a few drops of blood put in something someone has ingested will have moderate effects (see 2x Effects) within 10 minutes.

-If something coated with the PC's blood pierces a person's skin, the person suffers from serious effects immediately (see 4x Effects).

-The particles of moisture coming up out of the lungs have enough poison in them that if the PC breathes directly in the face of someone who is inhaling, the victim will get a tiny dose of the poison (see 1x Effects) which takes effect nearly instantly (within 1 round).

-Unprotected sexual intercourse exposes the partner to toxins passing through mucous membranes (which are much more permeable than skin) so that the partner suffers from moderate effects (see 2x Effects).

-Any person or animal to consume large portions of the PC's blood and flesh will suffer immediate and powerful effects (see 8x Effects).

Grandchild of Jacob: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC is one of the grandchildren of Jacob Drake. Grandchildren are given slightly more respect, are believed to know a little more about Drake poisons (even if their knowledge is no better than other Drakes). Most importantly, one of the PC's parents is one of the most influential of the Drake elders, who have been Drakes longer than anyone alive and who have the most influence over what the family does.

Dioxyl: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 7 Bonus Points. Cannot be taken in conjunction with the Grandchildren of Jacob advantage. The PC belongs to the small group

Dioxyl Ash Pipe

This is a length of metal pipe, filled with dioxyl-BVC plastic and sealed, then put in to a furnace until it is red hot. The pipe is handled using thick welder's gloves. While still hot the pipe lets off powerful anti-psychoic static which disrupts psychoic skills over a wide range (as opposed to cold dioxyl ash which is only strong enough to work by touch). Within 10 ft. the ash gives -4 to all psychoic skill rolls, within 2 ft. it gives -10. Hitting someone with a dioxyl ash pipe does both blunt and burn damage and hitting them in the head (an aimed shot) can seriously disrupt someone's nervous system (especially psychoic systems). The pipe stays hot enough to burn for about half an hour.

Range: 1

Damage: 2 blunt, 1 burn (see p.56). Any time the pipe touches a person's head, that person suffers from dizziness (-7 to save vs. loss of balance) and faintness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 rounds and psychoic disruption (-15 to psychoic skill rolls) for 1 hour.

of Drakes that scavenge dioxyl plastic, burn it, use and sell the ash. The PC has access to 5 doses of Dioxyl-BVC ash per week and can make a Dioxyl Ash Pipe whenever he or she is heading in to battle with a psychoic. The PC also gains immunity to the disruptive effects of dioxyl ash (no dizziness or faintness) but the result is permanent densitization of the normal psychoic systems (any attempt by the PC to use a psychoic skill or by a psychoic to effect the PC is at -15 even when dioxyl ash is not present).

Suggested Skills- Gardening, Lock Picking, Knife Throwing, Prowling, Sleight of Hand, Street Fighting: Armed.

Suggested Equipment- Blowpipe, Lock Picks: Homemade, Knife: Kitchen, Poison Ring, Phonebook Glass Armor, Throwing Glass.

Suggested Reading- Assassins, Black Market, Drake Poisons (p.102).

Drake Poisons in Brief

See the p.102 of the equipment section for more details.

Drake Blood Poison: Made from: incubated blood, feces and disease samples. Used for: putting on a weapon to create horrifying infections. Effects: fever, paralysis, delirium.

Drake Deliriant Poison: Made from: extracts from weeds. Used for: brainwashing and torturing people. Effects: confusion, loss of willpower, hallucinations and delusions.

Drake Dioxyl-Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash: Made from: burned plastic. Used for: disrupting the abilities of psychics. Effects: Psychoic attempts are obscured by something like "static."

Drake Fungus Poison: Made from: juice from a fungus. Used for: killing quickly, keeping Drake blood toxic. Effects: Weakness, paralysis, heart failure.

Drake Glass Poison: Ground glass, plant based irritants and insect venom. Used for: killing with access to something a person will only touch (like a doorknob). Effects: first itching, then when the person scratches the itch enough that deadly poison enters the bloodstream: numbness, paralysis, permanent neurological damage.

Drake Knockout Drops: Made from: medicinal herbs and stolen pharmaceuticals. Used for: knocking people out. Effects: Unconsciousness, occasionally death.

Drake Pain Juice: Made from: hot peppers and herbs. Used for: torture, self-defense.. Effects: debilitating burning pain.

Drake Suicide Poison: Made from: Insecticide. Used for: painless deaths. Effects: Euphoria, numbness, sleepiness, heart failure.

Insomniacs

In Brief- Use a drug which gives psychoic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Favorable Stereotypes- Powerful psychics, highly aware, self-sacrificing, awesome self-control.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, self-hating, dangerous, intolerant, hate life, bizarre addictions.

Other Names- The Sleepless, Sleep Burners, Sibosiners, Sibos.

Origin- In 2072, researchers at a corporate pharmaceutical research lab thought they had discovered something they had been trying to find for a decade: a drug that would remove the need to sleep. Sibosin, the name given to the experimental drug by the marketing department, seemed to remove the need for sleep in primates with no side effects other than a slight irritability. Human tests showed

that not only did the drug decrease or eliminate the need to sleep, it also increased psychoic ability. The military rushed to sponsor more research. Two side effects derailed the high-hopes of the corporation. First, the irritability first seen in primates was much more pronounced in humans. Second, to the horror of the test subjects, too many doses in a row and the effect of the drug was permanent. The number of doses that would cause permanent insomnia was not stable between subjects: some could take the drug for thirty nights in a row without a permanent effect, others could take it for two nights and never be able to sleep again. Irritability in permanent insomniacs quickly turned in to a form of madness: constant awareness of their surroundings led to an annoyance that many subjects said was worse than physical pain. Although their environments could be changed, the insomniacs felt the same way about their own bodies, and they quickly turned to all manner of self-destructive habits and finally suicide.

Knowing that they could never get FDA approval for the drug, and fearing the terrible consequences if Sibosin should become an abused street drug, the military and the corporation attempted to destroy any information about the chemical structure of the drug or how to manufacture it. A test sample made it on to the black market, where it was passed around the community of illegal drug manufacturers (each paying hundreds of thousands to get a sample of the drug). The drug hit the streets through the black market traders (the Drug Lords saw no use for it, since it wasn't addictive) and there was a brief fascination with using it. That fascination was quickly soured: a number of horror stories circulated through the city of people who used the drug, became permanently unable to sleep, mutilated themselves and then killed themselves. Use of the drug waned and some Traders stopped carrying it.

There was a tiny cluster of street families in the city who thought of themselves as psychics. Unable to afford expensive electrochemical feedback machines, these street people had to resort to teacher-to-student training. Teacher to student training is an inefficient, unreliable and lengthy process. Most students who learn this way take years to learn even the most miniscule psychic skills. The psychic street families thus had barely any skill, but it was enough to give them a slight edge. They heard about Sibosin, how it increased people's psychic abilities, and they heard the horror stories about people going insane. Having led hard lives on the streets, they figured that as a community they could deal with a bit of insanity, and they figured it was better to be insane than dead. They pooled money and bought a large batch of Sibosin, waiting for more desperate times to use it. They did not have to wait long for desperate times (street people seldom do) and they started taking Sibosin en masse, knowing that there was a good chance that many of them would become permanent insomniacs. Two members of this small group became permanent insomniacs, but the use of the drug made the group powerful enough to pull themselves out of trouble.

Next time the group faced hard times, they dipped in to their stash of Sibosin again, and again and again. As more of their members became permanent insomniacs, they found out more about the nature of the madness. Some of their members succumbed to suicide, but even more learned to live with the madness, and to remain productive members of the community. The group came to depend on Sibosin more and more and to use it almost all the time. The group became known throughout the city as a powerful and dangerous group of psychics. The Insomniacs became one of the city's most successful street families and they grew quickly as many people married in to the group.

Timeline

- 2071- A group of small street families who dabble in psychic skills form a loose alliance of families.
- 2072- Sibosin invented.
- 2075- Human tests with Sibosin, side-effects discovered.
- 2075- Sibosin research ends.
- 2075- Sibosin hits the black market.
- 2076- The families purchase a large batch of Sibosin.
- 2076- Insomniacs first use of Sibosin.
- 2076- Two Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
- 2078- 50 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
- 2080- 250 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.

Becoming- Young Insomniacs are trained in psychic skills from an early age. The type of training requires a skilled psychic to spend many hours with a student, giving endless verbal feedback on what the students' psychic systems are doing. Children as young as seven are also allowed to imbibe powerful concoctions of caffeine, amphetamines and even maxin, to help prepare them for what using Sibosin will be like. No member of the family is forced to use sibosin, although almost all choose to. An Insomniac must be fifteen before they allowed to take sibosin (the elders keep all of the family's sibosin and decide who can have it). Even when they are allowed to take it, young people must be very careful: they can not take it more than three days in a row, except in the most dire emergencies. They will need to get much older and wiser before they are allowed to use Sibosin at their own discretion.

At level one, adventure one, a PC is still considered young by the family, and has only been using sibosin for a short period. It is possible that the PC has become permanently unable to sleep, but it is unlikely. The PC is only now starting to develop bad habits that will plague him or her in later years.

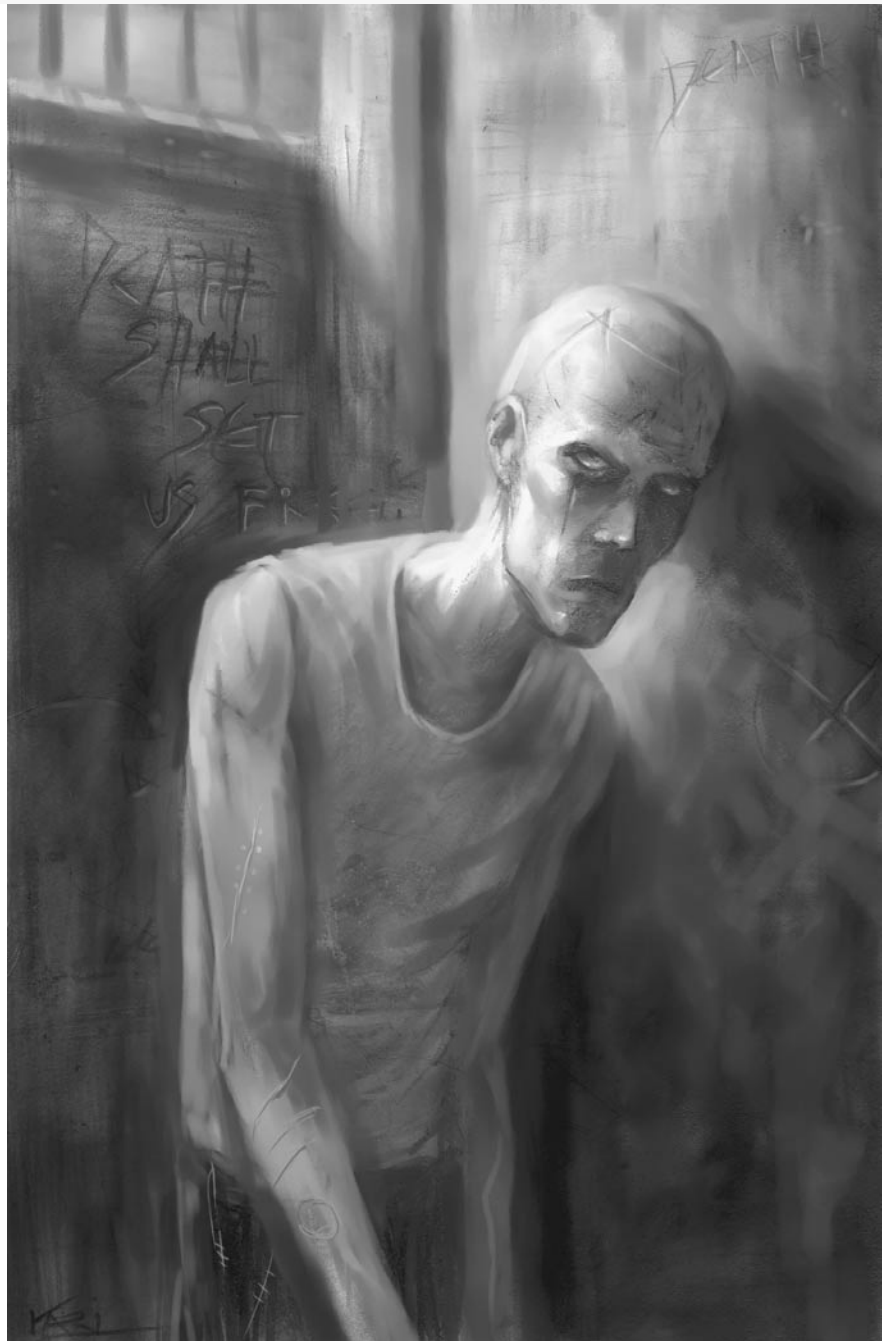
Lifestyle- Sibosin comes in a tiny yellow pill that will leave a horrible bitter aftertaste if it is not swallowed down quickly enough. The effect is immediate, though sometimes subtle. The drug does not amp one up: a user can be calm or tired, but not sleepy. Any sleepiness that the user has disappears immediately and doesn't come back. The other effect is that the user can not become inured to details. Say there is a crack in the wall, the sibosin user can not simply get used to it and forget it is there. They will notice the crack again and again every time they look at it, even if they have looked at it a million times already. The user will eventually become so sick of the crack it will be like torture and the Insomniac will want to destroy it or do something else so that he or she never has to look at it again. The longer the user stays awake, the worse this effect gets. Eventually they become aware of the sound and sensation of their own breathing, of their heart beating, of blinking, of food churning within their intestines, and even the feel of their own skin. It is like they are wearing a coat, made of some hot, sticky, slimy, unbearably uncomfortable material that they can not take off for even a second. For those with psychic skills, their raw power increases dramatically (skill and subtlety does not increase). It takes at least 24 hours without sleep for psychic power to increase by a significant level.

When someone stops taking sibosin, the constant awareness of their surroundings slowly fades, and the ability and need to sleep comes back a little at a time. Twelve hours without sibosin, and a person might be able to sleep a few hours, another day and they may be able to sleep five or six, another day and they can sleep through a full night. There is no "crash" like after coming down from amphetamines. Sleep simply comes whimpering back, like some kicked dog who comes back when it gets hunger overcomes its fear. Or sometimes not. Sibosin users never know when they stop using sibosin if the need for sleep will ever come back, if the irritable awareness will ever fade. For many, a simple yawn can be a cause for relief, and even weeping with joy. Every day, more and more Insomniacs find themselves unable to sleep.

Unlike some other families, who have been living the same way for generations, the Insomniacs are a family in the process of changing. Four years is the longest anyone in the family has gone without sleep. Nobody else that the Insomniacs know of has gone longer. Even if the first test subjects were still alive, they would only have been without sleep for five years. Nobody has any idea what might happen after ten years without sleep, or after twenty. Some Insomniacs believe that they will slowly grow more and more powerful as the years go on until they are more powerful than any psychic in recorded history. Others secretly hope that after many years without using sibosin, the ability to sleep will slowly return. This is perhaps the Insomniacs' only hope, since nobody in the world seems interested in finding a cure for insomnia (the government claims that Sibosin never made it on to the black market).

What's worse, Insomniacs have a growing annoyance with the sound of their own thoughts and their own states of consciousness. This can not be changed as easily as one's home or body can, and most drugs provide too short a solution. Non-Insomniac addicts can spend their days high on drugs and then pass out as they are coming down, but Insomniacs do not have that luxury. For every high they experience every low in excruciating detail. Many insomniacs become addicted to sniffing glue and self-asphyxiation for the brief feeling of dissociation from reality it gives them. Some Insomniacs pay a lot of money for drug cocktails (usually made by Needle Punks or Goods) which will knock them out in a way that resembles sleep. This is rarely a good solution: it is expensive and the drugs have annoying side effects.

If insomniacs hold incredibly still for long periods of time, they cease to feel their own bodies and the sense of uneasiness with their own bodies disappears. Many experienced Insomniacs who have been charred for a long time give up on the moving world and stay in a motionless state most of the day, using their impressive psychic powers to communicate and interact with their environment. These insomniacs often learn breath control, and exist in a constant state of near-hypoxia. These Insomniacs, called the "Stills" or "Non-Breathers" seldom leave Insomniac territory. They can be quite impressive to outsiders: their breath and pulse are hard to detect, making them seem dead, but their minds are powerful enough to make their will known without a blink.



Social Structure- Insomniacs are mostly free agents, searching the city for ways they can use their psychic skills to make money. They use the money they get to care for their younger siblings, children and other dependents. They also pay a small tribute to their elders. Whatever is left, they get to keep. Older insomniacs may assign a job to a younger member, but these assignments are considered favors rather than impositions.

Respect for elders is an unvarying rule. Younger Insomniacs don't have to obey the orders of elders, but they must listen quietly, answer any questions asked of them and call their elder "Ma'am" or "Sir." Any failure to show respect is taken as evidence that the young Insomniac has forgotten how much more powerful the elders are. The elders see nothing wrong with trying to cure this ignorance by taking control of the younger Insomniac's body and mind and making him or her feel complete helplessness. The "Stills" often demand that younger Insomniacs pay them respect by telling them everything that is happening throughout the city.

Sibosin has redefined age: a twenty year old who has been without sleep for five years may be considered the “elder” to a fifty year old who has only been using Sibosin for a few years and still sleeps the occasional nights.

Advancement- A regular user of sibosin will eventually lose his or her ability to sleep, it may take months or it may take years but it will happen. Some members of the family take little or no sibosin and care for the family in other non-psychic ways. These Insomniacs rarely gain much respect.

When a person becomes “charred” (permanently unable to sleep), the tortures of sibosin turn in to an inescapable prison. Some lose hope and kill themselves, but for most it is the commitment to their families that keeps them going, and it is this commitment that is honored by the non-charred. Even as the charreds’ problems get worse, so do their powers. Even as they become increasingly unable to live a normal life, and more and more subject to bizarre and self-destructive behaviors and addictions, they grow more powerful and more respected by the other Insomniacs. By the time they spend most of their time still, the Insomniac has the power (and usually the wisdom) to command tremendous respect from the Insomniacs and most of the rest of the street community.

Population- There are about 800 Insomniacs in the city. About 300 of them are too young to take Sibosin. About 50 are old enough, but choose not to use Sibosin. 200 are using Sibosin but can still sleep. 200 are charred, but still walk the streets with their uncharred family members. About 50 in the family are the “still” or “non-breathers.”

External Relations- The Insomniacs are able to gain considerable respect in the gang community simply by virtue of being psychic. Most people don’t like to mess with psychics, and so they avoid messing with Insomniacs. On the other hand, the Insomniacs have no fear of other psychic gangs, and they put the Tea Drinkers, Immortals and the Bleeders on their list of people who they don’t care if they offend. Insomniacs sometimes even bully these other gangs around, though they usually stop short of provoking pointless wars.

Street Families: The Black Meds often call Insomniacs to consult on medical cases, the Crackers often pay them to steal passwords out of people’s heads, the Water Rats and Keepers think of the Insomniacs as fair and reputable traders, and visa versa. Ever since the new Dioxyl group formed within the Drakes, though, the Insomniacs and the Drakes have had a sour relationship. The dioxyl Drakes have the ability to mess with psychics, and they use it whenever possible, sometimes cruelly. Like most street people, though, the Insomniacs are usually too busy trying to stay alive to get in to wars, and the Drakes are the subject of more spite than violence.

Skin Borgs: Quite a few Skin Borgs have anti-psychic armor, and those Skin Borgs make it a point to bully Insomniacs whenever they see them. There have been a few battles between Insomniacs and Skin Borgs, but no all-out wars.

Traders and Goods: Insomniacs make a lot of money by selling their psychic skills, but they also spend a lot of money on Sibosin. The Insomniacs depend on black market traders to find them clients and to sell them Sibosin at bulk rates. Insomniacs also sometimes buy Sibosin from Goods.

Military Style- During war, even the elder still Insomniacs begin moving again (often moving with the help of two younger Insomniacs). The Insomniacs are not afraid to cross the city in search of an enemy to strike, and they only leave enough members behind to keep the children hidden if someone should come to their turf while they are away. The party moves slowly, not caring much about stealth, dealing with any enemy they come across. With this style of advancing, a full-out battle is usually unavoidable. When battle begins, the elder Insomniacs stay still as pillars, using psychic powers to confuse and disable the enemies. The younger Insomniacs run around with knives and clubs, taking out any enemy who appears unable to defend themselves. The elders also use their powers to give orders to the younger Insomniacs. If there is an enemy that seems immune to the powers of the elders, the elders will command several young Insomniacs to surround and ambush that enemy.

Typical Weapon- A wooden club or steel pipe is a common weapon for an Insomniac, with a knife being the next most common.

Turf- Insomniac turf is downtown, just North of the Bowery, bordered by Houston on the South, Avenue B on the East, the sunken city to the East and 14th Street on the North. Like the Bowery, this part of town has been run-down for some time, the buildings are nearly all abandoned (save a few cheap hotels, welfare apartments, soup kitchens and liquor stores). Nobody has made any serious efforts to save any of the buildings in this part of town for more than a century. Those buildings that haven’t already fallen down are rotting and crumbling away.

Many charred insomniacs live in abandoned buildings right on the edge of the sunken city (because many have an addiction to ice-cold baths).

Distinguishing Features- Multiple fits of self-mutilation have left most Insomniacs with many scars. The older and more powerful the insomniac, the more scars, and the deeper those scars tend to be. They usually also have tattoos and piercings. Because they hate to be hot, they wear little clothing and what they do wear are things like short sun-dresses, thin tank tops, cut-off shorts, holey slacks and sports bras. Being dirty or oily annoys them so that they bathe more often than any other street people and are therefor remarkably clean.

Symbols- A red X or a bloodshot eye are used to represent insomniacs.

Slang

Burn: v., temporarily remove the need and ability to sleep with sibosin.

Charred: adj., permanently unable to sleep.

Itchies: n., annoyance with some detail an Insomniac can’t ignore.

Non-Breathers: n., those who spend most of their time not moving and seldom breathe.

Still, the: n., another term for non-breathers.

Yellow: n., sibosin.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$250 +\$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The family pools money to buy sibosin in bulk. The PC can get up to 3 doses a week free.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Charred: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has taken sibosin one time too many and can no longer sleep. The PC never needs to sleep and never suffers from sleep deprivation damage. Additional doses of Sibosin have no effect on a charred PC. **Addiction:** Any time the PC becomes asphyxiated, is exposed to very cold water, or does inhalant drugs, he or she must make a save vs. psychological addiction (20 difficulty, +5 for every level the PC has been charred). **Itchies:** Any unpleasant sensation that is constant and unchanging becomes harder and harder to deal with (+1 difficulty to save for every hour the PC has to deal with it). Example: *An Insomniac notices an annoying hum near his dwelling. Every hour, he must make a save, using WIL, to avoid doing something about the hum. After 10 hours, it is only 10 difficulty, after 20 hours it is 20 difficulty, etc. The difficulty keeps rising until the PC is forced to find and destroy the source of the hum, move away, or poke his own eardrums out.* **Mutilation:** Unless the PC becomes entirely still (so the PC doesn't feel his or her own body) the PC must make a daily save to avoid changing his or her own flesh (cutting it, scarring it, piercing it, tattooing it, etc.). The difficulty of this save is 5 per level that the PC has been charred. **Psychic Prowess:** The PC gains +4 AWR, +10 to psychic based WIL rolls and +10 pooled END for use with psychic skills.

Cold Water Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 5 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to immersion in very cold water (cold enough to force them to make a save vs. hypothermia). As per the addiction rules (p.57) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving for immersion in cold water.

Asphyxiation Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to being asphyxiated to the point that they nearly lose consciousness (must be long enough to force them to make a save vs. unconsciousness, see p.52). As per the addiction rules (p.57) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving to be asphyxiated.

Suggested Skills- Belief Attack, Clairsentience, Control Attack, Hold Breath, Pain Attack.

Suggested Equipment- Lighter: Disposable, Stick With Nail.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Psychic Phenomenon, Sibosin (p.90).

Keepers

In Brief- Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Self-sufficient, skilled survivors, protecting a strange and marvelous ecosystem.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Xenophobic, territorial, ignorant and increasingly primitive.

Other Names- Holers, Central Park Hunters.

Origin- In the Mid 19th Century, rich New Yorkers, wanting to emulate the large park spaces of major European cities, campaigned for a large park to be built. The state legislature purchased a large portion of land in the middle of the city that was underutilized because it was too rocky, mountainous and swampy. 843 acres were eventually purchased. The area was heavily landscaped over the course of many years, and was the first park in the US to be landscaped. In addition to being the city's largest and most majestic park, Central Park was also used to store water for the city in human-made lakes.

Throughout the late 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries, Central Park was once one of the world's most impressive parks. Buildings and services slowly invaded the park, including museums, community centers, skating rinks, sports fields, a zoo, payphones, food-carts. In the 2030s, corporate sponsors of the park filled it with vending machines and advertising billboards. In the turbulent times of the 2040s, huge shantytowns of homeless people made their home in central park (despite attempts by riot police to clear them out) and heat-waves and pollution killed off much of the greenery.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez moved the base of operations for the Freedom Army to the city. Jeffrey Hernandez found the park an ideal place to build: it was the largest piece of land in the city where he could build without having to tear anything down. Taken with the beauty of the park, Hernandez did not want to destroy

the greenery so he planned, as much as possible, to build in harmony with it. Many of the buildings in his complex were designed to be mostly underground with underground roads and walkways between them. These mostly-underground buildings would also be harder to bomb.

In 2054, while the complex of buildings was still under construction, rebels snuck bombs in to the buildings and detonated them. Most were traditional explosives but one was a small nuclear device. The buildings were destroyed and thousands of Freedom Army soldiers were killed. The Freedom Army itself soon fell. The restoration committee did a minimal cleanup of radioactive waste in the park, then fenced it off and condemned it. As soon as people were moved back in to the city, people started cutting holes in or knocking over the fences. People went in to "the hole" as it had become known, for privacy: to do drugs, have illicit sex, hide bodies or stolen goods or to hide from enemies. For the most part, this activity occurred on the outsides of the park. People rarely went deep in to the interior of the park.

Street people began to move in to the park and build small shacks to live in. Some of these street people formed small cooperative associations, others didn't. The street people who lived there found that they could hunt and trap animals in the park and gather edible plants. Recent immigrants who had lived in similar ways in their native countries took to this quickly, but even hardened urbanites quickly became skilled hunters and gatherers. The Street People who lived in the park found a comfortable life there. However, addicts, mentally ill people and violent criminals soon started encroaching on their living spaces. To escape the growing danger of life on the outside of the Hole, many of the people who had been there the longest moved closer to the center of the hole. These older park residents became a community of friends. These friends became more and more skilled at surviving in the ecosystem of the hole, and in turn they became more dependent on it.

The older hole dwellers feared that too many people moving in to the hole would deplete the natural resources, and they formed a task force with the name "Keepers of the Hole" to try to dissuade newcomers from moving in to the hole. They accomplished this mostly by destroying homes and stealing the belongings of newcomers. The newcomers could not retaliate in turn because they could never find the homes of the Keepers. The Keepers then started imposing limits on how, where and when non-Keepers could hunt. The Keepers disliked violence, but they found that the same strategies that let them hunt and trap animals could be used against invaders. They also found that setting up many traps in "Keeper only" areas was a good way to keep people out of those areas.

The more self-determination the Keepers achieved, the more other Street People wanted to join them. The Keepers allowed those that they liked to join. As their population grew, so did the "Keepers only" areas of the park. By 2075, all non-Keepers had been forced out of the hole. The Keepers were now firmly in charge of every inch of it.

Timeline

1853- NY State authorizes purchase of central park.
 1859- Central Park first opened for use.
 1871- Central Park Zoo.
 1880s- Poor people campaign for equal access to park.
 1925- Croton Reservoir in Central Park closed.
 2050- Freedom Army attacks on corporations and government in New York.
 2051- New York firmly under Freedom Army control.
 2052- Construction of Freedom Army complex in Central Park begins.
 2054- Several bombs, including a small nuclear bomb, destroy Freedom Army complex.
 2057- Nuclear cleanup ends, Central Park fenced off and people allowed back in the city.
 2061- Elder park residents forced to move deeper in to the Hole.
 2062- "Keepers of the Hole" task force forms.
 2075- Keepers have complete control of the Hole.

Becoming- The Keepers are not currently accepting new family members, except on the rare occasions when a young Keeper falls in love with and marries a non-Keeper (and even then, the "marriage" is usually not considered legitimate, and the spouse is considered only a visitor, until children are born).

Young Keepers are taught to hunt and gather plants at an early age. For snacks they pick berries and catch and cook lizards. They play games of hide and seek in the hole (although older children must accompany young children to make sure they don't accidentally wander in to areas that have traps). At adolescence, Keepers are expected to participate in adult activities: cooking meals, going on hunting parties, building shelters, setting up traps.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is about fifteen and is considered old enough to go out of the Hole and in to the city by themselves to trade, scrounge and make war.

Lifestyle- The Keepers know of several types of edible berries, roots and greenery growing within the hole. Some Keepers know herbal medicine and gather medicinal herbs as well as food-plants. The Keepers also hunt for animals to eat. The Keepers have been known to eat snakes, mice, rats, gophers, raccoons and birds (especially pigeons).

Each Keeper has a hunting area in which he or she is allowed to put small homemade traps. Once or twice a day a Keeper checks these traps and gets any animals that have fallen prey to them. When Keepers find signs that a bigger animal is living in the park, they form small hunting parties. They track it down and kill it with small homemade bows. The Keepers will occasionally chase a prey animal out of the hole and continue to track it through the city. The Keepers are careful to never hunt a species in to extinction (unless it is a foreign species that is causing ecological problems in the hole). When Keepers can not hunt or gather enough food to give them good nutrition, they leave the hole and visit soup kitchens and city dumpsters.

Keepers typically only spend a three or four hours a day hunting and gathering. The exception is some young people who enjoy the challenge of a hunt so much that they will hunt for hours to catch an animal, even though that animal may not have much meat on it. Most Keepers spend several hours a day outside of the hole. They wander around in the block or two surrounding the hole. They hit dumpsters looking for anything they can salvage for use in crafts. The Keepers may sell hand-made weapons, clothing, food and even some medicinal herbs that grow in the park. They also offer services: anything they can do with their wilderness survival skills, from hunting down a rabid dog to butchering and dressing a raccoon that some addict caught (in exchange for a portion of the meat). The Keepers have been known to take and hide fugitives, but the price tag is usually very high and the Keepers will not hide someone from an enemy they do not think they can defeat (e.g. the Drug Lords). They also do some begging and canning, hoping a little change to buy things they can't buy, trade for or find in the trash (such as alcohol or hygiene products).

Keepers typically spend their evenings sitting around communal fires in clearings deep in the park. They sit around, tell stories and jokes, have discussions and debates, and work on various crafts: clothing, traps, weapons, tools, etc. Many Keepers have hunting dogs and these dogs are cared for and trained in the evenings. At night they sleep in groups of three to five in small homemade shelters. The shelter is usually just a large lean-to, with plenty of room for several people to sleep in but not enough space to stand up. In the winter, when the weather is poor and the Keepers anticipate spending more time in-doors, larger "hut" like dwellings are constructed.

Social Structure- The basic unit of the Keepers is a household: a single adult, couple or parents and children who sleep in the same shelter. A family is responsible for taking care of its own needs. Several families (usually about 50 people in total) will share a clearing, but have no special duties to each other (beyond being cordial neighbors).

Most major decisions among the Keepers are made by group consensus of the elders of the community. Keepers generally get along and cooperate well together. Most disputes are solved with the help of elders. Only a few times has anyone been accused of breaking some law. The Keeper's laws were put together when the Keepers were first formed. A Judge decides when someone has broken a law and what the punishment should be. The judge is chosen by the elders, holds the position for life, and is expected to be fair and impartial.

Keeper laws are simple, and worded differently depending on who is repeating them. The general message is always the same: every person living in the park must not harm the ecosystem of the park, must not harm park residents, must cooperate with group projects (anything that can not be done alone, like building a shelter or a group hunt) and must fight against enemies of the Keepers (insomuch as they are physically able). The only rule that applies to outsiders is that non-Keepers can not enter the park without permission of the Keeper elders.

When Keepers are judged to have broken these rules, the Judge's most common punishments are: taking away personal property from the perpetrator and giving it to the injured party, shunning the perpetrator for short periods, banishing the perpetrator for short periods or (in the most severe cases) permanent banishment. When outsiders are caught in the Hole, the punishment depends on what the judge thinks the trespasser's motivation is: some are simply escorted out of the hole, some are robbed and beaten then escorted out of the hole, a few are killed and fed to hunting dogs.

Advancement- People gain respect within the Keepers by being good at the skills that Keepers alive: hunting, wildcrafting, crafts, trading. The surest way to gain respect and power is to become old, as elders are the acknowledged advisors and leaders of the Keepers.

Population- There are about 500 Keepers living in the Hole.

External Relations- The Keepers are fiercely protective of their turf. They equate their livelihood with their ability to control what goes on in their turf, and thus any invasion is taken as a physical assault. Unfortunately, the city population has many motivations to enter the hole: it is tempting as a shortcut, a place to hide, a place to meet privately, a place to stash stolen goods, and a place to see and experience a true wilderness (something few city residents have seen outside of VR).

Boarders and Runners: The Boarders often think of the hole as a good place to do some "off-roading" and Keepers like to give them a good beating whenever they catch them. Runners are tempted to enter the park in their endless quest for shortcuts, and they are given a little more leniency when caught (because they are fellow street people just trying to make a living).

Neos and Hunters: Neos enter the hole, mostly for religious or spiritual purposes. Neos new in the city don't know that anyone owns the hole, but when it is explained to them they are usually polite and ask permission, are willing to pay, and are respectful enough of the environment that Keepers let them in. Hunters are another

common intruder, coming in to the hole to hunt humans or animals they have released there. Keepers would beat or kill Hunters if they could, but are usually forced to retreat in the face of the Hunters' superior firepower.

Military Style- Any time the Keepers are engaged in a conflict, they do whatever they can to get the enemy to come in to the hole after them. This works well because the Keepers are rarely the aggressors (when they are, they usually try to hunt down and assassinate the enemy instead of confronting them). When an individual does something against the Keepers, if that individual can make it out of the hole alive, he or she will probably get away with whatever the perpetrator did.

Inside the hole, the Keepers use their best hunting skills to their advantage. They hide in blinds, picking off enemies with arrows and spears. They get an enemy to chase them and then lead that enemy right in to a trap. Or, they simply wait for an enemy to get tired of trudging through thick underbrush looking for someone to fight, then they attack in a massive ambush.

Typical Weapon- Home-made bows and arrows are a common weapons, but in close quarters combat they are discarded and replaced with short spears and large knives.

Turf- The Hole (a.k.a. central park), a rectangle of untamed parkland (with the occasional ruin) sitting in the center of the island, bounded on the North by 110th Street, on the South by 59th Street, on the West by Central Park West (a.k.a. 8th Avenue) and on the East by 5th Avenue. The entire park is surrounded by a barbed wire fence with many faded "caution" and "condemned area" signs. The whole of the hole is under the control of the Keepers and they do whatever they can to keep strangers out: They patch up the fence surrounding the

hole to leave only a few entrances and exits, they put traps throughout the hole (that serve a dual purpose of catching food and dissuading intruders) and they keep an eye on the area from tree-top blinds. For more on the park, see p.194.

Distinguishing Features- Keepers dress much like other Street People, wearing a variety of old stained and dirty clothing scavenged from the trash. The Keepers modify their clothing by adding skins, furs and cloths and cords made from plant fibers. They also wear trophies of successful hunts as jewelry: bits of bone, teeth, claws, scales, etc.

Symbols- A squiggle approximating the shape of the city and a large rectangle in the center is a common symbol of both the Hole and the Keepers.



Monis Ef (Keeper Judge)

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 15, CHM 3, END 3, INL 17, SPD 6, STH 5, WIL 14, BLD 2, BDY 4, INCY 1.

Appearance- Monis Ef is middle aged, part Middle Eastern and part East Indian in ethnicity. He has a shaved head, many black Maori-style tattoos. He always wears an olive military-surplus coat. He has tinted glasses with thick frames.

Social Status- Monis is the judge of the Keepers, and he will keep this position until he is dead or senile. Any time an outsider is caught in the hole or a Keeper is accused of a crime, Monis decides what punishment (if any) will be met out. He has never executed a Keeper, though he could if he wanted. Monis is exempt from the duty to participate in group projects and other Keepers anonymously leave him food and gifts to help support him. Monis is required to stay completely impartial, and this requires that he form few emotional ties with anyone in the community.

History- During the early days of the Keepers, Monis came to the park as a young homeless wanderer. He learned the ways of the park and married a young woman living in the park. Together they had two children. About five years ago, his wife and children died during a plague outbreak. Extremely depressed, he moved his shelter away from the rest of the Keepers and barely hunted enough to survive. The other Keepers allowed him to slack off on his duties, although they could have accused him of a crime if they had wanted. When the original judge died of cirrhosis of the liver (after many decades of alcohol abuse) Monis was asked to become the new judge. Monis wanted a way to help the community without having to spend too much time around them, so he agreed.

Personality- Monis spent much of his life a wandering loner, preferring books and ideas to people. His wife and children made him more sociable, but when they died he became more of a loner than he had ever been. He has suffered from bouts of depression throughout his life, but now he feels there is no reason for him to come out of his depression. He spends most of each day lying in a hammock near his property, drifting in and out of half-sleep, reading paperback books others have brought him, and watching the forest. It is only rarely that Monis is called upon to act as a judge, but when called he takes his job very seriously and he believes he does it well. Monis is cynical, believing that most people act out of bad motives, though he does like to give people the benefit of the doubt the first time they are brought to him. His punishments are not cruel - they are utilitarian, calculated to do whatever is necessary, but no more, to prevent the crime in the future. Emotional appeals do not sway Monis, instead they disgust him and piss him off. He is soft spoken but not afraid to let people know his displeasure if he feels they are interfering with his ability to do his job. Monis does not like to display emotions, much less talk about them, and he has never discussed with anyone his feelings about the death of his wife and children.

Motivations- Monis feels he has an important part of ensuring the survival of the Keeper community. He believes that without an impartial judge, the Keepers would factionalize and the community would break up. He doesn't think anyone else in the community has the capacity for impartiality that he does. He always makes rulings to protect the community, not out a desire for fairness or vengeance.

Methods- Monis had little persuasive power, but when a person is brought before him accused of a crime, Monis' ruling is final. When Monis is judging, he hears testimony from anyone who wishes to give it, allows time for witnesses to be sought and evidence gathered. If an accused can not be found, he is not afraid to rule in his or her absence. He is usually ready to give a ruling as soon as the testimony ends.

Special Skills- Monis likes to read, and since his selection is limited he reads whatever he can get. He thus knows a lot of trivia about different subjects.

Slang

Hole: n., Central Park.

Judge: n., a Keeper with the job of judging any crime committed by a Keeper.

Skills

Free Skills: Tracking (1), Wilderness Survival (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 12, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 12, THIE 6, SOC 9, STRT 4.

Income- \$150 +\$7/wk.

Special Equipment- Since there are many animal breeders and trainers among the Keepers, the PC can get trained animals at 50% off.

Suggested Skills- Animal Training, Archery, Blacksmithing, Climbing, Herbal Medicine, Prowling, Running, Swimming, Tracking, Trading, Weapon Making.

Suggested Equipment- Bow: Archery, Cloak, Fingerless Gloves, Knife: Kitchen

Suggested Reading- City Geography: The Hole, Environment & Ecology.

Water Rats

In Brief- Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city. did was dive in to the sunken city, pull up scrap metal and sell it to recyclers.

Favorable Stereotypes- Lucky, charming, daring, attractive, athletic, proud but humble.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature, irresponsible, thoughtless, arrogant kleptomaniacs.

Other Names- Timms, Sewer Surfers.

Origin- The five Timm siblings grew up on the streets. Their parents, who were unborn alcoholics, let them wander around the city unattended. Led by the oldest brother, Matt Timm, they did a lot of dangerous things including swimming in the dangerous waters of the "sunken city" (those parts of the city that had been partially submerged by rising ocean levels). When Matt was thirteen, the Timms' parent's died and they were solely responsible for their own survival. One thing they

As they continued to make a living this way (as well as canning, panhandling, trading, shoplifting and other normal street people activities) they became stronger swimmers and discovered methods to explore more of the sunken city. They created makeshift diving bells and strung rope between submerged buildings (hidden underwater so that nobody else could use them). Looking for more salvage opportunities, they broke in to storm drains to pull trash out of the catch basins. They heard that a group of dead, isolationist homeless people lived in the sewers, but the Timms had always been known for their luck and bravery. Eventually, the Timms did run in to the Moles but they found that if they turned and walked away as soon as they saw a Mole, there wouldn't be any trouble. The Timms were the first (and are currently the only) group to form an agreement, spoken or unspoken, with the Moles.

As they became more successful, the Timm family grew. The siblings became old enough to have boyfriends and girlfriends and these eventually became husbands and wives who brought in their own extended street families. The family grew exponentially and the Timms were happy to teach their new family members to dive and navigate in the sunken city. The Timms made their own boats to take elder family members around. Soon they discovered that travel to the half-submerged buildings of the sunken city was so easy that they took up permanent residence in them. Since the Timms were the only ones who knew how to get to these buildings, they had found a space that was exclusively theirs. The Timms slept more safely than anyone else in the city.

The young Timm children (and the other children that had joined the family) were encouraged to play in the water as much as they wanted. These children found themselves crawling up in to the water tunnels that terminated in the sunken city. Since most of the tunnels under the city are below the groundwater level, massive amounts of groundwater have to be pumped out of the island each day to keep the tunnels from becoming infiltrated. The tunnels that carry this water out to the water are constantly flowing, though usually not very full (except when it rains). The young Timms found that they could wade up the tunnel (against the current) then get on makeshift surfboards and surf their way out to the sunken city. Eventually the elder Timms figured out that this would be a great way to escape from enemies. The Timms scouted out and broke the locks off of entrances to these tunnels throughout the city. They found that nobody was willing to chase them in to the tunnels.

Like most street people, Timms did a little bit of shoplifting and other petty theft to get by. Now that they had an easy way to escape from pursuers, they became much more bold in their thievery. Recyclable scrap was becoming harder and harder to find and the Timms were happy to focus more of their time on theft. Groups of Timms would walk in to stores, grab whatever they could, and run out, not caring if a security guard pursued them.

Very few people had ever heard of the Timms while they were salvaging and selling scrap from the sunken city. When they started shifting towards bold theft as a means of income, people started hearing about the Timms. The Timms were a constant pain for well Freelancers working as security guards, who started calling the Timms "Water Rats" as an epithet. The Timms heard about this and, delighted that they had received notoriety, started calling themselves Water Rats with pride. As the Water Rats became more bold they started stealing from anyone who had something worth stealing, including a few gang members. The Water Rats had to fight against a few angry gang members and proved that they could hold their own even against a city gang.

Timeline

2052- Matt Timm born.
2058- Timm parents die.
2062- Youngest Timm born.
2067- Timms dive in to sunken city for scrap.
2071- 1st Timm children born.
2074- Moles "discovered" by city population.
2075- Timms first encounter Moles.
2078- Timm children invent sewer surfing.
2079- Timm parents adopt sewer surfing as a way to escape from enemies.

Becoming- Toddlers are dragged in to the water by their elder siblings. They learn to swim before they can even walk well. Play is also work (as it is for most street children): as soon as they learn to dive, they are encouraged to find anything on the bottom that can be used or traded. The salvageables that Water Rat children being up are usually worth only a few bucks a week, but it gives the young Water Rats a sense of contributing to the family. Older Water Rats will sometimes throw spare change in to the water and let kids keep whatever they can grab. Adolescents move on to more dangerous games, such as exploring the flooded basements of old buildings, underwater wrestling, and surfing the flow of water out of storm drains on homemade rafts.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is around sixteen years old and is generally thought of as an adult and is expected to pull his or her own weight within the family. The years of play will have given the PC almost every skill necessary to make a living as a Water Rat. At this age, the PC is also expected to help defend the Water Rats in times of war.

Lifestyle- All around the city are the dangerous waters of the "sunken city". The current between half submerged buildings is swift and dangerous, and even powerful speedboats have trouble making it through. This was one of the reasons Jeffrey Hernandez chose Manhattan as his base of operations during the Freedom Wars: an amphibious assault would be problematic at best. The Water Rats are the only people in the city able to navigate the submerged ruins of the city safely. Their primary tool is a maze of hidden ropes under the water. These lines let them navigate the sunken city without being carried off by the swift currents.

The younger Water Rats spend much of their day exploring the hundreds of half-submerged buildings of the sunken city looking for anything that can be salvaged or reused. Besides finding profit, they enjoy the thrill and challenge of exploring. The most accomplished swimmer dive in to dark, flooded basements. They use flashlights wrapped in plastic bags. Rope is a precious commodity to the Water Rats an any they find they keep for themselves. The strongest swimmers among the Water Rats carry rope between buildings, creating lines that less-accomplished swimmers can use to get from building to building.

Water Rats have build a number of small boats, which are typically used for ferrying elders (who can not swim as well) back and forth from the sunken city to the city. When the weather is very cold, even the strong swimmers travel by boat. Water Rats like to move back and forth between the city and the streets in the early hours of the morning, when there are fewer people who might be watching. The Water Rats worry that if someone was to watch them, they could find the hidden lines and make their way to the partially submerged buildings that the Water Rats live in.

Water Rats spend a lot of time in the city visiting recycling centers, black market traders and anyone else who they think will buy the stuff they have salvaged from the sunken city.

Every few weeks, when the weather isn't too cold, the Water Rats will plan a "rampage." They scout out an entrance to the groundwater outflow tunnels. Then they infiltrate neighborhood stores. At a precise moment (usually the chiming of a church's bells) they grab whatever they can (including people's wallets and purses) and race to the sewers. As they run, they dump the goods in to bags made of mesh or old nets, which they strap to their backs. Security guards often try to chase them, but the Water Rats are only a few blocks from the tunnel entrance and once they jump in they are safe.

Social Structure- The Timms are a small, tightly knit group who depend on each other for their survival. There is only one family name: Timm. People are either born with it or take on the name when they marry in to the group. Matt Timm is the undisputed leader of the Timms, and leads by virtue of the respect everyone in the family has for him.

Elders are respected, but do not lead the family (as they do in most other street people families). One reason is that the Water Rats are a very new family, and the elders who came in to the family (often because a child or grandchild married a Water Rat) were too old to learn the skills of the Water Rats. They don't know how to dive or sewer surf and so the most useful thing they can do for the family is stay at home in the partially-submerged buildings and keep the homes running smoothly.

Advancement- Unlike most street families (which reward age and wisdom) the Water Rats reward youth, vigor and daring. Acts of bravery that benefit the Water Rats will cause a PC to be liked and respected by other Water Rats, including Matt Timm. The only way to gain a lot of influence in the Water Rats is to become a friend of Matt Timm's.

Population- There are about 300 Water Rats living in the city. 5 are the original Timm siblings, 10 are the children of those siblings and the rest are people who married in to the Water Rats and their extended families.

External Relations- Most wells and Indies see the Water Rats as nothing more than thieves who might grab something they own and run off. Most gang members in the city have to live with the consequences of their members' actions and it makes them slightly annoyed that the Water Rats can do whatever they want and then run off to the safety of their sunken city fortresses. The Water Rats also have a propensity to trespass on the turf of other gangs and are most likely to get in to trouble with gangs who don't like people violating their turf (specifically the Night Shift, the Keepers, the Purists, the Risen, the Roofers and the Skin Borgs).

Freelancers: For Freelancers working as security guards, the Water Rats are a big embarrassment. Only a small percentage of goods shoplifted in the city are taken by Water Rats, but when the Water Rats steal everyone sees it and the security guards usually get in trouble with their bosses for letting the thieves get away.

Moles: The Water Rats are the only group to have any kind of relationship with the moles. This is an unspoken pact to leave each other alone. When Water Rats see Moles they simply turn and walk the other way. The Water Rats haven't run in to any of the deadly traps the Moles are known for, probably because any traps set in the storm drains would quickly be washed away. Some people are so enamored with the idea of the Moles as psychotic, inbred, xenophobic killers that they refuse to believe that something as simple as live-and-let-live could be the explanation for the Water Rat's ability to move through the storm drains without being attacked by Moles. Many people accuse the Water Rats, and Matt Timm in particular, of having various nefarious deals going with the Moles.

Military Style- The Water Rats are a small, inexperienced and poorly equipped military force, and they know it. They avoid traditional warfare whenever possible, since they know they would be devastated. Their approach is to harass and annoy the enemy for years. They pop out of tunnels in enemy territory, race through doing as much

Matt Timm

(Eldest Timm Sibling and Leader of the Water Rats)

Level 8 Water Rat

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 9, CHM 14, END 18, INL 14, SPD 16, STH 17, WIL 12, BLD 6, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Caucasian and African features, tall with broad shoulders, muscular, clean shaven with shaved head, broad mouth and attractively round head with a little bit of baby fat. Many people find Matt very physically attractive. When not wearing his homemade black wetsuit, Matt wears cotton shorts and holey t-shirts.

Social Status- Matt is the eldest of the Timm siblings and the acknowledged leader of the Water Rats. He, more than anyone, is responsible for the creation of the Water Rats and he is respected for his intelligence and leadership skills, even by elders who have been brought in to the family. Matt is the only one of the Timm siblings who has never married and had kids, though he is a loving uncle to his many nieces and nephews.

History- When Matt's parents committed suicide, Matt was forced to take over the care of his younger brothers and sisters. So that his siblings wouldn't lose hope, Matt adopted an optimistic demeanor, full of dry humor and false bravado. Eventually this "act" became his real outlook on the universe. He fearlessly led his brothers and sisters in to dangerous parts of the city: the sunken city, the storm drains. It was a surprise to him when the Timms became a successful street family.

Personality- Matt is jovial, friendly, never lets him self get stressed out or anxious about anything that happens. He will joke about anything, including subjects like torture, war, disease, insanity, etc. Matt believes in "Timm luck" and encourages others to believe in it. Matt enjoys music and plays almost every night with family members. When Matt needs to think he pounds out long, fast paced, deafening solos on his homemade drum set.

Methods- Matt personally leads almost every major attack, theft run, and dive project. Matt is the strongest swimmer in the family had he has strung a majority of the Rats' ropes and cables. Matt will never veto or criticize a plan because it is too dangerous. Instead of issuing "orders," he tries to get other Water Rats excited about a plan or project, hyping how great the project will be. When he has to negotiate with non-Water Rats, he tries to use similar persuasive tactics on them. Matt is vengeful but not bloodthirsty: he loves to humiliate an enemy, but not to kill them.

Motivations- Matt is motivated by two drives: a desire to protect and provide for his family, and a desire to do fun and interesting things.

Special Skills- Hold Breath (4), Swimming (6), Tunnel Surfing (3), Water Combat (3), Wrestling (3).

Typical Attack- Timm tries not to get in to a fight without a body of water nearby he can drag his opponent in to. Typically he will try to tackle an enemy (to push them in to the water) at SPD (16) + STH (17) + 12 (skill) 1d20 vs. 25 (or 20 + 1d20 vs. 0). Once in the water he tries to get the person in a wrestling hold where he can keep them immobile underwater until they go unconscious. The Grab: Wrestling is at STH (17) + INL (14) + 12 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 12 + 1d20 vs. 0). Since Timm has the Water Combat skill he does not suffer the -8 penalty to actions and reactions from being underwater.

damage and stealing as much property as they can, then they disappear in to the tunnels again. They sometimes hurl chunks of concrete at enemies as they run past, but this is the limit of their offensive strike capabilities. The Water Rats try to embarrass enemies in to submission rather than fight with them.

The Water Rats know that once they get to the tunnels they are safe. Anyone who dares follow the Water Rats in to their tunnels will probably be smashed in to the walls of the tunnels. If they make it to an exit, they will have to fight Water Rats underwater. Water Rats are deadly fighters when in the water, since most have been wrestling underwater since they are children. An assault on the Water Rats' homes would be even more dangerous: nobody knows exactly what buildings they live in or how to get to those buildings without being smashed against the sides of partially-submerged buildings.

Gangs know little about the sewer systems and they rarely know which of the thousands of manhole covers around the city lead to the tunnels the Water Rats. If any gang was to figure it out they would have a powerful weapon against the Water Rats: they could block their access to the tunnels and trap them on the streets. Fortunately, the Water Rats have not yet pissed off anyone enough to prompt such measures.

Typical Weapon- Almost all Water Rats carry knives on them. They also like to pick up whatever is at hand and throw it at an enemy as they race away.

Turf- The Water Rats consider their turf to be strips of half-submerged city streets that surround the island, known in city slang as "the sunken city." At any given point on the coast there might be no sunken city at all, there might be a few buildings deteriorating as a few feet of water lap at their foundations, or there might be whole city blocks under five to ten feet of water. There are about a thousand buildings partially submerged by water and the Water Rats have gone in to most of them looking for salvageables at some point. The Water Rats make the majority of their homes on the broad swaths of sunken city submerged by the East River near midtown and downtown.

When they come out of the water and on to the city streets, most Water Rats like to stop by at the Painted Rock, a small dive bar directly to the North of Mem Junkie turf at 30th St. and Park Ave. This small, dimly lit bar has an interior decorated with pieces of old ships (given to the owner by Water Rats). The bartenders give cheap drinks to Water Rats.

The Water Rats have secret lines tied underwater that let them navigate through the sunken city safely. These lines are very important to the Water Rats and so is keeping them secret. To outside observers, most Water Rats can be seen crawling in to windows in to abandoned buildings at the foot of the sunken city, and then the Water Rats are gone.

The Water Rats also consider Roosevelt Island a part of their turf. Roosevelt Island was a small sliver of land in the East River. The entire island is now submerged in the East River, although most of the large apartment buildings survive. Since it is harder to travel to than the sunken city, the Water Rats have not explored the majority of this part of their turf yet. They have plans to go here should their current dwellings ever be invaded.

Distinguishing Features- Water Rats have the physique of swimmers. Their hair is short or shaved and they seldom wear facial hair or makeup. They often wear homemade wet suits, stitched together out of materials and fitted exactly to them. The often wear mesh backpacks containing plastic garbage bags protecting whatever they need to keep dry. Those with Timm blood have, among other things, Caucasian and African American features, a strong brow and jaw-line, broad shoulders and attractively shaped heads.

Symbols- The color blue, water drops and cartoonish rats.

Slang

Shakeys: n., the Painted Rock Bar (called this because Water Rats are often shaking with cold when they enter).

Tunnel Surfing: n., swimming or rafting through the groundwater outflow tunnels.

Skills

Free Skills: Swimming (3), Hold Breath (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Tunnel Surfing costs only 7 skill points per level.

Tunnel Surfing- Uses END. This skill allows Water Rats to navigate through the groundwater outflow tunnels without getting smashed to death against tunnel walls. Water Rats with this skill have learned every tunnel entrance, every fork and turn and can tell where they are in the tunnel system even in complete darkness. Strong swimming or paddling and kicking off of walls is needed to avoid being smashed. Tunnel surfing is easier when the Water Rat has some sort of raft or surfboard, harder if they are just swimming. When there are heavy rains the tunnels become flooded and tunnel surfing becomes significantly harder.

Easy (10): Surf on a raft on a rain-less day.

Moderate (20): Swim on a rain-less day.

Hard (30): Swim on a rainy day.

Legendary (40): Swim on a rainy day while carrying another person.

Income- \$200 +\$13/wk.

Special Equipment- Free Mesh Backpack (a small backpack pieced together from piece of old net). The PC can buy a homemade wetsuit, made from scrounged materials and fitted to the PCs body by family elders, for \$25. The suit has a +7 heat factor and has AR 6 PR ½ bladed 2 skidding.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Hot Body: (Mandatory Advantage) Over the years, the PC's body had adapted to surviving swims in ice cold temperatures. The PC's metabolism increases when it gets cold, especially if aided by a nice hot irish coffee at Shakeys. The PC gets +6 to save vs. hypothermia.

Suggested Skills- Hold Breath, Music, Pocket Picking, Water Combat.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Dagger, Diving Bell, Dock Rope, Homemade Wetsuit (see above), Flare: Underwater, Flashlight: Small.

Suggested Reading- Sunken City, Underground, Weather.

NON-FAMILY STREET PEOPLE

Favorable Stereotypes- Intensely motivated, skilled, observant, brave, very hard-working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Dirty, crazy, diseased, untrustworthy, desperate liars and thieves with no control over their lives.

Being a street person without a large family to turn to for protection is dangerous and hard. Nobody chooses to end up in this position (although some people are partially at fault for their current lives). Most people in this position desperately want to do something else with their lives. Those who were born with birth certificates usually just want to get on welfare and get off the streets. Those who weren't born with birth certificates usually would like to join one of the large street families. Non-Family Street People are usually the most ambitious of any people in the city because they know that things can't get much worse. Living on the streets is very hard, though, and when street people lose hope the results are terrible. Most Non-Family Street People are bitter about their place in society. They believe that society kicked them while they were down and is making it difficult for them to improve their lives.

Non-Family Street People are the most victimized people in the city. They are victims of robberies, hate crimes, sex crimes and attacks by pusher gangs. Young people have been known to go pour flammable liquids on homeless people and set them on fire. Street people are not victimized because they are hated more than the rest of the street population, or because they are not as tough and wary. They are victimized because people know that street people have no gangs, no families, no political interest groups, no corrupt politicians looking for reelection that care what happens to them. Occasionally a victimized street person will have powerful friends and family that will come after a victimizer. In the majority of times this is sadly not the case.

Most Non-Family Street People are damaged in some way. The bright, charming, emotionally balanced people rarely end up on the streets by themselves. Even when

they do, life on the streets is so hard that it often makes people bitter and mean, makes them turn to drugs or even drives them crazy.

Non-Family Street People are ingenious in the ways they find to make money. Every scam to cheat someone out of money, every piece of trash that can be salvaged or reused, every line that someone could say while begging for change, every thing someone can do with their bodies to make money, there is a street person who has done it.

Homeless Housing

The sleeping arrangements for street people vary greatly. Some street people live in running or non-running cars or in recreational vehicles parked in the city. Car campers are usually people who work or get a check from the government but still cannot afford an apartment. Most street people are squatters, taking over one of the city's many abandoned buildings and making it fit for living in. Some abandoned buildings are barely modified; they have no electricity, no running water, no heating or air conditioning, no good locks on the doors. These abandoned buildings are no more than holes to hide in when their resident's sleep: the street people often sleep in closets, in heating ducts and under floorboards so that they will be safe from anyone who wanders in. These buildings often become choked with refuse and the people sleeping in them move on to another building. Other abandoned buildings have been heavily remodeled by their squatters, especially when powerful street families have taken them over. These buildings can have secure locks (or better, round the clock guards), stolen electricity and hot and cold running water. The houses that some street families have taken over are so nice that some Wells and Indies envy them. Other street people have been known to create their own shelters out of cardboard and scrap wood.

The homes of street people are not easy to find, and this is done on purpose. An alley that appears to be completely filled with trash may contain a secret home. Some homes are large, others are barely big enough for one person to crawl in, wrap up in a blanket, and sleep. No matter how small the home, and no matter how badly off the owner's current situation is, almost every home is decorated and outfitted with a hundred personalizations, no matter how small. Houses often have ingenious construction, amenities and security features.

The worst off street people are those who do not have any kind of sleeping arrangement staked out. When they are lucky they can sleep in one of the city's few shelters (those who bother to show up at a shelter have about a 1 in 10 chance of getting a bed), or in some other street person's home. Otherwise they must try to find some warm place, with no safety and no privacy, to try to sleep through the night. Sleeping out in the open is always dangerous. Though learning to sleep lightly helps, it never completely illuminates the danger. Some homeless people, usually those who are on drugs or are psychotic, can not even find a warm vent to sleep on. For those street people, the random fluctuations of the weather is the factor that decides if they live through the night.

Home Thieves

Most homeless people, especially older people who know the city's ins and outs, are quite adept and finding good shelter. They can find places that are warm in the winter or cool in the summer, comfortable, well hidden, dry, easy to defend, etc. Some street people, however, take over other people's shelters. These are usually younger, stronger people, often drug addicts or mentally ill, who find an older street person with a nice dwelling, and forcibly move in. If the home's finder stays, he or she will be reduced to the position of a housekeeper. Most leave, preferring to find another shelter than fight to their old one. Unfortunately, the home thieves seldom take good care of their homes and when the homes are choked with waste and infested with rats and insects from improperly stored food, the home thieves leave to prey on more responsible street people again.

Street People Alignment

Common folk-wisdom among Street People is that people fall in to one of two categories:

-The "what goes around comes around" people. These people offer help and kindness and help to each other (when they can) and they believe they will at some point receive help and kindness back. They also avoid ripping off or giving shit to other street people because they believe that this will eventually come back to them as well. "What goes around comes around" people attribute the mechanism of repayment to various sources. Some believe god will make sure people are repaid for their deeds. Other believe in an invisible, impersonal principle at work in the universe that enforces karma. Other simply believe that enough people are like them that it is inevitable that their charity will someday be repaid.

-The "take what you can get" people. These people either don't believe that what goes around comes around, or they do believe it and are too desperate to care. They ask for help, favors and even loans which they will never return, and they take advantage of other street people. The "take what you can get" people try to associate with "what goes around comes around" people as much as they can, but they often are ostracized after constantly taking and never giving and are forced to hang around with other "take-what-you-can-get" people.

Getting On Your Feet

Rising in social class from street person to well is commonly called "getting on your feet." Getting on your feet is easier for some and harder for others. For members of Street People Families it is very hard: most are unborn, without birth certificates and no way to prove who they are. Some members of Street People families have birth certificates, others are able to get hacked access to a birth certificate. Even those who do, and who manage to get on welfare (see Getting on Welfare, p.15) often continue to live the lifestyle of their families. It often comes down to a simple choice: do they abandon the group that raised them and live the marginally more comfortable life of a well, or do they give over their welfare checks to their family elders, who will do a tremendous amount of good with it. Most people choose the latter, those who choose the former are rarely talked about among the families.



In Brief- Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Favorable Stereotypes- Cunning, tough, wary and street-smart despite their sad disability.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Diseased, desperate, unwise, weak-willed, remorseless, cowardly, mentally ill, unprincipled, willing to betray anyone.

Other Names- Junkies, Dopers, Users, Druggies.

Origin- Drugs are a technology and this technology has seen several major increases over the years. With every technological leap, more people become addicted to drugs and more people are so addicted that they end up on the streets. When Arab alchemists distilled alcohol, when tobacco companies found that adding ammonia to tobacco would cause more nicotine to enter the bloodstream, when Bayer labs found that two morphine molecules could be bound together to create a heroin molecule, when drug dealers discovered that cocaine and baking soda could be used to create crack, the number and plights of addicts have increased.

For many years, alcohol was the king drug of the US. In Seattle, Skid Row was a street where lumberjacks would slide felled trees downhill, and as this neighborhood deteriorated it became the home to many down-and-out alcoholics. The Bowery in New York, once a quite nice neighborhood, became one of the poorest parts of New York. Cheap lodging houses meant that alcoholics could spend less money on rent and more money on booze. The Bowery quickly developed in to one of the country's most famous skid row neighborhoods.

For street gangs illegal drugs have always meant quick and easy money. During prohibition, the mafia turned in to a nationwide organization by distributing and selling

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

alcohol. In the 80s the Crips and Bloods spread franchises nationwide by getting in on the ground floor of the booming crack market. In 2044 God Killer, a drug even more addictive than crack, was invented. Within a few years, cities all over the country were being terrorized by God Killer pushers. They were rich, armed to the teeth and completely fearless from using their own product.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez, a recovering addict, gained power over most of the US and many parts of the rest of the globe. Hernandez broke the back of international drug cartels and domestic pusher gangs with one single act: he legalized drugs. Addicts had to register as addicts, attend treatment programs, and they would be dispensed a free dose of their drug, whether it was opiates, alcohol, amphetamines or even God Killer. Nobody was willing to pay money for what they could get for free and pushers went broke. Drug related crimes and medical problems among addicts dropped dramatically. Despite being given free drugs, many addicts managed to get off drugs during the Freedom Wars. After the wars, ex-addicts reported that the treatment programs, the monitored doses, and the reduction of stress and anxiety (since they no longer had to spend every hour of the day scrounging to make money for drugs) helped them quit using.

When the Freedom Army was destroyed, the old narcotics laws were immediately reinstated. Even while survivors of the New York bombings were in refugee camps, illegal drug sales started again. When the city was reopened for occupation, drug sales began again. The people who got in on the ground floor quickly became rich and powerful criminals, known as "drug lords" who controlled the movement of all drugs in to the city. The drug lords sold drugs to street gangs. The street gangs grew rapidly, becoming huge and powerful organizations. They sold mostly God Killer to poor and homeless people. The street gangs made millions for the drug lords. The street gangs

fought for turf, and they used the money they made to buy expensive weapons. While the street gangs sold the most drugs, there were a variety of other dealers: users who occasionally bought in bulk and sold to fellow users, homeless people who hung out on major avenues selling low-quality marijuana to tourists, black market traders who sold stolen pharmaceuticals, lone dealers who carried pagers and developed a loyal clientele by selling quality drugs.

Then, in 2075, the city drug scene changed forever and this variety disappeared. The city's biggest Drug Lords got together, killed all the others and took over every level of the drug trade. The Drug Lords formed their own organization to create, distribute and sell drugs. The Drug Lords were incredibly efficient and didn't waste time and money with infighting. The Drug Lords were the most powerful organization in the city. Soon after taking power, the Drug Lords introduced new and even more addictive drugs. Although more addictive, they were not as pleasant, and pushers had to go to extreme methods to get people hooked. Pushers started holding people down and forcefully injecting them with drugs until they were addicted. The number of addicts increased, and more and more people ended up on the streets. In the five years since the Drug Lords consolidated the number of addicts on the streets doubled.

Timeline

700- Alcohol distilled by Arab alchemists.
 1850s- Skid Road (later Skid Row) in Seattle.
 1853- Hypodermic needle invented.
 1855- Cocaine first extracted from coca leaves.
 1887- Amphetamines invented.
 1895- Heroin invented.
 1919- Methamphetamines invented.
 1920- Heroin illegal in the US.
 1925- Heroin black market in China Town.
 1970- Amphetamines illegal in the US.
 1985- Crack revolutionizes crime and addiction in NY.
 1988- Ecstasy illegal in US.
 2044- God Killer invented.
 2053- Freedom Army legalizes drugs for registered addicts.
 2055- Freedom Army rule in the city ends.
 2075- Drug Lords consolidate.
 2076- Chomper invented.
 2076- Maxin invented.
 2077- Mauler invented.
 2077- Trace invented.
 2078- Escape invented.
 2078- Slave invented.

Becoming- Addicts have many different stories. Some were once rich, some have always been poor, some have been on the road to being a homeless addict since they were kids, some people were hit out of the blue just recently.

The most common life story of an addict is something like this: *You were a poor kid and the other kids you hung out with drank or used drugs to pass the time. You started using and soon couldn't stop. You alienated friends and family and soon ended up on the streets. You were just learning to get by when some pusher gang grabbed you, held you down, and forced you to use one of their new drugs. The withdrawals from this drug were so bad that you would do anything to get more drugs.*

Some people become addicts and are able to "keep it together" for quite a while. They stay on welfare, they keep their apartments and they are able to keep up their drug habit. The defining characteristic of a true addict, however, is that if it comes to a choice between drugs and anything else, the addict will choose drugs. It always comes down to such a choice: pay the rent or buy drugs, have a phone interview with a welfare department social worker or get drunk and pass out. A lot of addicts choose drugs over their own health and what puts them on the street is medical problems. Most wells and Indies have a social "safety net" that keeps them from ending on the streets: family who will loan them money, friends who will give them a place to sleep for the night, etc. Addicts find themselves continually lying to, stealing from and betraying their friends and family and soon they find that the social safety net is gone.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been an addict for quite a while, and has been on the streets for about six months.

Lifestyle- Getting money to get drugs takes up the majority of an addict's attention and time. Most addicts have no particular skills that they can reliably make money with. They "hustle," a term which, among addicts, means doing anything one can to make money. Hustling means panhandling, shoplifting, canning, salvaging and reselling things they found in the trash, selling sex, calling up relatives and old friends begging for money, and anything else that they think can make them a quick bit of change. The more desperate for drugs an addict is, the more degrading or dangerous things addicts will do. When they get really desperate, addicts will get together and decide to mug someone. They try to find a person who is alone in a secluded place (or lure someone in to such a place), then grab them, beat them senseless and take everything on them.

When addicts do get some money they go on drug runs to get drugs. Addicts are keenly aware of where they can get the best deal of drugs and will sometimes go halfway across town to get the best deal. Runs are also a dangerous and anxious time for addicts: when they have money or when they have drugs, they are a target for robberies by other addicts. Addicts buy their drugs from whoever is their preferred dealer (a pusher gang, a Good, a black market Trader, a liquor store). Once they have their drugs, they usually (but don't always) have enough willpower to get someplace safe to use the drugs. They know that if they start using in a public place they will wander around intoxicated and may even pass out, making them targets for all kinds of predators. So, when they can, they find some secret little place where they can use their drugs.

Addicts have a tendency to be very ritualistic about their drug use. They handle their drugs and kits with care and reverence. They do everything they can to make the moment when they first take in their drug as perfect as possible. Some addicts use drugs alone, but others like to be around other addicts who are also using. When addicts have enough to share, they usually do.

It is a constant struggle for addicts to ration drugs. They buy drugs that need to last them a certain period of time (a day, several days, a week). They swear they will only use a little bit at a time to stave off withdrawals. The problem is that once they start using drugs, they stop caring and all they want is more drugs. Most addicts fail and blow all their drugs all at once. Sometimes when addicts get

a lot of money they blow it all on drugs and go through a years worth of drugs in a few days. Some addicts manage to stay on public assistance, despite being homeless, and every month they get a huge check. The drugs won't let them spend their money wisely and they typically blow through the money on drugs and things like hotel rooms and prostitutes, and within a few weeks they are back on the streets checking payphones for spare change like the rest of the addicts.

When addicts are trying to get money for drugs, they sleep little and are on their feet a lot. By the time they get their drugs, they are often exhausted and weary. When they use drugs that are sedatives, or when they come down off of stimulant drugs, they crash and sleep for ten to twenty hours (depending on how long they've been up). They might wake up once or twice to go urinate or vomit, but most of the time they just enjoy being unconscious and not having withdrawal pains.

Taking care of other necessities of life comes last. When they are hungry, addicts usually go to soup kitchens, or search through dumpsters. They get clothing and hygiene products in the same way. Medical problems are usually ignored until they become emergencies, at which point the Addict is taken by friends or Volunteers to the emergency room.

Social Structure- Friendships rarely last long among addicts. Most start strong but end badly after one of the friends betrays the other in some moment of desperation. Sexual relationships last longer because there is a stronger mutual need, and addict lovers are likely to stay together despite betrayals. Couples cling to each other tenaciously, depending on each other for the physical aspects of survival as well as psychological support. These relationships are rarely happy ones: paranoid mistrust, frequent arguments and physical abuse are common. Each partner is likely to try to exploit the other, and women in these relationships are often pressured in to prostitution to support both herself and her partner. What's worse, when either partner seems close to leaving the streets or successfully quitting drugs, the other partner is likely to deliberately sabotage this progress.

The more intensely addictive the drug, the less likely the addict is to have friendships with other addicts. Alcohol is one of the least addictive drugs abused on the streets, and winos are likely to form friendships and even small communities that may last for decades. Winos who camp together may watch out for each other and even join together to fight off threats. Slave addicts, perhaps the most desperate of all addicts, may form brief compacts for the purposes of robbing someone or defending a shelter, but they seldom ever trust each other.

Advancement- Advancement as an addict is nearly impossible. There are skills that can help one survive as an addict, but almost all are learned within the first few months on the street. Wise old addicts don't have it much better than any other addict. Most addicts go steadily downhill as their health, their self-esteem and their mental health get steadily worse. A very few addicts catch the eye of a pusher and become personal servants for the pushers, they get paid with drugs for their loyalty and labor, and these addicts are better off than other addicts. Some addicts get off the streets and in to housing, via a job (even pushing) or public assistance, while still using, but their being housed rarely lasts long.

The best way to advance as an addict is to stop using. If pushers figure out that an addict is trying to quit, they will try to stop the addict, and many pushers would rather see an addict die than quit. Other addicts may sell out an addict who is trying to quit, hoping to gain favor among the pushers. There are many people and agencies trying to help addicts get off of drugs, but too few to help every addict trying to quit. At any given time, about one tenth of the addicts (about 1,500 people) are seriously trying to quit, and only about 200 Volunteers involved in programs designed to help addicts and only about 750 Goods trying to get users on less harmful drugs. Most addicts are on their own when trying to quit. Many addicts don't even seek help, knowing that they are likely to betray and hurt anyone who tries to help them.

The ultimate problem of quitting an addiction is a very simple one: an addict can successfully resist the urge to use drugs a million times, but if they fail only once then all that work is for nothing. Addicts expend incredible amounts of willpower in trying to quit, but one moment of weakness can bring it all down. Most addicts have tried to quit, and most addicts have stories about the moment of stupidity, or pain, or anxiety that brought them down.

Population- There are 15,000 drug addicts and winos living on the streets (compared to 10,000 indies and 30,000 wells). There are about 5,000 winos, 2,000 opiate addicts, 1,500 amphetamine addicts, 3,000 god killer addicts, 1,000 chomper addicts, 500 maxin addicts, 2,500 maunder addicts, 500 trace addicts, 1,000 escape addicts and 3,000 slave addicts living out on the streets. The addict population is growing at a rate of 10 per day (15 new addicts show up on the streets while 5 addicts die or make it off the streets).

External Relations- Addicts are one of the most universally disliked groups in the city. "Scum", "insects" and "animals" are words commonly used to describe them. Many think of the addicts as not having any free will of their own, being chemically driven to do whatever depraved act they must in order to get drugs. Even those who claim to have compassion for addicts are careful not to turn their backs on them.

Pushers: Most addicts are dependent on members of pusher gangs to supply them with their drugs. They usually hate the pushers they have to deal with, and may be beaten, raped or ripped off by the pushers with little they can do as vengeance. The only power addicts have is to move to an area controlled by a different pusher gang and hope that the other pusher gang will be nicer.

Drug Lords: The Drug Lords often use the Addicts to their advantage. The Drug Lords may, for instance, have their pushers put out word to all the addicts that they are paying a handsome sum for some piece of information, or they may even put a price on someone's head. It rarely takes the Drug Lords more than a few thousand to have nearly 15,000 addicts (in addition to 5,000 employees of the Drug Lords and many others) looking for some person. Addicts, thus, often become the enemies of the enemies of the Drug Lords (especially Goods, Hungry and Night Shift).

Goods and Volunteers: Goods and Volunteers are the only groups in the city who make it a full time job to help addicts. Most times addicts are grateful and try to help and protect the Goods and Volunteers. Sometimes, however, the addicts do harm to Goods and Volunteers, either to rob them or because they are doing the bidding of the pusher gangs.

Hungry: Almost all Hungry were once addicts living on the streets. Many still have contacts among the addicts community and even those Hungry with no contacts are sympathetic of Addicts.

Night Shift: The Night Shift has a split personality when it comes to addicts. At times they see addicts as victims of an evil organized crime agency. At other times addicts are seen as the largest horde of dangerous criminal scum in the city. Typically the Night Shift forgives addicts the crime of buying, possessing and using drugs, but they will beat down any addict who victimizes anyone else (including fellow addicts).

Typical Weapon- Sharp rocks and pieces of wood.

Turf- Addicts can be found all over the city, though they are more likely to be found outside of gang territory (where pushers operate) and in the most run-down neighborhoods with the most abandoned buildings (where addicts like to sleep).

Distinguishing Features- Most addicts are malnourished, many are skinny, many have thinning hair and missing teeth. They have many scars from untreated infections, and may have amputations of extremities lost to frostbite. Some addicts have needle-tracts on arms, legs, neck, etc. The longer the person has been shooting up, the more tracts. Addict clothing is typically dirtier, smellier and less well fitting than the clothing of most homeless people. Addicts rarely pay any attention to personal grooming, and the men usually have beards and both men and women commonly have long, unkempt hair.

Symbols- Graffiti artists often use pills, needles or small pipes to symbolize addicts.

Slang- Addicts in the city have thousands of special terms they use amongst themselves, and these vary between users of different drugs and between small groups of addicts. Each addict has an average of five slang names for his or her drug of choice and is able to convey messages to their fellow addicts, such as "I am searching for drugs" or "I have drugs" or "I am under the influence of drugs" using slang that few that might overhear would ever understand. More general slang, known by addicts of multiple groups, is:

Backtrack: v., Pull blood in to a needle prior to injecting.

Bang: v., Inject.

Blades: v., Snorting drugs from the tip of a hot knife.

Bring Up: v., Make a vein ready for injection.

Bugged: adj., Having sores from infected injection sites.

Candy: n., Drugs.

Carpet Sniffing: n., The crawl characteristic of an addict coming down and searching for any crumbs of drugs that may have been spilled.

Charlying: v., Rubbing drugs in to small cuts made in the skin.

Chilling: v., Snorting alcohol.

Cutting: v., Adding non-drug substances to drugs to increase profits.

Full Timer: n., A person who lives on the streets, devoting all their attention to getting drugs.

Gank: v., To cheat or steal drugs from another addict.

Hot: adj., Poisoned.

Huffing: n., Using inhalant drugs (e.g. sniffing glue).

Hustling: v., Doing whatever one can think of to make money for drugs.

Kit: n., Set of equipment for using drugs (especially with a syringe).

Lit: adj., Intoxicated.

Mainlining: v., Injecting drugs in to a bloodstream.

Mission: n., A search for drugs or trip to get drugs.

Part Timer: n., A person who keeps up their normal means of income while being an addict.

Popping: v., Injecting drugs directly under the skin, where they create a small bubble and are quickly absorbed in to the bloodstream.

Pulling: v., Vomiting, esp. from drug use.

Score: v., Buy drugs.

Speedball: n., A stimulant and a depressant taken together.

Stash: n., Drug hoard, especially when hidden.

Worm: n., A person who sells fake drugs.

Skills

Free Skills: Drug Resistance (1), Street Drugs (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 10, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, MIL 11, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 4, SOC 12, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The skills Street Drugs, Needles and Drug Resistance costs only 5 skill points per level.

Income- \$50 +\$7/wk.

Special Equipment- PCs who need special equipment to use their drug of choice (e.g. needles, pipes, lighters, spoons, etc.) get one free drug kit.

Special Bonus Characteristics

PCs must have one of the following disadvantages. Each disadvantage is as per their description in the disadvantages section (see p.39) but only gives the number of Bonus Points listed below:

Addiction: Alcohol- Gives 0 BPs. See p.39.

Addiction: Amphetamines- Gives 3 BPs. See p.39.

Addiction: Chomper- Gives 7 BPs. See p. 39.

Addiction: Escape- Gives 0 BPs. See p. 40.

Addiction: God Killer- Gives 7 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Opiates- Gives 3 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Inhalants- Gives 2 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Mauler- Gives 10 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Maxin- Gives 0 BPs. See p.40.

Addiction: Multi-Drug- Gives 0 BPs. See p.41.

Addiction: Slave- Gives 10 BPs. See p.41.

Addiction: Trace- Gives 10 BPs. See p.41.

Group: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC belongs to a small group of (4-6) addicts who are all addicted to the same drug. These addicts know each other, share living quarters and cooperate in schemes to make money. At their best (when they are not desperate for drugs) the group acts like a corner gang: the members protect each other and seek revenge for crimes committed against each other.

SRO: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 Bonus Points (only 5 if the PC also has the Group advantage)- The PC (and possibly some fellow addicts) have it together enough, most weeks, to scrape together the rent for a tiny room in a Single Room Occupancy residential hotel. The room is just barely big enough for a single cot and a nightstand. The bathroom is outside of the room and is shared with the whole floor. There is no kitchen, although some residents hook up hotplates and a lucky few even

have old mini-refrigerators. Having a door that locks is a luxury many addicts only dream of and the PC is in a much better position if he or she ever tries to get back on his or her feet. If a week goes by and the PC can't scrape up enough money to give to the manager, the PC will lose the room and be out on the streets.

Long-Term Addict: (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has been using his or her drug of choice for quite a while and is suffering badly from the drug's side effects. Depending on the PC's drug of choice, the PC suffers from:

Drug	Using For	Side Effects
Alcohol	10 yrs.	Brain damage (-5 INL, -5 AWR, retrograde ad anterograde amnesia at 10 difficulty save), liver damage (-5 to save vs. drug/poison effects).
Amphetamines	4 yrs.	Malnutrition (-3 BLD, -3 BDY)
Chomper	2 yrs.	Lost hair and teeth (-15 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-24 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects), Anemia (-2 BLD).
Escape	2 yrs.	Blunted personality (PC has few strong feelings about anything), severe insomnia (1 in 2 chance each night of getting any sleep), poor vision (-2 to vision based AWR rolls).

God Killer	6 yrs.	Emphysema (-6 END), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR).
Inhalants	2 yrs.	Brain Damage (-4 AWR, -4 AGY, -4 INL, -4 WIL).
Mauler	1 yr.	-12 INL, tendency to act without thinking.
Maxin	4 yrs.	Weakened bones (-3 BDY)
Multi-Drug	6 yrs.	Scars and Bad Skin (-4 to seduction rolls), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR), Poor Immune System (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and personality), Malnutrition (-2 BDY, -2 STH).
Opiates	4 yrs.	Poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).
Slave	2 Yrs.	Weight loss (-1 BDY, -1 BLD), pale skin, liver damage (-2 to save vs. poison/drug effects)
Trace	3 yrs.	Poor immune system (-12 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-3 AGY).

Suggested Skills- Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Needles, Shiv, Street Drugs.

Suggested Equipment- Phonebook Armor, Shiv.

Suggested Reading- Drugs.

Gamblers

In Brief- Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, witty, observant, intelligent, like challenges, good people-sense.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Calculating, charming, amoral, two faced, habitual liars, cheaters, prey on the weak minded.

Other Names- Cardsharks, Cheats.

Origin- The majority of games people play in the city can be traced back to England, China and Native America. English commoners brought their own forms of gambling to the United States. The Puritans tried to eliminate gambling, but failed. The US government eventually turned to lotteries for fund raising. Gambling as a profession first became large in the underworld of Victorian England, where the laws and society created a stable criminal class. "Magsmen" around London would play and cheat others on card and skittle games.

Large casinos appeared early in the beginning of the 19th century, and with them came professional gamblers who would use cheating and skill to make money at the expense of "the house." In the middle of the century, riverboat casinos became popular and flashy riverboat gamblers became well known (and widely hated). The largely unregulated and "uncivilized" west was filled with gambling. Chinese immigrants brought by the gold rush (and later by the railroads) ran some of their own gambling institutions. Prejudice forced many of these immigrants to move to the East coast, especially to New York's China Town (which would quickly grow to become the largest Chinatown in the Western hemisphere).

After the prohibition ended, gangsters turned to gambling as one of their sources of income. The great depression brought a new sense of morality, and mayor La Guardia, elected on a promise to clean up the streets, closed down many gambling houses and fought mobsters. The East

coast crackdown on mobsters sent them West to California, and a crackdown on them there forced them to Los Vegas, a paradise of legal gambling. In Los Vegas they set up large empires which set the culture of gambling for the rest of the country. Atlantic City in New Jersey legalized gambling hoping to become the Los Vegas of the East coast.

The next revolution in gambling came from a number of court decisions which gave Indian reservations the ability to open their own casinos, despite state regulations to the contrary. Gaming released the tribes from the prison of abject poverty they had been trapped in for centuries. Many tribes became healthy and successful communities with their gambling money. By the 2040s, the Native Americans were one of the few economic blocks in the US not owned or controlled by one of the three big multinational corporations. When the Freedom Army refused to grant the tribes autonomy, they formed their own armies and helped the US military fight the Freedom Army.

During the Freedom Army occupation of the city, gambling was outlawed but it did not end. Back-room and back-alley games of cards and dice were as common as ever, even when people had nothing more to gamble with than scraps of food. Even in these incredibly lean times, a few people survived the occupation on gambling proceeds alone. When the Freedom Wars ended, gambling stayed illegal. The city sprouted hundreds of illegal card-rooms, most in the back of bars. Flashy slot machines quickly left city consciousness in favor of simple craps and poker games.

People have been gambling since before recorded history. Whether the gambling was done in mob-owned card rooms, flashy casinos or in back alleys, there have always been a tiny class of people able to make a living through the proceeds of gambling. In the city today there are no tribes, corporations or organized crime agencies that run gambling in the city, but there are still professional gamblers.

Timeline

1665- 1st horse racing track built on Long Island.
 1800s- Large casinos in US.
 1835- Vigilantes in Mississippi lynch 5 cardsharks.
 1833- NY lottery ends after scandals.
 1849-1855- Gold Rush gambling.
 1850s- Heyday of riverboat gambler.
 1850s- Chinese immigrants bring new gambling to US
 1880s- Chinese, fleeing discrimination in California, start NY Chinatown
 1895- 1st slot machine.
 1900s- NY public fear of Chinatown gambling, prostitution and crime.
 1929-1932- NY Mayor La Guardia war on sin (including gambling houses)
 1931- Gambling legal in Nevada.
 1978- New Jersey legalizes casinos to revitalize Atlantic City.
 1980s- Video slot machines become popular.
 1987- Court decision opens door for Indian gaming.
 2010- On-Line gambling so prevalent, casino gambling nearly extinct.
 2050- Freedom Army makes enemy of US Indian tribes.
 2053- Gambling made illegal by Freedom Army.
 2055- Restoration committee grants increased autonomy to Indian tribes.

Becoming- Some gamblers have parents who are gamblers and learn the trade from their family. Others find they have a proficiency as children and learn from other older gamblers (who occasionally like to take on apprentices). Gamblers must learn many skills and weave them together seamlessly to win without causing suspicion.

At level one, adventure one the PC has been gambling professionally for about 6 months, long enough that the PC is confident that he or she can make a living gambling.

Lifestyle- Successful Gamblers do not believe in luck. People who lose money gambling believe in luck. They believe that because they have lost several times they are more likely to win the next round, or they may believe that they may win because they deserve it or because they want it badly enough. Professional gamblers never depend on the outcome of a die roll or card draw to be anything other than completely random. "Luck" never favors any person for any reason, except cheaters.

Professional gamblers survive by combining incredible gambling skill with the ability and willingness to cheat when necessary. Gamblers have learned hundreds of methods of cheating that most people would never think of, some high-tech, some centuries old. There are dozens of ways for a cheater to mark a card so that nobody can notice the markings but them, from creating tiny holes, to using infra-red paint (which can only be seen with special glasses), to making tiny indentations on the card with a fingernail. Gamblers also use sleight of hand to switch cards, making sure they get the good cards and their opponents get the bad cards. Gamblers need only see a card for a blink of an eye to recognize it and Gamblers can easily look at the top card of a deck without being caught. Gamblers can also use sleight of hand to replace dice with loaded dice. Special devices, from mirrors to remote transmitters, can be used to spy on the hands of other players.

Card counting is another common form of cheating. The Gambler keeps note of the value of cards that have been

used, and determines from this information what cards are most likely to come up. Most Gamblers can do the math in their heads, other must hide small calculating devices on their person (e.g. a device in the shoe which responds to coded toe-presses).

Gamblers often work together: one plays as the gambler who will win the money, the other is a "confederate." Confederates pretend not to know the gambler at all, instead they pose as another player or as a person simply observing the game. Confederates not in the game can peek at the hands of other players and relay that information to players using a variety of secret codes. Confederates within the game can strategize together using secret codes and gain a huge advantage over other players. Confederates are also useful to look out for law enforcement, to provide distractions when a Gambler needs people looking the other way, or to "accidentally" get in the way of anyone chasing a caught cheater.

Gamblers try to get in on games that are already going, but they may quickly find themselves unwelcome at card rooms. When people on street corners start games up, Gamblers join in, and they are likely to start some themselves.

Social Structure- Most gamblers work alone, but a few work together in small groups. When they work in groups, it is typically to help create and maintain an illusion in a complex scam. Many gamblers take on apprentices just so they can have confederates for such scams.

Gamblers can typically recognize other professional gamblers by style of play alone, and they avoid playing against each other whenever possible (playing against each other would be the gambling equivalent of a fair fight, and neither party wants that). Some gamblers may be protective of their turf and try to chase off other gamblers. Most gamblers have the courtesy to warn a turf invader, but if they don't take the hint the worst thing a gambler can do is expose another. Most gamblers are more concerned with making a money than conflicts with each other, but a few have been known to get in feuds.

Advancement- Gamblers advance by becoming more skilled at the skills of gambling (Card Counting, Gambling, Read Tell, Sleight of Hand). Those who save their money can reinvest it in nice clothing so that they can pose as Indies and Wells and get in to higher stake games. The limit on Gamblers in the city is that there just aren't enough rich people to have very-high-stake games. A Gambler might move from \$50 pot games to \$500 pot games, but there are no \$5000 pot games unless the Gambler can afford to leave the city and live near large casinos.

Population- There are about 400 gamblers living in the city.

External Relations- Gamblers try not to be known as Gamblers. If someone realizes that someone is a Gambler, then that Gambler has made a serious professional error. Known Gamblers are often hated and sometimes even hunted. Gamblers typically pose as well Freelancers and are treated accordingly.

Street People: Since Gamblers are street people, they may have contacts within the street people community that know that they are Gamblers. Some Gamblers may even hire non-Gamblers to help them as confederates. Gamblers are especially likely to have friends, lovers and family members who are Jacks, Sex Workers and Thieves.

Freaks: Gamblers come to Freak territory en-masse during the festival of the Freak to try to make money from festival goers. Most Freaks use scams or tricks in some way or another. Because they use the same techniques, Gamblers often recognize what Freaks are doing and visa versa. "Professional courtesy" keeps them from ratting each other out.

Typical Weapon- Switchblades are common (because gamblers know sleight-of-hand and can bring out a switchblade covertly).

Turf- Gambling is scattered all over the city. There are many games going on in the backs of bars and many games that start up spontaneously on alleys and street corners. The highest concentration of gambling is in the red light district, directly South of the Hole (a.k.a. Central Park). Many Gamblers can be found in Freak territory during the Festival of the Freak.

Distinguishing Features- Gamblers tend to dress a little more flashily than most street people, they spend a lot of money on clothes and are able to pass as Wells or even Indies. They may have fake jewelry to accentuate the illusion of wealth. It is important for Gamblers to look like people who don't care if they lose a lot of money (rather than street people desperate to turn a profit so they can feed themselves).

Symbols- Dice and cards and other game pieces are common symbols for gamblers. Some gamblers may use personal symbols that consist of specific cards, or combinations of dice, etc.

Slang

Action: n., The total amount one person bets in the course of a game.

Confederate: n., A person who helps a gambler make money.

High Roller: n., A person who gambles a lot of money.

Holdout: n., An extra card kept on one's person.

Juicer: n., Person who marks cards.

Mechanic: n., Sleight-of-hand cheater.

Shooter: n., A person rolling dice.

Shill: n., Person with the job of upping bets (even though they will probably lose).

Spook: n., Someone who peeks on players and secretly conveys information to a player.

Stacking: n., Pre-arranging cards in a deck.

Tell: n., A behavior that betrays a bluff.

Wall Kid: n., Lookout.

Skills

Free Skills: Gambling (2), Sleight of Hand (1), Card Counting (1), Read Tell (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 11, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Read Tell costs only 10 skill points per level.

Read Tell (Uses AWR) Everyone has a tell, some unconscious behavior that they do when they are bluffing. A Gambler learns to watch a person (a person can make a Hard opposed AWR roll to notice if they are being watched) play several games to discover their tell.

Easy (10): From tells, figure out if a player is trying to hide strong emotions.

Moderate (20): From tells, figure out if someone has a good or bad hand.

Heard (30): From tells, figure out the relative value of a player's hand.

Legendary (40): From tells, and the other cards that have been dealt, figure out every single card a person holds.

Income- \$250 +\$10/wk.

Special Equipment- Free dice and a deck of cards.

Suggested Skills- Card Counting, Drug Resistance, Forgery, Gambling, Pocket Picking, Seduction, Sleight of Hand.

Suggested Equipment- Knife: Switchblade, Outfit: Clubwear.

Suggested Reading- Fashion & Style.

Jacks

In Brief- Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, brave, creative, entertaining, loyal and hard working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Loud, obnoxious, hyperactive, annoying, uneducated, prideless con-artists.

Other Names- Jacks-of-all-trades, Beggars.

Origin- Begging has been a staple for homeless people for millennia. Throughout ages and cultures, people have come up with many different methods to enhance their begging. Some used strong arm tactics, begging forcefully and with an implied threat. Some used signs with evocative messages on them. Some came up with stories about needing gas money to drive a pregnant wife to the hospital, or of being robbed after just getting in to town. Some beggars try to be amicable and entertaining, forcing the beggie to like the beggar. Some beggars blurred the lines between beggars and day-laborers: their "will work for food" signs would occasionally net them paying jobs, but much more often would get them

alms. In the 20th century, places like New York and San Francisco became so inundated with beggars that people learned to tune them out. In order to get noticed, beggars in these places had to be very dramatic or entertaining. In the economic troubles of the 2030s and 2040s it became so bad that if a beggar wasn't a child or attractive woman he or she had to be a one-person show. To make even a bit of change a beggar had to be able to sing and dance, tell jokes and stories, even do dangerous stunts.

There is a story that, around 2070, someone came around some street corner asking for Jack, wanting to hire him for something. A local beggar, thinking that there might be some opportunity in it, said that yes, he was Jack. He was taken along to some job, bluffed his way through it (stories about what he did vary), succeeded via quick thinking and pure luck, and was paid a handsome sum of money. The beggar told his beggar friends, and the next day when someone came looking for Jack, a handful of people came up all claiming to be Jack. The story goes on to say that the skills and quick thinking of "Jack" became increasingly well known, until every beggar in the city was claiming to be Jack and claimed to do any sort of job.

A new form of beggar was born in the city. A brave, gregarious, extroverted, quick thinker who claims to be able to take on any job. "Jack" beggars became so popular that beggars (save for the children and people too old or disabled to be cavorting around) were forced to start calling themselves Jacks in order to compete.

Timeline

1980s- "Will work for food" signs became popular.

2070- First Jack.

2075- City beggars all call themselves Jack.

Joining- Being a Jack is not a learned trade, it's something people do if they don't have any other skills that they can use to make a living. Many Jacks grew up on the streets as homeless orphans, surviving mostly by begging. Very few Jacks are ever "trained" by other Jacks, although Jacks may watch other Jacks in action and see what they do. For the most part, though, being a Jack can't be learned, it's about improvising, saying or doing anything to make money.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been calling himself or herself Jack for about half a year and has learned most of the ins-and-outs of the trade. The Jack is usually too new to have any loyal repeat customers.

Lifestyle- The Jack phenomenon is begging that has evolved to meet the current sensibilities of city residents. Jacks are homeless people who make money by begging and doing odd-jobs. They accost people who are walking down the streets and ask if there's anything they can do for the person for a buck. The Jacks have a near limitless list of things they can do for a buck: give directions, tell a joke, sing a song, take a message, give a foot massage, listen to the begee's problems, carry their bags, protect their home from burglars while they are gone, watch their back, etc. Usually the person who was accosted gives the Jack a dollar just to get them to shut up and go away. Sometimes, the person hears something they like and pays a dollar for the service. People have varying experiences when they actually pay for a service, some say that the Jacks did a horrible job and ripped them off, other claim that the Jacks did a great job. Enough people have had good experiences that they come back asking for Jacks whenever they need help doing something. Jacks who do their jobs well often become trusted servants for Indies and even Wells.

Some Jacks use their people-skills as sales-people. They or other street people will salvage things from the trash and then the Jack will try to sell it to the people he or she accosts. A Jack might sell some trinket worth ten cents for a buck. The buyer typically knows the item is not worth much, but buying it serves the purposes of giving money to this likable person and getting the person to go away. Some Jacks even turn to drug sales: selling soft drugs (cheap marijuana, hallucinogens, mild opiates) to tourists and young people.

Jacks are especially good at recognizing people new to the city. When they find a newcomer their goal is to both protect and exploit the person. Jacks do help people find their way around the city, give them interesting information about the city, teach them how to survive, and even protect them when necessary. The Jack's assistance is valuable, but also costs a lot (up to \$20 a day). The new person in the city may become dependent on the Jack and sink a good portion of his or her income in to supporting the Jack.

Jacks are also good at finding people who have a hard time saying no. If the Jack does something for someone and gets a buck, it's not in the Jack's interests to simply go away. The Jack tries to find something else they can do for a buck. A Jack will never leave until a person stops paying them. As long as a person pays, the Jack will follow the person home and become a butler or maid. Jacks are so persistent and helpful that a lot of people let Jacks in to their homes. Typically, this kind of situation doesn't last long. Jacks are good at thinking on their feet and making friends, but they are seldom good at commitment and dependability. So, Jacks may have periods when they have a nice couch to sleep on and good food to eat, but in all likelihood they will be back on the street within a week.

Life as a Jack is all about uncertainty. Jacks can never know how much money they will get that day, where they will be sleeping or how they will eat. Some people would go crazy with anxiety and stress in this kind of lifestyle. The people who survive as Jacks are people who seldom think about the future and focus their minds only on the present moment. Jacks are classic extraverts, and many would be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder if they had ever been to a doctor. A few Jacks have bipolar disorder: when they are manic they beg and make money, when they are depressed they survive on whatever they have saved.

Social Structure- Jacks operate independently and autonomously, owing allegiance to no person. The only relationships or obligation that Jacks have are obligations to loyal customers.

Advancement- Jacks can increase their income tenfold in the course of a day if they run in to a person for whom they can make themselves indispensable. A small number of Jacks have left the streets after becoming personal servants to city Indies.

Population- There are about 1,500 Jacks in the city.

External Relations- No group prompts more varied opinions than Jacks. Some think of them as admirable, hard working and honest. Others think of them as liars, cheats and leeches on society. Jacks are out meeting and interacting with as many people as they can every day and almost every person in the city has had some experience, good or bad, with a Jack. That experience sets how they view Jacks.

Street People: Most of the Street People who make a living via some skill or talent don't like Jacks. In their rush to say anything to make a buck, Jacks often claim to be Black Meds, Crackers, Insomniacs, etc. When they do this, Jacks don't just compete with other Street People, they hurt their reputations. For instance: when a Jack claims to be able to hack in to a computer and then fails, it is the Crackers whose reputations suffer. The Black Meds have even tried to make PR war against the Jacks: every time they see a poor stitching job they say "this looks like a Jack job."

Typical Weapon- Many Jacks invest in tools they can use to do odd jobs: hammers, crowbars, brooms, etc. These tools often double as weapons.

Turf- The Jacks have no turf, they wander around all of the city looking for people to accost. They are found wherever people tend to be found: the major cross-town avenues, Broadway, subways and near the tourist hotels in the Northern part of the red light district.

Distinguishing Features- Jacks find that it helps to dress as nicely as they can. They are still obviously homeless people but they pay a lot of attention to their appearance. Street People who are attractive find it easier to survive by begging and so many Jacks are physically attractive.

Symbols- The letter J is a common symbol of jacks, and some Jacks even wear J patches or tattoos.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 10, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 9, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- \$100 +\$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Quick Improvisation: (Mandatory Advantage) Jacks are not necessarily smarter than other people in the city, but through practice they have become quite good at thinking improvisationally. What this mean in terms of game play is that GMs should afford players a bit more time to think about their reactions, even in time sensitive situations.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, City Knowledge, Fashion and Beauty, Cooking, Music, Seduction, Sleight of Hand, Storytelling, Trading.

Suggested Equipment- Carpentry Tools.

Suggested Reading- City Culture.

Runners

In Brief- Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, hard working, reputable, quick, wary, trustworthy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Stupid, single-minded, servants with little free will.

Other Names- Riders, Errand Boys/Girls, Gophers, Delivery.

Origin- The modern black market formed during the Freedom Army occupation of the city from 2050 to 2054. Communications systems had been knocked out and the provisional systems set up to replace them were monitored by the Freedom Army. To keep their activities secret, the vast web of black market traders had to communicate in person or by handwritten messages. Children and homeless people were hired to carry messages, goods and money back and forth within the city. Street kids who were proficient with personal transportation (bikes, skateboards, roller blades) were especially valued.

After the Freedom Wars ended, the basic framework of the black market continued. Traders became more blasé about secrecy: they used encrypted voice communications and money transfers to conduct business. They still needed runners to carry physical goods. There was a growing population of people who had been born on the streets and who couldn't get any better job than running errands for black market Traders. There was stiff competition and only the fastest, most efficient and most trustworthy Runners got jobs. Other people in the city, however, started seeing how good these runners were. Soon, people all over the city were hiring runners regularly.

Timeline

2050- Freedom Army occupies the city

2053- Food shortages in the occupied city

2055- Freedom Army in the city destroyed

2075- Traders fight with Drug Lords over drug sales

Joining- Runners typically start very early in life, as homeless children with no other way to make a living who take minor items for quarters. As they grow and learn more about the city, they learn how to get a package anywhere in the city quickly. They gain the trust of Traders and they start making more money. At level one, adventure one, the PC is generally thought of as a young adult and has had several years of good history with Traders.

Lifestyle- For runners, each errand they run is significant to their career. Getting a job done quickly and getting

the package delivered safely means they are likely to be given another job. The runners who are the fastest and most dependable are given the most important (and best paying) jobs.

Runners do most of their jobs for Traders, though they give their contact information to everyone they meet (any satisfied customer might someday hire a Runner). Most runners have cell phones or pagers that people can use to contact them. Some even hang outside in front of the building of the Trader most likely to hire them so that the Trader only has to shout out his or her window.

Whenever they can, Runners like to try to form relationships with shut-ins. This can be hard because Shut-Ins are very wary of talking to strangers. Once a Runner can convince a shut-in that they are trustworthy the shut-in will occasionally call on the Runner to do errands. These errands are usually easy because they don't require the Runner to go very far. The Shut-In typically wants something from a grocery, drug or liquor store and knows that hiring a Runner is cheaper than having the store send a delivery person.

Most Runners have some cheap means of transport. Those who do not have transport will only get local delivery jobs and don't make as much money. Bicycles are the most common. A bicycle is a Runner's livelihood and they often take it with them everywhere (even if that means carrying it up several flights of stairs). Most Runners become accomplished at bicycle repair and can fix most problems within a few minutes.

Runners get together in cooperative groups to do subway hand-offs. They take turns doing "running" and "riding." The Runner who is riding pays to get in to the subway system and stays there for days, riding the trains. Other Runners pass packages through the turnstiles to the Rider, who delivers them to other Runners on the other side. The riders get food and drink passed to them and most Runners enjoy their time riding as the only time they get to relax (and heal from injuries).

Runners survive by being fast. Criminals know that runners may be carrying money or valuable goods. Runners can usually outrun (or outride) any muggers, but muggers have been known to set traps for Runners. Runners try to stay anonymous, but it is hard when they are carrying a package under one arm and racing around the city on a bike.

Social Structure- Runners do the majority of their jobs for one to three traders that they know well. They are most likely to work with other Runners who work for the same Traders as they do. Runners seldom need anything big

from each other, but they do each other a lot of little favors. There is an assumption of reciprocity among Runners: a Runner asks for a favor expecting to someday return it.

Advancement- Runners advance by getting better transportation: a better bicycle, an electric bicycle, even a slipboard. Faster Runners get very important rush-jobs that pay significantly more. The best Runners in the city make almost three times as much as a starting Runner (up to \$45/wk.).

Population- There are about 750 Runners in the city (about 1.5 per black market trader).

External Relations- Traders do well to present themselves as honest and friendly. When Runners meet someone it is usually because they are delivering something. Runners are usually appreciated and liked by the person they deliver to. Runners try to make contacts among every segment of city society: they are as happy running errands for Traders, gang members, street people families or shut-ins.

Traders: The majority (95%) of a Runner's business is given to them by black market traders. Runners depend on the trust and good graces of Traders for their very survival (and Traders depend on trustworthy Runners to run their businesses efficiently). Traders are notorious gossips and are quite willing to tell everyone they know what they think of a Runner. An accusation of theft, even if the Runner is completely innocent, can be disastrous. For the most part, however, Traders trust Runners implicitly. Some Traders grow to trust Runners so much that they will pay them to do non-Running chores like baby-sit their children. A few Runners have become diplomats, speaking on behalf of very powerful traders.

Turf Protective Gangs: Runners need to get places as quickly as possible, and this means ignoring the boundaries of turf. Gangs who don't like their turf invaded tend to be annoyed by Runners. This includes

the Purists, Risen and Skin Borgs. Some of the Runners' shortcuts even involve briefly trespassing on the turf of the Roofers and the Keepers.

Typical Weapon- Although most runners carry a knife or some other weapon, their means of transportation (bike, skateboard, etc.) is usually the easiest thing for them to attack with.

Turf- Runners usually hang out where the black market traders are (see Traders, p.159).

Distinguishing Features- Runners try to dress like average street people, though they are typically more athletic and have better transportation. They often wear baggy clothing so that packages can be easily concealed on their person. A typical outfit would be stained shorts, a knit cap, and a baggy flannel sweater.

Symbols- Running stick figures are commonly used in graffiti to represent Runners.

Skills

Free Skills: Running (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 10, CMBT 6, CRTV 5, INFO 12, MIL 10, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- \$200 +\$15/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Geographic Familiarity: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC gets +10 to any City Knowledge roll concerning how to get somewhere or where anything is in the city.

Suggested Skills- Bicycle, Climbing, Information Smuggling, Mechanics, Mnemonics, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Backpack, Bicycle, Vehicle Repair Tools: Portable.

Suggested Reading- Black Market, City Geography, City Infrastructure.

Sex Workers

In Brief- Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Favorable Stereotypes- Survivors, good instincts, keep promises, empathetic.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, unambitious, weak willed, untrustworthy, hateful.

Other Names- Whores (derogatory), Hustlers (usually referring to male prostitutes), Street Walkers, Prostituted People (a term used by activists to emphasize that prostitution is a crime committed against individuals, not an identity), Hookers.

Origin- Throughout history, the status of female prostitutes (who make up the vast majority of prostitutes) has varied with the status of women, ranging from societies in which women were traded like cattle to societies where prostitutes could become entrepreneurs and gain wealth and status. In ancient India and the Middle East, prostitutes worked in temples, making money for them. Intercourse with these prostitutes was considered holy. Later, in ancient Greece, there were three classes of prostitutes: simple brothel workers, those trained in different forms of entertainment, and owners of salons who played hosts to

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

the rich and powerful. In ancient Rome, widespread slavery led to a large class of slave-prostitutes, which Roman law gave even less rights to than normal slaves.

Early Christianity did little to stop prostitution in ancient Europe. Christian churches followed the teachings of St. Augustine. St. Augustine said that prostitution was an inescapable evil: if it were wiped out then there would

be even greater sins committed (like rape). At the same time, corrupt government officials and even church leaders made fortunes on the proceeds of prostitution. It wasn't until the 16th century, when prostitution was linked to syphilis outbreaks, that major government and religious crackdowns on prostitution occurred. Punishments for prostitutes became increasingly harsh, while punishments for the men who visited them were light or non-existent.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the industrial revolution created huge cities. With the anonymity of city life, prostitution flourished. Many countries quit trying to stop prostitution, and instead implemented cruel and degrading medical inspection of prostitutes. The people running prostitution (usually men with criminal histories) found that foreign women would work for less and with less disobedience. An international trade in human beings

(mostly young women) began and flourished all over Europe, despite attempts by industrialized countries to stop it. This trade would only grow (encompassing the whole globe) in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the mid 19th century, growing industry in lower Manhattan pushed prostitution up towards midtown (in between 34th and 59th streets). Broadway, always a major commercial thoroughfare, became the center of prostitution in the city. Many of the brownstones in this part of town became saloons, hotels and brothels where prostitutes operated. This part of town became quickly known as the Tenderloin, one of the country's many "red light" districts. Red light districts became popular in the late 1870s as a means of quarantining prostitution to parts of town where it would not bother "ordinary people." The tenderloin remained a red light district until a booming theatre industry forced it out. The tenderloin became "times square." With the theatre came a number of gay men. The bar at the Astor Hotel and the Metropolitan Opera became major tea rooms (places where men would go to pick up other men using pre-arranged secret signals). Gay prostitutes started appearing in the area.

When servicemen returning from World War two started frequenting midtown, there was a sudden market for pornography. Several adult bookstores sprang up in the Times Square areas. In the 1960s, attitudes and laws regarding sex and prostitution became more lax. Adult bookshops, theaters and peep-shows proliferated in the Times Square, and drug dealers and prostitutes (male and female) worked the streets. Times Square once again became known as a seedy and dangerous part of town. This changed in the 1980s with renewed attempts by legitimate businesses to revitalize the area. The city government made deals with large corporations (Disney, MTV) and by the end of the 20th century had virtually wiped out sex and pornography around Times Square (pushing it, instead, to other parts of the city).

After the Freedom Wars, there was a massive exodus out of the city. Most tourist class hotels closed and the only ones left were the former-luxury hotels built along central park South. With the city's only tourists and business travelers nearby, the sex industry once again concentrated in the area near Times Square. Prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors and peep shows moved back in to the Times Square area, eager to earn tourist dollars. This part of town quickly became known to city residents as "the

of town quickly became known to city residents as "the red light district".

Despite the movements of the sex industry to different parts of town, the lifestyles of prostitutes in the city changed little from the mid 20th century to the late 2070s. Pimps (mostly male), kept prostitutes (mostly female) using psychological and physical bondage. Pimps took all the prostitutes' earnings and only gave back enough for the prostitutes to survive. Pimps, in turn, have often owed allegiances or paid tributes to whatever organized crime was currently ruling the city. Whenever there was a crackdown on prostitution in the city, it was usually the prostitutes that would suffer while little happened to johns and pimps. The pimps had it good and so this system of

exploitation survived many attempts to wipe it out. The average voter knew little about the nature of prostitution: they only saw the scantily clad men and women and did not see their exploiters. The people who spent their time on the streets (the gang members, criminals, gutterpunks homeless people, etc.) knew the truth, but until recently they had very little power.

In 2076, a new gang formed called the Sexologists. The Sexologists were a psychic Indie gang that preached healthy loving sex. As the Sexologists grew in size and influence they decided to make war on the pimps. The Sexologists and their devotees would make regular trips in to the red light district, acting on knowledge gained from informants to find and beat up pimps. Although many Sexologists preached non-violence, they were not afraid to kill if a pimp refused to take his beating and fought back. Within a few months, the city's pimps had either fled, been killed, or had gone deep underground. The prostitutes of the city

suddenly found themselves out from under the thumb of pimps.

The removal of pimps was good in a lot of ways: many people left the sex industry, others were able to become escorts and strippers. Many remained prostitutes but enjoyed increased income and more autonomy (especially an increased ability to choose what tricks to take). The removal of pimps has not, however, been a panacea for the problems of prostitutes. In the absence of pimps, Johns became more exploitative: paying less, demanding more, trading sex for things like shelter and protection. Worse still, johns started preying on prostitutes even more than before: refusing to pay them, beating them, robbing them, raping them and even killing them.



In response to this increased need for self-protection, many prostitutes taught themselves self-defense (even lethal self-defense). Many of the same prostitutes, taking a clue from the gang code of revenge, started forming revenge pacts. About a year ago, four prostitutes formed a pact, and got tattoos with a triangle of symbols to advertise that pact. Other copied this and the triangles quickly became common, almost a status symbol among prostitutes. The triangle also became a symbol that city prostitutes were coming in to their own, learning to defend themselves. However, hope for city sex workers is still limited: those who really become self-sufficient typically leave the sex industry, to be replaced by naïve and psychologically weak runaways.

Timeline

1500s- Syphilis outbreaks in Europe cause crackdown on prostitution.
 1699- 1st US anti-prostitution laws.
 1700s-1800s- Industrial revolution creates big cities, larger prostitution market.
 1849- Term "hooker" (British slang for a thief) 1st used to describe prostitutes in US.
 1863- Disreputability of Gen. Joe Hooker's soldiers helps popularize term "hooker".
 1825- Anti-brothel riot in Lennox Pennsylvania
 1870s- Creation of "red light" districts in order to hem in prostitution
 1910- Congress passes "white slave traffic" act.
 1910s- Broadway becomes home to the much live theatre.
 1925- Charles Luciano, early Mafioso, gains control of all of Manhattan prostitution.
 1945- Returning WWII soldiers create market for semi-legal porn shops in Times Sq.
 1960s- Sex laws loosen, bring legal pornography to Times Square.
 1984-1996- "42nd Street Development Project," MTV, Disney & city cleans Times Sq.
 2055- Prostitution returns to Times Sq. as legal commerce dries up.
 2076-2078- Sexologists form.
 2079- Sexologists attack pimps.
 2079- First "triangle" revenge pact.

Becoming- Most of the current sex workers were forced or coerced in to prostitution before the Sexologist war on pimps. Almost all had tragic childhoods and ended up on the streets of the city with absolutely no knowledge of how to protect or care for themselves. Runaways come to the streets every day, from every strata of society, and professional exploiters are always on the lookout for those who look especially lost and helpless. Some of these exploiters are from cults, some are from the pornography industry, and up until recently most of them were pimps.

Pimps are often sweet at first, but end up keeping prostitutes in line with physical intimidation and psychological abuse. Abuse keeps prostitutes' self-esteem so low that they seldom seek anything better in their lives. Pimps keep prostitutes totally dependent on them, never allowing them to learn to take care of themselves.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been working in the sex industry (primarily working the streets as a prostitute) for several years. The PC has been free of his or her pimp for several months. The PC has learned how to obtain food, clothing and shelter, but still has no non-sex industry skills which could be used to make a living.

Sex Workers and Childhood Sexual Abuse

A large portion of sex industry workers have been sexually abused as children (more than other city residents). There are two explanations for the high prevalence of childhood sexual abuse:

The sociopolitical explanation is that both the sexual abuse history and the current state of prostitution can be explained by one overarching cause: bad homes. Almost all prostitutes were raised in homes that were rife with mental illness, substance abuse and criminal neglect. These households made the children vulnerable to every type of victimization, including sexual victimization, as well as making them vulnerable to ending up on the streets, penniless, having never been taught any skills that could be used to make a living, with prostitution just about the only means for survival.

The psychologists' explanation is more subtle: sexual abuse has caused the person to grow up thinking of sex not as a pleasurable activity, not as an activity that strengthens a romantic relationship, but as an service that can be bartered. This unhealthy sexual worldview makes people more likely to seek employment in the sex industry.

Lifestyle- The most common transaction in the city sex industry looks something like this: *A male john walking down Broadway sees a female prostitute that he likes and that he thinks is within his price range. He walks up to her and offers a certain amount of money for a quick sex act. She quickly decides that he is probably not a serial killer and starts haggling with him. Whether or not a condom will be used and whether or not the john will pay up-front are just points in the negotiation. When the two come to an arrangement, the prostitute leads the john down an alley, to a nice quiet, private spot (that is within earshot of the prostitutes' friends if she calls for help). The sexual act is engaged, standing or on an old weather-beaten couch (placed there for just that purpose). The prostitute and the john arrange their clothing and the john pays. The prostitute has made \$10 for an hour of waiting around, a few minutes of haggling and rarely more than a minute of sexual activity.* Countless variations exist on this basic scenario. Not all prostitutes are female and not all johns are male. Some situations are better, with the sex worker leaving happier and wealthier, and some are much worse.

Some johns are better than others: some are repeat customers who the prostitute knows and trusts, some pay more than the normal market price because they feel like it, some are socially isolated people who are paying for human interaction as much as they are for sex. Some Johns will buy presents or food for prostitutes, or will take them to a nice hotel (the prostitute may even get a cut from the hotel owner).

Some johns are worse than others. With no pimps to protect prostitutes, many johns believe they can do whatever they want. Some haggle quite viciously, knowing that the sex worker will work for next to nothing if pushed. At two or three AM, when many prostitutes are ready to go to sleep for the night, many Johns come by offering a place to stay the night in exchange for sexual services. A few johns are even evolving in to pimps: demanding both sex and a few bucks for a safe place to sleep for the night. Johns might seem perfectly nice but have some communicable disease that the sex worker may catch. Johns sometimes try to humiliate, beat or rob prostitutes. Serial killers often prey on prostitutes, and often use money as a lure to try to get the prostitute to come to an isolated place. This is why Sex Workers rarely go to an unfamiliar or isolated place without a friend.

"Happy prostitute? Sure, I've heard of them, but I don't know any. Maybe it's like back when slavery was legal and the white people would have one happy slave which they would bring out to show that slavery was okay."

-M'Rick Silva, Sex Worker

When things go bad, Sex Workers must be ready to defend themselves at a moment's notice. Many wear knives in sheathes that remain strapped to their bodies at all times. To gain further protection, many Sex Workers join a revenge pact with three friends. These pacts are known by their symbol: the triangle. The triangle is a solid black tattoo visible on the prostitute's body. The triangle has the Sex Worker's personal symbol in the center (symbols are used, rather than names, because many prostitutes are illiterate). On each corner of the triangle is a smaller symbol representing the other three prostitutes that participated in the pact. The pact is an oath to avenge the death of anyone in the pact (or die trying). Sex Workers take this oath very seriously, and they get very angry with any Sex Worker caught shirking revenge duty. When a Sex Worker is found murdered, other Sex Workers comb the streets looking for people with matching symbols so they can inform those people of their duty. Many Sex Workers memorize the triangles of those working nearby them so that they can identify the triangle symbols even if a killer removes the triangle. The threat of revenge represented by a triangle is not as fearful as the threat of revenge of killing a gang member, but is a great enough threat that it makes life as a Sex Worker significantly safer.

Why Men?

Ask any Sex Worker, male or female, to tell horror stories about johns and nine out of ten stories will be about male johns. It is a statistical fact that a majority of those who seek sex for money are men and that an even greater majority of those who engage in sexual violence are men. Many Sex Workers, both male and female, come to believe that all men enjoy hurting and humiliating women. Sexologists, and others, have gone to great pains to tell people that this is not true, that only a minority of men find sexual satisfaction from violence and cruelty. Those who have used psychic skills or other techniques to experience the consciousness of both men and women say that, with exceptions, sexual desire is different between men and women. This difference in how desire "works" means that men have a greater capacity than women to find violence or cruelty sexually stimulating. Evolutionary psychologists have many theories why a difference in male and female sexual desire would be selected for, but nobody knows all the details for sure.

Social Structure- Most Sex Workers start as prostitutes working the street, and few ever see any other segment of the sex industry. Most Sex Workers don't owe anyone and they work only to gain enough money to get by. Their only allegiances, if any, are with a small group of other prostitutes with which they have a revenge pact. With other prostitutes they are usually friendly (though there may be feuds). The most common source of friction between two prostitutes is a dispute over who "owns" a particular working corner.

A few prostitutes working the streets (about 1 in 20) still have pimps controlling them from behind the scenes. These pimps must keep themselves secret or face violence at the hands of the Sexologists. Since they must stay

secret, they have less control over their prostitutes than they did a few years ago. Most pimps have 3 to 6 prostitutes working for them (usually all males or all females). There are a few pimps who have only one prostitute, and most of these are the spouses, significant others or parents of the prostitutes.

A small number of Sex Workers work as prostitutes, but do not work the streets. They advertise on the internet, receive calls on cell phones or pagers and go to wherever the potential john is. These Sex Workers have little contact with other Sex Workers.

Some Sex Workers operate out of escort services, brothels, strip clubs, pornography studios and massage parlors. Sex Workers in these establishments are typically employees of the owners of these businesses. Many of the owners are ex-pimps who expanded in to semi-legitimate business before or during the Sexologist war against pimps. A few of these are owned by Sex Workers or ex-Sex Workers. The largest and most profitable (including some of the strip clubs, most of the pornography studios and all four of the escort services) are owned by private investors from outside of the city. The Sex Workers that work in these establishments are typically free to leave whenever they want.

Even johns have some small amount of social organization. Multiple sex sites on the internet are visited by city johns, or people interested in visiting the city in order to meet a Sex Worker. On these sites, people describe experiences with prostitutes, give tips, tell what charges are reasonable, rate prostitutes and give information on how to find those prostitutes. One popular net site gives a list of street walkers who won't fight back if johns "slap them around a bit."

Advancement- The fastest and easiest way for a Sex Worker to improve his or her quality of life is to leave the business. A few Sex Workers escape with the help of friends, family or lovers and a few escape with the help of charity organizations, but most are on their own and have to teach themselves the skills they need to survive outside of the sex industry. Most people who have escaped from the sex industry are hard-working and dependable members of whatever occupation they end up in, perhaps because they feel so lucky to be doing anything other than prostitution.

There are many barriers to prostitutes leaving the life. Drug problems, distrust of people (especially men) and low-self esteem can keep a prostitute from seeking help, working for something better, and forming relationships with those who could help them.

Sex Workers can also advance within the Sex Industry. The first, biggest and hardest step is to stop working on the streets. There are many avenues available in the sex industry for street workers who are attractive and ambitious enough: they can sell sex as employees of brothels, massage parlors or escort services. Although

"Thank you drugs for keeping me numb and helping me forget a day as soon as it ended. Thank you distrust and hatred for keeping me from getting to close to anyone who might want to exploit my weakness. Thank you self-hatred for keeping hope and desire for something better from tearing me apart. Thank you all for helping me survive. Go now, in peace, to help someone else, for I no longer need you."

-"Prayer of the Ex-Prostitute" by Latina Kumatsa, Sexologist

they still have sex with johns for money, they are paid more and work in a safer environment. These workers often have an income nearly equivalent to that of a well (\$75/wk.). Very attractive Sex Workers can get jobs in strip clubs or pornography studios. The safety and pay here is even higher, and many make more than the average well (\$150/wk.). A few prostitutes in the city become "kept" by some rich person, which means they are given a steady income (which they can supplement with other forms of prostitution) but they are constantly "on-call" for sexual services. Kept prostitutes can make from \$100 to \$200/wk.

As a Sex Worker advances in the sex industry, the Sex Worker is increasingly likely to reach a point where he or she does not meet the physical requirements to advance any further. Exercise and artfully applied makeup can help, but only a little. Most Sex Workers who feel a strong need to advance end up getting plastic surgery. Some are able to save up enough money for plastic surgery, but most must get someone else to pay for it for them (which leaves them in another person's debt, sometimes a debt they can never get out of). Those who have had tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of plastic surgery done to them can make up to \$300/wk. as high-class escorts, kept men and women or porn stars.

Compared to working on the streets, the jobs a Sex Worker can advance through are vastly more comfortable, safe and well-paying. Yet few Sex Workers find lasting satisfaction in these jobs. Some find themselves in a worse state: they are still plagued by drug and self-esteem problems but they do not have the day-to-day job of staying alive to keep them distracted. Many Sex Workers advance very high in the city sex industry only to end up committing suicide.

It Can Always Get Worse

Just as there are ways to advance or to leave prostitution, things can always get worse. There are still pimps in the city and an unlucky prostitute can find himself or herself under the control of a pimp. Another way to slide down is to keep working the streets but to lose physical attractiveness (due to injuries, age or other problems). These prostitutes make even less money and have to do even more dangerous and degrading things to survive. Worse still, there are small groups of people in the city who capture men and women and keep them complete prisoners, using their bodies to make money. These groups prefer to prey upon immigrants who know nothing of city ways, but prostitutes are considered the next best thing when immigrants can not be found.

Population- There are about 650 Sex Workers in the city (500 females, 150 males). About 130 (20%) are transgendered. The average age is 18. Of the 650, at any given time about 330 (51%) are walking the streets, 15 (2%) are working on-call via the internet, 55 (8%) work in brothels and massage parlors, 110 (17%) work for escort services, 75 (12%) work in strip clubs, 35 (5%) work in pornography studios, and about 30 (5%) are kept prisoner in three or four secret brothels throughout the city.

External Relations- Most people on the street see Sex Workers as another group of street people who have been forced to do something dangerous and unpleasant in order to survive. Only a small percentage of the population of people out on the streets are johns (about 2%, or 1,800). There are also a number of shut-ins who leave their homes in order to visit Sex Workers.

Freaks: Many Sex Workers come to Freak territory

during the quarterly Festival of the Freak hoping to make money. The Freaks tolerate their presence. There are some Freaks, however, whose "shows" appeal to mostly prurient interests and who might be considered by some to be Sex Workers. These Freaks often see Sex Workers as unwelcome competitors, and Sex Workers often feel that the Freaks set too high a standard with their kinky acts.

Sexologists: The opinions of Sexologists towards Sex Workers are complex and voluminous. Several net sites owned by Sexologists expound on these opinions and could fill whole paperback volumes. Most Sexologists feel that Sex Workers are victims of a "plague". That plague is an unhealthy relationship with sex, a relationship that is spiritually and psychologically destroying the Sex Workers (and everyone else involved with the sex industry). Sexologists believe that Sex Workers can never be healthy and happy until they can leave the sex industry and spend significant time repairing the damage that has been done to their relationship with sex. Sexologists can be seen wandering around the red light district, looking for pimps and other exploiters to beat up and trying to talk Sex Workers in to leaving the sex industry. Some Sex Workers have left the industry with the help of Sexologists, and many have even become Sexologists. The majority of Sex Workers, though, don't think they can leave the sex industry at this time. They are annoyed by Sexologists coming around telling them to do something they can't or won't do.

Hunters: A few Hunters have preyed upon Sex Workers, thinking of them as unclean things that need to be cleansed from the city. Sex Workers are understandably afraid of anyone who looks or acts like they might be a hunter.

Night Shift: Since most things that Sex Workers do is a crime, the Night Shift feel an obligation to harass them. However, prostitution is fairly low on the list of crimes the Night Shift are out to stop and most Sex Workers have little to fear from Night Shift officers. A few older Sex Workers even like the Night Shift (they remember the corrupt cops that used to come around threatening to put Sex Workers in jail if they would not have sex with the cops). Night Shift officers will try to grab Sex Workers who are clearly underage (to send off to child welfare), and so these typically hide whenever they see a Night Shift officer.

Typical Weapon- Sex Workers like small thin knives which can be strapped to the body and be mostly inconspicuous. A few who advance in the sex industry even pay for Skin Knives.

Turf- A majority of Sex Workers operate within the area known as the red light district. The red light district has loose boundaries and tends to encroach on other city areas. The red light district lies South of the hole and goes as far South as 34th street. It is generally bounded on the West by 8th Avenue (where Tea Drinker and Sexologist turfs begin) and on the East by 5th Avenue (where Risen turf begins). Broadway, a major thoroughfare in the city, angles Northwest through the red light district and is where a majority of the action of the red light district can be found. The streets are crawling with johns, Sex Workers, cult recruiters, muggers, Sexologists and others. The businesses along Broadway are mostly pornography stores, strip clubs and liquor stores. Most sex takes place in alleys off of Broadway, though there are a few cheap hotels nearby that give hourly rates. Off Broadway are

old buildings currently being used as pornography studios, strip clubs, massage parlors, etc. Somewhere in the red light district there is known to be at least one secret brothel where people (mostly young immigrant women, smuggled in to the US) are kept prisoner.

Distinguishing Features- When working, Sex Workers wear clothing as revealing as they can get away with considering the weather. They wear clothing which is often quite uncomfortable: ultra-tight jeans for men, tight short skirts and high-heels for women. Many prostitutes wear black tattoos showing they are in revenge pacts. Recognizing an on-duty prostitute is not difficult, since they shout offers at nearly everyone who passes them.

Symbols- Black triangles are the most common (and the nicest) symbol used to represent sex workers.

Slang

Around the World: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Business, The: n., prostitution or the sex industry in general..

Half-and-Half: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Hustler: n., male prostitute (who typically gets male customers).

John: n., a customer who wants to pay for sex.

Pimping: v., forcing someone to have sex for money (through psychological manipulation and physical violence) and taking some or all of that money.

Trick: n., a transaction of sex for money.

Bad Trick Sense (Uses AWR)- There are a lot of very dangerous johns in the city, if a Sex Worker goes with the wrong one her or she can get killed. Sex Workers who survive for long are either very lucky or have learned to make split second decisions about a john. This skill is a snap judgement on a person, about whether there is a possibility that they are dangerous, based on how the person is dressed, how they look, how they carry themselves and how they speak.

Easy (10)- After chatting with a john for a few minutes, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Moderate (20)- After being greeted by a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Hard (30)- After looking at a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Legendary (40)- Tell exactly what kind of kinky stuff a john is in to just by looking at him or her.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, MIL 11, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 5, SOC 10, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Bad Trick Sense costs only 10 skill points per level.

Income- \$100 +\$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Pimped: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 10 Bonus Points. The PC is unlucky enough to be under the control of one of the few pimps still operating in the city. The PC is dependent on the pimp, who takes all the money the PC makes and provides for all the PCs needs. The pimp survives because the PC is completely ignorant about how to survive on his or her own (PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill). The pimp uses physical violence and psychological abuse to keep the PC down. The only benefit to being pimped is that the pimp has a financial motivation to protect the PC, and the PC may get in a situation where the pimp will use force to protect the PC.

PK: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. Some prostitutes have joined the Sexologists in their war on pimps, helping chase away or even kill pimps. Prostitutes who are believed to have killed their own pimps are afforded extra respect by the prostitution community, and most get a "PK" or "Pimp Killer" tattoo to help advertise their new status. A PC with this advantage is widely known to have killed his or her pimp.

Triangle: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC wears the black tattoo of a triangle representing a mutual revenge pact entered in to with three fellow Sex Workers. The triangle is worn where it is visible as a deterrent against would be murderers. Although it acts as a valuable deterrent, it carries with it a dangerous duty: if one of the other Sex Workers is murdered, the PC will probably be tracked down and expected to avenge that death (or die trying).

Suggested Skills- Bad Trick Sense, Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Seduction, Street Fighting: Unarmed.

Suggested Equipment- Dagger, Outfit: Clubwear, Pheromones.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Serial Killers.

Who is Better Off: a Sex Worker or a Drug Addict?

The distinction between the two is not always easy to make. Most Sex Workers use drugs at some point and most addicts resort to prostitution sometimes. Here is a general comparison of the average life of a starting member of these two groups:

Sex Workers meet friendly johns regularly.	Addicts meet good drug dealers occasionally.
Sex Workers are often beaten up or killed by johns or pimps.	Addicts are occasionally beaten up or killed by drug dealers or other addicts.
Sex Workers are common targets for cults.	Addicts are poor targets for cults because their addiction is usually stronger than the cult brainwashing.
Sex Workers can't trust johns or pimps, can usually trust other Sex Workers.	Addicts can't trust drug dealers or other addicts.
Many Sex Workers have mutual revenge pacts.	Few addicts have mutual revenge pacts.
Some Sex Workers advance by getting a better and safer job.	Addicts have few routes to advancement (becoming an errand runner for drug dealers is one of them).
The war on pimps by the Sexologists has been mostly successful.	The war on the Drug Lords by various city groups has been mostly unsuccessful.
Average life expectancy for a Sex Worker: 22.	Average life expectancy for an addict: 22
Percentage of people who escape from the sex industry (by a means other than death): 38%	Percentage of people who escape from addiction (by a means other than death): 11%

Thieves

In Brief- A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

Favorable Stereotypes- Nonviolent, skillful, crafty, honest survivors.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, cowardly, remorseless victimizers.

Other Names- Burglar, Catburglar, Pickpocket, Sneak.

Origin- There is now, and always has been, two types of theft. The first is theft by force or threat of force, the second is subtle theft, stealing without the victim knowing about it. The second takes skills and techniques that are best developed over the course of several lifetimes. This requires a stable underclass of people who will be forced to resort to crime from one generation to the next.

The skill of thieves peaked in the cities of Victorian England. The state of society created a permanent criminal class. This class, generation after generation, perfected the arts of thievery and broke theft down in to multiple specializations, including pickpockets, "attic thieves," shoplifters, horse thieves and even dog thieves. The criminal class even had its own slang language which nobody else could understand. The Victorian thieves were some of the most skilled thieves ever, trained almost from birth in their particular arts. A wealth of knowledge was destroyed when social changes caused the criminal class to become unstable.

Welfare was one thing that kept cultures of theft from developing in many industrialized countries. Not everyone in the welfare age could or would live by welfare alone and many did turn to theft. Not every member of a family line turned to theft and thus there wasn't enough inter-generational stability to create a true criminal culture. The closest thing to Victorian criminal culture that the 20th century would see was prison culture. People in prisons and juvenile halls would receive training in criminal arts. Prison culture was brutal and dangerous and the best and brightest of the poor classes tended to avoid it.

In the first half of the 21st century, Several changes in American law, meant to combat illegal aliens and identity theft, made it progressively harder for people to prove they were US citizens and made it harder for people to get any kind of job at all without furnishing that proof. Shortly before the Freedom Wars, a new type of underclass began to show up in large inner cities: people born on the streets with no birth certificates. They would come to be known (after the Freedom Wars) as the Unborn, and they would become an underclass more likely to stay poor than even the Victorian criminal class. As early as the 2030s, families in New York have been making a living from theft and have been teaching the arts of theft to their children. The third or fourth generation members of these families are known simply as "Thieves".

Timeline

1837- Queen Victoria comes to the throne.
 1838- Oliver Twist, by Charles Dickens, published
 1901- Queen Victoria dies.
 1932- Great depression in US, 1st major federal funding for welfare.
 2030s- First thief families that still exist today.
 2040s- First appearance of an "unborn" class.

2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Most Thieves were raised to be Thieves. As small children, they were taught to provide distractions to help their parents and older siblings steal without getting caught. As young as five they were encouraged to learn to shoplift from stores. As young as seven, they might have been trained to pick pockets (and do quick hand-offs to their siblings in case the victim noticed). At around adolescence the young thief will have been taught the real tricks of the trade: picking locks, jimmying open windows, recognizing and turning off alarms, finding valuables hidden inside a house or apartment. When they reach their teenage years, Thieves are expected to be able to support themselves. At around fifteen, most Thieves leave home and soon start building their own families.

At adventure one, level one, the PC is an accomplished thief who has just left home. The PC still gets some support from his or her family (and supports them when they are in need) but the majority of time the PC is stealing only to feed himself or herself. The PC has not yet started his or her own family.

Lifestyle- For a Thief, everything is well-planned and well thought out in advance. Every contingency is thought of and a plan made for each. If they are seen, most Thieves have an escape route pre-planned, where they can run until out of sight and hide in a place they can not easily be found. Obstacles, from a confederate pretending to be a stumbling drunk to a tripwire, can be left behind to slow a pursuing victim. When a thief has confederates, valuables are almost always handed off to a confederate as soon as they are stolen. If there is no confederate, Thieves often hide the things they have stolen. That way, if the thief is caught he or she can protest innocence and show that he or she doesn't have the stolen item.

There are two places that people store their valuables: on their person, and locked up at a residence, business-place or storage facility. When Thieves go after valuables stored on someone's person, they use various forms of pocket picking. When Thieves go after valuables stored in a building or vehicle, they use burglary.

Pocket Picking: Most people in the city know to check their pockets after anyone bumps in to or brushes up against them. Some people will grab or hit anyone who touches them in any way. So, thieves usually look for less recognizable forms of pocket picking. Some Thieves cut holes through the seats on subway cars so they can stick their hands through and pick the pockets of someone in a seat in front of them. Some Thieves simply follow people around, waiting them to get careless and set down a valuable item for just a second. In winter, Thieves often steal jackets left lying around in restaurants and bars. Crowds are also a favorite of Thieves, who can usually pick pockets without anyone checking their pockets. There are few crowds in the city. The largest public event is the quarterly Festival of the Freak, and Thieves are out in force at this event. Thieves may even try to manufacture their own crowds by doing things like staging fights. Thieves also have tricks to distract people so that those people don't realize that someone else is brushing up next to them. A common ploy is for one Thief to loudly accuse someone of some crime while another picks the accused's pocket.

Some Thieves hang out near ATM machines, waiting to see someone put in their pin number. When the person leaves, the thief (or a different thief) picks their pocket and uses the ATM card to take out as much as they can (most banks have a \$200 per day limit).

Burglary: They key to a successful burglary is casing the place to be burgled. Casing allows Thieves to establish when the building will be unoccupied (or, save that, when the people occupying it will be asleep or in VR) and what security measures exist.

Getting in to a building is often the most hazardous part of burglary, because at that point the Thief is in danger of being noticed both by people outside and by people inside. A good approach is vital for a Thief, and Thieves love hedges and fences that can mask their approach to a building. Second best is a dark alley or a poorly lit street. The city is slow at replacing street lights and many security conscious building owners have their own lights installed on the sides of buildings. A thief might break one or two of these lights during the day to prepare for an unseen entry at night.

Some thieves have been known to cut holes in walls, ceilings or floors to gain entrance to a building. This is especially useful when an in-use building has a shared wall with an abandoned building. Most times Thieves enter through a door or window or skylight. Doors can be jimmied open, forced open or the locks picked, but are most likely to be alarmed. First floor windows are the most heavily protected (solid bars and alarms) and skilled Thieves usually try to enter through a window on an upper floor or a skylight on the roof. Even these windows have bars, but they are likely to be old bars that can be sawed or pulled off easily.

Once a thief gets in to a building undetected, the next trick is to grab as much valuable stuff as possible as quickly as possible. Thieves know the weight-to-black-market-value ratio of everything they might run in to. They know where people like to hide things and they have a standard search pattern. They know the quickest ways to break in to lock boxes. Some Thieves have the expertise that will let them get in to safes, but most ignore safes and focus on things they can grab easily.

Social Structure- The Black Meds were once separate families that practiced street medicine. These families eventually coalesced in to one large family. The same thing happened to the Crackers and Insomniacs. Thieves, on the other hand, have shown no signs that they are coalescing. Instead, there are hundreds of families spread throughout the city, most aware of the existence of only a few other families. This independence and anonymity suits the Thieves: they can live somewhere without their

neighbors knowing that they are Thieves, and there is no place for an angry victim to go looking for revenge.

It does benefit a thief to get to know a few other Thieves. Fellow Thieves can get together to act as confederates or lookouts. Small teams of Thieves may assemble to take on very lucrative jobs where there is a lot of security to deal with. Despite the fact that they sometimes work together, there are no Thief "hangouts", no shared language (except among Thieves from the same family) and since they don't advertise that they are Thieves, meetings are uncommon. Thieves may even pay black market traders to hook them up with other Thieves.



Advancement- The easiest way to advance as a thief is to reinvest money in to better equipment which can help the thief take on bigger and better jobs. Having some money saved up can also let a Thief take a break from the normal day-to-day jobs while he or she plans something big. Money also allows Thieves to hire non-Thieves (especially Crackers) and to bribe security guards and people working inside a building. Thieves who have saved up some money usually try to rob from the homes of the city's wealthiest people (black market traders, hunters, Drug Lord kings) and from corporate offices. A very tiny minority of Thieves will gain enough money, skills, equipment and dependable confederates that they can become international super-thieves, stealing from institutions around the world. Many Thieves who gain enough money and experience to take on jobs in other cities are so tired of the stressful life of a Thief that they prefer to retire and live like a well.

Population- There are about 1,700 Thieves and members of small Thief families in the city.

External Relations- Thieves rarely steal from other street people: the potential profit is very low and the potential trouble they would get in to if caught is as high as if they robbed some Indie. Thus most street people feel relatively safe around people who they know are Thieves.

Con-Artists: For the last decade there has been a known rivalry between the Thieves, who steal by skill and stealth, and con artists, who steal by tricking people. Jacks sometimes con people, and Thieves sometimes go after them, but Thieves most love to go after wells and indies who run big moneymaking scams. There are many stories (probably exaggerated, possibly false) of Thieves ratting out con artists out of a philosophical objection to conning people. No one is quite sure how this rivalry started, but many Thieves have been happy to take on the rivalry: it improves the public's feelings towards Thieves and thus helps a caught Thief talk his or her way out of a beating.

Crackers: Thieves may hire other Street People to help them with jobs (and visa versa). The most commonly hired are Crackers. In some cases, the relationship is so strong that Thieves have married or been adopted in to the Crackers.

Night Shift and Security Guards: Thieves are the bane of the Night Shift and of private security guards. The Night Shift are only embarrassed by the huge number of unsolved crimes that Thieves cause. Security guards, on the other hand, can lose their jobs if a thief gets by them. For this reason, security guards are often very violent when they do catch Thieves.

Roofers and Siders: In their constant patrols, Siders and Roofers often come across Thieves climbing buildings or sneaking around rooftops trying to get in to buildings. Roofers typically beat up Thieves they find trespassing on their rooftops. Siders often alert the owners of the building the Thieves are trying to break in to. Although they would never admit it, Siders and Roofers are often pissed off to see someone moving on their turf at a level of

skill and ease approaching their own.

Traders: Thieves work intimately with black market traders, selling stolen goods and procuring burglary tools. Some Traders have Thieves who they call to help with special jobs.

Typical Weapon- Knife.

Turf- Thieves are spread throughout the city, living in mostly in abandoned buildings.

Distinguishing Features- When they are not out stealing (or are out picking pockets), Thieves look just like normal street people. Many Thieves have a nice suit (probably stolen) hidden in their belongings in case they need to try to bluff their way past the front desk of an office building. When they are out for burglary, they tend to wear dark colored clothing that lets them hide in the shadows (but never full-black jumpsuits, which could make them look too suspicious if someone was to notice them hanging around).

Symbols- A keyhole with a lockpick sticking in it is a common symbol used by graffiti artists to denote a Thief.

Skills

Free Skills: Alarm Systems (1), Lock Picking (1), Pocket Picking (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 9, MIL 9, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 7, THIE 3, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- \$300 +\$25/wk.

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Auto-Theft, Climbing, Escape Artistry, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Lock Picking, Microelectronics, Pocket Picking, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Bolt Cutters, Lock Picks: Professional, Nightvision Goggles: Cheap, Rope and Grapple.

Suggested Reading- Alarm Systems (p.181), Black Market, Criminals.

WELL GANGS

Animalists

In Brief- Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Favorable Stereotypes- Passionate, willful, fast-reflexes, intense, self-aware, emotionally balanced, down-to-earth.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Primitive, barbaric, thoughtless, violent, oversexed, unpredictable, amoral.

Distinguishing Features- Animal-ists wear affectations that remind them of their favorite animal. They wear clothing adorned with patches of (vat-grown) fur, feathers or scales. They have weapons that approximate the natural weaponry of animals: fangs, claws, horns. Some of these weapons are built in to armor (e.g. a glove with built in claws) while other weapons are actual biological implants. These affectations are not purely a matter of

fashion: Animalists spend so much time in a simulation of being their animal that they feel more comfortable when they can feel the fur on their arms or scratch at a wall with their claws.

Bleeders

In Brief- Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, powerful, cautious.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, back-stabbing, Machiavellian extortionists and assassins.

Distinguishing Features- Bleeders wear dark red and black clothing, covering as much of their bodies as possible (long sleeves, turtlenecks). Besides identifying them as Bleeders, this style of clothing also hides Blood stains so that when two Bleeders are fighting, one will not know when the other one is injured and bleeding.

Freaks

In Brief- Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wild, entertaining, creative, truly odd with incredible willpower.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, immature con-artists and wanna-be-psychopaths. Sycophants to Habey Cox (a narcissist windbag).

Distinguishing Features- Freaks come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. While a few look completely normal, most have changed their appearance with bizarre forms of dress, tattoos and scarification, piercings and implanted spikes and bizarre surgical modification. Those with extremely bizarre body modifications, however, often keep their modifications hidden (only paying customers are allowed to look). "Fetish" clothing (leather straps, chains, corsets, masks, etc.) is also common among Freaks.

Humankalorie

In Brief- Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, wise, believe strongly in duty, justice and order, always looking to prove and improve themselves.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sad wannabes, pretend to be something they aren't, obtuse and inflexible.

Distinguishing Features- Humankalorie get tattoos under their eyes of vertical parallel black lines going down to the cheekbone. Humankalorie carry Kalor weapons with them at almost all times. The Humankalorie also wear straps around their necks, upper arms, and thighs. These straps can be of any material, though they are usually black leather, and most contain round holes. The Clowdian straps are also often worn in other places: on wrists, as belts, sewn to the cuffs of shirts and pants, etc. Some Humankalorie wear red colored contact lenses.

Hummingbirds

In Brief- Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Favorable Stereotypes- Athletic, artistic, passionate, energetic, attractive, life-loving.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, drug-addicted, impulsive, randomly violent, inattentive, sensation seeking, shallow, lookist.

Distinguishing Features- Few other groups in the city spend more effort on their appearance. Hummingbirds wear clothing appropriate for much warmer temperatures. Exposed shoulders, backs and midriffs are common. Hair is usually short, both on men and women. Hummingbirds typically have water bottles and candy on their persons, usually visible. Hummingbirds tend to be skinny and muscular. Hummingbird style is usually a senseless mishmash of goth, gutterpunk, mod and old school gang. Some hummingbirds wear bright colors, mirrored clothing or patches, or flexible LEDs which show psychedelic patterns. Others wear all gray and semi-permanently dye their hair and skin gray.

Hungry

In Brief- Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, determined, well organized, singular in purpose, self-controlled, willful, hard to kill.

Distinguishing Features- The most prominent feature of the Hungry is their size: they are all huge and muscular. Many have old signs of addiction: bad skin, missing teeth, needle tracks. They all have a tendency to wear black leather.

Immortals

In Brief- Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, always concerned with the bigger picture, unafraid of death, broadly experienced with many psychic skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Living vicariously through others, pretend to be wise, enslaved to hundreds of debts, promises and grudges.

Distinguishing Features- Some immortals wear cloaks, others wear normal street clothes. Most wear jewelry made from bones, and a few have bone weapons.

Math Addicts

In Brief- Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Favorable Stereotypes- Intelligent, insightful, spiritual, precise, analytical, logical, full of useful info.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Mystical, eccentric, obsessive compulsive, head-in-clouds, intellectual snobs.

Distinguishing Features- Math Addicts vary greatly in appearance. Math Addicts tend to be either very in to fashion and style (very precise mord/corp style) or not in to it at all (homeless/grunge style, often with sandals). Lately, light brown has become an unofficial gang color of the Math Addicts and many wear beige clothing. Math Addicts almost always wear something (patch, tattoo, broach) with an infinity symbol on it.

Mem Junkies

In Brief- Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unfortunate addicts, yet wise about memories and emotions.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Damaged, desperate, dangerous addicts; aliens in the real world.

Distinguishing Features- Mem Junkies are a decade older than other gang members. They tend to be thin and pale. Many wear a style that went out of fashion years ago (a military goth look with a lot of olive colored military dress coats with pointy shoulders). Many tattoo on their bodies or write on their clothing the names of emotions. Many have long hair, beards and other signs of poor attention to personal grooming. Many wear sunglasses.

Needle Punks

In Brief- Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, fearless pharmaceutical geniuses with encyclopedic knowledge of drug interactions and effects, who can push their bodies to do almost anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Reckless, self-destructive, suicidal junkies and criminals with no respect for health, longevity or nature.

Distinguishing Features- Younger Needle Punks can be recognized by rows of pre-filled syringed strapped to their bodies. The syringes are often color-coded. Needle Punks have pale skin with acne, sunken eyes, are skinny, have missing teeth, thinning hair and slightly cloudy eyes. When the Needle Punks show much skin, needle marks all over their bodies (especially at the veins) can be seen.

Night Shift

In Brief- Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, honorable, willing to take on evil no matter how powerful it is, with a strong sense of justice.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A hypocritical, xenophobic, arrogant, self-important lynch mob.

Distinguishing Features- Night Shift members wear cheap dark blue uniforms with chrome buttons and yellow "NYPD" lettering, black leather boots, and gold-colored badges in clear plastic envelopes on hips, chests or on a chain around the neck. Night Shift officers also adorn their uniforms with other add-ons, mostly military surplus: camo jackets and hats, non-issued armor and helmets, web belts, etc.

Orphans

In Brief- Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, wary, brave, dutiful, at every age they are willing to die to protect those younger.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, homophobic, unreasonably afraid of adults, willing to turn small children in to soldiers.

Distinguishing Features- Younger orphans wear the cheap uniforms provided by the state: two piece, grey, with a red trim. These uniforms are often ripped, stained, scrawled with graffiti and patched up. Even young adult still have old shirts, threadbare and mostly patches, which they wear as jackets over their normal clothes. All "adult" Orphans have the end of the little finger from one hand chopped off, as a sign of loyalty to the other Orphans.

Roofers

In Brief- Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, fearless, party-loving daredevils and expert acrobats.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, territorial, selfish, warlike, think that might-makes-right.

Distinguishing Features- Roofers like to wear things that will flap in the breeze when they jump: capes, trinkets on strings, ribbons, etc. They also distinguish themselves by wearing checkerboard-patterned patches or clothing.

Risen

In Brief- Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard-to-kill, fearless, lustful, seeking intense experiences and willing to change.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Amoral, violent, remorseless, bloodthirsty criminals and fugitives.

Distinguishing Features- Most wear tight black clothing, often with holes from battles and other injuries. Most have low-light vision implants and wear sunglasses even at night. Most have visible implants such as fangs and claws.

Siders

In Brief- Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, innovative, pioneering, self-reliant, highly-skilled, proud.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Vengeful, myopic, obsessed, impractical, stubborn, violent gang with an inferiority complex.

Distinguishing Features- Siders wear clothing with black and white stripes. They are also usually seen wearing climbing gear: from the most primitive (ropes, pitons, hammers) to the most complex (gloves and shoes that use secondary nanotech gels to climb walls). Almost every Sider carried a crossbow.

Skin Borgs

In Brief- Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, unashamed, willful, honest, know what they want, don't justify their actions with ideologies.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Violent, brutal, stupid, prejudiced, ignorant, paranoid, small-minded throwbacks and conquerors.

Distinguishing Features- The Skin Borgs wear one or more skins: high-tech armors made of materials so thin that they resemble jumpsuits. Some Skin Borgs wear helmets, others wear armored masks (looking much like ski masks) and some let their heads go unprotected. Powerful Skin Borgs wear several layers of armor on top of each other. The outer skin is usually spray-painted black with personal decorations and symbols in brighter colors. Some Skin Borgs wear old leather belts wrapped around waists, biceps and thighs. Many have taken steroids or gotten muscle implants and are physically large.

Technophiles

In Brief- Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Favorable Stereotypes- Smart, funny, altruistic, knowledgeable, intuitive, always looking for a challenge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Physically and emotional weak, impractical, obsessive, easily distracted geeks with poor social skills.

Distinguishing Features- Some technophiles like to make their own clothes. Natural fabrics, undyed, are common. The clothing is fairly simple, much of it looks like something peasants might have worn during the renaissance or middle ages. Those who do not wear homemade clothing usually wear old ripped jeans and torn t-shirts from thrift stores with a lot of grease stains on them. Technophiles rarely go anywhere without either tools or a portable computer. Many wear patches with gears or wrenches to let people know that they are technophiles.

NON-GANG WELLS

Cornerpunks

In Brief- Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unambitious, humble, with simple needs and strong friendships.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Ignorant, lazy, small time bullies, thugs and drug addicts with delusions of grandeur.

Distinguishing Features- Most cornerpunks are easy to recognize because they are seldom seen on the street without a small group of friends with them. Corner gangs may use an abbreviation for their corner to identify them, others may choose some affectation, like a red and green ribbon sewn on the arms of a jacket, or a brown dragon patch.

Freelancers

In Brief- Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Favorable Stereotypes- Tough, self-sufficient, unique, free from attachments and willing to experiment with just about anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Greedy, unintelligent, un-empathetic, un-loyal, morally flexible bullies living pointless "unexamined lives."

Distinguishing Features- Since they have no symbols of gang membership to make people think twice about messing with them, Freelancers are forced to display whatever they do have in full view: weapons, armor, implants and even muscles are purposefully exposed.

Goods

In Brief- Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Favorable Stereotypes- Compassionate, humble, utilitarian, realistic, brave, friendly, knowledgeable, helpful, non-preachy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Selfish, greedy, cowardly, exploitative, hypocritical, two-faced criminals.

Distinguishing Features- Most Goods hide the fact that they are Goods and do not wear distinctive clothing. A few Goods wear the style of wealthy drug dealers from the Old Times: nice suits with glowing clothing (made from electroluminescent fibers). Glowing ties are the most common affectation, often with happy faces on them.

Neos

In Brief- Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, healthy, self-sufficient, living by values of honor, compassion and responsibility.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Unpredictable, eccentric, anachronistic, cultish, impractical.

Distinguishing Features- Neos wear a mix of modern and traditional clothing, choosing whatever parts of the two appeal to them. They may wear modern clothing (pants, shirts, jackets) for convenience but will adorn themselves with traditional jewelry, tattoos or ritual scarring. They may carry traditional weapons when in the city. Many Neos are not oriented to material goods and will wear whatever they can buy cheapest at a thrift store.

Workers

In Brief- Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, committed, hard working, mature people who enjoy doing a good job and earning a week's pay.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sub-average intelligence, ignorant and prejudiced, corporate wannabes, exploited by the capitalist system.

Distinguishing Features- Industrial workers on their way home from work are typically muscular, tired looking and dirty, wearing dirty jeans or coveralls. Government workers typically wear either ill-fitting and fraying suits, or agency uniform jumpsuits (often with florescent orange safety jackets on-top of them). Service industry workers typically travel to and from work wearing whatever silly uniform and name badge is required of them.

INDIE GANGS

Arcadians

In Brief- Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant and invaluable consultants, strategists and manipulators.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Obsessed gamblers, heartlessly toy with human lives, think they are smarter and therefore better.

Distinguishing Features- Black clothing seems to be the universal style of the Arcadians, occasionally accented with fluorescent colors. Most Arcadians wear expensive gloves and tinted glasses.

Boarders

In Brief- Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, easygoing, independent, forgiving, highly skilled, apolitical.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature punks, marijuana addicts, vandals, disrespectful, clowns, full of false bravado and delusions of immortality, oblivious to the rest of the city.

Distinguishing Features- Boarders tend to wear baggy clothing. They like to wear thick fabrics, like denim, flannel and leather. They dislike, however, any armor that impedes their movement. Many wear gloves and some wear goggles. Stickers and patches given out as promotional items by board and board-part manufacturers are applied liberally to themselves and their boards. The best distinguishing feature of a Boarder is a tricked out slipboard.

Dragons

In Brief- Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the “dragon” of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spiritual, wise, creative, intense, powerful, wild, respectful of nature.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Destructive, deluded cultists, under the control of an egomaniacal poet.

Distinguishing Features- The easiest way to recognize a Dragon is by his or her armor: when a wild hunt is possible, Dragons have a green-plastic insulation armor that includes a hood, gloves and special shoe inserts. Over that is usually worn some other form of armor, usually with plates made to look like reptile scales. Clothing tends to be green and made of “natural” fabrics (silk, cotton, leather). Many Dragons wear jewelry, clothing or tattoos that they designed personally. Claws and fangs are a common implants among Dragons.

Omniscients

In Brief- A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Favorable Stereotypes- Thoughtful, insightful, cutting edge techies, always gathering and sharing knowledge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Fat, lazy, disinterested voyeurs.

Distinguishing Features- Many Omniscients live a sedentary lifestyle and this shows in their physique. Omniscients are very meticulous in their grooming and like to wear very comfortable clothing: silks, velvets, felt, etc. The most notable feature on Omniscients is the presence of the external protrusions of sensory implants.

Purists

In Brief- Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, healthy, self-controlled, vice-free, monk-like.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, vengeful, miserable, prejudiced pollution-phobics.

Distinguishing Features- When they are outside, the Purists always wear shiny-grey biohazard suits with a mask over their face. The suit lets moisture and oxygen in and out but nothing else. The suits are skin tight and Purists wear clothing over their suit when it is cold out.

Sexologists

In Brief- Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Favorable Stereotypes- True altruists with genuine love for every person, fighting for the psychological and spiritual health of city residents.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A cult of puritanical homophobic busybodies who think there’s only one right way to have sex.

Distinguishing Features- Some Sexologists have can be recognized by their psychically enhanced sexual attractiveness. Sexologists wear clothing which is simple and modest yet flattering. They avoid clothing that looks slutty, flashy or complicated, yet they do enjoy showing off the human shape.

Tea Drinkers

In Brief- Reviving the ancient Indian “Soma” drink which gives psychic powers.

Favorable Stereotypes- Insightful, intuitive, psychics, are respectful of the past and have knowledge of the future.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, rich kids, buy soma as a status symbol, minds clouded by hallucinations.

Distinguishing Features- Some Tea Drinkers wear hooded trenchcoats (often light-brown with silver buttons). Almost all Tea Drinkers carry around large steel thermoses to keep their tea in. Many Tea Drinkers wear the Bollywood style.

INDIE NON-GANGS

Eccentrics

In Brief- Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, observant, unique viewpoint, independent, calm, principled, interesting.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Intellectual loners, odd, extremists, incapable of being part of a social unit.

Distinguishing Features- Most Eccentrics are older than the average person out on the street. Eccentrics rarely try to keep up with city fashions and wear clothes that either were fashionable in their day or are selected just to be comfortable.

Hunters

In Brief- Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Disciplined, sophisticated, well equipped, patient, objective, cleaning the worst elements from the city.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cold, heartless, cowardly, sociopathic vigilante killers.

Distinguishing Features- Hunters try not to distinguish themselves, but they often wear city camouflage (dark, almost black grays, and occasionally homemade trash suits). They often have sensory tech on: telescopic, infra-red or night-vision goggles. They can often be seen carrying weapons that aren't common in the city, like rifles.

Night Walkers

In Brief- Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spontaneous, quick witted, funny, brave, interesting to be around.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, narcissistic daredevils with no respect for privacy.

Distinguishing Features- Night Walkers make it a point to wear very comfortable clothing. Otherwise, most Night Walkers dress plainly. Gloves and either bulky clothing or some sort of hip-pack or backpack are necessary to conceal the plug and handjack. Night Walkers rarely smoke.

Sat Jumpers

In Brief- Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Independent, self-sufficient, fearless techs with brilliant repair skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Eccentric, cranky, greedy loners.

Distinguishing Features- Sat Jumpers can often be identified by the pressure suits they wear and their propensity for carrying their tools with them even when they are not on duty. When they want to be identified as Sat Jumpers, many Sat Jumpers wear polo-shirts or jackets with an SRC logo patch on them.

Traders

In Brief- The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Favorable Stereotypes- Friendly, helpful, well-connected, savvy, wise.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Profiteering, immoral, greedy, lazy, fat con-artists.

Distinguishing Features- Although some Traders are as athletic as any gang member, many others are not so fit or may even be physically handicapped. More than a few Traders have dwarfism. More than any other group, Traders tend to have death-borg implants.

Utopia Children

In Brief- Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Favorable Stereotypes- Incredible friends, incredible community members, altruistic, compassionate, stable, highly educated, calm, well-rounded.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Smarmy, ignorant, vain, meddling, moralistic, with a false sense of superiority and a shallow view of the universe.

Distinguishing Features- Most Utopia Children have remarkably good teeth, and skin that is free from scars and blemishes. Most Utopia Children are what the average city resident would consider physically attractive. Though they tend towards simple (humble) clothing, Utopia Children tend to be quite meticulous about their clothing and grooming, with clean clothes and perfect haircuts. A few Utopia Children wear blue gloves.

Volunteers

In Brief- Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

Favorable Stereotypes- Altruistic, educated, friendly, compassionate, willing to get their hands dirty and risk their own safety to help the needy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, moralistic proselytizers who interfere with things they don't understand.

Distinguishing Features- Volunteers usually carry around large metal thermoses. They also often have notebooks or handheld computers. Most wear simple clothing like jeans and sweats.

Y1s

In Brief- Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant, ambitious down to earth business people, willing to throw themselves in to a project and get their hands dirty.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Outsiders, ignorant of city ways, obsessed with money and success. Blind to anything beyond simple capitalism.

Distinguishing Features- Y1s often wear a fancy black suit and tie, carefully groomed hair, conservative makeup and jewelry. A few go for a geekier or trendier look.

Chapter Five - Encyclopedia

Althea thought she'd been given the easy job. She was the lookout. All she had to do was sit in the fast food restaurant across the street, watch the building while the others did their burglary thing, and call them up on the cell if anything weird was happening. Althea thought she would be spending an evening eating fries. That was before the soda drinking fucker.

Althea counted fifteen packets of sugar he put in to his soda before he started drinking it. Althea was supposed to call if anything weird was going on, and this bastard was weird as hell, but Althea imagined getting laughed at for calling about a guy putting sugar in his soda.

The problem was that the guy gave her the creeps. Part of it was his style: the blue tracksuit and the plain haircut made him look like something from twenty years ago. Part of it was the way he acted: just sitting and staring, looking around occasionally at nothing in particular. But mostly it was the damn sugar pockets she just couldn't get out of her head. What was going on with the sugar packets?

Althea ran through the possibilities. He might have mitochondrial vampirism, or he might be on Hummingbird, or he might have some genetic mod that required that he eat more sugar than normal. Maybe he was a homeless guy, and all he could afford to eat today was a soda so he wanted to put as many calories in it as possible. Maybe he was one of those golems, an AI assassin programmed to act normal, but the programming was screwed up. Maybe he was a Kalor; they ate more sugar than normal – or was that salt? Maybe he was just a crazy nutball who thought sugar would help him fight the voices in his head.

Althea knew she was supposed to be quiet, unobtrusive, not attract any attention. She couldn't call in with a vague suspicion about a sugar-eating-guy, but she couldn't just sit here next to this creepy guy without doing anything. Finally she made up her mind. "Hey, you, hey," she whispered at him. He turned to look. When she saw the look in his eyes her heart leapt and her hand darted for her knife...

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BLACK MARKET

In Brief- The black market is huge, decentralized and efficient. Through traders and their multiple connections, one can get almost anything.

The modern black market was formed back during the occupation of the city during the Freedom Wars. The black market is made up of an army of independent traders, each of whom has contacts with many other traders and hundreds of other contacts. Every criminal enterprise in the city (except the Drug Lords, who have a vertical monopoly on drug distribution) depends on the black market for their existences. Even semi-legit organizations rely heavily on the black market. The black market has no leaders (although some traders are wealthier and have more economic influence than others) and no real structure.

A common saying on the streets is that the black market can get you anything if you're willing to pay enough for it. There is some truth to this saying. If someone asks a trader for something, the trader first checks to see if it is in his or her current inventory. If not, then the trader finds out how much the customer "wants it" (in other words, how much of a markup he or she is willing to pay). If the person wants it badly enough, a request may jump from trader to trader to trader (each taking a percentage) before it reaches a trader who has or can get the thing in question. If nobody on the black market has a product, it is easy enough to hire someone to steal it. Through this network of contacts, it is conceivable that someone could come to a local black market trader with a few billion dollars and, in a week, get the Mona Lisa.

For traders, information is a good just like anything else. Traders pay for, hoard and sell information whenever they can. Services are also sold (from spying, to a plumbing repair, to a legal bribe, to a massage, to a murder). The trader matches a person needing the service with the person who can provide it, and takes a commission for himself or herself. Some traders (though not all) are also loan sharks, giving loans to people who could not normally get loans, though with ridiculously high interest and mercenaries as debt collectors. Traders who act as loan sharks make it a point to tell the debtors what they are getting in to: they don't want anyone claiming that they got a raw deal from the trader.

Despite its seeming clumsiness, the black market is very efficient.

Traders

In Brief- Independent and powerful traders make up the black market. They seldom exert political power but can have a large influence.

The black market is traders. Without traders, people could steal but they wouldn't have an efficient mechanism to get stolen goods to the people. Crime would be crippled in the city without traders.

Most traders are indies that operate out of their homes. A trader's apartment is a heavily guarded cache of goods. Most traders have either expensive security systems or 24 hour guards at their apartments. A minority of traders are in debt to other, larger traders, and act as employees. Many became traders so they wouldn't have to answer to anyone.

It is easy to ignore traders: they are not organized and they don't go to war to avenge each other (except in the case of personal friendships). For those interested in gang politics, traders are sort of like the scenery: always there when you need them.

Traders see it differently: they always keep an eye on gang politics (as it can greatly effect their business) and they can use their economic power to nudge a situation in one direction or another. For instance, a trader might decide that a gang war would hurt their business (by disrupting people's ability to travel freely through the area). To stop the war, a Trader may share information, send runners to take messages between gang members interested in a truce, or loan the weaker side some very nasty weapons so they appear less vulnerable.

Transactions

In Brief- Most transactions are face-to-face in trader homes. Other transactions are handled using locked accounts and homeless runners.

For most products that a black market trader sells, the standard deal is that the cash and product are handed over at the same time, usually in the traders home (where the trader has defenses ready in case of any malfeasance). If a trader has to "special order" a product, he or she usually asks for some amount (such as 10%) up front. For known clients, with whom the trader has established a trust, a trader may extend a line or credit. For very large deals, and when face-to-face transactions are not possible, Traders use cheap internet escrow services.

Escrow Services- The health of the black market depends upon people who do not necessarily trust each other being able to do large transactions relatively quickly. Escrow services make this possible. Money is transferred to the escrow service, who keeps a hold of it until both parties log-on to say that the transaction was concluded. If the parties can't agree, the escrow service keeps the money.

Runners- Not all transactions happen face to face. Sometimes a buyer wishes to remain anonymous. Sometimes the item is too worthless or the transaction too routine for someone to bother to walk all the way down the block to the trader's home. Sometimes the item being purchased is for some emergency and the person needs the thing right away. Sometimes the item is being delivered from one trader to another. In all of these cases, traders use homeless Runners they have at their disposal to take money, goods and messages back and forth. The runners are every bit as professional, skilled and efficient as the traders they work for.

Why People Don't Buy Children on the Black Market

Some things are just so morally reprehensible that people do not buy them from the normal black market. There are willing buyers and willing sellers, and some traders will be willing, but too many black market traders who would make it their business to fuck up someone who tried to make this sort of purchase.

Say someone goes to a trader and inquires whether the trader can procure a child for him or her. The trader might flat out say no. The trader may, however, say that he or she can procure a child. Most traders are good liars and the person wishing to purchase the child has no way of knowing, when they go to pick the child up, whether they will actually get a child or whether they will be ambushed and killed by an army of angry Orphans who the trader secretly contacted.

Guns

In Brief- Very few in the city own guns. Those that do own guns are either rich enough to have them smuggled in, or use unreliable homemade guns. Gun owners are generally given a wide berth. Outside the city, most guns have technology to prevent unauthorized use.

Only a small minority in the city own guns. Of those that do, many have homemade weapons. Some can only be fired once, others can be used multiple times but because they are home-tooled they have a large chance of misfiring and even injuring the shooter.

Guns are equally likely to come from three basic sources: First, those smuggled in to the city and sold on the black market. Second, those manufactured in the city. Third, those in the city prior to the 2050s that were not found during Freedom Army sweeps.

City residents are very wary about people with firearms. Even those gang members who will jump fearlessly in to any fight will try to avoid combat when the opponent has a gun. Often, when someone has a gun, it is the one and only advantage that they have.

BODY MODIFICATION

Decoration

In Brief- City residents of every income level use body modifications to improve their looks or make themselves appear tough, including piercings, implanted spikes, tattoos, tissue dying, scarring and surgical changes.

Piercings- These are probably the most common body modification in the city. Professional and amateur piercers in the city will take on any request, from the mundane to the very creative. Among favorers of the gutterpunk style, spikes are common. Spikes can be implanted just under the skin, and this is the easiest and least painful method, but the spikes are not very secure. A more skilled piercer (or Black Med or legitimate doctor) can connect spikes to the bones.

Tattoos- Most tattoos are done by a computer and are cheap and fast. Any image can be placed on someone's skin, either permanently or semi-permanently. It is mostly poor people who go for traditional (needle-gun) or archaic (skin abrasions) methods. Some gutterpunks go to practitioners of Maori style tattooing (a chisel is used to abrade the skin, then ink is painted on) to prove how tough they are. Some "posers" go to computerized tattoo parlors and get tattoos that are almost indistinguishable from authentic Maori style tattoos.

Coloring- Non-toxic dyes can semi-permanently dye hair, skin, teeth and even eyes to some color that the person requests. In general, changes in shade are the cheapest and easiest to get, while extreme changes (like going from caucasian skin coloring to jet black skin) are expensive and take special procedures.

Scarring- Some in the city (most often poor teens and mentally ill people) engage in scarification of their own bodies as a means of decoration. Most of them are people who have some vested interest in advertising to others how tough or self-destructive they are.

Surgical Modifications- The Freaks may invest money in scary looking surgical modifications which will be part of their acts. Sex industry workers may borrow money to invest in plastic surgery, hoping to enhance their careers. It is only Indies who can afford surgical mods purely for the aesthetic value. These mods can include vat-grown parts, like third eyes, tails, extra-fingers. Parts can be functional or non-functional. The mods can also include non-organic substances (e.g. glass, metal, plastic, even stone) implanted in the body.



CITY CULTURE

Origins

In Brief- City culture is mostly practical, but draws elements from gang culture, homeless culture, radical utopianism and teenage rebellion.

For the most part, city culture has created itself. It is not so much a set of shared traditions as it is a bunch of people, each reacting to their environment as rationally as they can. Similarity to other cultures, past or present, is probably just because something happens to be an effective way of doing things. However, there are some city traditions which can be traced directly back to specific roots.

Gang Culture- Gangs have changed a lot recently. In fact, many gangs have done whatever they can to differentiate themselves from the randomly-violent, self-destructive drug gangs of the old times. However, certain elements remain, especially in gangs with an old history (Roofers, Risen) or with elder members. Major contributions: revenge as a means of deterrence, the idea of the gang as one's family.

Homeless Culture- Whereas the Indies and Wells have "found the streets," the homeless and unborn have always had them and have had good ways of dealing with their dangers. Wells and Indies new to the streets have often incorporated homeless ways of doing things because they work. Major contributions: respecting other people's boundaries (to a fault), theft seen as morally justifiable and the idea of giving others every chance to live-and-let-live.

Radical Utopianism- For a while in the late 2050s, utopianism was the major radical movement of the day. Radical Utopianists believed that community was more important than government and that "perfect communities" could change the world's culture. Major contributions: emphasis on self government, use of banishment as a punishment.

Teenage Rebellion- There is a lot of teenage rebellion in the culture of the city. For centuries, teenagers have been growing up pressed up against the flaws of their parents' lifestyles. Many of the teenagers have decided, however naively, that anything would be better than living as their parents did. For Wells, the single most common reason for leaving home is not wanting to be like parents. So, many city values are really just the violent rejection of the values of VR addicts. Major contributions: devaluation of

The State of Equality in 2080

In Brief- Women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities face little or no discrimination. Poor, immigrants, transsexuals, "ugly" people face some discrimination. City residents discriminated against by those outside the city.

Victories- Over the last century, American culture (and most other cultures in the industrial world) has rid itself of nearly all cultural and institutional prejudice against women, homosexuals and racial minorities. These people can join military service, the clergy of most religions, street gangs, and almost all private clubs (including the masons). To most people it would be a bizarre and alien thought to think that these people are inferior or bad in any way. In the city, the only exceptions are mentally ill loners who may decide they hate a certain gender, sexuality or ethnicity. Some Immigrants and religious extremists discriminate against minority sexualities, but they are outsiders with social little power. Every once in a while, a small group of young teens who share a certain prejudice will get together to commit hate crimes (usually cornering and beating people up). Many serial killers are misogynists (people who hate and fear women). Women are targeted for sex crimes more often than men, but most people see this as a vulnerability of male psychology, not a female weakness (see "Why Men?" p.147).

Failures- Certain people still face cultural and institutional prejudice. Even in the city, where even the richest are considered poor by most standards, there is still prejudice against poor people. People who are poor are more likely to be thought of as stupid, immoral, dangerous and diseased. This is especially true of shut-ins, who regard homeless people as something like wild animals. Similarly, immigrants are commonly thought of as ignorant, unsophisticated and unfriendly. The physically disabled and elderly are thought of as being less capable than others and are often denied membership in city groups (including some gangs) and in gated communities and corporations.

Transsexuals face much less discrimination than they did 80 years ago, but there are still many people in the city who think transsexuals are mentally ill. The problem is that there are some mentally ill people who seek a gender change, and when people hear about them they assume that all transsexuals are mentally ill. Transsexuals are sometimes denied jobs, memberships in groups (including some gangs and gated communities) and are sometimes targeted for violence. There are a lot of transsexuals in the city who came to the city because their families and the communities they lived in would not accept them. There are some in the lesbian/gay/bisexual community who think of transsexuals as part of their community and try to stop prejudice, but there are also many in the community who would rather not be associated with transsexuals. There is a lot of similar discrimination against people with sexual fetishes.

"Lookism" is not as prevalent in the city as it is in other parts of the country. The main reason is that, on the streets, people often put a higher value on looking tough than on looking attractive. Also, the city has a plurality of very different styles and thus more than one "ideal" of physical beauty. Despite this, people who are considered attractive find they have an easier time getting jobs, joining groups and gaining power.

City Residents- Any resident of the city will find himself or herself discriminated against by people from outside the city. People living in gated communities or corporate living centers assume that anyone living in the city either couldn't pass screening tests or was too crazy to want to. They assume that any city resident is either mentally ill, stupid and uneducated, drug addicted or evil. People who choose to be out on the streets are often thought of the same way by those who choose to be shut-ins.

Graffiti

In Brief- Art, self-expression, communication and historical records all in one.

Timeline

1930s- First gang graffiti in US.
 1949 – Spraypaint invented
 1968 – Julio 204, first city ‘writer’.
 1970 – Taki 183 makes the news, makes ‘writing’ famous.
 1971 – First writing crews.
 1973 – City spends \$10 million removing graffiti.
 1973 – Strong anti-graffiti laws.
 1972 – First burner (large mural masterpiece).
 1982 – First large scale wars between writing crews.
 1985 – NY writing declines after crack cocaine takes over the lives of more urban youth.

History- Historically, there have been two different (but never completely separate) types of graffiti in the city. Gang graffiti has been seen in the city’s poor ethnic neighborhoods before World War II. Gang graffiti was meant to communicate information to other gang members: it was incomprehensible to most non-gang members and even to gang members from other areas. As time went on, the language of gang graffiti became more complex and more things could be communicated with gang graffiti: the limits of turf, threats and challenges to other groups, listings of the members of gangs, memorials for dead gang members, and even descriptions of battles or other accomplishments. An increasing involvement of street gangs in drug sales spread a more uniform gang culture around the country and made it so that people from one city could often understand much gang graffiti from another city.

In New York, in the late 1960s, graffiti as a unique form of self-expression was invented. Early “taggers” or “writers” would write their nickname (and the street they were from) on anything and everything they could. The media took the story and ran with it, making writing increasingly popular. A whole lifestyle evolved: kids would shoplift cans of spraypaint, form crews, spraypaint huge murals on subway cars or buildings. Crews would even get in to bloodless “wars” where they would paint their own marks over each other’s marks.

Graffiti itself was also an act of daring: putting graffiti up in gang turf, or somewhere where one risked being caught by authorities, or in a dangerous place proved the graffiti artist’s bravery. Graffiti artists of the 1980’s and 1990’s were urban explorers, going in to tunnels, hopping barbed-wire fences, climbing bridges. Writers would often paint beautiful murals in places where nobody but other writers, homeless people living underground, and the occasional stray utility worker would ever see them. Many of these underground paintings are still there, a hundred years later, having outlasted many city buildings.

Because some of the murals created by writers were quite beautiful (at least to some) this lent some amount of respectability to graffiti writing. Some started using the phrase “graffiti artists.” This term pissed off the property owners and city government, who were paying millions a year to clean up graffiti. Although the police continued to crack down on it, writing became the domain of kids of all social classes, not just poor kids.

Modern Graffiti- In the city today, graffiti continues to be something that crosses social and economic boundaries.

Graffiti ranges from a bare, utilitarian scrawl meant to convey a message (even if the message is as simple as “I was here”) to large, attractive murals that take twenty to thirty cans of paint. Much graffiti falls somewhere in-between: it tries to send a message as well as showing the skill of the writer.

Some graffiti uses easy to understand pictures, symbols and language. Others use symbols that only members of a particular group might understand. Others use a “language” of symbols known only by experienced writers. At its best, graffiti is not only beautiful, it is a historical document that skilled graffiti artists can read in the same way one might read a newspaper.

Slang

In Brief- Borg = artificial, Black = underground, see p.225 for more.

The culture of the streets has developed several new slang words, mostly in response to new things that there weren’t simple terms to describe. Most groups in the city, gang and non-gang, tend to have slang to describe the things they deal with in particular. An analysis of city slang can provide insights in to the worldview of the people who speak it.

“Borg”- Many slang words use the suffix “borg,” taken from the word cyborg. “Borg” indicates that something has been replaced by something else artificial. The X + Borg formula commonly refers to both the technological measure and the person benefiting from it. For instance, the Skin Borg gang are people who wear high tech armor almost 24 hours a day, replacing the weakness of human skin with the strength and powers of high tech materials. Death Borgs are people who have had their normal processes of death replaced by a bomb which explodes upon death. Kid Borgs is a term used to describe people who use mental copying technology to move their minds in to the bodies of children.

“Black”- Many slang terms have this prefix, as in “black market.” It typically indicates that something is illegal and being done underground. E.g. a “black corp” is a division of a corporation that operates in secret, using illegal means to make money for the parent corp. “Grey” is used to describe things that dance the line between being legal and illegal.

See the Glossary of City slang, p.225 for more.

“Hunting for Souls”

In city slang, “hunting for someone’s soul” means trying to take away someone’s free will. A person’s free will can be removed by means of drugs, mental programs, brainwashing, psychic attacks or implants. **Drugs** can temporarily inhibit free will, but cannot remove it altogether. **Mental programs** are expensive and take a long time to install, but can let a person command (e.g. with spoken “keywords”) any element of a person’s mental functioning. Mental programs can turn on or off emotions, paralyze people, block memories, or other nasty things only limited by current knowledge about the brain. **Brainwashing** is low tech but effective. It involves forcing someone say what you want them to believe, and then slowly reducing their mental capacity until they start believing what they are saying. **Psychics** can control what people, think, feel, do or even believe, but rarely for more than a second. **Implants**, put in people against their will, can let people monitor, punish and even kill by remote control.

Philosophy

In Brief- The city gives many opportunities for philosophy. Eccentrics and street people have many philosophies. It could be said that everyone in the city has their own philosophy, whether or not they can put it in words.

Eccentrics are stereotyped as the city's philosophers. The classic image of an Eccentric is someone who sits back and observes everything going on in the city, and draws conclusions from it about abstract subjects such as human nature or ethics. For this person, the anarchy of the city is a laboratory of all the principles of human life. Every possible combination of peoples, motivations and situations come together at some point or another. There is also the unregulated use of technologies that raise important philosophical questions. Mental copying technology raises questions about human identity and the idea of a unique soul. Mental installer technologies, psychics and drugs raise questions about free will. Virtual Reality raises questions about what is real, and under what circumstances reality is really necessary. AI and genetic engineering raises questions about what is human.

One very inaccurate stereotype is that while the rich think about philosophy, the poor do not. In fact, homeless street people think about philosophy as much as any Eccentric. It is mostly boredom that prompts thinking: philosophy (along with sex and poetry) is one of the few free past-times available to street people. Street people have many philosophies and opinions, though they often resemble "folk wisdom" more than academic philosophy. Rather than trying to extract abstract theorems from a priori logic, street philosophers try to extract abstract principles from things they see around them. A street person might come up with some simple rule (e.g. "'free' just means you don't know what the cost is right now") and then spend hours delightfully pointing out every real-life story in which that rule holds true. Street people entertain each other for hours discussing what is the best way to deal with certain people or situations; what is right and wrong; what parts of people's behavior are innate and what parts are a reaction to the environment; what are the core motivations of human beings; and what makes things aesthetically pleasing.

Everyone in the city, though, has some theory, strategy, opinion, explanation or worldview which is unique to them. Many gangs have their own philosophies, though each individual member puts his or her own spin on that philosophy (or, in some cases, rejects it altogether). Groups sometimes teach their philosophy through lectures, but most often they teach it by the way they act, the goals they seek and the way they deal with problems.

The Ten Worst Ways To Die

By Carl Finnix (Roofer Founder and Battle General)

10. "I guess some of the plagues we've had around here have been pretty bad. You remember that one we had last Summer, the one where you bleed out and the blood's all black, and you go to the doctor and the doctor says 'Your organs are dead, so all we can do is give you a bunch of pain killers.' That one was pretty bad."

9. "And the Drakes have some pretty nasty poisons. There's this one that you just go crazy, like the worst possible drug trip, and then you have a heart attack and die. Come to think of it, I guess the Drakes are pretty cool. I mean, they have this shit but most of the time they use poison that kills you painlessly."

8. "There's that disease, the one that gives you boils all over and the people who gave it to you charge you a thousand dollars for the cure. I hear it feels like there's bugs crawling under your skin. It could be worse, there could be real bugs crawling under your skin. They're probably working on that next."

7. "A buddy of mine once got put in an oven and cooked. The sad thing is that if he could have just grabbed on to those heating coils and yanked them out of the wall, he could have saved himself, but they was just too hot to touch. So he died knowing the one way to save himself, but being unable to do it."

6. "I guess Mauler addicts have it pretty bad. I mean, you just get dumber and dumber and you can feel your being a person just slipping away. Then, when you finally forget how to buy drugs, the withdrawals are so bad that you end up scratching yourself to death."

5. "There's that leash program. You know, that mental program that you put in someone's head and you can command them. You can make them feel all kinds of pleasure, or all kinds of pain, just by saying a certain code word, and there's nothing they can do about it. Or you could just paralyze them and stomp them to death, and they can't do nothing."

4. "Being eaten by rats has gotta suck. Like, if you go in to a place with a lot of rats, and if you get paralyzed, like a mental program malfunctions. The rats are gonna come sniffing around to see if you'll do anything, and if you don't do nothing they'll come a little closer, and if you don't do nothing they'll take a bit out of you. Then all of a sudden there's a dozen of them chawing down on you."

3. "I've heard that really powerful psychics can just take over your head and make you stab yourself. That's gotta be pretty bad, especially if you don't even know who the psychic is who's doing it to you. Say there's a bunch of people around you. It could be any one of them."

2. I saw this guy once and someone had fucked him up good, like surgically, you know. I once got told it would cost two hundred dollars to put my nose back straight, so what they did to this guy must have cost a million dollars. I'd hate to be so fucked up that I would want to do that to somebody else. The guy was just... I can't describe it. Not like a person, not like any animal I ever heard of. He couldn't walk, he just kind of flopped around. A foot must have seemed like a mile to him."

1. "The worst, I guess, is my dad. He wasn't tortured or anything, so maybe it wasn't that bad, but it makes me the saddest because I know the guy had it in him to be something great. When I hear about these young guys and girls fighting Colins, making deals with corporate operatives, negotiating peace between warring gangs, solving murders, shit like that, I imagine that my dad could be doing that. But all he ever did was sit around in VR all day. He thought he was a good parent, but he wasn't even in the real world enough to realize that he wasn't. I don't know... maybe torture's better. Torture, you go nice and crazy after a few days and you don't really feel it so much anymore. And at least you did something with your life."

Rumors

In Brief- Rumors travel to every corner of the city and are an important, though inaccurate, source of news.

Benefits- There is no newspaper for people on the streets in the city, no news service that keeps them up to date with the happenings of the city. People gain almost all of their knowledge about what's going on in the city from word of mouth.

One reason that people like to have friends outside of their own gang or social grouping is that they can receive important information. There are so many bonds of friendships between different gangs, groups and social classes that people are seldom more than four or five degrees of separation away from any knowledge within the city. Like the decentralized black market, the speed, efficiency and usefulness of rumors in the city surprises many outsiders.

Flaws- Rumors have their limitations. One common problem is that, as the rumors are passed on, theories are stated as facts. This is why Matt Timm, known as the street's best known expert on the moles, refuses to speak any sort of conjecture about the moles. He has seen too many theories and inferences stated as known fact. Another problem is that the source of a rumor often becomes lost or misstated (some of the "facts" about moles are incorrectly attributes to Matt). Another common problem is that while the basic message of a rumor rarely changes, specific facts (and especially numbers) can change radically. Of a hot rumor, a person will probably hear multiple versions, and will probably choose the most dramatic version to repeat to his or her friends. The death of three in a gang battle can easily become the death of one hundred. This caused problems when many people refused to believe information about the large number of Colins prowling the city, believing that those numbers must be exaggerations.

The most intelligent way for someone in the city to deal with rumors is to take them as a warning that something might be the case. A rumor, at best, will prompt someone to seek out further information.

Time

In Brief- Morning: gang members sleep, addicts buy drugs. Afternoon: gang members take care of personal business. Evening: gang activity starts. Madrugada (midnight to dawn): mostly gang members on the streets, and near dawn the city is quiet.

For city residents, a day is broken down in to four parts:

Morning- (dawn to noon) Most people in the city are asleep. Most gang members sleep through morning. If they haven't arrived home before dawn, they arrive shortly after and go to sleep. Addicts wake up, their bloodstreams empty of drugs, and desperately seek out their next fix. When VR Addicts and other shut-ins are forced to go outside, they choose this time of day, knowing that it is the safest.

Afternoon- (noon to sunset) Many gang members sleep in a few hours in to the afternoon. Afternoon is usually thought of as a leisurely time of day. People who have "business" to take care of do it now: errands, training, shopping, paying bills, doing welfare paperwork, working at part-time jobs, etc. Street People (who typically work 12 or more hours a day) get started working. Addicts have comfortable levels of drugs in their bloodstreams and are out trying to get food and money.

Evening- (sunset to midnight) This is the most active time on the streets. When something important happens on the streets, it most likely happens in the evening, and anyone who wants to watch or be a part of city life is out. As sun falls, gang members head toward their turf to meet up with their friends. The Arcadians start assembling in their arcades. The Risen meet up in their packs. Boarders start showing up in parking lots and doing tricks. The Humankalorie assemble in Oht arenas and set up matches. Later in the evening, when all the gang members are together, discussions turn to serious gang business, and when gang members set off to make war it is usually around 10 pm. In the evening, all other types of "street life" are out in force, from charity workers, to freelancers, to sex workers.

Madrugada- A Spanish word, now part of city vocabulary. Madrugada is generally thought of as the time that weird things happen. "Madrugada stories" is a slang term for any tale of the weird, scary or unexplained. As it gets later, and dawn approaches, there are fewer and fewer people on the streets. People out to make money (jacks, sex workers, etc.) go home, as there are too few people on the streets. Addicts typically find some place safe to take the last of their drugs and crash. Those left on the streets tend to be those who are under the influence of stimulant drugs, those who are heading back from some cross-town excursion, and those whose lives are in some sort of crisis.

CITY GEOGRAPHY

In Brief- "The City" is the island of Manhattan in New York. 2 by 11 miles.

Manhattan

What is known popularly as "the city" is the island of Manhattan. The city is approximately 1.75 miles long and 11.8 miles wide, 19 square miles altogether. In the 1660s, the size of the island was increased by sinking old ships and covering them with dirt. In the 2040s, due to rising ocean levels, about 5 square miles around the city were partially submerged (now known in city slang as "the sunken city").

Manhattan is on the East coast of the United States, surrounded by rivers (the Hudson to the West, the Harlem

and East Rivers to the East) with New York Bay on the South. Manhattan runs Southeast to Northeast. The Bronx, Brooklyn and Newark are across the water from the city. Manhattan is part of the state of New York, the bulk of which lies to the North of Manhattan.

Manhattan was once part of a system of boroughs which made up New York City. After the reformation, Manhattan was changed from a borough to an independent city. In the early 2060s, as people were setting up prestigious communities outside the city, congressional districts were redrawn (gerrymandered) so that Manhattan would never have its own representative.

See Also: Full City Map, p.238

Most of Manhattan has a very easy to understand street plan. Streets run roughly East to West and are numbered from 1st Street (Southernmost) to 220th Street (Northernmost). Avenues run roughly North to South, from 1st Avenue on the West to 11th Avenue on the East end of the island. The names of most avenues change while in Harlem, having been renamed after figures in African American history. The regular street plan dissolves in to a tangle of named streets at the very Southern tip of the city (the very old financial district) and the very Northern tip of the city (the hilly and once very wealthy Inwood district).

City Access

In Brief- Only two bridges and one tunnel still work. They have automated gates that keep guns and explosives from moving in and out of the city.

Most of the tunnels and bridges leading to the city were destroyed by rising ocean levels and by terrorist action during the Freedom War. There are now only three ways to access Manhattan by foot or land vehicle:

-George Washington Bridge connects the East side of the Inwood/Washington Heights neighborhood (in the North) to the Bronx, across the Harlem river.

-The Holland Tunnel, downtown, on the East, connects to New Jersey.

-The Manhattan Bridge, downtown, on the West, connects to Brooklyn. This bridge also provides freight-trains access to the city.

These two bridges and one tunnel contain automated contraband stops, of the kind built all over the country during the 2040s. These stops have heavy metal gates which close to enclose a vehicle while it is scanned by x-rays and chemical sniffers. If firearms are detected, an automated system informs the driver that firearms are illegal in the city, and allows the person to back out. If drugs, explosives or biological weapons are detected, the gates stay closed until a team of heavily armed Bridge and Tunnel Authority officers can come from their office in Queens. Trains traveling over the Manhattan bridge are scanned as they go through.

Travel to and from the city by means of water is nearly impossible. Powerful currents flow through the partially submerged buildings of the sunken city and any vehicle trying to come through risks being smashed in to the sides the buildings. The city is also very strict about issuing permits to fly over the city. Usually only the National Guard, CDC and medical helicopters are allowed to fly over and land in the city.

Inwood/Washington Heights

In Brief- Northernmost city, old Indie neighborhood with large industrial/railroad complex, Skin Borg turf.

The Neighborhoods of Inwood and Washington Heights form the Northernmost tip of the island. They run South to 165th Street. South of this is Harlem.

Inwood, in the North, was (until a few years ago) a sought-after indie neighborhood. There was a quiet residential district on the hills in the Northwest, dotted with expensive homes. The rising ocean levels did little damage here. Also on the hills is the Cloisters, a museum built from pieces of European monasteries and now home to the Lumens cult. To the East of the hilly area is a large industrial area, with some abandoned factories, some in-use factories, some warehouses and a large railyard.

Secret Geography of the City

For only \$300, you can purchase a pair of geo-info goggles. These goggles have GPS (global positioning system) and gyroscope chips inside, so they know where you are and what you are looking at. Spend a few bucks more on a "tourist chip" and glowing green arrows and words will appear everywhere you look. Look over here and a green box will pop up informing you that Frank Lloyd Wright designed this building more than a century ago. Look this way and you will see that on this spot was a wall of sharpened logs, built to protect early settlers from Indians, from which Wall Street took it's name.

If you have some black market contacts, you can buy a chip designed for police officers. Look to the apartment building to your right and you will see that a parolee lives here, having served a sentence for conspiring to smuggle weapons in to the city. Composite crime rates are available at the turn of a tiny wheel on the side of the glasses: this alley sees 0.62 murders a year, turn the wheel and you will see that it will play host to 2.41 muggings.

Imagine that such chips are available for the geographic knowledge from the minds of other city residents. Plug in the chip for a VR addict and you might see the most brightly lit streets, the closest payphones to dial 911 from, and a bright beacon shining high above the safety of home.

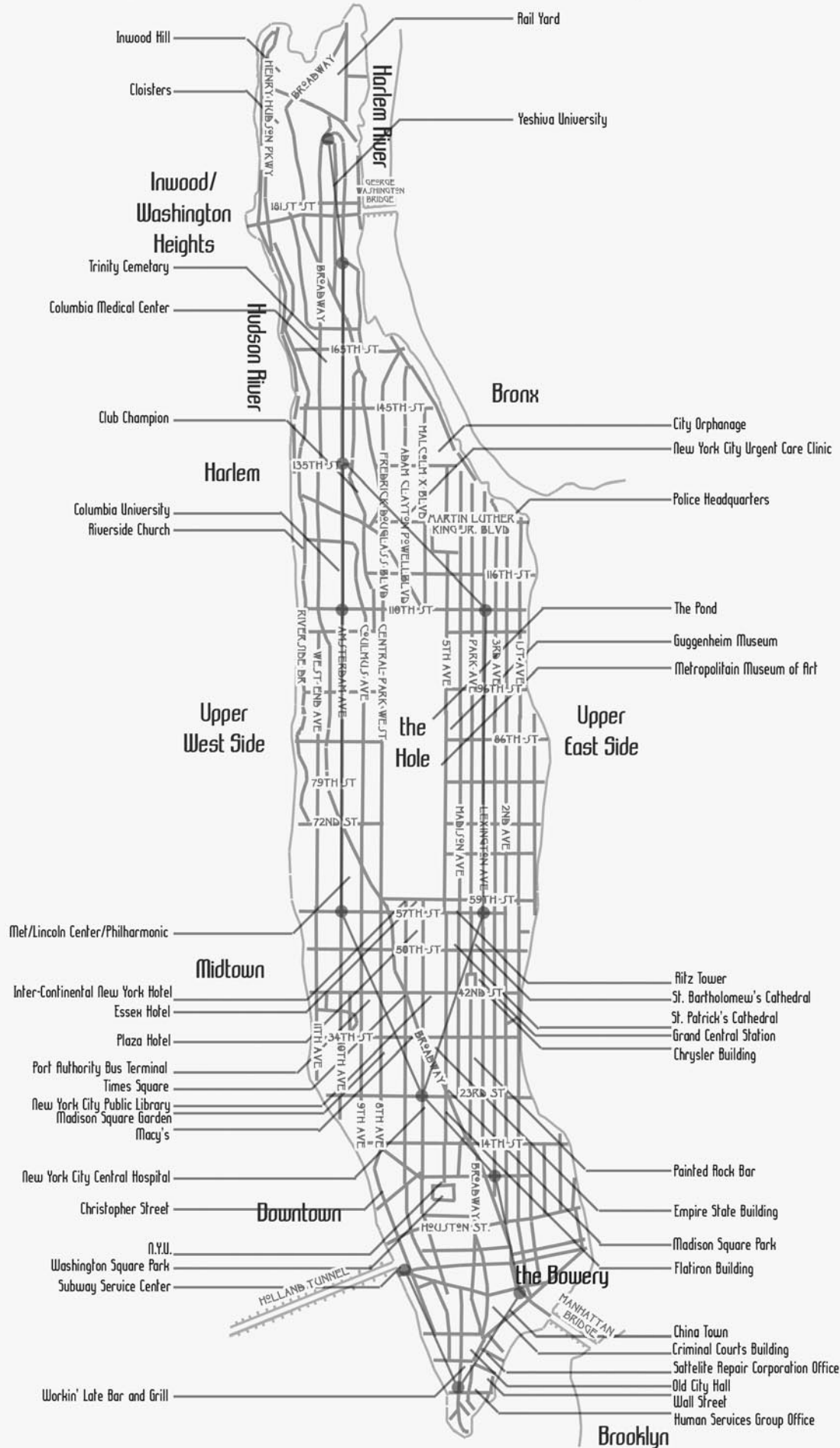
A gang member chip would plaster the walls with tiny green sigils to remind you what gang holds claim to this part of town. Look up the street and you might see the solid line of a well established turf, the fuzzy line of a poorly established turf and the zigzagging lines and spinning green daggers of a war-zone. Major hangouts for the members of various gangs would pop up.

The chip for a street person would be a constant barrage of pointers and signs showing places to hide, places to stay warm, places to get food, places to beg, places with dumpsters overflowing with food or salvageables, automated recycling booths, and the meandering lines of the well established daily routes of friends and enemies.

An addict chip would show monochrome green-and-black head-shots of the pushers gangs that operate on each couple of blocks. Under the headshots would be little notes: "likes to beat people for no reason", "cuts stuff with baking powder", "probably high on god killer" or "has got a limp from some recent injury."

The info pulled out of people's heads could make thousands of chips, each with a detailed and unique geography of the city. Outreach workers would see places where the homeless like to sleep. Perverts would see places to buy illegal pornography, hire prostitutes or meet with brothel owners for a (blindfolded) trip to the brothels. Corporate agents and LBRA corp hunters would see corporate logos hovering over every store, apartment building, even vending machine. Hackers would see a tangle of green lines, information snaking under the streets of the city, ready to be tapped, ending in paycomputers, security cameras, remote-controlled security systems and more. Runners would see signs pointing out every major shortcut through the city. Thieves would see tiny symbols plastered on each building: stick figures holding clubs would mean a security guard, a camera would mean surveillance, a suitcase would mean the residents are on vacation.

There are billions of pieces of geographical information about the city, some are known to all, some are available to anyone who cares enough to inquire, and some are closely guarded secrets. Some say that there are many cities, all coexisting all at once, all mutually invisible.



South of Inwood is Washington Heights. This was once a neighborhood for successful blacks who moved out of Harlem (to the South). In recent times, it has been primarily a lower class area with a high density of apartment buildings. 181st Street in Washington Heights was the birthplace of the gang that would become known as the Skin Borgs. The Skin Borgs have expanded rapidly in recent years, taking over all of the Inwood and Washington Heights areas and some of Harlem. The Skin Borgs destroyed or forced out every other gang in the area. Most of the indies fled Inwood when the Skin Borgs took over and the whole area is economically depressed.

The buildings in this part of town are mostly residential, with a number of large housing projects. There are trees on many of the sidewalks. The most impressive buildings in this part of town are abandoned, and include a football stadium and an old Jewish college.

Harlem

In Brief- Old black and Hispanic area, North of the hole.

This district runs from 165th Street to 110th Street. Historically, Harlem was an African American ghetto, founded by laborers who were brought in to build the first subway. In the 1920s and 1930s Harlem was the center of a "black renaissance," where much of modern African American art, music and culture was born. Later, it became known as an African American ghetto. In the 1920s, Puerto Rican immigrants started moving to East Harlem, later followed by other Spanish speaking immigrants, and the area soon became known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio.

145th Street in Harlem is the scene of the blockade of the Skin Borgs by the Purists, Hummingbirds and Immortals. The street is a war zone with battles happening every day. Other gangs with a presence in Harlem include the Orphans, Immortals, Math Addicts, Humankalorie and Bleeders.

Harlem has the city's highest percentage of old brownstones. These are thin, two or three story buildings, built in tight rows during the 19th century. They are made from reddish sandstone (which has turned brown from pollution). These buildings are attractive, but have cramped interiors and no elevators.

Upper West/East Side

In Brief- To the East and West of the hole (Central Park) are now Indie neighborhoods.

This part of town runs from 110th street to 59th street, South of Harlem and North of Midtown. It is divided down the center by the hole (Central Park), forming three columns.

The Upper East/West sides are now a mostly Indie territory, with a lot of small homes owned by Indies, a few high class condos or apartment buildings, and shops that cater to Indies. This is the closest the city has to a "wealthy neighborhood" though there are just as many street people and addicts. Indie gangs rule most blocks and keep them relatively peaceful. The Sexologists and Arcadians rule the Upper East Side. The Dragons, Omniscients and Bleeders rule the West Side.

Before the Freedom Wars, real estate near Central Park was the highly valued. Near the park, on either side, were many museums and mansions (homes to millionaires and foreign embassies). Today, most of these museums and mansions are in ruins, victims of Freedom War violence

or random destruction by the Dragons. Farther away from the park, near the East Hudson river, are working-class brownstone apartment buildings, breweries and small factories. In between is a nice Indie area, with many restaurants, boutiques, shops and nice apartment buildings. There are trees on the sidewalks. The apartment buildings were mostly built before WWII. They are handsome, 10-30 story co-ops with high ceilings, arched doorways and hardware floors.

The Hole

In Brief- What was once a huge rectangular park in the middle of the city is now fenced off ruins and untamed wilderness.

Approximately in the middle of the city, between the Upper West and Upper East Sides, is what was once Central Park. This was one of the largest urban parks ever, approximately 2500 ft. by 13250 ft. It had a museum and two large bodies of water. During the Freedom Wars, Freedom Army forces started building a complex of buildings in the hole. The complex was supposed to incorporate the beauty of the park and much of it was underground. Some of the buildings were in operation and some were being constructed when the rebels blew up several of the buildings. This act brought on the end of the Freedom Army occupation of the East Coast. The hole, as it is known today, is ruins choked with unmaintained greenery. Despite the nuclear cleanup preformed by the restoration committee, the hole is slightly radioactive and the hole is surrounded by a barbed wire fence. The Keepers, a street family, consider the hole to be their territory and guard it viciously, so few people go in to the hole. See p.194 for more.

Midtown

In Brief- South of the park, has the red light district (hotels, prostitutes), Indie and Well gangs.

Midtown runs from 59th to 34th street. The Upper West and East Sides (and the Hole) are to the North and Downtown is to the South. Midtown was once the tourist capital of the city, dotted with luxury hotels, massive department stores, trendy neighborhoods and architectural landmarks. Today Midtown still plays host to the city's few tourists, as well as most of the city's sex industry and the Tea Drinkers, Freaks and Risen.

On the South end are the ruins of Macy's, once the largest store in the world, now mostly demolished. On the very Eastern edge, near Risen territory, is the New York Public Library. It is closed to the general public, but historians make occasional pilgrimages to the library to search through its collections of old paper-printed books. Nearby is Rockefeller center, a selection of large buildings (the largest being the RCA building at 70 stories). Impressive churches of Midtown include St. Patrick's Cathedral (a Catholic church, built in the 1800s, still in use) and St. Bartholomew's (which is now a meeting place for the Risen).

To the East, in Risen territory, is the Chrysler Building (a 77-story high skyscraper built in 1928-1930) and Grand Central Station (once a major transportation hub, the Freedom Army bolted the doors because they feared it would give rebels access to tunnels under the city). The half-collapsed ruins of the United Nations building lies, partially submerged, in the sunken city to the East.



Red Light District- South of the hole, N. of 23rd St., W. of 8th Ave., E. of 8th Avenue. This is the part of town where most prostitutes operate from. The Red Light District is also home to adult book stores, strip clubs and pornography studios. The red light district is centered around Times Square (the intersection of Broadway, 7th Ave., and 42nd St.).

People come from throughout the city and throughout this part of the country to partake in the city's sex industry. The average "tourist" is a businessman from a nearby private city, corporate living center or high-class neighborhood, who wants to spend the weekend in the city doing drugs and sleeping with prostitutes. Not everyone in the red light district wants sex or pornography, some are people staying in the city who want a cheap hotel room. Accommodations in the red light district range from seedy converted office buildings that cost \$30 a night (or \$10 an hour) to former luxury hotels (like the Ritz-Carlton, the Hotel Wellington, the Salisbury, Park Lane and the Plaza Hotel) that overlook the Hole and cost \$60 or more per night. In each of these former luxury hotels, the management can only afford to maintain a small portion of the hotel (usually the first few floors) but the parts that are maintained are clean and retain a little of their former grandeur. Only the best-dressed prostitutes in the city are allowed to hang around in the lobbies of these hotels and harass potential customers.

Broadway is one of the busiest streets in the city, and Times Square was once the heart of shopping and tourism in the city. Huge buildings, including the New York Times building, were built around Times Square, mostly to impress visitors. Multi-story high billboards and electronic signs are now cracked or peeling. Most of the buildings have spacious commercial frontage, which is now taken up by strip clubs and porn shops. Although half the neon lights are out, Times Square is still the best lit part of the city. All around Times Square there are old theatres and television studios which are now mostly used for creating pornography. There are dozens of theatres, some of which are forcefully co-opted by the Freaks for stage shows during the Festival of the Freak. Carnegie Hall is a famous old music studio which, although boarded up most of the time, is sometimes rented out to legitimate musical groups in the city who want to hold recitals.

Downtown

In Brief- Southern tip of the city, home to the bowery (large street people area), homosexual district, financial district, many skyscrapers.

Downtown Manhattan, which is everything South of 34th Street, is the most varied section of town, with commercial centers, industrial complexes, old residential neighborhoods and old skid-row neighborhoods. Less than half of the area of downtown is gang territory, making it the lowest concentration in the city. Downtown is also the oldest part of the city. Street gangs fought bloody battles here in the mid 1800s. At the very Southern tip, the regular street plan dissolves in to a tangle of ancient streets.

Large portions along the West side are actively used industrial complexes, employing many of the city's working classes (who live in corporate owned apartment buildings nearby). The majority of downtown is commercial, and though the tallest skyscrapers are in midtown, downtown boasts the highest concentration of skyscrapers. The residential areas are mostly very old ethnic neighborhoods, and most are now occupies by well

gangs (the Technophiles, Animalists and Needle Punks). Downtown has the Holland Tunnel (to the West) and the Manhattan Bridge (to the East), two of the three working ways in and out of the city.

Residential Neighborhoods- Downtown's residential neighborhoods had the city's first ethnic neighborhoods, and some have seen many groups of immigrants come through. The neighborhoods to the West (Chelsea, Soho, Greenwich Village) are generally "trendier." Although they have their share of Victorian tenements and old industrial buildings, they also have a lot of nicely renovated buildings that serve as Indie apartments. Loft space is plentiful, and a lot of the city's small "art scene" happens in small cafes and galleries here.

The Eastern residential neighborhoods (Lower East Side, Little Italy, China Town) have mostly been swallowed up by the growing Bowery (see below), yet some of their ethnic population and unique character remains. These neighborhoods are known for their high concentration of old tenement buildings. These buildings feature commercial frontage, party walls (walls shared with other buildings), no elevators, and dim interiors. Walking in these neighborhoods, one sees blocks filled completely with four to six story tenement buildings, they are mostly red and grey brick and the front of the buildings are covered with a maze of windows, ledges and fire-escapes.

Chinatown has a significantly different architecture from the other residential districts. Chinatown has some of the oldest buildings in the city that are still standing. The buildings are very cramped, even by city standards, and the architecture shows an unmistakable Chinese influence. The Chinese population here is still very high, enough so that corporate chain stores operating here find it profitable to advertise their services with Chinese neon signs.

Homosexual District- Originally centered around Christopher street (in what used to be called West Village), the homosexual district has grown to encompass most of the West Village and most of Greenwich Village. The homosexual district is roughly triangular, bordered by Greenwich Ave. on the Northeast, Christopher St. on the Southeast and the sunken city on the West. Many gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transvestites, including members of most of the city's gangs, live in apartments here. There are many bars and cafes here that are hangouts for the city's homosexual population (and heterosexuals who simply enjoy the atmosphere). There are many nice restaurants in this district.

Bowery- An ancient skid-row neighborhood, the Bowery has grown since the massive exodus from the city in the early 2060s. This huge section of town is home to the Black Meds, Crackers and thousands of other homeless street people. The current Bowery is sprawled along the Southeast corner of the city, incorporating the Lower East Side and most of Little Italy and Chinatown.

The buildings in the bowery are drab, almost all abandoned. There are many ruins of ancient shops, bars, theatres, music halls and hotels. The buildings still in operation are bars, liquor stores, churches, shelters, and cheap hotels. Even those buildings still in use are very old and weathered and are on the verge of falling apart. There are many fenced off vacant lots (now taken over by groups of homeless people) and piles of rubble from buildings that fell down. Many buildings show scars: holes that have been boarded over, buildings that shared a wall that have been torn down (leaving doorways that open up on to empty space), spots where crumbling red brick have been quickly replaced with concrete, etc.

As much as street people in the city have a culture, the Bowery is a center of that culture. The Black Meds, the street family that provides black market medical services to other street people, live here. The Bowery has the highest concentration of Street People of any part of the city, the majority of the (numerous) abandoned buildings have Street People living in them.

On the Southwest corner of the Bowery is the Criminal Courts Building, the only courthouse still in use in the city. It is nicknamed the Tombs, has 835 jail cells and is shaped much like a ziggurat.

In the middle of the Bowery is the Manhattan Bridge. When cops pick up homeless people in the nice neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens, the homeless people are usually given a choice: go to jail or go to Manhattan. Those that choose Manhattan are driven over the Manhattan Bridge and dropped off there. This part of town is sometimes known as "the drop off point." At any given time, hundreds of new city residents are sleeping on the streets or living in cheap hotels near the drop-off point. Cult recruiters prowl this part of town in force, and it is a coveted location for pusher gangs.

Financial District- Located at the Southern tip of the city, this neighborhood was once a center of international commerce. The major pre-Freedom War corporations had huge complexes here. The streets here are very old, are much narrower than in the rest of the city (created for horse and buggy traffic) and do not conform to the city's regular street plan. The abundance of tall, blocky buildings and narrow streets make this the most claustrophobic part of the city, with only a tiny portion of sky visible from the streets.

More than half of the office buildings are abandoned. Of those that aren't, usually only the first few floors are in use. The Satellite Repair Corporation, the Human Services Group and most YIs have offices here. In the North part

of the Financial District is the civic center, an abandoned complex with the old City Hall, a park, commercial office buildings and hall of records.

Sunken City

In Brief- Rising ocean levels created a dangerous ring of semi-submerged buildings around the city.

This term is used to refer to all the urban areas in Manhattan and Roosevelt Island that were semi-submerged when ocean levels rose during the 2030s. The "sunken city" has eaten up all of Roosevelt Island (in the East River), several blocks around Downtown, a few blocks all along the East side of the island, several blocks on the East coast of Inwood/Washington Heights and a large bite from the very Northern tip of the island.

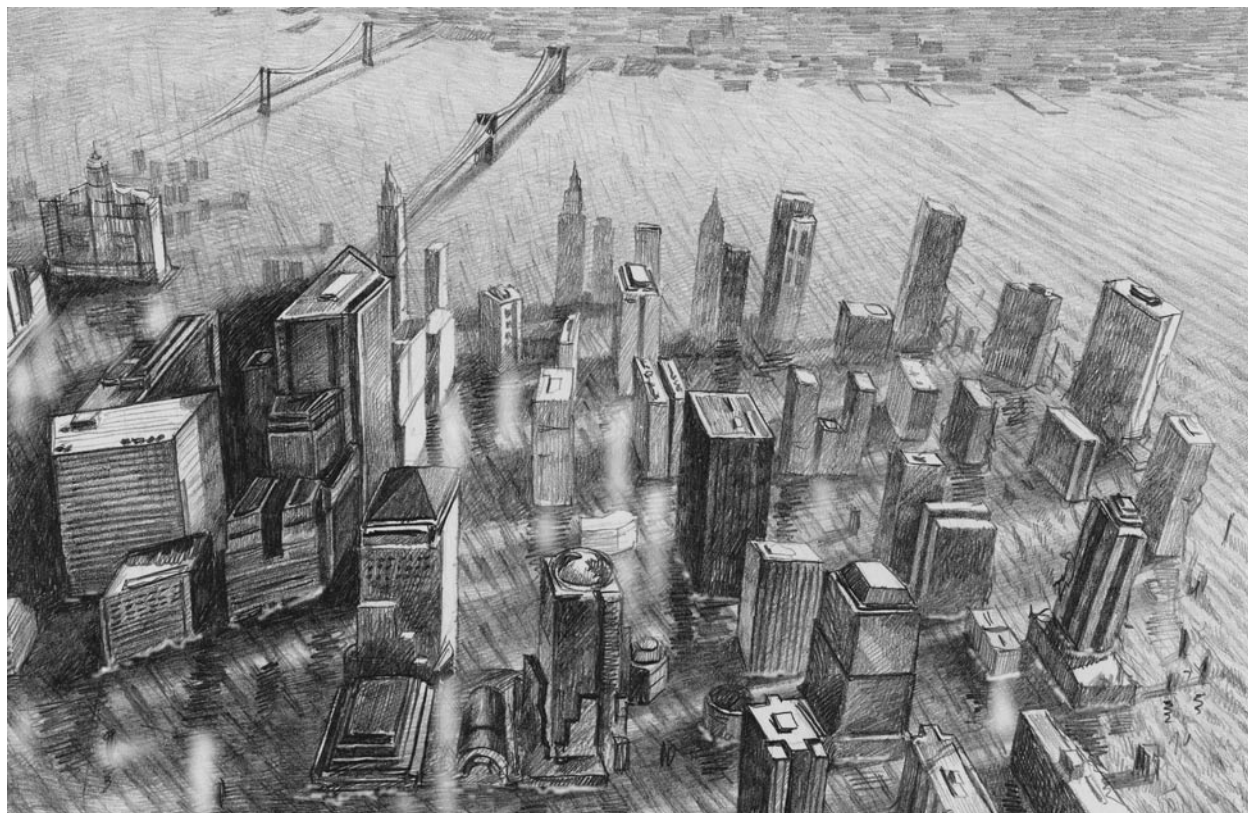
At the high-tide line, barbed wire fences, propped up by sandbags, are meant to keep people out of the sunken city. Many of the fences have been knocked down, and other have had holes cut in them. The water flowing through the sunken city is fast-moving, turbulent and typically very cold. Many people trying to wade through the sunken city are knocked down, sucked under and never seen again.

The Water Rats, an unborn family, live in the ruins and have secret ways to get there safely. See p.130 for more.

Suburbs

In Brief- Surrounding the city are gated communities, a private city, corporate living centers, business districts and upper-class neighborhoods.

During the land grab of the 2050s, large tracts of land in New York and New Jersey were bought up by corporations, gated communities and other private concerns. Areas once as old and dilapidated as Manhattan have been renovated and are now nice places to live.



The City: Despised and Romanticized

Manhattan is the biggest and worst ghetto in the area. To people living outside the city, the city is emblematic of a bad neighborhood. Most have big misconceptions about the city. Many people once lived in the city and left as they saw it getting worse and worse. They assume that everyone living in the city is either an addict, a violent gang member, mentally deficient or crazy. City gangs are generally confused with the drug-selling gangs of the old times. There are urban legends about city gang members killing people for wearing the wrong color shirt.

On the other hand, people outside the city have a romantic attachment to the city. For poetry, art and fiction, having been created in the city is a major selling point. The corporate and gated community consumers believe that art produced in the city has a "gritty realism" and an "intensity" that can't be found anywhere else. Many artists come to the city specifically to make it big on the art scene.

Pulp novels about life in the city are very popular. Like romance novels they are cheap, poorly edited, distributed widely, not given much respect by the literary community and a new one comes out every week. Some of these novels are written by people living in the city, others by people who have never been in the city and all their knowledge is secondhand. Either way, the novels are usually very inaccurate. They take a few real facts about the city (like names of gangs or place names) and fill in the rest with fantasy, all the while claiming to be "accurate depictions of city life." Some are even sold as non-fiction. The novels are wild tales of crime, adventure, gang war and romance among ruggedly handsome criminals and gang members in the city. People of all ages read these novels, but they tend to be very popular among adolescents in gated communities and corporate living centers. Because the novels tend to idealize things such as violence and danger, many gated communities have banned these books for their underage members (although this doesn't always stop the teenagers from getting copies of these books).

CITY HISTORY

Early 21st Century

In Brief- Urban problems worsened in 2030s and 2040s.

Urban problems such as crime, disease and poverty continued to grow worse throughout the early 21st century. Despite this, Manhattan remained a "hip" place to live and a birthplace of new cultural trends up until the 2030s. In the 2030s and 40s, the city took the brunt of a population explosion. The massive overcrowding was even more than the ambitious city government could deal with. Parks were paved over to build hospitals. Homeless people packed shanty-towns in to every available space. Riots were plentiful during this era, mostly initiated by unemployed working-class people.

In 2045, the Industrial Fire Disaster put many thousands of tons of black ash in the atmosphere. This started a chain reaction which accelerated the rising ocean levels. Superstorms racked the coast. The city, already dangerously overcrowded, shrank as rising water partially submerged many parts of the city. Many bridges and tunnels were damaged and the city did not have the budget to repair them.

In 2046, God Killer hit the area. New York law enforcement did not have the resources to deal with it. The population lived in fear of crazed God Killer addicts rampaging through the streets mowing people down with automatic weapons. The city built high-tech checkpoints at every way in and out of the city, but drugs managed to get in regardless.

Freedom Wars

In Brief- Freedom Army tried to make the city in to a socialist metropolis, made significant changes, became increasingly paranoid and was destroyed by rebels.

Corporate complexes in Downtown Manhattan were blown up during the massive first-strike by the Freedom Army. Manhattan's population was scared and rioted, trying to grab up as many goods as they could. In the massive rioting the police and National Guard were forced to flee the city.

Jeffrey Hernandez, head of the Freedom Army, needed a base of operations for the Freedom Army. Manhattan was the perfect place: there were only a few ways in and out of the city (which had checkpoints) and the sunken city made travel by water very difficult. Hernandez also wanted to create a thriving, successful metropolis, to show that the Freedom Army could build as well as destroy. Manhattan had the infrastructure to make this possible.

The Freedom Army set themselves up in office buildings and conscripted the whole population of the city as labor to build the new government and infrastructure. Factories were created, manufacturing everything from weapons to medical supplies. The Freedom Army started work on a complex of government buildings in the middle of central park. These half-underground fortresses were planned to serve as the world capitol of the Freedom Army.

Manhattan residents became increasingly dissatisfied with being forced to work for a government that couldn't even keep them fed. Hernandez became increasingly paranoid that rebel elements in the city would destroy the socialist metropolis he was trying to create. The Freedom Army swept the city for weapons and explosives. Hernandez locked up every manhole in the city and built a new (more secure) subway system. Other security measures included the forced registration of psychics and a massive hunt for the recently discovered Kalor aliens.

The Freedom Army's paranoia helped create some of its worst enemies. In 2054, city rebels detonated a small nuclear bomb and several non-nuclear explosives, destroying the Freedom Army government complex. City residents rioted against the surviving Freedom Army soldiers. This bombing was a fatal blow to the Freedom Army, and within two years the Freedom Army was destroyed.

The surviving population of Manhattan was shuttled to refugee camps outside the city (where many died from disease). The Restoration Committee did a quick nuclear cleanup of the city. After the cleanup ended, refugees were put back in to the city. For a brief period the city was a huge homeless shelter. Parcels of property were quickly sold to companies which converted buildings in to low income housing.

Social Movements of the 21st Century

Futurists (2010-2020)- High-tech idealists, used illegal tech, tried to rouse the general population from their apathy, and believed they could take control of the shape of the future.

Watchdogs (2030-2049)- Using Internet webcasting, these anti-corporate activists tried to put a check on corporate power and educate people about the causes and severity of global problems.

Freedom Army (2050-2055)- A global movement of anti-corporate rioting, misinformation, and tactical terrorism. The Freedom Army succeeded in destroying corporations and governments, but failed at attempts to build its own governments.

Utopianists (2058-2061)- Believed that new tech could be used to screen applicants and thus create "perfect" communities. These Utopias would create a perfect culture that would spread to the rest of the globe.

Unborn (2070-Present)- People born on the streets, made permanently homeless by strict laws, began to build their own culture and society in the city.

New Gangs (2075-Present)- Rose out of the vacuum created when the city's Old Time drug gangs self-destructed (their drug sales having been taken away). Unlike the previous gangs, the new gangs appealed to intelligent, well-adjusted people and have (mostly) been trying to make the city a better place.

Old Times

During the land grab of the early 2050s, the newly formed corporations and gated communities bought huge tracts of property in New Jersey, Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island. None of these groups wanted property in Manhattan (thanks to few working bridges, a huge homeless population, many bombed out ruins and a slightly radioactive Central Park). Outside Manhattan, low income housing was bought up and renovated, the

poor people forced to move out. Soon, Manhattan was the only place left in the area for displaced poor people to go to. Even as poor people were moving to the city, there was a massive exodus of the middle and upper classes out of the city. Those who stayed in the city found the streets becoming increasingly dangerous, and they chose to lock themselves away in their apartments. The new VR companies gave these shut-ins access to VR fantasy worlds to keep them occupied.

Quickly after the Freedom Wars, the drug market in the city re-established itself. Criminal entrepreneurs in the city bought God Killer from Appalachian biker gangs, sold it to the new street gangs, who sold it to the general population. These drug entrepreneurs (who quickly became known as "Drug Lords") became the richest and most powerful people in the city. The gangs that sold the drugs grew quickly. In a few years they went from small groups of a dozen people to organizations with thousands of members. The gangs used their drug profits to have guns smuggled in to the city, and they fought bloody battles against each other.

So, for more than a decade, the majority of city locked themselves away to escape from the violence of gang warfare. Most of the people on the streets were either gang members or drug addicts. Everyone else on the streets (including the city's large homeless population) tried to stay hidden. Anyone on the streets had to be very careful, lest they be caught in the crossfire of a gang war, be forcefully inducted in to a street gang, or be mugged by desperate addicts.

In 2075, this era abruptly came to an end. The Drug Lords formed in to a single organization and yanked drugs away from the drug gangs. The gangs quickly self-destructed and the Drug Lords, with their highly efficient structure and powerful new drugs, seemed on the verge of ruling the entire city. However, a new generation of gangs would appear that would frustrate the Drug Lords and make the city streets safer.

CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Buildings

The city has hundred of architecturally impressive buildings, most of which are abandoned. Some buildings include banks, concrete parking structures, Madison Square Garden (an indoor sports arena), courthouses, college campuses, movie theaters, museums and large hospitals. Since property values were so high, and lots were small, buildings in the city tend to be tall, thin and deep with very little space between them.

Abandoned Buildings- "Abandoned" is, like "homeless," a misnomer. About half the buildings in the city are not used by anyone with a legal right to be there, but most are used in some way. Most abandoned buildings have been given over to the city (the owners got tired of paying property taxes) and the city posted up big "condemned" signs and forgot about them. Of those buildings that are being used by the owners, almost all of those have some unused areas. In some buildings there is a "bad floor" that no one ever bothered to clean up and is used for storage. In some cases, only the first two or three floors are used, the rest are not kept up at all.

One result of all the free space is storage space is plentiful and cheap in the city. Anything that people are obligated to store, but don't really care if it gets damaged or stolen, is stored in the city. Dark, unmaintained buildings throughout the city are home to millions of boxes of old paper files, drums of semi-toxic refuse, old paper-printed books, and cheap plastic coffins.

A lot goes on in abandoned buildings. Some buildings are hangouts for gang members, littered with cigarette butts and beer bottles. Some buildings are used as repositories of trash and human waste by street people (who have nowhere else to put their waste). Many buildings are homes for the "homeless." Homeless living spaces range from the barely maintained (a cold and dirty place to pass the night) to the lavish (home to a large extended family who have spent hundreds of hours remodeling and fortifying the building). Most abandoned buildings are not used in a regular fashion, but they are routinely used for something, be it a party, a meeting, a place to stay the night or a place to hide bodies.

Industrial Complexes- The one city industry that actually grew after the Freedom Wars was high-pollution manufacture and chemical production. Every other community in the area blocked high-pollution factories from being built near them, so they all came to the city. Most industrial complexes are in current 24-hour a day use. Trains run in and out of the city constantly, bringing in materials and bringing out finished products. These complexes usually take up a city block (or more). They are gated with barbed wire fences, security cameras and round-the-clock guards. Some industrial complexes are abandoned (often because an accident happened and the corp found it cheaper to build a new complex than to clean up the old one).

Inside an industrial complex there are typically a few large warehouses and garages, some small offices (usually temporary buildings and trailers), and industrial machinery (large tanks, furnaces, pumps and smokestacks). Smoke and fire can be seen coming from the top of smokestacks and cooling towers 24 hours a day. Explosions, fires and chemical leaks happen here often. Because the city fire department is so poorly funded, most complexes have their own fire fighting equipment and marginally trained staff. Employees toil around the clock: most are minimum wage workers who live nearby, managed by a few corporate employees who commute from nearby corporate living centers.

Skyscrapers- A handful of skyscrapers dominate the city skyline. Built during a time when cheap labor was plentiful, Manhattan once had the highest skyscrapers in the world (now Asia boasts the world's tallest buildings). The majority are found in Downtown and Midtown. By most definitions, a skyscraper is a building with 20 or more floors (though some have as many as 102 floors). Skyscrapers became possible at the end of the 18th century when people learned to build large buildings with the building's weight supported by steel cages rather than masonry walls. The first skyscrapers were huge blocks. Fearing that they would block out the sun, the city required skyscrapers to have a tapered shape.

Skyscrapers are more than just tall buildings, they operate on a different set of rules than normal buildings. They take up whole city blocks and the networks of maintenance passages within them are so complex that it would take years to explore them all. Special pumps are needed to make water reach the upper floors. Normal elevators move too slowly and stop too often, and so people must travel through the building using express elevators to get near their desired floor and then normal elevators to get the rest of the way. Radio repeaters are necessary to let people inside the buildings receive radio or cellphone signals. Special dampeners let the top of the building sway several feet in a heavy wind, yet keep the sway slow enough that people can't feel it.



Skyscrapers are so expensive to maintain that none of the skyscrapers in the city have more than the first few floors in use. The first five floors can be maintained without much cost, while the upper floors are sealed off or used for storage. Other skyscrapers are closed altogether, abandoned. Homeless people live in the first few floors, but since there are no elevators, anything higher is an inconvenient place to go to. Sometimes, people will haul themselves up dozens of flights to hide themselves or to hide important objects. Sometimes secret meetings are held in rooms deep inside skyscrapers. City skyscrapers have an average of 3000 rooms, making finding anyone or anything the equivalent of finding a needle in a haystack.

There are also a few secret apartments and offices hidden in the empty depths of the upper floors of some skyscrapers. Rather than hooking in to the system for the rest of the building, water and fuel for generators is delivered every few weeks and waste containers are taken out. Tenants typically enter the building through underground tunnels and ascend through dark elevator shafts using personal ascending devices. The security guards who sit in the lobbies of the buildings typically do not know that such apartments exist. These apartments and offices are in sharp contrast to the building around them: behind armored doors they are warm, well lit and luxurious, while all around them the abandoned floors are cold, dark, dirty, laden with trash and dust, utterly without life. The owners of these apartments and offices are wealthy and secretive. It is common knowledge in the city that such apartments exist, but nobody knows who uses them.

Luxury Hotels- Most of the city's luxury hotels are still open, but only the first few floors are maintained. When in operation, these were some of the world's most prestigious luxury hotels. They are wide buildings, all over 20 stories tall. In addition to more than a thousand guest rooms, they have huge lobbies, tiny shopping malls (containing dozens of stores), gyms, indoor swimming pools, movie theatres, pharmacies and doctors offices, huge banquet halls and conference rooms, restaurants, bars, and helicopter pads on the roofs (now all unused). Underneath the hotels: a maze of hotel offices, storage rooms, kitchens and laundry facilities. The most expensive "rooms" include huge living rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms and even kitchens.

Most of these hotels are in Midtown (the center of city tourism) and most of them were built overlooking Central Park. Today, these hotels do not have nearly the amenities that they once did, but they are still the nicest places to stay in the city (especially if one has an interest in history, grand architecture, or a view of the hole). When wealthy people stay in the city they usually stay in these hotels.

Churches and Cathedrals- The city has some of the country's most impressive old cathedrals and churches. Most are still in use, although the congregations are much smaller. Most churches in the city lose money: the tiny crowd of parishioners that come in give what they can but it is not enough to even pay the ministers' wages. Appointments in these churches used to be prestigious and sought after, but today the churches are lucky to get volunteers willing to live and work in the city. Fortunately for the ministers, anything of value was carted out of the church during the Freedom Wars. Many churches operate tiny homeless shelters and soup kitchens, usually from the back of the church. They may also rent out church offices and old Sunday-school rooms to community groups like Alcoholics Anonymous.

Apartment Buildings- The most consistently used

buildings in the city are apartment buildings. The rental market in the city is so complex and varied that city residents have created a whole vocabulary to describe the different types of rentals. In order from the most desired to the least desired:

Highrise: Thirty to Fifty floors. Built in the late 20th, early 21st centuries to house the upper-middle class. These large buildings have big windows (giving splendid views of the city), roomy interiors and central heating and air. They either have attendants at the door or an intercom and camera based buzzer system. Typically have balconies, kitchens with modern appliances, health clubs, underground garages and other amenities.

Doorman: Twenty to forty floors. Built during the 1950-70s. These are luxury buildings, home to trendy indies, with an attendant at the door 24 hours a day. They have few modern amenities, but the architecture is nice (lavishly decorated lobbies, detailed façades) and there are relatively-modern elevators.

Loft: Six to Twelve floors. Formerly used for light manufacturing, they have been converted in to spacious apartments, perfect for artists or engineers who need a large working space. Typically have a large cargo elevator. Most are found Downtown.

Elevator: Nine to twenty floors. Built through the 20th century as housing for the middle class. Typically have an intercom security system. May have rooftop patios.

Brownstone: Three to five floors. This is a red sandstone version of the typical late 1800s/early 1900s townhouse or rowhouse (a long, thin, tall building, built to be sandwiched in rows on a block). Originally built as a single family home, but later converted to apartments (4 to 10 apartments). The rooms are small, but have charm and sometimes have amenities such as wood floors, fireplaces, terraces and private gardens in back.

Projects: 10 to 40 story high buildings. Built in response to the massive need for low-income housing during the 1970-80s and 2030-40s. These buildings are huge unattractive blocks, sometimes cloned on several



huge unattractive blocks, sometimes cloned on several consecutive blocks. They are built unimaginatively, of cheap materials and have few amenities. At best, each building has a laundry room, a small "community area" and possibly a black-top playground. Inside, seemingly unending hallways with stained grey carpet and dim florescent lights lead to hundreds of plain wood doors, each opening up to a tiny apartment.

Walkup: Three to five stories. Containing 12 to 30 small apartments. These are old tenement buildings, built in the late 1800s through the 1960s, to house the very poor. There are no elevators, just dimly lit wooden stairwells, usually with trash inside them. The apartments are cheap, cramped, dark with little or no ventilation. There may be dark airshafts in the walls, but they are typically plugged up with trash. Exterior fire-escapes are often the only place where people can hang out and get fresh air, though not every apartment has fire escape access.

Many old buildings in the city still use steam based furnaces for heating in the winter. Except for the very cheapest tenements, most apartment buildings have a live-in superintendent who is responsible for collecting rent, doing minor repairs and hauling the trash out on trash days. The super is paid by the land management company that owns the building, which is itself owned by a larger corporation.

Streets

The city has some of the worst streets in the US. The corrupt city government rarely repairs streets unless forced to by corporate pressure. When the major avenues get so bad that trucks can't deliver groceries to grocery stores, the streets get repaired. Apart from those major avenues, however, most streets are unusable except with a vehicle with a powerful engine and four wheel drive. There are cracks, potholes, old craters from Freedom-War explosions, rubble, trash and even old non-running cars in the middle of the streets. In come cases there are holes in the streets that go straight through to old utility tunnels below. The cheap electric cars that are being cranked out now don't have the power to travel over these streets. Most people who ride motor vehicles in the city depend on old gasoline-powered vehicles (and have to buy prohibitively expensive gasoline). In some parts of town vehicle traffic is so infrequent that homeless people camp in the middle of the streets with no fear of being run over.

Utilities

Trash- Trash is omnipresent in the city. It can be dangerous, when characters are forced to wade through it and may miss hazards such as holes, sharp pieces of metal, etc. Trash can also be a blessing when it allows characters to hide from their enemies. In some places there is so much trash that it creates a physical barrier.

There is garbage removal city in the city, but it is chancy. Dumpsters are often overflowing in to the streets by the time apartment managers can convince the garbage removal services to do what they are being paid for and come pick up the trash. There is no garbage removal on the streets, in public areas and in the abandoned places where people live. The fences that were put up to keep people from going to the sunken city keep trash from blowing out to sea and make the city a sort of cage full of trash. When strong winds blow, trash flies through the air from one side of the city to the other, where it piles up against fences. There are some small parks and other public areas that are enclosed by fences and walls and these places usually have trash several feet deep. Alleys are a common dumping place for trash that is too heavy to blow away, and some alleys are filled, end to end, with trash piled higher than a person. Some homeless people who squat in abandoned buildings do not carry out their trash, they leave it there until the house becomes too choked up with it, then they move on.

Electricity- Most power comes from Hydro-Quebec which gets it's power from hydroelectric sources, including Niagra falls. The many factories in the city also create their own power and resell the unused power to the city. Power outages are common and are a major cause of riots.

Sewage and Water- Probably the city's most dependable utility. Centuries old water and waste tunnels are kept running by a tiny staff of city workers and second-hand robots. These robots travel through the tunnels keeping the pipes clean, cutting up obstructions and patching holes. At the Northern end of the city a large plant (mostly underground) uses secondary-nanotech filters to create (mostly) clean drinking water out of polluted water from the Harlem river. Sewage is processed: the water is removed and dumped in the river, the solid elements are loaded on trains to be sold as fertilizer.

CITY POPULATION

In Brief- 210,000 people on island of Manhattan, much less than in the past.

There are currently about 210,000 people living on the island of Manhattan, only one seventh of its population at the end of the 20th century and about one tenth of the island's population in the 1920s. This is a population density of about 11,000 people per square mile.

In terms of socioeconomic classes: there are 28,000 indies (7.5%), 151,000 wells (72%) and 31,000 street people (14.5%).

In terms of allegiance (or lack thereof) to city power structures: 120,000 (57%) are shut-ins, 55,000 (26%) do not belong to any gang or family, 30,000 (14%) belong to gangs or major street families and 5,000 (2%) belong to the Drug Lords organization.

There are also about 1,000 people just passing through in the city at any one time. If they are staying for the night, they are likely staying in hotels in the red light district, at cheap motels near the drop-off point, or at the homes of relatives in the city. These travelers have every conceivable motivation for being in the city, legal and illegal, ethical and unethical, exotic and mundane, but the majority are New York area businessmen coming to the city for drugs and prostitutes.

Manhattan Area and Population

Date	Above Water Area	Population	Density
1920's	24 mi ²	2,300,000	95,000/mi ²
1990's	24 mi ²	1,500,000	65,000/mi ²
2080	19 mi ²	210,000	11,000/mi ²

Death

In Brief- 17 deaths/day, some go to mortuaries, others are eaten by rats, most are cremated and buried in unmarked graves.

17 people die in the city every day. About 12 of them end up in the city morgue or a funeral home. It can take weeks for bodies to be discovered and taken to the morgue (especially shut-ins, who may not be discovered until neighbors complain of bad smells). 5 of the people do not end up in the morgue: the bodies are hidden, buried, or never found. When bodies are left laying around, rats eat most of the flesh and the bones become just another part of the city's massive amount of trash.

The city morgue is located in the basement of the New York City Central Hospital, downtown. About half the corpses that pass through it are unclaimed and are cremated and buried in Potter's Field (located on Hart Island on Long Island South) with no marker.

If they are claimed by a mortuary, the body is picked up and prepared for burial. There is no cemetery space in the city, so the families have the choice of having the body buried in upstate New York, or (the cheapest and most popular option) put in to one of the many city buildings that have been converted to mausoleums. The mausoleums look like old unused office buildings, they are kept unheated, dimly lit, and are filled with air-tight concrete or plastic crypts.

City Population

Out of 210,000:

Addicts/Winos	15,000	(7%)
Crazies	5,000	(2%)
Drug Lords/Pushers	5,000	(2%)
Indies (in gangs)	5,000	(2%)
Indies (not in gangs)	4,000	(1.9%)
Miscellaneous	16,000	(7.5%)
Shut-Ins	120,000	(57%)
Street People (in families)	5,000	(2%)
Street People (not in families)	5,000	(2%)
Wells (in gangs)	20,000	(8%)
Wells (not in gangs)	10,000	(4%)

Group	Avg. Life Expectancy
Indies (Non-Gang)	65
Indie (Gang)	61
VR Addicts/Shut-Ins	58
Wells (Gang)	51
Wells (Non-Gang)	49
Street People (Family)	40
Street People (Non-Family)	30
Winos	25
Crazies	24
Addicts	22

Top Causes of Death for All City Residents

- #1- Heart Disease
- #2- Drug Overdose
- #3- Stroke
- #4- Exposure
- #5- Communicable Diseases

Top Causes of Death for City Residents Ages 18-25

- #1- Drug Overdose
- #2- Murder
- #3- Communicable Diseases
- #4- Accident
- #5- Exposure

The AI Tax, Welfare and VR Addiction

In the early 2060's, in the aftermath of the Freedom Wars, the "AI tax" bill was passed by congress. It was designed to ease the massive unemployment caused by Artificial Intelligences replacing more-and-more workers. The AI/unemployment problem had been a major factor that led to the Freedom Wars. The AI tax takes big chunk of profits made using AIs in "traditionally human occupations" and earmarks it for unemployment and welfare programs. Many of the larger corporations actually supported this legislation, for reasons which will become apparent shortly.

Large corporations own almost all of the credit card companies that welfare recipients are in debt to. They own most of the land holding companies that own the apartment buildings welfare recipients live in. They own (or are paid interest to by people who own) the liquor stores, grocery stores, security companies and practically every company that caters to the shut-in welfare class. For every dollar that the large corps give to the AI tax, they get 95 cents back. And five cents is a small price to pay to prevent anti-corporate rioting. The only people who don't make their money back are the small start-up companies who can't yet afford to think on such a vast socioeconomic scale. For these companies, the AI tax is another barrier that keeps them from making it big and competing with the big corps.

Disappearances

In the city, about 500 people disappear per year, more than one per day. The Math Addicts have concluded that these disappearances can be explained without resorting to paranoid theories of evil conspiracies. The Math Addicts best-guess break down of disappearances is as follows:

175 people died of **natural causes**, bodies not found or found and not identified.

130 people **murdered** and the bodies hidden or disposed of.

90 people who **left** the city or **moved** to another part of the city, not telling anyone where they were going.

25 people who entered **cults** and were asked (or forced) to leave their friends and family behind without a word.

25 people being **held** against their will, inside or outside the city, for purposes of forced slavery, prostitution or the creation of illegal pornography.

20 people whose minds were **wiped** and bodies were sold on the black market.

20 people killed and **eaten** by animals or mauler addicts.

10 people who **lost** their **memory or sanity**, and who are still wandering about the city as homeless crazies.

5 people who **drowned** in the sunken city and were carried off by the water.

Children

In Brief- 20,000 children in cities, raised by parents, Orphans, foster system. Most children educated in cheap VR schools. 'Kid Borgs' are adults in children's bodies.

Out of 210,000 people in the city, about 20,000 of them are below the age of 15 (the number 15 is used because this is youngest age where most gangs will let a person join). There are children being raised by every social class in the city. Some have fewer children (like the addicts, whose drug use usually kills fetuses, and shut-ins, who have a hard time meeting real-world lovers) and some have more (street people in families have the highest). Although shut-ins have the lowest birthrate, they make up 57% of the population, and thus there are more children of shut-ins than of any other city group.

When children do not have parents who can or will take care of them, many end up in the hands of the state. Many Wells and Indies in the city earn some extra money by taking in foster children on a semi-permanent basis. Foster parents range from the genuinely good parents, to the abusive, to indescribably worse than abusive. If there are no foster homes available, a child is sent to the state run city orphanage. The orphans in the orphanage know the dangers of foster homes and will not let a child go to a foster home once they have entered the care of the orphanage. The orphanage is run by grownup orphans who took a vow to protect those smaller than them. The corrupt state workers who are being paid to run the orphanage don't dare to come near it. Some parents have been known to drop off their children in Orphan territory temporarily. The Orphans don't approve of this, and will make life as hard on the parents as possible, but this doesn't stop them from watching over the children.

Some children have no one to take care of them, yet they are lucky enough to have gained the street smarts to survive on their own. Children who learned to survive on their own from a very early age are rare enough to have gained semi-mythical status. They are often called "wilderns" in city slang.

Among the Unborn, children are put to work as soon as possible. The children contribute, even in a small way, to the health of the family, but at the same time they learn the skills that they will use to make a living later in life. Unborn children are very skilled: a Black Med can usually set and splint a broken bone at 6, a Cracker can rip off a payphone at 7, a Drake is given a sharp scrap of metal or glass (coated with a poison Drakes are immune to) at 3.

Education- Gated communities and corps run their own schools, for which they gain significant tax breaks (thanks to the self sufficiency acts of the early 2060s). Since most children born in a corp or gated community will end up becoming a member, it is a wise investment for the corp or gated community to pay for good education.

The pool of funding for public schools is very low. Since the early 2070's there has been one virtual reality system which acts as a public school for the entire state. Students and teachers log in from home. Students who do not have full immersion VR hardware will be loaned old hardware (donated by VR companies). Students who don't have a safe place to log in go to a schoolhouse (an old converted office or school bus with a security guard and VR terminals). The teachers do very little: mostly the students run pre-written learning programs (ten years older than those used in corporate schools). In theory, parents should make sure children go to a schoolhouse or log in every day. If parents don't make sure a child goes to school, child protective services can be called. In reality,

few parents ever face such punishments and truancy is common. Many students drop out of school when they turn eighteen, completely illiterate.

Kid-Borgs- Some people have been known to use mental programming technology to transfer (or copy) their minds in to the bodies of children. Some use children whose bodies were grown in a vat and who never had any real consciousness, but most use the bodies of real children who had their minds wiped. The main reason criminals choose children is because they think they can get away with more as children. Because of this phenomenon, children who are encountered on the streets without any parents are usually regarded with suspicion.

Kid Gangs- Just as adults join together in to gangs for the purposes of self-protection or to bully around others, so do street kids. Kid gangs are usually small (four to seven kids, only a few are as large as twenty) and they tend not to last very long. Like adult gangs, some kid gangs steal and rob from other children and some act as benevolent protectors. Kid gangs rarely mess with adults, and so the world of kid gangs is generally invisible to adults. The only adults who are really aware of kid gangs are those who prey on children (and try not to prey on members of kid gangs).

Top 5 Children Not To Mess With

Drake Kid- From a very early age, Drake children are given tiny amounts of poisons, especially the Drake Fungus Poison. By the time they are walking and talking, they can take massive amounts of the fungus poison without it hurting them. They are on a steady diet of this poison so that their very blood has enough poison in it to kill most people. Drakes learn from an early age to throw pieces of poisoned glass with deadly accuracy and they are seldom found on the streets without these deadly weapons in their pockets. Even if a Drake child can be disarmed and bound they know that they can kill with a bite and they are not afraid to bite as hard as they can.

Leader of a Kid Gang- Some kid gangs do not have a real leader, but some do. Those leaders have a significant amount of power at their command: a tiny army of rough street kids armed with rocks, knives and clubs. Kid gangs have learned the lesson of revenge early on and they will go to great lengths to pay back someone who has injured them.

Baby Colin- Colin doesn't just copy his mind in to the minds of adults. He inhabits a fair number of children in the city, and he uses their supposed innocence to his advantage. Even though too small to fight with an adult, little Colins wait until those who trust them are sleeping and then slit their throats with a knife. Baby Colins like to travel in packs so that their collective strength is enough to pull down a person, knock them out, and drag them to whatever dark basement their mental installer is in.

Orphan Babysitter- From as early as they can understand anything, those kids who end up at the city Orphanage are taught to protect younger children. Orphans as young as 3 have been known to attack full grown adults to protect their charges. The Orphans are trained in a martial art specially designed to let small groups of children attack and kill adults. They are all armed with railroad spikes that have been sharpened to wicked points. They know every spot on an adult that is within their reach that will paralyze with pain, cripple or kill. When there are multiple Orphans they act in concert, encircling opponents and stabbing them in the back.

Cult Kid- Cult kids are generally pretty harmless to adults. They are sent out in small groups to try to lure street kids back to the cult compound, bribing them with candy and friendship. They are usually under orders to stay away from adults (who might try to save the kids from the cult). When the cult leader feels that his or her power is in danger, though, the kids become very dangerous. The kids are brainwashed in to believing that death should not be feared. It is not uncommon for cult leaders to strap homemade explosives to kids and send them to blow up some of the cult's (real or imagined) enemies. The kids look perfectly normal, may even come begging for help, but they know when to hit the button to take out their enemies. These kids are perfectly fearless, so certain are they that a perfect life awaits them.

Immigrants

In Brief- Many legal and illegal immigrants come here to escape terrible conditions. Some are kept ignorant of US ways so they can be exploited. Some are literal slaves in brothels. Some immigrants form small xenophobic communities.

Each year, millions of people come to the United States from countries ravaged by war, political oppression and economic collapse. Some immigrate legally and quickly join gated communities or corporations. Others enter the US illegally, entering with false visas. They cross the Mexican border with the help of "jackals" (professional people smugglers), ride homemade rafts up the coast, or pay to be smuggled in to the country onboard cargo ships. Those immigrants who have entered the country illegally can not get welfare or legal jobs and so they end up in inner cities, usually living as street people.

Slave Trade- Many illegal immigrants are dangerously ignorant of American ways, and some people take terrible advantage of this ignorance. There are con artists in the city who specialize in catching immigrants in scams. Sometimes they bring them over at little or no charge, but put them in debt with interest so high they can never pay it off, turning the immigrants in to indentured servants.

The worst examples of taking advantage of illegal aliens is the slave trade. Some people are enticed in to coming to the United States on false pretences, promised legitimate work or marriage to a loving spouse. Others are physically kidnapped or bought in third world slave markets and smuggled in to the US as chattel. Once in the US they are virtually brainwashed in to believing that if they are caught by the government they will suffer a terrible fate. They are told that illegal immigrants are put in to violent and disease-filled prisons. Fear keeps the immigrants from leaving the homes, factories or brothels where they live or work.

This slavery does not happen only in the city. Many people living in private cities or wealthy neighborhoods have live-in maids who get paid nothing and are afraid to leave the homes.

There are secret brothels in the city where women, children and a few men are kept inside by fear of their captors and fear of what lies outside the brothels. Most of the people in these brothels were kidnapped by organized crime gangs in Southeast Asia, Russia and Central America, smuggled over in cargo ships, and sold to the brothels at a few thousand per head. The Sexologists have made it their personal crusade to hunt down the operators of these brothels and kill them, but there are still some left in secret locations in the red light district.

Immigrant Communities- Most illegal immigrants merge seamlessly in to the city society and economy, taking on the roles played by unborn. Some even marry or are 'adopted' in to powerful street families. No matter how well they fit in to the city society, most immigrants feel most comfortable around people who speak their language and share their culture.

There are some people who fail completely to acculturate themselves to city society. They suffer from a sort of culture shock where they turn inwards and refuse to try to fit in or even learn the language. They tend to form small, insular communities which they defend against outsiders. When they are forced to leave these communities (for instance, to scrounge for food) they refuse to communicate with other city residents.

One example is a camp of refugees from Sierra Leone in midtown in a vacant lot at the corner of 47th St. and 8th Ave, East of Tea Drinker territory. The camp is fenced off with barbed wire, inside the concrete has been torn up so that crops could be grown in the dirt. The camp has 30 people living there, some interact with city residents, some don't and a few refuse to leave the camp even for medical care. No outsiders are allowed in to the camp, even for a visit, and the camp recently repelled an attack by a coalition of four local pusher gangs.

COLIN

In Brief- Serial killer, kidnaps people and copies his mind in to theirs (thus creating copies of himself), thinks he's a god, city residents have found him impossible to wipe out.

History

In 2075, amateur profilers were investigating a series of mutilated priests found in churches. When they caught the perpetrator in the act, what they saw frightened them: a group of small children. They were unable to take the children alive, but they autopsied the bodies and found evidence that each child's mind had been wiped out and over-written with a new mind (see Mind Copying, p.209). They could reach no other conclusion other than that someone had erased the children's minds and copied another mind in to their brains. What was worse, it was a mind that was capable of mutilating priests. The profilers immediately raised every alarm they could, and whole gangs took to the streets to find what they assumed was

one perpetrator with one mental installer.

Colin himself revealed the truth to the profilers and the truth was much more horrible than they had thought. They had imagined one person with a mental installer manufacturing serial killers. In reality, each copy of Colin was an independent agent. Each copy went out and did whatever possible to make as many copies of himself as possible. Like a virus, any single Colin could reproduce exponentially in the right conditions. The copies were not just children, they were everyone: young people, old people, gang members, members of the Drug Lords, wealthy and powerful people, anonymous homeless people. Colin was infiltrating every sector of city society

Each copy struck out on his or her own, meaning that not even Colin really knew who was a Colin or how many Colins there were out there.

A paranoid witch hunt began, peaking in a few months. Every person who had gone away for any period of time or who was acting differently in any way was suspect. Many hundreds of people were lynched in the streets and many mental installers were destroyed. No one knows how many real Colins were killed, but there are at least a hundred people now believed to have been wrongly murdered. The witch hunt died down as people began to believe that Colin had been destroyed.

This pleasant belief lasted only a few months before Colins were caught again. Another, smaller witch hunt occurred, but tapered out as people began to see the uselessness of a witch hunt. Colin was too good at staying hidden and anonymous, he was as likely to be the leader of a lynch mob as he was to be the victim of one. Many said that Colin could only be fought with constant vigilance. Many were of the opinion that Colin just could not be destroyed by any means.

Now, about one Colin is discovered every month. Math Addicts have given various estimates of the current population of Colins as being somewhere between 20 and 500.

Colin Hunters

In Brief- Some people specialize in hunting Colins.

Colin scares most people more than anything else in the city. Some people have transformed their fear in to a "no tolerance" policy towards Colins: they will immediately kill anyone that they even suspect of being a Colin. Other people, especially people who have been hurt in some way by Colins, have decided to devote their lives to hunting Colin. Others hunt Colin as a hobby, some even find it fun.

Colin hunters come from all ranks of city society. Some are Hunters, some are Eccentrics with a law enforcement background, some are young people who are hobby profilers. Together they form a small community that investigates Colin, shares information, and creates theories about his psychology. When they discover a Colin, they have a small army of volunteers willing to help them capture or kill the Colin. One thing they wonder about is why Colin hasn't tried to wipe them out yet. Their major theory is that Colin likes people studying him.

Church of Colin

In Brief- A few people pretend to worship Colin in exchange for his anonymous protection.

There is a small group of individuals who "worship" Colin as a god. Their official position is that Colin wants (some would even say needs) worshippers and is willing to offer a great deal in return. Colin worshippers wear black, wear bowl-cuts with the sides of their heads shaved and wear silver crosses upside down. This is said to be Colin's original appearance, although no one knows where this information came from.

Colin worshippers are, obviously quite hated, but the people who hate them rarely do anything to them for fear of being attacked by Colins. Worshippers will do many things to please Colin, including defacing churches with pro-Colin graffiti, proclaiming from street corners that "Colin is a God," building public shrines to Colin and

leaving offerings (usually in the form of food, money and weapons) to Colin.

In exchange, Colin worshippers are watched over and protected by an invisible hand. Colin never contacts these worshippers, but the most devout worshippers are under constant surveillance by Colin. One rude remark to a Colin worshipper can be enough to cause a person to be attacked by Colins. Colin Worshippers often have a lot of Colin hunters around them, looking for Colins.

Although Colin does not communicate with his worshippers, the zeal with which he protects them or does not protect them gives some clue about what behavior Colin likes or does not like. Colin likes fear, awe and christianesque worship. He also likes when worshippers talk as if he was a popular-culture icon. He likes worshippers who do not claim to have personal powers, but who rely on the power of Colin to protect them. For instance, Colin might not protect someone who says "You can't mess with me, I'm a Colin worshipper, you'll be killed," while he might protect someone who says "I put my faith in the power and infinite wisdom of Colin." Colin does not like worshippers who try to be like him, he has killed at least one worshipper who tried to copy his mind in to a victim's mind.

There are about 10 to 15 Colin Worshippers in the city. The Church of Colin has no formal organization, but Colin McKray, the first Colin Worshipper is the most powerful, has "converted" the most people and has the most influence over other Colin Worshippers.

Strains

In Brief- Different strains with different skills/knowledge; some Colins may have decided to quit reproducing.

Any time Colin changes, if he is gaining a piece of knowledge, learning a new skill, or gets a new mental program, every Colin that Colin creates is subtly different. Since Colin has been reproducing for 10 years, and has been actively trying to improve himself, there are many different strains. A new strain that is significantly better (e.g. has powerful psychic skills, or is a master martial artist) could reproduce more quickly than other Colins and could be an immediate threat to the city.

Colin's personality doesn't change much. Colin Hunters attribute this to the powerful megalomania that has dominated every aspect of his life for the last decade. However, personality change is probably inevitable if Colin survives long enough.

"The Dropout Effect"

This is a theory by Colin Hunters. They say that at some point (if it hasn't happened already) some Colin will change (either because of experiences or because of errors in the copying process) to the point that he doesn't want to be a Colin anymore. Yet the effect on the Colins as a whole will be almost nil. Those Colins will "drop out" but other Colins will continue. In the animal world, a mutation might make an animal not want to have sex, but since that gene is not carried on to a new generation, the effect on the species is nil. Thus, say Colin experts, Colin may continue to reproduce forever if we allow him.

Finding a Colin dropout would be a major coup for the Colin Hunters, who could find out more about Colin's psychology. However, a drop-out may not necessarily be a nice or safe person to be around.

CRIMINALS

It is hard to find someone on the streets who does not break some law or another. Many people use illegal drugs, most people buy stolen merchandise from black market traders, most people trespass on to abandoned property. Many people will end up doing some job that they get paid under the table for. Violence in the name of vigilante justice or revenge is common. For street people, their very existence violates anti-camping and anti-vagrancy laws.

Most city residents would divide criminals in to one of four categories:

Incidental Criminals: Commit crimes that are incidental to their lifestyle: a Roofer trespasses on rooftops, an Insomniac uses illegal drugs, a Risen participates in gang warfare. The majority of people on the streets count as this type.

Professional Criminals: Make a living off of crime. In order to survive they must be skilled and patient. They seek the easiest and least dangerous way to commit their crimes, and so they are seldom violent (the major exception being professional assassins, who practice efficient violence with nothing left to chance).

Impulsive Criminals: Typically Wells. Commit crimes to get money for drugs, prostitutes or other expensive vices. Impulsive criminals would make poor professional criminals: they are not skilled, patient or careful enough. They typically commit crimes under the influence of drugs (most commonly alcohol and god killer) and they are very likely to use violence.

Sadistic Criminals: Commit crimes solely to victimize others. Include rapists, serial killers, child molesters and hate criminals.

Top 10 Shoplifted Items in the City

1. Cigarettes
2. Liquor
3. Condoms
4. Over the Counter Medicines containing Ephedrine*
5. Spray Paint
6. Razors
7. Disposable Lighters
8. Data Cards
9. Baby Formula
10. Batteries

*from which Methamphetamines and God Killer can be manufactured

Burglars

In Brief- Cat burglars are stealthy and skilled. Smash-and-grab burglars are violent.

There are two distinct types of burglary as practiced by professional and impulsive criminals. The first type is cat burglary, where not being seen takes precedence over getting something of value. Burglars of this type are usually professional unborn thieves with in-depth knowledge of how to bypass alarm systems. The second type is the smash-and-grab: gangs of armed youths break down a door or smash a window. They run in and subdue anyone who happens to be present with violence or threats of violence. They run away before security can come en-masse. This type of burglary is a big problem in the city: hundreds are killed each year and many more are injured. The burglars tend to prey on those who can not defend themselves and more than half of those who are killed are elderly.

Muggers

In Brief- Small gangs of youths ambush people to get money for drugs.

Muggers are typically small groups of desperate addicts or violent teenagers. They seek out those least able to defend themselves: intoxicated people, old people, sick people, anyone who looks like a VR addict out on the streets for the first time in months. Typically, the group waits in dark alleys, waiting for a spotter to tell them that a lone traveler is coming by. The muggers ambush the traveler, usually attacking with blunt objects. The point is to incapacitate the victim, the muggers seldom care whether they kill or not.

Pounders

In Brief- Gangs of tough homeless men who bully around other homeless people.

Although many street people band together for the purposes of self-protection and cooperative labor, some street people form small groups that bully and exploit other street people. They are known as "pounders" because of their propensity for ganging up on and beating up street people. These groups are typically made up of 5 to 20 males in their twenties and thirties, most of whom are physically large. There may or may not be a leader. Most of these groups are ethnically homogenous (e.g. all white, all asian, etc.). Most drink alcohol as their primary form of entertainment.

The group bullies around other street people. They get the best camping sites (typically a vacant lot with a barbed wire fence and abandoned cars to sleep in). The group takes over the best canning routes and begging spots. When semi-legitimate jobs are offered to street people (for instance, a shop owner may pay street people to sweep up in front of the shop, or an apartment manager may pay street people to carry garbage bags to the dumpsters) these gangs muscle in and take over the jobs. The gangs may also steal directly from street people.

At night these street people use their ill-earned money to buy drugs and alcohol and have parties. They play music on car stereos and use drugs and alcohol. The drugs and alcohol are used to lure street women in to the compound where they will be given drugs and taken advantage of.

Pounder gangs typically stay away from each other. The pounders also stay away from the large street families who would fight back against them. Like most bullies, they only want to deal with the weak.

Types of Alarms

Infrared Beams

Recognizing: Visible with infrared sensors, or look for the holes in the wall the beams come out of.

Uses: Infrared beams are a cheap way of protecting some passageway against anything moving through it. They are only useful indoors, where it is unlikely that pigeons or wind-blown trash will interrupt the beams.

Bypassing: One or two beams can be stepped over. If beams completely block passage, they can be redirected with semi-reflective mirrors or fiber-optic cables.

Floor Sensors

These are sensors on the floor that set off an alarm when weight is put on some part of the floor.

Recognizing: Loose tiles or a thin layer of spongy or flexible material on the floor.

Uses: Floor sensors are a good supplemental security system for rooms which no one should be in during certain hours, such as an office or vault.

Bypassing: Sensors on top of the floor can usually be erased with a spray of acid. If sensors are under the floors, thieves can glue the tiles in place or build a bridge.

Door/Window Sensors

When the door or window is opened, an electrical contact is broken and an alarm is activated. High quality always run wires through the door or window so thieves cannot cut a hole in the window or door.

Recognizing: Electromagnetic sensors are a sure way, but most can be seen by shining a flashlight in to the crack.

Uses: Making sure doors and windows stay closed.

Bypassing: With cheap sensors, the easiest thing to do is to cut a hole in the window or door. In high quality devices, thieves must drill in and insert wires to maintain connections.

Ambient Temperature Sensors

High definition heat sensors which are hooked up to the air conditioning and heating systems. When a temperature increase indicates a human presence, an alarm is triggered.

Recognizing: Typically a small thermostat box on one wall.

Uses: Useful only in temperature controlled environments, such as the rooms supercomputers are housed in.

Bypassing: A high tech temperature regulating body suit, or a thick wool suit filled with ice-packs.

Human Recognition Sensors

Recognizing: Small cameras, usually mounted on ceilings, that sweep back and forth. Typically transmit wirelessly to a security computer.

Uses: Used in outside areas where people are not supposed to be at night and where wind or animals might set off other types of alarms. In very high-security corporate offices, every employee wears a security badge that the computers read. If any human appears and there is not a corresponding security badge signal, an alarm is triggered.

Bypassing: Thieves create trash suits that make them look like a shambling mound of trash. Thieves must also know how to move in a manner that doesn't read as human. Accomplished thieves look so weird in their shambling-trash mode that human guards are often shocked for several seconds upon seeing them.

Motion Detectors

Recognizing: Small boxes mounted on the ceiling. When well hidden, they are pinholes in the wall.

Uses: Used in rooms where there should be zero movement in the off hours.

Bypassing: Motion sensors can be bypassed by moving extremely slowly (a moderate END roll and a hard AGY roll.)

Types of Locks

Mechanical: A key pushes pins of different sizes in to the right position. Can be picked by putting tension on the lock and raking the pins with a pick.

Keypad: There are a wide variety of these: Some run off of battery, some run off of wall power. Some store the codes inside, others communicate with a network. Some have one code that works, others have multiple codes that work at different times of day. The easiest way to break in is to "shoulder surf" and see someone else's code. Skilled electricians can open the keypad and trigger it to send an open signal.

Electromagnetic: Electromagnetic signals sent from a security card or other small object trigger the door to open. Although thieves can try to "guess" the electromagnetic signal that will open the lock, the easiest way to bypass it is to cut the lock open and cross some wires.

Data Keys: Small key-shaped devices hold pieces of data. When inserted in to a jack they open a lock. The nice things about these keys are that they are easily internet compatible: stick one in a door to open it, stick another in a paycomputer to access some service on a net-site. The best keys are "hotcoded" so that the data never actually leaves the chip. A computer "challenges" with a random string, the data key encrypts or decrypts the string and responds. Thus, the true "key data" never actually leaves the key (and if someone tries to take the key apart, the data will disappear).

Biometric: These are electronic locks for which the people themselves are keys. A biometric lock measures one or more unique human characteristic (fingerprints, voice prints, retinal images, DNA sample) to determine whether it should unlock.

Hybrid: A hybrid lock incorporates two or more of the above in to one lock. Because hybrid locks require a higher level of skill to install and maintain, it is usually only security specialists who really love their jobs who install these kinds of locks.

Terrorists

In Brief- The terrorists who were the heroes of the Freedom Wars, and the culture they helped create, linger now as mercenaries and lone radicals.

Terrorism was a huge part of the Freedom Wars. Terrorists could operate without the support of a bureaucracy or infrastructure, and were thus able to do damage in lands completely controlled by the enemy. Terrorists helped both sides, and some terrorists even switched sides midway through the war.

Before the initial attacks of the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez created training camps for terrorists in sparsely populated areas of Mexico. Over five thousand people were trained in demolitions, intelligence, sabotage, assassination and brainwashing. These highly skilled terrorists went out and trained other terrorists. Some of these terrorists defected when they saw what Jeffrey Hernandez did with his power. There was never just one resistance and there was never really one Freedom Army: there were many completely independent cells and lone individuals, each with their own view of what the outcome of the Freedom Wars should be and with different ideas of what methods were acceptable.

After the Freedom Wars ended, the Restoration Committee's primary goal was to end rioting, fighting and terrorism. They made concessions to any group they worried might resort to terrorism. Thus, much of the globe was balkanized. Most of the terrorists who had fought in the Freedom Wars decided that they had won (the Freedom Army had wiped out the corps, the resistance had wiped out the Freedom Army) and retired. A few however, were too radical to accept even partial victory. Like all good terrorists, they went in to hiding to await the time to strike. Now, 24 years later, the FBI estimates that there are a thousand terrorists in the US and 100 in the city. Many terrorists, trained in methods of indoctrination, have indoctrinated new terrorists (including their own children). Most acts of terrorism committed in the US today are committed by people 18-30.

A few terrorists have gone in the other direction and become mercenaries. Some live in the city while awaiting jobs. They use the same methods as politically motivated terrorists, but they destroy whoever or whatever their employers want them to.

Serial Killer or Normal Killer?

A lot of people in the city kill, and for a lot of reasons. Finding a set of dead bodies killed with a similar M.O. does not necessarily mean that a serial killer is at work. Is it a mugger who likes to bash people's heads in, or a serial killer who happens to rob his victims? Is it vigilante justice or systematic revenge? Some Hunters have been known to murder members of a group (like pusher gangs), but believe they are doing good. Some profilers have even gone so far as to call certain Hunters "good serial killers."

Two clues tell profilers that they should use a classic "serial killer" profile in trying to solve a series of murders: First, the victims all belong to a class of people (e.g. attractive women, old winos, etc.) but are not actually related. Second, there is evidence that the killer is trying to recreate some internal fantasy in the external world. The murder is often careful, ritualistic, and bodies are often posed. A god-killer addicted mugger doesn't create a fantasy world about bashing people's heads in, he or she just goes out and does it. It is the serial killers who are trying to make fantasies real.

Serial Killers

In Brief- The city has around 100 serial killers at any one time, who enact violent fantasies for anxiety relief and self-esteem.

The city has one of the highest concentrations of serial killers in the world. There are estimated to be about 100 serial killers operating in the city at any given time. There are many reasons for this, some obvious and some subtle. To illustrate, here are some of the childhood environmental factors most strongly correlated with the development of a serial killer:

- Moderate (but not extreme) poverty.
- A tragedy or trauma in early life.
- Little or no supervision by authority figures during childhood.
- Few friends and social contacts.
- Emotionally distant parent(s).
- Early access to pornography, especially violent pornography.
- Nothing that would provide a strong sense of identity (e.g. a strong talent or membership in a minority group).

Many of these factors (moderate poverty, emotionally distant parents, poor supervision and few social contacts) are consistent with the environment in the homes of shut-in well VR addicts (the largest part of the city's population).

Pornography- Most serial killers in the city are male and most appear to be dependent on pornography and violent sexual fantasies. The relationship between serial killers and pornography seems equivalent to a drug addiction. Most serial killers have very low self-esteem and feel a transient feeling of power when they view pornography or have violent fantasies. Like a drug user who gains a tolerance for the drug, serial killers need increasingly intense stimulation, and use more and more "hardcore" pornography and fantasies. Eventually, the only way to get enough stimulation is to commit a real act. Serial killers must kill increasingly often to fight away the 'withdrawal' of low self-esteem anxiety.

The most disturbing aspect of the serial killers' fantasy worlds is that they have an obsessive need to dehumanize their victims. A serial killer's self-esteem is so fragile that they are only comfortable living in a world where they are the only one with an identity and free-will. All else who share this world with them must be nothing more than flesh and base emotions at the control of the serial killer.

Partnerships- Most serial killers prefer to work alone, though there are instances of siblings, lovers and friends working together. In most cases, only one of the people is truly 'in to' killing people, the other one is simply along for the ride. When both are true serial killers, they work together for the same reason drug addicts work together, because they see mutual benefit in it, not because they like each other or want to share their experiences. Most partners of this type meet on the underground market for illegal pornography. Very few ever form what city residents would think of as a deep or fulfilling friendship.

CULTS

In Brief- Many cults in city, prey on psychologically weak, can be dangerous.

Cults are a major problem in the city. There are about four thousand people in some cult or another. About two people per day are recruited in to a cult. Most cults only last a few years before breaking up (or ending in mass suicide). Cults recruit from every level of the population, rich and poor, shut-ins and street people. Most cults in the city are small (20-100 people). A few cults become large enough to have some political pull in the city. The Lumens are currently the largest cult in the city and have been able to take on gangs.

Characteristics

In Brief- Prey on the confused and vulnerable, offer companionship and safety, teach people not to think for themselves, charismatic leader.

Cults prey on those who are experiencing stress or trauma. Runaways are the biggest target, and many cult recruiters hang around the bus stop in the Bowery where most runaways come in to town. The cults give a person in crisis a comforting atmosphere, friendship, encouragement, love and sometimes even sex. In exchange, the cult controls the person's surroundings 24 hours a day, controls what information the person has access to. The person's thinking is distracted so he or she doesn't have the time, energy or inspiration to question the doctrines of the cult. The wild ideologies seem normal when everyone else believes it. Finally, the cult member learns to censor his or her own thoughts. The member is taught that "bad thoughts" will harm his or her spiritual progression and should be avoided at all costs.

Almost universally, cults are led by a charismatic person who is thought of as superhuman by his or her followers. Cult members are taught a sense of superiority over anyone else not in the cult. They are taught that the lifestyle of outsiders is evil and dangerous to their souls, that common knowledge from the outside world is ignorance and propaganda, and that cult members (especially the leadership) do not need to follow the laws of the outside world.

Some think that the Purists and Dragons are cults. They both have charismatic leaders who have unique spiritual ideas. They both have followers who believe in the ideas of the leaders and live as the leaders suggest. However, because members of the Purists and Dragons both enjoy freedom of association, most people classify them as gangs and not cults.

Lumens

In Brief- City's biggest cult, live in Cloisters, use bright lights for ceremonies and for blinding opponents.

The Lumens are well known because they have taken on both the Skin Borgs and the Drug Lords and survived. The Lumens live in the Cloisters, European monk's cloisters reconstructed in 1914, in Inwood hills on the North of the island. This is right in the middle of Skin Borg territory.

Social Structure- The Lumens call themselves "penitents" and their church "church of the infinite light." The name Lumens was given to them by city residents. No one outside of the Lumens knows very much about the leader of the Lumens. He is said to be a handsome, middle aged male who is very intense and charismatic. Like a gang, the Lumens seek immediate revenge for the death of one of their own.

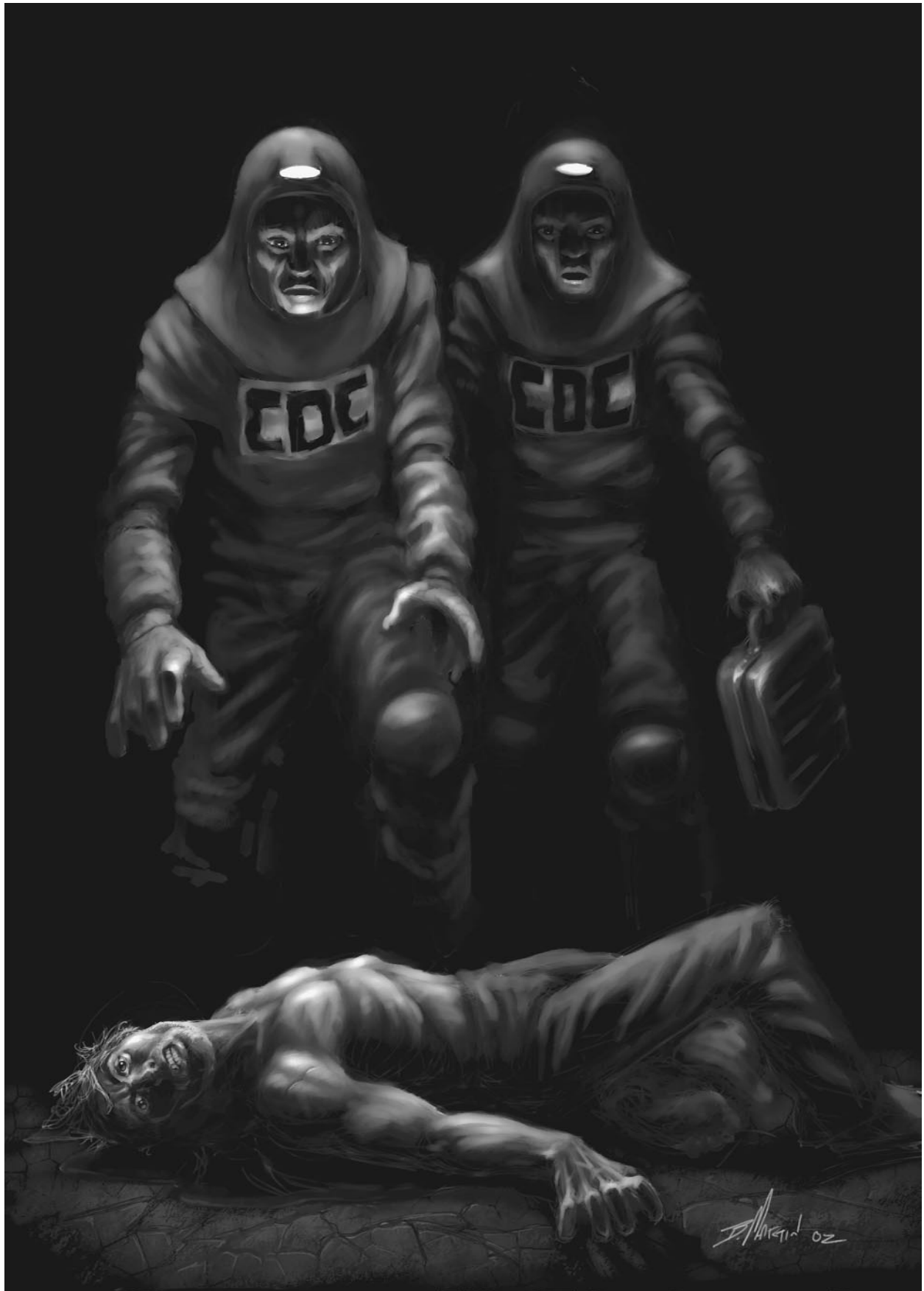
Beliefs- The Lumens believe that god is pure light and in their religious ceremonies people expose themselves to extremely bright lights (along with hypnotic chanting). The lights are supposed to help cleanse the fears and desires that remove people from god. They are also supposed to show people how beautiful heaven is. Critics point out that, since bright lights can be an effective therapy for depression, the Lumens are just curing depressed people and calling it spiritual awakening.

Recruitment- Lumens are not allowed to leave the Cloisters alone, they always travel in groups of four or more. When they are recruiting, though, one member does the recruiting and the others hang around nearby, pretending not to be associated with the recruiter. Lumens wear "humble" clothing, which usually means that they dress like Street People. They all carry knives and each team that leaves the cloister has one high-tech portable spotlight. In combat they shine this light at their opponents. The Lumens are used to operating in very bright light and are not blinded as badly as their opponents.

Lumens look for people who look like they are having a hard time with life. One Lumen strikes up friendly conversation, gets to know the person, then offers the person a hot meal and a place to stay the night. The person is brought back to the Cloisters and treated with kindness and respect. Any time the recruit asks to leave, the Lumens make up some imaginary crisis that is keeping them busy (but promise to let the person leave as soon as it is done). If the person tries to force his or her way out of the compound, the person will be grabbed and put in a brightly-lit cell. Someone sits outside the cell preaching, 24 hours a day, until the person submits.

Battles- From their inception, the Lumens have been very good at recruiting drug addicts. The Lumens will capture drug addicts, bring them to the cloisters and keep them prisoner until they have detoxified (during which time they are thoroughly brainwashed). Taking drug addicts (and thus income) away from the Drug Lords had prompted several attacks on the Lumens. The Lumens have held their ground, refusing to change their behavior. The Drug Lords have not called off the war against the Lumens, they still offer a reward to any pusher or addict who kills a Lumen, but they have stopped ordering tactical assaults on the Cloisters. The Drug Lords have stopped after two dagger teams were destroyed. Hundreds of Lumens were killed in the battles, but the Lumens didn't seem to care.

As the Skin Borgs expanded, they ran in to the Lumens. At first, the Skin Borgs were determined to take over this cult like they have taken over all the other gangs in their way. The Skin Borgs quickly gave up, telling themselves that this didn't count as a loss because the Lumens weren't a gang. There is still a lot of hostility and warfare occasionally ignites.



DISEASE

Healthcare

In Brief- Street People go to the Black Med family for care. ERs must provide emergency care for indigent.

Unlike Wells and Indies, who have private and government healthcare, Street People go to the Black Meds, a large, old street family that specializes in providing medical care for street people. None of the Black Meds have any formal medical training. The care they provide is mostly basic first aid (sterilizing, cauterizing, sewing and splinting) and the use of herbs and placebos. Street people mostly barter for Black Med services. When it comes to plagues, Black Meds can offer little help except to make sure the victim has plenty of fluids and a warm place to rest.

The central hospital and urgent care clinic emergency rooms are required by law to provide care to any indigent person. No preventative or long-term care is provided: it is simply a matter of patching the person up and releasing them back to the streets.

Slow Killers

In Brief- Many diseases, transmitted by body fluids, that there are no cures for.

Body Fluid Transmitted Diseases (BFTDs) infect up to 5% of the city population. New strains pop up faster than cured can be discovered. The most common BFTDs only cause pain and annoyance but seldom kill. Others can not be cured and will eventually kill. Most of these are autoimmune diseases descended from HIV or from the newer HDNA diseases. These BFTDs are often called "slow killers". A majority (55%) catch these diseases through sex, 40% catch them through use of dirty needles and 5% through some other sort of body fluid contact. The slow killers cause a slow decline of health, resulting in death in 4 to 6 years. Even when there is no cure, a person's lifespan can be increased by using expensive drugs.

Plagues

In Brief- A new type of virus, made from human DNA, occasionally pops up as a horrible plague.

The 2040s were an era of plagues. Massive overpopulation, economic crises causes substandard healthcare and sanitation, and everyone from corps to terrorists were

messing with the DNA of disease organisms. The worst plague of this era contained human DNA and had a protein coating that was virtually invisible to the human immune system. Three million people around the world were killed before the first strain of this virus was brought under limited control. Many of the terrible plagues of this era are waiting, living in other hosts and waiting to infect the human population. Plagues are worst in inner cities, and the city has been the source of several recent plague outbreaks. Countless untold diseases are living in the city's massive rat population (not to mention stray cats and dogs, pigeons, squirrels and bats). A random bite by a rat can introduce a new strain in to a population. Or, in an even worse scenario, a mutated strain starts killing all the rats, and the billions of fleas jump off the dead rats and bite humans (thus spreading the disease to them).

Quarantines

In Brief- The CDC locks down the city during plague outbreaks, provides emergency care.

The city hospital reports disease stats to the CDC. When the CDC fears there is considerable danger from a disease, it issues a quarantine. The city is locked down, no one can enter and leave except for CDC doctors in CDC helicopters. CDC doctors set up inflatable labs where they can work on finding some treatment for the disease. Helicopters with powerful speakers move through the city ordering everyone to stay inside. Anyone could be arrested for going out on the streets (or disobeying a CDC doctor) but the CDC seldom has the time or employees to enforce such rules. The Central Hospital and Urgent Care Clinic (and sometimes the blocks surrounding them) become triage units where people die en masse and a fine disinfectant mist is being constantly sprayed from the ceilings. After one hour, the subways are shut down.

Plague Survival Kit \$170 (\$500-\$1000 during a plague)

Gasmask \$75 (to protect against airborne diseases)

Sterilization Spray \$50 (to sterilize food)

Latex Gloves \$1 (to protect against contact based diseases)

Trenchcoat \$35 (to protect the body from bites and scratches)

Insect Repellent \$5 (to repel insects that might carry diseases)

DRUGS

Drug Addicts

In Brief- Drug addicts mostly dangerous, unhappy, poor. Some addicts handle addiction better than others. Many spend all day doing anything they can to get money for drugs. A lucky few become servants of addicts.

The most visible drug addicts are what people jokingly call "**career addicts**": people who are so deeply addicted to their drug that they can not stay on welfare or hold an occupation (legal or illegal) or allegiance to any group. Career addicts are easy to spot: they care little about hygiene, they may stink of alcohol or have visible needle tracts on their skin, the malnutrition from each time they chose drugs over food is readily visible, and they have a desperate look in their eyes. The majority of drug addicts

look like everyone else, these are the "**part-timers**" who are able to "keep it together" enough to stay at their current place on the socioeconomic ladder and maintain their membership in whatever group they belong to. Some part-timers keep their addictions secret from everyone they know, some only hang around with drug abusers and never think of not using as an option, some have admitted that they are addicted and are trying to live with their "disease" as comfortably as possible, some are trying to fight the disease with the help of friends and family.

There are 20,000 career addicts in the city and 56,500 part-time addicts. Altogether that's more than a third of the city population that is addicted to some drug, whether they are willing to admit it or not.

Public Perception- The majority of addicts do not live on the streets, they keep their lives together. However, they are not so visible, so when people think of or talk of "addicts" they typically mean the career addicts people see on the streets every day. Addicts are considered by many to be the lowest form of human life in the city. Even homeless schizophrenics who scream day and night at invisible demons take better care of themselves than some addicts do. In the mind of non-addicts, all addicts are desperate, dangerous, immoral and do not fear death. In truth, not every addict fits this stereotype, and those that do only fit it some of the time.

Most people see career addicts as hopeless losers. This is incorrect. They are very skilled at getting drugs, using drugs and operating while under the influence of drugs, it's everything else in their lives that they are bad at.

Good and Bad Addicts- The biggest difference between addicts is one of psychology: some people handle addiction better than others. Some take only as much as they need to keep withdrawals away, they are careful and sensible and always choose to get high after they have done their most important duties of the day. Other addicts use far more drugs and at inappropriate times. When they have problems, they deal with those problems by doing drugs, which only makes the problems worse. Sometimes they get passively suicidal: too scared to actually hurt themselves, but too scared of life to imagine it going on much longer. They take dangerous amounts of drugs and do dangerous things. Most addicts fall somewhere in the middle: they keep a handle on their addiction most of the time, but occasionally lose control (especially when there is extraordinary stress in their lives).

Hustling- Among career addicts, "hustling" means doing anything they can think of to get money. Generally, addicts get all their physical necessities (food, clothing, toiletries) by standing in lines at shelters and by searching through dumpsters. Addicts need money for buying drugs, and as soon as they get any money at all it quickly goes toward drugs. The average career addict spends about 14 hours a day, earning fifty cents an hour, hustling.

Hustling is not purely the domain of homeless addicts. Homeless crazies, non-addict street people and even wells hustle when they need cash and can't think of any other way to get it.

Hustling can include the following:

Canning: Finding recyclables in the trash and turning them in to one of many recycling centers across the city. Recyclables are usually kept in large plastic trash bags.

Begging: Going to places where a lot of people pass by, usually with a sign or a well practiced phrase.

Salvaging: Finding usable goods others have thrown out and selling or trading them. Addicts might even go to homeless shelters to get food, toiletries and medicines, which they turn around and sell.

Working: Doing odd jobs, usually hard labor, for a few cents worth of change. Superintendents usually get help with garbage bags for only a few quarters.

Theft: Addicts usually steal from intoxicated fellow addicts. They may shoplift, but are typically not very good at it. They may get together in small groups to ambush and rob non-addicts.

Sex: Providing sexual favors in exchange for money or drugs.

Lackeys- A lucky minority of addicts become servants to pushers (and even kings). The pusher gives the addict drugs, a little money for food and clothes, and sometimes even a place to stay. In exchange, the addict is on call 24 hours a day to run errands. Most lackeys realize how lucky they are and are very loyal and protective of their pusher. For the pusher this is a very good deal: a full time servant for cash and drugs that cost the pusher about \$200 a month. The more successful a pusher is, the more lackeys. Some pushers have addict lackeys that do all their pushing for them, the pusher just manages the money. Despite the mutual benefit of this relationship, most pusher-lackey relationships eventually go sour: pushers are violent and irresponsible, addicts are undependable and prone to betrayal in desperate moments.

Street Drugs

In Brief- Millions are spent on legal and illegal drugs. Drugs quite harmful to the addicts and to society.

Alcohol: most abused drug in city with wide range of addicts who are better off than other addicts.

Opiates: Many abuse prescription pain killers.

Amphetamines: Popular stimulants, losing abusers to God Killer.

God Killer: Most abused illegal drug, used by many young thugs, causes megalomania, feelings of invulnerability, sometimes bloody and tragic rampages.

Chomper: 1st drug created by Drug Lords, now few addicts (ODs and more addictive drugs). Some OD victims survived inability to feel pleasure by becoming the Hungry.

Mauler: Created by Drug Lords, causes brain damage, addicts eventually become cannibalistic animals.

Trace: For "special" addicts the Drug Lords want to keep track of.

Maxin: Not a recreational drug, Maxin is very addictive because it is a powerful smart drug and without it addicts feel stupid.

Escape: Not designed as a street drug, escape is very psychologically addictive. It suppresses all feelings.

Slave: The newest drug from the drug lords and the most addictive yet.

Every day in the city, more than \$700,000 is spent on alcohol and addictive street drugs. More than 21 million per month goes in to the pockets of corporations, small business owners, black market traders and the Drug Lords.

Alcohol- Alcohol has, perhaps, the widest range of addicts. There are young and successful Indies who are secretly addicted to alcohol and keep a hip flask of brandy in their briefcases. There are also homeless winos who spend every bit of spare change they can scrape together to buy bottles of fortified wine. Most alcoholics do not exclusively use alcohol, it is simply their drug of choice. More than half of winos will occasionally use god killer, amphetamines, opiates and other drugs when they can get a hold of them. Pushers often wish to force winos to become addicted to their super-addictive drugs. Pushers may force winos to use via threats of force, or they may actually hold down and inject a wino. The wino's best defense is to be indistinguishable from other addicts.

Drug	Method of Intake	Major Effects	Long Term Effects	Withdrawal	OD	Num. Of Abusers	Cost/Day to prevent withdrawal	Created
Alcohol	drink	anxiolytic, pleasant buzz, clumsiness	brain and liver damage	delirium tremens	vomiting, coma, convulsions	5,000 career, 20,000 part-time	\$5	Prehistory
Opiates	swallow pills shoot-up	sedation, anxiolytic, pain relief, pleasure	poor immune system	cramps, insomnia, flu-like symptoms, diarrhea	heart attack, fluid in lungs, inability to breathe	2,000 career, 7,000 part-time	\$8	Prehistory
Amphetamines	swallow pills	excitement, pleasure	malnutrition, paranoia, ulcers	depression, anxiety, shaking, insomnia	difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat coma, spasms	1,500 career, 5,000 part-time	\$7	1932
God Killer	smoke	excitement, megalomania	emphysema, cancer, brain damage	anxiety, panic attacks.	psychosis, heart attack	3,000 career, 10,000 part-time	\$10	2046
Chomper	shoot-up	mood swings, anxiolytic	hair loss, liver damage, anemia	shortness of breath, panic attacks, vertigo, headache	endocrine collapse	1,000 career, 1,000 part-time	\$7	2076
Maxin	swallow pills	irritability, excitement, increased intelligence	weakened bones	feel stupid	heart attack, stroke	500 career, 2,000 part-time	\$20	2076
Mauler	paper under tongue	narrowing of attention, pleasure, excitement	brain damage ("animal state")	burning, itching sensation on skin	loss of blood pressure, hypothermia	2,500 career, 1,000 part-time	\$7	2077
Trace	shoot-up	sedation, pleasure	poor immune system, arthritis	migraine headache, poor hearing, poor vision	paralysis, inability to breathe	500 career, 1,000 part-time	\$7	2077
Escape	smoke	emotional detachment	loss of personality, insomnia, poor vision	none	catatonia, coughing blood	1,000 career, 7,500 part-time	\$20	2078
Slave	smoke	anxiolytic, psychedelic, "mellow excitement"	weight loss, pale skin, liver damage	"the uglies", loss of willpower	diarrhea, vomiting, brain swelling	3,000 career, 2,000 part-time	\$8	2078

Although they try to stay camouflaged in the background, winos are the best-off of any of the career addicts. Alcohol is cheap, so addicts spend less time hustling and more time taking care of personal needs, including social needs. Winos are the most likely of the addicts to form close friendships or small groups, and these social bonds are a source of power on the streets. Because they have more time to relax and look at their surroundings, they tend to be more aware of that's going on around them than other addicts. People who need informants on the streets often hire winos. Alcohol is legal, and so is less dangerous to buy and use. Alcohol does have debilitating long term effects (severe liver damage and brain damage leading to severe memory problems) but these effects happen more slowly (take decades rather than years). Alcohol even provides some nutrition, so winos are not as skinny as some other addicts.

Alcohol is also less addictive than most of the modern street drugs. Most winos will "go straight" (detoxify or stop using) several times and may stay straight for several months before relapsing back in to alcoholism. When they do drink, though, winos don't just drink to stave off withdrawals. They drink because they suffer from chronic pain, because they suffer from anxiety over the constant uncertainty of life on the streets, because they suffer from painful self-esteem problems and because life on the streets can be very boring.

Alcoholics have a number of choices for alcohol. Fortified wine, sold in liquor stores, provides the most alcohol per cent of any legal alcoholic beverage. Because it can be obtained legally, the majority of shut-ins who are addicted to some drug are addicted to alcohol. Young people working part-time jobs delivering groceries to shut-ins often deliver dozens of bottles of liquor in a day. Pushers

and black market traders sometimes try to compete with liquor stores by selling moonshine. Winos try to avoid this liquor because it can be dangerous if improperly prepared and it is sometimes doped with other drugs. Some winos make their own alcohol, known generally as pruno, out of yeast and fruit. Most pruno is brewed in a tin can sitting next to a hot water pipe and tastes awful. If an alcoholic can not buy alcohol in a store (e.g. because the liquor stores are closed due to a riot) the alcoholic may buy (or shoplift) mouthwash that contains alcohol and combine it with fruit juice to make it palatable.

Even though they are the best off of the addicts, few non-addicts envy winos. People beat, rob and rape winos, thinking that the winos will not try to defend themselves and have no one willing to revenge them. Most winos are eligible for welfare but their lives are too unstable for them to go through the necessary paperwork. They are chronically poor, don't eat well, can't stay clean, suffer from diseases and infections (they must wait until they are life threatening before they can get treatment at an ER). Some winos don't even seek medical care when they can because they are too drunk to notice an illness. Winos sometimes pass out on cold nights and freeze to death.

"You can't trust anyone out here on the streets, not even your best friend, because drugs erode people's principles. You see, drugs are about constant desperation and need, so no matter what kinds of principles you got, it's only a matter of time 'till your mind is on something else and you forget about one of your principles, let it slip just a bit. Each time you let it slip, the next time's easier; 'till one day you realize there's nothing you won't do for drugs. You think you got a strong will, solid principles? That just means it will happen slower is all."
-Delilah Mungial, Addict

Opiates- Opiate chemicals are derived from a chemical found in high concentrations in the opium poppy, which has been used since pre-history for pain relief.

The addictive power of the “new drugs” has been enough to almost completely destroy the trade ring that once brought large quantities of heroin in to the city. Today, most people who are addicted to opiates are addicted to prescription pain killers. Most addicts either scam or bribe a doctor to get a painkiller prescription, or they buy the same drug off the black market. The Drug Lords would like Opiates eliminated from the city (so their drugs have less competition) but because opiates are brought in to city pharmacies legally, the Drug Lords can't do much.

Opiate addicts are, on average, older than most other addicts and many have legitimate physical conditions that cause pain. The typical addict is a shut-in well, around 40, with some physical disability who scams prescriptions off of doctors. There are about 2,000 career addicts in the city and about 7,000 part timers.

Opiates cause euphoria, sedation, pain relief and relief from anxiety. Withdrawal from opiates has very unpleasant effects, including cramps, insomnia, flu-like symptoms, diarrhea and profuse sweating. Long term addicts suffer from constipation (which can be deadly if not treated) and a poor immune system.

Amphetamines- Since prehistory, the Chinese and Native Americans used herbs that contained the drug ephedrine. In 1932 amphetamine, a drug made from ephedrine, was invented. During WWII, both sides used amphetamines to keep soldiers awake and alert, and heavy amphetamine use was one reason for the success of Hitler's blitzkrieg. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, amphetamines competed with crack cocaine as the top drug of abuse. In the 2040s, God Killer displaced both, and amphetamines only remained abused because they could be stolen or scammed from pharmacies.

Amphetamines are powerful synthetic stimulants. Their effects are a euphoric mania. Effects for long-term abuses include malnutrition, paranoia, ulcers and skin diseases. Withdrawal symptoms for addicts are depression, anxiety, shaking and sleep disorders.

God Killer- In 2046, God killer was introduced on the streets. In many ways it was the first “modern” drug: a cocktail of drugs designed for maximum addictive potential. God killer quickly forced crack cocaine and methamphetamines out of their economic niche. In 2048, god killer replaced crack cocaine as the most abused illegal drug in the US.

God killer is created by organized crime syndicates operating in the Appalachians. Genetically engineered plants (looking like normal weeds) growing on mountainsides are harvested and turned in to god killer in little labs built in tiny wood shacks. The rich and powerful “mountain gangs” that create and sell god killer have their roots in the biker gangs of the early 21st century and may have Freedom Army war criminals in their ranks.

Although the drugs created by the Drug Lords have been gaining steadily in popularity, God killer is still the most abused illegal drug in the city and provides most of the Drug Lords' income. The “typical” addict is a young male well, who uses god killer to feel powerful and commits crimes under the influence of god killer.

God killer is a powerful stimulant, it also reduces pain and anxiety. It increases self-esteem, making users feel powerful, and causes delusions of grandeur and invulnerability. The drug gained its name because some addicts, while under the influence, think they are powerful enough to take on whatever god(s) they believe in.

Long term god killer use causes emphysema, increased risk of cancer, and brain damage (leading to mental retardation).

God killer addicts are famous for doing stupid things that hurt others and themselves. Any dosage of god killer increases the chance that a user will do something stupid. God killer users think they have infinite power. A god killer user, for example, may break his daughter's neck, expecting to be able to resurrect her by force of will. A god killer addict may jump out of a window expecting to be able to fly, might break a leg and get a severe concussion, but will be unable to believe that he or she failed and will hobble off (not noticing the pain) to go do something else stupid. The most dangerous thing that can happen to a god killer user (and the people around the user) is a “rampage.”

Some rampages are caused by accidental overdose (a person gets a stronger-than-normal batch). Typically, through, a god killer addict starts out meaning to use only a little god killer. The addict uses a little bit, then (feeling on top of the world) decides that moderation is for the weak and smokes every other pellet he or she has. Wanting desperately to not come down, the addict runs off and spends every bit of money on god killer, smoking it all. When that starts to run out, he or she commits some crime to get more. At some point, the abuser decides that he or she is immortal and omnipotent and decides to go around destroying anything that he or she doesn't like. From this point, there are very few ways it can go that doesn't end up with the user dying.

They wander around the city attacking anyone they dislike in any way. They may shout out challenges, and may even demand that god come down to fight. They may seek out old enemies or bullies. They may show up at the houses of ex-lovers, expecting to be taken back. Intimidation doesn't work against rampagers. Appeals to morals or compassion are useless. Pain and injuries are shrugged off. Setbacks do not phase the abuser, since he or she simply doesn't believe in them. Rampagers are stronger and faster. Rampagers do not defend themselves: they focus on hurting their opponents as much as possible. A fight with a rampager is always very messy.

Chomper- The first drug created by the newly incorporated Drug Lords. Only a year after their coming together in to a single entity, the Drug Lords caused a huge shortage of street drugs and flooded the streets with cheap chomper. Chomper was also the first drug so addictive that pushers could hold people down, force them to use it, and make life-long addicts. The fatal flaw of chomper was that it was too easy to overdose on it. When Mauler and Trace were invented, addicts were encouraged to switch to these drugs. Chomper use peaked in 2076, the year it was released, with 7,000 addicts. Now there are only 2,000 addicts (about 1,000 career and 1,000 part-time).

Chomper causes powerful and thrilling mood swings. Anger, depression and happiness are all equally pleasurable while on chomper. Chomper also enhances the pleasurable effects of many other drugs, and is still used by many addicts as a "booster." Chomper gained its name because users tend to clench or grind their teeth. Withdrawal for addicts causes shortness of breath, panic attacks, vertigo and headaches. Long term chomper users suffer from hair loss, liver damage, anemia and their teeth tend to break from clenching and grinding.

Chomper overdoses create a condition called endocrine collapse. The pituitary gland in the brain, which uses hormones to control most of the other glands in the body, suddenly and permanently stops working. Most people who overdose on chomper die. The lucky ones get an implant that take over many (but not all) functions of the pituitary gland. The implant cannot regulate pleasure and causes a total anhedonia (the inability to feel pleasure). Anhedonia typically causes suicide, but a small group of ex-Chomper addicts called the Hungry have devised a way to keep themselves going and are a powerful enemy of the Drug Lords.

Mauler- Introduced by the Drug Lords in 2077, an eagerly needed replacement for Chomper. Mauler is a distant relative of LSD and is manufactured in city labs from "crops" of the ergot fungus. Mauler turned out to have severe long term effects and is currently being phased out by the Drug Lords. There are about 2,500 career addicts and about 1,000 part timers.

Mauler is sold as little scraps of white paper with distinctive symbols on them. Each batch has a different symbol and addicts would refer longingly to "red stars" or with disgust to "clown head." The scraps are put under the tongue. Mauler causes stimulation, pleasure, and a narrowing of attention. Mauler addicts under the influence feel that the focus of their attention is the only thing in the universe. A Mauler addict might spend hours examining the cracks in the wall, oblivious to anything that doesn't actually touch them. Withdrawal from mauler causes a torturous burning/itching sensation on the skin.

About a year after Mauler came out, people began to realize that it had a terrible side effect. Mauler addicts received brain damage. Some people seemed to receive brain damage faster than others, but it was apparent that all mauler addicts would eventually end up the same way. The parts of the brain that were being destroyed were those responsible for language, memory, self-consciousness and logical thought. People working with addicts watched in horror as the minds of mauler addicts slowly turned in to the minds of animals. The mauler addicts were oblivious. By 2079, two years after Mauler was released, people began to see packs of mauler addicts on the streets, communicating with barks and howls and eating human flesh.

For a while, mauler addicts exist in a twilight state: they spend most of the day in an animal-like state of being, yet they occasionally get better for a few hours and they are able to use this time to buy drugs. Even in their most animalistic states they can attack people and will remember to steal cash and valuables. Mauler addicts eventually stop having lucid moments. Unable to buy drugs, most scratch themselves up during painful withdrawals and die from infections. Those that live eventually form in to packs with other addicts.

Today there are about 1000 ex-Mauler addicts living as animals throughout the city. Mauler addict packs tend to go after the weak, intoxicated or injured. They will follow blood trails to find potential prey. If a victim turns out to be able to defend himself or herself, the pack will scatter.

Trace- Trace was introduced in 2077, only a few months after mauler. Trace is a grayish powder that must be cooked in a spoon or bottle cap and injected intravenously. Trace causes intense pleasure and sedation that starts to taper off immediately and slowly dwindles to nothing.

Trace has a special purpose for the Drug Lords. Anyone who the Drug Lords feel they might want to "keep an eye on" is forced to become addicted to trace. An addict with special skills, a potential enemy or someone with special knowledge is a candidate for forced addiction to trace. Only certain kings are given trace to sell and those kings give trace to only a few of their pushers. This means that trace addicts only have a few places they can go to get drugs and if the Drug Lords decide they want someone they can find them easily. Trace also makes the skin of users pink and blotchy, making addicts still easier to find.

Trace is made in city drug labs. Trace is synthesized mostly from heroin and tetrodotoxin (a poison found in the puffer fish). Because the Drug Lords must import these ingredients, trace is expensive for the Drug Lords to make, and they make very little profit at the price they sell it at. This is probably another reason that the Drug Lords chose to use it as their "special" drug.

Maxin- Maxin does not fit the mold of the other drugs. Only recently have the Drug Lords realized the potential profit from carrying this drug, before that it was the exclusive providence of black market traders and goods. There are 500 career addicts and 2,000 "part-timers" who might not even realize they are addicts. Maxin is illegal in the US, but is available as a prescription drug in Mexico (where most maxin is smuggled in from). Maxin comes in a small inhaler.

Maxin is the most powerful smart drug created to date. Maxin is also the most unpleasant smart drug around. Its effects have been described as "like not sleeping for two days, drinking ten cups of coffee, and getting continuously slapped in the face." Maxin users are excited, irritable, their hearts beat dangerously fast and they get muscle cramps. On the other hand, their speed of thought, powers of memory, creativity, logic and intuition are all increased significantly.

There are no real withdrawal effects except for a desire to crawl in to bed and sleep and the occasional headache. The problem is that after being so much smarter, Maxin users feel incredibly stupid. People feel that their thoughts are slow, their memories are poor, every intellectual task is so hard that it is painful. They are not any stupider than they were before, they just feel that way in comparison. This withdrawal doesn't go away easily: for years after an addict quits he or she may report feeling stupid.

Maxin is only addictive to people with a certain type of personality. People who don't mind being stupid won't become addicted to Maxin. People who are likely to become addicted are people who are goal oriented, spartan, utilitarian, overachievers (the type of people least likely to become addicted to other drugs). The typical Maxin user is an Indie gang member who is a highly skilled psychic, hacker, technician or medic.

The bones of long term Maxin addicts lose calcium and become very weak. Those who have been using Maxin since it hit the streets in 2076 can be killed by a simple fall.

Escape- Like Maxin, Escape was never meant to be a drug of abuse. The FDA recently made this drug illegal after many psychiatrists and GPs got their patients addicted to this drug. Escape was the “surprise” drug of the 2070’s: no one expected it to addict so many people and for those addictions to be so resistant to treatment. After becoming illegal, it quickly became a very popular street drug. It currently has 1,000 career addicts and 7,500 part-time addicts. At \$20 a dose, escape is usually a “rich person’s drug and addicts living on the streets with no source of income usually turn to other drugs instead of escape.

Escape can be taken as pills, but hardcore addicts prefer to sprinkle powdered escape on tobacco or some other smokeable herb and smoke the mixture.

More than any other drug, escape shows the power of psychological addiction. Escape has no withdrawal symptoms, yet it is highly addictive. Escape is a dissociative: it removes people from their emotions. It was originally created to help people deal with traumas, to help ease them in to feeling the terrible emotions. Armies throughout the globe have found that escape is very good for eliminating post-traumatic stress disorder until the soldiers can return to relative safety.

While on escape, everything feels like it is happening to somebody else. Users are still in control of their bodies and still retain enough feelings of self-preservation to stay out of danger and feed themselves. In fact, escape users typically engage in all their normal habits, the habits just don’t mean anything to them. Acting, not acting, it’s all the same to the escape user. Fortunately, escape blocks feelings of boredom as well. The escape user doesn’t even care that much about getting more drugs, until the drugs start to wear off. Then, all the feelings the person was trying to escape start to come back, as well as a new feeling: fear and self-loathing about being an addict.

Long-term escape addicts usually become shut-ins on welfare. They stay in all day, nothing motivating them to go outside. Desires and opinions slowly fade away from disuse until the person really has no personality at all. The ability to sleep is also damaged and the person slowly goes blind.

Slave- In 2078, only two years ago, slave first hit the streets. Pushers sold it cheap, giving it to God Killer addicts who could not afford to buy God Killer. Slave proved to be much more addictive than God Killer. Only 5,000 in the city are currently addicted to Slave (3,000 career, 2,000 part-time), yet growing quickly.

Slave comes in tiny bluish-white pellets that can be smoked with a god killer pipe. The effects of taking the drug are good but are also “nothing special.” Other drugs provide a more pleasurable experience. Slave reduces anxiety and pain, it creates a paradoxical “mellow excitement” where the user feels excited and giddy but doesn’t want to do anything, and it has mild psychedelic effects.

Slave is said to have the worst withdrawal of any drug. Slave withdrawal is known as “the uglies” by addicts. During withdrawal, every single thing the addict experiences or imagines seems unbearably ugly and disgusting. Even the idea of being clean, of defeating the drug addiction and never having to face the uglies again, seems like a terrible and disgusting idea. The uglies do not go away quickly, they can last for weeks or even up to a month in hard core addicts.

Although slave has only been around for two years, long-term-effects have started to appear. Those who work with addicts predict that Slave users will die within a few decades from damage to the liver and digestive system.

Drug Lords

In Brief- Drugs sold by a mysterious, ruthless, monopolistic, efficient organization. Small, violent gangs sell drugs (sometimes forcefully) on proscribed turf. Some pushers keep their turf orderly and peaceful. Other pushers transgress in to other turf and wage war against each other (despite possible punishment). Kings distribute to pushers from home fortresses. Kings are controlled by Lords, who are secretive, enforce a strict law (don’t touch Drug Lord employees, don’t interfere of compete with drug sales) using “daggers” (elite teams of trained killers with black motorcycles). Drugs manufactured in the city by production teams.

Pusher Gangs- Pusher gangs are the foot soldiers of the Drug Lords. The average pusher gang is made up of five teenage males armed with knives, clubs and one pistol. They are the children of wells, but are not old enough (or don’t have their lives together enough) to be on welfare. They use drugs themselves (typically god-killer or alcohol) yet are not “career” addicts. They have a history of crime, especially theft and assault. They make about \$2,000 a month each, but spend their money quickly. The members of the gang grew up on the streets, ambitionless young men, hanging together and using their numbers to intimidate others. They did minor crimes to gain money and used money to buy weapons. At some point they felt they had made a name for themselves and they petitioned the local king (and gave a small bribe) for a recently vacated piece of pusher turf.

Pusher gangs vary from this standard template wildly. Some gangs have only one member, others have twenty. Some pushers are sadistic sociopaths, others are almost Goods and know their addicts by name. Some are adolescents, some are in their forties. Some pushers make as little as \$250 a month each, others make up to \$10,000 a month.

Most pusher gangs forcibly addict people to their drugs. Some grab anyone walking past who appears vulnerable. A few will go so far as to break in to the apartments of shut-ins to forcefully addict them. The Drug Lords discourage this extreme behavior for fear that it will attract the attention of the corporate news media and citizens’ groups.

Most pusher gangs operate by a code of revenge much like that of gang members. They hunt down and kill anyone who has messed with them. Most pusher gangs understand only military force, and they feel free to mess with anyone they think they can beat. They may kill someone for something as small as giving them a dirty look. The pusher gangs typically don’t mess with large gangs or street families.

At first, pusher gangs appear completely independent. They purchase drugs from their local king and sell it for as much as they want (usually a 100% markup), they can even sell to resellers. When the Drug Lords have an enemy, the pusher gangs are offered a reward for the enemy’s head. Despite this apparent freedom, a lot of what pusher gangs do is controlled by the drug lords. The pusher gangs must meet a weekly quota, they are assigned a specific area they are allowed to sell in, and they aren’t allowed to fight with each other.

Most pusher gangs don't have any real ambitions. Most are living for their next hit of God Killer. The few ambitious pushers hope to someday make a bid to become a king.

Almost Goods- Some pusher gangs are better than others. Some pushers make a concerted effort to be fair and to keep peace in their selling turf. Some pusher turfs are virtually governed by the pushers and have their own rules of behavior for addicts. Some pushers may have a rule, for instance, that addicts can not kill any other addicts within their turf. Compassion and a preference for order over chaos might be a factor in these pushers' behavior. However, the most likely motivation is to try entice addicts from the turf of other pushers by making their turf known as a relatively safe haven. When pushers try this tactic, the money and effort it takes is usually quite well rewarded by an influx of addicts. It is only personality flaws and psychological limitations that keep the majority of pushers from using this tactic.

Pusher Wars- The Drug Lords do not allow any pusher gangs to sell on the turfs of other pusher gangs, and they do not allow pusher gangs to fight. Kings who discover pushers breaking these rules are supposed to execute the offenders.

In practice, though, some pushers want the extra money enough to risk the wrath of their kings. The temptation is irresistible to make extra money by trespassing on another pusher's turf to sell drugs or by sabotaging competing pushers so that their addicts must go elsewhere. Other pushers have personal grudges and will go to war against other pushers gangs with no profit motive in mind.

Pushers may try to get away with these illegal activities by stealth (committing the crimes anonymously) or by force (intimidating the victimized pusher gangs in to keeping quiet).

There have been a few fierce battles when pusher gangs (and once, a king) have been found breaking the rules and went rogue. The Drug Lords will come down on rogue elements with as much force as they can (in other words, with dagger teams, p.192). Enemies of the Drug Lords are very interested whenever there is fighting between members of the Drug Lord organization. They hope to "catch" a defector and gain important intelligence about the leadership of the Drug Lords. Unfortunately, no rogues have lived long enough to be questioned.

Kings- Kings are the bosses of pushers and are appointed by the Drug Lords. Each is given a home area to operate in and a turf. They can divide their turf among pusher gangs in any way they please. Kings pay for all their expenses: a house to operate out of, body guards, informants, weapons. Most kings save money by making their base of operations the house that they live in, and their bodyguards live in the house so they can protect the kings 24 hours a day. About once a month, heavily armed guards deliver a load of drugs to the kings' houses. The kings distribute them to pushers, and sometimes sell to addicts from their own front doors.

Lords- Even before the consolidation of the Drug Lords (in 2075), the lords were very secretive. They had reason to be: they were the wealthiest and most powerful drug traders in the city, they dealt with international drug cartels and they sold to the city's most powerful street gangs. They were also at constant war with each other and were not afraid to assassinate each other.

Little is known about the events of 2075. Some lords were executed, the rest joined together in to a single entity that worked with uncharacteristic efficiency. Every move by the Drug Lords, since 2075, has been made with a logical intelligence that amazes even the Math Addicts. Within a year, the lords had destroyed every major enemy, had created a vertical monopoly over drugs in the city, and were working on freeing themselves from dependence on the drug cartels. They created new drugs that were much more efficient and could be manufactured from sources found in the city (as opposed to Heroin and God Killer, which came from Asia and the Appalachians).

Nobody could have predicted the effect on the city of the destruction of the old drug-selling gangs. By taking drugs away from the gangs, the Drug Lords inadvertently opened gang membership up to a new type of person. These new gangs (including the Night Shift) are capable of standing up to the Drug Lords and willing to do so. These new gangs are the only major setback the Drug Lords have faced since their consolidation.

No one knows exactly who all the lords are, or even how many there are, but anecdotal evidence shows that there are about 7 of them and they have divided the city in to equal parts. Each lord has a dagger team and a number of kings. Unlike the kings, whose bases of operation are public knowledge, enemies of the Drug Lords have been unable to figure out where the Lords operate from. When lords appear on the city streets, which is rare, they usually appear in armored cars with a multitude of bodyguards armed with machine guns.

The Lords seem to act in a uniform manner. When prices change, when policies change, when someone becomes an enemy of the Drug Lords, kings all over the city are given exactly the same orders at exactly the same time. Some believe that this is evidence that the lords are being controlled by some outside force. If this is true, though, there is no clue who the controller is.

Branching Out- Many pusher gangs have been known to offer their own independent services in such traditional organized crime areas as loan sharking, gambling, black marketeering, assassinations, prostitution and protection. The extent of these services has been small for one reason: the pushers can make more money per hour selling drugs than at any of these other pursuits. Similarly, the Drug Lord organization as a whole seems to be willing to branch out, but only when the potential reward is high. Most recently, an unprovoked strike by dagger teams was believed to have been paid for by a black corp division.

Laws- There is no codex of laws handed down by the drug lords to the city population, but by looking at who the Drug Lords choose to execute, it is easy to extrapolate a number of rules:

- Don't **hurt** any member of the Drug Lords organization, even in self-defense.
- Don't **interfere** with pushers selling drugs or getting new addicts.
- Don't **sell** any street drugs if you aren't a pusher gang belonging to the Drug Lords.
- Don't **help** too many addicts get off drugs (programs that don't have a high success rate are allowed to continue).
- Don't **find out** anything about the Drug Lords and their drugs that isn't public knowledge.

The Drug Lords also seem to have a set of internal rules, including:

- Don't **encroach** on the turf of another pusher gang/king/lord.
- Don't **fight** with another pusher gang/king/lord.
- Don't reveal Drug Lord **secrets**.
- Avoid messing with **gangs**.
- Avoid catching the attention of **corps** or **feds**.
- Sell** a lot or be kicked out.

Dagger Teams- While pushers are their own muscle, and bodyguards are the muscle for kings, the muscle for the lords is the dagger teams. Each lord has his or her own team of 4 to 6 trained killers. All daggers have high-powered black motorcycles, black full body armor, automatic pistols and military explosives. Dagger teams are used for only one thing: search and destroy missions. Daggers are used to destroy enemies of the Drug Lords and to destroy employees of the Drug Lords who have gone rogue. Like the lords, the true identities of dagger team members are kept secret.

Production Teams- Each lord controls several production teams. Each team is made up of at least one master chemist, a few assistant chemists and several heavily armed bodyguards. The teams move around frequently, trying to keep their location secret and because their labs quickly become toxic. They use whatever space they can get, from warehouses to apartments. Many innocent people living in cheap apartment buildings have been killed when labs caught fire, released poisonous gasses, or both.

Productions teams are responsible for testing new drugs and methods. The lords are in a constant search for cheaper, faster and more dependable ways to create drugs. Whenever a new batch is created using new equipment or a new method, the production team sends out guards to kidnap a street person to test the drug on. The Drug Lords have been known to abduct whole groups of people, of different ages and socioeconomic status, for testing brand new drugs. The victims may be kept for weeks or months as the effects of use, addiction, withdrawal and overdoses are tested on them. There are horror stories of new drugs that didn't make it on to the streets because of various side effects. The production teams tend to execute their victims afterwards, but a few have escaped to tell the tale.

EMPLOYMENT

Illegal

In Brief- People who can't get legal jobs can work below board or as criminals.

Illegal jobs are in much greater demand and are much harder to get. There are a lot of people in the city who can't get a legitimate job and desperately want the extra income that a job will give. Some illegal jobs pay well, but the majority pay less than minimum wage.

Below Board- These are a lot like the jobs that wells engage in, but the employees are paid "under-the-table." The employees don't need to show any identification, and nobody pays any income taxes. Almost every small-business owner in the city hires the occasional below-board employee with little fear of getting caught. The most common below-board part-time jobs in the city: assistant to a black market trader, maid, exotic dancer and light manufacturing.

Criminal- This is where people are paid to do something that is completely illegal. See the section on criminals (p.190) for more information. The most common criminal positions in the city are: pusher (p.190), prostitute (p.144), mercenary and runner (p.143).

Fighting For Money

There are a few places in the city where a good fighter can make a few bucks. Most good fighters, however, know that every fight is dangerous and won't risk it.

Alley Fights: Most fight betting is started by homeless professional gamblers. Two people are arguing and appear ready to fight, people stop to see what is going to happen, and a gambler collects bets. In most cases it is a setup: the fight is fixed and the fighters and gambler will each take a cut.

Warehouse Fights: Some gamblers and traders hold larger indoor fights. The audience must pay a small cover to get in (they usually also bet money once inside). Some fight promoters try to boost the audience by doing something exotic (e.g. fighting with saws). The fighters in these cases are typically practiced martial artists who make a circuit of major inner cities. They may appear injured (or may even appear to die) but they are seldom badly injured. The chances of some random person off the street beating these fighters at their own game is very small.

Death Fights- Even rarer, some people in the city will stage fights-to-the-death. These are small operations, with few attendees. Often the people who stage the fights are the same people who make illegal pornography. They will record the fights and sell the recordings on the black market. Fighting is done with bare knuckles, or with small hand weapons (nothing that will kill too quickly). The fighters are typically career addicts who desperately need the money. The fight promoters usually give the fighters free God Killer so the fighters will fight without fear of death. Winners are paid between \$200 and \$750.

Hunters- Some hunters pay people to be their prey. Few hunters care for fair fights, and people are more or less paid to run away and try to survive being hunted.

Red Light District- Some of the bars in the red light district feature occasional catfighting or sexual wrestling to attract portions of the fetish crowd. It is mostly sex workers who do this but anyone could walk in off the street and apply for the job. The fighters are usually not paid any extra for winning, in fact some may be paid extra to lose and take a good beating.

Child Boxing- One disturbing sport, brought to the US by Southeast Asian immigrants, pits children against each other in bare knuckle boxing and kickboxing matches. The Orphans have only recently heard of this and have declared that they will kill anyone who forces or coerces children in to engaging in this practice.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Pollution

In Brief- Factories in the city create much pollution, it is dangerous but usually blown out to sea.

Corporations have used lobbyists to make sure that the city was zoned for high-pollution industry. The reason is that the corporations want to make money by running high-pollution factories, but they don't want them in the corporate living centers where corporate employees might suffer from health problems. So, in the corporate living centers, corporate employees work at low-danger and low-pollution factories, while in the city, 'workers' (who enjoy none of the benefits of corporate membership) work dangerous jobs in factories that spew huge columns of pollution in to the sky above the city.

Coastal winds usually scatter the pollution, taking most of it out to sea (where it pollutes the oceans). Enough of the pollution stays in the city, especially on days when the wind is relatively still, to cause health problems for many thousands of people in the city. Rates of asthma and cancer are higher in the city than in surrounding areas. An accident, a fire or a broken pollution scrubber could mean that noxious smoke and gasses can be expelled from the smokestacks. Such accidents have, in recent years, killed hundreds and put thousands in the hospital. Some have been permanently disabled with scar tissue in their lungs or neurological damage.

When the pollution builds to dangerously high levels, the cloud forms (see below). Most people who expect to be out on the streets during these days own some sort of gas mask or improvise one.

The Cloud

In Brief- When there is no wind, a dark, flammable, pollution eating cloud of genetically engineered bacteria floats over the city.

On days where the wind is still, pollution pools around the city, growing dangerously thick. At this point, bacteria "hibernating" in grime across city rooftops comes to life. The bacteria absorbs and metabolizes pollutants, turning them in to simpler and less toxic chemicals. One of the metabolic byproducts is hydrogen gas, which fills tiny sacks attached to the bacteria, causing them to float. Eventually, a thick grey cloud forms, hovering about 800 feet over the city (higher than most rooftops). The cloud saves lives by destroying many (but not all) forms of pollution. It can also produce a greenhouse effect which can make the city up to 20 degrees higher than the surrounding area. The cloud has the effect of making the city very dim, which has been known to cause depression in some people. The cloud was released with the assurance that it would not be at all flammable. Lately there have been instances of especially thick parts of the cloud catching fire. The cloud smolders, glows slightly and a powdery ash falls on the city.

Weather

In Brief- The weather is wildly unstable, with temperature extremes and massive rainstorms, windstorms and blizzards.

The greenhouse effect has caused a partial melting of the polar ice caps, which has caused rising ocean levels, which has changed weather patterns worldwide. In general terms, the earth has become a warmer place by about seven degrees. This is not an absolute, however. The weather has become very wild and unstable.

The modern era is one of super-storms. Superstorms last for weeks, even months, crossing oceans and sometimes almost circling the globe. Most superstorms that hit the city come from the sea and bring huge amounts of water and heavy winds. Fourteen hurricanes have hit the city in the last two decades. During winter, superstorms can travel down over Canada and create blizzards capable of choking the streets with snow and winds that can freeze a person in minutes. At any time of year, strong winds tossing trash and knocking over children are common.

Wildlife

In Brief- Wildlife returning to city, including pigeons, stray cats and dogs and other small animals. 10 million rats cause health problem and bite the defenseless.

Since the massive exodus from the city in the early 2060s, nature has, bit by bit, begun to return to the city. Weeds grow in unrepaired cracks in streets up and down the city, and trees are even growing out of some of the larger cracks in sidewalks.

About 10 million rats inhabit the city. These rats were brought to New York in the 1700s from Norway, on sailing ships. Much bigger than native rats, they weigh about a pound each and can grow to be up to 18 inches long. Through natural selection, these rats have become immune to most poisons they have been introduced to over the last few centuries. Rats have also developed an urban wit: they will watch their fellow rats going in to new situations and are smart enough to avoid anything that killed a fellow. Rats have been known to bite humans who are sick, intoxicated, wounded or otherwise helpless. Their teeth can gnaw through most barriers and they can decimate food supplies in a single night. Rats also carry diseases. Rats once carried the bubonic plague, now they carry rabies and strains of different plagues (see Disease, p.185).

Another immigrant to the city is pigeons. Pigeons lived on cliffs in Europe and came to America (along with sparrows) in the grain holds of ships. Like rats, pigeons are omnivores and reproduce quickly. They nest on the ledges of buildings, creating terrible messes. Their dropping are acidic enough that they have caused metal cables on city bridges to snap.

There are thousands of stray cats and dogs living in the city. The stray dogs have reverted to living and hunting in packs, like wolves. Stray dogs can attack children and may attack adults when hungry. Dogs can contract rabies, which makes them irrational and dangerous.

Other city wildlife that may be seen on the streets are squirrels, raccoons, bats, blue jays, robins and sparrows. Red-tail hawks and falcons make their nests on the top of tall buildings and hunt street wildlife.

The city also has quite a lot of insect life. The most insidious are cockroaches.

The Hole

In Brief- Largest and most wild park in the city, has many animals and plants (including coyotes and deer), all under the stewardship of the Keepers.

The city was once known for its parks. Those that weren't paved over in the 2040s are now overgrown with weeds and filled with trash. These parks have quite a few animals living in them. The largest and most impressive park in the city was and is Central Park, known in city slang as "the hole". Central Park takes up 843 acres, representing more than 10% of the total acreage of the city.

Now, the park is choked with thick underbrush and trees (along with the bombed-out ruins of Freedom Army buildings). Many types of trees, grasses and bushes grow in the hole, some native to New York and others imported from all around the world. Wildlife, includes owls, warblers, blue jays, robins, sparrows, wild turkeys, rats, mice, raccoons, stray cats and dogs, bats and squirrels. There are fish, turtles and bullfrogs in the park's human-made ponds. There have been a small population of coyotes living in the park since the end of the 20th century. There is even a small population of white-tailed deer in the park. Nobody knows whether they were introduced in to the park by hunters, or whether they traveled to the park via bridges before the security gates were built.

The Keepers, the small street family who live in the park, eat all of the animals that live there (and many types of plant life). The Keepers are careful not to hunt any species to the point where they are close to extinction.

See the section on the hole in City Geography (p.167) and the section on the Keepers (p.127) for more information.

Monsters in Central Park?

The Keepers don't like to tell people what's in the Hole. They don't think it's anyone's business and they don't want to give anyone a good reason to invade the Hole.

As does anything mysterious, a number of rumors have sprung up about what the Keepers have found in the hole:

- Jeffrey Hernandez, who did not die on the satellite but has instead been living in the ruins.

- A cache of secret experimental weapons in one of the Freedom Army research labs.

- Gold, jewels and antiques plundered by the Freedom Army.

- An unexploded nuclear weapon.

- Genetically engineered animals that escaped during the bombings and have been breeding in the hole.

The Keepers have denied all of these rumors. Most of them are fairly unlikely (cleanup crews did comb through the entire hole). The only actual evidence for any of these theories comes from the Keepers themselves. Keepers like to wear small trophies from their hunts: bones, teeth, tails, claws, etc. The more impressive the animal, the prouder they are to wear its trophies. Some Keepers have been seen wearing parts that casual observers can't recognize. With characteristic "none-of-your-business" attitude, the Keepers won't identify the trophies.

It has been established as a fact that there were Freedom Army labs in Central Park during the Freedom Wars, and that some of these labs did genetic research. It is possible that some of these labs were underground and the animals there were not immediately destroyed when the park was bombed. It is further possible that the cages were somehow opened (either by accident or on purpose) and animals escaped in to the park. Some of them managed to find a place in the park ecology and survive the decades.

Another explanation for the Keepers' odd trophies is that Hunters may have released exotic animals in the park in order to hunt them. Hunters may have even released genetically engineered or resurrected extinct animals in to the hole.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Tech Geekdom

People who don't know much about computers assume that there is one continuum of computer knowledge. In fact, there are several areas of knowledge, just as in art or science, and knowledge of one does not necessarily mean knowledge in the others. Tech knowledge can be divided, generally, in to:

Hardware: the physical makeup of machines, what parts will work on what type of machine and how to install them.

Operating System: The program that runs and manages every other program on a computer and controls which people and what programs can access what resources..

Applications: The use, features and differences between large software suites.

Internet: What is available on the net and how to get to it.

Networking: How computers transmit data to each other, and how servers route this data.

Programming: Creating programs and net sites, and how they retrieve and store data in databases.

Data

In Brief- Data is very important and valuable in a computerized age. Can be copied, compressed and easily hidden.

When any riddle that asks what the most expensive, the most desired, the most dangerous commodity per pound is, the answer to the riddle is usually data. In the industrial age, coal, gasoline and electricity were the lifeblood that let the economy operate. In the computerized age, that lifeblood is data. Data can be anything from a cheap pulp novel that keeps a homeless person entertained on a lonely night, to research results from a top secret military research project that is worth billions on the black market and might kill millions if it falls in to the wrong hands.

There are four universals about data:

Data can be **copied**. Any type of data can be copied any number of times without any degradation.

Data can be **compressed**. Any data with any sort of redundancy (including human language) can be made smaller so it can fit on smaller storage media and can be transmitted faster. For a company that deals exclusively with data and the internet, a 5% compression can save the company billions.

Data can be **encrypted**. See Cryptography (p.200) for more.

Data can be **hidden**. Data can be hidden inside other data such that it will be invisible to the naked eye. Only special programs can tease this data out.

Copy Protection- Over the past 100 years, the fact that any data can be copied has been a considerable annoyance to those trying to get rich by selling data. Software and entertainment companies have created a number of "copy protection" methods. Despite the name, these methods do not actually prevent data from being copied, most prevent illegally copied data from being used. The most common copy protection scheme in use today: when you start up a program, the program goes on-line and checks to see if you've actually purchased the program. If not, the program won't run. The common reaction to this copy protection scheme is to excise that part of the program. Crackers make a large percentage of their income by "cracking" the copy protection on pirated programs and selling them on street corners.

Hotcoding- When the military wanted to protect its ultra-secret code breaking algorithms, copy protection just wasn't good enough. The military created "hotcoding." The basic idea is to keep people from copying data by never actually letting them have it. Hotcoded data comes locked up in a little box and it never actually leaves the box. Information can be sent in, processed by computer chips inside the box, and the result is returned. If anyone tries to open the box, an electrical circuit is broken and the data disappears forever. Although highly effective, hotcoding is not effective for most types of data. About the only thing it is good for is holding encryption codes (including the keys that allow people to access bank-accounts and other highly secure systems) and code breaking algorithms. There are rumors of a top-secret VR training program that is hotcoded, but nobody in the city has actually seen one.

Information Smuggling- Information can be hidden in other information, and information is everywhere. People have made whole careers out of figuring out ways to smuggle information and out of trying to catch information smugglers. Anti-information smuggling experts typically work on top secret projects where blinder programs are used. Blinder programs insure that people won't remember anything that happened while working on the project, and the experts make sure that the people don't write little notes to themselves and smuggle them out.

Some things information can be hidden in:

- In a microchip smaller than a pinhead.
- In the smuggler's brain as a mental program.
- In the smuggler's DNA.
- In a chain of proteins, dissolved in the smuggler's soda.
- In anything that has been printed or embossed by a computer.
- Printed on any surface with an ink visible only in the ultraviolet spectrum.
- In any music, text, video or program file stored in any digital medium.
- In the microprocessor of a microwave oven.
- In a grain of sand etched by nanobots.

Data Sizes

Data	Size
500,000 Chemical Formulae	1 ZB
100,000 Short Text Emails	1 ZB
50,000 Decryption Keys	1 ZB
20,000 Full-Length Novels	1 ZB
10,000 Building Blueprints	1 ZB
10,000 High-Quality Photographs	1 ZB
7,000 Music Files	1 ZB
30 Hours of Video Voicemail	1 ZB
30 Seconds of Full-Immersion (5 Senses) Recording	1 ZB
10 Blueprints for Nanobots	1 ZB
Installation File for 5 MMU Mental Program	1 ZB
1 Hour of High-Quality Video	1 ZB
Full Human Genome	1 ZB
Typical Net Site	1 ZB
Complete Software Suite	10 ZB
Computer Operating System	10 ZB
High-Level Artificial Intelligence	500 ZB
Full Copy of a Human Mind	5,000 ZB

Internet

In Brief- Primary means of communication, shopping and information exchange for the planet.

The internet replaced the old phone system entirely in the 2020s (although there are still a few third-world countries that still use phone systems). Every house or apartment is built with an internet connection in it, and phones, videophones, computers, even appliances are hooked in. Higher level connections can be rented by people who need extra bandwidth (generally VR addicts).

The biggest internet provider in the city is NYR-LAN (New York Regional Local Area Network) which provides service to 95% of the city business because it can undercut the costs of any competitor. The NYR-LAN is owned by the Zyztech corporation. The 5% who do not use the NYR-LAN usually have special needs for security or reliability and are willing to pay more. City ATM machines, for instance, are on private networks in order to reduce hacking attempts.

Entertainment- The primary use of the internet today is to entertain people. Typically, people pay to access music, books, movies and VR games. The biggest entertainment businesses today are the large VR fantasy worlds that most shut-ins turn to for entertainment. There is also quite a bit of free entertainment available on the web, made by amateur artists who have put their work on-line for others to enjoy.

Shopping- The second biggest use of the internet is for mail-order shopping. City shut-ins order their every need, from clothes to groceries, and have it delivered to their doors. Any specialty item which doesn't exist in a city store (vehicle parts, fine art, expensive jewelry, computer parts, rare seeds, etc.) must be ordered on-line.

Research- For those who know how to find it, the internet has the answer to almost every conceivable question. Whole libraries have been made available for free on the net. Some people make a living helping people find freely-available information on the net or helping people figure out if information they have found is accurate or not.

Communication- There are a number of communication protocols available on the net, including: email (text), phone/videophone (voice and video), and VR meeting (full immersion VR). People can also send any sort of data, from music files to computer programs, to each other across the internet.

Community- For many people, the internet is a means of communicating with like-minded people. There are message boards and chat rooms on the internet for devotees of every conceivable topic. There's even a VR chatroom that claims to be for NY area serial killers. For shut-in VR addicts, the VR worlds they live in are as much about human contact as they are about winning some game.

Remote Control- Computers and phones aren't the only things that hook in to the net. There are millions of appliances, printers, security cameras, medical devices and even industrial machines that are plugged in to the internet so they can be monitored and controlled by remote. Some of these devices are tasty targets for hackers.

Piracy- Much to the dismay of the corporations, people also use the internet for trading pirated data. It is mainly users of the Hacker's Guild operating system that do this (see p.82), but others do it as well. Just as skilled researchers can find almost any piece of info on the web, skilled pirates can find, or trade for, nearly any piece of pirated data.

Net Geography

In Brief- Who and what gets on the internet from each country is a matter of that country's laws and economy.

White Towers- Many Northern European and Southeast Asian countries fall in to this category. These are countries that exceed UN International Law Guidelines for internet law. Their laws are quite a bit stricter than the US. People can and will be arrested for data piracy, copyright violations, releasing viruses, defaming people, sending unsolicited communication, distributing pornography, gambling on-line and putting instructions for committing crimes online. Free speech is often curtailed. Anyone in the world can report someone doing something illegal in these countries and those people will be quickly shut down.

The result is that these countries have few hackers and grey-market internet sites. The big corps don't like running servers from these countries because of the hassle of the additional laws. The majority of servers in these countries are owned by local companies, hobbyists, gated communities and governments. Since these countries are among the most wealthy, they tend to have good hardware and the latest software.

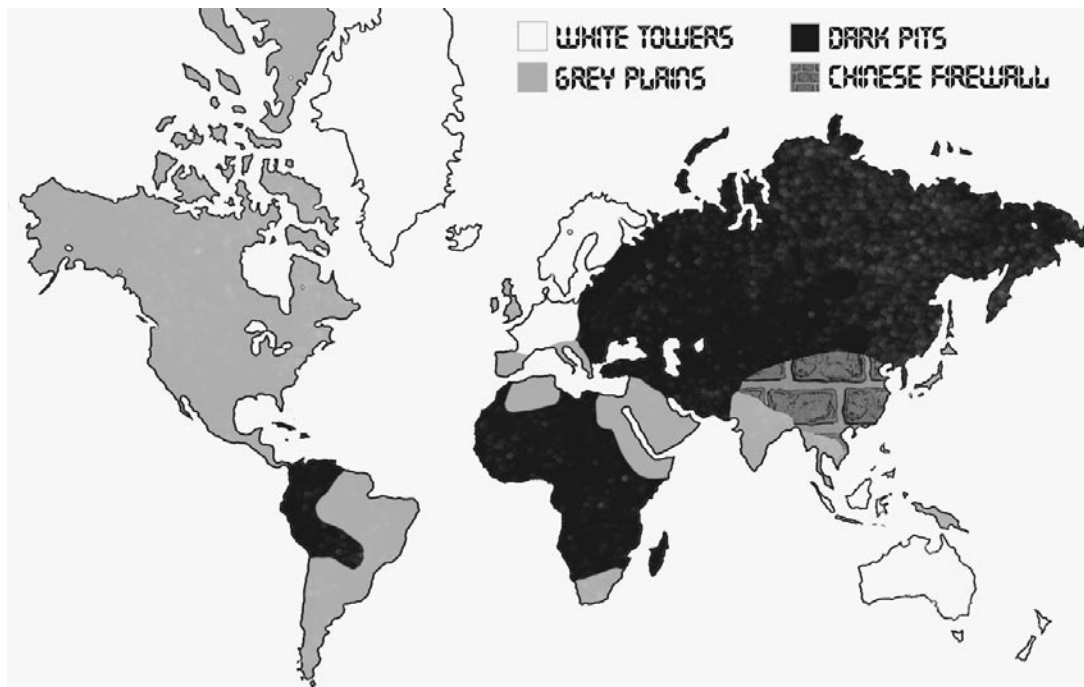
Grey Plains- The majority of North American and European countries fall in to this category, including the United States. These countries meet the UN International Law Guidelines, although only barely. There are basic criminal penalties for things like selling pirated software, distributing child porn or attacking other servers. However, the law enforcement agencies that would enforce them are typically overworked and seldom catch perpetrators. Companies and private individuals typically use the civil law (lawsuits) to stop servers from pirating their data or attacking them.

There are plenty of "grey-market" net sites in these countries, hosting everything from pornography, to hacking tools, to unsolicited advertising. These activities might or might not be illegal, depending upon the judge, and many people find it worth the money to run such sites. There is also clearly illegal stuff happening on servers in these countries. Typically, the people who own these servers are not aware of these activities and shut them down when they find out. The criminals just go and find space on other servers.

Dark Pits- These are countries that refuse to meet the UN standards, often because they are so poor that they hope to make some money by inviting in organized crime to operate within their borders. These are typically the same corporations that have not signed the International Corporate Law Treaty and allow Banned Corps to operate on their borders.

Data Storage Devices

Name	Cost	Size and Shape of a ...	Capacity
Data Key	\$1	key	1 ZB
Data Card	\$5	business card	5 ZB
PDA Hard Drive	\$25	condom	10 ZB
Desktop Hard Drive	\$100	pack of cigarettes	50 ZB
Portable Data Store	\$250	paperback book	100 ZB
Mainframe Hard Drive	\$500	shoe box	200 ZB
Supercomputer Hard Drive	\$10,000	truck	2,500 ZB
Nanotech Data Tank	\$75,000	oxygen tank	5,000 ZB



These countries are the heart of all darkness and evil on the internet. Banned corps and organized crime agencies sell pirated software, illegal pornography, guidebooks for terrorists. They host net sites where extremists go to plan terrorist acts. They run internet based scams that bilk the gullible out of millions.

The servers in these countries are a mishmash of stolen parts, old used parts and illegal knockoff chips. The computers work poorly and unreliably. The software running on them is all pirated. The servers are often badly misconfigured (the people running them had no real computer education). These misconfigured servers wreak havoc with the rest of the internet because they don't conform to data transfer standards. The misconfigured servers are also easy prey for hackers. Hackers all over the world keep accounts on these machines and often launch denial-of-service attacks from them.

Even the government gets in to the act in these countries. The government inducts bright young people to help pirate software to run on government computers. Because the government and businesses encourage computer crime, these countries often spawn many hackers. The hackers might not be as well-educated as hackers in other countries, but the sheer number of them means that new viruses, hacking tools and exploits will pour out of these countries.

The Great Firewall of China- All internet activity in and out of China is strictly controlled. The government controls which net sites the population can visit and which Chinese sites can be contacted by the outside world. The Chinese government monitors their firewall constantly and will block whole countries if they see an attempted attack.

The effect of this censorship is that the outside world knows little about what is going on in China and visa versa. Chinese computers, which hold biotech information that nobody else in the world has are also almost immune from hackers. In addition to the firewall, Chinese computers are protected from Western hackers because they use Chinese software and operating systems that few in the Western world are familiar with.

Corporate Networks- The networks run by large corps and gated communities are much like a medieval walled city. There is one entrance from the outside (the internet) and it is carefully guarded and can be shut down at any time. Within are hundreds of servers and network nodes. The servers that the general public are not supposed to access are within another firewall (the castle of the city). It is from this protected area that network security monitors the goings on in the walled city.

The most valuable and important data is not connected to the internet. There is typically an internal LAN (local area network) within a building or a group of buildings within a corporate living center. Computers that don't access the internet may sit right next to computers that do, but the networks are never supposed to mix. Occasionally, however, a node on the network accidentally gets connected to the internet. An incredibly skilled hacker might be able to get in, and might get corporate data worth billions, but it would mean having to get past two firewalls, find the node (before Network Security finds it and shuts it down), hack in to it, find the server with the data and hack in to that machine.

Legacy Servers- In the aftermath of the Freedom Wars, the Restoration Committee was desperate to get the internet back up and running as quickly as possible. Whatever servers were still running were rigged together in to an internet backbone. As the years went on, these servers were replaced by new and better servers, and almost all of these old servers were shut down.

Although most people have forgotten about these servers, the internet has not. If someone was to boot them up and connect them to the internet, they would still have the authority of a major backbone server (see below). Hackers could use these servers to wreak havoc with the internet (+10 to Sniffing, Network Protocols, Anonymity and Denial of Service skill rolls). Unfortunately for hackers, few remember where these servers are, they may or may not still work, and they run old operating systems that modern hackers have no idea how to use. There are rumors, however, that a few of these servers exist in old abandoned buildings and private residences in the city.

Internet Backbone- The true powerhouse of the internet is a few thousand backbone internet servers throughout the globe. These servers communicate directly with each other via dedicated satellites and fiber optic channels. The only job of these servers is to pass information back and forth. The servers are set up in a distributed net: if one goes down, the others take over. Some of these servers are run by the world governments, but most are run by major corporations. The corps are happy to pay to maintain the servers in order to get a backbone connection to the internet. Companies with a backbone connection can sell internet connectivity to Internet Service Providers, who can sell connectivity to ordinary users.

Internet backbone servers are a tempting target for hackers because so much data, from emails to international money transfers, goes through them. Hackers who install sniffer programs on these servers only need to be able to decrypt the data they capture to get access to just about anything on the internet.

Satellites

In Brief- A network of satellites, some old and some new, helps the world communicate.

Since 1957, people have been launching satellites in to space. Most fly around in an asynchronous orbit (they spin faster than the earth). Some are high up enough that they spin at the same speed of the earth and appear to use to be rooted in one spot (a geosynchronous orbit).

Today, every government and corporation has satellites in orbit. Nanotech (p.207) has made satellites smaller and cheaper. A network of satellites makes up the backbone of the internet, which handles all of the world's communication. The internet could keep working if half the satellites were destroyed. On the other hand, whenever one of these satellites stops working, the corporation that owns it loses millions per hour. Quick satellite repairs can be contracted through the Satellite Repair Corporation (which has an office in the city).

There are humans in space, living aboard a number of space stations, which are used for various experiments. There are also a number of derelict satellites launched before the Freedom Wars that nobody owns or uses. There are some that people have forgotten exist altogether. Some may still even work. Anyone who could find and capture one of these satellites would have salvage rights.

Money Transactions

In Brief- Money now completely digital, no gold standard, money very hard to hack.

There is no longer a gold standard, there is not even a cash standard. Cash is still used occasionally (especially in inner cities) but most money exists only because a group of international financial institutions agrees that it exists. Since money does not exist as a physical commodity, extraordinary measures must be taken to make sure that hackers or disloyal bank employees don't try to "create" money out of thin air. The rich and powerful don't care too much about if one person steals from another, but if someone were to create a lot of money it would create inflation and make their money worth less.

When someone pays for something on the internet, the person typically enters a secret code (or puts in a data key containing a code). The on-line sales company takes that

information to the consumer's bank and says "this person said give me some money." If it is a large amount, the bank's computers may contact the consumer for additional verification. If the bank thinks it's a legit transfer, it deletes the money from its data banks and the on-line sales company adds money to its data banks. A third party (the International Transactions Repository) gets copies of every single communication being sent, and makes sure that everything adds up.

Communications between financial institutions are made using the best cryptography around. They do not use the same internet service providers that normal people do (thus they are harder to sniff). Bank computers are also renowned for having very good firewalls and competent system administrators watching over them at all times. The International Transactions Repository also makes it hard on hackers. In order for a money transfer to go through, both banks and the repository must be fooled.

Virtual Reality

In Brief- VR very advanced, can be used for entertainment, training and behavior modification.

VR was the big boom industry of the 2060s. This boom drove the development of newer and better VR systems. Today, VR entertainment is a multi-billion dollar industry, and more than half of the world's computer power is devoted to running these VR worlds. Although the developments in VR technology were created primarily to entertain bored shut-ins, VR can also be very useful.

Types- VR can be accessed using gloves and a VR helmet, or even with a keyboard and screen, but most people prefer full-immersion VR. Mental stimulation makes it possible for a person to see, hear, feel, smell and taste the virtual environment. Most VR simulations are a little fuzzy (not quite "photorealistic") but VR users who get involved in the simulation rarely notice.

The simplest VR environments are tiny VR rooms on internet sites. They are usually put together by amateurs and are exceedingly simple. The walls are often plain white (or plain black) and there are only a few objects in the room that can be interacted with. People might come to these rooms sit around and chat, taste the site owner's favorite recipes, play a small game, or anything else the programmer has time to put in.

Slightly more advanced are the rooms people pay for. They may have games, training, pornography, gambling, interactive reference guides, etc. Closely related to VR is the phenomenon of "sensory broadcast." People broadcast their full senses and people logging in can see, hear, feel, smell and taste what the person is experiencing. "Nightwalkers" in the city wander around having adventures so bored shut-ins and people living outside the city can get a thrill. There are also "VR movies" where users do not control the action, but instead follow around in the body of a fictional character.

The most advanced VR simulations are the VR multiplayer games. These are subscription services which cost a lot but provide a massive and detailed world. These worlds offer just about every kind of challenge and interaction and many are content to spend their every waking moment there.

Training- Although entertainment is the big-money industry, VR is also incredibly useful for training. People can train in simulations of real life situations without the accompanying dangers. A firefighter training program can subject someone to realistic sensations of being inside a burning building without putting the firefighter in any real danger. Most governments and corporations today use VR training. Indies and Wells on the streets often rent or borrow mental stimulators to run pirated training programs that purport to teach how to pick locks or move silently stab someone in their vital organs.

Behavior Mod- An illegal offshoot of VR training is a new system called "behavior mod." Behavior mod is like automated brainwashing. A person in full immersion VR is put in situations, punished (with pain) if they do the wrong thing and rewarded if they do the right thing. This is done over and over again, for several days in a row, until the person is so conditioned that they have little free will left in that type of situation. Since this is an incredibly unpleasant experience, most people use blanker programs so they won't remember it.

Whether or not people remember it, behavior mod has severe psychological side effects. People suffer from many of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. There may also be "accidental pairing of conditions." As an example, if a simulation happens to have a wooden table in it, the sight of a wooden table may cause a person to fly in to a rage, or vomit, or cower in fear.

The programs don't just modify physical behaviors, they can modify emotions. A person might be punished for feeling fear in a certain situation, or rewarded for feeling anger at seeing someone's face. Behavior mod hasn't been around long, but some fear that it could be used to turn normal people in to assassins. People would disappear for a few weeks, when they return they don't remember anything but feel fine, but when they see a certain person they execute an expert martial arts strike and snap the person's neck.

Despite the side-effects, illegality and scary ability to change people's emotions, many people seek out behavior mod. Some seek it out to push them to limits they can't push themselves to. Others have heard that behavior mod can eliminate personality flaws. Behavior mod is often sought out by ronin who desperately want to pass the psych screening for a gated community or corp.

Hacking

In Brief- Computers too complex to make completely secure. Good hackers can destroy and make money. "Hidden" are legendary paraplegic super-hackers at war with each other. Hacker's Guild produces free hacker OS.

Hacking is a lot like catburglary. Hackers spend days doing research and scoping out vulnerabilities. When they get in, their primary concern is not being noticed. They try to get what they're after and get out as soon as possible. There are some military and terrorist hackers, but the vast majority of hacking is young criminals trying to explore or make a quick buck. Militaries and terror organizations don't invest much in hacking because they know that it's a matter of chance whether a hacker can get in to a particular system.

Hacking is a little more than a century old, and many of the things that were true about hacking back then are still true now. There is still no such thing as a completely secure system. Every day security holes are discovered and patched, but every day new software or operating system releases open new holes.

Vandalism is the easiest and most common form of hacking. The most common hacks don't even get in to the system: they are "denial of service attacks." A hacker simply sends millions of requests to a server, slowing the server to a halt and blocking legitimate requests. Hackers who actually get inside a system often find that its easier to crash the operating system than to get access to specific files.

See p.61 for more information on the specific tactics available to hackers.

Hidden- Due to pollution and leftover radiation from the Freedom Army nuclear attacks, there were a lot of babies born with birth defects in the city. Some were badly disabled, but were able to live as normal people in VR fantasy worlds. A handful were born with a neuroanatomy so different that they could not even operate VR bodies. In 2064, some doctor thought he could give these babies a way to interact with the world by hooking their brains up to the command prompts of very simple computers with internet connections. They were meant to be the Helen Kellers of the 21st century.

Today, everyone who worked on the project has disappeared. Some have seen evidence of mysterious super-hackers operating in the city. At some point, someone connected the super-hackers with the missing disabled kids. A knew city legend was born. Some hackers pieced together incidents involving these super-hackers and concluded that they were at war with each other.

What follows is unconfirmed rumors and conjecture: *The kids who received this therapy grew up knowing nothing but computers and were naturally incredible hackers. They also grew up with no human contact and grew up as sociopaths. As sociopaths that could do nearly everything, they soon sought out the only challenge worthy of them: each other. It was a no-mercy, no-rules fight, like when serial killers go after each other. Because their physical bodies were vulnerable, the hidden erased all information about where their bodies were in the real world. They were also forced to be incredibly subtle, never allowing their internet connection to be traced back. Denied outright attacks, they were forced to make war subtly, secretly manipulating just about everything that happens in the city. They are in thousands of systems and can make a series of "coincidences" happen to get their way.*

There are stories of people who became secret servants of the hidden. These stories take much the same form of the old devil-at-the-crossroads stories. In the hidden stories, some desperate person goes to some empty VR room and shouts out for help in his or her personal crisis, for any payment asked of him or her. The problem mysteriously or coincidentally goes away, then the person starts receiving terse text messages that appear to be system errors but give instructions for actions. The servant never meets the hidden, knows which hidden he or she is working for, nor knows the purpose behind the tasks.

Hacker's Guild- In the 2040s there was a war between tech criminals (who wanted to give consumers the ability to control their data), and (corporations who wanted to strictly control what people could do with data). A small group of tech criminals put out a free hacker Operating System. This operating system did not include legally-mandated copy-protection schemes, and it had built in file and information sharing, built in encryption and other features. The operating system also contained a pyramid-scheme that gave the people who released it access to an incredible amount of pirated data and information.

The hackers who released the operating system became rich and powerful. One of the things they did with this power was to steal tech that the corporations had locked up in their R&D labs (including mental programming tech) and started using it. Hackers were installing programs in their own brains while the corps were still trying to get permission for human trials.

During the Freedom Wars, the Freedom Army courted the members of the Hacker's Guild. The guild was split over whether or not to help the Freedom Army. One half joined up, they helped the Freedom Army create computer networks and they ran Freedom Army research labs. The other half went underground, and eventually helped the rebels destroy the Freedom Army.

After the Freedom Wars, the leaders of the guild found that many of the things they had been doing illegally were now legal. Most went legit. They offered to help the Restoration Committee rebuild the world's information infrastructure, and most became rich in the process. Many of these rich ex-Guild members are now technology advocates, donating money to lobbyists trying to reduce government restrictions on technology and trying to give third world countries access to tech. Some moved to Pacific and Caribbean islands where they could experiment with tech without having to worry about any laws.

Although most of the old guild members were giving up hacking, the Guild OS was still the premier operating system of hackers (and quite a few legit computer professionals). Someone needed to put out updates to the OS to help it keep up with new technologies. A new generation of idealistic young hackers took over the guild and put out updates. However, they were no longer at the top of an information and file-sharing pyramid, their only reward was the prestige of putting out a hacker OS. In modern times the Guild has been shying away from the blatant criminal activities of the 40s and has tried to portray itself as a semi-legit advocate for tech rights. In the countries they work in, what they do is (more or less) legal. Now, the corps still hate the guild but have a harder time convincing judges that they've done anything illegal.

Cryptography

In Brief- Code making/breaking is a constant war, any code can be broken given enough time. Computer power, good software and a skilled user helps.

As much as data is important in today's computerized world, so is cryptography. When a wireless security camera transmits a video stream, it encrypts it. If it were not encrypted, anyone with a wireless receiver could view the video stream and could block it in favor of a video stream they created. When a wealthy Indie steps up to an ATM machine, they insert a tiny key which contains a cryptographic code that is used in a challenge-response system (see Money Transactions, p.198). Most important is the internet, which hosts almost all of the

world's communications. A good hacker can get on to an internet node and see every piece of information that is being sent back and forth. Nearly every communication on the internet is encrypted, the question is how well it is encrypted.

Types of Encryption- There are several types of encryption, each with various uses.

Private Key Encryption: This is the stereotypical encryption that people have been doing almost since there's been a language. This type of encryption requires both people to know what the encryption scheme is. One person uses the encryption scheme on the data to encode it, the other uses the same scheme in reverse to decode it. With modern encryption schemes, this type can be very powerful, but it requires both parties to get together ahead of time and share an encryption scheme.

Public Key Encryption: Invented by Stanford researchers in 1975, this type of encryption is the basis for almost all encryption on the net. Each code has two parts: a public key and a private key. The public key is given out to anyone and everyone, and anyone can use that key to encrypt some data. However, only the private key can be used to decrypt the data, and only one person has that. This type of encryption is like mail slots: anyone can drop any letter in to a house's mail slot, but only the house's owner has the key to get in the house and retrieve the mail. Public key cryptography is much more useful but not quite as strong.

One-Way Encryption: This type of encryption uses a code to encrypt data, but there is no code that can decrypt it. This type of encryption is very hard to break and is typically used for password verification. Example: *an encrypted copy of Bill's password is stored on a system. When Bill tries to log-in he enters his password. The computer takes what he entered, encrypts it, and compares the result to the encrypted password it has on file. If it matches, the computer lets Bill in.* The great thing about using one-way encryption for storing passwords is that people who capture the password file gain little benefit: they still have to guess the right password (or break the code).

Evolving Code: Private or public keys can be configured to evolve. The trick to an evolving code is that the encryption scheme the parties are using is constantly changing, and how it will change can only be predicted by someone who has an unencrypted copy of the last transmission. Each letter in a text message might change how the next letter will be decrypted. The benefit to evolving codes is that even if someone breaks the code on one occasion, if they miss any transmission their code becomes useless. Unfortunately, the same applies to the legitimate receiver of the transmissions.

Cryptographers- Modern codes (and code breaking programs) are the result of top researchers working for years in top-secret R&D labs. A cryptographer on the street has little chance of making a code better than these labs produce. However, a skilled cryptographer can choose the encryption program and settings that will work best with that particular data. By making the right choices, cryptographers can make the codes much harder to break.

Unbreakable Codes?

"No such thing as an unbreakable code, my ass. Here's a code you can't break with a million supercomputers: 'Hey Joe, let's do that plan A we talked about.' Break that punky. Codes get broken because people are too fucking lazy, they want to encrypt a whole fuckin' book, and that's when your supercomputers can tease some meaning out."

-Bill Woodsell, Wino

Despite the inclusion of AI routines and order-finding algorithms, code breaking still works on the principle of guessing: guess a code, and if that doesn't work then try another one. The more computer power a code breaker has to work with, the more guesses can be made per second, and the faster the code will be broken. It's never a matter of whether a code can be broken, but how long will it take. Run a supercomputer with military code breakers against a weak code and it will be broken within a second, run a cheap palmtop using last month's code breaker against the world's best codes and it might take several times the lifetime of the universe to break it. Like encryption, skilled cryptographers can aid code breaking by setting the right settings and using their intuition to help direct the guesses of the code breaker. The best code breakers give the users a full immersion VR interface where they are floating above a huge multi-colored tree, each leaf of which represents a guess. The cryptographer tells the program which areas of the tree to focus most of its energies on.

Artificial Intelligence

In Brief- Can do most things better than a human since the 2040s, but they are costly and seldom used. Stolen assassin program is highly valuable.

When speaking of AI (Artificial Intelligence), it is important to distinguish between full AIs (which are expensive and rare) and AI routines, which are built in to much modern software. Today, AI routines do everything from musical accompaniment for musicians, to running robots in factories, to searching through security camera footage for the faces of criminals. AI routines use intelligent strategies, they learn and adapt, but they are no more intelligent than an ant. Full AIs can direct their own attention and can become aware of or learn nearly anything.

Before the Freedom Wars, each of the major corporations had powerful AIs secretly advising them on every important decision within the corps. The AIs knew everything that was going on in the corporation: every penny of profit, every employee resume, sent. The corps kept these AIs strictly secret (they knew people would riot if they found out AIs were secretly running the corps). The AIs were programmed to make recommendations with no consideration or morality or legality. The boards of directors for these corps always did what these AIs suggested, because they knew that the competing companies also had AIs and that the other corps would do what the AIs said. By 2043, the corps that weren't run by immoral AIs had all been wiped out. When the Freedom Wars came, the Freedom Army found out about these AIs and tried to hunt down and destroy every copy.

AIs are no longer used for decision-making purposes (this is an international law). Full AIs are very expensive. The supercomputers required to run them cost millions, and fill up entire buildings (technicians literally walk around inside the computer). They are used only for research purposes. Meanwhile, AI routines continue to make computers able to do things that humans can do, and continue to make human jobs obsolete. The AI tax at least makes sure that corps pay in to public assistance for each lost job (see p.176).

Expert Assassin- Several AI programs have been written to run the bodies of "golems" (human bodies with blank brains). Some are designed to be servants, others are designed to be sex toys, others are designed to fight and kill. The most advanced and most deadly program is known as the "expert assassin." The expert assassin was recently stolen from a Russian military R&D lab. It uses techniques that are on the cutting edge of science and technology. Copies of the program are very hard to find and sell for \$10,000 or more.

The program has many settings, and can be sent out with several levels of unobtrusiveness. At the highest level it stays to the shadows, pretending to be a mentally ill homeless person, avoiding any kind of contact until it finds its target. At the lowest level, it powers through an area, shooting anyone who gets in the way, blowing up barriers, and grabs and interrogates people to find the location of the victim. The program can be given a location, photo or even bloodhound powder (see p.97) to track the target with. It can memorize maps of an area and can be programmed to avoid minefields and enemy camps. It can be told that people wearing a certain type of uniform are friends while people wearing another type are enemies. The assassin can be set to operate completely independently, or it can be set to radio or phone in to get new instructions and information (all in a code that sounds like normal conversation to a casual observer). The assassin can be programmed with a "stop code," a password that will stop it in its tracks.

The program has excellent communication abilities. Mostly it tries to avoid conversations (it can pretend to be anything from a tourist who doesn't speak the language to a babbling schizophrenic). It can, however ask how to get to a certain place or where to find a particular person. The golem uses psych-mental programming to detect lies and it can understand directions. When the assassin's unobtrusiveness is low it will grab and torture people to get the information it wants.

The assassin can survive for some time in an urban environment. If given money, it can find restaurants or grocery stores and buy food. It can even pay for rooms at hotels (or it can find a dark place to crawl up and rest in). The assassin has a huge database of items it knows how to use. It can buy, steal or pick up items (from dead victims). It can use thousands of different weapons, vehicles and armor. It even knows how to use a few medical supplies.

Despite all these amazing abilities, the expert assassin is not sentient and does not have a unified intelligence. Instead, it is programmed with thousands of different "intelligent routines" that recognize and take over in different situations. For example, if trapped it has an "exit seeking" routine where it methodically searches for any way to get out. Every once in a while, an expert assassin will do something incredibly stupid (like trying to blend in to a crowd even though it is soaked with blood, or not knowing how to grab a person with a missing arm). The expert assassin can not really learn (although it can map environments it's been in and can learn to recognize enemies on sight).

The Myth of the Self Aware Computer

People often assume that, like people, a full AI would be conscious of its own existence and would have a desire for self-preservation that would outrank all other directives. This is plainly false: AIs, no matter how smart or advanced, only care about what they are programmed to care about and only pay attention to that which is important to their pre-programmed motivations.

For example: the AIs that ran corps before the Freedom Wars were aware of their own existence, but only as resources of the corps. The computers would recommend security and tech budgets to protect them, and would even recommend programmers be assigned to creating upgrades, but only because they saw their own existence as a means to protect the profits of the company. They would have recommended their own destruction if they thought it would benefit company stock.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENON

In Brief- A natural system in the brain that uses quantum sympathy to transmit and receive information. People can be trained, via feedback systems, to influence or read minds.

History

In Brief- Scientists discovered the source of psychic phenomena in 2046. Psychics were persecuted during the Freedom Wars.

In the 2040s, scientists had figured out most of the human nervous system, but there was a large piece of communication happening within the body that couldn't be attributed to any known system. Most assumed it was an unidentified chemical neuromodulator that they had not been able to isolate yet. Some studies seemed to show that the information was transmitted instantaneously across the body, and people started looking for electronic or magnetic signals.

In 2046, researchers in India found receptors within neurons that would respond to quantum sympathy (quantum particles separated by space having an instantaneous effect on each other). A whole neuromodulator system was discovered, a way of transmitting information instantly from one part of the body to another. Because this quantum sympathy can happen through a solid object or a complete vacuum, researchers wondered if information could be transmitted from one brain to another. British researchers first documented actual information being transferred from mind to mind. This transformation was very subtle, and never at the level that people were consciously aware of. Scientists wondered if maybe this was a natural system of "intuition."

Scientists decided to see if they could train people to use these systems consciously. Scientists had long ago learned to teach people to control brain wave frequencies, blood pressure, and even some hormone levels through biofeedback (using sensors to give people immediate feedback about their internal states). The test subjects in these early experiments quickly learned to activate these internal communication systems. Within a few months, some of them were able to purposefully effect the minds of other humans. Other test subjects were trained to sense psychic signals and they eventually learned to find people in the dark or read people's minds.

Militaries and corporations quickly sponsored intense training programs to try to crank out powerful psychics. They soon created psychics that could read minds, sense what other people were sensing, mess with people's thoughts, emotions and memories, and even take over people's bodies for brief periods of time. The public was

alarmed to discover that their minds could be so easily manipulated. The government and corps assured the people that psychic skills could not be learned without special equipment and that equipment was rare, expensive and highly-regulated. Even while the governments were telling people that they had a better chance of being struck by lightning than meeting a psychic, they were working on ways to defend themselves against psychics. The US military developed a gel that could be put in the lining of helmets and bodysuits and would protect the wearers from psychic manipulation.

In the last days before the Freedom Wars, fake psychics popped up everywhere trying to con people out of money. Real psychics spent most of their time in labs and seldom had any chance to effect the world. Jeffrey Hernandez, who was building a terrorist army in Mexico, managed to recruit two psychics who he used for screening. These psychics made sure everyone within the organization stayed completely loyal to the organization.

During the Freedom Army occupation of many parts of the planet, the Freedom Army ordered that anyone with psychic skills come in and be registered. Psychics who did come in were tested for loyalty and either drafted or executed. In the city, some rogue psychics who refused to register joined up with the rebel movement and helped win the war.

Current Research

In Brief- Communication can happen between nervous systems, sometimes even across time.

The bulk of psychic research today is trying to verify and discover exactly what psychics can and can't do. Many outlandish claims have been made, but time and time again scientists have found that psychic phenomenon is limited to one nervous system communicating with another nervous system. Psychic transmitters in the brain are implicated in memory, emotion, regulation of consciousness, and even volitional movement. Psychic systems are also used to communicate with the body and skilled psychics have been able to manipulate human physiology, both their own and that of others. There have been verified instances of psychics starting and stopping hearts, changing the amount of blood flow to different parts of the body, increasing or suppressing immune system responses, and even increasing the speed of tissue repairs.

Just before the Freedom Wars, scientists found that psychic communication can happen through the countless subatomic wormholes that dot the fabric and space time. A very strong psychic signal can be sensed before or after the signal was sent. The signal is faint and intermittent, but it is definitely there. Some psychics have been able to gain access to senses that people sensed in the immediate past or near future. What's more, people can act on these signals and change the future. Research in to transtemporal psychic phenomenon has led to the discovery of "ghost events" (see p.203).

What Psychics Can Do

Psychic can...	Psychics can't...
...introduce thoughts in to people's heads.	...start fires.
...mess with people's memories.	...levitate.
...see through another's eyes	...see something nobody is looking at.
...stop peoples' hearts	...make peoples' heads explode.
...find a person in the dark.	...interface with electronics.
...force a person to move his or her arm.	...move inanimate objects.
...constrict blood vessels near an injury.	...cause miraculous healing.
...make people fall asleep.	...suck out people's power.
...make people hallucinate.	...make images appear on any media.
...see a vision from the future.	...switch bodies.

City residents know of a few things that psychic researchers don't. Specifically, the Bleeders and Sexologists have proven time-and-again that they can do things scientists would call "impossible." Bleeders can target people over long distances, manipulate people and even take some of their proficiencies, using a small sample of blood. Sexologists can use intercourse to synchronize psychic signals and basically share nervous systems for a brief period of time. Anyone who has had scientists laugh at the idea of Bleeders and Sexologists knows that there may be other things science has yet to learn.

Laws

In Brief- Psychics need licenses to charge for psychic services. Threatened psychic attacks considered assault. Psychic senses not reliable evidence. Can't scan people without permission.

The state of New York (and most other states) do require psychics to be tested and licensed by a state licensing board before they can charge for psychic services or seek employment as psychics. Psychics who do not charge do not need get a license. Licensing is expensive and is generally only a career move. The licensing board only recognizes a limited number of psychic skills, and people can only charge for skills listed on their psychic card.

Any psychic manipulation against a person's will is a felony (10 to 20 yrs. prison) and the victim can sue for battery. Moreover, the courts have found that threatening someone with psychic attack, even if one is not capable of psychic attack, is the equivalent of lunging at them with a knife. The farthest the courts have gone is *Grisbane vs. New York* (2074) where a defendant was sent to prison for a year for "staring and furrowing up his brow in a manner suggestive of a psychic attack."

Using psychic senses is different: like overhearing a conversation, it is not always the psychic's fault. A New York state law makes it a misdemeanor to "follow, touch or isolate someone with the purpose of using psychic senses on the person." People who have been "scanned" can also sue for invasion of privacy.

Numerous cases have found that psychic senses are not reliable enough to convict a person. Sometimes they can be brought in to evidence, other times they are not even allowed. Psychic senses can provide "reasonable cause," however, to obtain a search warrant.

Suspects in crimes can request a psychic reading (much as they may request a lie detector test) but such a reading can not be forced upon a suspect. An inappropriate psychic invasion by police is not only a crime in itself, it also makes any evidence found based on it inadmissible in court. Despite this, many suspects are "railroaded" by persuasive police detectives in to agreeing to psychic readings.

Similarly, government agencies can not require a psychic scan as a condition of employment and cannot make employees submit to scans. Private entities (corporations and gated communities) are free to require scanning, and they do so often.

Ghost Events

In Brief- The brain of a dying person sometimes sends psychic signals backwards and forwards in time through microscopic wormholes, which may cause a sense of foreboding. Skilled psychics can occasionally communicate with the dying person.

In 2049, a commission of European scientists was doing statistical research on psychic energy readings found from psychic energy sensors placed in random spots around a city. They found bursts of psychic energy both before and after violent deaths. They even found a few instances where there were bursts of energy as if a death was about to happen, and an accident was narrowly avoided. Another study (this time in an ER) discovered accident victims had a powerful psychic energy cascade just before brain death. The commission came up with a radical new theory: the brain is designed, when death is imminent, to go in to a cascade and release a large amount of psychic energy. Some of this psychic energy leaps through subatomic wormholes going in to the past and future and can cause a sense of foreboding. This has the possibility of actually saving a person's life by making them wary of a future danger.

"Ghost events" are very rare, and most are nothing more than a small field of foreboding that pops in and out like random static, appearing more often and longer as the ghost event is approached. It is only psychics and very introverted people who ever notice the sense of

Ancient Psychics

People have been claiming to have psychic powers for centuries, and before that people claimed to have magic powers. The discovery of psychic phenomenon has caused people to ask whether these powers were real. This is a question that divides scientists (and pseudo-scientists).

The believers claim that ancient shamans and magicians had actual psychic powers. They claim that smaller population densities of the pre-industrial era meant less psychic "static" and more opportunities to learn psychic skills (without the need of biofeedback machines). Some go as far as to say that people evolved to have less psychic sensitivity to deal with being in urban environments. The believers also point out that today a skilled psychic can train another psychic by acting as a human biofeedback machine (though it is slower and harder to learn this way).

The skeptics say that there never were any psychics until someone was hooked up to a electrochemical biofeedback machine in 2046. These skeptics point out that 99% of the people who claim to be psychics today are either frauds or lunatics with no real psychic powers. They also point out that many of the psychic powers people claimed to have prior to 2046 involved things like moving inanimate objects (telekinesis) or making images appear on film, things which are clearly impossible according to modern psychic science. These skeptics say that plenty of people claimed to be able to fly via magic powers. The fact that the Wright brothers actually did fly in 1903 did not make these ancient lunatics any less crazy.

A new "moderate" view holds that there may have been a few isolated instances of weak psychic powers in ancient times, but that most "magic" and "psychic" phenomenon was trickery, sleight of hand, hypnotism, drugs and placebo effect.

of foreboding. There are a few poorly documented cases of skilled psychics undergoing a ghost event who were able to communicate psychically to people in the future or past of the event and were able to use psychic skills to manipulate events. Because of the cascade (the psychic receptors are literally working so hard they are burning themselves out) the psychics are much more powerful.

Two things limit the power of psychics acting through a ghost event. First, the brain is undergoing brain death, being flooded with neurotransmitters and the dying psychics are delirious, sometimes even delusional. Second, psychic connections with the near future and past are random, giving the psychics no ability to plan or react. To a dying psychic, the past, present and future are all happening at the same time, popping on and off randomly.

Mediums are psychics who have been trained in contacting the minds of ghosts and communicating with them. A calm medium can calm a ghost down enough to the point that some amount of coherent communication can take place. Some mediums have been employed by police departments to communicate with the "ghosts" of murder victims.

Partial Psychics

It is possible that some of the amazing things people have been seen doing in the city are at least partially psychic (along with other skills). Consider the incredible sensitivity or seductive powers that some Animalists develop, or the Freaks' ability to direct a crowd's attention and shock even the most callous people, or the Purists' ability to sense different kinds of pollution. Clearly they aren't completely psychic. If they were, other psychics would be able to sense them, Drakes with dioxyl ash could mess them up and pro-psychic drugs could make them stronger. It is possible, though, that psychic skill makes up part, but not all, of these abilities.

Why No One Should Be Afraid of Psychics

Limited: Just as human physical abilities are limited, so are human psychic abilities. No human can rip apart steel because the tensile strength of steel is stronger than that of any human tissues. Similarly, there are certain concrete physiological limits to the power of psychics.

Inefficient: Just because you could kill someone with a scarf doesn't mean we should be afraid of everyone with a scarf. The human psychic system is designed to allow elementary subconscious communication between members of the species. It is not designed to be used as a weapon. As a weapon it is quite weak. Like a scarf it depends on the element of surprise to be useful.

Armor: A gel-filled cap that protects from psychics can be purchased for \$250. If one can not afford such a cap, a smearing of ash from dioxyl-pvc plastic will do almost as well.

Rarity: Powerful psychics are rare. Most people who claim to be powerful psychics are lying, just as most people who claim to be expert martial artists are lying. Spending time worrying about psychics is like wearing anti-lighting armor.

Distance: Distance seriously weakens psychic attacks. Most psychics have to touch you in order to do anything serious to you. Running away from a psychic is almost always successful.

Tiring: Psychic activity is also quite taxing on the supply of oxygen and energy in the brain. In order to do anything useful, a psychic has to over-stimulate areas of the brain to levels that they have not been designed for. Many psychics collapse, completely exhausted, after an attempt at controlling another person.

Unprofitable: Finally, most psychics have better things to do than run around attacking people. Psychic training is expensive, it is a significant investment and in most cases some corporation or gated community paid for that investment. The corporation or gated community needs to see this investment paid back by making sure that the psychic uses all his or her free time to benefit the corp or community. In other words, psychics are not sent to do a job that someone with a taser and syringe full of mind altering drugs could do.

Why People Are Afraid of Psychics

Doubt: Having a psychic around means that all the rules people live by are now broken. People can no longer depend upon physical defenses to protect them and they can no longer trust their own thoughts, emotions and sensations. The doubt that a psychic's presence prompts can be as debilitating as anything a psychic actually does.

Teamwork: Many psychics, by themselves, are quite weak. A psychic might be able to distract someone for a split second, or cause a hand to lose tension for a second. By itself, these powers would be nothing scary. If someone happens to be in a knife fight, for instance, a moment's distraction or weakness can mean death. Thus, a psychic teamed up with competent fighters, thieves, interrogators, etc. can make the others considerably more powerful.

Invisible: Psychics can not be easily identified while they are not using their powers. No pat down or x-ray scan can identify that someone has psychic powers. Psychic skills are the ultimate concealed weapon. Even when the powers are in use it takes special sensors (or psychic training) to identify a psychic. A psychic hiding in a crowd can often attack with complete anonymity and no fear of a counterattack.

Paranoia: The main reason people fear psychics is because they fit nicely in to paranoid delusions. A century ago, many paranoid schizophrenics thought that high-tech electronic devices were being used to spy on their thoughts and mess with their minds. Electronics were the fear-of-choice because they could be easily concealed and most people did not know their true capacities and limitations. You can't see a satellite, so it's impossible to prove that one isn't beaming homosexual thoughts in to your head. Today, psychics are the bogeymen of choice for paranoid people for exactly the same reasons.

RIOTS

In Brief- Riots are a city tradition, starting randomly and fueled more by alcohol and looting than by social or political discontent.

"A riot is the voice of the unheard."
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

What starts a riot and what keeps a riot going are often quite different things. Most riots have a mix of people with different reasons for being there. Most riots in the city are an equal mix of political protest, drunken anger and greedy looters.

Riot Junkies

In Brief- Some people hang around waiting for riots so they can loot.

Some people in the city are expert looters, they hang around any place where people are gathering together in hopes that there will be a riot. They listen to police radio bands to hear when riots are starting. Some may even smash the first store window in order to start a riot. They come prepared: gasmasks, armor, crowbars, bags to hold loot, etc. Riots don't happen often enough for anyone to make a living doing this, but some people significantly supplement their income. Almost as important, most riot junkies find riots and looting during riots to be quite a lot of fun.

Beginning

In Brief- Riots can start anytime, alcohol fuels crowds, power outage riots common.

Riots are most likely whenever a crowd develops, especially if there are anti-corporate or anti-government tensions. When there are power or internet outages, riots are more likely. More people are out on the streets with nothing to do but drink and gripe. Also, people know that the police and private security guards are less able to respond to trouble calls and so they feel safer looting.

Most shops close immediately whenever a large crowd begins to gather. Many stores have bars that can be brought down with the flick of a button if it looks like a riot might develop. There are usually one or two stores caught open when a riot starts, and people quickly rampage through the store grabbing anything of value. Word spreads that there is a riot and the crowd swells. Rioters start attacking windows and doors trying to open more stores to looting. One of the primary targets when rioting starts is liquor stores: people steal alcohol, drink it, and become more fearless rioters. The difficulty that authorities have in putting down a riot is directly related to the amount of alcohol the crowd has consumed.

Cops and Private Security

In Brief- Some riots end when cops and security guards show up and start grabbing people.

Quickly after looting starts, private security guards and Night Shift officer show up. Sometimes corps can even pressure the corrupt Day Shift in to showing up at a riot. These forces start trying to grab and arrest looters. Some riots end at this point, the crowd is small enough and the security guards and cops numerous enough that people are afraid of being arrested.

National Guard

In Brief- Bad riots are quickly smashed by well armed National Guard troops.

About 1 in 10 riots grows so quickly that private security guards and the police cannot stop them. Security guards put in a call to their corporate bosses, who put in a call to the governor's office. The governor (or her appointed deputy) signs an immediate order authorizing the National Guard to enter the city. About 30 minutes after the governor makes the call, National Guard helicopters fly in from the National Guard base in Yonkers. There are typically 200 guardmembers in 10 helicopters. They are suited up with high tech armor and shields, gas masks, tear



A Brief History of Major Riots in the City

Slave Uprisings (1712-1714)- There were several attempted slave uprisings during these years with violent reprisals by scared and angry white mobs.

Stamp Act Riot (1765)- British parliament passed an act taxing many paper items, including pamphlets, playing cards, newspapers and legal documents. Colonists protested and rioted against this heavy taxation and the next year the stamp act was repealed.

Doctor's Riot (1788)- A medical student drying a human arm in a window provoked pre-existing anger over rumors of medical students robbing graves. A mob broke in to a hospital, destroying anatomy specimens, searched the homes of doctors.

December Fire Riots (1835) After a particularly bad fire, city residents (including the volunteer fire department) began to loot buildings. Some looters lit more fires to mask their activities. There were mob lynchings of arsonists.

Flour Riots (1837) People suspected that the high price of flour was being caused by shopkeepers who were purposefully holding back flour. A meeting at city hall turned in to a mob that looted shops.

Astor Place Riot (1849)- A rivalry between an English and an American actor causes a riot outside the Astor Place opera house.

Police Riots (1857)- Two city police forces, one controlled by the corrupt city hall leadership and one controlled by the state government went to war with each other over control of the city.

Dead Rabbits Riot (1857)- July fourth, a massive consolidation of street gangs from the five points ghetto, including the Dead Rabbits gang, marched on the bowery where they attacked several Bowery gangs, destroyed property and looted the area. Of the feuding police departments, only one made any attempt to stop the riot and they had little success.

Draft Riot (1863) Angered that the rich could avoid the civil war draft by paying \$300, poor whites (mostly Irish) rampaged. Much of their anger was turned against African Americans who were seen as the reason for the war. African Americans were lynched in the streets. Rioting continued for several days and more than 1000 people were killed. Mobs even attacked a police armory trying to get weapons.

Orange Riots (1871) Members of the Loyal Order of Orange, an Irish Protestant group, won a parade permit and violence with Irish Catholics ensued.

Tompkins Square Park Riot I (1874)- Police beat unemployed protestors in Tompkins Square Park.

Harlem Riots (1935)- Rumors that a young black boy had been beaten to death by police caused rioting in the heavily African American neighborhood of Harlem.

Harlem Riots II (1943)- More rioting in Harlem, this time because of the police shooting of a black man.

Stonewall Inn Riot (1969)- A routine police raid on a gay club in Greenwich Village (the Stonewall Inn) turned violent when the club-goers fought back against the police. Rioting lasted for several days.

Hard Hat Riot (1970)- Construction workers attacked anti-Vietnam War protestors on Wall Street.

Blackout Riot (1977)- A massive power failure across the East Coast left the city in darkness. Looting and rioting ensued.

Tompkins Square Park Riot II (1988)- When the government attempted to evict homeless people from this East Village park, political radicals came to protest. The police responded with violence. Some cops taped over their badge numbers so they could stalk the streets beating up anyone they wanted.

Rodney King Rioting (1992)- After the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers videotaped beating Rodney King, there was sporadic rioting in Manhattan (as well as more intense rioting in other parts of the country). This was one of the first multi-city riots made possible by mass media, a precursor to the rioting of the Freedom Wars.

Tompkins Square Park Riot III (1995)- A riot ensues after police try to evict homeless squatters from an abandoned building near Tompkins Square Park.

AI Riot (2043)- Rumors that a new Artificial Intelligence system would replace hundreds of workers caused protesting. The police refused to break it up, and when corporate security guards tried two were beaten to death and rioters tried to set the building on fire. The police eventually stepped in and stop the riot.

Taxi Riot (2043)- During a taxicab drivers' union strike, several taxicab drivers parked their cars in the middle of major Avenues in the city. The city was paralyzed by gridlock and uncontrolled looting and arson began in several parts of the city.

Unemployment Riot (2045)- An announcement that unemployment payments would be cut drastically caused rioting. The national guard tried to suppress rioting with teargas, but rioting started in other parts of the city, until martial law and a curfew was declared.

Hospital Riot (2049)- During a bad plague outbreak, plague victims in triage in the parking lot at a local hospital heard rumors that all the medicine was being used on rich patients, patients assaulted several doctors

Mason Marks Riots (2050)- The assassination of an anti-corporate third party candidate caused rioting in all over the US. Just as rioting started to settle down, corporate headquarters and government buildings around the world were bombed. TV broadcasts told of massive uprisings worldwide. Rioting and looting in the city was intense, most people were trying to stock up for a possible end of society. The police, then the national guard, then the military all failed to stop rioting. Freedom Army snipers used the rioting as cover to fight guerilla warfare against the government. Government forces eventually pulled out and the looting ended when there was nothing left to steal. In the city, over 5,000 were killed and hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

Food Line Riot (2054)- For several months in 2054 there was a shortage of food and severe rationing in the city. City residents in line for food at a Freedom Army supply house rioted, attacking Freedom Army soldiers and stealing supplies. The riot only ended when Freedom Army soldiers reluctantly obeyed an order to fire in to the crowd.

Orphanage Riot (2065)- Children in the city's orphanage revolted, killing several abusive orphanage employees and driving out the rest. The police were brought in but were rebuffed at the entrance to the complex by gangs of children armed with sharpened railroad spikes. The corrupt police lied and told the media that the orphanage had been brought under control.

VR Riot (2066)- A long outage of internet service in the city made many city residents restless. Corporate security guards (protecting an internet service center) were attacked. The National Guard was quickly brought in.

Arsonist Riot (2064)- The corrupt fire department made only token attempts to fight fires, and a serial arsonist held the entire city in fear. A mob took to the streets, with the stated purpose of hunting down the arsonist, but they ended up drinking and looting buildings until the National Guard were called in.

Colin Riot (2075)- The discovery of Colin (see p.178) led to mass lynchings in the street of people suspected of being Colins. In midtown, random searching of homes by a mob turned in to looting and the National Guard is called in.

Smash And Grab Riot (2077)- A small gang of teen criminals broke in to a closed liquor store and started handing out free liquor to everyone they could. The drunk crowd rioted and, under the cover of the rioting, the gang was able to steal over \$10,000 worth of merchandise from local stores. The success of this riot prompted seven more similarly crafted riots over the next few years.

gas grenades, nightsticks and rifles. This is the only time guns can be legally brought in to the city (and the guns have chips to assure that only guardmembers use them).

The National Guard helicopters land in the streets near the riot. Loudspeakers on the helicopters, which can be heard for blocks, proclaim that everyone is ordered to proceed directly to their homes and that anyone found on the streets will be arrested. At this point, most rioters flee the scene with whatever loot they can carry. The National Guard combs the emptying streets, arresting anyone they can. The helicopters fly above, shining searchlights on the streets and providing intelligence to the troops on the ground. Many homeless people with nowhere to go get arrested for rioting, even if they didn't participate.

Very rarely, the rioters don't flee when the National Guard shows up. The more angry the crowd is, the more likely they are to hold their ground. When this happens, guardmembers surround the rioters. They throw tear gas grenades in to debilitate them. They advance on the crowd with their shield wall. One by one they pull rioters from the crowd, slam them to the ground and restrain them with plastic restraints. Anyone who wields a firearm or manages to get past a guardmember's shield is shot. Those arrested typically spend 90 days in jail and are given a thousand dollar fine.

Riot Survival Kit

\$351 (\$500-\$750 during a riot)

Gasmask \$75 (to protect against national guard teargas)

Phonebook Armor (Glass) \$30 (to protect against being crushed by a mob)

Shield (Hand) \$15 (to protect against security guard nightsticks)

Steel Toed Boots \$70 (to protect feet and aid in stomping)

Crowbar \$45 (to open things during looting)

Bolt Cutters (Folding) \$100 (to open things during looting)

Backpack \$10 (to hold loot)

Flashlight (Small) \$2 (because power outages commonly accompany riots)

Opiates \$4 (because tear gas gets everywhere)

SCIENCE

In Brief- Major advances: nanotech (limited and expensive), mental programming (computer programs in human brains), genetics (used mostly in agriculture), smart chemicals (react to various stimuli).

Nanotech

In Brief- Freedom Army invented nanobots (reproducing molecular robots) and rebels created predator robots to limit them. Today nanobots can be used briefly, if released in large numbers. They require a lot of power, are slow, fall apart when it gets hot. Secondary nanotech is tech made by nanobots in "clean" tanks by nanobots and includes high-tech materials, microelectronics and micro-robotics.

History- People have been building things molecule by molecule with scanning tunneling microscopes for nearly a century, and people have been able to create very tiny, very fragile and very expensive microrobotics. This nanotechnology was only practical for use in a few small industries. For instance, corps would create million dollar micro-robots for use in surgery. In 2054, the Freedom Army pulled together research from various corporations and finally created the first true nanobots. These tiny robots were built molecule-by-molecule and they could go on to build the next generation of nanobots. The nanobots were powered by powerful electromagnets which would "broadcast" power to a nanobot colony. Nanobots could reproduce much faster than they could be built by other means.

The potential power of nanobots was almost unbelievable. Given enough power and materials, they could reproduce in to an army capable of manipulating the structure of anything at the molecular level. They could conceivably turn a tank in to dust or build a cheeseburger out of a pile of garbage.

Predator Nanobots- The development of nanobots by the Freedom Army nearly let the Freedom Army win the war. The Freedom Army had nanobots, but before

they could make the most use out of them they had to figure out how to make them follow complex instructions. Since each nanobot had very little computing power, a complex hierarchy of control nanobots had to be created to disseminate orders. This would prove to be almost as monumental a task as creating the nanobots in the first place. In the meantime, rebels captured nanobots of their own.

The rebels created a set of nanobots that knew how to do only two things: find and destroy other nanobots, and reproduce. The rebels created a huge batch of these predators (enough to cover the whole world with one predator nanobot for every 8 square feet). They launched these nanobots in to the jet stream using a homemade rocket. The next time the Freedom Army tried to power up a batch of nanobots, they found themselves giving power to the predator nanobots as well. The predators nanobots could decimate any nanobots population within minutes. The nanobot threat was ended.

Tanks- Predator nanobots start reproducing and killing as soon as power is provided, and since they can reproduce exponentially, they will quickly overrun any nanobot population. Nobody knows (or wants) a way to get around this limitation, the trick is to get something useful done before the predators can wipe out your nanobots. The way to do that is to start with several billion nanobots.

In the clean-rooms of corporate labs, nanobots are dropped in to tanks and the tanks sealed. Power is applied and (if the tank is predator-free) then the nanobots can reproduce unmolested. When the tank is completely filled with nanobots, the power is removed. In the field, the tank is opened up and a powder containing billions of nanobots is spilled out. When power is applied, these nanobots quickly go to work. Their huge population has given them a head-start and they can act for several minutes before the predator population grows large enough to disrupt their activities.

Mental Programming

These tanks are very expensive, and so are rarely seen. Few things that happen are important enough to justify using a nanobot tank. The world's most elite swat teams use nanobot tanks to melt through doors and disarm explosives. The world's elite criminal justice organizations use tanks to create a database of every microscopic particle in a room. Paleontologists and archeologists wheedle and beg to get nanobot tanks that can burrow in to the ground and find every fossil and piece of DNA. Multi-million dollar aircraft have nanobot tanks which can open up in an emergency and repair (or even rebuild) damaged components. Rich patients can have nanobots injected in their bloodstream to hunt down disease organisms, repair damage, or make backup copies of the brain.

Weaknesses- Besides predator nanobots, nanobots have two major weaknesses:

Power: Nanobots require a huge amount of energy. An average nanobot tank uses more power than a city block. A lot of the cost of a nanobots tank is the powerful battery that transmits power to nanobots. The electromagnetic transmitters can disrupt or fry nearby electronics.

Slow: Since nanobots are so small, they travel very slowly. Nanobot tanks that need to spread nanobots over a wide area (e.g. forensics tanks) blow the nanobots powder around before the power is even applied. Even the fastest nanobots (who form together in to "vehicles") are about the speed of ants.

Fragile: Nanobots are very fragile machines. They are designed to work at room temperature. Extreme cold (anything below freezing) will cause them to lock up and extreme heat (Anything over 100 degrees) will cause them to break apart. Predator nanobots "destroy" nanobots simply by attaching an ionized molecule to them. A spray of weak acid or ionized particles can destroy most nanobots populations.

Secondary Nanotech- The most profitable and common use of nanotechnology today is for manufacturing. In the same corporate clean rooms where tanks are produced, nanobots in sealed vats manufacture products. Devices and materials made by nanobots (called secondary nanotech) are not vulnerable to predator nanobots. Secondary nanotech is very valuable (the cheapest secondary nanotech products cost \$250/lb.) but still a lot cheaper than nanobots tanks. A lot of technology was made cheaper but not much better by nanotech. Computers are a perfect example: modern computers are only a little more powerful than they were in the 2030s, yet they are much cheaper to produce. In the 2030s, 20% of the average person's budget went in to computer equipment, now it's closer to 4%.

Secondary nanotech can create microelectronics and microrobotics with nanoscale sensors, processors and manipulators. Secondary nanotech can be found in the processors of high-power computers, mental stimulators and installers, in the best weapons and medical implants. Tiny "factories" that assemble protein chains can be used to create pharmaceuticals, genetic codes or other complex chemicals.

Secondary nanotech can also create materials with amazing properties. High-tech armor can be made out of materials that are as light as cloth but stronger than steel. Slipboards are small boards with a secondary-nanotech underside that is so smooth it is virtually frictionless. Secondary nanotech filters can be found in the best gas-masks, water purifiers and even biohazard bodysuits.

In Brief: Technology to read information from, insert information in to and make permanent changes to brains without surgery. Injected chemicals are altered with precise radio beams. The simplest tech is Mental Stimulators, which can only make temporary changes and are used for full-immersion virtual reality. Mental Installers are rare, expensive, sensitive, highly regulated, but can make permanent changes. Mental Programs are like computer programs and let people control their own minds. Each person can fill up to 100 MMUs worth of space without problems. Installation is \$20/½ hr./MMU. Human minds can be copied from one body to another with near perfect accuracy.

RCNS- All mental programming is based on RCNS (Radiochemical Neural Stimulation). The basic principle is to introduce a macromolecule in to the brain that, in its normal state, does nothing. When two very precise radio beams meet, any molecules in the convergence change their molecular structure and release another molecule they had "trapped" inside. If a neurotransmitter is released, it can cause a neuron to fire (or prevent it from firing) in a certain spot in the brain.

Early RCNS was used merely to stimulate portions of the brain to see what they do. Researchers have been doing this using metal probes since the 19th century, but RCNS could be used without having to open the skull. In combination with high-definition SQID (superconducting quantum interference device) sensors, RCNS could be used to map connections in the brain.

The next major breakthrough came when researchers used RCNS to release neural growth factor. They found they could force a neural connection to grow at any point in the brain they wanted. A large number of connections, laid down in parallel, could mimic a logical circuit, create a sort of computer program inside a brain. Thanks to tech criminals of the 2040s, who stole this technology and experimented on themselves, mental programming became a powerful new technology.

Mental Stimulators- These are the cheapest, simplest, least dangerous and least regulated form of RCNS technology. Mental Stimulators are mass-produced and most VR addicts have one rented to them as part of the standard monthly fee for their VR service.

Mental stimulators are, by law, built so that they are physically incapable of aiming at any part of the brain except for the motor and perceptual cortexes. Thus a mental stimulator can't make a person's heart stop, or screw with someone's emotions. What mental stimulators can do is block out the sensations of the outside world and put a person in to a full-immersion virtual world where they can see, hear, touch, smell and taste.

The typical mental installer is the size and shape of a footlocker. It is typically lain at the head of a bed or strapped to the back of a chair. There is a hole in the device where the user places his or her head. The user puts on a dermal patch which slowly feeds the RCNS macromolecules in to the bloodstream. The typical mental installer isn't precise enough to do "photorealistic" stimulation (everything is a bit fuzzy). However, very expensive models (bought by VR aficionados) can create photorealistic simulations.

What Mental Programs Can and Can't Do (Yet)

Mental programs can...

- ...enhance memory recall or storage.
- ...wipe memories stored while the program was active.
- ...communicate with implants (and through implants with computers).
- ...take control of the body to perform physical actions.
- ...perform limited psychic actions.
- ...reduce or eliminate unpleasant sensations.
- ...create pleasant or unpleasant associations with a stimulus.
- ...monitor the internal workings of the brain (identify drugs, psychic manipulation, mental illness).
- ...hyperstimulate abilities (like agility or intelligence).
- ...control emotions.
- ...create altered states of consciousness.
- ...control sleep and let people survive on less sleep.

Mental programs can't...

- ...directly transfer memories or knowledge.
- ...wipe out specific pre-existing memories.
- ...let people understand and control computers on an intuitive level.
- ...implant physical skills or abilities.
- ...replicate the skills of a real psychic.
- ...eliminate pain or nausea without creating a safety hazard.
- ...change values, opinions or beliefs.
- ...monitor poorly understood processes such as thinking, remembering, awareness and creativity.
- ...increase wisdom or common sense.
- ...make precise changes to personality.
- ...make people spiritually enlightened.
- ...let people survive on zero sleep.

Mental Installers- Mental Installers are the machines that can create mental programs inside the human brain. They are much larger, much more expensive, much more sensitive than mental installers. They are also highly-regulated (anyone caught possessing one without FDA approval faces 15 years in prison). Mental installers are a very precious black market commodity, and any trader lucky enough to own one keeps it running 24 hours a day (making about \$40/hr. installing illegal mental programs in to people's heads). Because of the risk of theft (or federal authorities being tipped off) black market traders usually blindfold people when taking them to a mental installer.

Mental installers are very sensitive to vibrations. Most black market mental installers are bolted in to the ground in concrete basements (away from subway lines). Patients are strapped in tightly and given a skeletal muscle paralytic so that they don't move at all. Although paralyzed, users cannot be sedated (any psychoactive drug will interfere with the process). A drip IV administers the paralytic and the macromolecules containing neural growth factor.

Mental Programs- There are a number of mental programs that have been approved by the FDA for use on humans. Most are medical, meant to cure a specific form of brain damage or psychiatric problem. A few are useful tools, like internal calculators, programs that make the hands type whatever the person thinks, programs that record senses or broadcast them to a jack implant, programs that enhance memory storage or recall, language translators, etc.

The majority of programs do not have FDA approval and are completely illegal. These are the programs that let people mess with the internal workings of their own minds. They are quite powerful but also very dangerous and many have a possibility of addiction. There are programs available on the black market that will let people control their own emotions, control their feelings of pain, hunger, nausea. Some programs hyperstimulate certain areas of the brain (e.g. the areas responsible for physical agility, or the areas responsible for concentration) to provide a temporary boost to abilities. There are programs that simulate the effects of mental illness or drugs on the brain. There are even mental programs that turn the people who have them in to slaves or puppets, their emotions and/or bodies under the control of someone else.

The newest mental programs, which are strictly illegal and are a hot commodity on the black market, are psych-mental programs. These programs activate the portions of the brain that control the psychic communication system. Although not yet as effective as a skilled psychic, the programs can let people do psychic-like things.

MMUs- Once scientists (and tech criminals) had discovered how to create mental programs in the brain, the next step was to determine where to put them. By looking at brain damage studies, they mapped out several areas in the brain where a mental program could be put without a noticeable loss of abilities. These areas are divided in to 100 Mental Memory Units, and the size of a mental program is measured in how many MMUs it takes up. People can install more than 100 MMUs, but there is an increasingly greater risk of loss of abilities. Human brains vary, and what is usually a safe spot in most people may not be in some individual. About 1 in 100 mental installations has some side effect and about 1 in 5000 leads to a serious disability.

Modern mental installers can write one MMU of information per half hour. The standard black market price for mental installation is \$40/hr. (or \$20/MMU). The instruction files that tell Mental Installers how to install mental programs usually take up 1Zb per 5 MMUs.

Mind Copying- Mental installers can be used to copy the unique portions of each mind (memories, knowledge, personality) from one brain to another. There are serious legal limitations to this procedure: it is only legal to copy the minds of fatally ill individuals in to the minds of clones who have never been conscious. The cost of this is prohibitive to everyone except the very rich. HMOs and government healthcare refuse to pay for it.

Reading a mental pattern takes about 2 days and putting it in to another brain takes about 3 days. Unless information is copied directly from one mental installer to another, the patterns must be stored (takes 5000Zb, typically requiring special nanotech memory storage tanks).

Most copies are made in to clones who were grown in the vat with neural growth in the cortexes inhibited (and thus have no higher-brain functions). It is possible, however, to wipe a normal person's mind and copy another person's mind in to it (see the section on Colin, p.178). Since sedatives interfere with the copying process, people are conscious and experience the bizarre and frightening sensation of being destroyed and rebuilt as a new person one memory, thought and opinion at a time.

New copies are quite clumsy until they get used to being in their new bodies.

Genetic Engineering

In Brief- Can change the biology of humans, animals, plants, microorganisms. Legally: can only use on humans with Rx to fix medical problems, can't release modified organisms in to the environment without special approval.

Capabilities- Scientists know what 97% of the genes in the human genome do and more-or-less how they work. Computer modeling allows genetic programmers to see what the end result of a modification will be before even putting it in a real cell. However, high-level systems (systems built upon other systems) are slightly mysterious and genetic programmers do not know all their secrets. It is very easy to change the structure of cell walls, slightly harder to change the properties of a tissue, harder still to change the shape of an organ or appendage, and very hard (almost beyond the abilities of current researchers) to change instincts and behavioral proclivities. The simpler the organism, the easier it is to program, and a lot of fantastic things have been done with the instincts of insects.

Uses- Genetic engineering is used today for:

Medicine: to repair genetic defects or speed the repair of damage.

Parts: to create organs and tissues that are compatible with a person's immune system (will not be rejected). Replacement organs and limbs are one possible use, as are biological implants such as poisoned claws, extra muscles or nightvision retinas.

Agriculture: to create plants and animals that grow in artificial environments and produce food, building and construction materials, and medicines. Most food from corporate farms comes from genetically engineered plants and animals designed to create food products with maximum efficiency. Most modern products are made out of either plastics or fibers made from genetically engineered sources. Criminals have even used genetic engineering to make drug factories that look like ordinary weeds.

Enhancements: Although it is very difficult to improve on nature (see sidebar), genetic engineering can be used (illegally) to add additional abilities to humans or animals.

Smart Chemicals

In Brief- Very complex chemicals that react and change in pre-programmed ways to environmental stimuli.

Smart chemicals are more expensive than most modern tech, but less expensive than secondary nanotech. Most smart chemicals are made by expensive secondary nanotech machines. Smart chemicals are complex human-made molecules (usually long chains of proteins) that are designed on a computer to react to certain stimuli, and to interact in very complex ways. A molecule can be made that will change shape when it gets warmer than 98 degrees, and that chemical may in turn cause a pigment molecule to change shape so that color changes from clear to black, spelling out the temperature.

Some smart chemicals react to electricity (like the pigments in color change clothing). Others react to catalyst chemicals that can be used to control and fine tune the reaction (like the paint in smart paint). Some react to the presence of other chemicals (like the sensors

in terrorist sticks, or in auto-blood tests, p.92). There are even chemicals that react to psychic energy (like psychic goggles).

Bloodhound powder (p.97) is a powder made up of very complex molecules that attach to certain human olfactory receptors. When the chemicals encounter a set of proteins (corresponding to the unique smell of an individual person) they activate the smell receptor. When the person being tracked comes near, the person using the bloodhound powder smells a strong smell of nutmeg.

Smart chemicals can also be used to create invisible bombs. These bombs could look like anything from cloth to a pencil, and can be manufactured to detonate at a variety of different stimuli. Fortunately, these invisible explosives are very rare and expensive and can be sensed with standard explosives sensors.

Pharmaceuticals

In Brief- No major advances, but more and more useful drugs being discovered.

The pharmaceutical industry is often compared to the tortoise from the old story of the tortoise and the hare. There have been no ground-shaking, world-changing advances from the pharmaceutical industry in this century. However, pharmaceutical branches of corporations have steadily been cranking out new drugs with tremendous medical and street uses.

Many pharmaceuticals have been made stronger and with less side effects. Maxin, the strongest smart drug created to date, is so strong that some people become addicted to it. Pharmaceuticals with completely new effects have been created. The drug with the street name "bright" enhances sensory sensitivity and perception. Sibosin eliminates the need for sleep (it has been made illegal because of dangerous side effects, but it is still popular on the black market). Some of the most important drugs are the pro-psychics (drugs which increase psychic abilities). The most powerful pro-psychic drug (Soma) did not come out of a R&D lab, it is a hallucinogenic mixture of plants and fungi originally used as a religious sacrament in ancient India.

A High Tech World?

Looking around the city, it is hard to see the technological advances of the last century. In the parking lot of a fast food chain might be a paycomputer. On days when there is no wind, the cloud (p.193) forms above the city, looking like a dirty black storm cloud. The drink bottle lying in the gutter is probably made from plastics from genetically engineered crops, but it is indistinguishable from ancient plastics. A few doors might have hooded keypads instead of mechanical locks. A passerby might have high tech armor, but will probably hide it under other clothing (to reduce the temptation of other people to steal it).

For the most part, however, the things people see and interact with are all old technology. Most things in the city are old (many buildings were built 200 years ago), and even new items use old tech because old-tech is cheaper. Most new technology (secondary nanotech, smart chemicals, genetically engineered organisms) have not yet reached the point where they are cheaper to use than ordinary materials.

TRANSPORTATION

In Brief- Cars rare, personal transport common but most walk, small subway, bus depot in Brooklyn.

Cars

In Brief- Cars rare in the city because streets too bad for electric vehicles, gasoline vehicles too expensive to run.

Cars are seldom seen on the streets of the city. The two most popular options for vehicles today are electric (like the cheap little golf-cart-like vehicles that can be seen in gated communities and corporate living centers) and gasoline powered. The roads are too bad for the cheap electric vehicles. They just don't have enough power to make it past the city's many potholes, cracks and craters (see City Infrastructure, p.172). Gasoline powered vehicles are too expensive for most people (gasoline is \$7/gallon). There are also no professional establishments to maintain and repair cars in the city.

The busiest avenues in the city, during their peak hours, see a vehicle every few minutes. These vehicles include:

- 4-wheel-drive electric cars and trucks owned by security companies.
- Large delivery trucks delivering merchandise to city stores or packages to residences.
- Old gasoline powered vehicles maintained by amateur mechanics.
- Gasoline powered motorcycles, ridden by the rich and powerful.
- Old gas-powered taxis and armored limos.

Personal Transport

In Brief- Bicycles, motorized wheeled transport, slipboards (boards with incredibly slick bottoms), hopping trains and walking.

Bikes- Bicycles are common, especially among street people. They use no power and can be repaired with basic tools. Most street people have beat up, rusty bicycles. Bicycles are not much valued for speed, but they can help people get around the city without getting exhausted.

Motorized Transport- Small electric motors have been put on to many personal vehicles, including roller blades, roller skates, skateboards and scooters. These vehicles are ideal for city travel because they can be picked up and carried over potholes and can be taken inside (rather than parked on the street, where they might be stolen). Most Indies have a vehicle like this (though they often choose to walk and not make themselves a target for thieves).

Slipboards- The most expensive form of personal transport is a slipboard. Generally, only Indies can afford slipboards, and those that have them guard them cautiously. Slipboards use secondary nanotech materials (and a thin gel) to make the underside nearly frictionless. A skilled rider can move easily through any terrain. Special mods are available that let slipboards make powered jumps.

Hopping Trains- After over 120 years without above ground trains, corporations successfully lobbied to have a railroad built in the city. The railroad follows Broadway and there is a small railyard at the northern tip of the city. About 5 trains come by per day. Many people (especially homeless people), grab on to the sides of the trains for a free trip across the city. The train cars are locked with alarms and security guards will react if someone tries to get in.

Walking- In the end, most city dwellers end up walking most of the time. Walking is free and can be done even while intoxicated or tired. Most people can walk from one end of the city to the other in about 7 hours.

Subway

In Brief- Makes a circuit around the city, \$1.50 per ride, runs every fifteen minutes. Sleeping and fighting common on trains.

The old subway lines were sealed up and a new subway system was built during the Freedom Army occupation of the city. The new system was built to remove the possibility of soldiers traveling by foot in the subway tunnels. The new subway does not go outside the city and there are few places in the tunnels a person can walk without being smashed by a train.

There are 14 subway stops in the city. A train comes by every 15 minutes (69 times per day). A single \$1.50 fare is paid to get in to the subway station. Floor to ceiling revolving gates make it so that only one person can get in per fare paid (although small people have been known to squeeze in together). Once inside, the rider can ride to any stop he or she wants. The train operates in a large circuit: the car will eventually hit each stop in the city.

About 10,000 train fares are purchased each day in the city. During the peak times (morning, early evening) there are about 250 people on each train, during very slow times (after midnight) there are about 50 people per train.

A subway train has three cars with fifty seats each (a train can hold 150 sitting, plus another 200 standing). Doors allow people to travel between cars. There are emergency exits in case the train is stopped due to a power outage.

There are only two trains in the subway system. When one train is going on the North on the East side of the park, another is going South on the West side, so no part of the subway needs to be large enough for two trains to pass at once. Each train makes a full circuit of all 19 stops in about 30 minutes. The train is stopped with the doors open for about 15 seconds at each stop. It takes about 90 seconds to get from stop to stop.

Some street people pay the fare to enter the subway so they can sleep on the train. At night, about half the seats have street people sleeping in them.

Subway Facts in Brief

- 10,000 fares purchased each day
- \$1.50 per ride
- Train comes by every 15 min. (69 trains per day)
- 14 stops in a large circuit (30 minutes)
- 50 to 250 people per train
- Three cars with 50 seats each
- 15 seconds at each stop
- 90 seconds between stops

Almost everyone in the city, including gang members, rides the subway. The subway is thus the scene of more violent confrontations than any other place in the city. Gang members at war enter the subway expecting to get in a fight. Fights in subways are so commonplace that subway riders are used to moving to a different car when a fight is starting. Some city residents practice fighting in subway cars (see the Subway Fighting skill, p.24).

Trains are run by a computer in the subway maintenance center downtown. Once a night subway cars stop in this center for cleaning and maintenance. Unless they fall asleep on a train, city residents rarely see subway employees.

Subway stations have restrooms, though they are seldom cleaned except by a few Jacks who ask for tips. Subway stations also have small pay lockers. It costs \$1 for 48 hours.

Subway Stops

North to South

Ft. George Ave. & Ft. George Hill
(Inwood/Washington Heights)

Amsterdam Ave. & 170th St.
(Inwood/Washington Heights)

Amsterdam Ave 135th St. (Harlem)

Amsterdam Ave & 110th St.
(Harlem/Upper West Side)

Amsterdam Ave. & 86th St.(Upper
West Side)

Amsterdam Ave. & 57th St. (Upper
West Side/Midtown)

Ave. of the Americas & 23rd St.
(Downtown)

3rd Ave. & East 8th St. (Downtown)

W. Broadway & Canal
(Downtown)

Battery & State (Downtown)

Canal & Hudson (Downtown)

South To North

Canal & Hudson (Downtown)

Battery & State (Downtown)

W. Broadway & Canal (Downtown)

3rd Ave. & East 8th St. (Downtown)

Ave. of the Americas & 23rd St.
(Downtown)

Lexington Ave. & 57th St. (Midtown/
Upper East Side)

Lexington Ave. & 86th St. (Upper
East Side)

Lexington Ave. & 110th St. (Upper
East Side/Harlem)

Lexington Ave. & 135th St. (Harlem)

Amsterdam Ave. & 170th St.
(Inwood/Washington Heights)

Ft. George Ave. & Ft. George Hill
(Inwood/Washington Heights)



UNDERGROUND

History

In Brief- Increasingly complex in 1800s, 1900s, early 2000s. Some damage in 2040s. Freedom Army tried to lock it up.

As the city became more packed and real estate became more valuable, more and more things were moved underground. The first utilities to be moved underground were small pipes (mainly wood) containing water, steam, gas and sewage in the 1800s. In the early 1900s, people started to use tunnels for transportation. Subway and rail tunnels were built. Because many of these tunnels were built below the water table, a whole series of pumps had to be built to continually pump groundwater out of the island. In the late 1900s the underground became even more complex with the addition of electricity and then

fiber optic lines. New buildings were built to tap directly in to the underground network, and some even had private subway stations. Some buildings extended their basements under the street (to maximize usable space) but the city started charging them for this space. Rather than pay, many building owners chose to seal up those parts of the basements.

Some of the tunnels were lost during the rising ocean levels of the 2040s. During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez feared the massive and partially unmapped network of tunnels. He ordered every entrance to the sewers locked up. He closed down the old subway system and built a new, more secure system. By the 2070s, people were trying to break the locks on the entrances to the underground, but they found that someone already had the underground as their turf (see Moles, below).

Moles

In Brief- Mysterious, live underground, avoid contact with others, violently repel trespassers. Are they violent, inbred savages or humble loners?

The underground is inhabited solely by city residents known as Moles. Not much is known about the moles, because they refuse to communicate with those living above them. Most who have tried exploring underground (or spying on the Moles) have been killed. Every once in a while a Mole has been caught scrounging from dumpsters in the city above, but they fight to the death rather than being caught and interrogated. The Moles' knowledge of the city seems about as limited as the city's knowledge of them (though some have suggested this may be a ploy).

The people with the most contact with the Moles are the Water Rats, who sometimes run in to them in the groundwater outflow tunnels that the Rats "surf" in. The Water Rats and Moles have sort of an unspoken agreement, whenever they run in to each other they do not speak to each other and try not to get in each other's way. The head of the Water Rats, Matt Tim, makes it a point to hear every detail of every encounter members of his family have with the Moles.

Military- The tunnels the Moles live in are dotted with deadly booby traps. Moles seem to patrol the tunnels looking for intruders. When they see intruders they rush off and gather a huge army. Mole armies attack without question. The Moles seem unafraid of death and wave after wave of Moles will attack an enemy until the enemy is driven off. The Moles know the tunnels quite well and seem to be able to operate well in darkness. Their favorite trick is to smash the enemy's lights and attack.

Conjecture- Estimates of the Mole population varies incredibly. Some say it could be as little as 100, others claim it's as much as 5000. Some say that they are a cult of Unborn crazies who, during the Freedom Wars, went underground to await the end of the world. They eat rats, have a social system based on violence, are badly inbred and are indescribably miserable. They don't know how to read, some barely know how to talk, and all they know is fear and violence.

Others say that the Moles must be intelligent and disciplined to survive with what little they have. They say the Moles must be master pirates (tapping electricity and running water), scavengers and craftspeople. A few Moles weapons have been captured. They resemble weapons manufactured by Street People and show a high degree of skill and creativity.

People also like to hypothesize about the motivations of the Moles. Some think that they are breeding underground until they have a large enough population to overrun the city. Others think that the Moles simply want to be left alone to live by their own humble means.

Although often regarded as an expert on the Moles, Matt Timm rarely engages in conjecture. He responds to most conjecture with "yeah, that's a good theory."

Geography

In Brief- Small utility pipes near the street, tunnels under that, huge water pipes deep underground, few good maps exist.

Utilities Level- In the first thirty feet underground are the majority of the city's utilities. There are electrical lines and transformers, fiber optic lines, water, steam, natural gas and many unused pipes. When people need access to these pipes, they typically dig up the streets (although there are small underground rooms at major junctions). At this depth there are very few tunnels wide enough for humans to enter.

Subway and Sewage- Below 30 feet, below the level of most basements, are larger tunnels. There are subways and subway stations (most of which are closed off and unused). Groundwater pumps and tunnels carry water out to the sunken city and keep water from infiltrating the subway. Below the subways are sewage lines which carry sewage (at a slight incline) to a treatment plant at the north end of the city. A separate system of utility tunnels (with their own control rooms) provide electricity and water for the subway system.

Deep Pipes- Hundreds of feet below the city, in the ancient bedrock, are the biggest tunnels in the city. The deep pipes carry water, at high pressure, to the city. These pipes are huge (some large enough to drive trucks through). City Tunnel #3, the last and largest water tunnel built for the city, is 70 stories underground. Risers carry pressurized water up to the street above.

Maps- There is no one map that shows all of the underground. There are many unused pipes and tunnels, some of which have been forgotten about completely. In ancient times, people would go dig under the city and install utilities without asking anyone's permission or telling anyone what they'd done. Much information about the underground was lost during the chaos of the Freedom Wars. The major utility companies have maps, but those maps often only show the tunnels and pipes that they are currently using. Maps that combine information about known tunnels are a hot commodity.



Chapter Six - Adventures

As soon as Jem answered the phone and saw Mohammed's face, she knew something terrible had happened. He told her, quietly, about the party he had been at last night, about the attractive young woman he had met, about how she had asked him to come home with her. He told her about the huge Park Avenue townhouse she took him to, about how it was dark inside, about how he remembered seeing something disturbing but couldn't remember what. He told her how he had woken up in the bushes in the hole, with a sewn up incision burning like fire across his belly. Mohammed asked what might have been taken out of him or put in to him. Jem couldn't answer.

After thinking for a minute, Jem spoke. "The way I see it, we could go down to the city hospital and wait four hours to be seen, or we could go over to her place and find out what the fuck is going on. If she's there we'll make her tell us what she did, if not then maybe we can find some evidence. I can meet you on Park and 59th and we can go straight there. I'll call my buddy Tim, the Sexologist - he'll come. And that Freak whose life we saved last week, I bet I could get him to come too. Jack Schmidt will come if we tell her there's housebreaking involved. So, let me make some phone calls and I'll meet you in... thirty minutes."

"Jem, wait, you don't have to..."

"The fuck I do, because I know you'd do the same for me. Don't worry Mo" she grinned a predatory grin, her teflon coated fangs showing, "we'll get this bitch."

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PC PARTIES

Diversity can be of great benefit to a group of Player Characters: the more diversity, the more skills, resources and contacts the group can call on. Everyone in the city recognizes the power and flexibility of a diverse group working together. However, diversity has a serious drawback: different philosophies, goals, ethical standards and loyalties can get in the way of cohesive team action. There have been numerous attempts by powerful people in the city to put together "dream teams" to solve problems, and these dream teams usually self-destruct.

The key to a successful diverse team is friendship. When people actually grow to like and care about each other, to want to help each other, that's when dream teams become powerful. When they have friendship as a motivation they can work together despite differences. Such bonds are not easily achieved, but they are the most valuable thing in the city. They also make the GM's job easier: if PCs are good friends, then the GM only has to make an adventure relevant to one of the PCs and the other PCs will come along out of loyalty. GMs should remind players about the reward of 5 XP per new strong friendship formed. If a group of 5 PC's meet and all become good buddies, this can mean 25 XP earned in a single adventure.

The question remains: how to get PCs who don't know each other, who have different loyalties, interests and social circles, to meet and work together? Here are a few suggestions:

Altruism- One suggestion is for the GM to require all players to have a desire to help people and make the city a better place. This does not mean that PCs cannot be

selfish, rude, violent, cynical, vengeful, ignorant, mentally ill, or whatever other character flaw players enjoy – it only means that given a choice between helping people out or sitting around doing nothing, the PCs will choose helping people out. If all characters conform to this requirement, the GMs job will be much easier. One way to get PCs together is to have them all happen to be in the same place at the same time when the opportunity to help someone comes about.

Shortcut- If first-meeting scenes don't appeal to the players and GM, simply shortcut them. Just say that the PCs know each other, are good buddies and are on the short-list of who to call when something is going down. PCs don't get the 5 XP friendship reward, but can go straight to the adventure.

FOAF- The PCs have a friend, lover or relative in common. Maybe Jim has gone missing, and Jim happens to be the cousin of one PC, the childhood best-friend of another, the ex-boyfriend of another, and guy-who-saved-the-life-of another PC. Another way to do this is to have a shared contact make introductions (e.g. "You're going to go look for that serial killer? My brother is going to do the same thing. He's a great guy, you should hook up with him.")

Chance Debt- Some of the PCs are walking down the street and just happen to run in to a PC who is in serious trouble (e.g. being mauled by a pack of Mauler addicts). If the other PCs help out the victim PC, then the victim PC will owe the PCs a debt and may decide to follow the PCs in to whatever adventure they're going to.

Ordered/Hired- City politics is complicated and constantly changing. For every given situation, there are a hundred possible reasons that a group may want to send or hire someone to help out. Even groups who have no interest in the situation itself may be trying to get on the good side of some other group, or form an alliance, or discharge a debt. Either way, the PCs are each approached by some powerful person and asked, ordered or hired to go help out. There will always be some potential reward for the PC for participating, whether it's a wad of cash or increased respect for gang elders.

Thrown Together- The PCs are suddenly thrown (against their will) in to some situation and they have to work together to escape with their lives. Example: The PCs wake up in a dark abandoned building, a note on the floor reads "you are being hunted."

"My buddy Bren Tate of the Siders said he'd send one of his people to help us catch this serial killer. I want you to meet this Sider, be her escort while she's on our turf, and see if there's anything she can actually do to help us."

"Hey kid, you wanna make some money? I'm putting together some people to go investigate this shooting over on 42nd Street. If you go with them and help them with any hacking they need to do, I'll give you a hundred bucks."

"Some of my best clients are going to go put themselves in the middle of some dangerous shit, and if they die I'll be quite unhappy. If you go follow them around and smash anyone who fucks with them, I'll give you a thirty percent discount on that armor you've had your eye on."

"I hear the Drakes are having trouble with some pounder gang on their turf. Maybe if one of us goes over there and tries to help out, the Drakes will finally stop holding a grudge about the incident at the Chucky's Del Taco last Summer."

"I just got off the phone with the Purists. They said they'll help us round up this crazy plague-carrying motherfucker, but we've got to send someone to help them break in to some bank or something."

"Listen up. We've got confirmation that there's some kind of Colin activity going on in Freak territory. If the Freaks fuck this up, which I'm pretty sure they will, then that means there'll be a Colin incubator not more than three blocks away from us. So, we're going to go over there, find the Freaks investigating this mess and take over the fucking investigation."

"Dude, I totally promised I'd help this hot Insomniac chick look for her little brother, but this hangover is kicking my ass. I don't want her to think I'm a flake, so can you go in my place, tell her I'm sick or something?"

ADVENTURES

Mystery- This is a great starting adventure to get PC's together. Something important has happened, and each major group in the city wants to know the details. The PCs are asked (or hired) to go investigate and figure out what actually happened. As happens in all good mysteries, in the process of figuring out the situation the PCs get involved in the situation. As soon as the PCs figure out what's going on, they're forced to choose where they stand and what they're going to do about it.

Hacking- A well crafted hacking adventure can give all the PCs something to do, not just the hackers. The PCs desperately need to get in to a computer and change or retrieve some piece of data. Unfortunately, this is an ultra-secure machine that isn't on the internet. In order to succeed, the PCs will have to do a lot of homework (PCs with tech skills can search the net, PCs with social skills can try to social engineer info out of people, PCs with thief skills can sneak around stealing bags of garbage hoping for old manuals or printouts). When it comes time to actually hack in to the machine, PCs have to break in to the building or compound where the network is, and while the techie characters are hacking, other characters have to deal with alarm systems, security guards and other problems.

Politics- At its best, city politics is people getting together, discovering common interests, and working together to solve problems. At its worst, city politics is people bad-mouthing, blackmailing, sabotaging and arranging for bad things to happen to each other in order to gain a scrap of power. At its best or at its worst, starting characters are typically used as pawns in the political actions of the more powerful. PCs may think they are doing something good and noble for the betterment of the city, only to

find out that they are just furthering someone's political goals. When PCs get more experienced and powerful, political adventures becomes more about making contacts, arranging alliances and negotiating conflicts.

War- A huge war rages, and the PCs are all allied with one side of the conflict. The PCs have the goal of helping their side win (or end up on top) by any means. If the PCs are in to combat, they can wade in to the middle of a battlefield and take out as many of the enemies as possible. Chances are, a PC group can find something more useful to do: gathering intelligence, assassinating enemy leaders, getting other parties to help in the conflict, etc.

Peace- A huge war rages, and the PCs have the goal of stopping the conflict. PCs might even be on two sides of the conflict, and must work together in secret (lest they be seen as traitors). If the conflict is based on a mistake, miscommunication or lie, the PCs must gain evidence about what really happened and present it to both sides. If the conflict is based on something that really happened, PCs must broker a peace accord between the two groups. One common problem in the city: group 1 comes to group 2 and says "one of your members committed a crime against us, hand him/her over or we'll make war against you." Group 1 can't or won't hand over the person, possibly because they can't find him or her, because they don't know if the person is really guilty, or because they don't know which of their members it was. Group 2 assumes that Group 1 is just trying to protect its own and proceeds to make war. In this case, all the PCs need to do to make peace is to find the suspect and either present proof that the person is innocent (or that there were aggravating circumstances) or hand that person over to Group 2 for punishment.

Theft- The PCs are given the job of breaking in somewhere and stealing something (or kidnapping some person). Like a hacking adventure, a good theft should be half research/preparation and half dealing with whatever comes up during the job. This is an adventure where PCs with thief/espionage skills really shine, but other PCs can also find things to do: PCs with social skills can con information out of people, PCs with tech skills can hack in to security networks, and PCs with combat skills can deal with the random security guard who walks around the corner at the wrong time.

Survival- Put the characters in a very dangerous place or situation and see if they can get out alive. It could be a very unusual situation: trapped in a VR fantasy world, lost underground in the sewers, trapped in an abandoned building. Or, the PCs could be on the normal city streets with some serious disability making normal city dangers much more dangerous. PCs might be disabled by some disease, toxin or drug, might be injured, might find themselves without any armor or weapons.

Personal Growth- Once the PCs have been playing together for a while, their own personal goals should be pretty well defined. The whole point of this adventure is to offer the PC something he or she has been looking for. Make sure the PC's friends are around when the PC finds out about this opportunity (in case the PC is reluctant to ask for help in such a personal matter). Whatever it is the PC wants, make sure there is something for the PC's friends to do to help out.

Personal Problems- This adventure involves the PCs trying to fix something that's gone terribly wrong in the lives of one or more PCs. Remember that nothing is stable or dependable in the city and that events in the city

can conspire to make even the simplest things incredibly hard. A PC might catch a disease and need antibiotics, might have his or her home taken over by a pounder gang, might have had his or her identity stolen, might have been accused of a crime, etc. On top of the immediate problem, a backdrop of gang wars, plagues, riots, power outages and other problems can make putting the PCs' lives back together incredibly difficult.

Hunting- The PCs are looking for some wanted person, people or animal. The easiest option is if the PCs are looking for a person to kill him or her. It is more difficult if the PCs need to take someone alive. In addition to normal investigation, PCs may have to follow the prey in to dangerous areas and deal with traps set by the prey.

Hunted- In this case, one or more people is hunting for the PCs. PCs might be on the run from law enforcement, from some gang, from the drug lords. Or the PC may be on the run from some very powerful individual, e.g. a hunter with a sniper rifle, or a serial killer whose appearance is unknown to the PCs. PCs who are gang members will probably want to seek refuge among fellow gang members, but to do so might require a trip across the city.

Exploration- Never forget how huge the city is. Thousands of blocks, hundreds of thousands of buildings, most are 5 to 15 stories high, some are hundreds of stories high. Exploring the dark places of the city can be dangerous but can also be very rewarding. PCs exploring "abandoned" buildings face the dangers of traps as well as addicts, crazies and animals that live there. PCs exploring non-abandoned buildings must deal with alarms, security guards and residents armed with self-defense weapons.



Common Baddies

Here are some people that it's no stretch of the imagination to see a PC group fighting.

Addicts

Motivations: Desperate for money to buy drugs with, some addicts will do anything they can to rob a person of a saleable possession, including killing a person.

Methods: Groups of addicts will wait in dark places for someone to walk through, then will ambush that person, grab anything the person has, and run off before any help can arrive. Sometimes the bright addicts will even use ploys to get people to wander in to dark, secluded places for an ambush. Addicts run away when their "prey" proves to be dangerous.

Typical Encounter: 4-10 level 0 addicts armed with Pipes, Shivs and Sharpened Sticks. See Typical Addict Merc (p.98).

Methods: Colin benefits from being disorganized: even on being tortured he can't tell the location of any more than one or two other Colins. Typically, Colins spread out from where they were "made," but occasionally (when a Colin has some plan or scheme to make a lot of copies of himself) large groups of Colins will congregate. Colin operates in secret, playing the part of the person whose body he is using for as long as possible. He takes advantage of people's trust by getting them alone and then attacking them by surprise (knocking them unconscious with some drug if he wants to steal their bodies, stabbing them with a knife if he wants to kill and mutilate them). Colin has absolutely no fear of death (considering himself to be an entity beyond a single body).

Typical Encounter: A single Colin posing as a friend of the PCs. Will look for any opportunity to get PCs alone and attack them. If discovered, will try to run away. Colin may also appear as a stranger, even as a child, trying to lure the PCs in to a trap by pretending to need their help.

Crazies

Motivations: Mentally ill homeless people are sometimes driven to attack people at random. The person is most likely suffering from paranoid delusions and believes that he or she must attack the PCs or be killed.

Methods: Crazy doesn't necessarily mean stupid. A Crazy who chooses to attack may plan the attack logically and might possibly even act sane long enough to get close to the PCs. The Crazy's dangerous thought process might "show through" any time he or she speaks to the PCs. Crazies may try to get a PC alone and stab him or her in the back, or may try to set fire to a building the PCs are in. Some even try to get the PCs in trouble, telling anyone who will listen that the PCs robbed, beat or raped them (something the Crazies may actually believe).

Typical Encounter: A single Crazy sneaks up behind the PCs and tries to stab one of the PCs in the back with a shiv, then runs away.

Cultists

Motivations: Cultists have typically submitted their will to a charismatic leader. The leader may believe what he or she is preaching, or could be making things up to gain followers. The primary motivation of a cult leader is the feeling of power of controlling the beliefs and thoughts of others. Secondary benefits may be money (cult followers sell

all their possessions to give to the leader) and sex (cult members submit to sex with the leader). In any case, the main thing a cult wants is to get more members. When cult members are seen on the street they are typically looking for recruits. If not that they are probably out to fight the cult's real or imagined enemies or to retrieve a lost member.

Colins

Motivations: Colin wants to kidnap people, take them back to some place where he has a mental installer, erase their minds and copy his mind in to them. He is interested in any way to increase his rate of reproduction. He also wants to commit horrific crimes in order to frighten people, become famous and get the attention of god.





Methods: When recruiting, cultists seek out people who look like they are in a psychological crisis. The cults trick the people in to coming back to the compound where they can be brainwashed. When cults are on the offense, they typically use terrorist tactics: suicide bombings, driving vehicles loaded with fuel in to buildings, sending children with diseases to infect a group, etc.

Typical Encounter: Most encounters PCs will have with cults are harmless: a cult recruitment team tries to talk a PC in to coming back with them and when the PC says no they leave. PCs are most likely to come in to conflict against cults if PCs are called on to rescue someone from a cult or if a cult is making holy-war against the PC's group. The Lumens are the largest and most powerful cult in the city, and they have proven themselves capable of making war against large gangs. See p.183 for more on the Lumens.

God Killer Rampager

Motivations: The rampager has done too much God Killer and has gone in to a megalomaniacal rage. The rampager believes that he or she is immortal and invincible and can do anything he or she wants, starting by destroying anyone or anything the rampager doesn't like.

Methods: The rampager believes his or her power is limitless, doesn't think he or she needs any defenses or precautions. He or she will stomp down the street, shouting out challenges to anyone and proclaiming his or her intention to tear down every part of the city that displeases him or her. The rampager doesn't think he or she needs a weapon, but may use one if that is what he or she feels most comfortable with. The rampager will attack anything, from a person with a skyscraper, hitting again and again (not defending) until the enemy is destroyed or the rampager gets bored and decides to do something else. The rampager is incapable of believing that he or she failed at anything: if the skyscraper he or she attacked didn't fall down, it's because the rampager didn't want it to. The rampager will also ignore any injury, no matter how severe.

Typical Encounter: If a PC has ever pissed off a God Killer user, and that user knows where the PC is, the PC may be in danger. More likely, PCs may be attacked by a God Killer addict walking down the street who decides that he or she doesn't like the way the PCs look. The God Killer addict will attack any number of PCs no matter how well-armed the PCs are and will fight to the death.

Hunters

Motivations: These are bored rich people who enjoy the sport of hunting other human beings. They are typically cold, anti-social people with little or no self-identity who gain a feeling of superiority through the act of hunting.

Methods: Since simply shooting an unsuspecting person is far too easy, Hunters try to give the prey some clue that they are being hunted. Some fire a warning shot, others leave anonymous messages (sometimes even riddles) for the prey. Although the Hunter may try to make the game interesting by making it harder, the Hunter does not want and will not allow a fair contest: if the prey ever gains the upper hand the Hunter will flee. Once the game begins, the Hunter tries to stay out of sight, tries to follow and find the prey wherever they go, and shoots the prey whenever they can. Hunters usually have sniper rifles and are very well trained in their use. They typically also have high-tech equipment such as nanopadded and nanoweave armor, color change clothing, advanced nightvision goggles and even bloodhound powder.

Typical Encounter: The PCs are walking down the street, see a wallet on the ground, when they pick it up they find a note inside saying "you have one minute to run." The Hunter is watching the PCs from a secret hiding place and follows the PCs wherever they go.

Mauler Packs

Motivations: These are brain damaged drug addicts who act much like wild pack animals. They eat, raw, whatever animal they can catch, including people. They prowl the streets looking for prey and are likely to attack anyone who appears wounded, old, disabled or asleep. Mauler Packs are capable of following blood trails to find wounded prey.

Methods: When they find suitable prey, they surround the person, rushing up and beating on the person with their fists until the person drops. Once the person has dropped they stomp on and punch the person until the person is clearly unconscious. Then they tear the person to bits with their teeth and devour the flesh.

Typical Encounter: Word gets around quickly when there is a Mauler Pack in the area, and if the party has any proficient fighters the fighters will probably be asked (or begged) to hunt down and destroy the pack. A pack is seldom hard to find (street people see them coming and get out of the way, and will be glad to point out which way they went). Mauler addicts are also easy to kill (for characters with good weapons and armor or good combat skills) but the problem is getting them all. Mauler addicts will run

Typical Mauler Addict Pack

Makeup- Ten addicts, about four are the strongest and healthiest and they attack first, the rest move when the prey is wounded.

Appearance- Half-naked (dressed in the shredded remains of clothing), skinny, dirty, diseased, unkempt, wild-eyed, long-fingernails, blood encrusted around mouths and under fingernails. They run along hunched over, growling and hissing at each other.

Attributes- The four strongest addicts have AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 0, END 7, INL 0, SPD 7, STH 7, WIL 0, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 4. The weaker addicts have AGY 6, AWR 8, END 4, SPD 4, STH 3, WIL 3, BLD 1, BDY 1, INCY 3.

Typical Attack- The four healthiest addicts swarm an enemy, getting around on all sides and staying just out of range. When an enemy isn't looking or is occupied, they move in to range 0. If the enemy turns to face them, they jump back, but if the enemy doesn't turn then they use their next action to attack. They typically slash at the face with their long fingernails, doing either a Slash attack at AGY (10) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 5) or a Blinding Strike at AGY (10) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 10). A successful slash does ½ bladed damage and victims must make an opposed save vs. distracting pain.

problem is getting them all. Mauler addicts will run away when attacked, and survivors will wander the streets randomly (feeding on pigeons and strays) until they meet up with other Maulers and form a new pack.

Muggers/Burglars

Motivations: This group of tough young teens are used to being able to use their collective might to get whatever they want. They want money, typically to buy drugs with, and they are quite happy smashing a few heads to get that money. They want to grab whatever they can that has black market value and run off before security guards can show up.

Methods: Sometimes they wait around in dark, mostly empty parts of town for someone traveling alone. They don't have much patience, and may try to follow someone from an area with a lot of people in to an area without. Sometimes they threaten people to try to get their belongings, sometimes they just rush up and hit someone on the back of the head. They will also break in to the apartments of VR addicts, breaking down the door, terrorizing those inside while grabbing as much as they can carry. Burglars often prey on older relatives of a member of their group (since this is a place where they know who is inside and what might be stolen).

Typical Encounter: PCs in groups are seldom targeted, but if a PC wanders off alone, a group of muggers on a street corner may decide that he or she is good prey. A PC will be attacked by between 4 to 7 muggers, mostly armed with clubs and knives.

Pounders

Motivations: In the dangerous, hard world of life as a Street Person, Pounders survive by being tough and loose with their morals. They horn in on every opportunity, making sure they get the best of everything, from camping spots to care packages from shelters. They are bullies, they beat people up to prove they are in charge. They like alcohol, sex and being the toughest people on the block.

Methods: Pounders use sheer numbers to overwhelm victims. They are physically large, travel in large groups and give a good beating to anyone they feel like. They sleep in compounds, usually a vacant lot with a fence around it, which they can easily defend against invaders. Any extra money they make (or steal) is spent on drugs, which they use to lure homeless women in to their compounds. They are not above kidnapping and raping women when they cannot get one to come willingly.

Typical Encounter: Pounders will typically not mess with a competent-looking PCs. However, PCs may be begged by street people to do something about a Pounder gang that is terrorizing them. PCs may be asked to retrieve a woman that has been taken in to a Pounder compound.

Typical Muggers

Makeup- Four level 1 freelancers, the biggest and strongest is typically the leader.

Appearance- Four young men in their late teens, trying to dress like badasses (spikes, leather, tattoos, ostentatious weapons, gang old-school style clothing).

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 8, CHM 4, END 8, INL 5, SPD 10, STH 12 (leader has 14), WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 4

Special Skills- All have Street Fighting: Armed (1).

Special Equipment- The leader has a Skullcrusher, two have Sticks With Nail, one has a Ripper. \$200 in cash.

Typical Attack- They try to attack by surprise, one will make an extended knockout strike against the victim with the Skullcrusher at STH (14) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 1). The others will then step in to finish the job, making strikes with the Stick With Nail and Ripper at STH (12) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 3). If successful the Stick With Nail does 3 blunt, 1 ragged damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed) and the Ripper does 2 ragged damage.

Typical Pounder Gang

Makeup- Seven level 2 street people.

Appearance- Seven large men in their mid-thirties, they are homeless and wear scrounged clothing but it is nicer clothing than most homeless people have (nearly new blue jeans and hats, leather belts and jackets and fingerless gloves, nice boots). They are typically all the same ethnicity. Most have beards and short hair. They reek of beer, cigarettes and stale sweat.

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 7, CHM 5, END 10, INL 6, SPD 5, STH 12, WIL 9, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 3

Special Equipment- Three have Pipes (range 1, 3 blunt), one has a Chain (range 2-3, 3 blunt), one has a Swinging Rock (range 2-3, 3 blunt), one has a Stick With Nail (range 2, 3 blunt 1 ragged damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed). They all have Steel Toed Boots. \$50 in cash and change.

Typical Attack- They typically rush an enemy, encircling him or her, trying to stay in the range where they can hit the enemy (with their long weapons) but the enemy can't hit them, and making easy strikes against the enemy until the enemy falls down. They make strikes with their weapons at STH (12) + AGY (6) (-4 if it is a chain or swinging rock because they have a Hard Strike) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 (-4) vs. 7). As a reaction they jump-out at SPD (5) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 14). When the victim is on the ground they make 2 blunt damage stomp attacks.

Pushers

Motivations: Pushers make quite a lot of money from selling to addicts. They can also earn bounties for killing (or capturing) enemies of the drug lords.

Methods: Pushers like to increase their base of customers by holding people down and forcing them to take drugs. They look for people who are alone and don't look like they belong to a gang. Although it is strictly forbidden by the Drug Lords, sometimes pushers will fight with each other over territory.

Typical Encounter: PCs will typically encounter a pusher gang who is trying to hold down and inject some innocent person. Typically, there will be five young people, the leader will have a pistol and the rest will have clubs and knives.

Serial Killers

Motivations: Depend on violent sexual fantasies to help them deal with life, occasionally driven to make these fantasies real.

Methods: Serial Killers tend to appear as normal, friendly young men. A typical ploy is to gain the trust of a young woman, then when the two are alone he will attack her from behind, knocking her out and dragging her to some pre-arranged spot.

Typical Encounter: Serial Killers avoid messing with people who look like they can defend themselves (which will be a majority of PCs). PCs will most likely become involved in tracking down a serial killer who has been terrorizing a neighborhood. Most serial killers attack people within a few blocks of where they live, and if PCs can come up with a good "profile" of the killer they won't have to ask around long before it rings bells.

Sex Industry Exploiters

Motivations: They make money by exploiting the weak and catering to the darkest desires of city residents and "tourists." The money they make is typically spent on drugs. They also tend to partake in the product that they sell.

Methods: Sex exploiters kidnap people (mostly women and children) or buy them from other people who have kidnapped them. They prefer victims who are physically and psychologically weak and ignorant of the city. Illegal immigrants are a favorite victim because they have few people in this country who will notice they are missing or who they can run to for help. Sex exploiters typically try to brainwash victims in to believing that there is no good trying to escape.

Typical Encounters: Sex exploiters must stay hidden, or face the wrath of city residents (especially the Sexologists). In any adventure involving sex exploiters, the hardest part is finding them.

Typical Pusher Gang: Wimpy

Makeup- Three young (12-16) teenage males.

Appearance- Three teenage males, one sometimes acts like the leader.

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 8, CHM 6, END 10, INL 5, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 5, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 2

Social Status- This is a new pusher gang. Until recently they were just a group of youths hanging out on a street-corner and intimidating passers-by. They have little money and little respect from anyone else in the drug lord organization. They probably won't make it through the year as a pusher gang.

Special Equipment- Two have Pipes, one has a Combat Knife, none have armor. They carry about \$200 worth of cash and \$400 worth of drugs at any given time.

Typical Attack- The two with pipes try to keep the enemy at bay by swinging wildly with their pipes (Strikes at STH (10) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 vs. 6 and Pain/Stun Attacks at INL (4) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 vs. 12). While they are doing this the one with the knife tries to get around in back and make an extended strike at STH (10) + AGY (9) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 1). They dodge as a reaction at AWR (8) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 8).

Typical Pusher Gang: Average

Makeup- Five teenage males, all around 16-18.

Social Status- This group has a well established piece of turf and they sell to addicts in that turf. Up to a thousand dollars pass through their hands on a good day.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 9, CHM 6, END 10, INL 6, SPD 10, STH 12, WIL 7, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 2

Special Equipment- One has a Freedom Army Pistol, two have Pipes and two have Hunting Knives. They carry about \$500 worth of cash and \$600 worth of drugs at any given time. All wear Modern Chainmail (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Special Skills- The two with the pipes have Club (2), the two with the bowie knives have Knife Fighting (2).

Typical Attack- The four with the hand weapons rush at the enemy, hoping to distract them while the one with the pistol picks them off one by one. The clubbers Strike at STH (12) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1 + 1d20 vs. 0) doing 3 blunt damage and Parry at STH (12) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 5 + 1d20 vs. 0). The knifers make Vital Strikes at AGY (10) + INL (6) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 7) doing 5 bladed damage and Dodge at AWR (9) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 2). The shooter Aims as one action and then Strikes with the next action at INL (6) + AGY (10) +4 (aim) +1d20 -1/7 ft. vs. 25 (or 1d20 -1/7ft. vs. 5) doing 5 bladed damage.

Typical Dagger Team

Makeup- 5 level 7 mercenaries, one is the team leader for this mission but they are all equal in rank and experience.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 11, CHM 8, END 13, INL 10, SPD 12, STH 15, WIL 12, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 5

Appearance- They wear matte black plated armor with motorcycle helmets, they carry automatic weapons and driving black motorcycles.

Methods- Daggers do not use stealth. They strike hard and fast, killing anyone who gets in their way and using explosives to destroy any obstacle. They do not talk or investigate or sell drugs, their only job is to kill quickly and mercilessly.

Special Equipment- Each has:

-Armor/Sensory/Communication: Modern Plate Armor (AR 17, PR 10 bladed 10 blunt 8 burn, AGY penalty already figured in), Anti-Psychic Cap (+10 difficulty to psychic skills), Motorcycle Helmet: Sensory, Ear Bud Cellphone.

-Vehicle: Motorcycle (with Bullet Proofing, Intelligent Suspension, Ram Spikes, Noise Dampeners, and Theft Alarm: Aggressive).

-Weapons: Freedom Army Dagger (2 bladed damage, pierces as 6, Easy Vital Strike, Paralysis (80) in 1 round.). Shaped Charge (30 concussion damage). 2 Automatic Pistols (ROF 10, FR 8 ft., MR 750 ft., 5 bladed damage).

Special Skills- Automatic Weapons (3), Assassin: Armed (2), Motorcycle (4), Offensive Driving (3), Demolitions (1).

Typical Attack- When dealing with multiple enemies they make Area Attacks, sweeping a 15 ft. area at INL (10) + 10 (ROF) +12 (skill) + 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 25 + 15(ft.) (or 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 8). Each victim hit takes 5 bladed damage. When dealing with a single enemy they Aim as their first action then Vital Strike at INL (10) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +4 (aim) +1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 35 (or 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 3). As reactions they make simultaneous strikes.

Terrorists

Motivations: Terrorists tend to go after people in charge, and there are few of those in the city. Most terrorists in the city are laying low until they can attack a target outside of the city. They may attack if someone discovers them or if law enforcement comes after them. A few terrorists have turned freelance, using their skills for money. These terrorists are less dangerous (because they won't kill themselves for a cause) but do sometimes strike at city targets.

Methods: A terrorist moves in to town, gets a job (or welfare) and pretends to be a normal member of the community while preparing an attack. A terrorist may spend months or years quietly buying supplies, manufacturing weapons, surveying targets, gathering intelligence, and planning the attack. The most common weapon is a large bomb containing toxic chemicals. The bomb is planted in a place calculated to cause maximum chaos, loss of life and loss of public morale. Truly fanatical terrorists are unafraid to carry the weapon right up to the target and detonate it themselves.

Typical Encounters: Terrorists act like normal people most of the time, so PCs will likely be unaware when they have met a terrorist. PCs might discover the identity of a terrorist if they break in to his or her apartment. Freelance terrorists may be hired to strike any city group that has pissed off someone with money.

Wild Dog Packs

Motivations: Dog packs live like their feral ancestors: they hunt down and kill prey animals.

Methods: Dogs survive mostly on birds, rats and stray cats. They will attack people who are sick, injured, unconscious. The more humans they kill and eat, the more bold they become. When trying to bring down a larger animal (e.g. a human) the dogs use basic pack tactics: they surround the animal on all sides, distracting it with growls and fake attacks, and when one dog sees an opening (an unprotected side) it attacks.

Typical Encounter: Homeless people, who spend the most time on the streets are usually the first to know when a dog pack has taken to prowling an area. Some stray dogs are harmless and are ignored, but if there are attacks (especially attacks on children) then street people will start looking for someone willing to hunt down and kill the pack.

Typical Freelance Terrorist

Level 4 Terrorist

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 13, END 15, INL 15, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 19, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 5

Appearance- Thirty-something male with a weather-worn face, plain style of dress, no visible body modifications. Clothing is cheap and simple, that of a worker.

Social Status- The freelance terrorist advertises on anonymous message boards on the internet, is contacted and hired anonymously. The freelance terrorist has few friends of social contacts.

Special Equipment- Sniper Rifle, Drill Gun, 5 Pipe Bombs, 5 Letter Bombs, Nightvision Goggles: Deluxe. \$100 in cash.

Typical Attack- Double Aim (from Sniper) and Vital Strike with Sniper Rifle at INL (15) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +8 (double aim) -1/50ft. +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 +6 -1/50ft. vs. 0). The rifle does 6 (pierces armor as 9) damage on a normal strike.

Typical Wild Dog Pack

Makeup- Seven dogs, the largest and meanest male is the alpha.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 5(sight)/17(smell)/15(hearing), END 10, SPD 15, STH 6, WIL 3, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3

Appearance- Seven large mutts, with dirty fur, scars and missing patches and blood-stained mouths. They are growling and baring their teeth.

Natural Weapons- They can bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage) and make a Vital Strike bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage).

Typical Attack- They will encircle the enemy, making split action jump-in and wings (at 1d20 vs. 11) doing 1 bladed damage and then jumping-out (at 1d20 vs. 10). When an enemy falls down, one will move in for an extended vital strike (at 1d20 vs. 7) doing 4 bladed damage with -10 to the next reaction.

After Killing the Baddie

The PCs just killed some piece of dangerous vermin scum and now they are busy patting each other on the back. They've just made the world a better place, they're heroes and are about to march on to their just rewards, right? Unfortunately, this is the city, not a children's book, and killing the baddie doesn't always make things alright. Here's some consequences to throw at PCs who are a little to cavalier with the deadly force, or to throw at cautious PCs just to fuck with them. Choose one you like or roll 1d6:

1: Kids- Apart from being a major evil asshole, the villain was also a devoted parent. As soon as the PCs kill the villain, they hear the plaintive weeping from where the now only-child is hidden. PCs should feel some duty to at least get the kid to safety (a relative, the Orphans, social services) which may be hard with the kid screaming, kicking, trying to grab weapons and stab the PCs.

2: Booby Traps- It's hard to resist searching a fallen enemy for some cash, weapons and other goodies that can make the PCs more powerful (or at least pay for the medical treatment they need after the battle). However, even a dead villain may still be dangerous. The most common (by but no means the only) trick is for a person to have a razorblade or needle in his or her pocket with something nasty on it.

3: Witness- Someone oversaw the climactic battle with the baddie, someone who thinks that the baddie was the good one and the PCs must therefore be in the wrong. A simple wrong assumption like this can lead a witness to seriously misinterpret and misremember what they saw. Now the PCs have someone running around telling anyone who will listen (including the Night Shift) that the PCs slaughtered some innocent and unarmed person.

4: Revenge- The villain had some friend, relative or lover who wants revenge for the death of the villain. This person probably doesn't really care if the villain was in the wrong or if the PCs were acting in self defense. Remember that people can have unexpected connections: a homeless, brain-damaged drug addict in rags may be the younger brother of an influential Indie gang member.

5: My Enemy's Enemy- There is no league of supervillains in the city, and sometimes the bad guys are at war with the other bad guys. By killing one villain, the PC may have inadvertently helped out some other villain, maybe even a worse villain. What if the PCs destroy a pounder gang and free the ten people they had locked up in a basement, only to later find out that those ten people were Colins? What if the PCs destroy an evil Pusher gang, only to have an even worse Pusher gang take over the territory? Suddenly the PCs are responsible for fixing what they did.

6: Disease- Did any of the PCs get wounded during a battle? Did any blood happen to splurt from the villain before his or her heart stopped beating? Maybe the villain was carrying some terrible disease that the PCs are now almost sure to catch.

Some Ethical Dilemmas

For some players, an ethical dilemma can make a game more interesting. One way to make ethical dilemmas relevant for PCs is to find a value that a PC has identified with (e.g. honesty, justice, nonviolence, etc.) in his or her character concept. Then try to find a situation in which the PC group will want to betray that value.

Crime- Most people in the city see the law as a joke. For instance: the law says that the unborn cannot legally get a job (thus dooming them to poverty), but it also says that people cannot live on the streets (thus making their being alive illegal). Thus, few people see an ethical problem with breaking laws. Many in the city see corporations as nothing but robber-barons who have manipulated the law so they can exploit people and take their money. These people see nothing wrong with stealing from corporations. But who can be stolen from? If it's okay to steal from corporations, how about rich people? How about middle class business owners? Is it okay for a homeless person who is starving to steal from a welfare family that can barely make ends meet?

Justice- Many people on the streets take it upon themselves to seek revenge for crimes committed against people they know. People's thoughts on revenge typically fall in to three camps: The "revenge is always right" people think that the universe demands revenge and that any truly loyal friend will seek revenge. The "best justice system we have" people see a code of revenge as the most useful justice system people have available to them in the city. The "revenge is not just" people think that judging crimes and punishing people should be left to the criminal justice system. Even when all the PCs believe in revenge, there are questions like "how much revenge is too much?" Example: An adolescent was robbing a gang member, hit him in the back of the head and killed him. Now the gang wants revenge, they intend to find the adolescent and kill him. The adolescent begs the PCs for protection, swears that he didn't mean to kill the person, that he is sorry and will make whatever reparations he can. Should the PCs protect the adolescent?

Ends vs. Means- This one is a classic (sometimes it will be so familiar that players may find it boring). The basic idea is to test what things PCs will do to achieve a good ends. GMs should find that uncomfortable spot where the players say "I'm not sure I would do that" Would the PCs torture a terrorist to save a thousand people? Would the PCs torture an innocent person to save a thousand people? Would PCs kill an innocent child to save a hundred others?

Associating with Evil- PCs are offered an opportunity to defeat some terrible evil, but to do it they must work with and aid some other evil. More than just an "ends justifies the means" dilemma, it also deals with how PCs manage their public image: do they allow themselves to be known as people who associate with evil? Example: PCs capture a Colin, and he tells them that he will give them the cure to a plague that is currently killing thousands, but they must let him go.

Honor- Should PCs honor promises that they made (without being under duress or lied to) even though something bad will happen? Does the value of being known as people who will keep their word outweigh the value of helping people right now? Example: PCs have been paid to deliver a drug that will cure a current plague. They have sworn to protect the drug with their lives and to deliver it to a rich gang leader who has just contacted the plague. On the way they meet a child who also has the disease and is in much worse shape (more likely to die) than the gang leader. Does compassion come first, or should the PCs honor the promise they made?

Free Will- Should the PCs favor someone's freedom of choice, or look after that person's best interests? What if a person is mentally ill, or has been brainwashed by a cult, or is underage, or has some other impairment? Example: A friend just got a new mental program that can turn off the fear centers of the brain. While the fear centers are off, she decides that she hates her life, that she has wanted to kill herself for as long as she can remember, but now that she feels no fear she is ready to do it. Do the PCs grab her and keep her tied up until she turns the program off? What if, after the program is off, she makes a decision to turn it on again so she can go through with the plan?

Guilt vs. Tech- These dilemmas ask: to what degree are people responsible for their actions if they are being influenced in some way? Should people be held accountable if they were brainwashed, under the influence of drugs or other tech? Example: PCs track down the woman who committed a brutal murder, but the woman they find begs for mercy. She shows them proof that she was genetically engineered to have a deadly temper. There is no way to remove the offending genes or put in a rage-blocking mental program without the possibility of seriously damaging her. She promises that, now that she knows about her temper, she will learn to control it. Do the PCs give her a chance to change (and possibly to kill someone else) just because she has some artificial genes in her?

Individuality- Technology today has the ability to change any part of a person, from the DNA to the mind. PCs may have a number of comforting assumptions, like that a person is the same individual he or she was yesterday. When GMs blur the line on individuality, ethical problems become much more difficult. Example: PCs track down a child molester who once tortured and murdered children in the city orphanage. When they find the person he claims that he is not the same person. He claims that an accident with a malfunctioning mental program completely changed portions of his brain, and that he has a different personality and is not the same person. His wife and children attest that he would never hurt anyone. Should the child molester answer for his crimes?

Humanity- Similarly, technology can blur the lines of what is human. Most in the city would have no problem killing a golem (a human body with a simple AI in place of a human mind) to save a regular human. What if the distinction is not so clear? Example: The Keepers are hunting an animal that escaped from Freedom Army labs two decades ago. It is a genetically engineered animal and they hope to make thousands selling it on the black market. The PCs find the animal first and find that it has some human DNA and the intelligence of a gorilla, with just enough language abilities to say "help". Do they fight the Keepers, possibly killing them, to protect the animal?

Some Computer Systems

Bridge and Tunnel Authority Net

This network monitors and controls the automated security checkpoints that control every way in and out of the city.

Access: Not on the internet. Microwave dishes send to a satellite which links the control rooms for each checkpoint and a BTA office in Queens. BTA officers monitor the gates and respond to attempted access violations.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 10% monitoring by level 4 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 25

A Checkpoint Control Computer:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 6

Privileges

User: See live video and scans or recordings from the past week.

Superusers: Lock a checkpoint.

Admin: Open a checkpoint despite drug or firearm alarms.

CABRE Flight Reservation Net

The Completely Automated Business Reservation Environment is used by every major airline to handle reservations.

Access: Accessed from the internet by ticket agents and travel net sites throughout the world.

Network Firewall Strength: 30

Network Security: 80% monitoring by level 1 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

An Access Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 40

Power: 15

Privileges

User: Check any reservation, make or change reservations on one airline.

Superusers: Make or change reservations on any airline.

Admin: Manage accounts.

Child Welfare DB

Tracks children who have had any contact with social services.

Access: Accessed from the internet by social workers in the child welfare offices throughout the state (including the city).

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 5% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

Database Mainframe:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 8

Privileges

User: Read files on any child. Enter reports.

Superusers: Edit files, change a child's assignment.

Admin: Delete files.

Dept. of Health Medical Records Mainframe

Doctors and nurses in state run clinics and hospitals in the city keep patient records in this computer system.

Access: Accessed from the internet.

Network Firewall Strength: 25

Network Security: 30% monitoring by level 3 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

The Mainframe Computer:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 10

Privileges

User: Look up patient records, add notes. Look up prescriptions.

Superusers: Edit or delete patient records. Enter prescriptions.

Admin: Edit or delete prescriptions.

Fed Vital Statistics Repository

Whenever someone is born or dies, a certified record is supposed to be entered in this system. If someone does not exist within this system (and does not have a visa), he or she cannot gain legal employment or public assistance.

Access: Accessed from the internet by hospitals and coroner's offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 35

Network Security: 40% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 15

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 35 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 35

Power: 12

Privileges

User: Enter a birth certificate or death certificate (current date only). Look up a birth or death record.

Superusers: Add supplemental information to a birth or death certificate.

Admin: Erase any record that a person was ever born.

NY City Department of Buildings Net

This network keeps blueprints and building permits for every building on the island. Note that many blueprints were lost during the Freedom Wars, and many abandoned buildings have nothing more than a "condemned" notation in the database.

Access: Accessed from the internet by the employees of the department of buildings, most of whom are corrupt and only come in to work to take bribes.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 10% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 5

Privileges

User: View blueprints and permits. Create permits.

Superusers: Order a building condemned, schedule a visit from an inspector.

Admin: Edit records, including blueprints.

NYR-LAN Administrative Net

New York Regional Local Area Network is the city's largest internet service provider. This network connects field offices in the city (and other urban areas throughout the east coast) for billing and work orders.

Access: Accessed from the internet from NYR-LAN corporate and field offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 7% monitoring by level 1 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 25 (a login every minute)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 7

Privileges

User: Enter, view and edit work orders, put notes on bills, update customer records.

Superusers: Edit bills and billing information.

Admin: Remove bills.

NYR-LAN Routers

Every packet that goes from NYR-LAN customers to the internet (and visa versa) goes through these internet routers, which are located in an NYR-LAN office downtown. Information also passes through these routers from other routers outside the city.

Access: Accessed from the internet from NYR-LAN corporate and field offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 15% monitoring by level 3 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 25

A Router:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe10

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 20

Privileges

User: See packets traveling through the network.

Superusers: Block access to/from a particular address.

Admin: Edit packets traveling through the network.

NYUD Electrical Grid Mainframe

The New York Utilities District gives power to the whole city. The mainframe monitors power consumption and can turn off power to individual blocks. Billing information is stored in a separate network.

Access: Accessed from the internet by NYUD employees working in a small office downtown.

Network Firewall Strength: 30

Network Security: 3% monitoring by level 1 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 30

A Router:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 4d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe10

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 5

Privileges

User: View grid statistics and history.

Superusers: Reroute power through different substations.

Admin: Cut off power to particular blocks.

State Court Net

This network is used by the state's courts to keep track of trials and rulings.

Access: Accessed from the internet by judges, clerks, public and private attorneys, some of whom operate in or nearby the criminal courts building in the Bowery.

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 5% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 10

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 1d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenFree

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 3

Privileges

User: View dockets, rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Superusers: Enter rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Admin: Edit/delete rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Universe ATM Network

This network allows anyone belonging to any of the banks on the network to use any of the ATMs. ATMs connect to the network and send PINs, receive

amount of cash available, and log deductions and deposits.

Access: Each ATM in the network is connected to a private internet connection (not the NYR-LAN).

Network Firewall Strength: 40

Network Security: 90% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 30

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 40 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: Bank mainframes

Operating System: Proprietary

Virus Protection Rating: 40

Power: 2

Privileges

User: View balances, authorize withdrawal of up to \$200 from an account.

Superusers: Withdrawal of up to \$1000.

Admin: Empty an ATM of money, credit an account by any amount.

ViCap

The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program is a network used by police agencies in the US and Canada to track criminals. People on the network can search for a criminal by name, appearance, fingerprints, DNA and even MO. Records for each criminal includes last-known-address, known associates, gang or organized crime affiliations, criminal history (including crimes the person is suspected of having committed) and current warrants.

Access: Law enforcement officers throughout the nation access via the internet from computers in their offices and portable computers connected to cellular networks in squad cars.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 30% monitoring by level 3 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 15

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: Law enforcement records mainframes.

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 35

Power: 6

Privileges

User: Lookup records.

Superusers: Add warrants or notes.

Admin: Edit records, delete warrants.

Giving Depth To An Encounter With A Street Person

The situation: the PCs need a piece of information and the only person who has it is an old wino, not in any street family. The GM's first instinct may be to focus on one motive, the motive of the NPC to get as much money out of the PCs as possible for the few moments he has something valuable to barter with. Reducing the NPC to a single motivation will probably cause the PCs to act just as shallow and selfish. Adding more motivations can make the encounter a little more interesting, a little more surprising and possibly even humbling to the PCs.

One cliché to avoid is the "fall from grace": the street person who was once someone powerful or important. Apart from being over-used, this cliché intimates that a homeless person must have once been rich or powerful to have an interesting story to tell.

Parental Feelings: The average street person will be older than the average PC and the street person may feel an instinct to help out a couple of nice kids if he or she can.

Shyness: Some street people are quite shy, many have severe self esteem problems and find it uncomfortable to talk to people they think are looking down on them. The street person will probably try to cut off the encounter as soon as possible.

Entertainment: Living on the streets can be very boring. A lot of it is repetition: hitting the same canning routes, the same soup lines, the same fast-food place dumpsters every night. Sometimes street people just want to hear an entertaining story or have a lively debate.

Respect: Some street people like to be treated with respect, and will gladly treat anyone who does so in turn. Some street people demand to be treated with respect and will refuse to deal with anyone who doesn't.

Heroism: Some street people want to be part of something grand, to have stories they can tell. They might feel that giving a crucial piece of information is enough to make them part of the story. On the other hand, they might want to take a larger part in the events the PCs are involved in.

Power: Some street people feel quite powerless and having something that someone else wants is a good way to exercise having power over someone else. The street person will probably do the right thing eventually, but will first want to make it absolutely clear that they are the ones in control.

Altruism: Most street people are used to helping each other and if they have something they can do to help someone else, their first instinct will be to do it.

Attraction: Some street people may do whatever he or she can to help in order to impress or get on the good side of a PC he or she finds attractive.

Non-Partisanship: The street person may not want to get involved in some conflict without knowing both sides of the situation. After all, they only have the PCs word as to what's going on and as far as they know the PCs are the bad guys.

Economic Discrimination: Some street people are prejudiced against people wealthier than they are. The wealthier the PC is, the more likely the street person is to have negative stereotypes about the PC. The street person will interpret events to fit in those stereotypes.

Drugs: There are a lot of people who fall somewhere between total addicts and total abstainers. Many street people will use drugs when they can get a hold of them easily, if nothing more than to break the monotony. If the homeless person is on drugs their behavior could be far removed from what it would normally be.

Favor: The street person may want something other than money in return for their info. On the streets, money doesn't last long (it is stolen or misspent), and many street people would rather have a phone address they can call in some future time of need.

Allegiances: Many street people have family who are not street people. Even if that family is estranged (addicts tend to burn bridges) the street person may still feel an allegiance to them. If something that the PCs are going to do will have a major effect on the city, it is likely that there will be some potential effect on someone the street person cares about, and this effect, even if it is only imagined, will effect whether or not the street person will help the PCs.

GLOSSARY OF CITY SLANG

Biscuit: adj., sexually attractive (example: 'that guy's accent is biscuit.').

Black: adj., a prefix used to denote anything which is illegal or below board (e.g. black market).

Borg: n., a suffix used to denote something is unnatural or has been replaced by technology (e.g. Skin-Borgs wear armor all the time).

City, the: n., the island of Manhattan.

Death Borg: n., 1. a bomb implant set to explode when the owner dies, 2. a person who has such an implant.

Downtown: adj, southwards, towards the area known as downtown (street numbers decrease).

Golem: n., a human body with a mental program instead of a human mind.

Gutterpunk: n., 1. a style that incorporates punk, tribal and homeless elements, 2. a person wearing that style.

Hole, the: n., Central Park, a large condemned park in the middle of the city.

Indie: n., a person with some source of income better than public assistance.

Madrugada: n., from Spanish, the time of day after midnight and before dawn.

Mod: n., modification of a human (e.g. genetic mod).

Pounder: n., a gang of homeless people that intimidate, bully and rob other homeless people.

Punky: n., a term used to refer to an inferior or younger person. E.g. "listen punky, you have a lot to learn about the city."

Skin: n., high-tech, skin-tight armor.

Street Family: n., a large extended family of homeless people, often acting much like a gang.

Street Person: n., a respectful term for someone who has no dependable legal habitation (aka homeless).

Unborn: n., a person born in the US, on the streets, without a birth certificate and unable to gain legal employment or public assistance.

Uptown: adj., northwards (street numbers increase).

Well: n., a person on public assistance (or one who lives a similar lifestyle with a similar income level).

Wildern: n., a person who survived childhood on the streets alone.

GLOSSARY OF TECH TERMS

Admin: n., administrator, an account for a person with complete control over a computer.

AI: n./adj., artificial intelligence or a system which uses artificial intelligence.

Amicus: n., an operating system created primarily for VR design.

Application: n., a computer program used by a computer user.

Backdoor: n., a security hole left in a system to ensure re-entry.

Biofeedback: n., a system that gives people immediate feedback about internal bodily states so they can learn to control them.

Code Breaker: n., a program that breaks encryption schemes.

Copy Protection: n., techniques built in to data to prevent piracy.

Data Card: n., a small card that holds data, the most common data medium.

Data Key: n., a small key-shaped device that holds a small amount of data.

Denial of Service: v., an attack designed to slow or crash a server by sending it many false requests.

Desktop: n., a non-portable personal computer.

Encryption Strength: n., how hard a given encryption scheme is to break.

Firewall: n., the sum of systems designed to prevent unauthorized entry in to a network or computer.

GPS: n., Global Positioning System, a system that lets electronic devices know where they are and what direction they are facing.

GuildOS: n., an operating system, popular among hackers and pirates.

Homework: n., research done by hackers prior to trying to hack in to a computer.

Hotcoded: n., data stored in electronic form so it can not be copied.

Information Smuggling: v., hiding data within ordinary things (e.g. a music recording).

Jack: n., a small implant in the hand that lets mental programs interact with machines.

Jellynailing: n., forcing a computer to run a program that would not normally run on that computer.

Legacy: adj., pertaining to old, currently unused technology.

Mainframe10: n., an operating system typically used for running servers and databases.

Media: n., pictures, sound, video and full-sense recordings.

Mental Installer: n., a device that uses RCNS to rewrite neural connections in a human brain.

Mental Program: n., artificially created neural connections in a brain that act like a computer program.

MMUs: n., a unit of measurement of the amount of "free space" in a human brain that mental programs can be put in.

Nanobots: n., self-reproducing robots designed atom-by-atom.

Nanotech: n., any technology based on nanobots or devices created by nanobots.

Net Site: n., A collection of information, data files, games, etc. publicly available on the internet with a graphic or VR interface.

OpenCert: n., one of several commercial operating systems that follow set standards.

OpenFree: n., a free operating system designed for normal people to use.

OpenMicro: n., an operating system designed for use on small portable computers.

Operating System: n., a program that lets a user interact with other programs.

Palmtop: n., a portable computer designed to be held with one hand and manipulated with the other.

Pirated: adj., data that was illegally copied and disseminated.

Power: n., a measurement of the memory and processor speed of a computer.

Predator Nanobots: n., nanobots spread throughout the globe that hunt down and destroy other nanobots.

Public Key: adj., utilizing encryption technology that lets anyone send an encrypted message to anyone else by using their publicly available encryption key.

RCNS: n., Radiochemical Neural Stimulation, stimulation of neurons by means of smart-chemicals and radio-beams.

Secondary Nanotech: n., any technology that utilizes high tech materials built in a lab by nanobots.

Server: n., a computer devoted to serving out data to other computers.

Smart Chemicals: n., complex human-made chemicals that react in a complex way to different stimuli.

Sniffing: v., spying on traffic traveling through a network node.

Social Engineering: v., conning people in to giving up information that will help hackers.

Suite: n., a selection of related programs together in a package.

Trojan: n., a program that looks like something benign but performs actions on behalf of the hacker.

Trust: n., a relationship between computers where access on one computer gives access on the other.

Virus: n., a self-reproducing malicious program that "hides" inside other data.

VR: n., Virtual Reality.

Workstation: n., an office computer used by an individual (as opposed to a server).

ZB: n., a measurement of data size.

RANDOM BUILDING TABLE

Commercial/ Major Ave.	Financial	Industrial	Residential: Well	Residential: Indie	Run Down/ Skid Row	Building
01-02	01-01	01-01	01-03	01-05	01-03	Apartment: Abandoned Brownstone (4)
03-04	02-02	02-03	04-06	06-11	04-06	Apartment: Abandoned Elevator (4)
05-06	03-04	04-04	07-09	12-17	07-07	Apartment: Abandoned Highrise (4)
07-07	05-05	05-05	10-12	18-19	08-09	Apartment: Abandoned Projects (4)
08-09	06-06	06-07	13-15	20-22	10-12	Apartment: Abandoned Walkup (4)
10-11	07-07	08-08	16-23	23-28	12-15	Apartment: Brownstone
12-34	08-08	09-09	24-31	29-33	16-22	Apartment: Commercial Frontage (1)
35-36	09-10	10-10	32-34	34-40	23-23	Apartment: Doorman
37-38	11-11	11-11	35-39	41-45	24-24	Apartment: Elevator
39-40	12-13	12-12	40-42	46-51	25-25	Apartment: Highrise
41-41	14-15	13-13	43-50	52-53	26-26	Apartment: Projects
42-43	15-16	14-14	51-58	54-56	27-28	Apartment: Walkup
44-45	17-21	15-16	59-59	57-57	29-29	Bank: Abandoned (4)
46-48	22-22	17-17	60-60	58-58	30-34	Church
49-54	23-24	18-18	61-61	59-59	35-35	Department Store (1)
55-60	25-27	19-19	62-63	60-60	36-37	Department Store: Abandoned (4)
61-63	28-29	20-20	64-64	61-61	38-38	Hotel: Abandoned Luxury (4)
64-66	30-31	21-21	65-65	62-62	39-39	Hotel: Luxury
67-67	32-33	22-23	66-70	63-63	40-54	Hotel: Skid Row
68-68	34-35	24-37	71-71	64-64	55-56	Industrial Complex
69-69	36-37	38-50	72-72	65-65	57-58	Industrial Complex: Abandoned (3)
70-71	38-39	51-56	73-75	66-69	59-63	Loft Building (5)
72-72	40-41	57-57	76-76	70-71	64-64	Mansion
73-73	42-43	58-58	77-77	72-73	65-65	Mansion: Abandoned (4)
74-76	44-58	59-60	78-78	74-74	66-66	Office Building (2)
77-79	59-75	61-63	79-80	75-75	67-68	Office Building: Abandoned (4)
80-82	76-80	64-65	81-82	76-77	69-70	Parking Structure: Abandoned (3)
83-84	81-82	66-67	83-84	78-78	71-78	Rubble (3)
85-86	83-84	68-68	84-89	79-84	79-79	School Building
87-87	85-85	69-69	90-90	85-85	80-80	Skyscraper
88-88	86-86	70-70	91-91	86-86	81-81	Skyscraper: Abandoned (4)
89-90	87-88	71-75	92-92	87-87	82-84	Storage Units
91-95	89-90	76-76	93-93	88-88	85-89	Theatre: Abandoned (3)
96-96	91-92	77-77	94-95	89-93	90-90	Townhouse
97-97	93-94	78-78	96-97	94-97	91-93	Townhouse: Abandoned
98-98	95-96	79-80	98-98	98-98	94-96	Vacant Lot (3)
99-99	97-98	81-89	99-99	99-99	97-97	Warehouse (5)
00-00	99-00	90-00	00-00	00-00	98-00	Warehouse: Abandoned (3)

(1) Random Commercial Use

01-01 Antiques
02-02 Appliance Repair
03-04 Appliance Sales
05-06 Art Gallery
07-07 Auto Parts
08-09 Bail Bonds
10-13 Bar
14-15 Barber/Salon
16-16 Carpet
17-17 Childcare
18-19 Beauty Supply
20-21 Clothing
22-22 Clothing (Trendy)
23-24 Coffee Shop
25-26 Discount/Outlet Store
27-27 Dojo
28-29 Drug Store
30-30 Dry Cleaning
31-31 Employment Agency
32-33 Furniture
34-40 Grocery
41-42 Grocery (Imported)
43-43 Health Club
44-44 Health Food

45-45 Home and Garden
46-46 Kennel/Pet Grooming
47-48 Laundromat
49-53 Liquor
54-54 Locksmith
55-56 Massage Parlor
57-58 Minimart
59-59 Office Space Hourly Rental
60-61 Pawn Shop
62-63 Personal Electronics
64-65 Personal Security
66-67 Personal Transport
68-69 Pet Store
69-72 Porn Shop
73-73 Psychic Services/Training
74-82 Restaurant (Fast Food)
83-84 Restaurant (With Bar)
85-86 Salon
87-88 Shipping/PO Box
89-90 Storage Lockers
91-94 Tattoo/Piercing/Body Mod
95-97 Thrift Store
98-98 Wedding Chapel
99-00 VR Rental

(2) Random Office Space Use

01-04 Abortion Clinic
05-07 Accountant
08-11 Bankruptcy Clinic
12-15 Crypt
16-19 Dentist
20-22 Detective Agency
23-28 Doctor's Clinic
29-34 Escort Agency
35-37 Funeral Home
38-43 Government Agency
44-47 Grade School
48-51 Home Repair/Remodeling
52-55 Land Management Company
56-59 Law Office
60-63 Pest Control
64-67 Plumbers
68-77 Porn Studio
78-85 Private Security Office
85-88 Real Estate Company
88-91 Therapist
92-97 Utility Service Office
98-00 Veterinarian

(3) Random Abandoned Space: Open

01-08 Garden- Reroll if this is a place that gets no light. Homeless people have broken up the ground and grow plants, some are food plants but the majority are medicinal and recreational herbs.

09-19 Graffiti Mural- The walls in or around this space are covered with huge graffiti masterpieces, each having taken hundreds of cans of spraypaint.

20-26 Homeless Graveyard- Homeless people have broken the ground with hammers, buried their friends and relatives, and put makeshift crosses and memorials over them. Homeless people, typically older ones, stop by every day or so to keep the site clean.

27-39 Homeless Lounge- This is a public place for homeless people to hang out and relax (while still keeping an eye on their environment). It is not owned by anyone and anyone can hang out here, though there are some regulars. The people who hang out here have set up old lawn chairs and couches to sit on, old trash cans to provide lighting and heat, old refrigerators (not running) may even be used to keep food and drinks cold.

40-44 Immigrant Compound- A mostly insular immigrant community has set up barbed wire fencing around this place and live in small shacks manufactured from whatever materials they could find. The center of the compound is a communal area where people living there hang out and spend time together. The immigrants do not let people in to their compound without special permission and if anyone tries to invade the compound they will rush the person with long pointed sticks.

45-50 Pounder Compound- Pounders live here, sleeping in derelict cars and hanging out on old couches and chairs. The compound is surrounded by a barbed wire fence. See p.180 for more on pounders.

51-60 Shantytown- Homeless people live here in small shacks they have built. The shanty town has a sort of community that kicks out people who cause a lot of trouble. The compound is open and anyone can come in.

61-68 Trash Pile: Fresh- Street People (and a few landlords who don't want to pay for garbage removal) have been dumping their trash here. The garbage is fresh, it reeks and the pile is infested with rats.

69-74 Trash Pile: Old- People used to dump trash here, but have stopped. The place is filled with waist-high piles of trash. Organic materials have all been consumed by rats, insects and microorganisms. Anything of value has been removed by scroungers.

75-00 Unused- Nobody has a set use for this place. People might sleep or hang out here occasionally, and there is some graffiti, old beer bottles and cigarette butts lying around.

(4) Random Abandoned Space: Closed

01-05 Addict Trap- Addicts live here and have built traps to catch unwary explorers so they can be robbed. Typical traps include holes in the floors that people can fall through and holes in the ceiling that rocks can be thrown through. The traps are, by necessity, poorly lit.

06-06 Brothel- Looks normal from the outside, but behind reinforced doors and boarded-up windows the place is clean and cozy. There are comfy couches and beds. Pirated electricity (or a small generator) feeds electric lights. 1 in 10 chance the sex workers here are being held against their will.

07-11 Burned Out- The building has suffered from a fire. It smells acrid and bitter. Inside, everything is black and brittle and rains blackened pieces down on the slightest touch. People walking here get black smudges on their shoes that leave tracks.

12-14 Cult- A small cult has taken over this abandoned space. They live and worship here, typically only leaving to recruit new members.

15-17 Drug Manufacturing- A Drug Lord manufacturing team has taken over this space and have set-up complicated contraptions on small folding tables connected by rubber tubing. Buckets full of toxic waste are strewn about and greasy stains cover the walls and ceiling. 1 in 6 chance that the place is almost too toxic to work in and the manufacturers are thinking of moving.

18-22 Drug Sales- A pusher gang has taken over this space and local addicts know to come here to buy drugs. Addicts also do their drugs here and almost every available space has a homeless addict, high on drugs, curled up in a semi-sleeping state.

23-25 Flooded- The interior of this place has several feet of water. It is dark murky, has pieces of trash and human or animal waste floating in it. Basement areas, if there are any, are completely underwater.

26-30 Gang Hangout/Lookout- Gang members have taken over this place and use it as a hangout. From windows on the upper floors they look out over their gang turf. The walls are covered with gang graffiti and messages cut in with knives. Old folding chairs, old drink and food containers and cigarette butts show the human presence.

31-35 Graffiti Mural- Every bit of the interior is covered with one or more writers' artistic masterpiece.

26-28 Mauler Addict Den- Animal-like Mauler addicts sleep here in a huddle among scraps of old paper and cloth that they pull over themselves for warmth. They relieve themselves in the corners of the building and the place reeks terribly. During the day the pack goes out and prowls, only the wounded and sick stay behind.

29-33 Squatters: Addicts- A group of addicts spend their evenings here. Typically they have blockaded almost all the entrances and people must enter by crawling through a small hole. The addicts have done almost nothing to make the place habitable: it is cold, dirty, dark and filled with trash and used drug paraphernalia. If they are lucky, the addicts have old bug-infested mattresses to sleep on.

34-38 Squatters: Crazy- A mentally ill homeless person lives here. He or she is probably paranoid and has spent a lot of time securing the area with barricades, traps and hidden sleeping places. There may be bizarre altars or graffiti versions of the crazy's unintelligible ramblings.

39-43 Squatters: Street Family- A member of a large and successful street family has taken over and lives in this place. Outside it look normal, but inside it is more luxurious than many well apartments. The space has well-conceived furniture, heating and lighting systems and decorations. The place either has pirated running water or plastic buckets (some have clean water in them; others are air-tight and are used for waste). A makeshift fireplace provides heat and warmth. Members of the homeless family can be found here 24 hours a day and will defend the house against robbers. During the evenings people play old-fashioned acoustic instruments to create a pleasant background noise.

44-48 Squatters: Street People- Street people who aren't in a family live here. Typically, these places are nicer than where addicts live but not as nice as where street families live. Some homeless people keep their places clean, others let them fill up with trash until they are forced to move out.

49-53 Trash Pile: Fresh- Street People (and a few landlords who don't want to pay for garbage removal) have been dumping their trash here. The garbage is fresh, it reeks and the pile is infested with rats.

54-58 Trash Pile: Old- People used to dump trash here, but have stopped. The place is filled with waist-high (or higher) piles of trash. Organic materials have all been consumed by rats, insects and microorganisms. Anything of value has been removed by scroungers.

69-97 Unused- Nobody has a set use for this place. People might sleep or hang out here occasionally, and there is some graffiti, old beer bottles and cigarette butts lying around.

98-00 Wild Dog Den- A pack of dogs sleep here and the place is littered with old feces.

(5) Random Warehouse/Loft Use

01-45 Abandoned- Roll on the Random Abandoned Space: Open table (3).

46-53 Apartments- The space has been converted in to trendy loft apartments, popular with artists, technophiles and others who enjoy having a large space.

54-57 Art Studio/Gallery- Artists rent this space where they create artwork at night and show and sell it during the day.

58-59 Boarder Hangout- Pipes for skaters were built here at some point before the Freedom Wars. Nowadays, Boarders have broken in and practice their stunts here.

60-63 Crypt- A city mortuary service uses this space for storing bodies in. Most of the bodies are stored in airtight plastic crypts with brass-covered engraved plates showing the name of the deceased. There is no heat or air conditioning and few lights.

64-70 Document Storage- Boxes of documents printed on old paper are stored here. The boxes are typically kept by people who don't care enough about the documents to scan them in and store them digitally, but have some legal obligation to keep the documents around. Rats have chewed holes in most of the boxes. Explorers have opened the boxes and tossed papers around looking for anything interesting.

71-85 Garage- Old vehicles are stored here by people who own them but don't really care about them. These are gasoline powered vehicles that haven't been started in decades and most wouldn't be able to run.

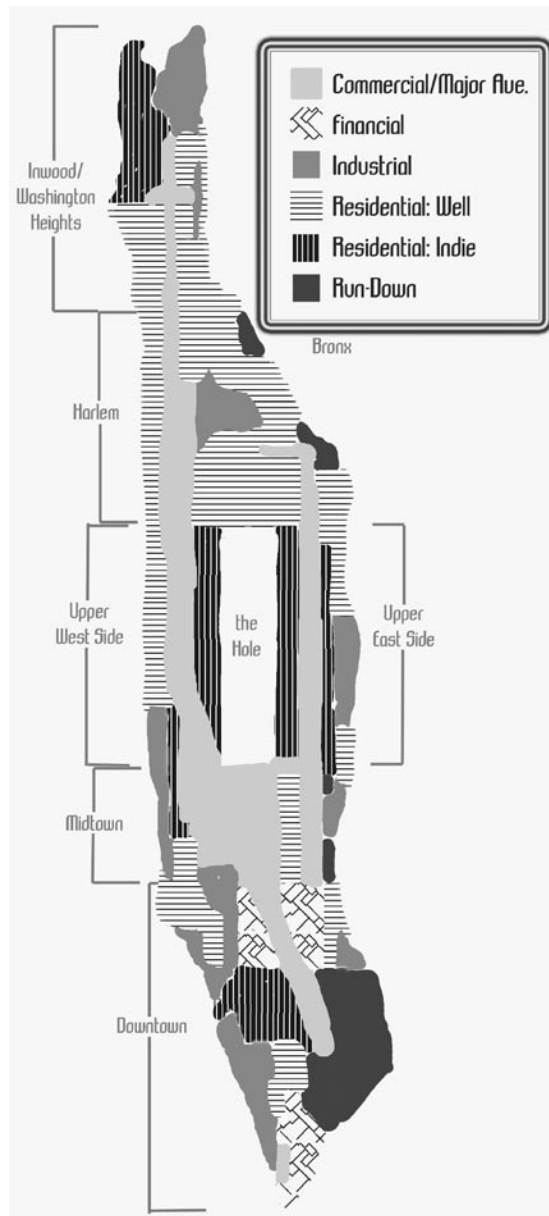
76-82 Industrial Storage- Products from a nearby industrial complex are stored here. It might be boxes of machine parts, barrels of chemicals or old train cars full of unwanted manufactured products. People have broken in but have found nothing worth carrying out.

83-87 Light Manufacturing- A corporation has taken over and has set up large industrial machines here. They are run and maintained by Workers and they churn out industrial products 24 hours a day. The machines are noisy and spew pollution in to the sky.

88-93 Miscellaneous Storage- Someone has sold storage space to private individuals. Stored here are things that people don't really care about but are afraid to throw away. Small cubicles or old metal shelves are packed high with a motley assortment of boxes filled with all kinds of crap. There is some minimal security.

94-98 Nightclub- Every night the owners have live music or a DJ spinning tunes and a bar sells alcohol.

00-00 Underground Fight Ring- A black market trader has taken over this abandoned space and runs fights here in the evenings. People pay a small cover to get in and bet on fighters doing battle (sometimes to the death) in a makeshift ring or cage.



RANDOM WEATHER TABLE

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	
01-04	01-03	01-04	01-12	Frost (cold and dry)
05-09	04-05	05-09	13-21	Hailstorm (cold, pelting hail)
10-13	06-24	10-13	22-22	Heatwave (very hot)
14-24	25-36	14-24	23-26	Mild Weather (not too hot or cold, nice breeze)
25-32	37-48	25-32	27-30	No Breeze (pollution builds up in city)
33-41	49-54	33-41	31-34	Rain: Heavy (constant soaking downpour)
42-51	55-64	42-51	35-39	Rain: Light
52-61	65-71	52-61	40-44	Rain: Very Heavy (streets flood)
62-64	72-72	62-64	45-53	Snow: Heavy (foot deep snow on the ground)
65-68	73-73	65-68	54-63	Snow: Light
69-70	74-74	69-70	64-73	Snow: Very Heavy (nearly impossible to travel)
71-73	75-77	71-73	74-79	Thick Fog (visibility less than 20 ft.)
74-80	78-86	74-80	80-86	Thunderstorm (lightning strikes tops of skyscrapers)
81-89	87-93	81-89	87-93	Tornados (windows break)
90-00	94-00	90-00	94-00	Windstorm (strong wind sends trash flying)

RANDOM STREET ENCOUNTERS

- 001-067 Addict: Hustling-** An addict looking to say or do anything to get money for drugs.
- 068-100 Addicts: Muggers-** A small team of addicts looking to beat up and rob someone.
- 101-113 Animalistic Mauler Addicts-** A pack of brain damaged Mauler users looking for the weak and wounded to eat.
- 114-126 Animalists-** 1d6 members of the Animalists gang.
- 127-132 Arcadians-** 1d4 members of the Arcadians gang.
- 133-145 Black Meds-** 1d6 members of the Black Med family.
- 146-157 Bleeders-** 1d4 members of the Bleeder gang.
- 158-167 Boarders-** 1d6 Boarders doing tricks or racing through the city.
- 168-195 Children-** 1d4 kids hanging out or walking down the street.
- 196-223 Children: Kid Gang-** 3d4 kids in a kid gang.
- 224-228 Colin-** A normal looking person prowling the streets for victims.
- 229-238 Cornerpunks-** 4-8 people who hang out on the street corner.
- 239-249 Crackers-** 1d4 Crackers, most likely hacking in to a paycomputer or peddling pirated data.
- 250-305 Crazy-** 1 in 20 chance will have something against the PCs. 1 in 20 chance bizarre body mods.
- 306-333 Cultists-** 1d4 cult members out recruiting.
- 334-342 Cultists: Lumens-** 1d6 members of the Lumen cult, out recruiting.
- 343-346 Dead Body-** A recently murdered person with no valuables.
- 347-351 Dragons-** 1d4 members of the Dragons gang. 1 in 20 chance of running in to the Wild Hunt.
- 352-361 Drakes-** 1d4 Drakes, most likely peddling poisons.
- 362-371 Drug Lord Employees-** 1d4 employees, most likely on their way somewhere, heavily armed.
- 372-393 Eccentric-** An elderly eccentric, 1 in 6 chance will want to engage PCs in conversation.
- 394-399 Fire-** A building is on fire. People are running in and out trying to grab valuables.
- 400-404 Freaks-** 1d6 Freaks. 1 in 6 chance they will try to do their act for money.
- 405-423 Freelancers-** 1d4 Freelancers (not currently acting as Security Guards).
- 424-427 Gambler-** A small side-alley card or craps game being led by a Gambler.
- 428-437 Gang Fight-** 4-6 members of one gang doing battle with 4-6 members of another gang.
- 438-438 God Killer Rampager-** Angry, screaming, belligerent, megalomaniacal God Killer OD.
- 439-445 Good-** A Good Drug Dealer, will most likely try to sell the PCs drugs.
- 446-458 Humankalorie-** 1d6 members of the Humankalorie gang.
- 459-478 Hummingbirds-** 1d8 Hummingbirds. 1 in 6 chance they have a boom-box and are dancing.
- 479-479 Hungry-** 1 member of the Hungry.
- 480-480 Hunter-** A hunter out on the prowl. 1 in 10 chance he or she will target the PCs.
- 481-484 Immortals-** 1d6 members of the Immortal gang.
- 485-492 Insomniacs-** 1d4 Insomniacs, most likely looking for someone willing to hire them.
- 493-522 Jack-** Will do or say anything for some spare change, will follow PCs around and bug them.
- 523-526 Keepers-** 1d4 members of the Keeper family.
- 527-539 Math Addicts-** 1d6 members of the Math Addicts gang.
- 540-542 Mem Junkies-** 1d4 members of the Mem Junkies gang.
- 543-573 Mugger Gang-** A group of 4-6 young God Killer addicts looking to beat up and rob someone.
- 574-576 Needle Punks-** 1d4 members of the Needle Punks gang.
- 577-578 Neo-** A person visiting from a neocultural commune.
- 579-598 Night Shift-** 1d4 Night Shift officers on patrol, looking for criminals.
- 599-599 Night Walker-** Currently broadcasting a live net show of his or her experiences.
- 600-603 Omniscients-** 1d4 members of the Omniscients gang.
- 604-618 Orphans-** 1d4 members of the Orphans gang, 1 in 20 chance they will have kids with them.
- 619-624 Plague Infected Person-** Delirious, infected with a deadly and highly contagious disease.
- 625-645 Pounder Gang-** 3d4 pounders looking for street people to intimidate and rob.
- 646-649 Purists-** 1d4 members of the Purist gang.
- 650-705 Pusher Gang-** A gang of 3-6 pushers out selling drugs and looking for new addicts.
- 706-711 Riot-** People smashing windows and looting, private security and night shift trying to stop them.
- 712-725 Risen-** 1d6 members of the Risen gang.
- 726-733 Roofers-** 1d6 members of the Roofer gang.
- 734-741 Runner-** A runner on his or her way to deliver a package or message.
- 742-742 Sat Jumpers-** 1d4 off-duty Sat Jumpers.
- 743-765 Security Guard-** A security guard guarding a nearby property, will want to the PCs to leave.
- 766-767 Sex Worker: Child-** A pre-teen prostitute out looking for johns.
- 768-770 Sex Worker: Male-** A prostitute out looking for johns.
- 771-774 Sex Worker: Female-** A prostitute out looking for johns.
- 775-784 Sexologists-** 1d4 Sexologists, 1 in 6 chance one will try to seduce a PC.
- 785-884 Shut In-** Very nervous, on a rare trip outside (most likely for a hospital visit).
- 885-891 Street Preacher-** Shouting about his or her religion to anyone who comes by.
- 892-896 Tea Drinkers-** 1d4 members of the Tea Drinker gang.
- 897-906 Thieves-** A group of 1d4 thieves out casing houses or shoplifting.
- 907-912 Thief: Pickpocket-** With Pocket Picking (3), will try to pick on of the PC's pockets.
- 913-915 Trader-** 1 in 4 chance he or she will try to sell something to the PCs.
- 916-916 Utopia Child-** 1 in 10 chance he or she will try to befriend the PCs.
- 917-927 Visitor/Tourist-** Most likely here visiting family or seeking sex workers.
- 928-929 Volunteer-** An Indie doing homeless outreach work.
- 930-932 Water Rats-** 1d4 members of the Water Rats family.
- 933-942 Wild Dog Pack-** 2d4 hungry wild dogs looking for the weak or wounded to eat.
- 943-999 Winos-** 1d8 Winos, mostly intoxicated.
- 000-000 Y1-** A lone Y1, 1 in 6 chance he or she will want to hire PCs.

RANDOM NPC PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND

Indie	Well	Street	
Values			
01-09	01-05	01-24	Wants to survive and avoid pain.
10-33	06-20	25-33	Wants to enjoy life.
34-42	21-35	34-51	Wants to be a good member of his or her community/social group.
43-67	36-60	52-70	Wants to help people and make the world a better place.
68-81	61-75	71-75	Wants to achieve something heroic or memorable.
82-86	76-85	76-94	Wants to have a family and children.
87-95	86-94	95-98	Wants to be a good member of his or her religion.
96-100	95-100	99-100	Wants to discover something about the universe that not everyone knows.
Family			
01-08	01-07	01-13	Family dead.
09-11	08-17	14-26	Grew up without a family.
12-19	18-34	27-29	Hates family and never speaks with them.
20-34	35-40	30-28	Family lives outside of the city, is friendly with them.
35-49	41-47	29-30	Family lives outside the city, doesn't speak to them often.
50-68	48-53	31-32	Family lives outside the city, NPC keeps his or her lifestyle secret from them.
69-81	54-75	33-34	Family lives inside the city, NPC keeps his or her lifestyle secret from them.
82-94	76-91	35-36	Family lives inside the city, doesn't like the NPC's lifestyle.
95-95	92-93	37-49	Family lives inside the city, are understanding of the NPC's lifestyle.
96-99	94-99	50-99	Family lives inside the city, most live by the same lifestyle as the NPC.
100-100	100-100	100-100	Family lives in the city, are members of an enemy group/gang.
Drugs			
01-07	01-07	01-08	Abstains, thinks everyone else should too.
08-15	08-14	09-16	Abstains, thinks some people should be allowed to use drugs.
16-22	15-22	17-24	Abstains, thinks drugs should be legalized.
23-34	23-33	25-32	Uses drugs, but only when they are useful.
35-42	34-40	33-41	Uses drugs for entertainment, but never "hard drugs."
43-56	41-52	42-49	Uses drugs as entertainment and an escape.
57-63	53-63	50-67	Uses drugs every night, whatever the NPC can get a hold of.
64-70	64-71	68-69	Uses drugs to try to improve himself of herself.
71-83	72-83	70-77	Addicted to drugs, trying hard to quit.
84-100	84-100	78-100	Addicted to drugs, satisfied with being an addict.
Gangs			
01-13	01-07	01-13	PC does not belong to a gang, does not like gangs or gang members.
14-26	08-13	14-26	PC does not belong to a gang, thinks some gang members are good people.
27-38	14-20	27-38	PC does not belong to a gang, admires gangs and gang members.
39-47	21-31	39-47	Belongs to a gang, agrees with the gang's ideology.
48-56	32-43	48-56	Belongs to a gang, feels the gang is like a family.
57-65	44-54	57-65	Belongs to a gang, has good friends in the gang.
66-74	55-66	66-74	Belongs to a gang, sees it as a temporary scheme for mutual self-defense.
75-82	67-77	75-82	Belongs to a gang, sees it as a life-long scheme for mutual self-defense.
83-91	78-89	83-91	Belongs to a gang, wants to become a leader and gain great power.
92-100	90-100	92-100	Belongs to a gang, isn't sure if he or she will stay or can stay loyal.
Gender/Orientation			
01-35	01-35	01-32	Male, heterosexual.
36-40	36-40	33-38	Male, bisexual.
41-45	41-45	39-45	Male, homosexual.
46-47	46-47	46-52	Male, transsexual.
48-50	48-50	53-53	Male, abstinent.
51-85	51-85	54-84	Female, heterosexual.
86-90	86-90	85-90	Female, bisexual.
91-95	91-95	91-97	Female, homosexual.
96-98	96-98	98-99	Female, transsexual.
99-100	99-100	100-100	Female, abstinent.
Sex			
01-23	01-23	01-18	Wants monogamy, no kids.
24-46	24-42	19-42	Wants monogamy, with kids.
47-65	43-65	43-60	Wants to sleep around, no kids.
66-83	66-83	61-83	Wants to sleep around and be an only parent.
84-96	84-97	84-97	Wants to indulge a sexual fetish.
97-100	98-100	98-100	Wants to engage in sexual violence or exploitation.
Corps/Gated Communities			
01-03	01-03	01-04	Too young to join a corp or gated community.
04-05	04-14	04-14	Too poor to join a corp or gated community.
06-08	15-25	15-25	Too mentally unstable to join a corp or gated community.
09-11	26-37	26-37	Too uneducated to join a corp. or gated community.
11-12	38-36	38-89	Unborn or illegal alien, so can't join a corp. or gated community.
13-27	37-48	90-91	Was in a corp. or gated community but was kicked out, looking to return.
28-39	49-59	92-93	Was in a corp. or gated community but was kicked out, plans to stay in the city.
40-42	60-71	94-95	Not interested, too many responsibilities and connections in the city.
43-65	72-77	96-96	Not interested on political grounds.
66-87	78-84	97-98	Not interested on philosophical/lifestyle grounds.
88-100	85-100	99-100	Not interested, thinks a corp. or gated community would be boring.

Indie	Well	Street	
Violence			
01-03	01-02	01-03	Pacifist, will not use violence under any circumstances.
04-25	03-18	04-22	Avoids violence but will defend self or another.
26-38	19-34	23-38	Doesn't want to be violent, but is because of bad temper or has mental problems.
39-56	35-51	39-51	Picks fights for fun and to express anger.
57-73	52-67	52-67	Uses violence as a tool for solving problems and defeating enemies.
74-83	68-84	68-84	Violent criminal, uses violence to help make money.
84-100	85-100	85-100	Uses violence, but only against people who are weaker and when there is no chance of getting caught.
Ancestry			
01-32	01-32	01-34	Several ethnic backgrounds, unable to distinguish any particular one.
33-34	33-34	35-36	Mostly or wholly Asian.
35-35	35-36	37-37	Mostly or wholly Native American.
36-51	37-51	38-56	Mostly or wholly African.
52-84	52-84	57-81	Mostly or wholly Caucasian.
85-94	85-94	82-95	Mostly or wholly Hispanic.
95-96	95-96	96-97	Mostly of wholly Middle Eastern.
97-98	97-98	98-98	Mostly or wholly Pacific Island native.
99-100	99-100	99-100	Mostly or wholly Indian.
Culture/Nationality			
01-42	01-38	01-29	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, has no feeling of heritage.
43-56	39-59	30-53	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, pride in heritage and ancestry.
57-76	60-76	54-67	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, doesn't know his or her heritage.
77-78	77-78	68-71	Raised in America by an immigrant community.
79-80	79-80	72-75	Raised in America by a minority group (e.g. carnies, amish, fundamentalist Christians), has rejected that group's lifestyle or beliefs.
81-82	81-82	76-78	Raised in America by a minority group (e.g. carnies, amish, fundamentalist Christians), adheres to that group's lifestyle or beliefs.
83-84	83-84	79-80	Born and raised in a 1 st world, English speaking country, has obtained US citizenship.
85-87	85-86	81-82	Born and raised in a 1 st world, English speaking country, here on a legal visa.
88-89	87-88	83-84	Born and raised in a 1 st world, English speaking country, in the country illegally.
90-91	89-90	85-86	Born and raised in a 1 st world, non-English speaking country, has obtained US citizenship.
91-92	91-92	87-88	Born and raised in a 1 st world, non-English speaking country, here on a legal visa.
93-94	93-94	89-90	Born and raised in a 1 st world, non-English speaking country, in the country illegally.
95-96	95-96	91-92	Born and raised in a 2 nd or 3 rd world country, has obtained US citizenship.
97-98	97-98	93-94	Born and raised in a 2 nd or 3 rd world country, here on a legal visa.
99-100	99-100	95-100	Born and raised in a 2 nd or 3 rd world country, in the country illegally.
Body Modification			
01-20	01-15	01-13	Has modifications, regrets it.
21-41	16-29	14-26	Has modifications, is happy with them.
42-61	30-44	27-39	Has modifications, wants more.
62-76	45-63	40-54	Doesn't have modifications, plans to get some soon.
77-85	64-81	55-77	Doesn't have modifications, would get some if he or she could afford it.
86-100	82-100	78-100	Doesn't have modifications, doesn't ever want any.
Style			
01-12	01-05	01-02	Subdued Bollywood style.
13-23	06-07	03-04	Extreme Bollywood style.
24-37	08-09	05-05	Corp/Mod style.
38-48	10-17	06-13	Subdued Goth style.
49-59	18-28	14-22	Extreme Goth style.
60-68	29-38	23-80	Homeless/Grunge style.
69-78	39-79	81-88	Old School Gang style.
79-90	80-89	89-92	Straight style.
91-100	90-100	93-100	Mix of styles (roll again twice).
Self Improvement			
01-11	01-09	01-06	NPC doesn't think anything needs to change.
12-22	10-19	07-19	NPC doesn't think positive change is possible.
23-32	20-28	20-26	NPC is deeply ashamed of his or her behaviors, wants to change.
33-43	29-48	27-47	NPC can't stand lifestyle, desperately wants to change it.
44-54	49-57	48-53	NPC wants to expand knowledge and interests, become more well rounded.
55-65	58-67	54-59	NPC wants to achieve great power or talent.
66-75	68-76	60-73	NPC wants to overcome some mental illness or serious personality flaw.
76-86	77-91	74-84	NPC wants to become a better member of his or her community/group/gang.
87-100	92-100	85-100	NPC wants to become more experienced and wise.
Fear			
01-08	01-08	01-13	Greatest fear is being tortured.
09-21	09-20	14-20	Greatest fear is a disfiguring disease.
22-30	21-28	21-33	Greatest fear is being a drug addict.
31-38	29-36	34-41	Greatest fear is never being loved.
39-46	37-49	42-54	Greatest fear is dying without having helped anyone.
47-54	50-56	55-61	Greatest fear is giving up on life.
55-62	57-64	62-69	Greatest fear is slavery.
63-75	65-77	70-77	Greatest fear is becoming disabled.
76-84	78-85	78-85	Greatest fear is going insane.
85-92	86-92	86-92	Greatest fear is being responsible for something horrible happening.
93-100	93-100	93-100	Greatest fear is having his or her terrible secret exposed.

RANDOM CITY PROBLEMS

01-06 Bad Pollution Day- The air is still and the smoke billowing from the city's factories hovers over the city. The cloud (p.193) begins to grow, eating some but not all of the pollution. The city is dark all day. As it gets worse, people will experience asthma then more serious problems. Eventually, the city government will put out an alert that everyone should stay inside. Everything outside becomes grimy and oily from exposure. The air smells bitter and acidic, anyone outside without at least a cloth will begin to cough and choke and could die.

07-14 Bad Weather- Depending upon the time of year, this could be a heat wave, a snowstorm or a torrential rainstorm. It is quite difficult and dangerous for anyone to do anything and most people try to stay home. Many Street People will die.

15-19 Big Fire- Several city blocks are ablaze. All of the Night Shift fire-division's resources are devoted to trying to contain the fire (and thus fires in other part of the city are left unchecked, arsonists are having a party). Smoke drifts across the city. Thousands of people have been made homeless and shut-ins are wandering the city in a daze, unsure where to go and easy prey for addicts and muggers.

20-24 Big Gang War- Several large gangs are engaged in fighting, meaning there are thousands of young gang members out on the street looking for a fight. Huge war parties can be seen walking down the streets. The city hospitals are choked with wounded. Looters follow the armies, stealing whatever they can in the chaos of battle. Many shops have closed their doors. Smart people avoid the subway, knowing it will be the scene of many bloody confrontations.

25-26 Earthquake- A large earthquake has rocked the city, destroying many buildings. The worst hit are the old condemned buildings that homeless people live in. Power and internet is out over most of the city, much of the water supply has been contaminated by sewage, there are fires everywhere that the Night Shift can't keep up with. Fires at industrial plants spill toxic smoke in to the air. Addicts and thugs all over the city are looting. Homeless shut-ins are wandering the streets in the thousands. Some have banded together for self-protection and to fight off looters. Other have joined in on the looting. The city hospital is so choked with wounded that it has tuned the parking lot in to a triage. The state government is doing whatever it can to restore order, including sending the national guard in to distribute food. Increased chance of a plague outbreak, increased chance of rioting.

27-31 Garbage Strike- A noxious smell fills the streets, piles of garbage keep getting bigger and overflow on to the streets. Rats are going crazy and incidences of bites increase.

32-36 Internet Outage- NYR-LAN, the city's biggest internet service provider, is down. Most cellphones still work, and some Indies and government offices still have service, but otherwise the city is left without communication and entertainment. Smash-and-grab burglars, knowing that few shut-ins can call the police, are going on a spree. Shut-ins are pacing their apartments nervously, starved for human contact and entertainment and unable to order grocery delivery. If the outage goes on long enough they may arm themselves with steak-knives, drink some alcohol for courage, and leave their apartments. If enough people are out on the streets, a riot is likely.

37-40 Kidnapped Child- Some Indie child has gone missing, making VR news state wide. The NYPD day shift has been forced to get off their butts and help the night shift look for the kid with help from the FBI. There is a reward on the kid which means that many Freelancers and other assorted people are out looking for the kid.

41-44 National Guard Maneuvers- The National Guard has taken over some part of the city with no legal habitation (typically some place in the Bowery). They've chased out all the homeless people and they are doing combat simulations.

45-49 No Subway Service- The subways have stopped running. Major avenues have crowds of people walking across the city. Many people stop going to work and most restaurants and shops are understaffed or closed. Young teens take this opportunity to explore the subway tunnels. Small chance of rioting.

50-54 Plague- A massive plague just exploded in the city. The CDC has ordered a quarantine lockdown and is flying around in helicopters ordering people in to their homes. The city is waiting to see how bad things get and the city hospital is gearing up for being overrun with patients. From here this could become a plague that only kills a few and goes away in a few days or it could become a plague that terrorizes the city for weeks and kills hundreds.

55-60 Power Outage- A power outage has struck the city. Bored VR Addicts are leaving their homes for the first time in weeks. Shops have closed their doors and brought down steel gates. The longer the blackout lasts, the more the chance of rioting.

61-67 Riot- Almost anything can spark off a riot, from bad weather, to a utility outage. Every once in a while they will happen for no specific reason – a group of people start smashing windows and grabbing things and everyone else joins in. The Night Shift might be able to put the riot down, or a huge riot might leave a streak of destruction through the city before the National Guard puts it down.

68-73 Serial Killer- Over the last few weeks people have been finding the corpses of people raped, murdered and mutilated by a serial killer. Amateur profilers and the Night Shift are at all the crime scenes and local gangs are patrolling the streets.

74-78 Sewage Overflow- For a several block area the streets have raw sewage flowing. Basements are flooded and people living in below-ground apartments have been left homeless. The stench can be smelled halfway across the city.

79-82 Spree Killer- Someone with a gun has snapped and is going around shooting people. The Night Shift are out looking for the person and will call in the National Guard when they find him or her. Most everyone else who has heard about the spree is staying off the streets. Businesses and offices are closing.

83 Tidal Wave- An off-shore earthquake has caused a massive wall of water to travel through long-island sound and explode through the Harlem and Hudson Rivers. Cities on Long Island are the worst hit and they are getting all of the state and federal aid. In the city, the streets are flooded, a few houses near the sunken city have been knocked down, many people are homeless and wandering the streets.

84-88 Trucker Strike- The truckers who bring food (among other things) in to the city have gone on strike. The grocery stores are running out of food, especially since many entrepreneurs are buying up all the food, hoping to sell it back at a significant markup if the strike goes on much longer. Grocers are upping their prices and a few are driving outside of the city in personal automobiles to buy food and bring it back. Street People will suffer the most, since people will be throwing out less food. Wells and Indies will usually be able to survive for some time on old cans and packages of ramen noodles in their cabinets.

89-93 Violent Crime Spree- A bunch of teens on a God Killer binge have decided that they can get away with running around the city raping, killing and stealing. They spend whatever they steal on God Killer, fueling this sleepless, fearless, thoughtless rampage. Such rampages do not last long: the kids will soon be tracked down by the Night Shift or will try to attack a group of people that they can not beat.

94-97 Visiting Politician- A politician is making a tour of the city, perhaps visiting shut-ins or doing something else to publicly feign support for the city's voters. The politician has a security detail (Secret Service if they are a big enough politician) but since they can't bring guns in to the city they have the National Guard ready to come in if there is a problem. Security knows the route the politician will take and is going ahead to clean up any potential dangers or embarrassments.

98-00 Welfare Payments Late- Budget problems or computer errors have caused public assistance payments to not be made. As this goes on, people will become more and more desperate. Fridges will empty, VR service will stop, landlords will start trying to evict people. Day by day, the chance of rioting will increase.

RANDOM PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Street Person

- 01-06 Bad Breakup-** The PC was dating someone briefly and just broke it off, the other person is not taking it well.
- 07-12 Broken Bone-** One of the PC's arms or legs is in a cast, and will be for 2d6 weeks.
- 13-19 Cold or Flu-** The PC is suffering from a bad cold or flu and is at -4 INL, END, AGY. The more the PC exerts himself or herself, the worse the cold or flu will get.
- 20-26 Dental Problem-** The PC is distracted by a painful dental problem (20 difficulty distracting pain) and has a hard time eating.
- 27-33 Forced to Move-** The PC has suddenly been forced to move from the abandoned space he or she was using. The PC has all of his or her worldly possessions in a shopping cart and needs to scout out and set up a new place to sleep for the night.
- 34-40 Friend in Crisis-** A friend of the PC's is having some personal crisis related to drugs or mental health.
- 41-47 Friend/Relative Died-** A close friend or relative of the PC's just died, the funeral will be tomorrow.
- 48-54 Gang War-** (Reroll if the PC is not in a street family.) The PC's family is in a major war, with both sides sending war parties to try to kill each other. The PC will be expected to go to war and is danger when he or she is on the streets.
- 55-61 Hangover/Withdrawal-** The PC just did too many

drugs and is suffering from bad after-effects, including headache and nausea. (If the PC abstains, the drugs were taken accidentally or against the PC's will).

62-68 Infected Injury- The PC had a deep cut that became infected. The PC suffers from the infection on p.73 at 1x.

69-74 Parasites- Something the PC ate is living in the PC's digestive system causing many digestive problems as well as fever and weakness (-4 END). The infection has a disease progression rating of 20 and a progression speed of 24 hours.

75-80 Ruined Clothing- The PC's only good outfit just got ruined, until the PC can find a new one he or she must go around half-clothed or in clothing that is badly ripped or stained with an awful smelling substance.

81-87 Sick Relative- A close relative of the PC is very ill and the PC is required to take turns (along with other relatives) caring for this relative.

88-93 Tear Gassed- The PC was hit by some teargas recently (most likely the PC was just in the wrong place at the wrong time) and is suffering from ill effects. For the next 24 hours the PC will cough a lot, will be a little wheezy (-3 END) and will have painful bloodshot eyes (10 difficulty distracting pain).

94-00 Unwashed- The PC has been unable to find a place to bathe for several days (or has been too busy to bathe) and smells quite bad. The PC is at -10 to seduction rolls and if he or she takes bladed damage is at -7 to save vs. infection.

RANDOM POCKET CONTENTS

Indie (roll five times)

- 01-03 Nothing
- 04-08 \$2d20 worth of drugs (with necessary drug paraphernalia)
- 08-16 \$4d20 in cash
- 17-19 Breath Mints
- 20-26 Cellphone
- 27-31 Cigarettes and Lighter
- 32-36 Condoms
- 37-41 Digital Camera: Cheap
- 72-44 Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
- 45-52 Housekeys
- 53-59 ID, Bank Card
- 60-64 Keychain Flashlight
- 65-66 Lock Picks: Professional
- 67-71 Palmtop Communicator
- 72-73 Religious Icon
- 74-76 Single-Shot Gun
- 77-81 Swiss Army Knife
- 82-88 Switchblade
- 89-96 Taser Gun
- 97-00 Telescoping Baton

Well (roll four times)

- 01-08 Nothing
- 08-13 \$2d6 worth of drugs (with necessary drug paraphernalia)
- 13-21 \$3d20 in cash
- 22-25 Breath Mints
- 26-32 Cellphone
- 33-37 Cigarettes

- 38-44 Condoms
- 45-50 Crate Cutter
- 51-55 Digital Camera: Cheap
- 56-58 Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
- 59-66 Housekeys
- 67-74 ID, Bank Card
- 75-79 Keychain Flashlight
- 80-81 Lock Picks: Professional
- 82-84 Palmtop Organizer
- 85-86 Religious Icon
- 87-89 Ripper
- 90-92 Shiv
- 93-95 Swiss Army Knife
- 96-00 Switchblade

Street Person (roll three times)

- 01-13 Nothing
- 14-21 \$1d20 worth of drugs (+ necessary drug paraphernalia)
- 22-30 \$1d6 worth of cash
- 31-40 Cigarettes and Lighter
- 41-48 Condoms
- 49-57 Crate Cutter
- 58-63 Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
- 59-72 Lock Picks: Homemade
- 73-78 Razorblade covered with Drake Blood Poison
- 79-83 Religious Icon
- 84-91 Ripper
- 92-00 Shiv

Shut-In (roll three times)

- 01-10 Nothing
- 11-24 \$4d20 worth of cash
- 25-30 Breath Mints
- 31-37 Cellphone
- 38-52 ID, bank card, housekeys
- 53-62 Kubotan
- 63-75 Pepper Spray
- 76-85 Personal Sonic Alarm
- 86-90 Religious Icon
- 91-00 Taser

Addict (roll two times)

- 01-50 Nothing
- 51-60 \$2d6 worth of change
- 61-80 \$3d6 worth of drugs (+ necessary drug paraphernalia)
- 81-90 Crate Cutter
- 91-00 Shiv

Crazy (roll three times)

- 01-15 Nothing
- 16-23 \$1d6 worth of change
- 24-32 Cigarette Butts
- 33-41 Dried Leaves
- 42-51 Half-Eaten Food
- 52-61 Old Paperback Book (with strange notes in margins)
- 62-69 Razorblade covered with Drake Blood Poison
- 70-79 Religious Icon
- 80-92 Shiv
- 93-00 Wad of Bloody Toilet Paper

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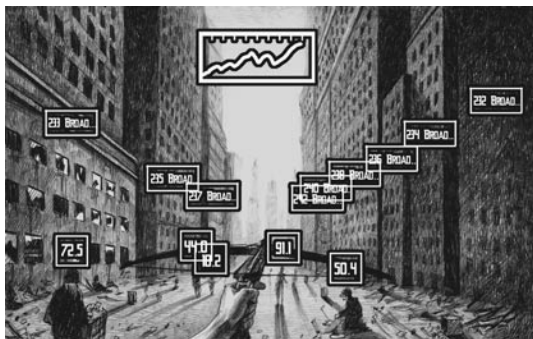
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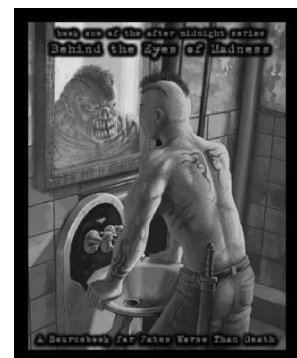
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CONCEPT			
Legal Name	_____	Age	_____
Street Name(s)	_____	Gender	_____
Player Name	_____	Orientation	_____
		Character Class	_____
		Socioeconomic Class	_____
		Home Neighborhood	_____
Worldviews	Ideals	Appearance	
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	
_____	_____	_____	
Advantages	Disads		
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

	Base	Current	Plusses/Minuses
AGY	_____	_____	_____
AWR	_____	_____	_____
CHM	_____	_____	_____
END	_____	_____	_____
INL	_____	_____	_____
SPD	_____	_____	_____
STH	_____	_____	_____
WIL	_____	_____	_____
			Health Attributes
BLD	_____	_____	_____
BDY	_____	_____	_____
INCY	_____	_____	_____

[illegible]

Weekly Income/Costs			
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ on person
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ in bank
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ hidden@home
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ hidden _____
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ hidden _____
\$ ____/wk. for ____	_____	_____	\$ ____ held by _____

Skill Costs: ATH____ BIO____ CMBT____ CRTV____ INFO____ INTL____ MIL____ PSY:X____ PSY:M____ PSY:S____
TECH____ THIE____ STRT____ SOC____ Special____
Unspent XP____ Total Earned XP____ Levels/Disciplines____

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

Combat Sheet for _____

ARMOR

Armor Name	AR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	PR	Penalties
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

COMBAT SKILLS

Skill	Levels	Actions/Reactions

COMBAT RANGES



COMBAT MODIFIERS

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

UNARMED

Punch Dmg _____	Kick Dmg _____	Unarmed Plusses _____
Action/Reaction	Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc1 = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty	

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon _____	Dmg _____	Range _____	Pierces As _____
Action/Reaction	Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc1 = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty		

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

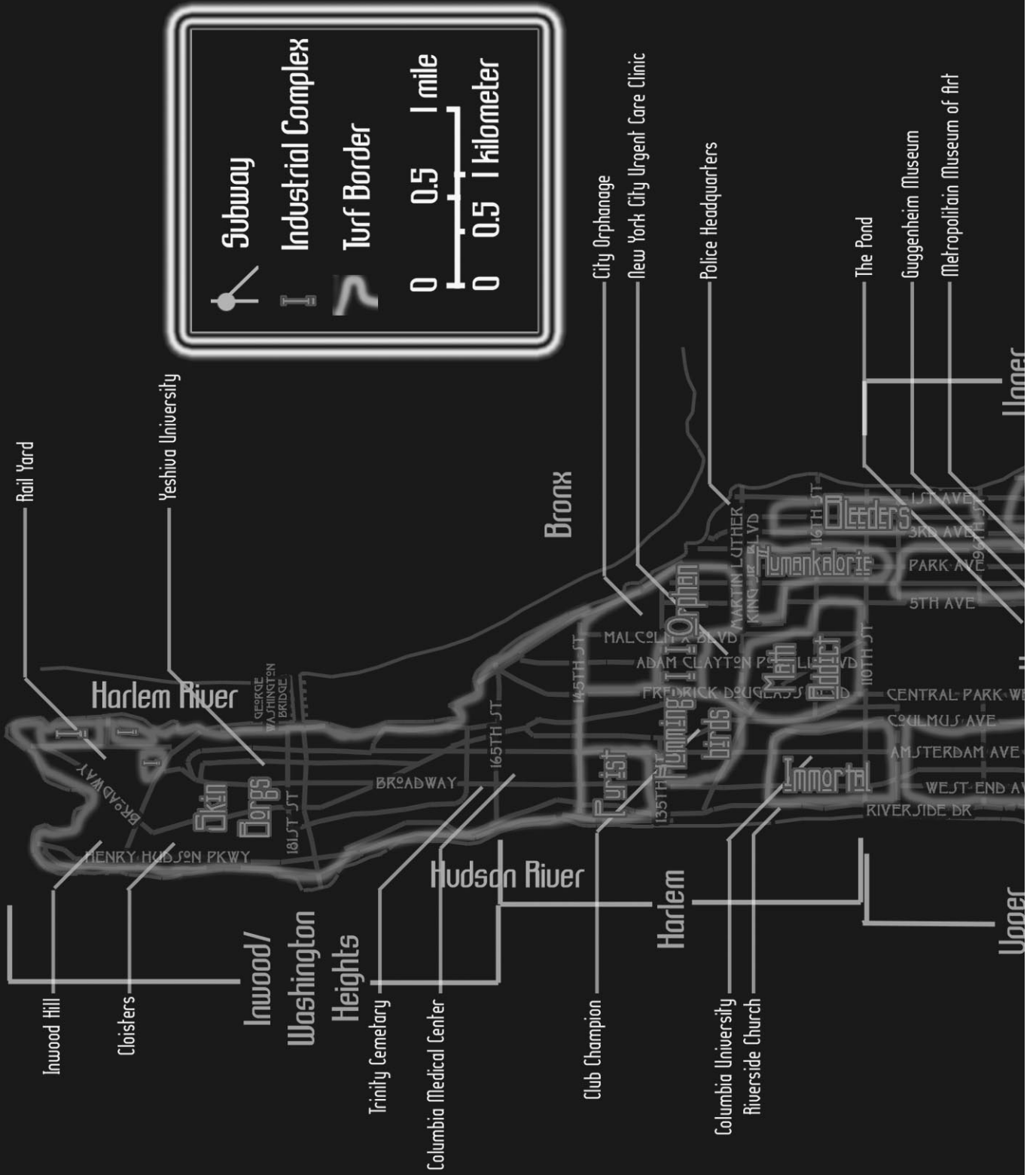
Weapon _____	Dmg _____	FR _____	MR _____	ROF _____
Pierces As _____	Clip Holds _____	Amount of Ammo _____		
Action/Reaction	Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc1 = Total -1/FR+1d20 vs. Difficulty			

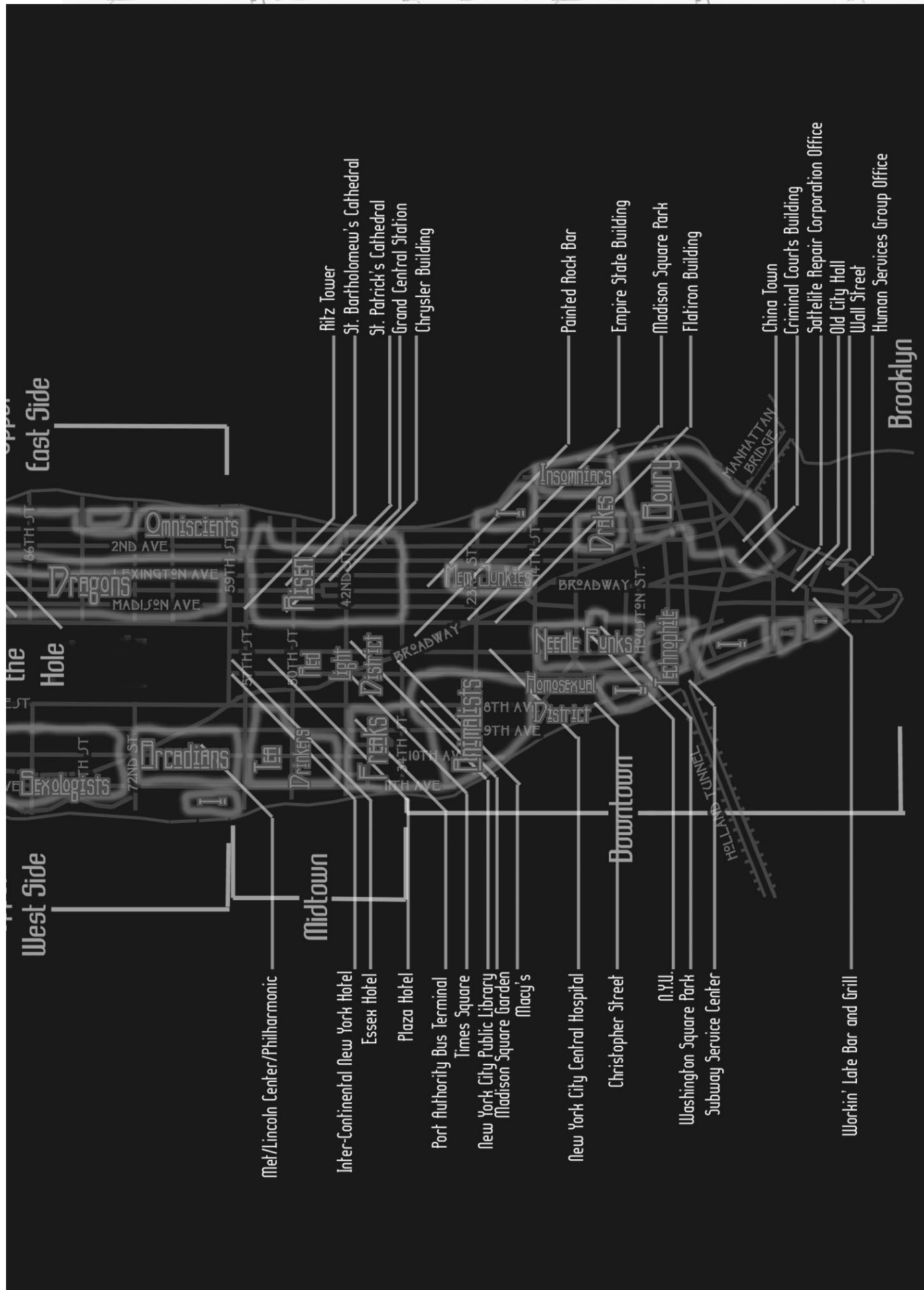
ACTIONS

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft.
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

REACTIONS

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25





QUICK REF

Weapon Specific Difficulties

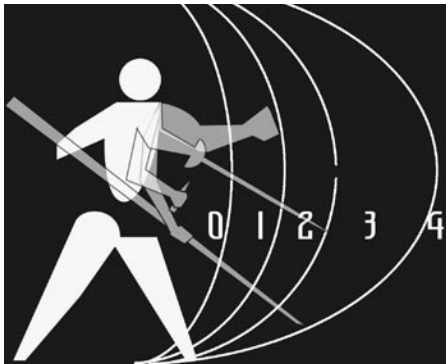
Very Easy (-8 difficulty)
Easy (-4 difficulty)
Hard (+4 difficulty)
Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Slashing Weapons : 1 bladed damage, -8 to actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: ½ point bladed damage, -8 to actions except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: 1 to 3, -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.



Combat Modifiers

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

Actions

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft.
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Reactions

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 - Character Concept: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

Step 2 - Personality Variables: Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Step 3 - Attributes: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Step 4 - Socioeconomic Class: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Step 5 - Choose Character Class: Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Step 6 - Choose Skills: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

Step 7 - Buy Equipment: Available money set by character class.

Step 8 - Bonus Characteristics: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

Step 9 - Character Advancement: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Spending BP/XP

1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point = 10 XP

3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Points = 30 XP

1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points = 2 XP

For Street People: 1 Bonus Point = \$125.

For Wells: 1 Bonus Point = \$250.

For Indies: 1 Bonus Point = \$500

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success

5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)

10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

City Knowledge (INL)

Easy (10)- Figure out whose turf the PC is on by looking at graffiti -or- Navigate by finding common land marks.

Easy/Moderate (15)- Find the closest black market trader to the PC's home.

Moderate (20)- Figure out what turf the PC is on by looking at the cross streets.

Moderate/Hard (25)- Recognize the leaders of every city street gang by sight.

Hard (30)- Give any information listed anywhere in the PC Groups chapter -or- Recite the complete subway timetables.

Hard/Legendary (35)- Recognize, and tell the exact location of, some random alley by a photograph.

Legendary (40)- Figure out where in the city the PC is by smell alone.

Psychic Modifiers

Manipulation Rolls

Manip. target remotely: -1/ft.
Everyone in range effected: +10

Sensory Rolls

Touching the source: -0
Sensing remotely: -1/ft.
Being in a crowd: -1/4 people

Modifiers to Code Breaking

Small Sample Size -5

Large Sample Size +5

Knowing what encryption software was used +5

Knowing what type of data is encrypted +5

Using old code breaking software -1/month

Having part of the unencrypted message +5

Cryptography Success

-50: > lifetime of universe.

-40: 10,000 years.

-30: 100 years.

-20: One year.

-10: One month.

0: One week.

1: One day.

3: One hour

5: 30 minutes.

10: 30 seconds.

20: One second.

30: Instantaneously.

Successful Homework Results

(roll on 1d100):

01-20: Physical location of the system or network and what physical security measures protect it.

21-40: Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)

41-60: The type of system, software running on it, and security setup. (+10 to Finding a Hole)

61-80: The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)

81-00: Information about the internal structure of the company (+10 to any further social engineering rolls).

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

Conversions

1 ft. = 0.3048 m. or ~ 1/3 m.

1 mi. = 1.6093km. or ~1 1/2 km.

1 lb. = .4536 kg. or ~ 1/2 kg.

1 m. = 2.74311 ft. or ~2.75 ft.

1 km. = .62131 mi. or ~2/3 mi.

1 kg. = 2.2046 lbs. or ~2 lbs.

Other Types of Damage

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

- BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
- Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/point of damage).
- Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
- Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Crippling Damage: ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.70) for more.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs) times number of stories. E.G. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

- Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
- Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
- Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.57).
- Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:

- Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
- Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
- Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins to END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

Radiation: For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.73). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Drug/Poison/Disease Effects

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

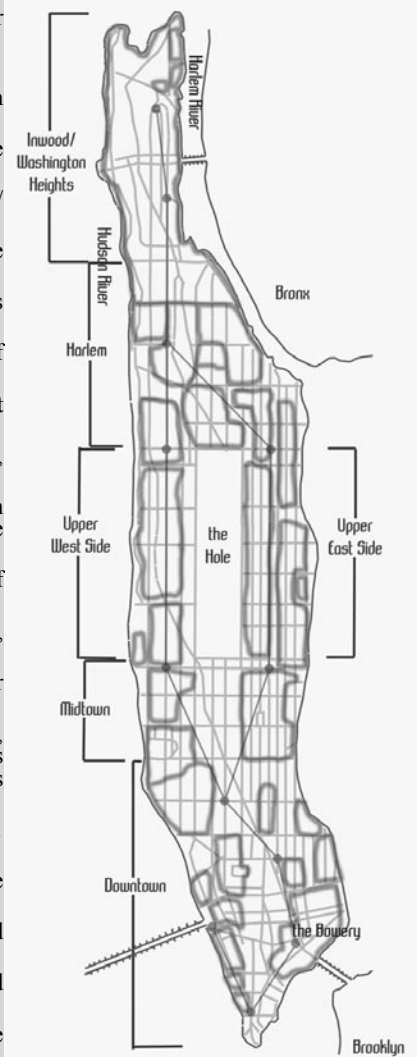
Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.



Timeline

- 2030- Hacker's Guild forms.
- 2040- 92% of world's businesses owned by three large corporations.
- 2041- Neural Restructuring Technology ("Mental Programming") discovered.
- 2043- Riots in NY over conditions of the working class.
- 2045- India Chemical Fire Disaster drastically increases global warming.
- 2045- First HDNA Virus outbreak in SE Asia.
- 2046- God Killer invented.
- 2046- Psychic energy receptors in brain first discovered.
- 2049- Ghosts discovered by scientists.
- 2050- Mason Marks assassinated, massive rioting.
- 2050- Freedom Army bombs major govt. and corp bldgs.
- 2050- Freedom Army gains control of many nations, including most of US.
- 2051- Forced registration of psychics in Freedom Army controlled territories.
- 2051- Freedom Army experiments with genetically enhanced soldiers.
- 2052- Freedom Army discovers existence of Clowdian aliens.
- 2053- Freedom Army closes off subways and sewer tunnels.
- 2053- City Rebel factions meet.
- 2054- Freedom Army creates nanobots, rebels release predator nanobots.
- 2054- City rebels bomb and sabotage Jeffrey Hernandez' satellite. Tide of war turns.
- 2055- Last Freedom Army soldiers flee New York.
- 2055- International Restoration Committee forms.
- 2055- First post-Freedom War corporations founded.
- 2057- Nuclear cleanup of Manhattan ends, homeless refugees shunted to city.
- 2058- Utopianist movement begins.
- 2059- Final drawing of national boundaries.
- 2060- Restoration Committee disbands.
- 2060- Internet working steadily again.
- 2061- First non-medical mental program approved by FDA.
- 2061- Cloud City founded.
- 2063- Gated Communities become popular.
- 2065- Restoration Committee disbands itself.
- 2065- Consumer full-immersion VR fantasy worlds become popular.
- 2073- Peak of the "Old Times" of powerful drug gangs in the city.
- 2074- Colin begins reproducing.
- 2075- Drug Lords consolidate, drug gangs decline, "new gangs" begin to form.
- 2075- Colin discovered.
- 2078- Trace introduced by the Drug Lords.
- 2080- Present Day