

PUNKTOWN

A Setting Book for
Call of Cthulhu® and Basic Roleplaying

**THIS BOOK CONTAINS
MATURE CONTENT**

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Peter Szmer





PUNKTOWN



The Seeds of Corruption © 2017 by Jeffrey Thomas
Gathering Forces © 2017 by Jeffrey Thomas
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Dedications

Tom Lynch:

"To all the backers who stayed with this long overdue project. You were more patient and more generous than we deserve. Thank you. Each and every one of you."

Angus Abranson:

"To all the backers, the creative and production team and Jeffrey for creating and then letting us explore Punktown! Special thanks to Tom, Stephanie and Nimrod for help and support in completing the project and to Mike for the reminders!"

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Looking Long Into the Abyss.....Brian M. Sammons
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PUNKTOWN

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FOREWORD

From its very conception, my world of **Punktown** was intended as a place for others to play in.

I conceived of Punktown as a fiction setting in 1980, years before I had had any stories published, but I still wrote avidly. Several years, yet, before the film *Blade Runner*, and the coining of the word “cyberpunk.” Punktown, I imagined, would be a horrific far future city colonized by Earth people and aliens from countless worlds, and I immediately invited my brother Scott Thomas and friend Thomas Hughes to pen stories set in this world, too. Over the years I wrote more novels set in Punktown, with a widening cast of main characters (because, ultimately, the city is the only consistent character in Punktown stories), and Scott was the one who wrote the first Punktown short stories. Finally, I started selling my own Punktown short stories to small press zines, and in 2000 the first Punktown book was released – the short story collection *Punktown*, published by Jeff VanderMeer’s Ministry of Whimsy Press. There have been numerous Punktown books since, some even translated into German, Russian, Greek, and Polish. In 2004 a Punktown shared world anthology called *Punktown: Third Eye* (boasting such contributors as Paul Tremblay) was released, with another – *Transmissions from Punktown* – in the works as of this writing. I always wanted my sandbox to be big, and I always invited those who played in it to utilize their own imaginations. So what if a little sand got spilled outside the borders?



By Jeffrey Thomas

So, although I must admit I myself am not a gamer (does one round of D&D played in 1983 count?), when Michael Tresca contacted me and said he felt Punktown would make a great setting for a role-playing game, it seemed a natural fit. Michael – author of *The Evolution of Fantasy Role-Playing Games* – then embarked on creating the rulebook for this proposed game, exhaustively poring over my books and extracting all the fine details. This work commenced in 2010, and the game started to become a reality when Michael approached Tom Lynch of Miskatonic River Press. Tom got behind the project, a very successful Kickstarter was launched, and then Tom Lynch in turn interested Angus Abranson of Chronicle City.

Michael’s heroic efforts of wrangling my wayward imagination into a rulebook that wasn’t the size of the Punktown phone directory were later supplemented by wonderful content from other writers, devising exciting game scenarios, not to mention the graphic design/maps/illustrations created by a fantastic team of artists.

It’s hard to express how exciting it is for me to see other creative people shape their own work, their own visions, from this little invention of mine. It’s exciting for me to imagine the adventures *you*, who are holding this book, will assemble from the components herein...and from your own imaginations. In a way, you are now a part of this huge collaborative artwork that is Punktown.

Welcome to my – *our* – world.



THE SEEDS OF CORRUPTION

By Jeffrey Thomas

After Jeremy Stake had depressed the button set into the wall beside the scabby metal door — and on the other side of that door he could hear the resultant metallic ring — he warily glanced over his shoulder at the lonely street behind him. A good thing that he did. In the gloom of sunset, deepened by the shadows of Punktown's multitudinous towers, he spied a snipe creeping on all fours along the weedy sidewalk. To Stake, the snipe looked like a cross between a dog and the cadaver of a man who had died of starvation. To the snipe, he knew he looked like dinner. Stake slipped a hand inside his jacket for the grip of his pistol, a Darwin .55. Catching the threat, the skeletal creature darted off, becoming one again with the shadows of Warehouse Way.

When Stake faced the metal door again, he flinched. A panel above the door bell had slid open and a black orb with a red pupil had emerged on a flexible black stalk, wavering in the air. He couldn't decide if the thing was organic or a mechanism, but after a moment it retracted into the wall and the panel slid shut. At the same time, a loud clank as the door bolt withdrew. Stake reached for the latch and let himself into the supposedly abandoned warehouse.

He found himself in a murky hallway, but light shone up ahead and he made his way toward it, ultimately stepping into a single vast room, its distant ceiling webbed with metal girders. Several strong lamps beamed down from on high. The room had been stripped, its only feature being a large O laid into the floor, resembling train tracks circling in on themselves in an Ouroboros. Stake might have thought it was a leftover from the derelict warehouse, part of some automated retrieval system, if he didn't know the kind of beings he had come here to meet. The beings who had hired his services as a private detective.

He was glad he hadn't stepped too close to the tracks. At first it seemed only a trick of his eyes, but gradually a gray blur could be seen whirling around that O in the floor, seeming to become darker and more substantial with each revolution. In only a matter of seconds, the blur had become a solid vehicle, and in a few seconds more it came to a screeching stop. The black iron machine, resembling a steam locomotive of old, was a tran — the conveyance used by an extradimensional race called the Coleopteroids in polite company, just as Punktown was officially Paxton. But most everybody called them the Bedbugs.

A hatch in the side of the steaming machine squealed open, and three odd figures stepped down. That is, two stepped down; the other seemed to float. He was the one meant to look human. The effort was only partly successful.

The pair of Bedbugs were typical of their kind. Bipedal black beetles, coming to Stake's shoulder in height, with six whip-like arms ending in pincers. But the envoy, as Stake knew he was intended, was taller, his body entirely cloaked in a black robe, leaving bare only his human head. The head was shaven bald, with a black metal cap riveted into its crown.

Stake didn't want to know where they'd acquired the head. Whoever he had been, he bore the features of an Earth male of Asian descent. The face reminded Stake of a fellow officer he had known during the Blue War by the name of Minh Nguyen.

The envoy's lips hardly moved as he said, "Thank you for coming, Mr. Stake."

"This is how I meet with clients lately. I'm between offices. Rent can be expensive."

"Perhaps you will be able to afford one again once you have completed the task we have in mind for you."

"That would be nice," Stake said.

As the envoy spoke with him, his eyes didn't blink nor even appear to shift in the mannequin-like head. Well, Stake knew he wasn't in a position to be put off by the envoy's appearance. He himself, as part of his condition as a mutant, was not entirely convincing as a normal human being. It wasn't that he wasn't good looking...he just wasn't *anything* looking. There was an incompleteness to his appearance that was hard to put a finger on. One person might overlook it, and another might find him eerie without being able to express why. That is, in his natural form. But he was not limited to his natural form. That was another aspect of his mutation.

"In fact," the envoy went on in his soulless, uninflected voice, "we will give you half of the fee you quoted us, up front." An appendage emerged from his robe, but it was a black prosthetic claw instead of a man's arm. The claw proffered a wad of freshly-printed munits. They had mutually agreed on not using an electronic transaction, lest it be traced. Privacy was always for the best.

"Ah, before I touch that," Stake said, "why don't we talk about the job some more, so I'll know for sure if I want to accept it."

"Very well." He didn't look perturbed. At least, the head didn't. "As we told you briefly in our call, there is a human who stole something from us. It is vitally important that it be retrieved. His name is Leon 'Eldritch' Angrimson. He is the founder and...as he calls himself, pastor...of a group called the Church of Indifference."

"Catchy. I think I belong to that myself."

"I should hope not, Mr. Stake. They are a small cult. As I indicate, Angrimson is their leader. Nearly a year ago Angrimson approached us, and his religious beliefs seemed in tune with our own. Against our initial reluctance, we let him come into our fold. It was a mistake. Angrimson's beliefs are more along the lines of the most extreme members of our race."

"You mean...members of your race like those who, oh about twenty-something years ago, tried to call a number of Gatherers into this dimension to harvest the life energy of every being on this planet?"

"Precisely. As you know, your authorities responded to that situation with grave intent. To this day, they view us all with a suspicious eye. Those of us who remain on this world, in this dimension, are fortunate to still be here. We must be careful about our activities, whatever our beliefs."

"But as you say, this Angrimson isn't as moderate as your group."

"No. But he presented his ideas and efforts to us with the expectation that we would be sympathetic and supportive. When he saw that we were not, when we attempted to discourage him, he fled from us. But he took something important with him."

"What is it?"

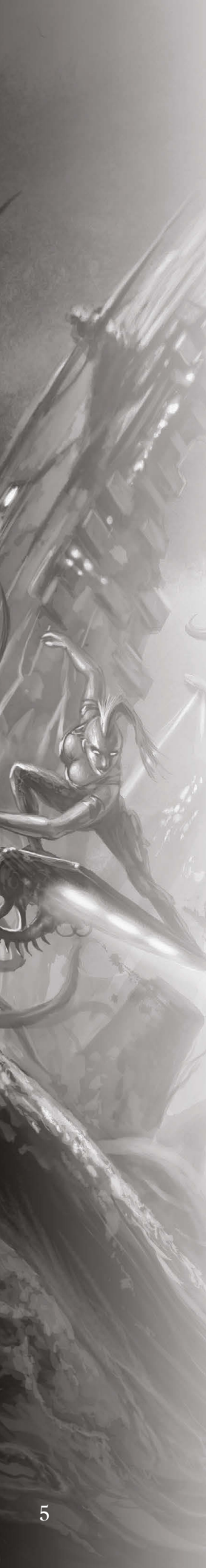
"Before I tell you, I would like to show you something. It will help demonstrate the seriousness of this matter."

Stake spread his arms. "So show me."

* * *

Stake followed the trio deeper into the cavernous warehouse, which grew increasingly dark again. The Bedbugs scuttled along, and the envoy seemed to hover slightly above the floor, as he didn't appear to possess feet.

They arrived at last in a smallish room with a large square shape at its center, covered by a black plastic tarpaulin. Without preamble, one of the Bedbugs took hold of the tarp in a pair of its pincers and yanked it away as if performing a magic trick.



Uncovered, exposed to the light glaring down on it from the ceiling, the occupant of the cage that had been cloaked by the tarp came awake in a flurry of frantic activity. Despite himself, Stake took a step backwards, conscious of the Darwin holstered against his ribs.

It was insect-like; that was all the private eye could really make out at first. A mass of tentacles — he figured a dozen — thrashed and writhed in a frenzy like rage, pincers snicking at their ends. Four jointed insect legs scrambled in opposing directions, not so much because the beast knew it had nowhere to go but, it seemed, because it was conflicted with itself. Did it have four eyes? Two heads, even? Was he seeing that right?

Then he understood. “It’s two of you...fused together. A teleporter accident?”

“No,” the envoy replied. “This is the work of Leon Angrimson. Before he found religion, as you might say, he was a bioengineer with a degree from Paxton Polytech. But to accomplish this experiment, he also used more esoteric means, gleaned from various books that he already had in his possession, and others we had supplied him.”

“You helped him make this thing?”

“No...he created it on his own, and then surprised us with it as a gift, thinking we would be pleased...enthusiastic. We were not. We were alarmed.”

“Did he bind two of your people together?”

“No; he grew this experiment from two of our larvae, which he conjoined. That is what he stole from us.”

Stake tore his eyes from the enraged creature to look at the mock human levitating beside him. “What’s that?”

He pivoted slowly in Stake’s direction but stared blankly right through him. “He stole a vessel containing a large number of our larvae. He has filled the container with a solution he concocted, and he has applied the esoteric techniques I have alluded to. Fortunately, the larvae are not yet mature enough to be released.”

“Released?”

“It is Angrimson’s intention to distribute the larvae throughout Punktown. They will grow into what appear to be normal members of our race. Dispersed in this way, they will not be grouped in a conspicuous congregation, so their presence in the city may not be questioned, unless the authorities catch on to the increase in our overall numbers.”

“But they won’t be normal members of your race, will they?”

Just then, despite its wild convulsions, the monstrosity in the cage managed to hurl itself with a crash against the side closest to Stake. He took another step backward, and thus avoided a tendril that snaked through the mesh, clicking at him.

Unfazed, the envoy replied, “No. They will be mindless servitors beholden to Angrimson. And on a given date, when he considers the conditions optimum, he will give a command, and every one of those beings will seek out its fellows and join with them.”

“Join? Into an army?”

“Not quite. They will physically merge together, like this aberration, forming an ever-growing and ever more powerful organism, until at last when all of the servitors have blended they will have become a single immense entity that in our language, as best we can translate it for you, would be called the Corruption.”

“Oh my God,” Stake hissed.

“Not your god, I trust, Mr. Stake.”

“No,” he amended, “no...definitely not my god. So you come to *me* with something this big? You should have the Colonial Forcers on this!”

“If we revealed the situation to the authorities, and they learned that we innocently helped Angrimson gain much of his knowledge, how do you think they would react to the remaining members of our race on this world?”

“That’s a bit selfish, considering the threat here, isn’t it?”

“We will double the payment we previously discussed, Mr. Stake.”

Stake sighed. Times were hard lately. Who was he kidding? Times were always hard. Well, it would be nice to be able to afford his own office again. So with something like fatalism, he asked, “How much time do we have before those mutated maggots are ready to be released?”

“By conventional growth rates, which may not be entirely accurate in this case, we estimate two weeks.”

“Oh my God,” Stake couldn’t help himself from saying again.

* * *

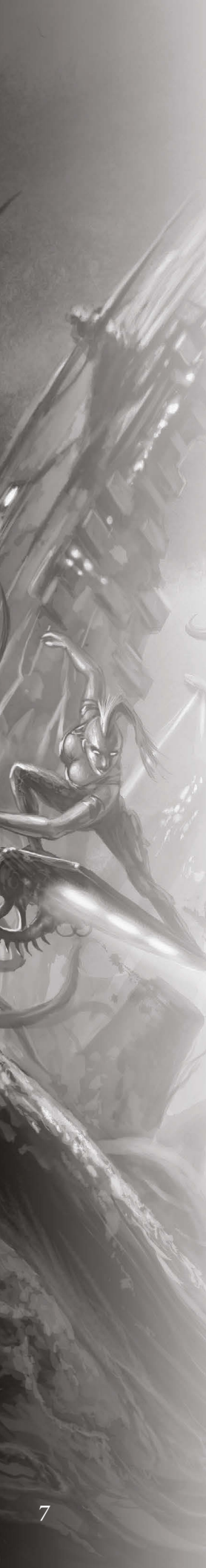
The man standing at the front of the room needed a haircut — his graying hair gone long and wild — and a shave besides. His modest clothing was rumpled. He had no podium, though a metal box rested before him on the worn floorboards. Dust motes swarmed like tiny gnats all around him, the meeting room’s subdued light trained solely on his figure, while all those sitting in the shadows on their folding metal chairs watched him in rapt silence. For his strong voice belied his appearance, deep with conviction.

The man was saying: “Once I held what I thought was an important position. Doing work I thought was important, for sentient races — including my own — whom I felt were important. Who perceive themselves as important. Until the day the veil was torn from my eyes, and I was given new perspective. Until the day I understood — with liberating clarity — that we are all of us, human or otherwise, mere slime molds that have evolved only enough intelligence to entertain this perception, this *illusion*, of self-importance.”



The Bedbugs had given Stake a number of possible addresses, because they said the Church of Indifference shifted from place to place. A basement, a vacant lot, a warehouse, a member’s apartment. He had had to sniff this address out on his own, however. Luckily he knew the neighborhood, the mutant ghetto called Tin Town, because he himself had grown up here. To reach this dilapidated old structure, a former factory storage shed built from purplish bare boards, Stake had had to traverse a little stream of faintly glowing white sludge, walking across a plank of that same purplish wood. Balancing on the makeshift bridge had made him uneasy, the waste runoff to either side of him thick and bubbling like boiling porridge, its caustic fumes making his eyes burn.

The speaker, “Eldritch” Angrimson himself, continued: “We are proud slime molds indeed. Slime molds with delusions of grandeur! Yes, we have challenged ourselves. We have arrogantly thrust ourselves out amongst the stars, to spread our disease. We have even penetrated other dimensions. But all these efforts achieve is to reconfirm how vast the Cosmos is. The further we push, the more the Cosmos seems to pull away, refusing to be met, refusing to concede any limitations. Do our explorations make us great? I ask you, when a toilet overflows and the water spreads under a closed door, is that encroachment greatness?”



“Ew,” Stake whispered, turning to the man seated beside him as if he might share his joke, but the man’s eyes were pinned to Angrimson. When Stake had seated himself earlier this man had introduced himself as Tim Feely. Stake had given himself the fake name of Rex Hunter. As Tim listened to Angrimson he was nodding, wearing a huge grin. Others in the little audience were grinning also, while some sobbed quietly. A number of people were grinning and weeping at the same time. There were young people and old, humans and nonhumans, those dressed in foul rags and others in five-piece business suits. All leaning into Angrimson’s every word.

“Oh, how I fretted once about my career, about paying my bills and taxes, about living in a good apartment and owning a good vehicle, about eating healthy and taking care of this fleshly shell. I embodied all the characteristics expected of us, in this fortress of unhappiness we have built for ourselves. But that fortress is only a delusion, a mass hallucination, and it can crumble in an instant. If we are *lucky* it will crumble! Because then we can experience the unobstructed view we have been denied, and the view thus revealed is *boundless*. The Cosmos gazes back at us, but the Cosmos is indifferent to us. We are nothing to infinity. And what greater freedom can we know, but to know we are nothing? In that stark light, all trivial worries and endeavors are burnt away like moths flying into the sun! If we are to allow ourselves any pride, if we are to attribute any worthiness to our existence, it is only in the realization that we are a part of that Cosmos, though all of us combined are only the tiniest fleck...not even a single cell in its body.”

Stake wondered why, if supposedly nothing was important, Angrimson would feel the need to share his epiphany with others. If no one was of any value, why bother to spread his knowledge? Why try to soothe or transform the minds of the ignorant and inconsequential? In this role as “pastor,” did he still perceive himself, despite his claims, as being important? A prophet, even, a messiah of doomsday? Stake suspected there was a practical reason, though, for attracting these little congregations throughout Punktown. If he planned on distributing the larvae across the city, he might very well need the help of others. Other hands to sow the seeds.

“There is one valuable achievement we can aspire to, and one alone: to eradicate the disease that is ourselves, and make the Cosmos pure again,” Angrimson told them. His voice was rousing, rich, but trembled with its passion. “We can do this by assisting the avatars of chaos...the agents of nothingness...the *true* embodiment of the Cosmos.”

“The Outsiders,” most of those assembled, those for whom this was not their first sermon, intoned in unison. Beside Stake, Tim repeated with the others, “The Outsiders...”

At this point, Angrimson knelt before the metal box that had been resting near his feet, withdrew something from inside, and stood upright again. In one hand he held a glossy black globe, like a giant egg, its exterior seemingly formed of the same chitin as the exoskeletons of the Bedbugs. He raised the globe aloft for all to see, like a god presenting a new world he had shaped with his own hands. “The one called the Corruption is of the Outside. But we can bring it *inside*...here...to redeem ourselves with our own annihilation.”

“That’s it,” Stake said under his breath.

He again glanced about at his fellow audience members as their chanting grew more fervent. Though some of them were nonhuman, he was not surprised that none of them were Bedbugs. That was why the Bedbugs had hired him; Angrimson would never allow a Bedbug close enough, now, to pose a risk to the fermenting larvae. Outside the shed’s door, two guards carrying formidable assault engines had checked each person for weapons before permitting them entrance. Anticipating this, Stake had left the Darwin in his parked hovercar. Two more guards, similarly armed, stood in the shadows to either side of Angrimson. The four human guards were very different in appearance, but each had the dead eyes of people whose souls had atrophied, if they’d ever even possessed them.

“You,” Angrimson’s voice boomed, bolder than even before. Stake looked forward abruptly, and saw the man staring directly at him. Pointing, even, with his free hand as he cradled the sphere to his chest. “Who are you?”

“An acolyte, great one,” Stake spoke up, feeling the dead eyes of the guards and of all the cultists on him, and wishing that Darwin was a lot closer than in his glove box right now. “I’ve heard rumors of your mission, and I embrace it.”

“Bring him to me,” Angrimson instructed the guards who flanked him.

Stake stood up from his chair, and didn’t resist as the guards moved toward him and each lightly took hold of an arm. They walked him through the rows of chairs, to the front of the room and into the light, to stand before Leon Angrimson.

When the light fell on Stake’s face, Angrimson hissed, as if forgetting his new faith, “Oh my God.”

Jeremy Stake bore a slight resemblance to Leon Angrimson. But he bore an *exact* resemblance to Leon Angrimson’s dead son, Noel Angrimson. One might have believed the seventeen-year-old Noel Angrimson had been cloned — or had never been murdered, along with his mother Tania, by a mugger in the parking garage of their upscale apartment complex.

Before setting out tonight, it had been an easy matter for Stake to research Angrimson on the ultranet. He’d read how Angrimson had left his position as a respected biotech researcher after the murder of his wife and only child. Stake had even found photos of Noel and Tania Angrimson on the ultranet, and had studied Noel’s face until his own face had taken on its form. The mutation Jeremy Stake was afflicted with had a name: *Caro turbida*. Roughly, “Confused flesh.” He was a shapeshifter. In his neutral state, he bore that oddly generic look that sometimes caused others to look upon him with suspicion.

Stake had thought it best not to look like himself when he attended tonight’s gathering. Then he had thought it could prove fruitful if he took on a guise that might incite Angrimson into bringing him closer...close enough to get at the black sphere. Stake hadn’t guessed that Angrimson would be presenting the globe so openly.

If Angrimson hadn’t had a son for Stake to mimic, he could have masqueraded as Tania instead. But of course, impersonating males rather than females was usually going to be easier.

“Who are you?” Angrimson demanded. His voice trembled with emotion again, but this time with uncertainty rather than conviction. “Tell me who you are!”

“You’re a hypocrite,” Stake said, now that he stood face-to-face with the pastor. But he tried to *unsee* his face as best he could; if he gazed too directly at Angrimson’s face, then against his will he might begin to take on that man’s appearance next. His ability had a disconcerting habit of getting away from him. He went on: “You say that no one matters, no life has value. So why not just kill yourself now, instead of dragging the rest of us down with you? A drowning man loves company, is that it? I understand your pain at losing Tania. At losing *Noel*.” He gestured at his face, seemingly so much younger than his own true age. He hoped to throw Angrimson entirely out of his equilibrium; to weaken him. “You valued *their* lives, you very much saw *them* as important. When they died, you felt you’d lost everything. But why must everyone else lose everything, too? Is that the tribute your son and wife would want from you? Your world ended, so now this whole world should end?”

Tears had formed glistening caps over Angrimson’s eyes. “Yes,” he said, voice quavering. Then again, more loudly, drawing back his strength: “Yes! *Yes!* It must all end!”

“You’re a selfish little bastard...*Dad*,” Stake said.

“No!” Angrimson cried, clamping his free hand to the side of his head. “Kill him! Kill him!”

Stake wasn’t sure what kind of combat training Angrimson’s soldiers might have, but he doubted it was much, if any, while he himself had served as a Colonial Forcer during the Blue War. While that often seemed like another lifetime, his postwar profession had kept his skills alive. Immediately upon hearing Angrimson’s command, he spun toward the guard on his right, driving his elbow into the man’s Adam’s apple. Still moving into his spin, in a microsecond Stake was standing behind the stricken guard with his hands on his assault engine, facing the other guard, who looked concerned about firing and striking his friend. Stake wasn’t in a position to be concerned for either of them. The assault engine offered various functions, from firing solid bullets to several types of rays to even miniature rockets, and it had a number of triggers for these options. The injured guard had a finger in one trigger (though his other hand had risen to clutch his throat, his eyes bugging in his skull), so it was the unoccupied trigger for the shotgun feature Stake found. He fired one blast at the other guard. It lifted him onto his heels, and then he slammed onto his back. All this transpired in one tick of time.

Stake had feared the cultists might rush to lend aid to the guards, but was thankful to see them rushing for the door to the ramshackle shed, Tim amongst them, overturning chairs in their panic. Maybe that was because Angrimson himself had darted for the exit first, hugging that globe in both arms like an endangered infant. The two guards outside couldn't enter against this stream.

Stake wrenched the assault engine fully away from the guard, who dropped to his knees, desperate for breath. He then bolted after Angrimson, but the cult leader had already slipped out, and his last few followers had bottlenecked in the doorway.

The sudden chatter of automatic fire, and the wall to Stake's left was chewed to splinters by a string of bullets. He crouched, whirled, triggered his gun all in one movement, even before he spied one of the two outside guards at a boarded-up window, firing in at him through a gap in the slats. Two quick shotgun blasts and the boards on the window were in flying pieces. So was the guard on the other side.

The bottleneck cleared, Stake plunged outside into the night. He looked sharply this way and that for the last of the four guards. In the distance, heading for the same shortcut over the stream of luminous waste he had used, Stake caught sight of Angrimson. Afraid the man might elude him, Stake called out, "*Dad!*"

Angrimson stopped in his tracks and turned. So did another of the fleeing, scattering figures.

Almost too late, Stake saw that the last guard had been running at Angrimson's side, sticking close to protect him. The man planted himself in an unmistakable firing stance. Stake brought his own gun level.

"No! *Noel!*" Angrimson cried, lunging in front of the guard and shoving him with his body.

The guard managed to get off one shot from his assault engine — the bright green flash of a ray beam — but it sliced the globe Angrimson clutched like a football.

This distraction gave Stake the extra moment he needed to sight on the last guard, and drop him with a single solid bullet to the head.

The guard crumpled, and Angrimson was staggering away again, wailing and shrieking as if his mind had been shattered by this apparition of his beloved son. But Stake broke into a run, came up close behind the former bioengineer, and saw the true reason for his terrible cries.

He had dropped the broken halves of the black globe, which rocked on the ground — empty. Angrimson's upper body was blanketed in a seething, boiling mass of black maggots. Squirming, writhing, and presumably feasting on the host they had erupted onto.

Stake glanced down fast at his assault engine's options, looking to see if it was loaded with any plasma rounds; hopefully the strongest, green plasma, which could dissolve all those ravenous little creatures and put Angrimson out of his misery in one shot. But before Stake could determine this, Angrimson stumbled onto the board laid across the burbling white runoff — overbalanced, pinwheeled his arms, and toppled to one side. With a final scream, he hit the thick sludge...and was sucked down into it, out of sight, along with all the larval Bedbugs that still clung to him tenaciously.



Stake walked to the edge of the gurgling stream, holding his breath against its burning fumes, with gun held ready in case Angrimson came bursting to the surface. He did not. One might never know he had submerged there.

Though it was night in Punktown, and light in this blighted neighborhood was subdued, peripheral movement at Stake's feet caught his attention and he looked down. Around his shoes, several black grubs twisted in the dirt. Repulsed, Stake stepped back. Then he lifted a foot, and brought his heel down on one of them. He dispatched the other few strays in the same manner.

He checked the stream's bank for more, didn't find any, but decided he should double back to the shed to see if any others had dropped free in Angrimson's mad dash. Before he turned away, however, he looked one last time at the bubbling sludge, and muttered, "Sorry, man. It's over now, okay? It's all over."

* * *

The Coleopteroid envoy looked down at the two broken halves of the black globe resting empty in his prosthetic claws. When he raised his head to stare at Stake, he could have sworn there was a flicker of real emotion in the organic mask of his face. "What is the meaning of this?"

So he told him what had occurred a few hours earlier at the latest manifestation of the Church of Indifference. He concluded, "I squished the few larvae I found. The rest had to have died in that toxic runoff."

"It is unlikely they would have survived, and they did not mature sufficiently in Angrimson's solution to develop their full potential, but there are still uncertainties. You were to have delivered the sphere to us intact, and *full*."

"Well, wasn't the main thing to stop Angrimson's plans? And it seems to me better that the larvae are destroyed, instead of simply transferred to you. In case any of your people were tempted to summon the Corruption, after all." Stake smiled.

"Yours is a cynical, insulting, and bigoted race, Mr. Stake," the envoy said.

"Sorry to hurt your feelings. I'll get out of your way if I can have my money now."

"You still expect to be paid?"

"I do, if you still expect I won't tell the authorities about all this."

A third claw emerged from the envoy's cloak, and thrust another wad of munits at the private investigator. "Take your payment and leave us."

Stake stepped forward and accepted the cash, tucking it into his jacket pocket. "Nice doing business with you. Let me know if I have to clean up one of your messes again." He turned and started for the warehouse's exit.

"Mr. Stake," the envoy called after him. He paused. "If we hear reports of any of those larvae still alive...perhaps made even more potent, in some way we can't anticipate, by the toxins in that waste stream...I would suggest you watch your back, as you Earth people say."

"I always watch my back," Jeremy Stake told him. "This is Punktown."

INTRODUCTION

Skyscrapers with sides so smooth and featureless (with vidscreens on the interior, instead of windows) that one might think they were solid granite monuments in a graveyard for dead gods. Other buildings that looked like they'd been pieced together from thousands of odd-matched parts salvaged from stripped factory machines, steam curling out of grids and grates in their complex flanks. Buildings with snake skins of multicolored mosaics. Buildings wearing an armor of riveted metal plates, like retired warships looming vertically with their sterns jammed into the street. Flat roofs upon which perched smaller buildings, symbiotically. Other structures tapering to needle points that seemed to etch the clouds upon the blue glass of the sky. Stacked apartments. Stacked businesses. On street level: shop fronts, and gang kids squatting on tenement steps, glaring insolently at the slow sludge of traffic...Ah, Punktown.

—DEADSTOCK

Why set a role-playing game in Punktown? Punktown encompasses science fiction, horror, noir, gangster fiction, romance, and any combination thereof. Punktown is a monster mash of every genre colliding into one glorious, fetid swirl: teleportation, dimensional travel, virtual nets, all populated by the truly alien. There are endless vistas in Punktown, and many of them are only a step away.

Punktown also strips away the core of self. Who you are will be tested in Punktown and you will come out – if you come out at all – changed. Clones, aliens, mutants, robots, extradimensional beings, corpses, souls; all of them cavort in a Bosch-like hell known as Punktown.

Punktown would not hold nearly as much appeal if it was only crime and criminals; there are heroes, too; forcers trying to do good, scientists daring to explore the unknown, and vigilantes unafraid to take a shotgun to the things oozing their way out of said unknown. Punktown is home to shapeshifting mutants like Jeremy Stake, skeptical detectives like John Bell, and civilians turned cult hunters like Christopher Ruby. Despite itself, there's still hope in Punktown, but you have to dig very deep.

Why set a role-playing game in Punktown? Perhaps the question is: why *aren't* you playing there? What lies in the subsequent chapters is the answer.

This book features six chapters:

Chapter One: The Punktown Universe details Punktown, itself. Get acquainted with it, but the best place to start is Jeffrey Thomas' novels and short stories. Read as much as you can to give you some background on the feel of Punktown.

Punktown is a big place, which can be intimidating. **Chapter Two: Gamemastering** gives you an overview of how to run a game of Punktown and themes to explore.

Chapter Three: Characters introduces the humanoid races of Punktown and their common occupations. These are the races that are the most humanoid and

relatable, but there's certainly nothing stopping a player from choosing any of the other races that appear in the books. See Chapter Six: Creatures for a sample.

Chapter Four: Powers covers many of the peculiar aspects of Punktown: mutations, drugs, disease, and sorcery. In Punktown, psychic powers are mutations or a peculiarity of an alien race.

One of the ways you can tell Punktown is set in a far future is its technology. Weapons, armor, vehicles, and cybernetics are all covered in **Chapter Five: Equipment**.

Chapter Six: Creatures includes intelligent aliens, animal-like xenofoms, servitors of the Old Ones, and introduces some new Great Old Ones themselves. It's simply not possible to cover every being in this book, so we've explored just the creatures that figured most prominently in the stories.

Finally, the book finishes with some **scenarios** to let you jump straight into **Punktown**.

About This Sourcebook

This sourcebook is a role-playing game setting compatible with the *Basic Role-Playing* and *Call of Cthulhu* (Sixth Edition) games. While we've done our best to include enough rules on how the game works that Gamemasters don't have to flip back and forth too much, we assume that you have at least one of these books for the full rules. Punktown accommodates just about every style of play, from horror to action, so the more books you have that are *BRP* and *Call of Cthulhu* compatible, the better.

Mature Content

This book holds a dark mirror to our own world and explores themes including depravity, sexual violence and other dark matters considered more suitable for adult, mature games. The GM should consult with and adapt aspects according to everyone's comfort zones.

Glossary of Punktown Terms

Punktown has several phrases that are unique to the setting. A quick perusal will have you talking like a true Punktowner in no time.

Assault Engine: a bulky weapon used most often by the military, capable of firing multiple types of bullets, rays, and explosive projectiles.

Beaumonde Square: the most affluent section of Punktown; thus, more heavily policed than other areas.

Bedbugs: derogatory nickname for the insect-like, extradimensional Coleopteroid race.

Belf: slang for any bio-engineered life form, sentient or otherwise, which can include clones.

Blast: popular curse word interchangeable with the f-word; thus, also a colloquialism for the sex act. A common expression of surprise (“Blast!”) or insult (“Blast you!”).

Blaster: a firearm that discharges rays or bolts of energy rather than solid projectiles.

Blue War: over fifteen years ago, the Colonial Forces fought a battle on the extradimensional world of Sinan. Ostensibly, this was to aid the Jin Haa people in their struggle for independence against the larger Ha Jiin nation, but the Earth Colonies really had their eye on Sinan’s source of precious sinon gas.

Brainframe: a powerful computer server, created from “encephalon” brain tissue. A brainframe might service an entire company, even manage public utilities.

Canberra Mall: this multi-leveled structure is by far the largest of Punktown’s shopping centers.

Choom: the native people of the planet Oasis; human in appearance except for their mouths, which extend back to their ears, and heavy jaws full of multiple rows of molars. Aside from people of Earth ancestry, the most prevalent of the countless races in Punktown.

Colonial Forces: the military arm of the Earth Colonies, charged with protecting its network of planets. A member of the Colonial Forces is called a Colonial Forcer.

Culture: slang for a cloned laborer.

Dilky: an indigenous root favored by the Choom. Though tough uncooked, deep-fried dilkies are very popular with Earth people, too.

Dung: popular slang word interchangeable with the similarly excretal s-word. A common exclamation of dismay (“Dung!”).

Earth Colonies: the network of worlds primarily colonized and governed by the people of Earth.

Earther: common slang for an Earth person, often used by Earth people themselves.

Encephalon: a bioengineered brain at the core of certain computer systems, or serving as the mind for some types of robots.

Forcer: short for Law Enforcer. A municipal police officer, stationed in precincts throughout Punktown. Not to be confused with a Colonial Forcer.

Forma Street: one of the wildest, most crime-ridden streets in all of Punktown.

Great Earthquake: over thirty years ago, a catastrophic earthquake struck Punktown, causing some of its subway tunnels to collapse. A number of these were left abandoned, and now serve as shelter for mutants and other secretive beings.

Head, The: an orbiting asteroid visible to the naked eye, sculpted by artist Cyrex Rendiploom, presenting on one surface a screaming human face, and on the opposite side a corresponding screaming human skull.

Health Agent: field operatives for the Health Agency of Paxton (HAP), licensed to use deadly force as necessary in the course of investigating any number of health risks to the public.

Helicar: a small, privately-owned vehicle capable of flying high above the streets, usually traveling along a network of navigation beams to avoid collision with other aircraft or buildings.

Hot Mustard: a thick, spicy, heated beverage made from indigenous mustard plants, popular with the Choom but some Earthers, too.

Hovercar: a vehicle that rides close to the street, levitating on a repulsor field. There are also hovertrucks, hoverbuses, and hovertrains utilizing the same principle.

Miniosis: the nearest Earth-colonized city to Punktown. Miniosis is an even larger megalopolis, but doesn't have Punktown's level of crime or abundance of races, though class struggle in Miniosis has led to decades of rebellion and terrorism.

Morpha Street: a colorful street in Punktown offering cheap apartments and countless shops. There is a corresponding, underground Morpha Street in Subtown, designated as Morpha Street B.

Munit: Punktown's currency; short for "monetary unit." One munit has an approximate value to one current US dollar.

Mutie: slang for a mutant.

Oasis: the name given by the Earth Colonies to the planet upon which they founded Punktown.

Outback Colony: a remote, sparsely populated Earth settlement far south on Oasis.

Paxton: the Town of Peace. The original and still official name for Punktown given to the city by the Earth colonists who established Paxton upon the foundation of a small, pre-existing Choom city.

Paxton Fair: an annual country fair, taking place at the rural outskirts of Punktown, offering carnival rides,

games and rides of every description, and live musical acts. The fair is run by former singer/songwriter, Del Kahn, and his wife, Sophie.

Plasma Ammo: ionized matter contained within a typically color-coded gel bullet. Red plasma dissolves a small hole in an organic target. Blue plasma eats into organic matter more substantially. Green plasma dissolves both organic and inorganic matter dramatically, possibly disintegrating an enemy entirely.

Prostie (also **prosty**): slang for a prostitute.

Shunt: a form of public transportation consisting of passenger cars conveyed along cables above the streets. They often rain sparks as they pass.

Subtown: a subterranean extension of Punktown, comprised of apartment buildings, shops, and small factories. A sizable sector, but not extending to the full limits of the city above.

Syndy: slang for crime syndicate.

Theta Agent: researchers into extradimensional travel, lifeforms, and sentient races. The Theta Agency is closely overseen by the Earth Colonies government.

Tin Town: the largest of Punktown's mutant ghettos.

Tran: a vehicle used by the Coleopteroids to travel from one dimension to another. Somewhat resembling a steam locomotive of old, a tran accelerates along a looping, complex set of tracks until it materializes at another set of tracks at the destination point.

Ultrane: a computer network offering a greater virtual reality type of experience than the regular net. Users may affix disks to their temples to receive wireless transmission, or actually jack themselves into the ultrane via ports implanted in their skulls for the most immersive experience — so vivid, it is indistinguishable from reality.

Union War, The: over thirty years ago, violent riots escalated into urban warfare as human workers rebelled against the extensive use of robots for labor. As a result, it was mandated that no manufacturing plant could have a higher ratio of robots than human workers. Another result of the war was that groups of former robot workers went underground, some literally, to pursue an independent existence.

Vidphone: either a device providing video communication between two parties, or such a feature available through one's personal computer system.

VT: short for Video Tank. Television transmissions received in a glass receptacle of varying dimensions and depth, containing three-dimensional holographic images. (Sometimes also referred to as a holotank.) VT can also stand simply for Video Transmission, however, as when such transmissions are received directly into the brain via disks pasted to one's head.

Getting To Know Punktown

The best way to Gamemaster **Punktown** is to read the stories. Here's the order in which they advance the overall Punktown universe:

Punktown (collection) (2000, Ministry of Whimsy Press)

Monstrosity (novel) (2003, Prime Books)

Everybody Scream! (novel) (2004, Raw Dog Screaming Press)

Punktown: Third Eye (anthology) (2004, Prime Books)

Punktown: Shades of Grey (with Scott Thomas) (anthology) (2005, Bedlam Press/Necro Publications)

Deadstock (novel) (2007, Solaris Books)

Blue War (novel) (2008, Solaris Books)

Health Agent (novel) (2008, Raw Dog Screaming Press)

Voices from Punktown (collection) (2008, Dark Regions Press)

Red Cells (novella) (2014, DarkFuse)

Ghosts of Punktown (collection) (2014, Dark Regions Press)

Warehouse Way: one of the most dangerous areas of Punktown, consisting largely of abandoned factories and warehouses now used frequently by street gangs.

Wrist comp: a miniature computer worn like a bracelet, most often used as a communication device in lieu of a hand phone. One can simply view its tiny screen, or interface with the device virtually when one stares more fixedly at the screen, which now fills the wearer's line of sight. At this point the computer's controls can be manipulated through thought. This, however, could prove a distraction and make one vulnerable to accident or attack.

Zub: the most popular beer in Punktown. Zub is more or less “buzz” backwards.



P U N K T O W N

OUTLYING FARMS

OUTLYING FARMS





KEY

- DOWNTOWN & RICH ZONES
- CORPORATE & AFFLUENT AREAS
- UPPER MIDDLE CLASS AREAS
- MEDIAN HOUSING & BUSINESSES
- WORKING CLASS AREAS
- POOR & ROUGH AREAS
- CRIME RIDDEN AREAS
- SUBWAY & HUB STATION
- SUBWAY STOP
- 1 BEAUMONDE SQUARE
- 2 PAXTON UNIVERSITY
- 3 CANBERRA MALL
- 4 HEALTH AGENCY OF PAXTON
- 5 OBSIDIAN STREET OVERPASS
- 6 'TIN TOWN'
- 7 FOLGER STREET
- 8 FORMA STREET
- 9 'LITTLE MANILA'
- 10 PAXTON TELEPORTATION CENTER
- 11 PHO PAXTON



OUTLYING FARMS

CHAPTER ONE: THE PUNKTOWN UNIVERSE

The central, oldest section is more organic, a little less systematized, at least less obviously so. As the city spreads out from there, a bit more mechanically ordered. Grids that run north and south, east and west. But still, that system is broken up where the city has overlapped the older city, and overlapped itself time and again, so that grids superimpose grids, blueprint atop blueprint, as if generations of spiders have woven their webs directly upon those of the spiders that preceded them.

—MONSTROCITY

Set a few hundred years in the future, humanity's dominance of the universe came about not from building massive spaceships, but through long-range teleportation and interdimensional travel. As humanity spread out in a wave, teleporting from planet to planet establishing colonies, it encountered a variety of humanoid-like races: the Tikkihotto, Kalians, and the Choom. The last were the native inhabitants of Oasis, but were eventually displaced by a massive influx of immigrants.

The Milky Way

Earth colonies extend to the moon, Mars, and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn. Earth's sprawling cities are bigger than Punktown, but the planet is a mess, overrun by rampant population, disease, and war, and at various times besieged by the Old Ones. In that regard Punktown is a failed hope, a colony that was supposed to be a better place but was never realized.

Punktown

Punktown is a colloquialism for the megalopolis of Paxton (which ironically means "town of peace") on the surface of Oasis. At a fantastically huge four-hundred and seventy square miles, Punktown is as much a nation as it is a city. In Punktown, twelve thousand subway cars transport ten million passengers every day over repulsor tracks that, if riding them all non-stop, would take you a day and a half to travel. Punktown has an approximate population of sixteen million citizens. Punktown is also continually expanding, as citizens flee the corruption to try their hand at farming on the outskirts.

While Punktown is a complex, established city it is still a border town akin to the Wild West of old. Laws are only enforced sporadically, violence is commonplace, and everyone carries a gun. This lifestyle contrasts sharply with Miniosis, a much more civilized and established city on Oasis.

There are a variety of unique features of Oasis and Punktown in general.

Beaumonde Square

The Blue Line subway mostly only stops at the nicer areas, as safely as possible transporting Punktown's "nicer" people without having to pass through areas like Red Station, and far, far worse. This marks the cobblestoned Beaumonde Square, with its trees, stone benches, bookshops, coffeehouses, Beaumonde Women's College and nearby Paxton University as one of the nicer areas of Punktown.

Of note, Diego Kaji, director of a company that produced cloned laborers, committed suicide by hanging himself from the chandelier that overhung the foyer of his mansion atop the Turquoise Tower in Beaumonde Square.

Scenario Hook: A double murder in Beaumonde Square is attributed at first to a lovers' suicide pact: he was from Paxton University; she was from Beaumonde Women's College. Due to their similar appearances the media at first cast it as a tragic case of a romantic mishap: two long-lost fraternal twins unwittingly fall in love only to discover they were related and then commit suicide as a result. However, DNA testing determined that they were in fact clones of one Diego Kaji. The characters are hired by the Kaji Estate to discover their killer and the motive behind it.

Blue Panda

Blue Panda is a restaurant that serves up that junky interpretation of Chinese food that Chinese feed non-Chinese —the kind that tastes good washed down with junky beer like Zub, Nickerson or Clemens Light — while listening to people, who have drunk too much of the aforementioned brews, humiliate themselves at karaoke. Blue Panda is particularly known for serving the massive Scorpion Bowl, an alcoholic concoction of fruit juice, multiple types of rum, vodka, gin, and grenadine that has the appearance of a volcanic island.

Scenario Hook: Karaoke is normally a bonding experience, but in Punktown the combination of the massive Scorpion Bowl with poorly interpreted music is a recipe for violence. The DJ encourages any visiting characters to take the stage. Even if they decline, it's difficult not to be swept up in the cheering and jeering of the crowd as drunken amateur performers attempt to mouth the most popular (and vulgar) lyrics. However, one song in particular has caused six incidents of murder at Blue Panda: Frank Sinatra's "My Way." No one knows why this is, but one rumor is that a gang known as the Rat Pack secretly monitors the karaoke and, if the performance is poor, enacts bloody vengeance. Characters may attempt to solve the murders or be a target of the gang's wrath.

Bone Club

The Bone Club is a restaurant/pub boasting a decor obvious from its name: animal skulls ranked row after row, with more rows below that, entirely covering certain walls, human skulls on shelves within the transparent bar counter like museum pieces, dinosaur-like leg bones framing doors, whale-like rib bones lining the length of the arched ceiling over the restaurant section. The background for this profusion of specimens is black to set them off, for more of that museum feel.

Scenario Hook: The Bone Club is an excellent place for a creepy meeting with black marketeers. Some marketeers use the placement of the bones as a secret code of sorts; characters sit next to a creature with the same name as the contact. This is further complicated by the fact that some black marketeers change their names for each new customer and the bones are not labeled. Unprepared characters, who don't do their homework, might be in for a rude surprise when they sit next to the wrong femur.



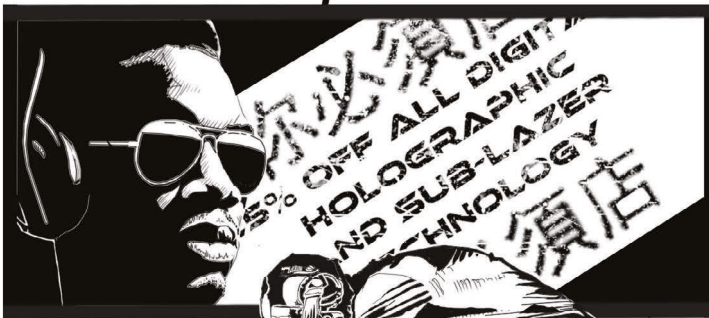
BurgerZone

BurgerZone is a restaurant chain that serves up the best junk burgers in Punktown, not to mention their delectably greasy and salty dilkies. As the BurgerZone VT jingle goes, “Let’s go grab a burger, a Fishsand and some fries! An extra-large bag of dilkies and a Choc-o-late Surprise!”

Scenario Hook: BurgerZone prides itself on not using automated drive-through booths, which means that any Punktown driver driving through actually has to crack a window to deal with a living being. This makes BurgerZones excellent places for ambushes, and more than one BurgerZone employee is also a part-time assassin waiting to be activated. Characters looking to get close to a target may find themselves using the same tactics to get close to particularly well-guarded targets occasionally craving a burger.

Café Prague

Café Prague is on Goitre Lane, an artsy little tributary of Forma Street. The painters, poets and holomakers dwelling there, often in little cadres to afford the rents, benefit from the friction between the creative ether of their romantic capillary and the largely illegal commerce of the hot pulsing artery of Forma Street.



Built out of blocks of greenish Lucite, from inside Café Prague one can see the watery lights of the wheeled and hovering traffic passing along Goitre Lane and the occasional swoop of a helicar. From the outside, the café’s interior glows like an aquarium. In each and every brick-like block, from which the bar and even the ceiling and floor is also composed, there is a large insect entombed, as if in amber, including huge moths, prehistoric-seeming dragonflies, non-terrestrial and mutated invertebrates.

Scenario Hook: If artists live at the Artist’s Collaborative, Café Prague is where they hang out. Many use the encased insects as inspiration for their art, inspired by the texture and color of their carapaces, pincers, thoraxes, and wings. There are rumors that Café Prague is also a black market for sharing rare species of insects, frozen in stasis, hidden in plain sight. Characters might be tasked with picking up or dropping off one of the Lucite blocks — and hope their cargo stays frozen in transit.

Café Quay

Café Quay on Morpha Street is not limited to one ethnic type; its menu ambitiously encompasses the cuisine of as many races of beings as its kitchen can conjure. In this way, Café Quay is as close to a true representation of Punktown as any restaurant can aspire to be. Hung upon the sensuously velvety brown walls in copper frames are moody, often eerie black and white photographs of discarded baby dolls and derelict factory machines, sometimes in disturbing combinations. At a touch from one’s fingers, the menu scrolls in glowing white letters across the black table-top, and in this way one can also check out the play-list of the music piped through the sound system.

Scenario Hook: Café Quay is the closest thing Punktown has to a neutral ground where residents of all types can come to meet. For races that are forbidden from mingling due to social rank, Café Quay is a location where it would be entirely feasible for them to be seen in the same place. Café Quay is popular as a result with young lovers from a dizzying variety of races and cultures that are never meant to be together, and characters might be called in to monitor their liaisons here.

Canberra Mall

Originally called the Canberra Circus Mall, the Canberra Mall is the largest and most popular shopping area in town with everything anyone in Punktown could need. Originally, it covered less ground, but was still five floors high. The ground floor had the carnival rides, games and sideshows; the second an immense arcade and billiards parlor; the third floor a parking mall; fourth a movie theater, shops and gift stores, a few bars, a legal gambling parlor and a legal brothel. The top floor with its domed skylight was an upper-class version of the floor below, with a cocktail lounge, nice restaurant, swimming pool, saunas and a better quality movie theater where plays and concerts were also performed. Over the years, the brothel and gambling den disappeared and the proliferation of stores and shops took over.

Scenario Hook: Need something, legal or otherwise? The Canberra Mall has it all. The Mall is overrun with children of all ages, including boys on hoverboards and girls dressed in every state of undress. Characters may be tasked with finding a lost child here. Children go missing all the time in Punktown; and the Canberra Mall is a frequent source of disappearances – some intentionally from youth running away from abusive homes. It's up to the characters to determine whether a child is better off at home or on their own.

Floating World

An exclusive sushi and karaoke bar constantly following a loop encompassing several city blocks, riding navigation beams as helicars do, high above the streets, Floating World provides an unparalleled view of Punktown, which is a blessing and a curse. There are special windows that zoom in on the worst parts of Punktown and provide a sort of live theater in which diners can watch citizens assaulted, robbed, and murdered while they eat. There's even a karaoke sing-along that adjusts the content of the songs to whatever crime is being witnessed on screen.

Scenario Hook: Where else can you eat and traverse half of Punktown before finishing your meal? Characters looking for proof of a crime may requisition Floating World's files – but the owner does not give them up easily lest the restaurant become a target of crime families everywhere. Conversely, Punktowners just wanting to grab an expensive bite to eat might be unwitting witnesses to a high-profile crime.

Forge Park Artists' Collaborative

A row of factories still casts long blue shadows over the tracks at the Forge Park train stop, once the name of this industrial complex before most of the companies relocated their operations to the Outback Colonies, where labor is cheaper, and crime and vandalism less rampant than it is in Punktown. Most of the plants are abandoned, sealed up, but one — Polymorph Sprayform — has been turned into a nest of inexpensive apartments/studios for artists with the help of government art grants.

Scenario Hook: A place of terrifying dreams, wondrous visions, and where artist occupations likely call home. There is a fine line between madness and art, and that line is often blurred in Forge Park. A mysterious dealer is shopping a new series of paintings from unaffiliated artists all depicting the same haunting yellow symbol, all of whom committed suicide – amongst them the characters' friends or family.

Health Agency of Paxton

The headquarters for HAP – the Health Agency of Paxton – is a thirty-story structure situated in case of mishap off Route Forty, outside the compacted nucleus of Punktown. The layout is exactly that of the Health Agency of Miniosis – HAM – except where the older building is gray stone, HAP is shiny turquoise plastic, right down to the flowery scroll-work and crouched gargoyles around the multi-tiered beehive cupola that tops it. Route Forty is a bleak area of highway rife with vehicle dealerships, new or used (mostly rented, either way – one can scarcely afford to fully own one, and to go through a bank only means buying the illusion of ownership). Distant woods are within view, but they seem as remote as clouds.

From the windows of the Health Agency building, one can see more of the woods below like a sea from an airplane, and small roads branching off Route Forty like tributaries from a river, lined with ominously blank-looking, lifelessly interchangeable plant structures. One of these plants, not far from HAP, set off a bit from the others and larger but still blankly inscrutable, is the waste processing plant for the town – an independent corporation commissioned by the Health Agency with a renewable five-year contract. The town's water supply is purified from this building, and waste materials relayed by truck, teleporter and pipeline to be thoroughly disintegrated.



Also in view, but isolated in the forest-sea like some oil refinery of old, is the “air factory” or atmosphere recycling center for this township, fully government-run by HAP, dominated by two tall conjoined cylinders of sky blue enamel, with a separate feature like a set of gigantic blue-enameled organ pipes. Like HAP and the waste plant, the air factory is gated, with guard shacks, and patrolled, security hovercraft ready on the roofs of all three establishments as though ranked on aircraft carriers in the battle to keep the environment from invasion.

HAP’s gargoyles are actually cannons, with angry bulbous eyes that can move and blaze deadly rays below or at threatening aircraft. HAP’s security hovercrafts hide like bees in the beehive cupola.

The ground floor is all security, aside from reception. Entering requires passing through a large standard decontamination unit, and no one leaves the building without at least being decontaminated. Visitors are required to strip in a glistening white changing room before moving on to a rank of individual clear plastic cylinders in which they are showered and blow-dried while invisible rays clean them further without penetrating beyond the special plastic tubes. By the time a visitor steps out, his

sanitized clothes are ready, still warm to the touch.

After a half-dozen security scans, the upper floors are mostly one great room portioned into individual cubicles like a noisy mall at Christmas time; a bustling little microcosm town.

The third floor features labs, much of their work performed by robots. Narrow halls with white-tiled walls, many doors, some open to reveal bright laboratories glittering with metal and glass, studious figures in white smocks intensely peering through microscopic goggles. Affixed to many doors is the target-like yellow/black symbol for radioactivity.

In addition to being the home of HAP Agents, HAP headquarters is a law even greater than the Forcers — crossing them is fatal.

Scenario Hook: This fortress in a sea of sickness is home to any characters who are HAP Agents. In times of outbreak — which are unfortunately all too often — HAP is often the target of riots and protests. Agents working there need to tread carefully; terrorists often lurk within these protest groups probing weaknesses in an attempt to breach HAP’s defenses and gain access to the rare diseases sequestered within.



J. J. Redhook's Crab Cabin

J. J. Redhook's Crab Cabin is a parasitic restaurant standing on legs in what had once been Plastech's cooling basin. The silverfish-like crustaceans the restaurant serves are seeded and raised in the basin. Mr. Redhook's stilt-legged "cabin" extends partway over the old cooling basin of the discontinued plastic company, and in the waters of said basin, Mr. Redhook breeds not only the white-crabs, but a kind of weed that when cooked resembles noodles.

Scenario Hook: The Crab Cabin serves a sort of local crustacean, a large white critter more like a silverfish despite its popular name of "white-crab." When Punktowners start getting a curious plastic-like growth on their eyeballs, the Crab Cabin's affiliation with the plastic cooling basin is blamed. The white-crabs, which are seemingly unaffected, become a rare commodity not for their taste but their supposedly medicinal properties to reverse the condition. Investigating is no easy task – Redhook knows an opportunity when he sees it and does not release his secrets lightly; and the weed where the white-crabs dwell has its own toxic defenses.

K-Block Library

The library is a somewhat medieval, large stone affair. A solemn out-of-place structure compared to the other buildings on K-Block.

Scenario Hook: A secret lies behind a particularly dust-splashed bookcase filled with books on murder, torture, and war. A mechanism on one side of the bookshelf causes it to swivel open to reveal a hidden room stocked with black market weapons; a virtual library of guns. One wall displays a vast assortment of long arms, tables covered with pistols, and a small shelf holds piles of ammunition cartons — a true armory. When the characters are ready to go to war, they can stock up here. Characters in the know ask for books on warfare – the subsequent discussion strays to details of weaponry. Sources brief the librarian ahead of time and if the character doesn't know their history the deal is off.

Luzon Market

The central spot amidst the crowded buildings, the culturally active Luzon Market is considered the heart of Little Manila. Fast staccato music blares readily from open windows and doors at either side of the open-air food market with vendor tables and open shacks, bins heaped with exotic vegetables, slippery piles of squid and fish and, of course, dogs.

Scenario Hook: Dogs are everywhere; lying on sidewalks, their muzzles wound shut with duct tape or crammed in cages. Animal activists, or even canine-like aliens, might be surprised by what's eaten here. The philosophical difference between pet and food comes to a head, and like so many creatures in Punktown, there's a fine line between the two. Characters may be hired to find a pet, or worse, may be looking for their own amongst the endless dogs trussed up for a meal.

Obsidian Street Overpass

The original Obsidian Street Overpass is an enclosed bridge based on a Ramon design and built of sturdy, black lacquered wood.

Scenario Hook: While vehicles swarm beneath its roof, packed along its pedestrian walkway is a miniature shanty town of homeless shelters thrown together from every sort of scrap and material conceivable. A place characters go to find every scum and lowlife, the truly destitute, the drug-addled, the worst prostitutes – a seething hole of the worst of the worst. Criminals on the run frequently flee here to become lost in the human filth, and characters may think twice before giving pursuit.

Paxton Maximum Security Penitentiary

This curiously designed featureless white structure houses the worst of the worst. Atop every corner of the prison – a massive decoration perhaps meant to make the prison's presence less threatening and militaristic to Punktown's residents — there is a giant abstracted pine cone.

Scenario Hook: Punktown is so crime-ridden that only the worst of the worst are sent here. Pity the scum condemned here; fear the thing that might escape. Characters using deadly force against gangs can easily find themselves on the wrong side of the law, and there are enough corrupt forcers that particularly powerful gangs can ensure the law throws the book at troublesome snoops, landing characters at "Pax Max."

Paxton Teleportation Center

The Paxton Teleportation Center is how citizens travel to other planets. Travelers cannot enter without first passing through a customs checkpoint where their bodies are scanned for weapons and their visas scanned for authenticity.

Scenario Hook: Forcers and characters alike can take advantage of the bottleneck of travelers to Earth, Mars, or the other colonies passing through here. Anyone coming or going to Punktown must also come through here, so it's a simple task to set up an ambush. Characters who make enough enemies can expect such a reception if they return to Punktown – or worse, teleportation pods can be rigged to mysteriously fail in transit, never to be seen again.

Paxton University

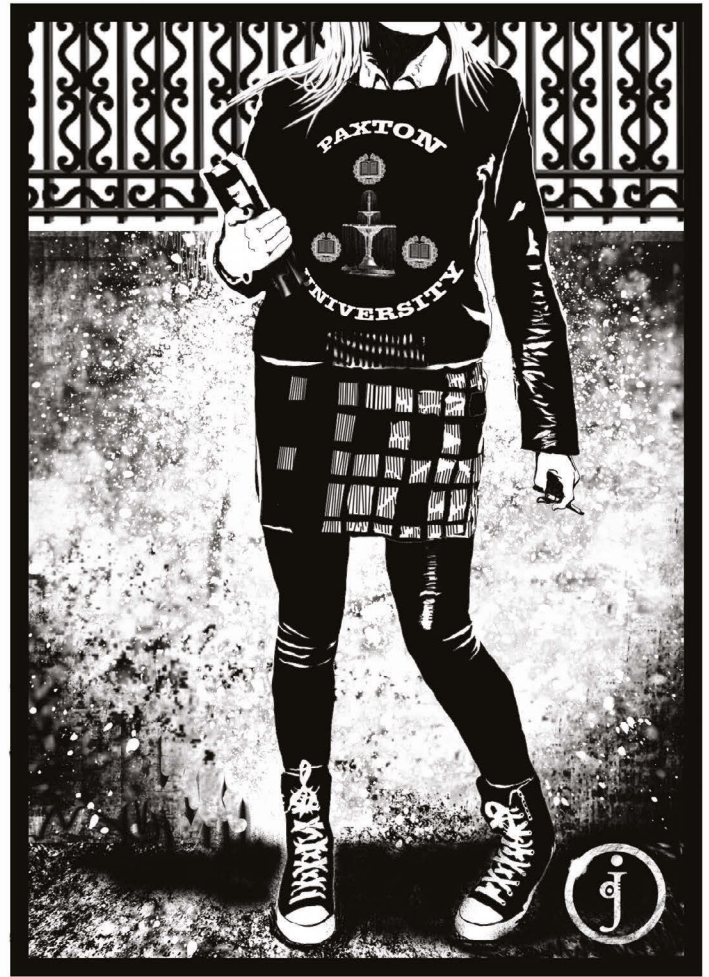
In the oldest part of Paxton Punktown's premier center of learning, Paxton University, was built over what remained of the Choom city that had occupied the spot before it was buried under millions of tons of colonist city.

The streets are narrow, many of them still cobblestoned. The crowded rows of smallish buildings are largely faced in brick and stone. Expensive gift and antique shops, quiet little bookstores and coffee shops occupy the ground levels. There are even small trees growing at intervals along some of the sidewalks.

Between two buildings on Fassl Street, near Salem Street, a few blocks from Oval Square, there is a small octagonal courtyard with a fountain at its center, a few stone benches, and some overgrown flower beds. Even in this nice part of town, there is still some graffiti on the walls. In the midst of all the water that sprays and falls back into the fountain's basin, there is a holographic film loop of a beautiful young girl convincingly made up to look like a mermaid. Her hair billows as if she hovers under the ocean, her arms waving as if in slow motion.

Despite being fairly wide and long, vehicles are not permitted to pass through the one central cobblestoned lane of Salem Street. Lined with the greatest concentration of shops in the area, it feels like an open mall. There is also good museum on this street.

Scenario Hook: Paxton University has a large concentration of educated young people, making them an excellent source of new characters. Paxton U. has a large collection of occult tomes in both digital and analog formats. Access to them is tightly restricted, but feasible if a character pulls the right strings. The Children of the Elders monitors these requests closely and, if a character asks for certain materials, may intervene. The level of intervention depends on the nature of the request. If the cult thinks the characters are just snooping around they might merely monitor the situation. If they think the characters are attempting to use occult knowledge for malicious intent, the Children may use deadly force.



Pho Paxton

In the neighborhood dubbed Willow Tree – after the great shaggy tree dominating a nearby traffic island – Pho Paxton offers the best Vietnamese cuisine. A smallish place located at street level in a somewhat worn brick building in the old Choom style, the fare is colorful, vibrant, and delicious. The house specialty is the quintessential Vietnamese dish, *pho bo*, or beef noodle soup (*pho* is pronounced roughly as “fur”). Another favorite is *banh xeo*, a kind of stuffed crepe. There's also *banh mi*, the Vietnamese equivalent of a submarine sandwich, but even more heavenly than Vietnamese food is Vietnamese coffee (*ca phe*), which is served in a glass topped with a little metal filter cup. *Ruon*, or specifically *ruon can*, is rice wine. As this is Oasis, not the old Earth that spawned these recipes, sometimes adjustments have to be made.

Scenario Hook: *Tom* are shrimp, but in Punktown the Vietnamese often use a local breed of crustacean like a very large prawn, but with eight weirdly human-shaped feet. Genetic testing of the prawn indicates they actually have human DNA and may be related to a character. How this could be is left to the GM's imagination, but the possibilities range from a rare genetic disease that can jump species, to a shape-shifting alien species masquerading as prawn, to a shared heritage as cloned stock.

Quidd's Market

Quidd's Market, in the upscale neighborhood of Beaumonde Square, is less a restaurant than a mall of food. This titanic cornucopia is contained within an extensive brick structure in the pre-colonial Choom style, with a majestic central rotunda. The great central rotunda is meant to look like Oasis as an invitation to the Earth people who initially settled here. The translucent, shell-like material of the dome doesn't let in more than a feeble luminescence, and no amount of cleaning has restored it to its once bright glow.

All of the stands sell foodstuffs, except for one tobacco shop; some stands are quite old but many have been renting for only a year or so. The halls of Quidd's Market are ever packed, though on weekends one can scarcely move. A real tourist site, but it is also the favorite shopping spot for the wealthy locals for whom these exotic selections, a treat to outsiders, are a staple. There are entrances to this vast hall at either end, but the front entrance is reached by marble steps. In a glass-roofed outer hall – a modern addition – portable booths offer gifts, curios and souvenirs, clothing and leather goods.

Scenario Hook: Quidd's Market was the major spot in the area for the Choom to sell their wares and crafts and produce to the first of the military and civilian colonists so long ago. Nowadays, the market rents its many tiny booths and stands to Earth people, Tikkihotto, people from many different worlds and even other dimensions, such as the Kodju with their popular stir-fried vegetables. Most alien species do their best to blend in with the crowd — even Stems, who aren't afraid to shove their stick frames into bulky overcoats and oversized boots — as assassins and hit-men are known to operate here. Characters crossing the wrong crime syndicate are wise to watch their backs.

Red Station

Red Station is a subway station that features the Serdab Memorial and is known for catering to somewhat mundane sexual services. The Serdab Memorial is no single obelisk or monument, but every tile of Red Station. The walls, the sides of descending/ascending escalator banks or wide staircases, are set with red tiles as glossy as porcelain, and set back inside these somewhat murky translucent tiles are apparently three-dimensional faces, each one different from the next, the visages of soldiers killed in the Red War. They are holographic reproductions taken from information stored in the dog tags of the soldiers represented, the resulting death-mask tiles called serdabs, after the ancient Egyptian word referring to a hidden cell in the masonry of a tomb into which were placed images of the dead. The rows of faces, male and female, human and otherwise, are more or less distinct depending on the quality of light which reaches them, and on how much grime or graffiti obscures them. Some tiles have been pried out and stolen, maybe to decorate the dashboard of a car or mantel of an errant art-lover's apartment.

Scenario Hook: Red Station caters to conservative tastes of those looking to purchase sexual services. There are seldom, if ever, surgical hermaphrodites, strangely-endowed mutants, smoothly muscular naked men posing about with glamorous hair cascading down their backs, or obese naked men with studded leather masks over their heads, as you can find elsewhere in Punktown. And no little boys, as in that part of town called the Meat Rack. This is the breeding ground of sexual diseases of all stripes, some natural, others genetically engineered, and some intentionally released by madmen into the populace. HAP Agents make frequent raids into Red Station, and characters may be called in to “purge” an outbreak if STDs reach epidemic levels. Punktown's population doesn't take kindly to these sorts of purges however, and the media backlash can be fierce.

Rhodes Bioflux Implants

Rhodes Bioflux Implants is narrow and five floors in height, entirely painted in a pale banana-yellow color. Gelatin molds are affixed to the outside surface of the plant, at the ground level, now covered in graffiti. Bordering each of the front windows on the second floor, rows of baby doll heads are attached. Their blankly open eyes and cherubs' lips shine a contented banana yellow. A lacquered ten-foot long rifuubi fish, with its vast sail and sleek eyeless head, is fixed at about the third level, its crimson skin now a calming yellow. At the fourth floor, the graceful yellow arms of female manikins reach out into the air as if to test for rain. And finally, at the fifth level, long yellow banners hang from short flagpoles, and snap in the gusts of wind. Each bears some interesting pattern or design, white against the yellow fabric and thus easy to miss. Some look like stylized stars, others almost like calligraphy.

Scenario Hook: Home of the enigmatic alien race known as the Carcosans, whose mysterious yellow patterns are deadly to artists who cross them. Characters looking for cybernetic implants find the Carcosans willing to sell their curious wares at a discount, but there are rumors that all their implants can be manipulated or deactivated by Carcosans flashing a certain symbol. Carcosans are aware of this reputation and often sell their cybernetics through third parties unaware of their origin – the only way to be sure is through magical detection, a skill few black market vendors possess.

Sarik Duul

The Sarik Duul neighborhood reflects a somewhat obscure island culture from the planet Kali. Neon twists in graceful alien letters and bleed into the humid sky from a carnival of twanging, chiming music, air hot with spices and incense, all set against the black of monolithic buildings and pointed baroque temples.

Scenario Hook: Kalian characters, called Sarikians, likely grew up here. The Sarikian culture is more moderate in its views and its members are easily differentiated from the usual blue-turbaned Kalian by their red turbans. Characters on the hunt for a Kalian extremist may have their hands full, as Kalian terrorists are fond of hiding among the populace and smearing the reputation of the Sarikians by wearing a red turban. Kalias are more than their turbans, but should the media catch any character roughing up a Kalian, both groups claim the victim is innocent and simply wearing a different turban to confuse the issue. Characters pursuing any Kalian suspect need to tread carefully.

Solon

The multi-story Solon is the largest legal brothel in Punktown. A dozen female angels with stylized figures and wings ring the circular roof, their mock alabaster breasts without nipples and their arms raised to the sky of wet slate. The Solon was so named in honor of the first public official in Earth history to organize licensed brothels — in 500 B.C., to lower taxes and raise funds for the erection of a temple to the goddess, Aphrodite. Within one structure is a richly diverse museum of desire with a collected a menagerie of exotic beings both human and otherwise. There are several floors for B & D, S & M; baths and pools, bars and lounges, gymnasiums of sorts for the athletic. There are even ranks of hostesses, as the establishment dubs them, affordably priced for those of the lower working class. The prostitutes of the Solon live in on-site apartments, ranked according to status, with the higher status members afforded their own flats higher up in the building.

Scenario Hook: Looking for some companionship? The Solon provides the highest-class escorts. Some hostesses want out, and aren't afraid to ask their johns for help paying back their debts so they can be free. A character might be hired to fulfill that debt in exchange for certain services; or a john might hire characters to eliminate his hostess mistress because of the amount he owes her.

Subtown

The city can only expand up and out so far; Subtown is the portion of Punktown built below the streets to maximize space. Subtown doesn't quite extend to the same limits as its surface twin does, but it's still like a small city in itself. Due to Subtown's fossilized sky of concrete, even the buildings are built on a miniature scale; mostly rows of flat-roofed tenements, interspersed with manufacturing plants and office blocks built on a modest scale so as to be contained by the ceiling. The upper subway system is at the same level as Subtown's streets, but the secondary, lower subway system is several hundred feet below the surface, bored through granite bedrock.

Scenario Hook: Subtown is home to the homeless and the dark doings of the Coleopteroids, mutants, and things from beyond. Characters pursuing serial killers find that the mutant population don't take kindly to outsiders, and respond with force if necessary. This is the refuge of most villains, and the oppressive darkness is used as a cloak of defense dwellers here — electromagnetic pulse weapons that knock out lights are commonly used by mutants adapted to living in darkness. As a result, Tikkihotto trackers are particularly valued here, and any character fitting the bill can find numerous jobs tracking down runaways, the missing, and the extremely dangerous.

Synerluc Communications

Synerluc Communications is best known for its headquarters in Punktown, an inverted pyramid floating massively above its point. Employing thousands of office drones, ranging from server techs to game testers to community moderators, Synerluc is the largest hub of the Ultranet, possessing an incalculable number of fortified servers that keeps communication humming throughout Punktown. Unlike traditional skyscrapers, Synerluc's hierarchy is inverted so that the leadership team is at the very bottom (the easiest to access) while the top level houses the majority of the workers, which can take several minutes to reach by elevator.

Scenario Hook: Any corporate drone occupation might work for Synerluc. Characters working there may find themselves approached by organized crime families wanting to dig up dirt on a foe or conceal information about one of their activities. Criminals, affluent citizens, and forgers wage a constant, secret war to manipulate, control, and obliterate data about what happens in Punktown. If a character commits a crime she doesn't want anyone to know about, Synerluc Communications is one of the last chances at erasing her history. Like all things in Punktown, making any modifications to a broadcast or file comes with a heavy price.

Temple of the Sea of Milk

The Temple is half-shrine and half-ghost train ride, half-fading and blistered and half-garish and slick, rusted but glittering, grindingly noisy but strangely serene in its constant, confident motion. People are loaded and strapped into its one small train of four linked carts and pulled along a track, if only symbolically, by a sled team of four mechanical babies, harnessed and yoked. The mechanical babies have skin of fluorescent pink rubber, cracked and split away around the joints, with glowing green bulbs for eyes, a number of which are blindly darkened. A recording of loud, frenetic religious music crashes to life, and the babies begin to slide their legs in their grooves laboriously as they drag the train up an incline and through a wall of black hanging strips like tentacles, into the maw of the Temple. The ride reflects the religion of the alien, Phlotus, based on a reverential fear of sex and death, rejecting nature's actual approach to rebirth. The riders pass through a series of hells and heavens, culminating in a visit to a form of rebirth where dolls receive the souls of the reincarnated. The riders watch the actual manufacture of the dolls that become each one's prize and icon.

Scenario Hook: The dolls are curious things that seem to have a life of their own. Possessing one is a life-changing experience that can lead to its owner's own spiritual rebirth. Characters owning a Phlotus doll might find themselves spiritually awakened, their lives orienting towards the occult and the arcane. The more scientific-minded might be inclined to pry open the doll. Magical detection indicates that there is actually something living within the doll, and this revelation may give ethical characters pause. Activists supporting the dolls' rights as living beings consider owning a doll to be kidnapping and stop at nothing to retrieve one, up to and including physical violence against the character owning it. There are also some extremists who believe the dolls are a plot to spread the Phlotus seed across Punktown, the dolls crawling into Subtown to eventually incubate into an army that will take over the city. These extremists are just as bad as the activists and stop at nothing to eliminate the dolls and their owners.

The Poison Apple

The dancers at The Poison Apple are all animated corpses, jerking about on the platform, their joints modified with small sensor-equipped devices allowing them movement, governed by an off-stage dance master at a control panel. The corpses are treated with preservatives on a regular basis to preserve their freshness.

Scenario Hook: Know someone who died? You might see them again at The Poison Apple. Even corpses aren't safe in Punktown. Family members of characters might end up here, and it's not uncommon to be hired to perform a hit on someone already dead so the family may have peace. Worse, attractive or odd-looking characters who die might be snatched by their enemies and sold here as a final insult.

Theta Transport Station

The Theta Transport Station is much less crowded than the Paxton Teleportation Center, at least in part due to its specialization. Theta Transport brings travelers to other dimensions, which is how travelers reach Sinan.

Scenario Hook: This is the only way to get to Meatland, Sinan, or other dimensions. Like the Paxton Center, the Theta Transport Station is a dangerous chokepoint for criminals attempting to enter and leave the system. Due to the existential threat of extradimensional invaders, security is much tighter here. There are two alien races that can easily circumvent these safeguards: Kodju and Vlessi. Vlessi are attacked on sight, and any character witnessing or participating in the encounter finds themselves at the unpleasant end of a brutal smear campaign that includes up to, for stubborn characters, assassination in the form of an accident. For the character witnessing the extremely rare Kodju, a media campaign soundly mocking the character's reputation is the more likely tack. In all cases, the official word is that Theta Transport Station is a well-guarded pinhole into other dimensions and that Punktown has nothing to fear.

Zebo's Saucer

Zebo's Saucer is located within the grounds of the annual Paxton Fair, though in recent years its owner – a small, huge-eyed being named Zebo – is known to move this mobile diner down to the warmer climes of the Outback Colony during the winter. Rumors are that the saucer-shaped diner is in fact the spacecraft it appears to be. Indeed, framed upon its walls are blurry photographs Zebo claims were taken of his craft (later appearing in books and magazines) as long ago as the 20th Century, when he was supposedly part of an interstellar exploration team. The menu consists of comfort foods – but comfort foods of a fair variety of planets, from Earthly burgers to the bland porridges favored by Zebo's race.

Scenario Hook: Zebo's an alien gray and an opportunity to explore all of the conspiracy theories associated with them. Zebo, in his younger days, kidnapped and sexually assaulted humans, because he thought it was funny. When a biography is released of a history of alien abductions on Earth, connecting it to Zebo's race, characters may be hired by the affiliated human families to investigate Zebo. Criminal organizations who discover Zebo's past may decide to take him out – and Zebo might hire the characters as protection.

The Head

The Head is an orbital asteroid sculpture created by the artist, Cyrex Rendiploom, portraying on one side a human man's face (howling in outrage or dismay down at the planet Oasis, reminiscent of man in the moon from George Méliès' silent film with a rocket in his eye) and on the other side a corresponding gape-mouthed skull visage. There had been some Choom opposition to the depiction of a human rather than a Choom double-visage but just the expected grousing, nothing to thwart the project.

The Head can be plainly seen at night when it is fully catching the sun's rays. The Head climbs the sky, reaching its apex around eleven.

The Head has been the subject of quite a bit of controversy. A strange secret colony of several dozen Bedbugs had begun construction of a bizarre mechanical temple inside a cave burrowed on The Head's skull side before it was broken up by the authorities.

The Bedbugs eventually managed to summon an immature form of a Gatherer to the Head before it was forced back to its own dimension.

Scenario Hook: The Head is impossible to ignore and its varying appearance might act as an ominous omen of darker things to come. The Head is considered by several cults to be a holy place, thanks in part to the Coleopteroids' attempt to summon a Gatherer. There are all sorts of madcap schemes to reach it, some feasible, others hopeful at best: cults regularly construct rockets, atmospheric balloons, and homemade teleporters. There are rumors that the Vlessi sell their services as teleporters to and from The Head, and characters willing to pursue crazed cultists to the asteroid have to determine if such services are worth the risk that they don't return at all.

Meatland

Meatland is another dimension that coexists in the same place as Punktown. Only two of the five Theta researchers who journeyed there returned alive, with one of them on permanent disability leave for mental trauma.

An endless landscape of mindless organic matter, Meatland has gently rolling hills, red and grooved like bare muscle, with red liquid bubbling in rotten sores, all under a sky of red with black clouds swirling like ink in water. Meatland's denizens reared out of the bubbling sores to chase and catch those hapless researchers, all wrinkly folds of shiny crimson flesh with no faces but for huge mouths filled with saw-blades of yellow teeth.

Scenario Hook: The violence roiling in Punktown may well be due to this dimension's influence. Nobody goes to Meatland voluntarily, but many things want to escape it. Coterminous with Punktown, it occasionally breaches the two planes in Subtown where meat monsters ooze forth and act as a check on the Subtown population, rampaging and consuming everything in sight until they are put down. Mutant characters from there are familiar with how to combat these beasts and even have some experience thwarting them; a particularly large invasion may be too much for even the formidable mutant population to handle and forcer characters may find themselves in an uneasy alliance with their fellow mutant Punktowners.

Limbo

This dimension is used by the Bedbugs as a container for the humanoid souls they consume. In many of these "Limbo" dimensions, the "dead" are shoulder to shoulder in a thick sea, mostly unmoving, only a few shifting in slow motion, eyes staring, unable to communicate. In similar dimensions, the dead are only too capable of communication, only too eager to talk. The identities of some of these subjects have been investigated and confirmed. These lost souls vary in coherence for all their talkativeness. This realm is a kind of lunatic asylum for lost, disoriented or waylaid souls. For the ones that can communicate, the residents make it clear that the Bedbugs are in fact feeding on these trace-energies of human souls collected by Gatherers.

The discovery of these Limbo dimensions put the Earth government in a quandary as they didn't have legal jurisdiction over the worlds where these entities were penned and harvested. In fact, they were trespassers there, since the Bedbugs had actually artificially opened or created these great spaces to store their rations in.

After an attempted invasion of three Gatherers, the Earth Colonial Network sent teams of soldiers, accompanied by Theta researchers, into the Bedbugs' vast corrals with orders to fend off or kill Bedbugs attempting to feast upon the tormented inhabitants. Declared kidnapped members of the Colonies, the Network demanded that the Bedbugs release the souls to continue on the various roads from which they had been hijacked, or return them to the various places – where they might have come to a final rest – from which they had been abducted.

Communication with these Limbo realms via remote probe laid the foundation for Ouija phones.

Ouija Phones

Ouija phones supposedly allow children to speak with the dead, receiving the thought forms of disembodied spirits. The technology is based on work done by government-commissioned Theta researchers, who sent probes into other planes of existence. The voices on the other side of these Ouija phones don't really interact with the callers as they moan and lament in more or less inarticulate despair, though some kids claim to establish bonds with certain spirits. Other kids just like to talk dirty and taunt them.

Scenario Hook: Nothing is permanent in Punktown, even death. If a "soul" appears here, it might be possible to reason with it through the right technology, perhaps a witness to its own murder. Theta agents might be asked to find a witness by traveling to Limbo to ask them questions. Other characters may snatch snippets of victims' communication from Synerluc Communications' hub that implicate their murderers. Desperate family members and guilty criminals go to great lengths to find or suppress such information, and pay dearly for it.

Miniosis

Miniosis is Paxton's sister city, not all that distant relatively speaking, an even greater megalopolis in size though not nearly as rundown and crime-infested. Despite its great size, Paxton is called a town to Miniosis's city, and on Earth both of them together would be like a city block by comparison. Decades of riots have been slowly changing the once fashionable, sophisticated city into a smoldering and increasingly gutted husk, now a close rival to Punktown for violence and squalor – where before, Punktown had been like a rotting corpse to Miniosis' misty ethereal splendor. Still, the rich and powerful cling to their city in

heavily fortified areas, and colonial security forces from Earth have reduced the so-called “freedom fighters” to splintered terrorist gangs, but the battles go on, buildings are taken or burned, and the cancer slowly spreads. The fighters sometimes hide out in Punktown to recruit fresh soldiers from the ranks of underworld mutants; they seduce the surly roaming street gangs, the homeless, the teenage girl and boy freelance prosties, the disgruntled among the Choom, lost souls of endless types woven into one crazy quilt, united by their anger and fear into some sort of effort that gives them a direction, a sense of purpose, an enemy to engage, an identity. They are steadily taking a giant city for themselves.

Scenario Hook: Civilized people used to come from Miniosis though nowadays it’s almost as bad as Punktown, but it’s still a legitimate starting place for militants. In Punktown, there’s a fine line between terrorist and insurgent, and forcers do not look kindly on either. Gang members in Punktown have steadily become more like soldiers and less like thugs, and it’s thanks to the Miniosis training ground developing their expertise. Most military-grade weapons make planetfall in Miniosis and then find their way into the hands of gangs when the disillusioned seek their fortune in Punktown – and bring their weapons with them. Characters seeking heavy weapons find that the insurgency is fueled by sales on the black market, and more than one dealer is willing to sell untested alien technology at a discount.

Sinan

Not just another planet, Sinan is another planet in another dimension and the only extradimensional world the Earth Colonies have ever engaged in war. Sinan was discovered by the Theta Agency research program seventeen years earlier with the aid of Bedbug transdimensional technology. The first field agents to journey there, led by a top Theta agent named Hector Tomas, met the citizenry of the Ha Jiin nation, but also ventured into an emerging, smaller nation peopled by the Jin Haa ethnic class. Cynical critics of the forthcoming Blue War say they couldn’t tell the difference between the Ha Jiin and Jin Haa—reminded of the people Gulliver encountered, at war over which end of the egg to crack open—but the difference was crucial to the Earth Colonies. For one thing, the Ha Jiin tend to be religious conservatives, the Jin Haa generally more moderate. In Ha Jiin law any building taller than ten stories—thus, taller than a legendary tree sacred to local beliefs—must have a temple at its summit to mediate between the material and spiritual worlds.

Sinan is known for its blue hue; every frond and blade and leaf and vine of the jungle ranging from pale robin’s egg, to vivid sapphire, to midnight indigo. Stalks, stems, and tree trunks might vary from this monochromatic spectrum. They might be white as bone, black, or even bright purple. The vegetation itself, however, the foliage—and lizards poised on glossy leaves large enough to wrap the bodies of the dead before they are carried into the tunnels dug for them beneath the forest floor, and the stained-glass wings of the butterflies that drink the blood of blue-haired animals like a kind of long-legged anteater—all a shade of blue. Even the light from the twin, blue-white suns, and the steam that rises from the plants as last night’s rain continues to evaporate. The very air itself, tinged with blue.

Scenario Hook: Veterans and clones of the Blue War have much history here. The scars of the Blue War are etched across Punktown: Sinanese characters face a lot of prejudice thanks to the Blue War. Blue War clones, unmistakable in their hue, have difficulty finding work; the Ha Jiin and Jin Haa conflicts are still fresh in the minds of both factions. The advent of dimensional transportation has polluted both sides. Characters who left the War behind may find it has followed them; Blastulas can “smell” travelers who have spent time in other dimensions and are known to ambush their prey at inopportune times.

The Neutral Zone

The border of the no-man’s-land called the Neutral Zone is a thin strip of forest that separates the Ha Jiin’s land from that of the Jin Haa, like the cold space in a bed between estranged spouses. The Jin Haa’s country is very much smaller, so that the Neutral Zone nearly encircles it like a castle moat, except where it borders the sea. In some areas, stone walls were erected on one side or the other of the Neutral Zone, or razor wire strung, mines buried, and booby-traps set. The Jin Haa capital city, Di Noon, has the best defense of all: a base full of Colonial Forces soldiers sent from the Earth Colonies. These boundaries have held for nearly eleven years, ever since the conflict the Earth people called the Blue War ended; that hated war, when the Jin Haa won their autonomy.

Scenario Hook: The war is over, but that doesn’t mean the Jin Haa and the Ha Jiin relations are any better. The corpses tell a story, and there are many bodies that still lay unburied in the Neutral Zone. Characters may be lured back to recover a memento or even the corpse of an old friend or lover from the Blue War, no easy task given the oft forgotten snares left for the unwary.

Sinan Tunnels

Sinan is pierced with tunnels. At the bottom, copper pipes stained green with verdigris run across the walls to glass globes, in which gas burns giving off light. Sometimes these caverns are utterly empty, except for the bodies of the dead – slotted into the honeycombs chiseled into the walls, slathered with a yellow mineral that crudely mummifies their forms. Other times, members of the Ha Jiin clerical order are down in the tunnels; maybe a solitary monk, or maybe an entire group. And then other times, the tunnels might be converted into a base camp for a unit of Ha Jiin soldiers. Taking their battle into these places only the dead were meant to be sheltered is frowned upon by their own kind, but the Ha Jiin fighters know that they are not the first to have desecrated the sacred netherworld.

Scenario Hook: Much of the Blue War was fought in these tunnels. For those unwilling to brave the surface of Sinan, the tunnels are a viable alternative, but they hold their own dangers. Now criminals and priests have retaken them, along with underground predators. Characters might be sent to the tunnels to collect Sinanese gas illegally, a desecration of the dead that doesn't deter corporations looking for a quick buck from the highly lucrative substance. The corpses are valuable for more than just the gas they produce – Punktown museums pay top dollar for corpses of the upper caste.

Bluetown

Bluetown is a bio-organic carbon copy of Punktown on Sinan accidentally built with a self-replicating material intended only to grow a small housing complex. In just two months, Bluetown achieved an astonishing ninety-five square miles, about a fifth of the four-hundred-seventy square miles the city of Punktown itself covers. There is no other city of such size on the whole of the planet, Sinan, not even the modern Di Noon.

Bluetown is surrounded by fog and deafening static, signs of the blue city's advance, the front line of its invasion. There are skyscrapers with sides so featureless that one might think they were solid stone monuments in a graveyard for dead gods. Other buildings look like they were pieced together from thousands of odd-matched parts salvaged from stripped factory machines. The windows are all opaque, because every surface of every building in Bluetown is blue. And every surface, if seen closely, has a rough texture like pumice, including the windowpanes.

Scenario Hook: For squatters and wildlife making the intrusive structures their lair, Bluetown is a battleground. Blastulas and other interdimensional predators roam the terrain, in addition to a particularly vicious blue-striped tiger that has taken to eating humanoids. Bluetown's value goes beyond the shell it leaves behind; Punktown's secrets are on display for all to see, and characters may be hired to explore or destroy the architecture that reveals secret vaults, safe rooms, and BDSM dungeons the affluent would rather neither world know about.



Vein Rhi

At first, the rust blotches extensively marring the bright surfaces of the riveted metal paneled wall surrounding this Sinanese hamlet might seem random, until one looks again and realizes the stains form pictures of people, animals, town and country life, and a great deal of religious symbolism. This “rust art” is accomplished by painting a caustic agent onto the metal, and letting it corrode over time. The practice was inspired several centuries earlier by a truly accidental mottling of rust discovered on the metal wall surrounding a prominent village thought to be a spontaneous rendering of the great prophet, Ben Bhi Ben.

Scenario Hook: The religiously inclined make a pilgrimage to Vein Rhi, but the journey isn't an easy one. Sinanese pilgrims travel from all over to reach Vein Rhi, but its ownership is regularly contested by Ha Jiin and Jin Haa. Characters might be pilgrims or hired to protect them from one side or the other. A Vein Rhi pilgrim is also a great cover for Sinanese with no other reason to return to Sinan.

Ultraneet

The ultraneet is a fully-immersive virtual network accessible via cyberports that link users directly into the system. Theoretically, this gives the ultraneet visitor unlimited access to information, but there is a dark side; users connected to the ultraneet can be “hacked” and even murdered virtually, killing them in reality.

Scenario Hook: Anything that can be conceived exists in the ultraneet, including sights, sounds, and touch. Sex, violence, and worse are all hyper-realized.

Sweet Revenge

A virtual simulation created by game designer, Marrk Argent, with the specific goal of simulating murdering his ex-girlfriends. Set in Punktown with several links to other sims, including sex sims based on the actresses, Jessica Heart Thatcher and Angelah Lee Henderson. Entering into this highly realistic world for entertainment, or to virtually and covertly explore various sections of Punktown, may be a disorienting and disturbing experience.

Scenario Hook: This is a great way to kill off someone without killing them — but what happens when the virtual victims end up really dead?

Lifestyles

Corporate Life

Thousands of office workers populate Punktown, keeping the city running. They are part of the corporate superstructure that governs much of the economy, although Punktown's corporations focus almost entirely on luxury products: encephalons, games, bio-engineered life forms.

Most office workers assume they will be mugged a few times in their careers in Punktown. The pay is higher, but few companies bother to provide security – there are endless workers to fill any vacancy. Few drive to work, using public transportation.

Gang Life

Punktown's culture is vibrant with gangs. Punktown's youth is a wild, dangerous force to be reckoned with, informing everything from fashion to VT. Young humans constitute the majority of the gangs, but they are not the only ones. In addition to the human gangs, there are mutant gangs, Bedbug gangs, even robot gangs. Most civilians fear gangs and wisely avoid eye contact with them.

All the old Earth prejudices are still in evidence, and gangs gladly segregate themselves according to skin color, Earth culture, or just appearance. Gangs are largely tolerated as an inextricable appendage of Punktown itself – there are simply not enough Forcers to stop them and in some parts of the city they are the only form of security.

Wedling Way

The Wedling Way is a belief system practiced by certain humanoids and even Earth humans in which each member, or wedling, can have ten wedlings for mates, and each of them ten wedlings, and so on. Many wedlings are bisexual. In the Wedling Way, the members live extra-long lives, though through artificial means, which in the Earth colonies is illegal to this extent, as is cloning oneself, but it is allowed in Punktown as an essential of a specific belief system. Upon reaching a thousand years old, wedlings are required by their own laws to halt all artificial means of prolongation and live out the remainder of their lives naturally. Acceptance into the web of the Wedling Way is a highly desirable thing – a few famous actresses and singers were allowed into this lucky following.

Welcome to the Ultranet

The ultranet can be interacted with in 2-D, 3-D, and fully immersive forms. This allows play in any other Basic Roleplaying-compatible game. Players could easily take on Cthulhoid monstrosities in 1920s Earth. This is not without risk, however. The more immersive the gaming format, the nimbler the character is in ultranet, but the game is that much more real and so are the SAN losses.

In the ultranet, INT, POW, and EDU remain the same. STR, CON, and DEX and the skills that depend on them are modified according to the format the character is using to interact.

In a 2-D format, usually a flat-screen, the character gets the benefit of a third of his physical stats. In 3-D format, like a holographic projection, the character's physical stats are merely halved. In fully-immersive format through an ultranet jack directly into the character's head, he gets the full benefit of his physical statistics at their normal scores.

It is rare, but possible, to die in real life after dying on the ultranet. A character who fumbles a Luck roll dies in real life.

Conversely, SAN losses and experience point gains accumulate in the same way: $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ for 2-D, $1/2$ for 3-D, and full SAN loss/experience gain for fully-immersive environments. Additionally, STR and CON can also be changed by 1D3-1 for an Expensive cost. SIZ and APP default to the character's but can be tweaked by 1D3-1 at an Expensive cost.

As they say in Punktown: On the ultranet, nobody knows you're a snipe.

CHAPTER TWO: GAMEMASTERING

Punktown is as much a mood as it is a campaign setting. Punktown is a thriving, vibrant city that is both corrupt to its core and yet pulses with life.

Themes

Punktown has several key attributes that make it unique and perfect for a role-playing game campaign.

Corruption

Like all good science fiction, Punktown is a modern analogue for real life. Any form of corruption that might be headline news finds its place in Punktown: businessmen keeping young girls' soiled panties, gang members openly murdering civilians, and a motley crew of terrorists, war veterans, and corrupt corporate suits. Anything morally or ethically revolting has its place in Punktown. The Mythos represents the worst pockets of corruption, but Punktown is all too busy feasting on itself without the help of forces from beyond time and space.

Crime and violence run rampant in the streets of Punktown. The perpetrators are human and non-human, mutant and automaton alike. Their crimes are often as shockingly alien as their physical bodies; who could imagine that a race of beings from one world might want to run up to you in the street and paint a yellow stripe down your nose? While this might merely exasperate and inconvenience some, it would be the greatest of malicious thrills to this race. Imagine a member of another race, from another world, clipping off one or both thumbs of a humanoid because they resemble closely their jointed phalluses, using them to concoct aphrodisiacs in unlicensed apothecaries.

Neo-Noir

With the seething corruption infesting Punktown it's hard to believe that there's a single decent being in its vast mass of people, but there are a few souls that rage against the darkness, willing to take a stand despite the odds. These few rare individuals are willing to risk life and limb to do what's right – to destroy a cult, reveal a corrupt corporation, or kill a dangerous life form. They are invariably alone in this endeavor; Punktown rewards

few heroes. And they are most certainly flawed – Punktown's few shining lights glow dimly and are just as susceptible to the temptations of sex, drugs, and money.

Technology

Unlike more optimistic visions of the future, any corruption of technology has its place in Punktown's far future. Clones are horribly abused for food, sex, and money; sexual fetishes are perverted to new depths thanks to robots and bio-engineered life forms. The exotic takes on new meaning as alien races intermingle physically and spiritually in new and experimental ways. There is no technology invented that Punktown cannot pervert for the basest needs of sentient beings.

Styles of Play

Despite the futuristic technology, weird aliens, and horrible extradimensional entities, the core of Punktown's narratives are interpersonal relationships; its people (from whatever walk of life) and how they relate to one another. One of the appeals of Punktown is how it explores relationships between two characters that are very different: between a man and woman, between human and mutant, between two different alien races. Punktown's setting has several means of accommodating this diverse storytelling.

One Gamemaster, One Player

Despite its massive population, Punktown can be a very lonely place. Many Punktowners go about their business with few social contacts, lost in the teeming mass of their day-to-day lives. In this lonely world, those relationships take on added significance. A single-player campaign has the makings of a great noir, as the lone character's isolation becomes reinforced – Forcers won't help, friends and family may be distant or dead. Conspiracy theories, battles against the Mythos, or just simply trying to survive in Punktown are all excellent motivators to set a single character on a dangerous journey. As an example, see Christopher Ruby's office drone turned Mythos-hunter from *Monstrosity*.

One Gamemaster, Two Players

Punktown's focus on relationships are also great ingredients for a two-player game. Much of the same single-player framework applies, but it opens the possibility of exploring relationships between genders, races, or even species, be it romantic, professional rivalry, or an arrangement of convenience.

One Gamemaster, Three or More Players

The more traditional campaign model also has a place in Punktown. Forcers in Car Thirteen, members of the same gang, Theta researchers on a mission – Punktown has plenty of bodies to fill the role of explorer, adventurer, and, if need be, cannon fodder. Punktown is violent and a campaign of this sort can afford to kill off characters because there is a supply of replacements. For an example of how this campaign might play out see the Folger Street Snarlens and the Tin Town Terata gangs from *Deadstock*.

Sanity in Punktown

Let's face it, you have to be borderline crazy to want to visit Punktown at all. The place is so rife with mundane and alien horrors that it's unlikely a strange being will send them gibbering in the street. The weak-willed do not survive long in Punktown. Residents of Punktown have SAN resistance equal to their POW/3. Non-residents visiting Punktown are likely bewildered, but if they live long enough – a year, at least – they gain the same SAN resistance. Any SAN loss equal to or lower than this SAN resistance is ignored.

Living in Punktown is a SAN-draining experience in itself. For every year after the first that a character has lived in Punktown, they suffer a loss of 1 point of maximum SAN. For this reason, it's usually a good idea to have starting characters begin in Punktown with just one year under their belt – long enough to know how to survive there but still horrified by the more extreme violence and alien nature of Punktown's inhabitants.

Life in Punktown

Living in Punktown is a bad idea, but citizens do it because they are desperate, because they have nowhere else to go, or because they are more dangerous than the things that might kill them. The grist mill that is Punktown's streets has become a part of Punktown itself. Need to get rid of a clone? Dump him on the street. Want to cover up a murder? Throw the corpse into an alley. One of the reasons plagues and serial killers run rampant in Punktown is because it's hard for Forcers and HAP Agents to tell the difference between a common crime and a more serious threat to the population at large. The death of one person doesn't mean much to Punktown.

Carrying a weapon is a must; openly brandishing it at the right time is wise. Large groups should be avoided and eye contact isn't smart unless you're looking for a fight. Then again, loading a weapon or punching someone in the face is sometimes a good way to let the threat understand you're more than their measure. However, unless the Gamemaster is seeking to teach them a lesson, random assaults on player characters are best avoided.

If players don't follow these general rules, or if they want to know what happens to a loved one, then the below table should sufficiently drive home the point: life in Punktown is nasty, brutish, and short. In all cases, the number of criminals involved is 1D6, but always more than the number of characters.

Hate Receptacles

One way the citizens of Punktown survive the grinding crush of SAN loss is through hate receptacles. There are several brands, including Whipping Boy and Scapegoat.

Scapegoat is a foot in height with a fake tarnished silvery color, a circular, translucent face, with its broad smile, chubby cheeks, and amused squinting eyes subtly back-lit by a dim bulb that glows a dark orange-gold color, either meant to look like an anthropomorphic moon or sun. Whipping Boy is a little smaller, with a faux patina of pale green verdigris and a smirking phosphorescent green jester face.

A small chunk of living matter resides in a little compartment, hidden behind two folding doors which form a silvery rib-cage when shut. Created specifically for use in such devices, more plant than animal, but neither, really, like some yellowish, gelatinous organ. After weeks and months of absorbing mental poisons, the miniature organ gradually darkens, blackens, withers and dies. They are replaceable, of course.

Hate receptacles are keyed to one individual's mind so that he can bend his anger, his frustration, away from other targets, valiantly bringing these dark feelings to stab its own tiny bosom. Possessing a hate receptacle provides a form of SAN storage; an Idea roll is necessary to put one point of SAN-loss into the receptacle instead of affecting the character, a form of cyber-therapy. Keep track of the penalties; a fumbled roll causes all of the SAN loss to hit the character at once.

Punktown Will Kill You

Roll	Crime
01-08	Attempted Murder: Someone attempts to kill the character.
09-16	Kidnapping: Someone kidnaps the character, unlikely for ransom.
17-24	Burglary: Someone breaks into the character's home to look for something. Worse, that someone may still be there when he returns.
25-32	Pickpocket: A thief attempts to pocket something from the character.
33-40	Hacked: A hacker steals something electronic from the character: munits, passwords, or perhaps his very identity.
41-48	Extortion: A hacker infiltrates the character's personal files and digs up something embarrassing or deadly in the wrong hands. He uses this information to manipulate the character into doing something for him – sex, drugs, money, or worse.
49-56	Prostie: Prostitutes are a fact of life in Punktown; indeed, some people visit Punktown for its prosties. Every prostie comes with a pimp, so characters should be careful with whom they consort.
57-64	Drug dealer: A drug dealer attempts to sell drugs to the character. If he is unwilling, the dealer senses the character is weak, he may try to force the drug onto the character to get him addicted.
65-72	Beating: The criminal simply beats the character for a variety of reasons, ranging from being high to a prejudice against his race/species.
73-80	Vandalism: Graffiti is common in Punktown. The character's belongings, his house, or even himself are defaced in some way.
81-88	Sexual Assault: Secual assault is all too common in Punktown; most residents in Punktown have been victims at least once, regardless of gender or species.
89-00	Mugging: The character is mugged in the street.

TYPICAL THUG

Characteristic	Roll	Average
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+5	15-16
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	3D6	10-11

Move: 10

Hit Points: 15

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armor: 1-point leather jacket

Weapon: Decimator .220 50%, 1D6 (impaling)

Tikkihotto Dagger 50%, 1D4+db (impaling)

Bat 50%, 1D6+db (crushing)

Fist 50%, 1D3+db (crushing)

Head Butt 35%, 1D3+db (crushing)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Demolition 20%, Dodge 35%, Drive (Truck) 50%, Gaming 30%, Grapple 50%, Hide 25%, In-sight 25%, Knowledge (Region: Punktown) 35%, Language (English) 50%, Listen 35%, Persuade 35%, Sense 30%, Sleight Of Hand 25%, Spot 35%, Stealth 25%, Throw 35%.

Powers: None



Instant Scenario Generator

Roll	Scenario
01-03	Women's corpses are discovered missing their lower torso. Who or what is responsible? <i>See Humit Crab (ch. 6).</i>
04-06	Artists are going mad drawing pictures of a strange yellow sign. Who is responsible? <i>See Carcosans (ch. 6), Beaumonde Square and Forge Park Artist's Collaborative (ch. 1).</i>
07-09	A rare pathogen found in food is making people sick, but at which restaurant? <i>See any of the restaurants in ch. 1.</i>
10-12	A shopping trip at the Canberra Mall (<i>ch. 1</i>) turns into an attempted robbery.
13-15	One of the characters gets an STD. He's fine, but concern rises that it might be a new untreatable disease. That's when HAP (<i>ch. 1</i>) is on his tail — worse, what if he is a HAP agent?
16-18	At J. J. Redhook's Cabin (<i>ch. 1</i>) a waiter serves the wrong kind of crab causing hallucinations. Hilarity ensues.
19-21	Military veterans, fed up with how they've been treated by the government, decide to go on a killing spree and have a secret cache of weapons at the K-Block library (<i>ch. 1</i>).
22-24	An alien entity that looks very similar to a dog ends up as a potential meal in the Luzon Market (<i>ch. 1</i>). It's up to the characters to find it before an international incident erupts.
25-27	A psychic mutant is required for a special mission, but she must be recruited first from the Obsidian Street Overpass (<i>ch. 1</i>), which is hostile to non-mutants.
28-30	A spree killer is on the loose. There's a witness, but there's a problem — he's a serial killer incarcerated at the Paxton Maximum Security Penitentiary (<i>ch. 1</i>).
31-33	Homeless men are found castrated around Paxton University. Rumors are that it's the initiation rite of a sorority, the Sisters of No Mercy (<i>ch. 1</i>).
34-36	An artist illegally clones himself and releases them in Punktown. One of them commits murder. Should the original owner be held responsible?
37-39	Red Station (<i>ch. 1</i>) still displays the serdab of a recovered soldier previously declared MIA. His family want it removed.
40-42	A high class prostie has been found dead, jumping to her death from the top of the Solon (<i>ch. 1</i>).
43-45	Rumors abound that the Phlotus are actually embedding their own spawn in the dolls they give out at The Temple of the Sea of Milk (<i>ch. 1</i>).
46-48	One of the characters' family members has reappeared in The Poison Apple (<i>ch. 1</i>) as a dancer.
49-51	A terrible disease sweeps Punktown and there's only one place that can provide the cure: Meatland (<i>ch. 1</i>).
52-54	A ouija phone (<i>ch. 1</i>) begins sharing the terrible secrets of a "ghost" about his murderer.
55-57	Bluetown (<i>ch. 1</i>) is a carbon copy of Punktown laid bare. A gang planning a heist of Punktown's data centers discovers that there's a secret passageway in Bluetown, which means the Punktown facility is vulnerable. The characters may need to defend it — or break into it before the flaw is discovered.
58-60	One of the characters has an ultranet (<i>ch. 1</i>) duplicate that is being tortured as part of a new illegal game.
61-63	A gang (<i>ch. 3</i>) murders a loved one. The Forcers have no evidence and are not inclined to follow a lead — much worse happens in Punktown every day.
64-65	A member of the Wedding Way (<i>ch. 1</i>) has died of seemingly natural causes, but far too early for near immortals that live to a thousand years old.
66	Worship of the Choom (<i>ch. 3</i>) deity Raloom experiences a resurgence, and the Choom are joining with the labor unions for equal rights.
67-69	Kalian (<i>ch. 3</i>) artists are putting on a new form of interpretive dance that pays tribute to Ugghiuutu; others whisper that it will summon him.
70-72	A very young child has been inducted as a Ha Jiin priest (<i>ch. 3</i>), its face mutilated beyond repair, violating several human rights laws.
73-75	A thief who uses a cloaking device to conceal himself in the color shrain can only be tracked by a Tikkihotto (<i>ch. 3</i>).
76-78	A gang war erupts, with Forcers caught in the middle (<i>ch. 3</i>).
79-81	A new dimension is discovered and it's up to the Theta research team to explore it (<i>ch. 3</i>).
82-84	Another sorcerer must track down a serial killer who escaped Punktown Penitentiary with the Line Travel spell (<i>ch. 4</i>).
85-87	A comatose witness to a crime is reachable only through telepathy (<i>ch. 4</i>).
88-90	Rumors abound that the Orb Weaver disease (chapter four) is actually being propagated by the Anul race (<i>ch. 6</i>).
91-93	Buzzers become all the rage, literally, when a gang starts using them to get an edge against the competition (<i>ch. 4</i>).
94-96	The truth is out about the origins of Purple Vortex (<i>ch. 4</i>); the Bedbugs (<i>ch. 6</i>) gang steps up their production before Forcers come down on them.
97-98	An encephalon (<i>ch. 5</i>) running a security system goes insane; only a telepath can contact it.
99-00	The characters are invited to compete in Building the Better Booby Trap (<i>ch. 5</i>).

CHAPTER THREE:

CHARACTERS

Races other than human had come to colonize the city as well, over the decades. Included among the few truly humanoid races that dwelt within the megalopolis were the Choom – indigenous to this world, which the Earth colonists had renamed Oasis. They had frog-like mouths that sliced their faces back to their ears. Then there were the Tikkibotto, who in place of eyes had bundles of clear tendrils that squirmed in the air as if to assemble vision with their sensitive touch. But there were far stranger beings in Punktown.

—GHOSTS OF PUNKTOWN

Cultures

The prevailing paradigm among cults and conspiracy theorists to explain the curious amount of humanoid races in Punktown is that the Kalian deity, Ugghiuutu, seeded the planets. Detailed here are only the most human-like races. For the teeming masses of other aliens and beings that populate Punktown, see Chapter Six.

Choom

The native people of Oasis, the Choom, are the most human-like of all humanoid races. They had no herdsmen, instead subsisting almost entirely on a vegetarian diet—until the colonists came. Perhaps because of this, they were a peaceful people, and there had been very little opposition to the colonization when it came; just isolated instances of violence from individual malcontents. The Choom welcomed the Earth humans, embraced the imported cultures, and learned the various imported tongues.

They even became so self-conscious of their queer dolphin-like mouths, so envious of the Earthly countenance, that some Choom have been known to cosmetically altered themselves so as to look more like the Earth people. Black skin is alien to them, so is considered particularly glamorous enough that they might dye their skin; and they might reduce the size of their great mouths and make their jaws less heavy with teeth.

Appearance: Aside from one distinct feature, the Choom are indistinguishable from Earth colonists: their wide mouths split their heads from ear-to-ear with a jaw full of rows of heavy molars evolved for chewing the tough native roots they still favor.

Culture: The first Earth colonists met very little resistance from the indigenous Choom. There was, however, one legendary rebel named Mooaki-Fen, who led a small band of resistance fighters before the Earth forces pinned them down in the mountains. Fen took his own life rather than be captured.

Demeanor: The Choom were a peaceful race, and accepted the first Earth colonists perhaps a little too readily, which resulted in the rapid obliteration of their own culture and assimilation into the new society the Earth colonists formed when they laid down cities such as Paxton and Miniosis on the sites of preexistent, much smaller Choom towns. Punktown's modern day Choom, however, are just as prone to violence as any other of the races that have settled there.

Equipment: The dilly root is the staple food of the native Choom race—and like many of the tough-fleshed roots and vegetables that form their diet, the reason for the evolution of their wide, heavy jaws. The Choom also favor luul, a sweet porridge.

Occupations: Any that might be filled by Earth colonists, with the exception of top-ranking political figures.

Religion: Worship of the god, Raloom, now largely an archaic faith. Raloom was always portrayed simply as a head and shoulders, these busts often rendered in metal and sometimes so large they served as temples themselves.

Creating a Choom Character

The Choom are a sturdy race, used to taking on hardships without complaining. Combined with their strict vegetarian diets, which means they don't stuff themselves with the same overly-processed, mass-manufactured food stuffs, they get +2 to their CON stat. With their extra-wide mouths and their natural pacifist nature, many non-Choom see them as weak and feel free to mock them. As such they suffer – 1 to their APP, but only in the eyes of non-Choom.

Raloom and Lupool

Raloom is the deity of an ancient Choom sect that all but died out over the past several centuries. Like his worshipers, the Choom, Raloom sports a mouth sliced all the way back to his ears, held shut in a stern line. Lupool, Raloom's wife, might have passed for an Earth human were it not for her mouth, the corners of which run back to her ears in a smile as serene as a dolphin's. Figurines of Raloom tend to be huge and imposing statues of his head, with braziers burning in his eyes. Effigies of Lupool are clockwork mannequins with jointed appendages that perform some unknown purpose.

As a race, the Choom are less technically adept than the average human. When Earth arrived to colonize Oasis, the Choom were technologically equivalent to the 19th century. Although still lagging behind in some technical areas, they have since adapted quickly. They get -20% to Technical and Repair skills and -10% to Science skills, which means Choom characters need to spend 20 and 10 skill points respectively just to break even.

Clone

Clones come from a variety of walks of life, but they tend to fall into two categories: laborers and soldiers. Laborers are cast from a master set of six males; convicts sentenced to death sign over the rights for their likenesses to be produced for these purposes. A third category, for the extremely wealthy, are “backups” to ensure a form of immortality.

Producing clones of living people is illegal, as is cloning for personal – rather than industrial – use. Though clones do not possess the rights of “birthers”, there are still many sticky legalities.

Most clones don’t even have the original’s personality, but those of programmed bogus histories. Though there is bound to be some similarity, in that much of the human personality is based on electro-chemical activity in the brain, and the brain literally changes on the microscopic level each time a new memory is added to its infinite library—these being physical properties that are reproduced to some extent.

Normally, programmed molecules are conveyed via a brain drip. Clones utilized for labor and the military have their training transmitted to them whole-cloth in this manner, likewise a deceased wealthy person is transferred into a clone of their body.

Military clones were bred by the Earth Colonies for the express purpose of fighting the Blue War on Sinan. As a result, a cloned soldier’s entire body is covered in a blue camouflage pattern.

Most clones do not live past five years old, the age at which they begin to get “uppity” and are often replaced.

Appearance: Clones look exactly like their originals. All Blue War clones look alike: blue camouflaged skin, bald and with similar facial features.

Labor clones have their heads tattooed in individual designs so as to distinguish them from each other. Numbers and letters usually figure into these design codes. Some have their names tattooed on their foreheads, and all tattoos are colored according to department: violet for Shipping, gray for the Vat, blue for Cryogenics, red for the Ovens, and so on. Nonetheless, the tattoo designs have some artistry employed. They might portray familiar landmarks from Punktown, or from Earth; animals, celebrities, sports stars, etc. Some labor clones also feature built-in wrist chronometers.

Culture: Blue War clones do not have a culture per se, but war survivors are often integrated into society as security officers and bodyguards. Other clones either assimilate into culture, replacing the deceased original, or become a disgruntled part of the lower class.

Demeanor: Blue War and laborer clones are stronger, hardier, with enhanced hearing and vision. Other clones match their originals, but diverge with experience. Clones seldom smile.

Equipment: Blue War clones are versed in weapon technologies used during the Blue War, but quickly adapt to any other armor and weapons they can get their hands on.

Occupations: Blue War clones’ striking appearance tends to engender prejudice wherever they go, and their reputation as warriors ensures that these war veterans can find few positions besides mining work or as security guards. Other clones are rarely noticed.

Religion: Few Blue War clones find religion. They are all too aware of how they came into the universe and how expendable they are.

Creating a Clone Character

Playing a clone of a human (technically illegal) or a labor clone is exactly like playing a human, so they are created the same way. The only difference is how they are treated by the naturally born citizens of Punktown, or “birthers.” If their clone status is known or even later revealed, they suffer an immediate -20% to their Status skill.

Blue War Clones were bred for battle and to survive the rigors of war. As such, they gain +2 to STR, CON, and SIZ. Their blue-patterned camouflaged skin and bald heads forever mark them as an outsider, someone not to be completely trusted or accepted. They get -2 to APP, -2 to their starting money (because it’s not easy for them to find employment), and -20% to their Bargain, Disguise, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Persuade, and Status skills (which means player must pay 20 skill points for each skill at character creation just to break even).

Deadstock

Cloning sentient beings is not legal, but that hasn’t stopped enterprising businesses from manufacturing meat. Deadstock, as they are nicknamed, are bio-engineered meat animals such as cows, pigs, chickens, Kalian glebbi, and so on, but grown without heads, usually without limbs, often without any bones or internal organs, not to mention fur or feathers. After the debacle of bio-engineered monsters at deadstock-producer, Alvine Products, some have sworn off eating deadstock entirely.

Kalian

Kalians are a traditional race impossible to ignore because of their uniform gray hue.

Appearance: Kalians are a strikingly handsome race with glossy gray skin ranging from light gray to charcoal. Their lips tend to be very full, their eyes, slanted in an oriental fold, have no whites, entirely black like volcanic glass. Their eyebrows tend to grow together, but most traditional men and women shave the brow to separate them. Their hair is as black as their eyes. Most Kalian men prefer their women a bit on the voluptuous, meaty side, and they naturally tend toward this.

Culture: Kalian women are forbidden from showing their hair or speaking in public on penalty of being stoned to death or having acid thrown in their faces. A woman's hair is for the eyes of her husband only, because it is the alluring, tempting weave of lust and evil personified.

Kalian women also receive ritual scarring the first day of their first period. These scars vary very little, always on the face; three lines begin just above the central point of the eyebrow and fan out across the forehead into a three-pronged fork. They almost look like an exaggeration of wrinkles of intensity or concentration. In addition, they sport a scar on either cheek, sideways Vs pointing inward toward the nostrils, so that the top branch of each design curves along the cheek bone, the bottom branch running down to the edge of the jaw. The scars are squiggly and raised, like keloids, dubbed

the Veins of Ugghiutu, their demon/god that creates and destroys all life. When a Kalian girl first menstruates her soiled clothing is burned and the ashes are rubbed into the wounds on her face, forming the silvery-sheened scars. Sarikian, a Kalian tribe primarily inhabiting the large island, Sarik Duul, are much more moderate in its views than other Kalians — they wear red turbans rather than blue. Female Kalians do not naturally lubricate, like human women, during intercourse — the men do.

Demeanor: Kalians are hard to read by human standards, as the uniform color of their eyes makes them inscrutable and — to some — very attractive. The women that mingle with humans and are not wed to traditional values tend to be considerably more free-spirited and headstrong; a result of their struggles to gain their independence.

Equipment: Nearly all Kalians wear turbans, which might be silken or rough, wrapped close to the head or piled high into cones or thickly coiled into bulging globes. They are always blue, anything from powder blue to deep indigo, but blue. Their clothing varies from business suits to loose, pajama-like affairs to robes (always long-sleeved on women) and metallic gold is the preferred color; even suits of red or green silk tend to be heavily embroidered with gold thread.

Traditional Kalian female garments are gauzy white dresses that end just above their bare feet. They wear tight white blouses with long sleeves, which button up to their throats, showing no cleavage, but which leave their midriffs bare down to the low-slung skirts.



Occupations: Kalias can be found in the full range of occupations, from Forcer to actor.

Religion: The Kalias worship the demon-god, Ugghiutu. He takes many forms, and often appears as a house or even masquerades as a temple to himself, to lure inside unwary souls so as to test them. He represents the endless cycle of life, death, and renewal. Ugghiutu feeds on life to create new life. He is also believed to have created the humanoid races, and he is worshipped by the Cult of the Outer Gods.

Kalias have a Day of the Dead equivalent, Death Day, where they offer up their bodies to house the spirits of all the dead from within the year. Each wears a mask representing a dead friend or loved one as they would have appeared at the time of death. Each of the Kalias becomes a walking Nirvana containing generations of deceased spirits.

Creating a Kalian Character

Thanks to their unearthly good looks, Kalian characters get +2 to APP. Due to their worship of Ugghiutu and other “Outsiders,” Kalias are more in tune with the esoteric than most races and so they gain +20% to Occult. Because they place such an emphasis on the spiritual and mystical, they get a -10% to Repair, Science, and Technical skills.

Sinanese

Indigenous to the extradimensional world, Sinan, this blue-skinned race, very similar to Earth’s Asians, may well be their planar doppelgangers. There are two different factions of Sinanese: the Ha Jiin and the Jin Haa.

The Jin Haa flag is orange as a sign of independence from the Ha Jiin nation.

Appearance: The Sinanese coloring ranges from a robin’s egg blue to an intense sky blue, or an even darker shade. Their hair is midnight black with a metallic red sheen, worn short on the men and very long on the women. Their eyes are likewise black as volcanic glass and shaped by what is called, on Earthers of Asian lineage, the epicanthic fold. When caught by light in a certain way their eyes glow a bright, unsettling red. Sinanese that lost family members in the Blue War sometimes carve scars in the form of horizontal bands on their own cheeks in tribute to them.

Upon death, wisps of black vapor escape from the Sinanese chest. Not sinon gas, but a related phenomenon, it occurs only when a Sinan person has his or her heart laid open. Sinanese haters make much of the black fog in their hearts.

Culture: The Sinanese inter their dead in tunnel systems beneath the jungle, first wrapping the corpses in huge leaves and slathering them with a yellow-colored preservative. The interaction of this preservative with the Sinanese’s body as it decomposes results in the release of a blue gas called sinon. The Ha Jiin believe this gas is the spectral essence of their ancestors, but the Earth Colonies covet this gas for its many scientific applications. During the Blue War, the Earth Colonies backed the Jin Haa minority in their battle for independence so as to gain better access to sinon gas.

Ha Jiin Clerics

There is a Ha Jiin monastic order with a remarkable appearance. Each monk wears a beautiful blue robe, a small black hat with three corners, and has a gaping hole in place of a face. From young initiates, they smoke an incense with cancerous properties, that eats away their faces over the years, a demonstration of their selfless devotion. Despite their lack of lips with which to speak, they are still able to chant, and if they really care to, these monks produce a certain pitch that can kill a man. In addition, some monks have developed PSI abilities through arduous training, and can even command animals to do their bidding. During the Blue War, captured Ha Jiin monks enticed birds through the windows of their cells, filled their tiny minds with messages, and sent them to seek out their brothers. Monks have also been known to attack their enemies by telepathically controlling the fearsome dog-like animals called snipes.

HA JIIN MONK, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6+4	14-15
POW	4D6+6	20-21
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D6	4

Move: 10

Hit Points: 14

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Sonic Blast (see Powers)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: The cleric has psychic abilities he believes have been granted by his deity. These powers are Astral Projection, Clairvoyance, Divination, Emotion Control, Empathy, Mind Shield, Precognition, and Sensitivity, all at the priest’s POWx1%.

Skills: Art (Illuminated Manuscripts) 35%, Command 25%, Craft (Bookmaking) 35%, Dodge 40%, First Aid 45%, Insight 35%, Knowledge (Religion) 70%, Listen 45%, Literacy (Common) 70%, Perform (Hymns) 35%, Persuade 45%, Spot 40%, Status 35%, Teach 30%

Powers: To hit with a Sonic Blast requires a successful Agility roll opposed by the target’s CON on the resistance table. Success means that the target is stunned for 1D3 rounds.



Ha Jiin men find white hands to be highly erotic; certain high class prostitutes are known to treat their hands with a special procedure that turns them to an alabaster-like consistency, making them incapable of doing work. For prostitutes preferring to maintain the use of their hands, white latex gloves suffice. Some men may even wear white rubber gloves to pleasure themselves, or purchase porcelain hands in Di Noon sex shops.

Demeanor: The Sinanese find humans to be suspicious at best and hated at worst. Like Kalians, their eyes are inscrutable to people accustomed to being able to read strangers, making a Sinanese ally alluring and a Sinanese enemy terrifying.

Equipment: Tah soup is a Ha Jiin staple. Sinanese weapons are specialized for their jungle planet and the Blue War, which range from sniper rifles to melee weapons.

Occupations: Most Ha Jiin live humble lives in small villages, tending farms and domesticated animals, though there are technologically advanced cities like the Ha Jiin capital, Coo Lon, in which the residents engage in much more modern forms of employment.

Religion: Many Ha Jiin follow the teachings of the great prophet, Ben Bhi Ben. Small hamlets are often surrounded by walls of riveted metal plates upon which is rubbed a caustic agent to form “rust art” figures, and Ben Bhi Ben is usually predominant in these displays. Especially fervid followers of Ben Bhi Ben’s teachings vigorously rub their hands

across his rust-caked image, rasping their palms against the scaly red stains until blood flows. If their wounds grow infected, their faces paralyzed with their mouths grimacing wide open, this is considered a blessing. They are thought to be “singing to the prophet” – despite the fact that that they can utter not mych more tha a gurgle through their locked open jaws, and death soon follows.

Creating a Sinanese Character

Coming from a much more savage, jungle world, the Sinanese have evolved to be more agile and quick than humans just to survive and therefore gain +2 to DEX. Thanks to their blue-skin and agility they gain +10% to Stealth. Their keen eyes give them +10% to Spot and they even have a chance to detect the use of some invisibility screening, such as when metamaterials are utilized. Because of their use in hunting and warfare, combined with their good eyesight, they have a natural affinity for long rang shooting and get +10% when using rifles. However the Sinanese are inferior to humans technologically and on their own world their science and technology is only on par with Earth during the 20th century. For these reasons, Earth has been able to exploit Oasis and Sinan. The Sinanese who live in Punktown have adapted well to its far more advanced tech, but they still suffer -20% (which means when rolling up a Sinanese, the player must pay 20 skill points just to break even) to Repair, Science, and Technical skills. Because many harbor ill will towards them over the Blue War, they also get -20% to Status.

Robot

Most robots in Paxton are mindless and strictly follow a preset program or are controlled remotely by someone. However, there are some equipped with Encephalon bio-computers, which gives them INT, POW, and true self-awareness. These robots have a true AI (Artificial Intelligence) and because of that, some activists see them as real living beings, despite being mostly inorganic, and think they should have the same rights as any sentient life form. However, such enlightened people are very few and far between in Punktown and the vast majority of people continue to see bots as things: tools and property. Self-aware robots live a hard life and many of the laws that protect “real” people do not apply to synthetic life. So many people of Paxton refuse service of any kind to a “toaster”, “clanker”, or bot, and they still can’t legally own property as they are seen, in the eyes of the law, as property.

Appearance: Robots come in all shapes and sizes, or should that be makes and models? There is literally no limit to what they can look like, but to keep things simple for the Gamemaster, and to keep the game as fair and balanced as possible, all PC robots are humanoid shaped. However, due to their artificial construction, they are almost always much heavier than they appear. A robot of average build and six feet in height could weigh up to 400 pounds. However, some deluxe models, and especially sex bots, are made of lightweight materials and can weigh the same as a human of the same size and shape. Finally, in their natural state, robots always look like robots, made from metal, plastic, and poly-materials, but many self-aware bots cover themselves in NuFlesh or TruTouch skin. A complete body suit of NuFlesh costs 5000 Munits and one made of TruTouch costs a tidy 50,000 Munits.

Cultural Skills: As the newest, and manmade, race, robots have no culture of their own. What little they do have is based on humanity, who they usually mimic and often strive to emulate. Due to their computerized brain, robots excel at Knowledge, Language, Repair, Science, and Technical skills. However, robots, even those specifically designed to interact with humans directly, have a hard time mastering emotions and social interactions and, therefore, have a hard time with Art, Bargain, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Insight, Perform, and Persuade.

Culture: Most robots try not to draw attention to themselves. They strive to blend in because they know that is the only way they can live in man’s world. As such, their culture is humanity’s culture. Now, some bots rebel against this. They embrace their artificial nature and see themselves in all ways better than the “meatbags” that created them. These robots rarely hide behind artificial skin and live in the underground tunnels beneath Punktown with the mutants and other less savory residents. They often modify themselves to appear less humanoid, grafting on extra arms, moving about on tank-like treads or hover-drives, and other thoroughly robotic additions.

Demeanor: Due to their secretive nature, many robots that try to pass as human are soft spoken and unassuming. They try to blend in at all costs. If they are the kind of bot that rebels against synthetic discrimination by their organic oppressors, they are loud, obnoxious, and live to thumb their artificial noses at all of society’s rules and laws. There is no in-between with Punktown’s artificial citizens.

Equipment: Being an artificial life form, robots can modify themselves as much as they like, adding new bits of cybernetics as they wish, without losing any of the maximum Sanity score. With that option open to them, most robots spend the bulk of their money on modifying and improving themselves with newer and better hardware and software.

Occupations: Unless a robot is wrapped in synthetic skin, it is hard for them to find employment of any kind. Many have to work outside the law as criminals, muscle for hire, or “sex bot” prostitutes. Because of their enhanced affinity for science and tech, many “work from home” as computer programmers, tech support, or hackers, and thereby usually never have to meet their employers face to face.

Religion: Unlike all other races in Paxton, robots know exactly who their creators are. This has led to almost every robot either being an atheist, or actually worshipping humanity. That is not to say they think humans are divine, but they see them as ideal, something to be aspired towards. They so crave to be part of the human experience that they often wrap themselves in the finest TruTouch skin and take on human names. They usually live among humanity, studying their neighbors, learning how to be more like them. Bots that despise humans are either atheists or, if their hatred truly burns bright, they may turn to the Great Old Ones for the power mankind’s laws have denied them.

Creating a Robot Character

The key to playing a robot character is money. They have nearly unlimited potential to improve themselves; in game terms, they start off rather weak. As the “basic model” all robots begin by rolling their money with a -2 modifier (as it is hard for them to find work). All their primary characteristics begin at the “basic model” level of 10. They can then increase these characteristics at the cost of the new score times 200 Munits. Therefore, going from 10 to 11 in a stat would cost 11×200 or 2,200 Munits, and going from 11 to 12 would cost 12×200 or 2,400. Each point must be purchased individually, there are no shortcuts. Once a robot’s characteristic has reached 18, to increase it further requires special, expensive materials, costing 400 Munits per new level; going from 18 to 19 costs 19×400 or 7,600 Munits. Once a characteristic reaches 30, only the highest grade, top of the line materials suffice, so the multiplier increases to 600; going from 30 to 31 costs 31×600 or 18,600 Munits. The maximum a robot can increase any characteristic is 40.

Robots are immune to poisons and disease, although they can become infected with all sorts of nasty computer viruses. Their CON score represents their structural integrity and is used to determine Hit Points.

Robots begin with a SIZ of 10 and weigh 250 pounds, and every point of increased SIZ adds 25 pounds to their weight. The gamemaster should remember this if the robot ever walks over weak floors, tries to ride the average hover cycle, or otherwise tries to pass off as hu-

man. To utilize lightweight materials, the robot must pay 200 Munits per point of SIZ it already has and increase the cost of any future SIZ increase by 200.

Robots begin with 1 point of Armor Rating due to their artificial construction. They can increase this armor up to a maximum of 10 at the cost of 15,000 Munits per level. Robots cannot get subdermal armor installed.

Robots begin with +20% to all Knowledge, Language, Repair, Science, and Technical skills. They get -30% to Art, Bargain, Etiquette, Fast Talk, Insight, Perform, Persuade, and Status skills.

Robots can equip nearly all cybernetic mods available in Punktown (with the exception of subdermal armor) and even more exotic hardware not listed here at the GM’s discretion. The more militant robots may well have various weapons, concealed and not, added to their frames.

Tikkihotto

Tikkihotto appear to be entirely human except for their wavering ocular filaments radiating out from deep skull sockets, like worms from the eyes of a dead man.

Appearance: Tikkihotto are remarkably similar to humans, with the exception of their eye tendrils, which whiten with age. Indeed, some Tikkihotto have had their tendrils cybernetically replaced to blend in with human society, shortening the tendrils so that they “plug in” to realistic-looking eyeballs.

Cultural Skills: Tikkihotto visual abilities are unparalleled; they can see in the dark and observe colors unde-



tectable to humans, they can even discern the simple transdimensional life forms that ever float in the air like plankton. They are the only species capable of perceiving the color shrain. Even cybernetics cannot perceive it; no scan or graphics program developed can reveal the color as the Tikkihotto claim it should be seen. Attempts to achieve the desired effect have been dismissed by Tikkihotto. More controversial is the fact that the color cannot be viewed even from experiencing a Tikkihotto's perceptions through virtual linkup and memory recording. Tikkihotto can also read emotions as readily as they can see in the dark.

Tikkihotto have dark vision up to 15 meters and are unaffected by penalties for darkness. They can also detect hidden supernatural entities at the same distance. They get a +10% bonus to Insight checks as well.

Culture: Tikkihotto culture is conservative, as indicative of their religious holidays, but has largely been subsumed into the larger human culture. As a result, many of their traditions have been subverted to be more celebratory and less religious, a fact that some traditional Tikkihotto find intolerable.

Tikkihotto written language might best be described as hieroglyphics, which also incorporates geometric designs, and the figures in the pictographs – while sometimes suggesting people, animals, physical articles – are more often than not unidentifiable. Color is important too; colored symbols intertwine, and make new colors where they overlap, which express various layers of meaning. Some characters must be read left to right as others are read right to left. The length of serifs, the space between symbols, the thickness and thinness and angles of symbols are all layers of meaning. All of which has to be taken in simultaneously, which only Tikkihotto can do.

Demeanor: Humans find it difficult to relate to Tikkihotto. Humans like to look someone in the eye, while Tikkihotto offer only squirming worms. As the more alien of the humanoid races, they tend to be less accepted in mainstream society. Of course, in Punktown everyone is as beautiful as they are ugly – there are porn stars that put their eye tendrils to creative use.

Equipment: Tikkihotto slim daggers and traditional axes are sometimes in vogue amongst gang members.

Occupations: Tikkihotto senses make them excellent sentries, trackers, and pilots requiring their finely-tuned visual acuity.

Religion: Tikkihotto believe in the five inner wheels of life, a concept similar to the seven chakras of Earth lore. Tikkihotto celebrate two holidays; one is a harvest festival, and the other a spring festival, celebrating the cycle of rebirth, and the emergence of new life. At the spring festival a great Tikkihotto bird-like mammal is cooked with babies still in its womb. Its skin is made thin and soft from a special steaming process. The amniotic fluid is intoxicating and slurped through a straw that punctures the flaccid body. The last person to enter the feast hall instead drinks the bird's brains.

Creating a Tikkihotto Character

Tikkihotto are so similar to humans that they roll the same dice for characteristics. However, if the Sinanese have good eyesight, the Tikkihotto have incredible eyesight. They get +30% to Spot and not only do they have a chance to detect invisibility screening metamaterials like the Sinanese, they can even see colors no other race can even detect. They also gain +10% to Track and Insight because their sharp eyes can detect subtle variations and “ticks” when someone is lying or bluffing. Due to their cultural heritage placing an importance on melee combat, they also gain +10% to Knives and Axes. Tikkihotto are vulnerable to degenerative diseases that can rot their eye tendrils and render them blind – unfortunately very prevalent in Punktown, perhaps due to pollution. They are considered to always being in “less-than-ideal” conditions and can only roll their CON x 1 to resist a disease.



Skills

Punktown uses skills from *Basic Roleplaying*, summarized below. If you plan to use *Call of Cthulhu*, Knowledge (Occult) should be used as the Occult skill.

Appraise: Appraising any object's value, from art to weapons to alien technology.

Art (architecture, musical composition, musical instrument, painting, photography, sculpture, writing): Creating an art form.

Bargain: Haggling and compromise.

Brawl: Fisticuffs.

Climb: Uh, climbing.

Command: Give orders to an organization or a crowd, pulling rank as needed.

Craft (various): Identify and make an object that has an immediate purpose besides art.

Cthulhu Mythos: Knowledge of the forbidden, the unknown, and the unknowable.

Demolition: Blowing stuff up.

Disguise: Changing one's appearance.

Dodge: Avoiding attacks.

Drive: Driving wheeled and hover vehicles.

Energy Weapon (pistol, rifle): Accuracy with non-projectile weapons.

Etiquette: Identify social guidelines and adhere to them, particularly etiquette of other alien cultures.

Fast Talk: Bluff, lie, cajole.

Fine Manipulation: Disabling devices, be it locks or traps.

Firearm (machine gun, pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, submachine gun): Projectile weapons.

First Aid: Emergency medical care.

Fly: Winged beings capable of flight can use this skill to maneuver as well as anyone flying with the aid of technology but not in a vehicle.

Gaming (board games, video games, card games): Play a game and play it well. Particularly important on reality show contests and the Ultranet.

Grapple: Wrestling.

Heavy Machine (armored vehicles, trans): Any wheeled or hover vehicle larger than a van.

Heavy Weapon (rocket launchers, mini guns, flamethrowers): The big stuff that isn't a long-arm or a firearm.

Hide: Hiding.

Insight: See through a bluff, detect a lie.

Jump: Wee!

Knowledge (academic lore, accounting, anthropology, archaeology, art history, business, espionage, folklore, culture (alien or human), history, law, linguistics, literature, occult, philosophy, politics, region (city or planet), religion, streetwise): Know stuff about stuff.

Language: Speaking, comprehending.

Listen: What?

Martial Arts (various): Hitting people with style.

Medicine: More advanced than first-aid, long-term medical care.

Melee Weapon (various): Hitting people with other things.

Navigate: Avoiding getting lost and finding your way.

Parry: Blocking an attack

Perform (act, dance, play instrument, ritual, sing): Artistic expression that involves the body in real time.

Persuade: Argue and convince through diplomacy.

Pilot (planes, helicopters, boats, helicar): VTOL vehicles that can navigate the upper reaches of Punktown as well as watercraft.

Psychotherapy: Healing the mind.

Repair (electrical, electronic, mechanical, structural, quantum): Fixing stuff.

Research: Digging up information using books and digital sources.

Ride: Use an animal for transport.

Science (astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, cryptography, genetics, geology, mathematics, meteorology, natural history, pharmacy, physics, planetology, psychology): Reach scientific conclusions about known and unknown phenomena.

Sense: Taste, touch, and smell.

Sleight of Hand: Prestidigitation, picking pockets.

Spot: Notice details.

Wealth

Punktown uses a system similar to *Call of Cthulhu*. Professions add bonuses or penalties to this roll, but cannot be less than 1 or higher than 10. Roll 1d10 to determine starting munits:

- 1: 15,000 munits
- 2: 25,000 munits
- 3: 35,000 munits
- 4: 45,000 munits
- 5: 55,000 munits
- 6: 75,000 munits
- 7: 100,000 munits
- 8: 200,000 munits
- 9: 300,000 munits
- 10: 500,000 munits

Professions

Punktown accommodates all walks of life, from the high-flying businessman to the lowly drone, from vagrants to the filthy rich, from gang bangers to Forcers laying down the law. All of them have their place. Children, few in number and raised within high-security facilities to shield them from the city's seething violence, and professions relating to them are rarely seen in Punktown.

Artist

There are several artist colonies in Punktown and throughout the known universe. Artists that deal with the esoteric frequently come into contact with dangerous elements like gangs and cults. They are also vulnerable to extradimensional beings infiltrating their dreams.

Wealth Modifier: -1

Skills: Any two Art skills, any Craft, Insight, one appropriate Knowledge skill, Language (Other), Language (Own), Listen, Research, and Spot.

Hitman

Hitmen tend to operate by a code of honor, elevating them above the common thugs so prevalent in Punktown. Because none but the hitmen are directly endangered, the authorities tend to look the other way, especially since a great deal of money is always concerned. Hitmen pride themselves on never having harmed a noncombatant.

Wealth Modifier: +1

Skills: Dodge, Hide, Listen, Spot, Stealth, and five of the following: Brawl, Disguise, Drive, Electronics, Grapple, Firearm (any), Fine Manipulation, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Throw, Track.

Child of the Elders

Primarily an Earth cult, the Children of the Elders have spread throughout the universe, worshipping the Elder Gods in their opposition of the Old Ones. The Tikkihotto have an equivalent cult known as the Church of the Burning Eye – a curious name, since Tikkihotto have no eyes.

Wealth Modifier: -1

Skills: Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge (Anthropology), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Occult), Language (Other), Language (Own), Research, and any two other skills: Art (any), Craft (any), Knowledge (Archaeology), Medicine, Science (any), or Status.

Special: This cult has access to spells. See the spells section for more details.

Corporate Drone

Making up the majority of Punktown's middle-class, most corporate drones have desk jobs, some are researchers, and none have much hope of doing anything else but what they're already doing. Corporate drones are invisible in large numbers and are frequently the targets of crime.

Wealth Modifier: +1

Skills: Craft (Computer Hardware or Code), one Knowledge skill, Language (Other) (a programming language), Repair (Electrical), Repair (Electronics), Research, Science (Mathematics), Status, Technical (Computer Use), and choose one of the following skills as specialties: Accounting, Hide, or Knowledge (Law).

Entertainer

Punktown plays host to a wide variety of entertainers making their living busking on the streets or performing for the VT.

Wealth Modifier: -1

Skills: Art (any), Disguise, Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation, Insight, Language (Other), Language (Own), Listen, Perform (any), and Persuade.

Forcer

Punktown's law enforcers, or Forcers, carry blue badges with their photo ID along with a weapon. Their uniforms are entirely black, and they often wear helmets – sometimes covering their faces as well as their heads. To move up in the ranks requires first becoming a character, then a detective, which requires work with a senior partner for several years.

The toughest members of the force are assigned Car Thirteen, on Forma Street. It's a real war zone and the Forcers have to fight rough. So after enough complaints and charges and stink from civil groups and lawyers, the force discharges the man or men and starts over. Once a Forcer is detailed to Car Thirteen, his career is in its last stage, be it months or, if he's real lucky, five years.

Wealth Modifier: None. Forcers begin play with a pistol and padded vest.

Skills: Brawl, Dodge, Fast Talk, Knowledge (Law), Listen, Spot, and four of the following: Drive, Firearms (any), First Aid, Grapple, Insight, Knowledge (Region or Group), Language (Other), Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Pilot (any), Status, Technical (Computer Use), or Track.

TYPICAL FORCER

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+3	13-14
CON	3D6+3	13-14
SIZ	3D6+3	13-14
INT	3D6+3	13-14
POW	3D6+3	13-14
DEX	3D6+3	13-14
APP	3D6+3	13-14

Move: 10

HP: 13-14

Average Dam Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Assault Engine 50%, 2D6+2
Grapple 65%, Special

Armor: 8-point plastic vest (4-point vs. melee)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Brawl 65%, Dodge 40%, Drive 55%, Insight 35%, Knowledge (Law) 50%, Language (English) 80%, Listen 50%, Persuade 50%, Sense 30%, Spot 45%, Stealth 30%, Throw 45%

Powers: None

Gang Member

Organized crime is as rife as the disorganized gangs that seethe through Punktown. The foremost is the Neptune Teeb organization, the biggest illegal arms and black market dealer in Punktown, and with their illicit cloning and manifold other services, they are considered a threat the Health Agency has been trying to crack for years. Running the dirty work for the Teebs, and other “syndy” families, are several kinds of gangs in Punktown.

Dimensionals: An errant gang of Bedbug criminals said to live in the subway tunnels and forgotten grottoes far below Punktown, sealed off by humans after the destruction of the great earthquake.

Folger Street Snarlars: This gang wears white leather jackets and some of them wear pink rubber swimming caps on their heads.

Nuts: A robot gang, formed after the Union War from the wreckage of industrial robots. The latest generations have never worked for humans and never will.

Tin Town Terata: This gang of mutants from the slum called Tin Town uses an identifying symbol that resembles a radioactive warning sign with three Ts at its center. They are also known as the Triple Ts. At its height, the gang had over thirty members.

Triad: Led by Ng Yueh-sheng, this is the descendant of the same Earth gangs of centuries past.

Martians: A young gang that exiles its members when they reach 13. They have a code of honor that does not allow them to shoot an unarmed man. They frequently take Purple Vortex to keep them pumped up.

Trogs: A gang numbering in the hundreds. All are dressed entirely in black, with long black raincoats and black fedoras, carrying hooked black canes, black goggles with a dot of red light in the center of each lens, skull-like on their impassive pale faces.

Wealth Modifier: -1

Skills: Bargain, Hide, Stealth, Drive or Ride, and choose any six of the following as appropriate to gang affiliation: Appraise, Brawl, Climb, Fast Talk, Fine Manipulation, Firearm (any), Gaming, Grapple, Insight, Jump, Knowledge (Law), Listen, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (any, usually knives or clubs), Persuade, Spot, Throw.

Health Agent

The Health Agency of Paxton (HAP) regularly fields agents with the ultimate authority in preventing deadly outbreaks, as was drastically realized with the outbreak of M-670, when agents were authorized to use deadly force. In exchange for their autonomy, HAP agents are constantly monitored – their pistols have cameras built into them, and any HAP agent is subject to having his or her memories replayed as evidence.

Wealth Modifier: +1. Health Agents begin play with a pistol and padded vest.

Skills: Firearm (Handgun), Knowledge (Law), Listen, Persuade, Spot, Research, and choose four of the following: Art, Brawl, Disguise, Dodge, Drive, Fast Talk, Firearm (any), Grapple, Hide, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (Other), Language (Own), Medicine, Science (any), Technical (Computer Use), Stealth, or Track.

Student

Punktown has two colleges, Paxton University and Beaumonde Women’s College. Students venturing beyond the campus grounds frequently get themselves into trouble. Perhaps the most vicious of the student body are the Sisters of No Mercy, an attractive upper-class sorority that castrate vagrants as part of their initiation in veneration of “what it takes” to succeed in the business world.

Wealth Modifier: None

Skills: Language (Own), Research, and choose eight other skills as courses of study, as appropriate to the setting and concept. Common choices are from the following list: Art (any), Craft (any), First Aid, Insight, Knowledge (any), Language (Other), Listen, Medicine, Repair (any), Perform, Persuade, Psychotherapy, Science (any), Technical (Computer Use), and one Physical skill (if involved in athletics).

Ten Men

A vigilante group of ten individuals that helps fight back against Punktown's rampant crime.

Wealth Modifier: -1

Skills: Climb, Hide, Listen, Navigate, Spot, Stealth, Track, and three of the following as appropriate to setting and concept: Drive, Firearms (any), First Aid, Grapple, Insight, Knowledge (Region or Group), Language (Other), Martial Arts, Melee Weapon (any), Missile Weapon (any), Pilot (any), Status, or Technical (Computer Use).

Theta Researcher

The Earth colonial government commissions and funds Theta researchers to explore other dimensions to study the trace-energies of "dead" humans and humanoids. Theta researchers are akin to astronauts in this fashion, as they wear spacesuits to protect them from hostile environments.

Wealth Modifier: +1. Theta researchers begin play with a pistol.

Skills: Climb, Language (Other), Language (Own), Persuade, Research, Spot, and four of the following: Knowledge (Anthropology, Group, History, Natural World, or Region), Drive, Fast Talk, Firearm (Pistol, Revolver, or Rifle), Navigate, Pilot (Aircraft or Boat), Ride, Science (Geology), Swim, or Track.

Union Worker

After the riots that caused the Union War, all Earth-operated colonies on Oasis are required by the Paxton Labor Organization to enforce the mandate that in every plant and factory, every institution of manufacture, the robots and fully automated processes do not outnumber the amount of blue collar workers, except where conditions are too dangerous. Economics means that in some cases it makes more sense to have the union members play cards and sleep than put them on the shop floor.

Wealth Modifier: None.

Skills: Climb, Craft (any), Drive, Brawl, Grapple, Heavy Machine, and four others, as appropriate to setting: Appraise, Fine Manipulation, Language (Other), Repair (Mechanical), Repair (Structural), Literacy or Technical (Computer Use).



CHAPTER FOUR: POWERS

They worshipped the Old Ones. And worse than that, these idiots were trying to pick the locks on their cells. Open the gates and the windows. In every way they could. Chants, rituals. It's always been said that the Old Ones would return when 'the stars were right'. That means, when the conditions of space and time were optimum for them to break free of the prisons the Elder Gods left them in. 'In strange eons', the dead gods are supposed to be resurrected. Well, it's time, Johnny. The stars are right. The strange eons are now.

—THE BONES OF THE OLD ONES

Punktown contains just about every form of supernatural phenomena. Mutations are rampant, some of whom are psychic. Cultists practice sorcery in dark corners of Punktown while Ha Jiin clerics use psychic powers to control animals and unleash psychic screams. Magic, however, is rare in Punktown, and the few spells known by casters are used only in dire emergencies. Like most things in Punktown, power comes with its own price.

Punktown sorcerers have access to a full range of spells, including those in *Basic Role-Playing* and *Call of Cthulhu*. Depending on the rules system you use, Punktown casters may have access to their spell lists. Due to their resistance to the sanity-draining effects of spells, most Punktowners do not suffer SAN loss from casting spells. For more information about SAN resistance, see Sanity in Punktown in Chapter Two: Gamemastering.

Sorcery

Ascending Mode

Range: Self, Sight

Ascending mode summons a demon, but it's possible to only read the first half of the chant to simply converse with a demon. It takes 1D8 hours to perform correctly. Unlike other sorcery spells, summoning a demon costs 9 power points, paid when the demon appears.

To conjure a demon to do the caster's bidding, the reader reads the entire Ascending Mode. The chant sounds like a person reciting backwards gibberish through a half-functional throat.

Binding a demon for a period of service costs the sorcerer 1 point of permanent POW (not power points), or 3 points of permanent POW to permanently bind the demon into an object. To attempt to bind a demon, the sorcerer must roll POW (before the permanent POW loss) vs. the demon's POW in a resistance roll. If successful, the sorcerer now owns his or her own demon.

When a demon is bound, the sorcerer can control its actions. If the roll fails, the demon possesses the caster.

The distinction between the two types of modes must be carefully tracked and if the chant is read from the same source (a book or disc) every chant counts as a summoning. This means that if a new owner comes into possession of a particular chant, it's possible to have a summoning already partially prepared. Experienced casters know to cast the Descending Mode completely before beginning any new spell, just in case. Inexperienced casters can inadvertently open themselves up to possession.

Possessed casters transform into a massive, corpulent mass of fat and muscle. The caster gains 1 point of Size per day, expanding like an inflated balloon filled with a gooey gray liquid, even in death. In this fashion, it's possible for a priestess' corpse to fill an entire room. This growth continues until the priestess reaches a certain size, whereupon she bursts, spreading 1d10 of immature forms of Ugghitu's spawn. Priestesses at the end of their life cycle seek out a body of water before bursting so that their spawn may have a chance at survival.

Each cast of this spell costs 1D3 SAN.

Power Points

Power points represent the amount of willpower or energy your character has to fuel magic spells, mutations, and psychic abilities. The Power characteristic is your character's maximum power points. When your character reaches zero power points, he or she falls unconscious. Spent power points regenerate at a rate of 1 per hour of sleep or total rest, or 1 for every two hours of normal activity. See BRP for more details.

Descending Mode

Descending Mode banishes a summoned demon. Reading the first half of the banishing chant closes the window between worlds if half of the Ascending Mode was previously invoked. Descending Mode sounds like Ascending Mode spoken backwards.

The sorcerer can dismiss a demon at any time by eliminating the binding, which takes 1D6 minutes, and costs no power points.

Doors Upon Doors

This spell blocks, redirects, or reroutes the pathways of dangerous energies that might gain access through a dwelling's primary entrance. It essentially allows the caster to now guard an entrance so that she is instantly aware of an intruder.

An area up to 15 meters in diameter is warded, giving the caster instant knowledge when a hostile force passes through the designated opening. Once the spell is cast, it is ready to go but does not actually activate until the line is crossed. No further effort is required to maintain the spell. It costs 3 power points to cast.

Line Travel

The caster draws a black web of lines and angles in the corner of the room to create a portal, allowing the caster to travel between dimensions, a disorienting and dangerous experience. Within this other dimension, it is possible to sense other dimensional creatures like Hounds. The caster must both navigate to a memorized location and avoid staying too long lest he be overwhelmed by the natural denizens, which take the form of black leech-like lampreys with flippered tails. These blood-sucking beasts swarm the caster in the other dimension after a few rounds, draining his blood and weakening him until he is so disoriented that he perishes between dimensions.

For each power point spent, the sorcerer may instantaneously teleport 1 SIZ point from his or her current location to another place within range of the power. For a living target, the opposing force is the target's current power point total. A willing target does not require a resistance roll. Line Travel does not need a targeting roll and can be used on anything within range. A failed defensive resistance roll inflicts 3D6 points of damage.

Each casting of this spell costs 1D3 SAN.

Mutations

Punktown's populace is riddled with mutations of every deformity, corresponding to every cruel whim of nature, distorted through radiation and pollution. Tin Town, a Punktown slum, contains the highest concentration of mutants, although mutants can be found everywhere begging for change.

Average mutants that are found on the street are considered "normal" mutants. The Gamemaster rolls D100 twice on the Random Mutations chart. Each mutation is minor, unless he rolls the same result twice—in this case, it is major.

Player characters may pick a number of mutations equal to 1/4 their character's initial CON characteristic (rounded up), with a minimum of 2. Major mutations count as 2, and major mutations can only be picked twice if the Gamemaster allows it. Players can take adverse mutations to increase the number of beneficial choices at a rate of one to one. Players cannot take more adverse mutations than 1/4 their character's initial CON.

See the *Basic Role-Playing* rulebook for more information about mutations listed here.

At the Gamemaster's discretion, the player can pick his character's mutations instead of rolling randomly.



Caro Turbida

A mutant with caro turbida, which means “disordered” or “confused” flesh, may take on the features of whatever humanoid he is observing, regardless of gender and race. The mutant can only take on features that are roughly within his own form or mass — a human mutant cannot take on features of a Tikkihotto, for example. This mutation can take effect involuntarily if the mutant is particularly excited, passionate, or distracted. Some mutants keep pictures of their true selves with them at all times to transform back into their baseline form; conversely, mutants who wish to become a specific person must study the person’s features for a few minutes or so. The change is gradual and noticeable, but once complete it is very difficult to detect. Less scrupulous mutants sell this service as a particularly flexible form of prostitution.

As a minor mutation, the mutant receives a +20% bonus to the Disguise skill. As a major mutation, the mutant receives a +40% bonus to the Disguise skill.

Dimensional Folding

The mutant can transform any object into essentially a two dimensional photograph, which he then picks up with astral hands, which in turn fold it again and again, making it smaller and tighter until it is no larger than a pill, then pressed against the navel of his mind, like an orifice situated in the front of his brain. It remains in extradimensional space until retrieved, using the same technique— astral hands pluck out the pill and unfold it into reality.

If the target is affixed to something or does not wish to be transported, the mutant must successfully overcome the item’s hit points (or armor value) vs. his or her POW on the resistance table. For a living target, the opposing force is the target’s current POW total. Dimensional Folding does not need a targeting roll and can be used on anything within range. A fumbled defensive resistance roll with this power causes the object to stick — objects can be folded into the space but not withdrawn unless the mutant can spend the points and make a successful Luck roll. Dimensional Folding is potentially lethal to living beings, who take 3D6 points of damage and the Gamemaster rolls on the Major Wound table to determine a likely effect for this level of trauma, adapting the result as appropriate.

The item or person stays there indefinitely, in a state of stasis, never rotting or aging. The death of the mutant causes all stored items to reappear in front of the corpse.

Dimensional Folding costs 1 power point per SIZ of the object.

Fish Mutant

Fish mutants have no hair and almost translucent gray flesh with squiggles of big black veins under it. They have silver, lidless eyes, no nose, wide mouths, almost as wide as a native Choom’s, with slick black lips, and pinkish, lacy gills on either side of the neck.

Mutants with this minor mutation can breathe both air and water. With a major mutation, the mutant receives a +40% bonus to the Swim skill.

Multiple Faces

The mutant possesses 1d4 additional faces of various sizes.

Each face bestows a +10% bonus to Spot and Listen skills per functional head. As a major mutation, the mutant receives an additional 1d4 faces.

Sonic Blast

In combat, the mutant can create a cacophony of painful sound energy.

A successful Agility roll opposed by the target’s CON on the resistance table is required to hit leaving the target stunned for 1D3 rounds if successful.

As a major mutation, all of the target’s Listen checks become temporarily impossible and any mental skill checks are Difficult for the duration of the stunned state. Each use of this mutation costs 1 power point.

Spider Form

This sickly mutation severely modifies the mutant’s form. Cadaverously thin, the mutant’s strangely bent stick limbs each have two extra joints, and their too-long fingers are super-normally jointed, as well. A wispy-haired head waves like that of a cobra atop a slender neck twice as long as it should be.

As a minor mutation, the mutant receives a +20% bonus to Dodge. As a major mutation, the mutant receives a +40% to Dodge.

Telepathy

This form of telepathy is actually a mutation, evidenced by purple veins at the temples, which throb when the power is actively used. The power doesn’t let the mutant read minds so much as sense them. The mutant can catch bits of peoples’ thoughts, which come through as static. In stressful situations a mutant may sometimes involuntarily transmit their thoughts, leading people to hear their thoughts as well. The mutant can detect powerful emotions, as well as the presence of encephalons and any bio-engineered being with a brain. Semi-mechanical beings are detectable as “bugs making sounds.”

When attempting to read a target’s mind, the mutant must defeat the target in a power point vs. power point conflict on the resistance table, after which he or she has access to the target’s memories and current thoughts for one full combat round. No roll is required on a willing target, but a new roll is required for each round the mutant wishes to use Telepathy on an unwilling target.

Successful use of Telepathy allows the mutant to perform one of the following actions:

- Detect a target’s powerful emotion (rage, fear, love, etc.).
- Pass along a simple message to the character, including instilling in the target’s mind a memory or mental image of some event, place, object, or person.
- Read the surface thoughts and feelings of a target.

Random Mutations

Roll	Mutation	Description
01-03	Adaptability	Survival in unusual environments.
04-05	Allergy	Skills reduced by contact to an allergen.
06-09	Biped	If two-legged, forced to walk (Quadruped) four-legged.
10-12	Camouflage	Skin has a concealing texture or color.
13	Caro Turbida	Increases Disguise skill
14-15	Coloration	Unusual coloration (minor only).
16-19	Congenital Disease	Suffers from a debilitating disease.
20-22	Decreased Characteristic	Characteristic decreased.
23	Dimensional Folding	Teleport objects into an extradimensional space
24-25	Disease Carrier	Carries (but is immune to) an infectious disease.
26-27	Fish Mutant	Fish-like characteristics give a Swim bonus.
28-29	Group Intelligence	Part of a hive mind.
30	Hands	Has extra hands or prehensile limb.
31-33	Hardy	Resistant to damage.
34-36	Hybrid	Has an animalistic trait.
37-44	Increased Characteristic	Characteristic increased.
45-48	Keen Sense	Has one or more sharp senses.
49-50	Luminescence	Emits a light from body.
51-53	Metabolic Improvement	Has a beneficial but unusual metabolism.
54-57	Metabolic Weakness	Has a disadvantageous and unusual metabolism.
58	Multiple Faces	Has more than one face.
59-60	Natural Armor	Has natural armor (scales, horn, hide, etc.).
61-65	Natural Weapon	Has natural weapon (spine, claw, teeth, etc.)
66-67	Pain Sensitivity	Low resistance to pain.
68	Pheromone	Emits chemicals that can affect others.
69-70	Reduced Sense	Impaired or missing primary sense.
71-72	Regeneration	Able to heal rapidly.
73-74	Sensitivity	Has an unusual affinity for a substance.
75	Sonic Blast	Release a stunning blast.
76	Speech (Mimicry)	Can imitate animal noises, or speak clearly.
77-78	Spider Form	Has a double-jointed body form.
79-81	Structural Improvement	Has an unusual and beneficial body form.
82-84	Structural Weakness	Has an unusual and disadvantageous body form.
85-86	Telepath	Can read minds and emotions.
87-89	Venom	Emits a natural poison.
90	Wings	Has wings and can glide or fly.
91-00	Gamemaster or player's choice	Pick or roll again.

Once established, Telepathy can be maintained by spending 1 power points. In addition, coordinating multiple simultaneous Telepathic activities requires an Idea roll for each additional target beyond the first. While the actions taken need not be the same, only a single Idea roll is required for similar actions.

At the beginning of each subsequent combat round following the first successful use of Telepathy, the target may attempt a new resistance roll of his or her POW vs. the mutant's POW. Success ends the telepathic connection and with a successful Idea roll the target also knows that he or she was in telepathic contact with the mutant. A special or critical success on this roll reveals the identity of the mutant. Failing the Idea roll leaves the target with a sense of some strange mental state, but otherwise unaware of the telepathic contact.

Activating Telepathy costs 1 power point or 1 power point per 3 points of the target's POW (divide POW by three, rounded up).

Random Diseases

Roll	Disease	Description
01-15	Garland Syndrome	Garland Syndrome is a terrible disease that mutates absolutely beyond recognition anyone infected within two weeks. Victims who succumb to it slip into a coma and end more fungus than man. It inflicts 1 hit point and 1 APP per day.
16-30	M-670	M-670 is a highly communicable sexually transmitted disease that is resistant to treatment. It is spread through body fluids. It takes hold fast, incorporates itself into the genetic material of the victim, and essentially becomes part of its host. It inflicts 1 hit point and 1 CON per day.
31-45	Orb Weaver	Orb weavers are curious tumors that first appeared on the planet Anul and can grow anywhere on the body. The tumor enlarges into a pink sphere, which grows larger and heavier with time. The sphere is always pink, swirled with white, and glossy as if made from marble. Victims only grow one, but it is always terminal – the sphere cannot be excised because its nerve filaments spread widely throughout the body, like intricately interwoven ivy through the body's nervous system on a microscopic level. To sever the parasite at the base kills a live host. It inflicts 1 hit point and 1 DEX per day.
46-60	The Puzzle	The Puzzle causes thyroid dysfunction, hair loss, liver damage, and epidermal crystallization. Layer upon layer of a victim's skin hardens into a glistening exoskeleton. Doctors must drill through it to insert a breathing tube and run another to administer fluids. Over a matter of weeks the petrified skin cracks into jigsaw-piece shapes and flakes off, exposing the muscle beneath. It is treated with skin replacement, but the results are imperfect. It inflicts 1 hit point and 1 CON per day.
61-75	Sinan STD	A very potent STD. It performs similarly to M-670. Once it goes full-blown it has a one hundred percent death rate, turning a person's brain to mush like spongiform encephalopathy. It inflicts 1 hit point and 1 INT per day.
76-00	Earth disease	Varies.

Random Drugs

Roll	Drug	Description	Effect
01-10	Anodyne Gas	Anodyne gas is sprayed into the back of the throat. Anodyne gas leaves the user insensate, such that addicts often urinate themselves without realizing it.	Speed of Effect: 1 combat round, POT: 15, Symptoms: APP bonus/damage
11-20	Beetle	This large beetle embeds in the chest like a lacquered chest plate. Two thin tendrils run from the creature's armor into the user's (usually blood-crusted) nostrils.	Speed of Effect: 1-15 minutes, POT: 20, Symptoms: STR bonus/damage
21-30	Buzzer	Buzzers are produced by the Nuts robot gang as a form of illegal income. They can be hidden in an organic being's pocket, transmitting signals to an adhesive backed disk affixed to the wearer's temple (these disks coming in a variety of flesh colors to blend in). The buzzer device, via this disk, then broadcasts pleasure to the brain. There are various settings for intensity, and various species of buzzer – some inspiring wondrous hallucinations, some heightening sexual pleasure, some (often worn by street gangs) triggering an exciting lust for violence.	Speed of Effect: 1 combat round, POT: 15, Symptoms: CHA bonus/damage
31-40	Fish	Addicts of the drug "fish" deteriorate, their whole bodies shrinking but their arms and legs – mere sticks – lengthening, the skin goes purple-black until they end up looking like mummified gibbons, and little larger than that.	Speed of Effect: 2-8 days, POT: 7, Symptoms: SIZ bonus/damage
41-50	Gold Dust	Gold dust heightens the senses and is used by psychics to keep them sharp.	Speed of Effect: 1 combat round, POT: 25, Symptoms: POW bonus/damage
51-60	Kaleidoscope	Oasis' human-footed shrimp can impart properties beyond the aphrodisiacal. A cousin to the breed used by Vietnamese cooks is used by drug peddlers as the main ingredient in the hallucinogenic nicknamed "kaleidoscopes."	Speed of Effect: 1 combat round, POT: 20, Symptoms: INT bonus/damage
61-70	Purple Vortex	A drug that is inhaled which causes hallucinations and, with prolonged use, caves the addict's face in. The edges of the addict's gaping hole of a face glow violet, thus the name. It is manufactured by the Coleopteroids, who consume humanoid souls on another plane of existence and then excrete them as gas. This gas is in turn manufactured into a drug by the Lobu.	Speed of Effect: 2-8 days, POT: 20, Symptoms: CON bonus/damage
71-80	Seaweed	Similar to earth's marijuana, Seaweed is also called iodine, smoked in pipes.	Speed of Effect: 1 combat round, POT: 10, Symptoms: INT bonus/damage
81-00	Earth Drug	Any of a number of typical earth drugs, including cocaine and marijuana.	Variable

DRUGS

All drugs have a potency value (POT) that is matched against the CON of a drugged character. If the drug overcomes a character's CON then the character takes full POT in damage to the listed characteristic. If the drug does not overcome the character's CON, the characteristic benefits from a half POT bonus instead. Buying drugs is cheap for new users, scaling upwards once the character is addicted, ranging from 1D10 x 100 munits to 1D10 x 1,000 munits. Dealer relationships, threats of violence, and extortion all effect the final price and are subject to change with each interaction.



CHAPTER FIVE: EQUIPMENT

Fashion in Punktown moves quickly, with almost no distinction between teen fashion and that of adults; the latest fashion, for example, is to open a flap on the rear of tight sweatpants. Most teenagers wear underwear, while the more daring wear nothing.

Day to day expenses for living in Punktown range from 250 munits/week for a flat in a dangerous neighborhood to 1,000 munits/week for something in an upper-class neighborhood. Houses can be rented at 20,000 munits/year, depending on location; homeownership spirals from 300,000 to millions of munits. The average meal costs about 5 munits for breakfast, 10 for lunch, and 20 for dinner. All costs are at the Gamemaster's discretion and the character's skill. For a quick and easy rule regarding other expenses, take the modern day equivalent in dollars and convert it directly to munits.

General Equipment

Equipment	Cost
Barrier	Res (1D6 * 1,000)
Encephalon	100,000
Friendly Flesh	5,000/hp healed
Nanomites	Res (1D6 * 10,000)
Nightvision Goggles	500
Skeleton Card	Res (1D6 * 1,000)
Ultraneet Pod	100
X-Ray Helmet	Res (1D6 * 5,000)

Barrier

Barriers carry a stunning charge, but during a condition or an alert to possible aggression—these force barriers deliver a considerable shock to anyone in contact with it.

When created, the barrier is 1 square meter per COST of the barrier, predetermined along the dimensions of width, height, and length. A barrier has 30 hit points against attempts to destroy it. Each additional COST added to the barrier (extra to those defining its size) adds 30 hit points to its hit point total.

Restricted Items

Restricted equipment (denoted by “Res” on each table) is illegal to purchase normally and is only available through the black market or military contacts. Stages for a purchase include finding a seller, negotiating a price, exchanging munits for goods, and getting away safely. Forcers may intervene, or the seller may try to rob or murder the purchaser. The black market is a highly variable place, so costs are determined randomly, modified by the purchaser's negotiating skills and the Gamemaster's discretion.

Encephalon

Cephalon Corporation are one of the main manufacturers of encephalon bio-computers, genetically engineered brains that look like convoluted grayish brain tissue inside a green solution. Encephalons are commonly squashed into rectangular, vertically positioned four foot-by-two foot-by-six inch deep containers, with wires snaking out of the mass and wavering like plants. While they are often used to power and control large structures, even cities, small, individual encephalons form the minds of certain robot models. Encephalons provide robots and computers with both INT and POW, since there is actually living meat housed within the metal.

Friendly Flesh

Friendly Flesh is a new, inexpensive concept in cell regeneration that doesn't require necessarily hospitalization, or intense cloning. The recipient's body is scanned as for a teleportation record, forming the cellular blueprint. In conjunction with pills taken daily, rapid cell regeneration kicks in upon injury. The cellular blueprint, which is on file at a specially equipped participating hospital, is alerted by the activity of the regenerative drug and transmits its blueprint information to the drug's 'memory.' Traditional cloning takes a week or so, but Friendly Flesh reduces it to merely a day. Friendly Flesh heals 1 hit point for every minute of game time.

Nanomites

Originally used for emergency surgical purposes in wartime, nanomites are a silvery substance, made on a microscopic level of insect/machine hybrids. They can be used for a variety of purposes: to temporarily relieve pain (+10

HP), to regenerate tissue (1 HP/round), or to even meld flesh (+10% Disguise). They can also be used for a darker purpose as a means of torture, causing the nanomites to attack a victim's nervous system. This particular method of torture is very difficult to detect and inflicts 1 SAN per torture session.

Nightvision Goggles

These black rubber goggles have dark red lenses and a knob on the frame allows the wearer to see in darkness. A keypad on the goggles amplifies light, and another tap of the keys projects a purple ray from a tiny lens on the goggles, with a notched wheel set into the goggles that increases the intensity of the ray until it turns a nonluminous black, acting as a sort of pointer. Thieves use this technology to depress security keypads through windows.

The goggles can see 15 meters in absolute darkness, despite the absence of light. Using the goggles cancels any negative modifiers to the Spot or combat skills due to darkness. The wearer cannot automatically discern between terrain features and living beings, however, and color detection is impossible.

Skeleton Card

A blank data card impregnated with hundreds of thousands of randomly generated key codes, used for illegal entry. It provides a +15% bonus to Technical (Electronic Security).

Ultrahat Pod

Acting as a wireless interface to the ultrahat, these pods are complementary to cybernetic ultrahat jacks.

X-ray Helmet

These helmets allow the wearer to see through 30cm building walls, blocked only by special high-density shielding, for a range of 15 meters.

Weapons

Weapons are common enough that just about anyone living in Punktown carries a gun.

Each weapon has the following attributes:

Name: The common name for the type of weapon.

Skill: The skill used for this weapon.

Base: The base chance to use the weapon.

Dmg: The damage done by the weapon. +db indicates damage bonus, and +½db is half the normal damage bonus.

Attk: How many attacks-per-round does the weapon allow?

Special: What type of special success does the weapon do?

Rng: The basic range of the weapon. At the weapon's basic range, the skill chance is unmodified. At medium range (double the basic range), the chance becomes Difficult, and at long range (four times basic range) it becomes ¼ the normal skill chance.

Hands: How many hands does the weapon require? 1H = one-handed, 2H = two-handed.

HP: The weapon's hit points.

Parry: Can the weapon be used to parry?

Mal: The weapon will malfunction if this is rolled. See "Malfunction" on page 60. If the weapon is not a firearm, the malfunction is some other mishap preventing immediate reuse of the weapon.

Ammo: How many times can the weapon be used without being reloaded or recharged?

Value: What is an average weapon's cost in an appropriate setting?

STR/DEX: What are the minimum STR and DEX required to use the weapon?

SIZ/ENC: The weapon's SIZ and Encumbrance value.



Assassin Rifle

If you can see your target on the other side of a computer monitor — either in a vid call or via security camera — this special ray rifle can strike them with a deadly beam of dark purple light. These rifles are also capable of firing right through any clear surface, such as a window.

Assault Engine

Assault engines are bulky but fairly lightweight weapons that can fire a number of different solid projectiles in fully automatic mode, shotgun shells from another muzzle (1D6-4D6 damage as a shotgun), gel capsules filled with corrosive plasma, a variety of beams (2D8 damage), and even mini-rockets (as 3D6 knockback damage).

Black Crystal

This tubular black weapon fires a black crystal bullet, which upon on contact with flesh immediately branches out, multiplying its mass in black obsidian spears. A terrible way to die.

Darwin

Touted as “the height of firearms evolution”, this pricey weapon has several features, including an optional silent mode.

Decimator

Decimators are glossy black ceramic revolvers ranging from .220 caliber up to the powerful, cannon-like .340. The .340 has an eight-inch barrel and a translucent grip of red plastic.

Weapon	Skill	Base	Damage	Attack	Special	Range	Hands	HP	Parry	STR/DEX	Mal	Ammo	Cost	SIZ/ENC
Assassin	Rifle, Energy	15%	2D8	2	Impale	100	2H	20	No	7/7	99-00	20	2500	1.5
Assault Engine	Rifle, Energy	25%	2D6+2*	2/burst	Impale	90	2H	12	No	10/5	00	30	3000	4.0
Black Crystal	Other	05%	2D6	1	Crystal	25	1H	6	No	10/8	93-00	6	3000	1.0
Darwin .55	Pistol	20%	1D8+2	2	Impale	20	1H	8	No	7/5	98-00	12	400	1.0
Decimator .220	Pistol	20%	1D6	2	Impale	15	1H	10	No	5/5	00	6	190	0.7
Decimator .300	Pistol	20%	1D8	1	Impale	25	1H	12	No	7/5	00	6	200	1.0
Decimator .340	Pistol	20%	1D10+2	1	Impale	20	1H	14	No	11/5	00	6	300	1.5
E-ikko	Axe	15%	1D8+2+DB	1	Bleed	Med	1H	15	Yes	9/9	-	-	10	1.0
Explosive Clay	Demolition	-	6D6/3 m	-	Knockback	21	-	15	No	-	99-00	-	3000	1.0
Gray	Pistol, Energy	20%	1D8	3	Impale	20	1H	5	No	5/5	00	12	350	0.3
Green	Pistol, Energy	15%	1D8+2	2	Impale	15	1H	14	No	7/5	99-00	30	400	1.0
Implode-Injector	Other	Brawl	3D6	1	Impale	Shrt	1H	7	No	5/7	97-00	10	3000	1.0
Imp Spray	Other	25%	1D4 vs.imps	1	-	2	1H	2	No	3/7	91-00	6	10	0.2
Katana	Sword	15%	1D10+1 +DB	1	Bleed	Med	1H/2H	15	Yes	11/11	99-00	-	300	1.5
Laser Knife	Dagger	25%	2D4+2+DB	1	Bleed	Shrt	1H	16	Yes	7/7	99-00	-	30	0.5
Machinegun Turret	Artillery	05%	4D6+4	Brst	Impale	200	-	48	No	-	98-00	1,000	Res	36
Missile Turret	Artillery	01%	8D6+8/2m	Brst	Impale	1,200	-	36	No	-	00	100	Res	44
Osprey .00	Pistol, Energy	05%	3D4+1	1	-	10	1H	12	No	7/5	96-00	30	650	1.0
Shock Turret	Artillery	10%	6D6	1/2	Knockback	40	-	24	No	-	97-00	Unlimit	Res	32
Shotgun, Automatic	Shotgun	30	4D6/2D6/1D6	1 or 2	Impaling	10/20/50	2H	14	No	11/5	00	8	100	4.0
Shotgun, Double-Barreled	Shotgun	30	4D6/2D6/1D6	1 or 2	Impaling	10/20/50	2H	12	No	9/5	00	2	75	3.5
Shotgun, Sawn-Off	Shotgun	30	4D6/1D6	1 or 2	Impaling	5/20/-	1H	14	No	9/5	00	1 or 2	50	2.0
Sinon Gas	Grenade	Throw	4D6/4m	1	Knockback	Thrown	1H	6	No	5/5	99-00	-	100	0.7
Sonic Turret	Artillery	05%	4D6	1/2	Stun	40	-	24	No	-	96-00	Unlimit	Res (1D6 x 2000)	32
Stun-Beam	Pistol, Energy	25%	2D6 Stun	1	Knockback	15	1H	16	No	5/5	00	12	200	1.0
Stun Wand	Other	Brawl	2D6 Stun	1	Knockback	Shrt	1H	7	Yes	5/7	97-00	-	400	1.0
Submachinegun	Sub. Gun	15	1D8	2/burst	Impaling	40	1H/2H	8	No	9/6	98-00	32	750	2.0
Tank Gun	Artillery	01%	15D6+4/4 m	1	Crush	9,000	-	36	No	-	00	1	Res (1D6 x 9000)	28
Thor .86	Pistol	20%	1D6	3	Impale	10	1H	6	No	5/5	00	8	55	0.7
Thor .93	Pistol	20%	1D8	2	Impale	20	1H	8	No	7/5	98-00	12	200	1.0
Tikkihotto Dagger	Dagger	25%	1D4+DB	1	Impale	Shrt	1H	15	Yes	4/4	-	-	15	0.5
Vlessi Axe	Axe	15%	2D6+2+DB	1	Bleed	Med	2H	15	Yes	11/9	-	-	20	2.0
Wolff .45	Pistol	20%	1D10+2	1	Impale	15	1H	8	No	11/7	00	8	300	1.5
Woman's Gun	Pistol	20	1D6	1	Impale	3	1H	5	No	5/5	00	12	55	0.3

Imps

Imps are audio and holographic images that interact with the real world, most popularly used as a form of persistent advertising that relentlessly pursues targets up to a certain distance. The legendary Screaming Pink Nazis cereal is the best example, which releases ten miniature soldiers that can be shot with a SPANK (Screaming Pink Automatic Nazi Killer) gun, sold separately.

A more sinister use of imps is for pornographic purposes in which a voyeur's wildest fantasy is fulfilled. Simulators provide the other senses – taste, touch, scent – as appropriate.

Imps have Dodge 50%, 1D6 hit points and the possibility of SAN loss depending on their appearance and function.

E-ikko

This colorful, traditional Tikkihotto axe is the in-vogue hand-to-hand combat weapon for gangs.

Explosive Clay

This green explosive compound is a “smart material” which can be programmed in a number of ways. The primitive mind incorporated into its very substance is receptive to signals transmitted from a remote detonator, and allows different chunks to be detonated individually, like grenades if thrown, or, all at once.

Gray

These odd, pale glossy gray handguns are less known for their stopping power than their ability to go undetected. This illegal and expensive weapon's composition uses metamaterials to screen itself from weapons scanners.

Green

Green pistols are blasters that utilize a beam that can pass through a screen as sunlight passes through a window pane.

Implode-Injector

Implode-injectors are bulky syringe-like pistols that resemble vaccine guns. They fire implosive devices into a target's body at point-blank range.

Imp Spray

When advertising imps become too annoying, imp spray drives them off.

Katana

Katanas are wielded by Ramon and Kodju, which ensures that imitators strive to live up to the weapon's fearsome reputation by wearing it openly on their backs, usually with a black trench coat. Genuine katanas are rare family heirlooms that fetch a high price on the black market.

Laser Knife

This utility knife, made by Guzman Hardware, gained some notoriety when two seven year old girls used it behind their school during second recess to kill a classmate they didn't like.

Machinegun Turret

Standard armament for Harbingers and tanks. See “Vehicles” on page 69 for more details.

Missile Turret

Standard armament for Harbingers. See “Vehicles” on page 69 for more details.

Osprey

The sleek, silvery Osprey fires solid .00 projectiles available to Forcers only—except when bought on the black market. Exploding when they strike a body, these devastating projectiles are not large and the Osprey carries thirty of the small pellets in its handle cartridge.

Shock Turret

Specialized armament for tanks using non-lethal forces. See “Vehicles” on page 69 for more details.

Shotgun

All three types of shotguns do damage by range. The first increment is the first damage dice, the second is the second, etc. Sawed-off shotguns are not effective beyond 20 yards.

Sinon Gas

The byproduct of Sinanese mummification is more than just the material used for interdimensional transportation; it's a highly volatile gas. Appearing as a blue haze, the extent of the gas has a lot to do with the age of the corpses stocked in Sinan tunnels—thin, attenuated mist if the remains are old, lusty and dense clouds if the more recently deceased are in residence—though very often, the dead are mixed together instead of segregated, families owning whole walls of niches so that they might bunk one day alongside their ancestors.

Stun Wand

A telescoping stun wand that can be adjusted to a lethal setting.

Stun-Beam 20-20

Stun-Beam 20-20 resembles a .25 automatic, but only fires pale yellow stun rays. The worst it can do is put an eye out, if fired at close range.

Stun Turret

Specialized armament for tanks using non-lethal forces. See “Vehicles” on page 69 for more details

Tank Gun

Standard armament for tanks. See “Vehicles” on page 69 for more details.

Thor

A ceramic semiautomatic handgun, commonly black in color, the Thor .86 is a smaller version of the Thor .93, holding thirty bullets in a staggered magazine or sixty plasma capsules.

Tikkihotto Dagger

This traditional dagger has a long blade nearly as slim as a spike.

Vlessi Axe

Vlessi shun projectile weapons, preferring instead to rely on their own interdimensional abilities to get them close enough to their targets to wield their signature war axe: a black metal tomahawk with a blade at one end of its head, a cruel spike at the other, the bottom of the handle tapering into another, thinner spike.

Wolff

The Wolff is a solid semiautomatic pistol that's considered by gun enthusiasts to be big and ugly.

Woman's Gun

This short and chunky plastic compact semi-auto has a magazine that can hold twelve tiny bullets. These pis-

tols come in a variety of bright colors, easy to find in a pocketbook in a dark parking lot or apartment, or softer aesthetically appealing colors to make the weapons seem less intimidating.

Ammunition

Ammunition	Dmg	db	Special	Cost
Plasma, Blue	D10	+2	Inflicts normal damage vs. non-organic	50 for 50 shots
Plasma, Green	D10	+3	Disintegrates destroyed/killed target	60 for 50 shots
Plasma, Red	D10	+1	None	40 for 50 shots
Shot, Crystal	D8	+1	None	30 for 50 shots
Shot, Lead	-	-	None	20 for 50 shots
AE Gel Caps	-	-	Inflicts disease, failing a CON roll suffers 1 CON/round	200 for 10 shots
Tranquilizer	-	-	POT 15 poison that causes unconsciousness in 1 combat round	100 for 10 shots

Plasma, Blue

Contained in gel-cap like bullets, blue plasma is stronger than red but only eats organic surfaces, like flesh, though the projectile penetrates cloth to get to the flesh.

Blue plasma converts all damage dice to D10 and inflicts an additional +2 damage. Against non-organic beings (e.g., robots) it inflicts normal damage.

Plasma, Green

Green eats anything — green can eat through a wall, or a car, before it burns out. With a couple of green caps, maybe even one good hit on a small body, it eats the whole corpse.

Green plasma converts all damage dice to D10 and inflicts an additional +3 damage.

Plasma, Red

Red eats a fairly small, limited hole before it stops dissolving.

Red plasma converts all damage dice to D10 and inflicts an additional +1 damage.

Shot, Crystal

Most often fired from shotguns, crystal shot makes a hole but then shatters against bone; it turns to shrapnel, and sends sharp dust all through the tissues, into the blood, where it is carried to the heart.

Crystal shot converts all damage dice to D8 and inflicts an additional +1 damage.

Shot, Lead

Lead shot makes a big hole, but a hole can be sealed. It's the standard ammunition for most weapons.

AE Gel Caps

After penetrating a subject or even bursting against

them, these projectiles release autolytic enzymes that set into motion a rapid, devastating self-destruction of the body's cells. They were used during the Blue War, but have since been banned due to public outcry that it was excessively cruel to make an enemy die by swiftly rotting away. The good thing about these bullets, though, is that the enzymes are always tailored to the particular race one was engaging, so that an Earth human accidentally caught in the crossfire or shot by a stolen gun loaded with such ammo does not suffer the same decomposition.

Targets struck by the gel caps contract a major disease upon contact, and failing a CON roll suffer -1 CON/round.

Tranquilizer

Tranquilizer bullets work fast, but some beings are immune. Some punks take drugs that nullify the effect, many people wear body armor, jackets with bullet and ray-proof mesh sewn in. The tranquilizer is a POT 15 drug that causes unconsciousness in 1 combat round.

Armor

Each type of armor has the following attributes:

Name: The common name for the type of armor.

AP: The amount the armor protects.

Burden: This describes the awkwardness or relative encumbrance of the armor. The game-master may use this value with the optional fatigue system.

ENC: This value is for a character of average SIZ (11-15). For SIZ 6-10, multiply the ENC value by .08; for SIZ 16-20 multiply the value by 1.2; for SIZ 21-25 multiply it by 1.4, etc.

Skill Modifier: This is a modifier to a number of your character's skills while this armor is worn. This modifier is applied to any listed skills (or skills within a category), and the game-master may assign it to any other appropriate skill.

Fits SIZ: The amount of variance the armor SIZ will accommodate from its default SIZ, expressed as a positive or negative number.

Time: How many combat rounds to put the armor on?

Locations: (Optional) If the optional hit location system is being used, what hit locations are covered by the armor? If hit locations are being used, use the fixed armor protection value.

Value: What is the armor's cost in an average setting?

Bulletproof Mesh

Bulletproof mesh is frequently woven into jackets and other clothing, which also makes the wearer impervious to moderate ray blasts.

Padded Vest

A light but tough padded vest of body armor.

Plastic Vest

This bulky plastic vest wards off enemy projectiles, but has a lower rating against other attacks.

Name	AP	Burden	ENC	Skill Modifier	Fits SIZ	Time	Location	Cost
Bulletproof Mesh	6	Light	2.0	-5% Physical	+/-1	1	All	350
Padded Vest	4	Moderate	11.0	-25% Physical	+/-1	2	Chest	250
Plastic Vest	4/8	Light	8.0	-5% Physical	+/-3	2	Chest	300

Cybernetics

While cybernetics are widely available in Paxton, but cybernetics, unlike some other games, do not define *Punktown*. This isn't a game of chrome-covered cyborgs with stylish hair hacking each other to pieces. Cybernetics are available, however, and if the characters want them, they're available to purchase. Cybernetics also make room for some quite colorful NPCs. The Gamemaster shouldn't feel limited to the cybernetics on this list, and if they wish, should create more. Also, should a character come up with an interesting cybernetic part or upgrade they want built, the Gamemaster should allow it, with caution.

Medicine being what it is in Punktown, there are nearly no natural deformities. After a fire or accident there is no need to remain crippled or scarred. The technology exists to replace the majority of limbs. There is no need to go bald, become obese, or even shrivel up with age so quickly. There are but two reasons why a Punktown citizen isn't improved in some way: poverty or pride. So whether by accident, mutation, or because the citizen just wants to improve their body, there is a massive choice for upgrading, but also a massive cost, and not just in munits.

For every cybernetic part or upgrade fitted, maximum Sanity decreases as the user suffers the mental and physical

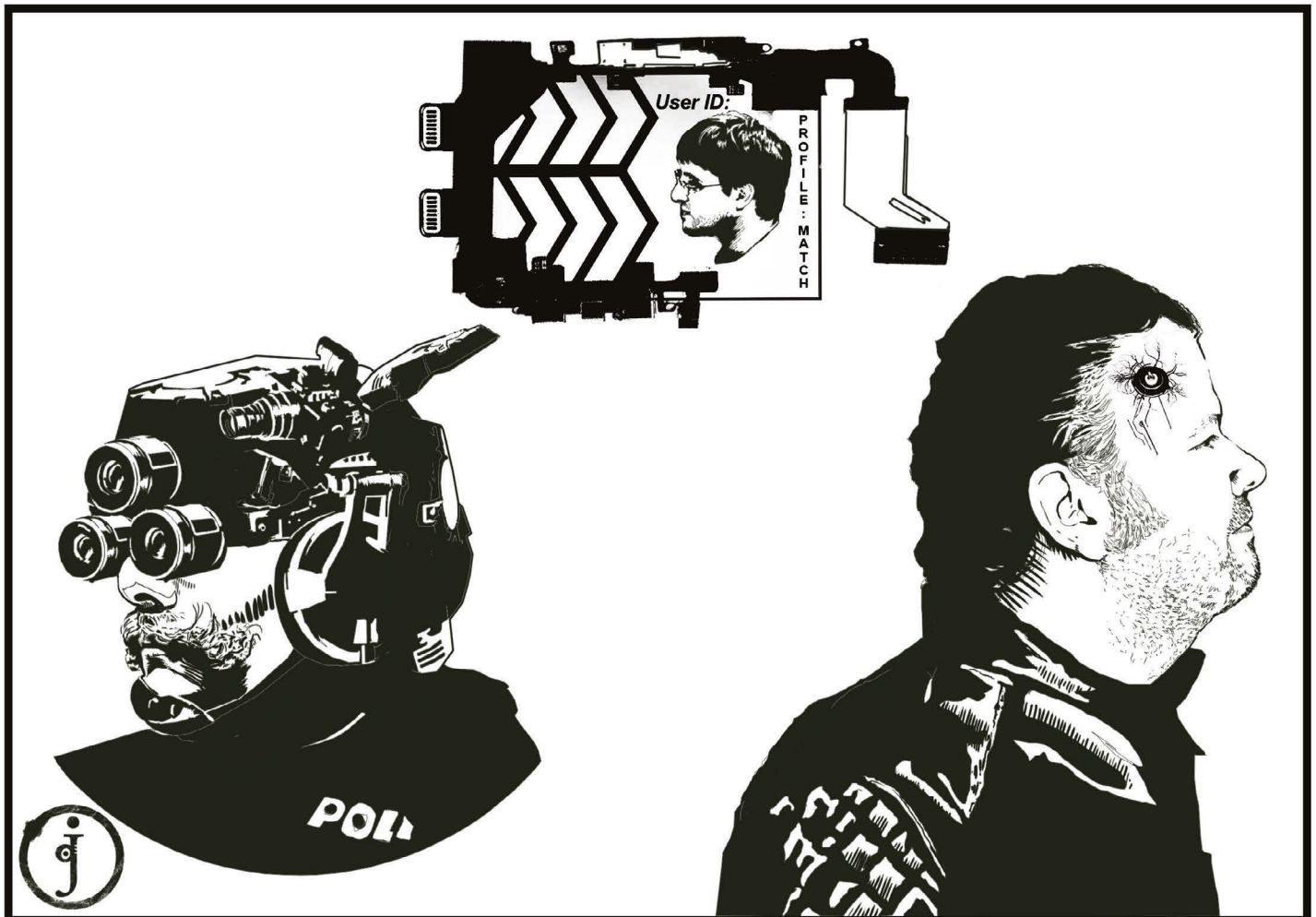
stress of having their flesh replaced by machine. In some cases, this is relatively low, but it all mounts up, and in a system where having a high Sanity helps your characters stay alive, some might find getting upgrade after upgrade is really not worth the risk. Others might not care about the shortened career as an adventurer in Punktown, just to be a cybernetic powerhouse for a while.

The Black Market

Cybernetics is a thriving trade on the Black Market, but it's probably best not ask where those fancy looking 'Zeiss Domingo' eye implants came from, or why there are bloodstains on the new chrome-plated arm you're about to get fitted. Cybernetic parts purchased on the Black Market usually cost about half the price of their new, legitimate equivalents, but there is often another price to pay for their purchase.

Rejection

Once a character has had a new part fitted for a few days, the player rolls Con x 5. With a failure their body has rejected the cybernetic part, and they lose 1 Hit Point a day until it is (hopefully, professionally) removed. Hit Points lost from this only begin to heal once the offending piece of cybertech has been removed.



Malfunction

Since many Black Market cybernetic parts are often ripped from still-living victims, or at best, robbed from graves, there is a chance there may be something wrong with them. In gaming terms, a character with second-hand cybernetics makes a Luck roll after they have had the part fitted. Failure means the cybernetic part is substandard or has other flaws. The Gamemaster should keep the result to himself, however, and reveal the malfunction at an inopportune moment: legs giving out while running away from an angry mob of Torgessi, for example, or switching on a pair of Infrared eyes just to have them short out, leaving the character completely blind.

Repairing Cybernetic Parts

Cybernetic parts don't heal naturally — they need to be repaired by a professional. If a location is not apparent when a character suffers a loss of Hit Points, the Gamemaster should decide if any of those points are from a cybernetic limb, and, whether it has completely stopped working or not. At a pinch, a successful Repair (Electrical) roll could jury-rig a broken part, returning 1D3 Hit Points to the cybernetic, much like the First Aid skill, provided that the person doing the repair has the tools and some basic parts on hand. Otherwise, the cyber-wearing character needs to find a suitable repair outlet, which repairs the limb at one tenth the original cost per Hit Point lost. Should all the Hit Points of a cybernetic replacement be lost, it completely stops functioning and must undergo major repairs at a fifth its original cost per Hit Point lost, or have the entire unit replaced. Yes, this could mean repairing a piece of cyberware could be more expensive than just getting a new one, but replacing a cybernetic device once again runs the risk of malfunction, rejection, and the time needed to recuperate from the surgery.

Listing Convention

Listing conventions are as follows:

The type of replacement, limb/organ etc is listed first, followed by a description of that replacement. The time it takes to perform the surgery and recuperation time follows, then the cost in munits and loss of maximum Sanity for installation, followed by the starting armor rating and Hit Points of the item.

Next follows the upgrades available for the limb/organ, a description of each, and the time taken to perform and the post-surgery recuperation time, followed by the cost in munits and loss of maximum Sanity for installation.

Cybernetic Limbs

Hand

The standard cybernetic hand looks and functions like a hand, replacing one lost in an accident or otherwise, granting the owner the exact same statistics the owner's hand would normally have. Flesh-colored to match the species it's designed for, though other colors are available on request, it punches for 1D4 damage.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1 week.

Cost: Free for veterans of the Blue War, otherwise 10,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 2

Hit Points: 5

Cybernetic Hand Upgrades

Pre-built upgrades can be purchased by simply adding the munit cost and, if applicable, the Sanity loss to the base unit. More than one upgrade can be pre-built into the hand at the Gamemaster's discretion.

Hand, Grip Strength

The starting cybernetic hand's basic grip strength of 10 STR is enough to get almost anything done, but for those wanting a hand like a literal steel vice to crush things or make sure whatever they grab does not get away this is the upgrade for them. The four levels of strength upgrades improve the hand in increments of 5 STR at a cumulative cost. So it would cost 12,000 munits for someone desiring a bone-shattering handshake of 30 STR.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Hour/None

Cost: 3,000 Munits per level

Sanity cost for installation: 0

Hand, Removable

With a few turns, the cybernetic hand can be removed from its housing. This type of upgrade is popular with people who wish to replace the hand with something else, like a weapon. This includes all the needed neural-connected ports to fire or operate the weapon. An adapted weapon, that slots into the hand's housing, is purchasable for 25% above its original price. Chainsaws are popular with some, more dangerous weapons with others. The cost of stub-mounted weapons is twice its original price.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Hour/None

Cost: 5,000 Munits per hand

Sanity cost for installation: 1 Point from Maximum Sanity

Note: The attached weapon has its own armor rating and Hit Points based on what kind of weapon is attached.

Hand, Claws

Popular with assassins and cosplay fanatics, a flick of the wrist pops five razor-sharp, four-inch claws from the ends of the users fingers, doing 1D8 + DB Damage to a victim. The claws can come in any color desired for a more personal touch.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 5,000 Munits per hand

Sanity cost for installation: 0

Hand, Concealed Laser

Concealed in the forefinger is the equivalent of a 'Green' Energy Pistol with the trigger in the palm, turning the hand into an effective energy weapon favored by assassins, which does 1D8 + 2 damage. For an extra 3,000 munits, a neural trigger keeps the laser "hands free" firing at via the owner's mind and therefore be "hands free."

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 5,000 Munits per hand

Sanity cost for installation: 1 Points from Maximum Sanity

Hand, Taser

With the press of a button, the hand functions exactly like a Stun Wand, causing 2D6 Stun damage and Knockback to the victim. Handy for subduing a foe un-awares, and practical jokes.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 3,000 Munits per hand

Sanity cost for installation: 1 Point from Maximum Sanity

Cybernetic Limb

The standard cybernetic limb looks and functions like a regular limb, replacing one lost in an accident or otherwise, granting the owner the exact same statistics the owner's limb would usually have. A cybernetic arm comes with a cybernetic hand, a leg with a foot. Flesh-colored to match the species it is going to, thought other colors are available on request. A punch from a basic cyber arm does 1D6 damage, while a kick from a cybernetic leg does 1D8.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D3 weeks

Cost: Free for Blue War veterans otherwise 25,000

Munits per limb

Sanity cost for installation: 5 Points from Maximum Sanity per limb

Armor rating: 5

Hit Points: 15

Limb, Move Upgrade

Only available in a pair, these cybernetic legs increase the speed the owner can physically move, doubling their original Move statistic, their Jump distance, and adding +30% to the Jump skill.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 12 Hours/1D4 Days

Cost: 20,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity

Cybernetic Limb Upgrades

Pre-built upgrades for a cybernetic limb can be purchased by simply adding the munit cost and, if applicable, the Sanity loss to the base unit.

Limb, Strength Upgrade

The basic starting strength of a cyber limb is 15 STR, but for those who want to punch through walls or to send foes flying for over forty feet with a kick, this upgrade allows just that if they have the munits. The five levels of strength upgrades improve the limb in increments of 3 STR at a cumulative cost. So it would cost them 25,000 munits for someone wanting to pack 30 points of STR behind their punch.

Note: An arm's bonus Strength only effects punches, grapples, hand held weapons and other feats of strength where the arms are used, while the bonus to legs affects kicks. Furthermore, the same STR bonus must be bought for both arms to be fully functional, otherwise if used in two-handed tasks, only half of the bonus Strength is applied.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D3 Days

Cost: 5,000 Munits per level

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Limb, Pneumatic Rams

For those who really want to lay someone out (or kill them outright) with a single punch or kick, a series of pneumatic pistons installed to their cyber limb greatly increases their lethality. This hard-hitting system increases punch damage from a cybernetic arm to 1D8 and the kick damage from a cybernetic leg to 1D10. This also grants each attack 1 point of Armor Penetration, effectively making the armor rating of anything they strike 1 point less.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D2 Days

Cost: 15,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Type	Time	Cost	Max SAN Loss	AR	HP
Cybernetic Limbs					
Hand	1 Day/1 Week	Free/10,000	3	2	5
Hand, Claw	1 Day/None	5,000	0	-	-
Hand, Grip	1 Hour/None	3,000/Level	0	-	-
Hand, Laser	1 Day/None	5,000	1	-	-
Hand, Removable	1 Hour/None	5,000	1	-	-
Hand, Taser	1 Day/None	5,000	1	-	-
Limb	1 Day/1D3 Weeks	Free/25,000	5	5	15
Limb, Move	12 hours/1D4 Days	20,000	3	-	-
Limb, Pneumatic	1 Day/1D2 Days	15,000/Level	2	-	-
Limb, Strength	1 Day/1D3 Days	5,000/Level	2	-	-
Cybernetic Organs					
Eye, Infrared	1 Day/None	15,000	2	-	-
Eye, Mirrorshade	1 Day/None	2,000	None	-	-
Eye, Nightvision	1 Day/None	10,000	2	-	-
Eye, Telescoping	1 Day/None	10,000/Level	1	-	-
Eye, X-Ray	1 Day/None	20,000	2	-	-
Organ, Auditory	1 Day/1D4 Days	6,000	2	1	3
Organ, Eye	1 Day/1D6 Days	Free/10,000	4	1	4
Miscellaneous					
Body Window	1 Day/None	2,000	2	5	10
Chip Implant	1 Day/1D6 Days	5,000	3	0	2
Hardening	-	4,000/AR, 2,000/HP	-	-	-
Holographic Tattoo	1 Day/None	100-500	None	-	-
Memory Implant	1 Day/1D6 Days	5,000	3	0	1
Orb-It	1 Hour/None	1,000	None	-	-
Prosthetic Pony	1 Day/1D6 Weeks	Free/20,000	None	3	15
Reactions	1 Day/1D6 Days	10,000/Point	5	3	6
Reactions, Dual	1 Day/1D8 Days	50,000	8	2	5
Size Increase	1 Day/1D6 Days	5,000/SIZ	2	-	-
Subdermal Armor	1 Day/1D6 Days	20,000/point	3	AR	15/AR
Ultraneet Port	1 Day/1 Day	4,000	5	1	3
VT Disc	None	100	None	None	1
Wings	1 Day/1D6 Days	20,000	3	0	5

Cybernetic Organs

Paxton has not completely perfected cybernetic organs, so organic transplants are still the norm when replacing internal organs damaged or destroyed in accidents. There are some sensory cyberware available, however.

Auditory Cyberware

Hearing Enhancement

Functioning like a permanent hearing aid, this ear implat is useful for those performing covert activities. The user can use this enhancement to hear clearly sounds up to 100 meters away, utilizing a dial set behind the ear. This bestows a +30% to the Listen skill.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D4 Days.

Cost: 6,000 Munits per ear

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 1

Hit Points: 3

Optical Cyberware

Eye

For the Tikkihotto desiring to fit in, maimed war veterans, and anyone that has lost their eyes to injury, the basic, 'no frills' cybernetic eyes perform exactly the same as their natural, organic equivalents. Eye implants are fashionable in some circles; some corporate drones pay to have cybernetic eyes installed bearing their company logo. Thousands of different designs are available for eye color, patterns, etc., including custom designs or the ability to glow or illuminate (at no extra cost).

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days.

Cost: Free for veterans, otherwise 10,000 Munits per eye

Sanity cost for installation: 4 Points from Maximum Sanity per eye

Armor rating: 1

Hit Points: 4

Cybernetic Eye Upgrades

Note: Pre-built upgrades can be purchased for cybernetic eyes by simply adding the munit cost and any Sanity loss to the base unit. Additional upgrades can be added to an eye at the Gamemaster's discretion. The on/off switch for these upgrades is typically located in a fake mole near the owner's eye. For an additional 5,000 munits per additional add-on, a neural switch added to each device allows its user to turn them off and on at will.

Eye, Infrared

Useful for night vision, canceling combat skill modifiers due to darkness, and seeing through smoke or gas, this eye detects heat emissions of both living things and objects with a heat signature to a range of 20 meters including through walls. If a trail is very fresh (less than five minutes), the eye can observe the tracks of living things, adding +30% to the Track skill. Using this mod around multiple heat sources (e.g. trashcan fires) or places of elevated heat (e.g. a boiler room) makes imaging either confusing (-20% to Spot or combat rolls) or effectively blinds them.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 15,000 Munits per eye

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Eyes, Mirrorshade

The mirrored surface coating the cybernetic eye works to cancel out any negative modifiers should the owner come in contact with a Flash Grenade, strobe lights, or anything similar. This only works if the eyes are owned in pairs.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 2,000 Munits per pair

Sanity cost for installation: None

Eye, Nightvision

This eye functions in exactly the same way as Nightvision Goggles, i.e. the eye can see 15 meters in absolute darkness, canceling any negative modifiers to Spot or combat skills due to darkness. The wearer cannot automatically discern between terrain features and living beings, however, and color detection is impossible. Furthermore, unless coupled with Mirrorshade Eyes, sudden bright light blinds the user for 1D4 rounds.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 10,000 Munits per eye

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Eye, Telescopic

Whether replacing the need for a telescopic sight on a weapon, or just because it's useful for spying on someone, this eye can zoom in on an object from a distance to varying levels, starting at a basic x20. When in use, this grants the player +30% to Spot things at long range.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 10,000 Munits per zoom level (increments x20) per eye

Sanity cost for installation: 1 Points from Maximum Sanity

Skin Jobs

Not everyone goes for that chromed-out look, so for those wanting to conceal their cybernetic limbs from the casual observer and cover up their new machine parts with good old skin (or at least a close proximity of it) there are two options.

Vacuformed and available in many different skin tones, NuFlesh is a rubbery facsimile of skin originally designed for burn patients or as cheap coverings for early sexbots. It never really caught on and is only used by those on a budget. To cover a cybernetic arm in the stuff costs 300 munits, while a leg costs 700 munits. At a distance of 10 meters or more it looks pretty much like the real deal, but anyone closer than that can see something is just not right about it. NuFlesh is not alive and does not heal damage, so after a time it will be in tatters or held together with duct tape and sutures unless replaced.

Organic, vat-grown TruTouch is the next generation of replacement skin, which if attached to other organic material, such as covering up burn scars, heals and looks like normal flesh. When placed over cybernetics, it makes such limbs look completely normal, and because it is alive, it heals any wounds inflicted upon it, unless the TruTouch skin is totally consumed by fire, acid, or the like. True to its name, it feels just like real skin because it *is* real skin. Covering a cybernetic arm costs 3,000 munits, while a leg costs 7,000 munits.

Eye, X-Ray

Performing exactly the same as an X-Ray Helmet, the eye emits and receives x-rays and can see right through a building's walls at a range of up to 15 meters. The wearer can see through 30 centimeters, blocked only by special high-density shielding.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 20,000 Munits per eye

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Miscellaneous Cybernetics

Body Window

Some Punktown residents opt to have their organs exposed by installing a clear window into their skin that provides a view to their insides. It's fashionable to position it at a particular organ, usually the heart, with a tattoo on the heart spelled in neon-glowing thread so it is visible from a distance or at night. Within certain groups of Punktown, having Body Windows bestows a +1 bonus to APP per window up to the species maximum. However, others may find them revolting and impose a -1 to APP per window. These reactions are at the discretion of the Gamemaster.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: 2,000 Munits per window

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 5 (made of class-two plexiglass they're surprisingly strong)

Hit Points: 10 (at 0 HP the internal organ behind the window is not fully exposed)

Chip Implant

A chip implant can receive either "stream"—free public transmissions paid for with advertising—or music from the recipient's own collection, programmed into his home entertainment system and remote-broadcasted to him. Some chip-wearers use a control bracelet, while others have controls tattooed onto their forearm. The truly elite have a neural control system for an additional 3,000 munits. The music goes directly to the user's brain as a translated signal, bypassing the actual process of "hearing." Chip implants bestow a +1 bonus to EDU, up to the species maximum, no matter how many chips are implanted.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days.

Cost: 5,000 Munits per implant

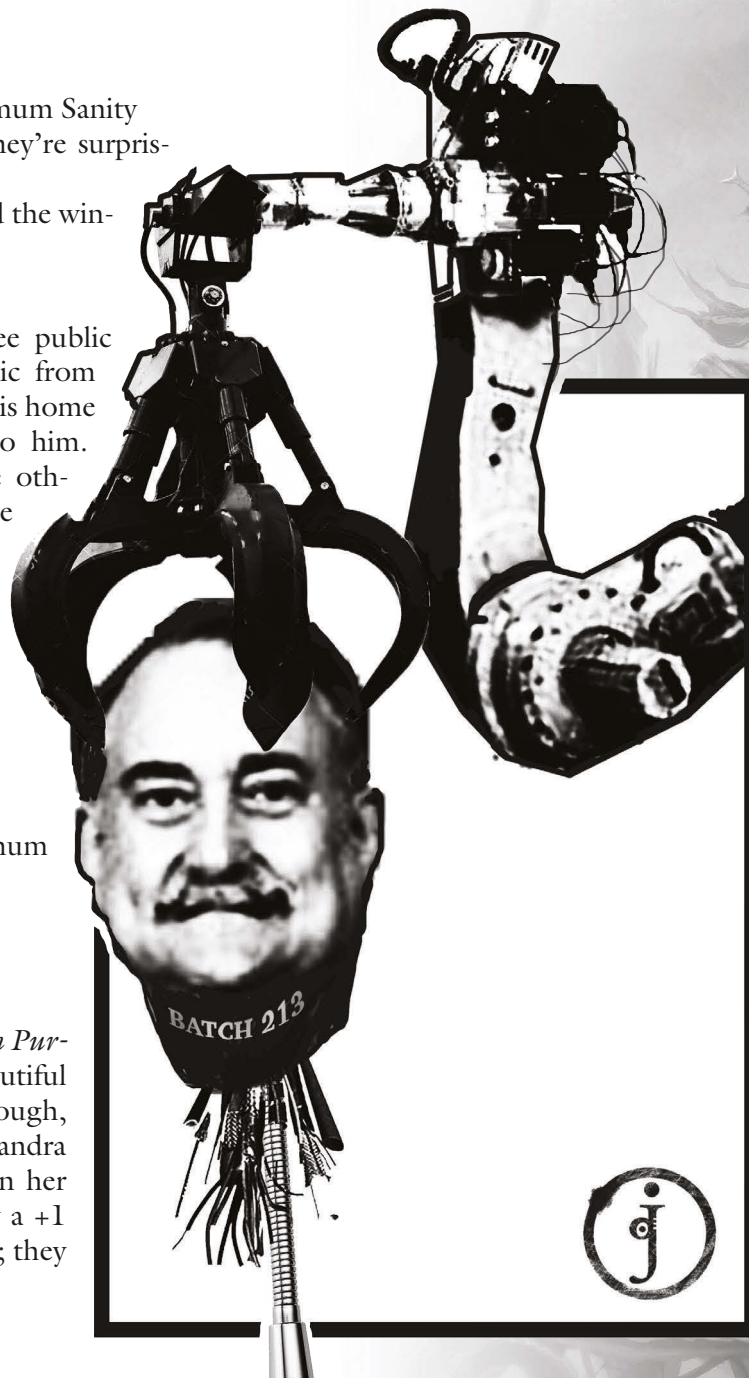
Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity per implant

Armor rating: 0

Hit Points: 2

Cybernetic Wings

The fad began with the popular vid for the song *On Purple Wings* from the band, 5Guyz, in which the beautiful model featured in the vid wore a pair of wings. Though, of course, the fad had really caught on when Chandra Shankar wore her white wings—and little else—in her vid for *Naughty Angel*. Cybernetic Wings bestow a +1 bonus to APP, but they have no practical function; they do not grant the ability to fly.



Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days.

Cost: 20,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 0

Hit Points: 5

Enhanced Reactions

By replacing nerve tissue within the spine with fiber optics, and reinforcing key muscles with strands of nanotubes, impulses travel from the brain to various parts of the body faster than ever and the body responds in less than a blink of an eye. Each level of enhancement increases the Dexterity score by 1 up to the species maximum +6.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days

Cost: 10,000 Munits for the first point, doubling the cost for each point afterwards.

Sanity cost for installation: 5 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 3

Hit Points: 6

Enhanced Reactions Dual Processor

Placed at both the top and the base of the spinal cord, these very high-tech twin microprocessors work in tandem, increasing an already jacked-up person's reactions to unbelievable speeds. Although anyone can have them installed, they can only be implemented once someone has a modified DEX score of 22 or more. The ERDP enhanced character gains one additional action per round, allowing them to make twice as many shots in combat, draw a holstered weapon and fire it in one fluid motion, slash twice with their katana, dodge two incoming attacks, run and jump behind cover and then spring up and fire at an attacker, and so on.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D8 Days

Cost: 50,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 8 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 2

Hit Points: 5

Holographic Tattoo

Some of the younger Punktowners find it fashionable to have tattoos prominently displayed on their bodies that are subcutaneous holograms. They are usually on the face, the better to force other people to look at them. Those who possess the tattoo are known to share videos of their favorite music groups, scenic vistas, or even porn. Holographic Tattoos bestow a +1 bonus to APP up to species maximum.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/None

Cost: Varies on size of tattoo, but at least 500 Munits per tattoo

Sanity cost for installation: None

Memory Implant

Memory implants, such as Mnemosyne-998, enhance the user's memory, recording everything perfectly and allowing playback at will. Memory implants bestow a +1 bonus to INT up to species maximum.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days.

Cost: 5,000 Munits for the first point, doubling the cost for each point afterwards

Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity per implant

Armor rating: 0

Hit Points: 1

Orb-It

Orb-it is an injectable fad appearing with greater frequency. A shot of a luminous substance into the desired body part (usually the breasts) which then radiates out with varying degrees of intensity, bestowing a +1 bonus to APP until the substance fades (1D4 days).

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Hour/None

Cost: 1,000 Munits per injection

Sanity cost for installation: None

Prosthetic Pony

This thin and insect-like, black bipedal cybernetic full-body harness is used primarily for war veterans that have lost all of their limbs or mutants born without limbs. It bestows a +1 bonus to DEX and provides a standard movement speed for paraplegics.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 weeks

Cost: Free for veterans, otherwise 20,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: None

Armor rating: 3

Hit Points: 15

Size Increase

Some Punktowners prefer increasing their size to sumo-like proportions by artificially grafting body tissue and bone into their bodies. Size increases bestow a +1 bonus to SIZ up to 6 points above species maximum.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days

Cost: 5,000 Munits per point of SIZ

Sanity cost for installation: 2 Points from Maximum Sanity per point of SIZ

Subdermal Armor

Installed under the skin and undetectable by sight, this bulletproof mesh armor is a good choice for anyone working in the security industry. Only available as full body armor, and compatible with cybernetic limbs, it can be bought per Armor Point, to a maximum of 8 points. An illegal variant, obtainable only through the government or from the Black Market, is made out of high density organic polymers and is therefore undetectable by metal detectors or other security scanners. This stealthy alternative is triple the usual cost.

Note: There are no negative results for owning 4 points of full body armor, but for every point over that the owner suffers minus 1 permanent Dexterity (at least until the armor is surgically removed). The ultra-cool and ultra-expensive organic variant does not hamper Dexterity at all.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1D6 Days

Cost: 20,000 Munits for each point of armor

Sanity cost for installation: 3 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: equal to its own armor rating

Hit Points: for every 15 points of damage it “soaks up” for its owner, it decreases by 1 point of armor rating until fixed.

Ultraneet Port

Ultraneet ports plug the user directly into the ultraneet. Plugging into the ultraneet requires both a port and a jack.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: 1 Day/1 Day

Cost: 4,000 Munits

Sanity cost for installation: 5 Points from Maximum Sanity

Armor rating: 1

Hit Points: 3

VT Discs

With VT discs affixed to the temple, the user picks up VT transmissions into the brain, allowing them to “see” and “hear” the program, but still hear the real world. Many commuters in Punktown use these rather than read a paper, viewing the news this way, but are more likely to choose a game show or rerun of a sitcom. Users can adjust the discs to a lower-level setting meaning they can still receive transmissions but also walk about and function fairly well simultaneously, the mind doing its best to keep its tasks separate, just as when a person drives a car while daydreaming or chatting on the phone. Still, it’s not uncommon to see people with discs on their temples or foreheads bumping into each other every day. Sometimes teenagers stumble in a daze with three or more stuck to their foreheads; or one might meet a man with a shaved head covered in discs sitting on a bench grinning at passers-by.

Surgery/Recuperation Time: None

Cost: 100 Munits per disc

Sanity cost for installation: None

Armor rating: none

Hit Points: 1



Punktown Is Watching

In Punktown, nothing is forgotten. It's possible to have an individual's mind scanned, willingly or unwillingly, and put his memories on display: extracted, projected and recorded via computer hook-up and then played back in slow-motion, freeze-framed, blown up, etc. Additionally, every time a HAP agent discharges his firearm, the connected cameras take a photo which is instantly transmitted to Health Agency headquarters –ensuring against agents abusing their authority to kill, considering plasma rounds leave no body and so no evidence, thus preventing agents killing whomever they desired. Anyone found overriding the photo insurance mechanism is subject to immediate termination by law. Agents tamper with them anyway, and the ones that get caught are usually quietly suspended for several weeks.

Cybernetic Hardening

Paxton citizens in high risk professions may wish for better made cybernetics that can stand up to more abuse without breaking down. Utilizing higher tech (and far more expensive) alloys and polymers with back up control systems in place, the Armor Rating and Hit Points of any cybernetic device can be increased up to double the normal amount. A little cyber eye could have an armor rating of 2 and up to 8 Hit Points, while a cyber-limb designed for combat could have an armor score of 10 and up to 30 Hit Points.

Each point of increased Armor Rating costs 4,000 munits and each additional Hit Point costs 2,000 munits. To keep things simple, these prices are the same for all cybernetic replacements.

Cyber Armor and Worn Armor

The Armor Rating of cybernetic replacements stacks with any proactive clothing worn by the character. For example, let's say that a forcer has level 5 Subdermal Armor and is wearing a plastic vest that has 4 points of armor. If they are shot in the chest then they have a combined Armor Rating of 9. If someone has a basic cyber-leg with 5 Armor Rating and is wearing pants with bulletproof mesh (AR 6) sewn into it, that leg has a total armor score of 11.

Vehicles

Mass transportation and personal vehicles cloud the highways and skyways; hovercars, helicar, and wheeled vehicles clog the streets and subways and trains snake their way through Punktown's arteries. For those who can't afford personal vehicles, public transportation is available: buses cost 5, taxis 10, and rail 20 munits for short distances, modified by the number of blocks, miles, and danger involved, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

Type: The generic type of vehicle.

Skill: The skill your character should use when piloting it.

Rated Speed: The maximum speed of the vehicle; an abstract value used in the BRP chase system.

Handling: This modifier is applied to your character's skill, reflecting the vehicle's maneuverability or relative ease of use.

ACC: Acceleration, the number of speed increments the vehicle can accelerate or decelerate from its current rated speed each combat round. This is provided as a value of \pm , and is used in the vehicle chase system.

MOV: The maximum speed of the vehicle in a combat round, expressed in its MOV rating. MOV has a sliding value of 1-5 meters; this assumes a median value of 3.

What's on the VT?

* *Punktown citizens are unlikely to be affected by television, but for those new to the planet even watching some of these shows can be a sanity draining experience.*

D100	Name	Description	SAN Loss*
01-10	Bloodbunnies	A sexually-themed, violent show that's often used as an excuse by killers to incite them to murder.	1/1D3
11-20	Building the Better Booby Trap	An annual competition in an ultranet environment rife with dangerous flora and fauna, where rivals off each other using ingenious and insidious booby-traps derived from the materials at hand.	None
21-30	Evil Men	This channel features popular recurring guest, N. Ron Hubbard, who frequently speaks about the art of being evil in business.	None
31-40	Buddy Balloon	A sitcom starring mutant, Buddy Vrolik, a 150-pound sphere without limbs or features, which is the centerpiece of a lovable if trouble-prone family, berating them or giving them smart-alecky wisecracks in a city-tough accent. He is famous for his lewd comments and double entendres when female friends visit the apartment. His catchphrase is: "Somebody kill me."	None
41-50	The Crime Report	Covers Punktown's juiciest, nastiest crime-related stories.	1/1D3
51-60	Lambshead, MD	Popular largely because of the sexy young actor playing the titular skilled physician, treating and romancing a multitude of sentient races on a far-flung space station.	None
61-70	Mr. Mauser	A no-nonsense, tough cop on a crime show. Forcers suffering comparisons is inevitable.	None
71-80	Pimp Mama T	A raunchy comedy featuring Slut Master E and Bitchoney J, played by two obese actors, OmarBlast M and MikeyMikey K. Slut Master E is Pimp Mama T's cousin, and Bitchoney J is her son. Pimp Mama T is played by a different up-and-coming actress in every episode, and is the zany madam of a cheap Forma Street brothel. The lowbrow show is known for Bitchoney J's trademark line, "God slap me dead!"	None
81-90	Bladebabes	A violent, popular action series that, like <i>Bloodbunnies</i> , is believed to be a corrosive influence on young minds.	1/1D3
91-00	Music Video	Sphitt are the current number one rock group with their number one hit <i>In Your Face</i> . Flemm, Mhukas and Sputum are other bands in the same mold. The members of Sphitt have snowy white fluffy lion manes overwhelming their tiny faces, with little chins and chiseled cheekbones and seemingly ceaselessly distended puckered pouts. Many boys now frequently punctuate their speech and activities with spitting, spit over each other's shoulders in greeting, at each other's boots in farewell, and at each other's bodies in hostility.	None

Musty Tomes in an Arcane Bookstore

In *Punktown*'s future setting any unspeakable tome found in a modern-day or historical *Call of Cthulhu* campaign set on Earth can turn up in Punktown. Original tomes are rare, but they have been copied and digitally transcribed in the dark corners of the Ultranet, living on even when many thought they had been eliminated forever. Each of these entries indicates the duration it takes to truly comprehend (not just read) the book, the benefit to Cthulhu Mythos or Occult from such study, possible spells that can be learned, and the possible sanity loss as a result of such study. The listed spells are all from *Call of Cthulhu*; those with a * are new in this book.

D100	Name	Description	Weeks to Study	Skill Bonus	Spells	SAN Loss
1-10	Atlas of Chaos	By Wadoor, a Choom alchemist, it concentrates primarily upon a god known as the Crawling Chaos, also known as the Messenger. Wadoor uses geometric formulae to open windows into other realms. The angles and curves of certain patterns bend space and time, distort their flow, or can be manipulated so as to pry open rents in the cosmic fabric. It was written before Earth colonized Oasis and retails for twenty thousand munits.	7	+4% Cthulhu Mythos	Banishment of Yde Etad, Contact Nyarlathotep, Create Gate, Create Scrying Window, Create Time Gate, Create Window, Doors Upon Doors*, Enchant Gate Boxes, Find Gate, Journey to the Other Side, Line Travel*, Plutonian Drug, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, View Gate	1D2/1D4
11-15	Book of Awe, The	Written by Louis Marotta, this book, of which there are only six in existence, is triangular in shape. Relevant chapters include: <i>The Keys to Keys</i> , which covers different chants and their effects; and <i>The Geometry of Transcendence</i> , patterns and angles that bend the barriers between dimensions. It's believed that Marotta, who disappeared without a trace a year after its publication, actually turned the book into a gateway between dimensions, which proved to be his undoing.	14	+9% Cthulhu Mythos	Apportion Ka, Bind Soul, Chant of Thoth, Compel Flesh, Create Gate, Create Window, Enchant Gate Boxes, Find Gate, Imprison Mind, Journey to the Other Side, Mind Exchange, Mind Transfer, Song of Hastur, Summon Plague, View Gate	1D3/1D6
16-20	Book of Night	This metal tube contains a tight-rolled scroll, a true account of the long lost Noctuary of Vizooranos. It is an ancient text of sorcerous potency, also known as <i>The Book of Night</i> . It is said that Eibon transcribed this through a form of possession by the sorcerer, Vizooranos, himself.	36	+13% Cthulhu Mythos	Call/Dismiss (Azathoth, Rlim Shaikorth), Contact (Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Tsathoggua), Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Create Gate, Create Mist of Releh, Deflect Harm, Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Enchant Brazier, Enchant Knife, Levitate, Voorish Sign, Wither Limb	1D4/2D4
21-25	Book of the Dominion of Mysteries	These scrolls contain a variety of spells, including: Neshxiba, the Sign of Flight and Direction Joined known as the wings of fire dancing (second scroll); the Grey Rite, which summons Azathoth (twenty-third scroll); and Making Shelter of Datuura-Cerlon (fifteenth scroll), which protects from Azathoth.	40	+8% Cthulhu Mythos	Call/Dismiss (Azathoth), Cloak of Fire, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Melt Flesh, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire, Levitate	1D4/1D8
26-30	Books of Power	This 18-volume series by Abdul-Kadir, is surprisingly light on actual power, referring instead to the political and social influence wielded by cultists of means.	3	+2% Occult	None	None
31-35	Daemonolateria	Remigius, the Latinized pen name for Nicholas Remy, was a French judge that presided over witchcraft trials. This book is a compendium of information about witchcraft with the intent of prosecuting them.	2	+3% Occult	None	None
36-40	De Furtivis Litterarum Notis	Giovanni Battista della Porta wrote this book with a title that means "On the Secret Symbols of Letters."	1	+1% Occult	None	None
41-45	Genomicon	This chip contains genetic coding for some bizarre races, including the Spawn of Ugghiuutu and Dai-oo-ika.	36	+6% Cthulhu Mythos	Black Binding, Contact Dai-oo-ika (Cthulhu), Summon/Bind Ugghiuutu Spawn	1D4/1D8
45-50	Keys of Solomon, The	Two books discussing the dangers of summoning spirits and the magical arts.	2	+5% Occult	None	None
51-55	Kryptographik	A book on cryptography published in 1809.	3	+3% Occult	None	None
56-60	Liber Al Vel Legis	The central sacred text of Thelema, written by Aleister Crowley, dictated to him by a discarnate entity named "Aiwass."	2	+6% Occult	None	None
61-65	Magus, The	A handbook of the occult and ceremonial magic compiled by Francis Barrett and published in 1801. Much of the material was actually collected by Barrett from older occult handbooks.	1	+4% Occult	None	None
66-70	Metal Book, The	Author unknown, this book, written in Latin, predicts a cosmic struggle between the Elder Gods and Outsiders. A thick metal catch system locks the book's hinged metal covers closed. Cold to the touch to an almost unnatural degree, this book can sell for up to four million munits.	50	+10% Cthulhu Mythos	Baneful Dust of Hermes Trismegistus, Banishment of Yde Etad, Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Eye of Light and Darkness, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods	1D8/2D8
71-75	Necronomicon	Written by the Arab author, Abdul Alhazred, in Damascus in the 8th century, original translations were in Latin, Greek, and English, running 800 pages or so depending on the version. Includes the spells Ascending Mode and Descending Mode.	68	+18% Cthulhu Mythos	Ascending Mode*, Call/Dismiss (Azathoth, Cthugha, Hastur, Nyogtha, Shub-Niggurath, Yog-Sothoth), Contact (Ghoul, Nyarlathotep, Sand Dweller), Descending Mode*, Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Resurrection, Shriveling, Summon/Bind (Byakhee, Fire Vampire, Servitor of the Outer Gods), Voorish Sign	1D10/2D10
76-80	Secret Lore of Magic, The	This book contains all the major source-books of magical arts, translated from French, Latin, Hebrew and other tongues, annotated and fully illustrated with numerous diagrams, signs and characters.	1	+1% Cthulhu Mythos	None	1/1D3
81-90	Veins of the Old Ones, The	By a Tikkiothto author, Skretuu, it acknowledges the patterns that exist even in chaos. Skretuu took Wadoor's theories even further after encountering his book, written a hundred years earlier, building on Wadoor's idea of mapping these invisible patterns by charting them, likening his research to the dissection of anatomists. Original versions are worth five thousand munits, but the paperback version is worth only about ten munits.	3	+5% Cthulhu Mythos	Doors Upon Doors*, Elder Sign, Line Travel*	1/1D3
91-95	Visions of Khyroyd'hon	William Davis Manly, a book of mysterious hypnotic poetry.	1	+5% Cthulhu Mythos	None	1D3/1D6+1
96-99	Zhou Texts, The	This ancient manuscript found in Asia, written circa 1100 BC during Zhou dynasty, contains the rituals to summon the Great Old One Kassogtha.	8	+3% Cthulhu Mythos	Call/Summon (Kassogtha)	1D3/1D6
00	Fizala	The authoritative text on Ugghiuutu.	14	+6% Cthulhu Mythos	Call Summon (Hound of Ugghiuutu, Ugghiuutu Spawn, Utalla), Contact Cthulhu (Ugghiuutu), Create Curse Whistle, Elder Sign, Grasp of Cthulhu, Pipes of Madness	1D3/1D6

Armor: The vehicle's general armor value and the amount of protection it confers upon the crew or passengers. Usually attacks on passengers are through a window or open section of the cabin. If these two numbers are different, they are expressed as two values separated by a slash. The GM should determine whether a character has protection from the vehicle. Usually attacking someone in a vehicle is a Difficult task.

SIZ: The vehicle's apparent SIZ in terms of its ability to be manipulated in the game world.

HP: The vehicle's hit points. Vehicles do not suffer the effects of special successes. Critical successes only ignore the vehicle's armor and do not do additional damage.

Crew: This is the number of characters required to pilot and maintain the vehicle at full efficiency while en route. For larger vessels, this is usually 1/3 the normal complement, as the crews work in 8-hour shifts. The GM may make vehicle-related skill rolls Difficult if the vehicle is under-crewed.

Passengers: The number of passengers the vehicle normally carries, combined with the number of off-duty crewmembers (if appropriate).

Cargo: The space the vehicle has for cargo, expressed in SIZ. For game purposes, 1 ENC equals 1 SIZ point.

Value: Cost in munits.

Bus

The city bus is a thing of beauty—silver, sleek, comfortable, air-conditioned—divided into three segments, the first of which is the driver's cab, partitioned off behind a class-four plexidoor that can hold its own against every form of bullet and most ray and plasma weapons. Just behind the driver's cab is the passenger entry booth where folks climb up into the vehicle and pay—the automatic machines accept both cards and hard money. A weapon scan commences; if weapons are detected, the driver is alerted and the person carrying needs to run their fire-arms ID card through a scanner in the entry booth before being allowed into the passenger area. While no bus drivers in Punktown are allowed to carry weapons them-

selves, the city buses are equipped with a handy full stun emergency blast, which the driver can activate with the hit a button, triggering a sudden clap of stunning energy that incapacitates everyone in the bus.

Harbinger

A military helicar equipped with two machinegun turrets and two missile turrets.

Helicar

Helicars are fully vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) vehicles capable of navigating the upper reaches of Punktown. They are quite common, but more expensive than Hovercars.

Hovercar

Hovercars are the poor man's form of transportation, hovering lower to the ground and thus relegated to certain lanes that helicars fly above.

Tank

Tanks stationed on Sinan are now used for crowd control, using sound cannons or shock turrets, either of which are nonlethal and either of which can fire straight through an energy barrier.

Coleopteroid Tran

Trans look rather like an ancient steam locomotive of black metal, and travel along a complex series of tracks knotted into overlapping geometric configurations. Coleopteroids enter and exit the Prime dimension using these trans by accelerating along the tracks. As the tran accelerates, its rate of speed and the pattern it follows along the train bed determines which material plane the tran ends up disappearing into.

Inside, the hulking black metal tran a control console has two crystal globes filled with a glowing, translucent milky liquid – navigator fluid. Below the globes are six silver rings, in two rows of three, like miniature steering wheels, an artifact of their multi-armed drivers.

Vehicles

Type	Skill	Spd	Hndlng	ACC	MOV	Armor	SIZ	HP	Crew	Pssngrs	Cargo	Value
City Bus	Drive	10	-10%	±4	100	16/2	55	65	1	80	72	300,000
Coleopteroid Tran	Drive	8	-	±4	83	24	90	140	4	200+	12	Res (1D6 *200,000)
Harbinger	Pilot	15	-	±10	200	8/4	48	48	1	3+	12	Res (1D6 * 20,000)
Helicar	Pilot	15	-	±10	200	4/2	48	48	1	3	12	35,000
Hovercar	Drive	10	-	±5	150	2/1	48	24	1	3	6	20,000
Tank	Drive	8	-	±4	83	24	90	140	4	-	12	Red (1D6 *30,000)

ZUB BEER



CHAPTER SIX: CREATURES

They're known as the Old Ones, the Great Old Ones, the Outsiders. By other names in other cultures and religions on a hundred planets. They once ruled everything...long before us. They may have seeded humans throughout many systems, like we'd plant crops. Sometimes for labor. Sometimes for food...not for the Old Ones themselves; they don't need to eat to survive. For all intents and purposes, they're immortal. But there are lesser beings. Spawn. Minions. More corporeal in the way we understand it. They seem to feast on us sometimes...though I don't know if it's blood they feed on, or the essence of life itself. Anyway, I think the Old Ones also might have seeded us because they wanted us around to help them come back through if they ever got locked out. Because that's exactly what happened. Another powerful amalgamation of beings — the Elder Gods — came and overpowered them. Locked them up, locked them out.

—THE BONES OF THE OLD ONES

Alien Races

Sentient alien races are brought into the civilized universe through the Earth Colonial Network.

Antse

Hailing from another dimension, the Antse, appearing as bland, smooth gray humanoids with hairless heads, are known for the peculiar custom of flaying a giant extradimensional animal called a Fluke, which they harvest during the Flaying Season once a year for its skin. This skin, a gorgeous mix of green and black like malachite, is formed into a form-fitting suit, the only clothing they ever wear. They also create effigies made of the Fluke's white inner meat, generally anthropomorphic in shape, which they stick with nails and spikes like some half-formed martyr.

Antse clerics have a ritual wherein a trio tuck themselves into a ball so tightly that they appear as smooth balls, naked without their usual wrappings but painted with a bright yellow mineral. They meditate until a certain unknown trigger awakens them, uncurling to hunt eyeballs, sacrificed to their deity by scooping them out of any humanoid they can find.

ANTSE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8

Hit Points: 13-14

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Claw 25% 1D6+DB
Grapple 25% (see Powers)
Hook 25% 1D4+DB
Spear 25% 1D6+DB

Armor: 3-point Skin

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see an Antse

Spells: None

Skills: Listen 50%, Scent 75%, Spot 50%, Track 75%.

Powers:

Dual Attack: An Antse can attack with two claw attacks each combat round. If it succeeds with both attacks, it inflicts 1D4 APP as it attempts to grapple and scoop out its victim's eyes.

Blinding Gouge: Antse who succeed on a grapple blind their victims, who must first make a successful Luck roll to attack the Antse, and then the attack is made at 1/4 the blinded character's skill roll. All other sight-related skills are useless to the blinded character. If the character loses all his APP from this attack he is permanently blinded.

Anul

Anul have a rose-pink hue to their skin and a huge, bony, mallet-shaped head, like that of a hammerhead shark, supported by two thin necks, but no eyes at its ends, or anywhere else visible. At the base of this bony mass, which is thinly coated in a shiny pink skin, is an imposing lipless mouth filled with rows of oversized molars in a constant, skull-like grin. They are associated with the Orb Weaver disease, which they are most vulnerable to and also the most adept at treating. Anul are rumoured to eat these tumors like gumballs. Females are indistinguishable from males.

ANUL, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6+8	18-19
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8

Hit Points: 13-14

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: None (Grapple or other weapon)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see an Anul

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Fine Manipulation 75%, First Aid 75%, Hide 60%, Knowledge (Human Culture) 55%, Language (English) 20%, Language (Anul) 100%, Listen 55%, Medicine 100%

Powers: None

Bliss

Bliss look like a stingray grafted onto the hind legs of a shaved goat and bleached of all color, white to the point of translucence. A Bliss has no upper limbs, and its face is just a suggestion of features, as if it'd been punched into that pallid skin with a screwdriver. Little is known of this race, called the Bliss for their hedonistic impulses that have apparently inspired their recent influx into Punktown where they are fast generating a reputation for decadent behavior, seeking out brothels, S&M dens, and more dubious institutions of pleasure, such as necrophilia clubs and snuff theaters. They like their drugs, the stronger the better, Purple Vortex being a favorite. Supercharged with arousal, ravenous for sensation, supremely masochistic, they seem to live only for a heightened state of ecstasy. To compensate for its lack of arms, the alien wears a wheeled mechanical harness that crosses its body but is mostly buckled around its thighs, which provides two spindly arms and a translator in the form of a rubber tube that runs from the machine to the Bliss' mouth. Despite the perception that Bliss are hedonists, they are actually atoning for their sins by punishing and debasing their physical bodies so that their liberated essence might move on to the realm of souls.

BLISS, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D4	5
CON	3D6+8	18-19
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D3	2

Move: 8

Hit Points: 5

Average Damage Bonus: -1D6

Weapon: None (Only with robotic harness)

Armor: 4-point (pain tolerance)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a Bliss

Spells: None

Skills: Knowledge (Human Culture) 55%, Listen 55%

Powers: None

Dacvibese

This alien race looks like an albino greyhound walking on its hind legs, with pink eyes and unnerving goat-like irises. They don't wear clothes, with an unnerving goat-like smell to match. When voicing disapproval, they speak in a high screeching barely coherent voice. Dacvibese also express displeasure by deliberating squirting mucus from glands at the corner of their mouth, which smells like rotting teeth.

DACVIBESE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8

Hit Points: 11-12

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Stench 35% (see powers)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to see a Dacvibese

Spells: None

Skills: Drive 35%, Knowledge (Business) 55%, Knowledge (Human Culture) 55%, Listen 55%

Powers:

Stench: Dacvibese can squirt opponents up to 5 feet away. If the target fails a Stamina roll, all tasks are Difficult against the Dacvibese for 1D6+2 rounds.

Enisku

The Enisku are a bird-like people with short beaks, covered in fluffy down, who mate for life, which makes it particularly difficult for them in Punktown, where assault and murder of a spouse is common. Enisku can be found in all walks of life, even as Forcers.

ENISKU, Lesser Independent Race

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Averages</i>
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	3D6	10-11

Move: 8

Hit Points: 11-12

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: None (Grapple or weapon)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Drive 35%, Knowledge (Business) 55%, Knowledge (Human Culture) 55%

Powers: None

Fekah

Fekahs look like giant albino toads on two legs. They have lacy pink gills along their necks that allow them to breathe water. Fekahs wear red-tinted fish-bowl helmets to protect human ears from the sound of their respiration, which is nearly deafening.

FEKAH, Lesser Independent Race

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Averages</i>
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8 (8 swimming)

Hit Points: 8-9

Average Damage Bonus: None

Weapon: Claw 35% (1D3)
Sound Blast 25% (1D10 each round in a 100 yd radius)

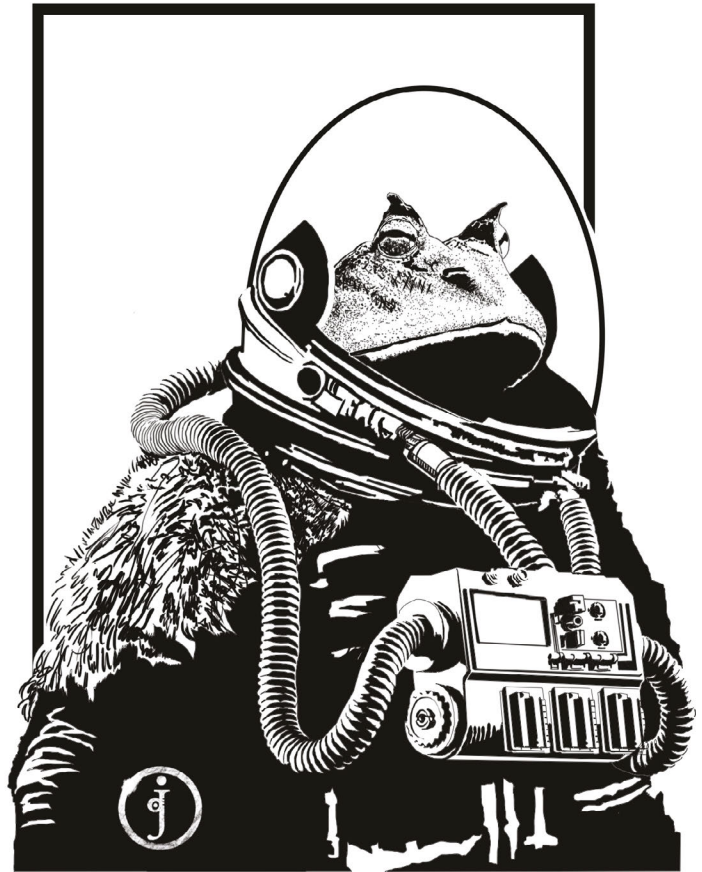
Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Swim 75%

Powers: None



Gray

The prototypical gray alien is barely five feet tall, like a skinny disproportionate child with long arms and long hands, an oversized head with white skin as smooth and hairless as that of a fetus. No ears, a tiny slit for a mouth, two pinhole nostrils but two huge, wraparound lustrous black eyes with blinking translucent lids. They claim to have visited Earth frequently, from ancient times to the more modern era, abducting humans as jokes and even seeding humans on various planets as an experiment. They have never fully approached the Earth Colonial Network.

GRAY, Lesser Independent Race

<i>Chararacteristic</i>	<i>Rolls</i>	<i>Averages</i>
STR	1D6+3	6-7
CON	2D6	7
SIZ	1D6+3	6-7
INT	2D6+12	19
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+3	13-14
APP	1D6+1	4-5

Move: 7

Hit Points: 7

Average Damage Bonus: -1D4

Weapon: None (Grapple or weapon)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Fine Manipulation 75%, First Aid 75%, Hide 60%, Knowledge (Human Culture) 55%, Knowledge (Region: Milky Way) 85%, Language (English) 20%, Language (Zeta Reticulan) 100%, Listen 55%, Medicine 100%, Navigate 70%, Pilot (UFO) 80%, Repair (Quantum) 50%, Science (Astronomy) 75%, Science (Planetology) 95%, Science (Zoology) 50%, Sense 60%, Spot 50%, Stealth 50%, Technical Skill (UFO Sensors) 50%

Powers: None

Keezee

The KeeZee are almost seven feet tall, with a jagged-jawed head resembling a monkey wrench with a thin, grayish-black skin vacuum-formed to it. Their long hair is sometimes woven into thin braids decorated with glass beads. They have three tiny black eyes. KeeZee bodies are a solid mass of muscle. KeeZee do not speak, their jaws barely moving, but can utilize translator devices. KeeZee are often hired as bodyguards and security guards due to their menacing appearance and legendary loyalty.

KEEZEE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	5D6	17-18
CON	3D6+10	20-21
SIZ	3D6+12	22-23
INT	2D6+8	15
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 9

Hit Points: 21-22

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Fist 50% (1D3 + DB)
Thor .86 45% (1D6)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 25%, Listen 30%, Sneak 20%, Spot 30%

Powers: None

Klu-koza

The orangutan-like Klu-Kozi were once enemies of the Choom and Earth governments, but have since become uneasy allies. Their planet has valuable resources that kicked off the war and the subsequent truce, a fact that does not sit well with the few surviving veterans from that war. Males are short, bald, and layered in fat with a tusk-like horn protrudes from their foreheads. The females are indistinguishable from the males, except for their genitalia. Their blood has the look and consistency of grape jelly, which is how they earned the “grapes” slur. Klu-Kozi’s heavy bodies make them difficult to kill.

KLU-KOZA, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	6D6	36
CON	3D6+10	20-21
SIZ	2D6+12	19
INT	2D6+8	15
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+3	13-14
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 10

Hit Points: 20

Average Damage Bonus: +3D6

Weapon: Gore 45% (1D6 + DB)
Brawl 25% (1D3 + DB)
Grapple 50% (see Powers)

Armor: 6-point (skin, muscle, and hair)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 45%, Hide 50%, Listen 35%, Sense 25%, Stealth 35%

Powers:

Dual Attack: A Klu-Koza will attack twice each round. It may strike twice with its fists (brawl), gore and strike, or gore and grapple.

Rend: If a grapple succeeds, the Klu-Koza grips its opponent and does full damage modifier (usually 3D6) each round. If grappling, it may continue to bite, an Easy attack.





Kodju

The towering Kodju people slip from one plane of existence into another by a process that, while requiring great discipline, does not involve any technology. A few short decades ago, the Kodju were utterly mysterious beings, a race from another dimension as rare and fleeting on this side as visiting mythical gods — intense humanoid giants adhering to a strict code handed down from their warrior forebears. Now, while these things are not always inexpensive, one can purchase Kodju plants and decorations for the home, wear Kodju silks, eat Kodju food stuffs cultivated here. Kodju movies are big; the more violent the better.

KODJU, Greater Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	6D6+24	45
CON	3D6+18	28-29
SIZ	6D6+24	57
INT	2D6+8	15
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 10

Hit Points: 43

Average Damage Bonus: +5D6

Weapon: Claw 50% (1D10 + DB)

Armor: 8-point (Thick hide)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Listen 25%, Spot 25%

Powers:

Dimensional Shift: A Kodju can take objects or beings with it when it fades into another dimension. By clutching the desired object in its talons and expending an additional POW per 10 SIZ points of the object or creature, it makes the transit also. Objects and victims lost are never found again.

Dual Attack: Kodju may attack with both claws each round.

L'lewed

A L'lewed's appearance has been likened to an egg purse of a shark or ray: a squarish, featureless package of flesh with two horn-like limbs at the top, and two at the bottom; the two top horns, somewhat flexible, waver subtly in the air like feelers. The putty-like L'lewed must spend most their time inside a small metal, brass-colored container within a central cylinder with two smaller cylinders fused to its sides, transported about on the back of a robot or hired aide. The L'lewed exits from a spiral iris in the main cylinder. L'lewed have a reprehensible process in which they feast on the death throes of another creature, a spiritual necessity they call The Vibration. On their own homeworld, a hairless, monkey-like race serves this purpose, but in Punktown ambassadors have been known to attempt fulfilling their spiritual needs without the consent of their spiritual sacrifices. The L'lewed forces itself down the humanoid's throat, finding pleasure in its death spasms ("The Vibration") and emerges reborn from the victim's lower body. L'lewed participate in this ritual because if they go too long without it, they consider themselves irredeemably unclean.

L'LEWED, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	6D6	21
SIZ	2D6-1	6
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	1D6	3-4
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 10

Hit Points: 17

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Strangle 25% (Suffocation)

Armor: None ($\frac{1}{2}$ vs. fire and electrical attacks, 1 point vs. physical)

Sanity Loss: 0/1d6

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 50%, Hide 25%, Sense 25%, Stealth 25%, Track 25%

Powers:

Suffocation: 1D6 + 1D6 each round until dead

Lobu

Lobu are tall, slender and hairless with polished, softly mottled green and orange flesh, looking like pliable agate. Their very humanoid faces are appealing to humans, with large eyes, no nose, and two large ear holes. They wear only a diaper-like garment to hide their midsections, with flat nippleless chests and two pink gill-like openings on either side.

Lobu live over a thousand years or more on their home world, and can easily reach five hundred on Oasis. They have three distinct sexes: accidental pregnancy is less likely to occur as the female must copulate with each of the two "males", within a few hours and in the correct order to become fertilized. Thus, generations have

been free to enjoy their sexuality without fear or restraint or inhibition. Only generally known to the Earth colonies for a few decades, they are highly desirable sex partners. Their long life spans make it less pressing to raise children, cared for in boarding schools, largely segregated from the adult world, until they reach sexual maturity at the surprisingly early age of five.

Lobu life is a hedonistic, almost utopian life-style, without sexual repression, discrimination or fear, and thus they have few wars, their religions non-patriarchal despite the two-to-one ratio of “males,” but they do, sometimes, become bored and discontented in their later years. To combat this, some branch to other worlds now that space travel has been introduced to them — never achieved on their own due to stagnation in technology; others, not uncommonly, commit suicide.

Lobu are best known as sex partners for humanoids. Females have two vaginal openings, with a strange set of four mandible-like digits outside that insert into corresponding vents in the groins of their males so as to stimulate them. These digits are put to expert use in the fondling and manipulation of the human scrotum and anus. Resourceful humanoid males have discovered the Lobu chest vents are also gratifying areas for penetration.

They are well known, also, for their use of drugs. Lobu are notorious dealers of the drug, Purple Vortex, which they in turn get from the Coleopteroids.

LOBU, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6+2	9
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D4+4	9
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	3D6+6	16-17

Move: 11

Hit Points: 10

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: None (Grapple or weapon)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Bargain 50%, Persuade 50%

Powers:

Seduce: Lobu emit special pheromones that can elicit lust with an intensity of 4D6 (rolled each time the power is used). The targeted creature or creatures must succeed on a resistance roll of his or her INT vs. the POT of the pheromone or succumb to lust for 5 minutes. The range of this power is the Lobu's CON in meters, though wind and weather conditions may increase or decrease this range as appropriate.

Meatlings

Meatlings are symbiotic organisms—one humanoid-sized and the other about the size of a monkey—that on their world, work in conjunction to survive. The similarities between this symbiotic species are obvious: they are scarlet-colored with glossy helmet-like skulls, but their faces are wrinkly masses of flesh like the caruncle of a turkey, as if badly sculpted out of raw hamburger; their squinted eyes seem lost in the heaped red tissue, but a long bone-white tube extends from the chaos by way of a nose. The smaller of the two meatlings is just as intelligent as its larger half — contrary to popular depictions in the media, one is not smarter than the other.

LARGE MEATLING, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+4	14-15
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8

Hit Points: 10

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: None (Grapple or Brawl)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 50%, Command 25%, Dodge 40%, Drive 45%, First Aid 40%, Grapple 50%, Hide 35%, Jump 35%, Language (English) 65%, Listen 45%, Spot 45%, Stealth 40%, Strategy 20%, Throw 40%

Powers:

Teamwork: When fighting the same opponent in conjunction with its twin, the Meatling receives a +10% bonus to all attacks.

SMALL MEATLING, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	1D4+4	7
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D3	2

Move: 8

Hit Points: 8-9

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: None (Grapple or Brawl)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 30%, Listen 30%, Sneak 25%, Spot 25%

Powers:

Teamwork: When fighting the same opponent in conjunction with its twin, the Meatling receives a +10% bonus to all attacks.

Acid Spray: The smaller meatling can spit acid of 2D10 POT 1D6 times per day, 20-foot range.

Mee'hi

Mee'hi are tiny creatures, no bigger than insects, feed off living creatures and build their nests from the corpses. While they don't usually kill other intelligent species for this purpose, it's been known to happen. The head of corpses are turned into a nest like a sand castle made of some black extruded matter. Mee'hi have a poisonous bite that causes painful swelling, but is only fatal in large numbers. Despite their small size, Mee'hi are still considered intelligent beings and therefore killing even one of them is considered murder. To avoid legal entanglements, assailants usually dispose of the tiny corpses.

Each player character attacked by a Mee'hi swarm is automatically stung 6D6 times each combat round until he or she is able to escape from, dissuade, or even destroy the swarm. A Mee'hi swarm usually attacks for 2D6 combat rounds before halting pursuit. Unless the targets are completely covered (netting, enclosed in a vehicle or sealed structure, diving underwater, etc.) there is no protection against a Mee'hi swarm. Players



can attempt a Difficult Dodge check to avoid a Mee'hi swarm, or can use some other means (GM discretion) to attempt to drive them away; fire, smoke, poison, etc., are usually effective. Any protective gear the character may be wearing reduces the number of stings per D6. See the chart below for more information.

Protective Gear	Sting Modifier
Normal armor	-1 sting per D6
Heavy clothing (with or without armor)	-2 stings per D6
Preventive steps to avoid stings	-3 stings per D6
Beekeeping gear	-4 stings per D6
Protective power use (GM discretion)	-1 to above
Complete covering (GM discretion)	No stings

Mo-mo-mo-mo

Mo-mo-mo-mo have hulking, dark orange carrot-like bodies, creased almost into fissures, with a droopy branch-like antenna dangling from the top knob, not really a head in the human sense since the functions of a head are dispersed or not in identifiable evidence. One leg is a thick, twisted club of wrinkly flesh, the other a veiny, scrawny two-toed bird leg. One arm looks like a giant penis ending in long, tactile hairs; the other isn't really an arm but a huge warty barrel constantly oozing slime with one large eye situated at its root. Though they smell to humanoids like feces, Mo-mo-mo-mo like to refer to themselves as the Perfumed Ones.

Mo-mo-mo-mo wear little clothing, but a diaper-like wrap covering the open bottom of its barrel. The Mo-mo-mo-mo are arrogantly obsessed with their own self-proclaimed beauty and glamour. To them, the perfect symmetry of humanoids is a ghastly, too mathematical, too mechanical, artificial-seeming arrangement – a perverted ugliness bordering on abomination. The telepathic Mo-mo-mo-mo can shut down their perception naturally, like closing an eyelid.

Mo-Mo-Mo-Mo, Greater Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6	14
CON	3D6+8	18-19
SIZ	3D6+6	16-17
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 8

Hit Points: 10

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: None (Grapple or Brawl)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Bargain 35%, Dodge 40%, Drive 30%, Fast Talk 35%, Insight 50%, Listen 35%, Research 65%, Sense 35%, Spot 40%, Status 35%, Stealth 30%

Powers:

Stench: For anyone within five feet of a Mo-mo-mo-mo that fails a Stamina roll, all tasks are Difficult against the Mo-mo-mo-mo for 1D6+2 rounds.

Psychic: Clairvoyance 50%, Mind Blast 25%, Telepathy 50%

Lamproid

Known colloquially as lamproids because they have no official name, this bizarre race has highly dimorphic traits. The females are somewhat caterpillar-like, an indeterminate number of legs obscured by the bloated segments that pulse with its labored progress. The brown flesh is dark up front, where the forelimbs and what passes for a head are located, though the long body becomes more translucent further back, showing layers of fibrous lace beneath the glossy outer skin. The females sport painful implanted seeds that form cysts, a form of symbolic brand that denotes the female's lineage and mate. Tattoos are similarly adorned along her backside as a curse against any would-be suitors. Females cover their bodies with silken embroidered cloth, removed only for their mates. Their vocal cords are severed as children and their mouths are lamprey-like, but the males pull the teeth of the females.

The similarity with males, on the other hand ends with the mouths, which have webbing fluttering across the opening, are filled with retractable teeth and take up their entire face, atop a thin neck, boney shoulders, and a skeletal child-sized humanoid form.

FEMALE LAMPROID, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	7D6	24-25
CON	3D6+6	18-19
SIZ	8D6	28
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	4D6	14
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D3	2

Move: 2

Hit Points: 22-23

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Bite 40% (DB + 2D4 STR drain)

Armor: 3-point (Rubbery hide)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Bargain 35%, Dodge 40%, Drive 30%, Fast Talk 35%, Insight 50%, Listen 35%,

Research 65%, Sense 35%, Spot 40%, Status 35%, Stealth 30%

Powers:

STR Drain: If a female still has her teeth, she can bite and hold on, sucking fluids from the victim per round until dead or until she is killed or driven off. The victim's STR returns at a rate of 1 point/week.

MALE LAMPROID, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D4	5
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D3	2

Move: 10

Hit Points: 7-8

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Bite 30% (DB + 1D2 STR drain)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Listen 80%, Scent 80%, Sneak 80%

Powers:

STR Drain: Males can bite and hold on, sucking fluids from the victim per round until dead or until he is killed or driven off. The victim's STR returns at a rate of 1 point/week.

Ophluu

Ophluu are black, almost amorphous glowing blobs of rubbery flesh, ringed with long tentacles, its head ringed in smaller tentacles. Several of the tentacles have weird silver markings on them that are actually tattoos. Ophluu brains are not housed in the center "head," but rather in any one of the tentacles, which can be detached in an emergency so that it can regrow an entirely new creature of its own. They are fond of illegal menageries.

OPHLUU, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6+24	38
CON	3D6+12	22-23
SIZ	8D6	28
INT	1D6+12	15-16
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
APP	1D3	2

Move: 8

Hit Points: 25-26

Average Damage Bonus: +3D6

Weapon: Tentacle 40% ($\frac{1}{2}$ DB in constriction)

Armor: 7-point (Skin)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Sneak 30%, Track 25%

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: In hand-to-hand combat, an Ophluu may use all five tentacles at once, but no more than three may be used versus a single target.

Constrict: Once a tentacle grips, it clings to the victim, and each round thereafter the victim loses hit points equal to half the Ophluu's damage bonus in constriction and crushing damage.

Ramon

Dangerous feline humanoids. They are fond of wearing robes and wielding swords capable of cutting a man in half. A single Ramon is more than a match for an entire band of highly trained human assassins, and defeating one is considered a mark of pride.

RAMON, Greater Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+4	14-15
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	4D6+6	20-21
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 15

Hit Points: 15

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Katana 100% (1D10+1+DB)

Bite 75% (1D10)

Claw 75% (1D8+DB)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 100%, Hide 75%, Sneak 75%, Track 75%

Powers:

Dual Attack: Ramon can both Claw and Bite or Katana and Bite in a round.

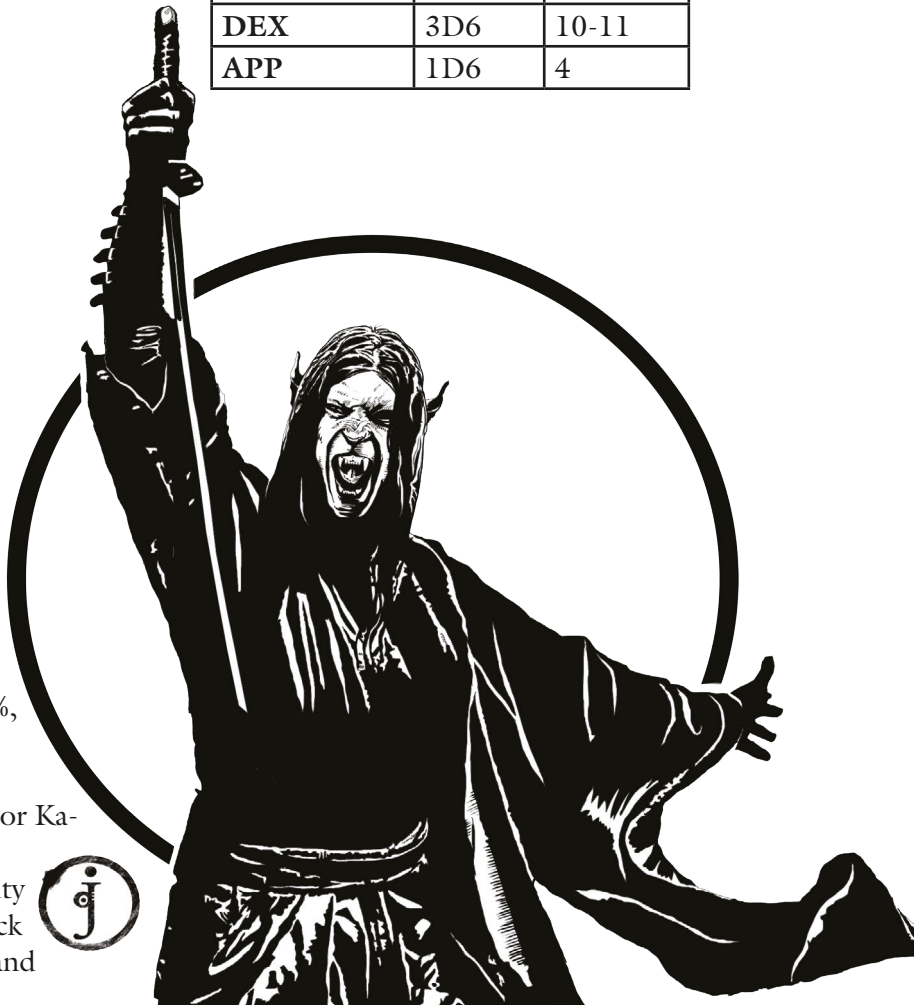
Cat-like Reflexes: Due to their cat-like agility and high DEX, Ramon evades one attack per round and still can Claw/Katana and Bite once each per round.

Stem

Stems average seven feet tall, with no part of their body larger in circumference than a drinking straw. Their form consists of a long central section jointed once at the middle, three-jointed legs and three-jointed upper limbs. Their bark-rough skin is a brilliant red, topped by a tiny face with sunken black triangular eye sockets, single triangular nostril and black toothless grins that look like the features of miniature jack-o'-lanterns. Their plump women, as thick in circumference as broom handles, are a foot to two feet shorter, glossy smooth and pure white – and no other race but the Stems are allowed to view them, soiled by the eyes of others, purified only by death. The Stems are a hard, violent people, their warrior class renowned, sometimes hired as bodyguards or assassins in Punktown and on other colonies.

STEM, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	1D6+12	15-16
SIZ	3D6+9	19-20
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D6	4



Move: 15

Hit Points: 20

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Brawl 45% (1D3+DB (crushing))
Black Crystal 55% (2D6)

Armor: 3-point (Hide)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Brawl 45%, Climb 50%, Dodge 40%,
Drive 45%, First Aid 40%, Grapple 50%,
Hide 35%, Jump 35%, Listen 45%, Spot 45%,
Stealth 40%, Strategy 20%, Throw 40%

Powers:

Thin: Stems are so thin that they take only 1 point from piercing attacks, which includes the majority of firearms.

Torgessi

Torgessi are huge, sturdy, and muscular with a head like a hornless cattle skull with cow-sized but intelligent human-like eyes set in the deep cups of the sockets, the teeth devoid of gums and covering lips. Torgessi do not normally wear clothes, their muscle definition thus clearly displayed, and this shows that while the helmet of their skulls are entirely turquoise, around the jaw and neck there begins a pebbly chain mail of tiny smooth scales, turquoise and black in various sizes and patterns, which change in accordance with the area of the large body (though other color arrangements are known); the scales and their patterns are beautiful. Despite their imposing stature, shoes made of Torgessi skin are a rare commodity.

TORGESSI, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	1D6+12	15-16
SIZ	3D6+12	22-23
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 6

Hit Points: 19

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Head Butt 35% (1D6+DB (knock-back))

Brawl 50% (1D3+DB (crushing))

Armor: 3-point (Hide)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Listen 35%, Sense 30%, Spot 35%, Track 55%

Powers:

Rage: If a Torgessi is wounded or achieves a special success while striking an opponent, it goes berserk for 24-CON turns, as the

Fury spell. A berserk Torgessi can attempt to shake off the rage by making a successful roll of INTx1%. After this berserk rage, it is considered fatigued (if the fatigue system is not used, all rolls are Difficult).



Veer

The Veers are outlawed from stepping foot on Oasis. Their eating habits and incorrigible savagery make a mockery of their visual charm; full grown Veers resemble earth children, small and cute and smooth. On close inspection, one might be able to see that their teeth are one forged and sharp beak-like expanse of bone and that their skin is somewhat glossy and doll-like — but then close inspection can prove fatal.

As clever as they are hungry, these creatures use powder to make their skin appear less glossy and employ special marker pens to draw fake teeth divisions onto their biting beaks. Veer are immune to stunning effects.

VEER, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D4	7
CON	3D6+6	15-16
SIZ	2D6	5
INT	2D6	5
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6+5	15-16
APP	3D6+5	15-16

Move: 10**Hit Points:** 7-8**Average Damage Bonus:** +0**Weapon:** Bite 30% (1D4+DB)**Armor:** 4 points (Thick hide)**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4**Spells:** None**Skills:** Disguise 90%, Listen 80%, Scent 80%, Sneak 80%**Powers:***Stun Immunity:* Veers are immune to all forms of stunning attacks.

Vlessi

The Vlessi race is actually the extradimensional counterpart of people from our own dimension, though a human counterpart can be any age, gender, or race. The Vlessi are a nonhuman race: their chests are long and narrow, shallow and bony, their arms and legs as thin as a deer's, and their feet are hooves (thus their nickname, the White Devils). Their hands are large and humanoid, the nails the same black as their hooves. Their heads are large atop their popsicle stick bodies, and hang forward as if with their weight. These heads resemble nothing so much as a human pelvis, shot through with open hollows and covered in thin but tough, short-furred skin. No visible mouth, no place even where a brain can be imagined to be housed. Set into the various cavities of this skull-pelvis are six tiny eyes, lidlessly staring like those of a doll, and haphazardly placed for each individual. They are usually naked except for a scarf, its color or material often signifying social or religious status. The portal to the Vlessi dimension opened on the Anul homeworld. When shady things happen, and the Anul are involved, chances are the Vlessi are in the shadows with them. Anul fear the Vlessi, but they aren't against using them.

VLESSI, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6+12	19
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	3D6+12	22-23
INT	2D6+8	15
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6-1	6

Move: 7**Hit Points:** 18**Average Damage Bonus:** +1D6**Weapon:** Axe 75% (2D6+2+DB)**Armor:** 3-point (Thick hide)**Sanity Loss:** 0**Spells:** None**Skills:** Listen 25%, Spot 25%**Powers:***Dimensional Shift:* A Vlessi can shift within 10 feet of their spiritual doubles and take objects or beings with them when it fades into another dimension.

By clutching the desired object in its talons and expending an additional POW per 10 SIZ points of the object or creature, it makes the transit also. Objects and victims lost are never found again.

Waiai

Waiai are yellow-skinned humanoids with remarkable hearing and channeled orifices ringing their heads all the way around the back from one side of their skulls to the other. They are blind, what eyes they might have seem to be squashed beneath the weight of their great hairless dome of a forehead, which reminds humans of the head of a dolphin. Their voices are squeaky, dolphin-like, the Waiai give off subsonic waves from an aperture in the center of that bulging dome, which are reflected back in a kind of radar that sculpts images onto some mind canvas. Their voices are squeaky, dolphin-like. Waiai-females, almost indistinguishable from the males, are considered sacred — bleeding in childbearing is called The Sacrifice; sexually assaulted women are avenged with extreme violence.



WAI AI, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6+15	22
CON	3D6+10	20-21
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+12	19
APP	2D6	7

Move: 12

Hit Points: 21-22

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Fist 35% (1D6+DB)

Sonic Lance 50% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 2 points (Thick hide)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Listen 100%

Powers:

Sonar Detection: Waiai are blind and immune to gaze attacks and illusions, but are capable of “seeing” using sonics alone. They can “see” in a 15-meter, 360-degree field of sonar detection, projected from the Waiai’s head. Use the Waiai’s Listen skill to determine if an obstacle is noticed, and an Idea roll to see if it can be identified.

Xenofoms

Albino Vampire

A toxic concoction of mutation, drugs, and an endless series of johns combines to turn a prostitute into a clone factory for vampiric mutant offspring. They are all skeletal, albino youths, with wicked claws and needle-like teeth in combs of multiple rows. Barely sentient, they bite and claw, licking the blood off their victims. It is not unheard of for one mother to produce over thirty spawn.

ALBINO VAMPIRE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6x2	20-22
CON	3D6x2	20-22
SIZ	2D6	5
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	5

Move: 12

Hit Points: 15-17

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Bite 50% (1D4+½DB (bleeding) + Blood Drain)

Claw 50% (1D4+DB (bleeding))

Grapple 75% (Special)

Armor: 4 points (Thick hide)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 50%, Hide 70%, Insight 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Sense 75%, Spot 75%, Stealth 80%, Track 75%

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: A vampire can make one bite and two claw attacks per round. If it succeeds in both claw attacks and a bite attack, it grapples its target and drains their blood temporarily each round until the target is incapacitated. It cannot attempt to Dodge during a round it bites.

Blood Drain: A vampire successfully biting a target drains 1D6 STR or 1D6 power points (GM’s choice) from that target on each subsequent round that it is able to stay attached to the target, using normal grappling rules. If the target has lost all his or her STR, the vampire can choose instead to drain CON from the victim; at 0 CON, the victim dies. Providing that the victim has not died, these characteristic points are not permanently lost and regenerate at the rate of 1 point per day of relative rest, or twice that long if the character is not resting. If more than one characteristic is drained, alternate recovery each day to recover 1 point of STR, then of CON, etc. Power points regenerate normally.

Bender

Benders, as they are nicknamed by Blue War veterans, are an extradimensional creature able to pass into and out of Sinan’s dimension. They rarely appear on Punktown’s plane of existence, though there have been occasional rumored sightings, including a few subway killings attributed to Benders said to live down there. They closely resemble blue jellyfish—huge when adult—that float in the air. The longer, blue tentacles paralyze their prey, while shorter black tentacles administer flesh-dissolving enzymes. Poisoned victims can look into the Benders’ realm, or even experience precognitive visions. Symbiotically, three Blastulas feed off the emanations of the larger Bender. In return, through a primitive telepathic connection, the little vampires serve as sensory organs and guides to the Benders in dimensions where they might otherwise be blind and disoriented.

BENDER, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	6D6+20	41
CON	3D6+6	20-21
SIZ	6D6+10	31
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	5D6	17-18
DEX	3D6	10-11

Move: 4 (Fly 8)**Hit Points:** 25-26**Average Damage Bonus:** +3D6

Weapon: 1D4 Blue Tentacles 75% (Paralyze & 1D6+DB or Grapple)
 Black Tentacles 75% (Engulf & 1D10+3 acid each round)

Armor: 4 points (Rubbery hide)**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6**Spells:** None**Skills:** Stealth 100%**Powers:**

Blue Tentacles: If the Bender's neuro-anaesthetic of POT 7D6 overcomes the target, he is paralyzed for 1D100-CON minutes. It also causes hallucinations, with a successful Idea roll giving some insane insight at the cost of 1D6 SAN.

Black Tentacles: A victim caught in the black tentacles suffers 1D10+3 points of acid damage each round as corrosive digestive enzymes begin to dissolve prey.

Blastula

A blastula is a primitive orange-sized extradimensional creature, a purple sphere with a fluttering gill-like ring at its base, floating leisurely to leech off other extradimensionals, like Benders and Flukes. It also leeches the POW from beings in the Prime dimension if it can.

BLASTULA, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	N/A	N/A
CON	N/A	N/A
SIZ	N/A	N/A
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	4D6	14
DEX	N/A	N/A

Move: POWx2**Hit Points:** POW**Average Damage Bonus:** N/A**Weapon:** POW Leech (1D3 POW)**Armor:** 4 points (Extradimensional hide)**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4**Spells:** None**Skills:** Stealth 100%**Powers:**

POW Leech: Blastulas drain POW by overcoming the victim's POW with its own.

Fluke

Flukes are as large as a good-sized whale and somewhat whale-like in general form. In transition between dimensions it glows translucent and ultraviolet. Its blunt head have no eyes and no mouth; at the end of its aerodynamic body there is only a kind of checkerboard, an area of alternating squares of raised and depressed flesh. When it has fully manifested in the Prime dimension, it has a beautiful glossy hide of green and black.

The Antse people flay the skin off Flukes carcasses inside ceramic block garages or hangar-like structures with scrap metal roofs, where their watery yellow blood runs down the streets of the neighborhood into grates. The swollen, tadpole-like form is lured out of its dimension by the Antse, who hail from the same dimension as the Fluke.

Blastulas feed off of Flukes, congregating in the hundreds around a humped bulge on its back. Its pain causes narcolepsy, depression, even suicide from its telepathic distress.

FLUKE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	10D6+10	43
CON	5D6+25	42-43
SIZ	10D6+15	48
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13

Move: 4 (Fly 14)**Hit Points:** 45-46**Average Damage Bonus:** +5D6**Weapon:** Smash 35% (DB)**Armor:** 8 points (Thick skin and blubber)**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D4**Spells:** None**Skills:** None**Powers:**

Psychic Distress: All sentient humanoids within one mile of the beast suffer 1D4 SAN loss for each full day they spend within its radius.

Humit Crab

Humit crabs appear very pointed, very elongated, and without arms, with dark reddish skin, giving the appearance of a giant carrot scuttling along on four crooked legs. The two front legs are actually forelimbs, ending in two human-like thumbs opposable to each other with thick, blunt nails. The mere presence of these things telepathically terrifies humanoids, and for good reason: Humit Crabs hollow out corpses, draining them of blood, and inserts itself into the body like a hand puppet. Just below the point where the corpse's body ends, half a dozen vertical crimson lips over black gums ring the creature's body, working independently of each other, full of combs of teeth. All the mouths feed into the same gullet, which lies just below the belt of fanged orifices. It has no limbs, eyes, and no features at all above that ring of mouths. At the very top is a crown

of swarming, wriggling translucent tendrils. The Humit Crab animates the corpse erratically, like a dead frog stimulated into movement.

HUMIT CRAB, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+5	15-16
CON	3D6+5	15-16
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+5	15-16

Move: 10

Hit Points: 13

Average Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: 1D4 Mouths 35% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 4 points (Thick hide)

Sanity Loss: 1D4/1D8

Spells: None

Skills: Disguise 75%, Dodge 50%, Hide 70%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Sense 75%, Spot 75%, Stealth 80%, Track 75%

Powers:

Human Shell: A Humit Crab can adopt the APP score of a corpse by wearing it and making a successful Disguise check.

Transmit Fear: A Humit Crab emits a telepathic transmission of its hunger, terrorizing its targets. Victims within 20 feet must overcome the Humit Crab's POW each round with their own or be paralyzed with fear for 1D4 rounds or until the victim suffers physical damage.

Snipe

Snipes appear as dog-like figures standing on crooked hind legs, emaciated, a corpse-like blue, with ribs picked out in black stripes of shadow. They have a natural faint bioluminescence. For decades now, there have been packs of snipes in Punktown, but it wasn't until the Blue War that Sinan was discovered to be their world of origin. They can open rifts to navigate dimensions, where they travel in packs. Snipe blood, when exposed to air, turns to black wisps like a spurt of octopus ink unfurling underwater.

SNIPE, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13



Move: 9

Hit Points: 13

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Claws 30% (1D6+DB)
Bite 30% (1D6+DB+worry)

Armor: Special (1/2 from piercing)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Sneak 35%

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: A Snipe can attack with two claws and its bite in a single combat round.

Worry: If a Snipe's bite strikes home, it hangs on instead of using claw attacks and worries the victim with its fangs, continuing to do 1D4 bite damage automatically. A Successful STR against STR Resistance Table roll dislodges the ghoul, breaking the Grapple, and ending the bite damage.

Willow Beetles

Willow Beetles look like sparkling orange gems on a willow tree. They are capable of assembling themselves into a humanoid form, which it cloaks in large hats and overcoats to walk Punktown's streets at night, calcifying back into a willow tree when dormant. Willow Beetles have a feral hive mind intelligence that never forgets a slight, and those harming the willow tree find themselves the subjects of its vengeance the next evening.

WILLOW BEETLES, Lesser Independent Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6+10	17
CON	3D6+12	22-23
SIZ	2D6+14	21
INT	2D6-2	5 (always at least 1)
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6+5	15-16

Move: 12

Hit Points: 22

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Tendril 40% (2D6+DB)

Armor: 5-point (Tree bark)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 80%, Disguise 75%, Hide 80%, Sneak 75%, Track 50%

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: A Willow Beetle swarm can attack with two tendrils per round.

Tree Form: A Willow Beetle swarm uses its disguise check to appear as a normal tree upon inspection.

Robots Magnus

Used as helpers for the disabled, or even assassins, Magnus robots are roughly humanoid, with a chrome-bright segmented neck, waist section, and flexible arms and legs. The head, chest, pelvic section and sharp-fingered hands and feet are of a green plastic as clear as hard candy.

Being partially organic, Magnus robots reason as well as any sentient humanoid and are thus subject to psychic and magical attacks. Their bio-engineered brain masses can be viewed through their transparent green skulls.

MAGNUS, Helpers and Assassins

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	5D6	17-18
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 8

Hit Points: 18-19

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Wolff .45 35% (1D10+2)
Fist 45% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 6 points (Armor against physical, fire, cold)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Electrical Repair 75%, Listen 30%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Operate Heavy Machinery 50%, Sneak 35%, Spot 35%

Powers: None

Guard Robot

While guard robots vary in shape, the popular form is something like a black snowman on a raised flat base. Cheap versions lack life-scan technology to confirm if targets have been eliminated. The more violent members of the Nuts gang have similar statistics.

GUARD ROBOT, Robotic Sentries

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	4D6+24	38
CON	4D6+12	26
SIZ	2D6+9	16
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 10

Hit Points: 21

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Blaster 80% (2D10+4 (impaling))
Fist 80% (1D3+DB (crushing))

Armor: 20 points (Internal plating)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Language (Binary) 100%, Language (English) 60%, Listen 65%, Repair (Electronics) 75%, Repair (Mechanical) 95%, Spot 75%

Powers: None

Blank People

Crafted for the upscale Beaumonde Square apartment complex Steward Gardens, these slate-grey bio-engineered life forms typically stand in their individual niches, blending in with their surroundings. Designed to perform simple duties as servants, they are stylized human figures with barely defined features and rudimentary limbs, standing straight like soldiers ranked at attention; they also ferociously defend the apartments from intruders.

The Nuts Gang

After the Union War, a group of rebellious automaton laborers took shelter in the abandoned subway and sewerage tunnels beneath the city, where they have now manufactured more of themselves, sneaking above ground occasionally to steal or purchase supplies with money earned from various criminal activities. The Nuts gang, all robots, is one of the most dangerous and legendary in town.

These machines and their ilk are the descendants of a group of robots that had once worked at the nearby Paxton Autoworks, all but leveled during the Union War by organic laborers – most of them laid off – rebelling against the use of robots in their place. Most of the automatons were slaughtered, but a number lived on after the riots in the ruins of the plant and in other ruins in that war zone of decimated factories. When these were gradually reclaimed and rebuilt (following new battles with a few robot tribes reluctant to give up their squatter's rights), the robots found their way into sealed off and abandoned subway tunnels forgotten after the great earthquake. Down there, with machinery taken from the factories and that they built themselves, they have given birth to successive generations of new robots, who have never known organic masters.

BLANK PEOPLE, Cybernetic Guardians

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	5D6	17-18
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 9

Hit Points: 10-11

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Claw 30% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 9-point (Stone hide)

Sanity Loss: 0/1d6

Spells: None

Skills: Disguise 75%, Hide 75%, Sneak 50%

Powers:

Blend: Blank People are indistinguishable from other statues unless they fail a Disguise check.

Kawaii Doll

Kawaii (“cute” in Japanese) dolls are animated to respond to their owners; most are mechanically animated, but a few are bio-engineered organisms. The Phlotus race produces similar dolls that some believe are the reincarnated souls of their ancestors, given out at the conclusion of a harrowing carnival ride called The Temple of the Sea of Milk. Almost all kawaii dolls are barely formed, with infant-like features; they usually lack fingers, toes, and fully developed sensory organs — all the better to keep them utterly dependent on their owners. Some kawaii dolls have other functions, such as dancing to music, responding to questions, dispensing beverages, or acting in other entertaining but relatively harmless ways.

KAWAII DOLL, Cute Toys and Trapped Souls

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6	7
CON	5D6	17-18
SIZ	1D3+2	4
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	3D6+5	15-16

Move: 9

Hit Points: 10-11

Average Damage Bonus: -1D6

Weapon: Claw 30% (1D6+DB)

Armor: None

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 75%, Sneak 50%

Powers: None



Rotwang

Named after the scientist from the film, *Metropolis*, Rotwangs these cybernetic organisms are constructed by the Nuts gang with bones formed from reconstituted robot alloy. Intentionally created to be attractive to humanoids, they usually take the form of human women, although any gender and race is possible if it furthers the Nuts’ ends. The Rotwang is a cybernetic bomb, with no other purpose than to get close to a target to eliminate it.

ROTWANG, Mechano-Terrorists

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+12	22-23
CON	5D6	17-18
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	5D6	17-18

Move: 8

Hit Points: 18-19

Average Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Wolff .45 35% (1D10+2)

Fist 45% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 6 points (Armor against physical, fire, cold)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Electrical Repair 75%, Listen 30%, Mechanical Repair 75%, Sneak 35%, Spot 35%

Powers:

Explode: Once Rotwangs are within 10 feet of a target, they explode for 6D6 damage in a 20 foot radius.

Trash Zapper

Equipped with retractable mechanized arms, the automated garbage trucks handling Punktown's endless capacity for refuse have specific paths, visiting dumpsters or simply picking up garbage, a red bulb on its side the only warning that citizens should stay out of its way. When a trash zapper is full, the red light switches to green and it finds an empty alley to slowly incinerate the contents, arms folded, in repose. Few give any notice to this fixture of Punktown, which makes the occasional rogue zapper (controlled by some form of intelligence) a dangerous threat indeed.

TRASH ZAPPER, Robotic Garbage Men

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	16D6+32	88
CON	16D6+32	88
SIZ	16D6+32	88
INT	2D6	7
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 5

Hit Points: 88

Average Damage Bonus: +10D6

Weapon: Claw 75% (1D6+DB)

Grapple 75% (Special)

Armor: 15-point (Hull)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Listen 30%, Spot 35%

Powers:

Incinerate: Trash zappers that successfully grapple a victim incinerate him in the next round, turning him to ash.

Worker Robot

Robot workers vary in size and scope. A common brand looks like an anthropomorphic wheelchair.

WORKER ROBOT, Threats To Unions Everywhere

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	2D6+6	13
CON	2D6+12	19
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6	7
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 8

Hit Points: 15

Average Damage Bonus: None

Weapon: Brawl 30% (1D3+DB (crushing))

Power Tool 50% (1D6 (fire or electrical))

Armor: 4-point (Plating)

Sanity Loss: 0

Spells: None

Skills: Fine Manipulation 95%, Listen 50%, Repair (Electronic) 95%, Repair (Mechanical) 95%, Spot 50%, Technical Skill (Computer Use) 100%

Powers: None

Servitors of the Old Ones
Afflicted

A strange event across the solar system struck humanoids with a penchant for the occult, or already mad, covering them with metallic-looking tumors, affecting men, women, and children, human and alien alike. A total of twenty-four thousand appeared on Earth, on the colonies of Luna, Mars, and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn in an attempt by the Great Old Ones to penetrate our dimension. These future harbingers of the Great Old Ones for the most part stumble about their lives, homeless and uncommunicative, like zombies, but when roused by a Great Old One the Afflicted are moved to action, lightning fast, albeit still inelegant in their movements.

The Afflicted sometimes form into groups of five, creating a spider-like creature with black teeth and whipping black tongues; their faces are like those of mummies wrapped in metallic bandages, their bodies withered. Afflicted spiders can spin long webs of silvery fluid, which in turn provides the foundation for an extradimensional gate. Even larger groups of thirty or more Afflicted can transform into huge tentacled beasts.

AFFLICTED, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+8	18-19
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	2D6	7
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+4	14-15
APP	2D6	7

Move: 10

Hit Points: 11

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Brawl 55% (1D3+1D6+DB (crushing))

Armor: 7-point (Flabby flesh)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 40%, Listen 35%, Sense 25%, Spot 30%, Stealth 25%, Track 25%.

Powers:

Absorb Afflicted: Afflicted can bond together to form monstrous entities. Each additional body adds 1 STR, SIZ, CON, and POW.

Web: Afflicted of five or more can spin webs and throw them at opponents with a 60% chance. A hit entangles the opponent; entangle STR equals half of the Afflicted's SIZ; to free, roll target's STR against Afflicted's entangle STR on the Resistance Table.

Carcosan

The aliens from Carcosa can pass for humans, but have an unnatural paper-white pallor, and when they speak, their features remain all but immobile, as if their faces are a mask. If damaged, Carcosan skin cracks like porcelain and a fluid seeps from the holes as thick as banana-colored sap with the stench of a corpse long liquefied inside a walking sarcophagus.

CARCOSAN, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6+10	20-21
POW	3D6+15	25-26
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 10

Hit Points: 11

Averager Damage Bonus: 0

Weapon: Brawl 55% (1D3+DB (crushing))

Armor: 3-point (Brittle flesh)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 40%, Listen 35%, Sense 25%, Spot 30%, Stealth 25%, Track 25%.

Powers:

The Yellow Signs: See sidebar for details.

Coleopteroid

This extradimensional beetle-like race are black, bipedal beings with six pincer-tipped arms, the lower two of which are occasionally removed and replaced with mechanical arms with four fingers and opposable thumbs, an artificial adaptation to a humanoid-oriented world; they wear no other clothing or jewelry. The Coleopteroids enter the Prime dimension by riding great black train-like machines called trans that move about upon train-like tracks laid out in odd geometric patterns. Coleopteroids are derisively known as "Bedbugs"

because they have an aura about them that makes people nervous. They feed on trace-energies of human beings in "Limbo" dimensions, brought there by Gatherers. They excrete a foul-smelling violet gas after consuming souls, the ingredients of which constitute the highly addictive and destructive drug known as Purple Vortex. Coleopteroids worship Cthulhu and some of them even constitute a gang in Punktown.

COLEOPTEROID, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6	7
INT	5D6+6	23-24
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	2D6+6	13
APP	1D6	4

Move: 8

Hit Points: 13-14

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: 1D4 Claws 30% (1D6+DB)

Armor: 2-point (Chitinous shell)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Hide 40%, Listen 35%, Sense 25%, Spot 30%, Stealth 25%, Track 25%.

Powers: None

Hound of Tindalos

Hounds of Tindalos are as tall as a man, with a torpedo-shape like a shark without fins, tail, or a head, all black and rubbery; gill-like slits open and close on the thing's smooth sides, as if gasping for air. It moves with an obscene flopping motion, swaying side to side, with the aid of flippers at its base, black claws curling out of them as cruel as an eagle's. It has no other limbs except for a vaguely translucent tongue that lashes out from a the hole, with five gray flaps like its tongue, in the top of its body. It emits short, sharp, guttural cries, almost like barks. Tindalosian Hounds hunt by smell and inflict great puncture wounds dripping a thick, syrupy blue color.

HOUND OF TINDALOS, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+6	16-17
CON	3D6+20	30-31
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	5D6	17-18

POW	7D6	24-25
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	1D6	4

Move: 6

Hit Points: 23-24

Average Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapon: Tongue 90% (1D3 POW)

Armor: 2-point (Hide)

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D20

Spells: None

Skills: Dodge 40%, Spot 30%, Track 25%.

Powers:

Immunity: Hounds are immune to mundane ammunition and weapons; gel caps are effective, however.

Tongue Attack: With a successful tongue attack, a deep penetrating (though bloodless and painless) hole is formed. The victim takes no physical damage, despite his peculiar wound, but loses 1D3 POW permanently.

Hound of Ugghiuu

Spawned from the skulls of the insane, there are all too many fertile victims in which a Hounds of Ugghiuu may gestate. Once Ugghiuu has been summoned, his hounds begin to manifest in those with 0 SAN. The afflicted's skull bulges, a condition that is very painful, until the skull bursts wide open killing the victim as the Hound is born. Hounds of Ugghiuu have ghostly, luminous bodies topped by a featureless head ringed with tendrils that sway and swirl like the hair of a drowned woman at the bottom of a lake. Its skeletal arms swim in slow motion, and its translucent wings beat slowly at its back.

HOUD OF UGGHIUTU, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	4D6	14
APP	1D6	4

Move: 7 (Fly 9)

Hit Points: 10-11

Average Damage Bonus: 0

Weapon: Nippers 30% (1D6+Grapple)

Armor: None (Minimum damage from impaling)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 15%, Sneak 15%,

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: Hounds may attack in hand-to-hand combat with two nippers at once.

Grapple: If the target is hit, the Hound tries to Grapple

The Yellow Signs

Carcosans bring a Yellow Sign with them wherever they go and are fond of patronizing artists including it in their art, which inevitably, this drives the artist mad. The signs vary in appearance, white against yellow and thus easy to miss; some look like stylized stars, others almost like calligraphy. The night following seeing a terrible Yellow Sign, the viewer loses 0/1D6 points of Sanity; after which, anyone suffering a loss of Sanity must make another Sanity roll every night thereafter, else they are haunted by horrible nightmares causing a further loss of 1 point of Sanity. This continues each time he sleeps until the victim successfully resists the Yellow Sign with a Sanity roll or until madness overtakes him.

the victim (roll STR against STR on the Resistance Table to break free), and fly into the sky to drop the victim from a height or take the victim so high that his or her lungs burst.

Pseudopede

Like the Puppeteer, this long creature slithering and wriggling with ripping cilia, is a microscopic parasite capable of expanding its size fantastically in just moments to attack, with cries sound like horse's hysterical whinnying with almost subliminal whisperings laced under it, like someone playing glasses of water with their fingertips.

PSEUDOPEDE, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	6D6+12	33
CON	4D6+10	24
SIZ	5D6+26	43-44
INT	4D6+6	20
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
APP	1D6	4

Move: 9

Hit Points: 33-34

Average Damage Bonus: +4D6

Weapon: Tentacle 40% (½ DB)

Crush 35% (DB)

Armor: 6-point (Thick skin and blubber)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

Spells: None

Skills: None

Powers:

Grow: Pseudopedes can infect a visitor to Cthulhu's dimension as a microbe and then grow instantly to full size. This guarantees that it gets a free attack as part of an Ambush.

Puppeteer

These microscopic amoeba-like creatures drift in liquid with little lazy spurts infecting beings crossing into Cthulhu's dimension. When necessary, they grow exponentially in seconds, transforming into a huge monstrosity topped by tentacles striped with black and silver, making a sound like that of a bellowing mammoth blended with a synthesizer running backwards, underwater. Puppeteers fire a long tendril into a victim's skull to perform detailed actions they cannot. This act keeps the victim alive in a zombie-like state, moving slowly and awkwardly, with enough memories to be functional. From a distance, the tendril may be difficult to spot, as the Puppeteers are semi-translucent, but close up the bizarre relationship is unmistakable. If the tendril is severed, the host dies instantly.

PUPPETEER, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	6D10+6	39
CON	3D6+6	16-17
SIZ	6D10+10	41
INT	4D6+6	20
POW	3D6+6	16-17
DEX	4D6	14
APP	1D6	4

Move: 8-9

Hit Points: 19-20

Average Damage Bonus: +4D6

Weapon: Tendril 75% (1D6+DB+puppet)

Armor: None (Immune to piercing and slashing)

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8

Spells: None

Skills: Control Human Body 50%

Powers:

Grow: Puppeteers infect a visitor to Cthulhu's dimension as a microbe and then grow instantly to full size. This guarantees that it gets a free attack as part of an Ambush.

Animate Corpse: If a victim would die from a Puppeteer's tendril attack, it instead animates the body by "plugging in" to the victim's skull. The victim is brain dead but still alive, giving the Puppeteer access to any skills the corpse had in life at the same rating as its Control Human Body skill.

Ugghiutu Spawn

These creatures were secretly designed at the bio-engineered meat company, Alvine Products, owned by Kalian devotees of Ugghiutu. Large,

glossy purple beasts with eight smooth tentacles at its front, set in a ring, in the center of which is a much smaller set of numerous writhing tendrils, a contrasting bright white in color. There are two paddle-like forward limbs that drag the hulk along, with the appearance of finger bones within them, like the hands of a still-forming fetus. Along either side of the monster are pulsing gill slits like those of a shark, showing starkly white meat beneath the purple outer skin.

UGGHIUTU, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	10D6	33
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	10D6	33
INT	1D6	4
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	2D6+12	19
APP	1D6	4

Move: 4 (Swim 10)

Hit Points: 23

Average Damage Bonus: +3D6

Weapon: Beak 45% (1D10+DB)

Tentacle 45% (1D6+DB+constriction)

Armor: 2-point (Hide)

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 70%

Powers:

Multiple Attacks: The beak and eight tentacles can attack simultaneously at up to eight different targets.

Constrict: The first tentacle striking a foe hangs on; when a second connects, the two constrict the target, and each does its damage each round.

Utalla

A hobgoblin of Kalian folklore, Utallas are big wingless birds that live in the mountains and love to eat cats. They skin them alive to torment them before they eat them and make their nests from cat pelts. Utallas, in reality, appear as skeletal humanoids with huge black eyes covered in a silvery protective membrane, and a long pointed beak like a bird's projecting from the front of their heads. The skin has a silvery sheen, but like their eyes seem black below the surface, giving Utallas an odd look as though their bodies were an x-ray. The Utalla are aligned with Ugghiutu, one of the groups of his servitor demons, and know where to find Ugghiutu's sleeping body, feeding some of his orifices the way birds feed their chicks.

UTALLA, Lesser Servitor Race

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+15	25-26
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	3D6	10-11
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6+6	16-17
APP	2D6	7

Move: 12**Hit Points:** 21-22**Average Damage Bonus:** +2D6**Weapon:** Bite 50% (2D6+DB)
Talon 35% (1D6+DB)**Armor:** 9-point (Protective membrane)**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6**Spells:** None**Skills:** Listen 25%, Spot 25%, Track 25%**Powers:** None**Great Old Ones****Dai-oo-ika**

Using bio-engineering technology from the infamous Alvine Products when they bought that company out, Fukuda Bioforms created a kawaii doll that initially looked relatively harmless — a squid-faced, winged, baby-like form. As he grew he became much more dangerous, with writhing head tentacles the thickness of a man's torso and a massive bulging form of gray flesh.

An avatar of Ugghiuu, Dai-oo-ika is driven by two conflicting goals: an endless need to fill a gaping hole left by his separation from his owner, and the need to create an apocalyptic world filled only with his followers. Dai-oo-ika deals aggressively with the first goal by absorbing those he feels any affection for into his own body. The second goal he achieves by growing after each absorption, becoming more powerful in the process.

DAI-OO-IKA, Avatar of Ugghiuu

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6*	17-18
CON	3D6*	17-18
SIZ	3D6*	10-11
INT	3D6+6	16-17
POW	5D6	17-18
DEX	3D6+12	17-18
APP	3D6	10-11

Move: 10**Hit Points:** 14**Average Damage Bonus:** +1D4**Weapon:** Tentacle 60% (1D8+DB+infection)**Armor:** 2-point (Rubbery flesh)**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D8**Spells:** None**Skills:** Hide 50%, Imitate Consumed Victim 99%, Read Minds Telepathically 99%, Sneak 50%**Powers:****Regeneration:** 1 HP/round until dead. Wounds from fire, electricity, acid or magic weapons do not regenerate.**Consume Victim:** Eating a victim requires 1 minute per point of SIZ digested through Dai-oo-ika's jelly-like protoplasm, which it spews over its food. As it consumes victims it also absorbs the dead creature's memory, skills, and mannerisms. In this way, Dai-oo-ika can accurately imitate any living organism. The transformation from one animal to another requires 1 round per SIZ of the Thing. Dai-oo-ika can fully transform or choose body parts to transform, such as creating teeth or claws quickly to attack or defend itself.**Grow:** As Dai-oo-ika eats, it increases its STR, SIZ, and CON 1 point each per 1 SIZ consumed.**Bud:** Dai-oo-ika can also bud to create independent organisms. This may be done when two or more victims have been consumed and it wishes to imitate both simultaneously. Because of this budding ability, separate (but always connected by a thin tendril to Dai-oo-ika) creatures take on lives of their own. Dai-oo-ika splits the characteristics of STR, CON and SIZ among the multiple bodies, but each separate entity retains the same INT, POW and DEX as the original.**Gatherer**

The Gatherers – and there are at least three – are beings summoned and worshipped by the Bedbugs. They pay tribute to these monstrous deities through the collection of souls, feeding them through their Limbo dimensions, until the Gatherers have enough power to slowly penetrate the Prime dimension. Gatherers appear as titanic spider-like beings with multiple eyes and legs.

Bedbugs transmit to the Gatherers over a telepathic amplifier-projector device, and the response is enough to burst the heads of telepaths. The Bedbugs chant praises to the beasts, which they view as fertility gods, these chants referring ominously to a coming “harvest,” when the Gatherers will reap enough souls to feed the Bedbugs in Limbo. Despite their vast size, these beings are, in fact, only nymphs.

GATHERER, Avatars of Atlach-Nacha

Characteristic	Rolls	Averages
STR	24D6+48	132
CON	16D8+48	104
SIZ	24D6+48	132
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	4D6	14
DEX	3D6	10-11
APP	2D6	7

Move: 18

Hit Points: 118

Average Damage Bonus: +15D6

Weapon: Crush 60% (1D6+DB (crushing + knockback))

Armor: 21-point (Skin)

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10

Spells: None

Skills: Sense 60%, Spot 60%

Powers: None

Ugghiutu

Ugghiutu, a Kalian deity often compared to Azathoth, is said to be responsible for creating the humanoid races so that they might release the Great Old Ones again. He is also worshipped by cults of Tikkihotto and many Coleopteroids.

Kalian women are forbidden to render an image of Ugghiutu. Only priests have ever done so, and they ritualistically hung themselves afterwards, because Ugghiutu had shown himself to their minds. In art, Ugghiutu is frequently depicted as a black sun ringed in a corona of tentacles, with one red eye in the center, or as a whirling vortex, black, with a red spiral for infinity as its nucleus. He consumes the souls of the living, a sort of octopus grim reaper, but then excretes them again as new souls, recycled and reincarnated. He is harsh, unforgiving, vengeful, cruel, monstrous – the usual godly attributes — and he lives in a kind of spider web that holds the universe and the dimensions together. This unseen palace is the Temple of Ugghiutu, and actual temples are built according to meticulous blueprints that are meant to emulate these cosmic patterns.

Ugghiutu is best known for transforming his amorphous black flesh into the semblance of a temple that appears in remote places, and lures the unwary inside as unwilling sacrifices. This temple of himself in tribute to himself exhibits a looming dome in the center, minarets made of entwined tentacles, and two flat-roofed wings of several floors that frame the central rotunda. In a city like Punktown, Ugghiutu may mimic more modern-appearing structures in vacant lots.

Characteristic	Rolls
STR	120
CON	230
SIZ	120
INT	0
POW	100
DEX	10
APP	-

Move: 15

Hit Points: 175

Average Damage Bonus: +14D6

Weapon: Tentacles 100% (14D6 or death on second round)

Armor: 50-point (Hard shell)

Sanity Loss: 1D10/5D10

Spells: None

Skills: -

Powers: Ugghiutu attacks by putting forth tentacles from its body, crushing victims, or drawing them into its shell where they are instantly torn apart.

The Fizala on Ugghiutu

The Outsider may be summoned in essence, but never awakened from His dreams; He may be consulted, as even in His dreams can He yet converse with His acolytes, but fully roused He is beyond the need for even the most faithful of men, whom He will trod upon with the infidel alike. As men use insects to make honey, so does the Outsider make use of men, but as men do not love these insects, and will destroy them without grief, so will the Outsider crush even His highest priests if He has no further need of them. Asleep, He has need of our kind so that we might make all attempts to summon Him into our world. And summon Him briefly whilst in His dreams we shall. But even those most loyal of us must betray His desire, if we are to survive as men, and the world survive without the horror of His visitation upon it. It is for the wisest of our priests to keep this truth even from our common priests. Allow them to believe that they serve only the full intentions of our Master. But watch closely that these priests use only the summoning rituals that are assured not to end the Dreaming One's timeless slumber.

SCENARIO: THE LEMONGRASS CRATER

by Glynn Owen Barrass

Introduction

Strange events are such a daily occurrence, the majority of Punktown's population have witnessed something odd, supernatural, or just downright insane at some point during their lives, and as such are accustomed to it. So, when a meteorite falls from the sky, killing the six hundred plus inhabitants of a sprawling apartment complex, people are shocked and outraged (for about two hours), after which they go about their daily lives.

The Health Agency appeared on the VT to explain this was a "one-in-a-billion occurrence," and people discussed the disaster, albeit briefly, over their evening meals. A HAP team entered the Lemongrass Square ruins, said the city was safe from radiation, and other interests appeared to occupy the city's myriad minds. Then the rumors started. Within the cordoned off ruins of Lemongrass Square, witnesses reported huge shapes lumbering through the devastation. Looters, doing overtime in the destruction the meteorite caused, entered the square and did not return. All this was heard on the rumor mill, discounted by most, and certainly didn't thwart the looters in their quest for a quick buck. Like most rumors in Punktown, it shouldn't have been taken so lightly.

This scenario is suitable for 2 – 4 players, the most suitable professions being Hitman, Forcer, or Health Agent, with combat skills being the most useful for survival, although high levels of Craft (Computer Code) and Technical (Computer Use) will come in very useful near the end of the scenario.

Gamemaster's Information

Before Lemongrass Square's construction, the whole four hundred square feet area was nothing but undeveloped land, heavily guarded, however, and surrounded by tall, electrified, razor wire fences. Public records showed the land's owners to be a company called Dukong Renovations, and they appeared in no rush to build on this virgin plot within a greatly overpopulated city. Dukong Renovations, however, is a subsidiary of P'yong Heavy Industries, and built a large laboratory installation beneath the bare earth for the sole purpose of creating illegal clones from stolen genetic material. At the time, P'yong Heavy Industries was chasing a military contract to create a 'super-soldier' for use in the Blue War, their clones going far beyond simply copying one creature to create a duplicate. Bizarre mutations were

created in their experiments, gargantuan amalgamations of Human, Choom, and other beings. They lost the contract, however, mothballed the installation, and left their newly created monstrosities in stasis while Dukong Renovations buried their secret underneath Lemongrass Square. All was well, except that in Punktown, no secret remains hidden forever, and a one-in-a-billion meteorite impact damaged the installation and released their sinister secrets made flesh. After the impact, the installation's mainframe went on defense mode, releasing its mutations to guard the surrounding area. Dukong Renovations and their masters, P'yong Heavy Industries, want the rumors about mutations quashed, and as such, want the mutations quashed. To succeed in this, they require some heavily-armed, no nonsense killers to enter the ruins and escort two of their operatives into the installation, the plan being, that once the operatives are there, they can reach the mainframe controlling the mutations and disable them by remote. With safeguards in place to stop the curious, P'yong Heavy Industries doesn't expect the characters to survive past the entrance to the installation; they are, in reality, nothing but cannon fodder. It's a good plan, in theory.

Involving the Characters

The exact way the characters get involved in the scenario is up to the Gamemaster, but here are some suggestions:

- 1) One of the characters has a friend working for Dukong Renovations (oblivious to the company's sinister secrets), and after hearing that Dukong was hiring, put a word in for the characters.
- 2) One or more of the characters are undercover Forcers or HAP Agents wanting access to the site to investigate the disappearance of five of their colleagues. This optional method of involvement is noted in the text under the heading *Missing Persons*.

However they first hear of the job, they are given the following information:

The Project Director of Dukong Renovations, Miss Gunmetal Costello, requires the services of discreet persons gifted in the art of killing. A problem has arisen on the site of the Lemongrass Square meteor impact that requires the immediate attention of any unafraid of getting their hands dirty. Large cash incentives are provided.

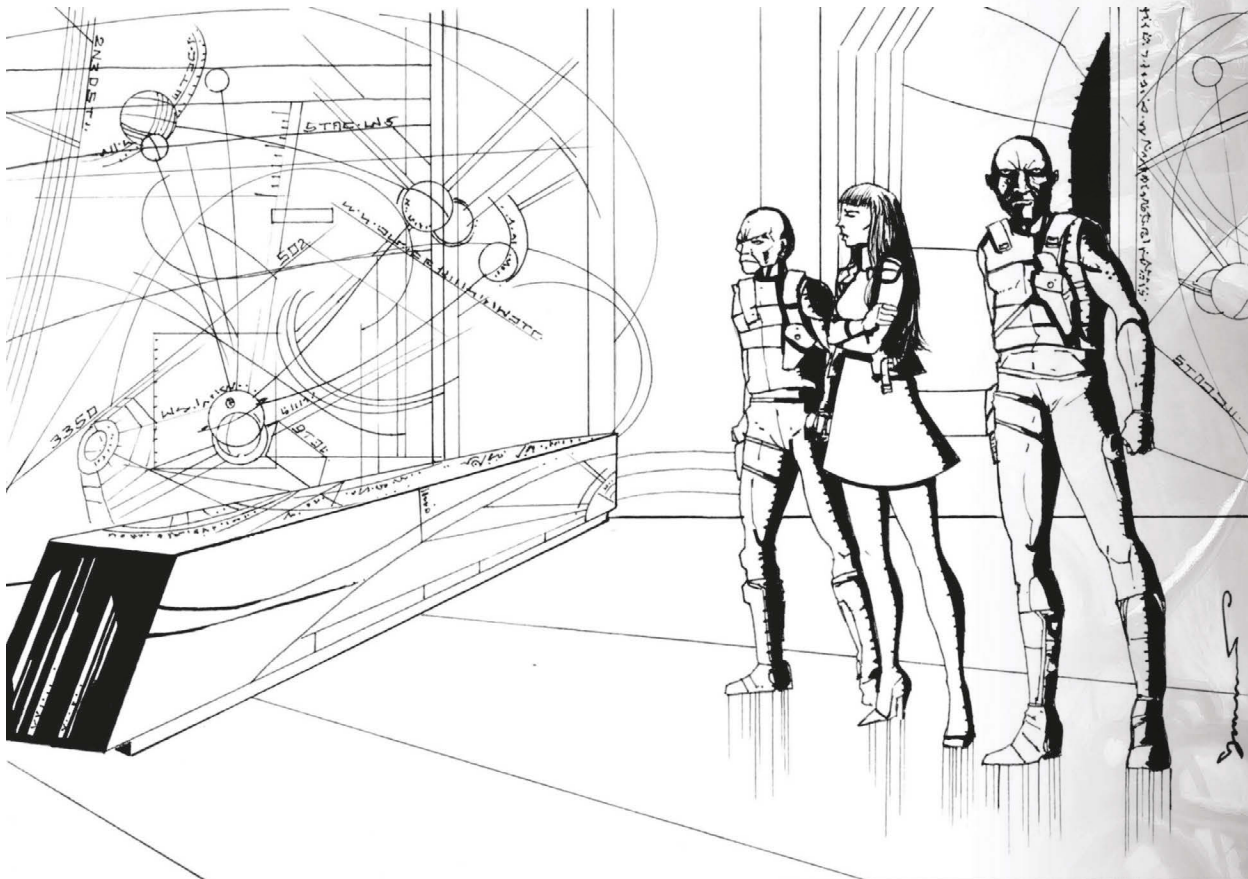
Dukong Renovations

Fronted by a large car park, this fifty-story high, imposing building formed from ersatz granite is shaped like a gravestone with circular windows like the portholes of a ship. Rusted steel scaffolding surrounds the building for the first twenty floors, but no structural work is being performed – this is just decoration. Upon the ground floor stands a row of six mirrored sliding doors above which a sign bearing the company name flickers in pink neon. There are two small guardhouses to either side of the entrance, each bearing a gun turret upon its flat roof. Anyone approaching the entrance is ordered to halt and submit to a weapon scan. Any weapons the characters wishing to enter the building may have are confiscated. A short, elderly, obese human and a young, thin, wiry Choom leave their posts within the guardhouses to confiscate the weapons. If asked about this level of security, the human replies, “We’ve been getting threats since the meteorite crashed, citizens are mad because their loved ones are still buried there.”

Characters enter the building into a brightly lit reception; the walls, ceiling and floor formed from octagonal yellow plastic tiles. A low, black granite desk stands between the characters and a bank of elevators at the rear of the reception, behind which sits a young, pretty, black-haired female Tikkihotto. Revolving holograms adorn the wall showing many of Dukong Renovation’s properties around Punktown; one of them, near the center of the right-hand wall, is blank because this frame once displayed Lemongrass Square. In addition to the characters and the receptionist, there are two human security guards posted at the elevators, who stare at the characters with suspicion as the receptionist asks them in a chirpy manner about their business before speaking into her earpiece to summon the woman they’re here to see. A few minutes later, the center elevator opens and the characters meet Gunmetal Costello.

The Project Director

Tall, shapely, with bright green shoulder length hair, Gunmetal Costello wears a metallic jacket, short skirt and high heels. Although she appears human, she is actually a Choom after extensive facial surgery. A native Choom character making an Idea roll realizes this on a critical roll. As she approaches the characters, the two guards flank her. She steps around the reception desk, smiles brightly, and shakes the hand of whomever has the highest APP (male or female, but ignoring any Chooms). She greets the characters, introducing herself as ‘Ms. Costello,’ and invites them to join her in her office. After a walk across the reception, they leave the guards behind and take an elevator ride to the fiftieth floor and a large conference room. Porthole windows line one wall while the rest of this room is decorated similarly to the reception, even down to the framed, revolving images, except that the Lemon-grass Square hologram is still present. Ms. Costello invites them to sit at a large table before taking a seat herself. The black granite table is bare apart from a small circular metallic plate at its center and a small console near where Ms. Costello sits. If the characters accept her invitation of refreshments, jugs of chilled juice and glasses elevate from hidden recesses in the table before Ms. Costello begins her pitch. Ms. Costello gives the most attractive, non-Choom character flirty smiles throughout the interview, although she won’t take things any further if propositioned afterwards.



It's a Bug Hunt!

"You may have heard the rumors about disappearances and things going 'bump' at the site of our former complex," Ms. Costello begins. "Well, it does seem they're true, and there are things, mutants most likely, wandering around the impact site and stopping our people from going in there and starting the clean up. We have no idea what these things are. Heck, this is Punktown so god knows what freaks have made their homes there in that rubble."

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

Call for Luck rolls, and if successful, they have passed Lemongrass Square in its heyday and have memories of a filthy structure with broken windows, mottled in graffiti. This is the reality, not the hologram.

Ms. Costello presses a button on the console and a large yellow 3D hologram of Lemongrass Square appears at the center of the table, slowly moving on its axis. The apartment complex, shown in its former glory, is a large ten-story cylindrical building with two wings leading in with steps to the roof, where a large glass dome stands. The wings are connected to two small, five-story cylindrical buildings, the rear of the building connected to a low, two-story parking garage. The walls are mostly transparent glass, with some white between. The main roof and those of the wings are spotted with satellite dishes.

"One of our oldest buildings," Ms. Costello continues with a sigh and switches off the hologram. "This operation should be a piece of cake for people of your skills. We'll even arm you, and include two of our men to accompany you into the ruins. This job pays ten thousand munits up front, each, and another ten thousand upon successful completion. If you agree, I'll have the cash transferred to your account immediately. Our two operatives can be waiting for you outside the Lemongrass within the hour, or whenever you're ready. We would, however, like the operation started within the next twenty-four hours. Are there any questions?"

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

Call for Psychology rolls; success reveals she is being untruthful about something.

The interview over, Ms. Costello escorts the characters back to the reception. They can either go to Lemongrass Square immediately or do some research. Whatever they choose, Ms. Costello gives the character she's been flirting with her business card. This way they can contact her when they're ready to begin the job.

Public Knowledge

At this point in the scenario the characters may want to do some research on their new employer and the Lemongrass Square incident. The knowledge provided in the handouts, opposite, can be found in a library—Punktown's K Block Library, for example—with a successful Library Use or Computer Use skill.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

The characters should make a separate roll for each piece of information, stating the keyword they are using for the search. Possible keywords are noted in **Bold**.

Urban Chaos

Upon arriving at Lemongrass Square, the characters see a chaotic wreck of fallen masonry surrounded by a ten foot tall, electrified mesh fence topped with razor wire. Numerous 'warning' signs are pinned across the fence to deter trespassers. One area of the fence connects to a gate, flanked by two fabricated steel guard posts topped with gun turrets. The men they've been sent to liaise with are easily found parked up in a Hovervan directly to the left of the gate. Upon the characters' approach, they leave the vehicle and the characters see a tall, stocky, blue-skinned human and a shorter Tikkihotto. The Tikkihotto waves, but the human folds his arms and glares at the characters sternly, sizing them up as they approach. Both men are wearing dark blue jumpsuits and black plastic bulletproof vests.

The bald human, Sebastian-13, is a trained mercenary and by the blue camouflage pattern of his skin, obviously a clone and a Blue War veteran. He has the number '13,' tattooed to his forehead in black ink, the area around his left eye is heavily scarred with a cybernetic, fish eye camera lens replacing his eyeball. He says, in a sarcastic tone, "You're the big bad wolves here to solve Dukong's problems? I'm Sebastian-13, and this here is Malla Turonga." The tone towards his companion is obviously derogatory. The Tikkihotto is a fair representation of his race; blonde hair and a goatee, and apart from his eyestalks appears completely human. He is very jittery in his body and eye movements. He pulls off a glove and shakes the characters' hands, his handshake limp and moist, saying, "I'm the tech support here, err, um, you can call me Mal." Sebastian-13 rolls his eyes and shakes his head, saying, "Well let's get this show on the road." He heads to the rear of the vehicle, Mal in tow, raising a shutter to reveal a miniature arsenal.

Handout #1

The DAILY INQUISITOR ONLINE EDITION

In court today, **Dukong Renovations** was successfully sued on a number of counts regarding their properties: 1,565 counts of rent overcharging, 2,454 counts of renting unsafe dwellings, and 502 counts of illegal evictions. In summary, Judge Leroy K'Tort said the company was the most disreputable one he had encountered in the eighty-three years he had sat behind the gavel. The amount for damages is unspecified, but guessed at in the millions. **Dukong Renovations** have refused to comment on the charges.

Handout #3

PAXTON BUSINESS ARCHIVES

Company No: 86816;

Dukong Renovations

(a subsidiary of

P'yong Heavy Industries)

Trade:

Construction and Commerce

Reference:

BT 31/11337/86816

Handout #4

PAXTON BUSINESS ARCHIVES

Company No: 70259;

P'yong Heavy Industries

Trade:

Military Hardware,

Pharmaceuticals and

Exotic Weaponry

Reference:

BT 31/34672/70259

Handouts for Public Knowledge

Handout #2

The DAILY INQUISITOR ONLINE EDITION

A **meteorite** plummeted from the sky today, completely obliterating an apartment complex with all 632 residents feared dead. The complex, **Lemongrass Square**, was at half occupancy while the owners undertook court-mandated repairs. Over 600 buildings in the surrounding area suffered structural damages from the resulting shockwave and seismic disturbances leaving 32 dead and 987 injured. HAP spokespersons stated this was a one-in-a-billion tragedy and the **meteorite** went undetected before atmospheric entry.

One witness, Poloona Kwat, who works in a nearby office block, told *The Daily Inquisitor* she saw "a very bright light," followed by a strong explosion that destroyed the windows in her workplace. *Inquisitor* reporters are at the scene, find our live VT feed by tuning in to *PaxtonWorld News*. (Sponsored by Zub)

The Armory Weapons

Weapon	base %	damage	range	att/rnd	ammo	HP	mal
Assassin	15%	2D8	100	2	20	20	99-00
Assault Eng	25%	2D6+2	100	2/burst	30	12	00
Decimator.340	20%	1D10+2	20	1	6	14	00
Osprey .00	5%	3D4+1	10	1	30	12	96-00
Thor .93	20%	1D8	20	2	12	8	98-00

NB: *There are three each of the above weapons available.*

Armor

Name	AP	Burden	Skill	Modifier	Location
Bulletproof Mesh	4	Light	-5%	Physical	all
Plastic Vest	8	Light	-5%	Physical	chest

NOTE: *There are four each of the above items available.*

Miscellaneous Gear

Nightvision Goggles – Users can see fifteen meters in total darkness. Negative modifiers to Spot or combat skills in darkness do not apply.

NB: *There are a dozen pairs of Nightvision Goggles available.*

The above table shows the weapons and equipment available for the characters.

At this point, the Gamemaster should give the characters the option of exploring the area surrounding Lemongrass Square. Sebastian-13 is fine with this as long as they're not gone for too long.

The office blocks and apartment buildings surrounding the crater are abandoned and boarded shut. Broken masonry from the blast and smashed glass litter the area. There is, however, an open BurgerZone restaurant, its windows clean and graffiti free, freshly repaired after the destruction of the meteor shockwave. Here, the characters can buy the greasiest burgers going, equally greasy, salty fries (yum!), and phallus-sized, salty green pickles. They might also want to interview the staff about the Lemongrass Crater and ask if they have seen anything suspicious around the ruins. In this case, the staff send for the Night Manager, a surly faced Kalian in a grease-stained orange turban matching his grease-stained orange uniform. He wears a nametag bearing the name: 'Ged.' He says: "Only paying customers get to talk. You pay. I talk." At this point, the characters get to choose something from the delectable menu: fries are 5 Munits a portion, burgers 10 Munits each or a double for 15, pickles are 10 Munits for a bag of three. Gamemasters should feel free to give the burgers exciting names if they wish; they all taste like pre-chewed horsemeat anyway.

The Kalian answers their questions now that they are patrons:

If asked: "Has there been anyone at the crater since it was walled off?" He replies: "There are hobos going in and out, climbing over the fence like rats. Ugghiuu only knows how they stop getting fried. I also saw some official types go in there. I didn't see them come out again." If asked about any other occurrences at the crater, he replies: "Some of my staff said they hear screams from in there, but they're idiots. The whole place is radioactive, I bet. We'll have eight-armed hobos climbing out of there like spiders any day now."

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

A sadistic Gamemaster may call for a CON x5 roll for any character that tried the burgers, keeping the outcome secret. If they fail, the character has been poisoned, and the Gamemaster may reveal this fact at the most inopportune of moments, such as during combat, for instance, when the character involuntarily evacuates their bowels, incapacitating them for two rounds, giving them half movement until they clean themselves up.

If the characters search the area surrounding Lemongrass Square, they find nothing but desolation and cracked pavements for their trouble. The Gamemaster should make a roll on the table "Punktown Will Kill You" on page 33 for a random encounter, ignoring and re-rolling inappropriate results.

If they decide to interview the guards in the posts flanking the door when they return to Lemongrass Square, they find only one manned by a slovenly, fat Choom

with food stains on his uniform. The man is abrupt and unhelpful with the attitude that the characters are accusing him of something. Sebastian-13, finally growing impatient, has the Choom open the gate so they can enter, on foot, with Sebastian-13 and Mal taking the lead.

The Lemongrass Crater

Random Encounters

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

The encounters in this section are fairly linear with only major locations described. Should the characters wish to explore different areas of the ruins, the Random Encounter table provided below may be used at the Gamemaster's discretion.

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Encounter</i>
01 – 25	Dangerous Footing: The ground is unstable here. Each character makes a Luck roll, with a failure meaning they fall into the remnants of a basement for 1D6 points of damage as per the Falling rules.
26 – 50	Frightened Looters: The group encounters a gang of 1D4 + 2 looters digging through the ruins. They flee at the sight of the group, and only fight if set upon, abandoning the fight if their numbers are reduced by half.
51 – 75	Brave Looters: The group encounters a gang of 1D4 + 2 looters digging through the ruins. They instantly set upon the group and fight to the death to protect themselves.
76 – 100	Avalanche: The nearest mound of rubble becomes unstable and crashes down towards two randomly chosen characters. A Dodge or Jump roll is required (or both), otherwise the characters suffer 3D6 damage from fallen debris.

With the gate behind them, the characters find themselves facing mound upon mound of debris, jagged with sheet glass and twisted girders. The only section of building still standing is half of the right-hand cylindrical wing, sagging dangerously with empty rooms and girders visible within. The asphalt surrounding the square is riddled with cracks, some so wide the characters have to be careful stepping over them. There are paths through the mounds, and Sebastian-13 tosses a coin to go either left or right.

The Right Hand Path

This path leads towards the barely standing building. Upon reaching the building, creaking ominously as if about to collapse, the characters find a dead end with evidence of digging where looters have been at work. In a corner, near the base of the building lies a corpse. Strange black matter covers its head, resembling a miniature tower with spiked battlements. A Mee'hi swarm has made its home here in a looter they encountered and killed when their original home in the building's basement was destroyed. The Mee'hi do not leave their home to attack unless the group comes within one meter of their nest. See "Mee'hi" on page 77 for dealing with a Mee'hi swarm.

The Left Hand Path

As the group walks, the desolation becomes a palpable presence, the hills of rubble around them filled with shadows. Half-buried clothes and other material shiver in slight winds; here and there, clouds of flies buzz around remains best left unexplored. The Gamemaster can use the occasional noise of falling masonry on the mounds above them to add a sense of tension to the scene. Mal comments, "I can't believe they haven't exhumed the bodies yet," and Sebastian-13 shushes him abruptly.

The path eventually opens onto a wider, fairly even area with remnants of wall still standing. On a successful Listen roll, the characters notice a low clattering sound somewhere to the left past a sagging doorway. Mal grows instantly suspicious, and raises his rifle in that direction. "This might be it," Sebastian-13 snarls from the side of his mouth, and with his gun raised, slowly steps across the rubble, through the doorway and into an area of more mounds. As they step across the uneven floor of cracked masonry, a failed Sneak roll is followed by the sound filling the air like a gunshot, causing everyone to instinctually freeze. Another Listen roll reveals the sound has ceased, but as they advance in the direction it came from, evidence grows apparent of recent disturbances in the rubble, like someone has been digging. Household objects and electrical goods, mostly smashed beyond repair, have been placed in piles along the path they take. Eventually, they see a section of roof upon a pile of rubble, forming a rough shelter.

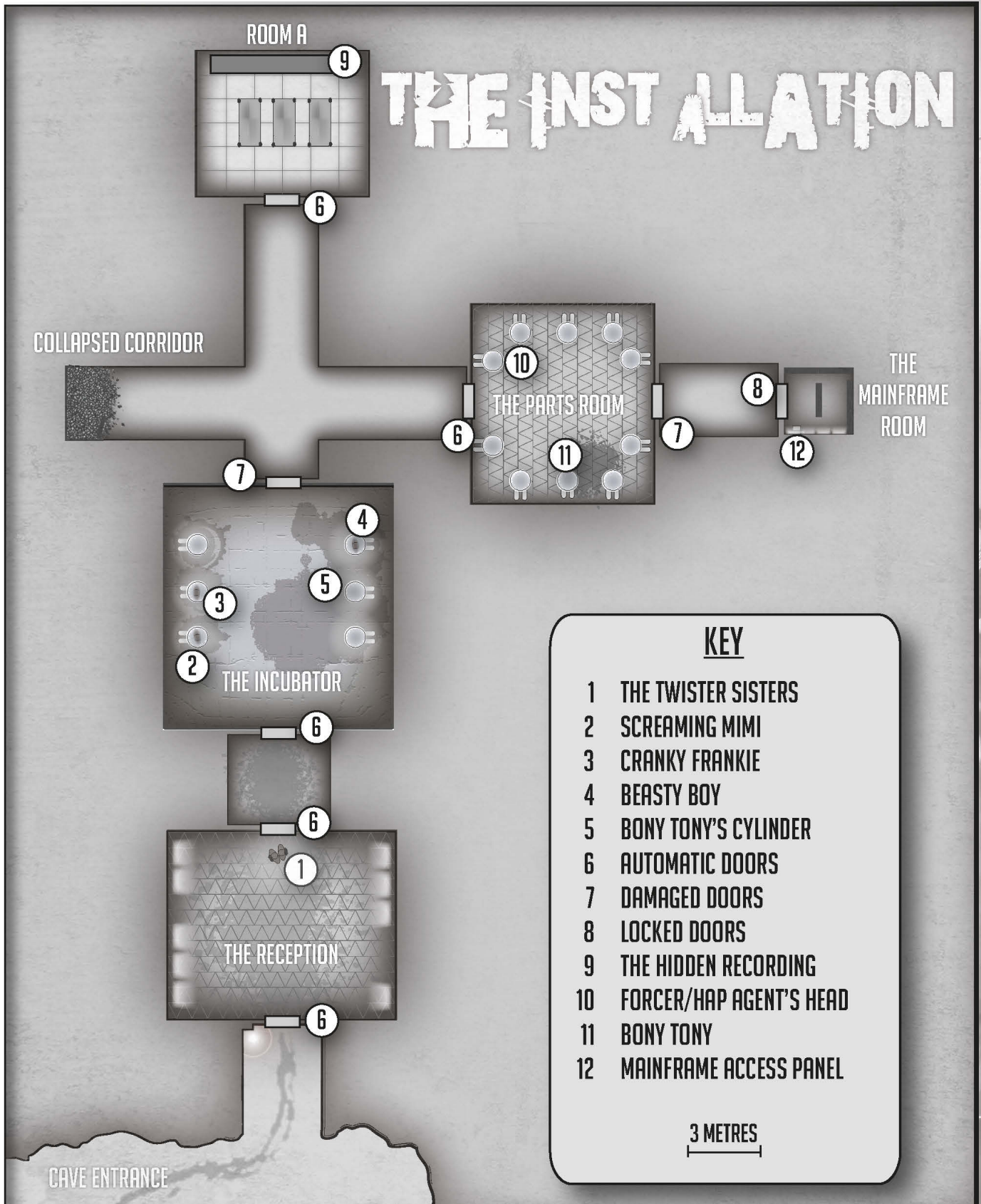
LEMON GRASS CRATER

KEY

- 1 THE GATE
- 2 NPC HOVERVAN
- 3 BURGERZONE
- 4 TOWER REMAINS
- 5 RUN'S SHACK
- 6 AMBUSH POINT
- 7 MONSTER TRAIL
- 8 WATER FILLED CRATER
- 9 INSTALLATION ENTRANCE

5 METRES





A randomly chosen character trips over, to their disgust, a skeletal, human hand poking from the rubble, cleansed of all but a few tatters of flesh. On a successful Luck roll they hold back from crying out, followed by a 1D2 Sanity check for everyone.

Regardless of any noise made, the group has been noticed, and a shape comes lumbering out from the darkness of the shelter with a sudden reek. Sebastian-13 hisses and shakes his head, saying, “Damn, my eye short-circuited. What the — ?” Nightvision Goggles and any other electronic apparatuses stop working too, as blinking and disorientated, a raggedy hobo appears from the shelter.

Dirty-faced and bald, his long, black beard streaked in gray, the wrinkle-faced hobo’s body is deformed, with extra-jointed long, thin arms. He wears a tatty brown hooded top reaching to his elbows, filthy jeans and yellow sneakers with dirty toes sticking out from the ruptured fronts. He performs a double take at all of those guns pointing at him, and says, “I ain’t done nothing ta nobody,” before staggering back the way he came. The characters may want to follow the hobo into his den — they may also want to hold their noses while they’re at it.

Kepler Run

“Hold on, hold on,” the hobo says as he fumbles around in the darkness. If the characters try to use flashlights they don’t work, and the hobo cackles, saying, “You ain’t gonna be using no ‘lectric around me, oh no!” He sparks a match and the ancient oil lamp held in the hobo’s filthy hands illuminates the hovel. The hobo’s den is in a deplorable state. With the illumination, cockroaches and less recognizable vermin disappear into the corners, scurrying loudly as they go. A pile of torn and bloody sheets lies in one corner, his ‘bed,’ beside which stands a pile of scavenged cans and uncooked, frozen foods turning to rot. Another corner holds a bucket, the contents of which are obvious by the smell. The hobo lowers himself onto a rickety wooden crate. “You look like you’re the monster hunters, huh?” he says and sniggers. “Well, my name’s Kepler Run, and I’m the ‘monster-keeper-away-er.’”

GAMEMASTER’S NOTE:

Kepler Run is a mutant with the ability to disrupt all electricity around him in a two-meter radius. This allowed Kepler and his former hobo companions to climb over the electrified fence without trouble, and survive so long without being attacked by the mutations (the things’ electronic parts begin to short out the moment they near him). For Sebastian-13, this means all skill rolls are halved within his two-meter proximity. Characters with implants should be hindered accordingly as the Gamemaster sees fit.

“I would ask you to make yourselves comfortable, but that ain’t gonna happen, is it?” Run says with another cackle. Sebastian-13 grows angry, and stalking across the hovel he grabs the hobo by the shoulder and shouts, “Who the hell are you? How many more of you are there?”

Run giggles and replies, “The others, I told ‘em to stay close to me. Now they’ve been taken, taken down into the spaceship.”

Sebastian-13 releases the hobo and turns back to the characters. “I can hardly see around this freak. This is useless. Let’s get out of here.”

As Sebastian-13 goes to leave, it is up to the characters to intervene and talk to the hobo. When this happens, Sebastian-13 pauses reluctantly to listen.

Kepler’s Story

“Life ain’t no picnic on the streets, let me tell you. Us hobos got ourselves starvation and disease to contend with, as well as the sadists killing and raping us for fun. We’re nobody, I tell you, nobody. And who gives a damn what happens to a nobody?”

“When that meteorite hit we thought we might find something good here, food, a bit of shelter, and started coming in on the regular. What folks don’t know though is that weren’t no regular meteor, ‘cos the damned thing has a spaceship inside! — Don’t look at me like that! It’s down there in the crater with those damned aliens coming out and killing anyone they can find. Those aliens keep away from me — they must have ‘lectricals in their brains or something. There’s a dead one out there if you wanna see it. Wanna see it? It’s a damned ugly sight, worse than me even. Heh, heh.” Run stands and continues, “Not far from here, yeah?” and without further words he leaves the hovel.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Outside the hovel, Kepler Run starts clambering up a mound of rubble, moving quickly and expertly, sometimes loping on all fours using his deformed arms. Before reaching the top of the mound, any character failing a Climb roll slips and hurts themselves on something sharp for 1D2. When they reach the top of the mound, they get their first good look at the crater itself.

The crater is a deep, dark, roughly circular hole around eighty feet in diameter surrounded by a rim of smashed stone and twisted girders. The area surrounding it bears the flattened remnants of the complex, surrounded by more mounds of debris.

“Down there’s the aliens! Heh, heh!” Run says and starts making his way down the mound. As with the climb up, failed Climb rolls on the way down have the same result. The base of the mound is filled with shadows, bearing almost intact reinforced walls and a staircase leading down to deeper darkness. After reaching

the ground, Run gesticulates towards the staircase saying, “Just take a look at the space alien. Down there, I tell you.”

Whatever’s down there, a foul smell issues from the darkness, a mingling of rotted flesh and some strange chemical odor.

“This is just bad. I’m not going,” Mal says, his eyestalks quivering. From the darkness at the bottom of the stairs, a hiss appears followed by quick, loud breathing.

In a panic, Sebastian-13 turns to Run and barks, “You said the thing was dead.” Run cackles, heading back up the rubble pile, shouting, “I brought them, Master Aliens, heh, heh. Food, Food!”

Now, all hell breaks loose.

GAMEMASTER’S NOTE:

Kepler Run is completely insane. He watched his friends torn to shreds by the mutations from below, and like all good maniacs, has taken to worshipping the object of his insanity. The characters aren’t the first group he’s lured to the mutations; some unlucky looters he encountered earlier met the same fate.

Three pairs of brightly glowing eyes open and blink at anyone peering into the darkness. Panting heavily, something horrible charges from the darkness, a blood spattered thing of myriad arms and faces that instantly attacks the nearest character. This is Screaming Mimi, and true to its name, performs its ‘Breathe Attack’ first. Adding to the chaos, two more mutations, Cranky Franky and Beastly Boy, burst from the rubble to either side of the staircase. It’s ‘stand-up fight’ time, and while the characters fight or die trying, Sebastian-13, his implant working again, joins the battle with a roar while Mal runs and hides in the corner.

The mutations are wild and powerful, but any reduced to half Hit Points stop fighting and try to flee towards the crater. This *should* leave most of the characters alive and wanting to lick their wounds before they continue. After the fight, the cowardly Mal has a burst of conscience.

GAMEMASTER’S NOTE:

If the mutations attacked and killed Mal, these words are said in his dying breath.

“This is all wrong,” Mal says, sounding a little unhinged. “You’ve all been duped by that witch, Costello. You’re just cannon fodder to get us into the installation. Those mutations are Dukong’s own creations. I’m here to switch them off at the mainframe. I just didn’t expect them to be so — horrible.”

Sebastian-13, if alive, orders Mal to “shut up,” and aims his gun at him. This leads to a Mexican Standoff with a successful Communication Skill roll required such as Command to stop him from shooting Mal. Otherwise, after attacking his former partner he turns on the characters. The final scene from *Reservoir Dogs* may serve as some inspiration for the Gamemaster.

At this point in the adventure, the characters are either alone or have at least one NPC companion with them. What do they do? Turn around and go home or continue hunting the mutations? Well, they’ve gotten this far.

Sebastian-13 wants to go kill Kepler Run, as may the characters. Retracing their steps they find him cowering in his hovel, easy to kill. Of course, enterprising characters may decide to restrain him and bring him to the underground installation, which would certainly make their lives a little easier, should they think of it. Again, the gun-happy Sebastian-13 just wants to murder the deranged mutant. There is also the staircase Screaming Mimi sprang from to investigate.

The Boiler Room

The base of the stairs leads to an area of darkness that reeks of rotted flesh. Formerly a boiler room, large antiquated brass boilers line the walls, and the floor is wet and muddy from myriad pipe leaks. To the right of the entrance, lie the decaying remains of two looters. A Spot roll reveals bite marks upon the corpses (Mimi and its friends were hungry) leading to a 1D2 Sanity Loss, but also revealing a lump of Explosive Clay poking from a torn pouch.

Missing Persons

Alternatively, the characters find the decaying remains of four Forcers/HAP Agents to the right of the entry point of the boiler room. A Spot roll reveals myriad bite marks upon the corpses (Mimi and its friends were hungry) leading to a 1D2 Sanity Loss, but also revealing 20 rounds of Green Plasma ammunition poking from a torn pouch.

It's a Bug Hunt! (Part II)

When the mutations escaped, they left a trail of slick, sticky fluids behind them, so characters wishing to track them find them easy to follow. The trail of steaming yellow pus and quickly congealing blood leads out of the rubble to the crater proper.

The characters may have questions for Sebastian-13 or Mal along the way. Here's what they know:

Sebastian-13: *"P'yong Heavy Industries. You heard of them? They own Dukong Renovations and I work cleanup when I'm not doing bodyguard duty. They used to have military contracts, and had something built underground to create those uglies. There's not much else I know except to get down there by any means possible. We get the job done, keep quiet about*

everything else, and come out of this rich, yes? Those assholes should be glad you survived. It means they can use you on other jobs."

Mal: *"It sounded like an easy job from P'yong, I do tech support for them all the time and even get my hands dirty on occasion. I didn't know they were into creating freaks. I have the know-how to reprogram those freaks, however. I'll disable the mutations, collect my paycheck, and that's me done with the company for good."*

The trail leads over a small mound of debris and towards the crater. If the characters were quick off the mark pursuing, they see the mutations clambering along the crater's rim towards its eastern-most point. Upon reaching the rim, characters looking to the bottom of the crater see a small lake of brackish black water has formed thirty feet down.

After clambering over the smashed stone and debris surrounding the rim, the characters reach the point where the mutations disappeared, a darkness-filled hole halfway down the rim's eastern-most point. This hole takes a successful Climb roll to reach, failure meaning Damage from a thirty feet drop as per the Falling rules. Another Climb roll is required to escape the crater. The mutations' bloody trail leads through the hole to a small cave of broken masonry (formerly the installation's Entrance Corridor).



The Installation

A large steel framed doorway stands at the end of the cave, the mutations' trail leads through the partially open hydraulic-powered doors, beyond which is flickering light. If Mal is present, he stops the characters from going any further and says, "The Twister Sisters are through there, and this might be trouble. Come look."

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

At the Gamemaster's discretion, if Sebastian-13 is alone he may decide to lead the characters into a trap.

As the group approaches the doorway, a small amber light flickers on above the frame and the doors part with a loud screech, steam hissing from the damaged workings within. The charnel room beyond contains something beautiful.

The Reception

Shiny, triangular steel panels form the walls, floor and ceiling. Six large monitor screens line the walls to either side, blank and filled with cracks. Recessed globes of light line the ceiling, behind broken glass. The whole area, floor to ceiling, is spattered with blood. And then, there's the sisters.

Skins and Needles: The Twister Sisters

Near the rear of the room, motionless before another door, stand two silver-skinned robots shaped like naked, beautiful women. Their limbs are slender, their breasts and buttocks shapely and their sharp-featured faces perfection beneath faux silver hair held in topknots. They stand embracing each other, their lips pressed together. Marring this beauty: the robot on the left has hands ending in large circular saws caked in blood; the robot on the right's hands are a mass of long, tiny spikes.

Sebastian-13 or Mal, whoever is present, says, "These things are deadly, but I have the disabling chip." The NPC produces a small silver box from their pocket with what looks like an opal gem at the center. "The sisters will remain inert when I hold this," he says. "Probably the only way to get past them."

GAMEMASTER'S NOTE:

There are a few options for this scene. Firstly, if the characters are alone, the sisters disentangle as they approach and attack with a ballet-like grace. Secondly, the characters may just decide to open fire on the sisters, in which case they return the attack with staggering speed. Thirdly, it wouldn't be too difficult for Sebastian-13 and Mal to walk past the inert sisters, throw their disabling chips across the room to the characters, and get past them that way. Gamemasters should roll a D100 each time someone passes the sisters with a chip, a 96-100 means the chip malfunctions and the sisters' spring to life regardless. Add tension to this scene with an NPC saying, "These chips don't always work, so be careful," and bring a sigh of relief to the players each time a character makes it past safely. And, of course, there's Kepler Run. With him in tow, the sisters shouldn't prove a problem at all.

The doors beyond the sisters part like the previous ones, leading to a wide steel-walled corridor with flickering lights but no bloodstains; the trail of gore the characters have been following continues to...

The Incubator

The injured mutations have returned to their incubator and birth room to heal. The stone floors are cracked, but the steel-coated walls and ceiling look solid. A sickly violet light emits from the huge, cylindrical amniotic baths lining the walls, three to each side, filled to the brim with purple fluids. Large pipes connect from the bottom of each cylinder to the floor. Some of the baths are empty; some contain the mutations the characters encountered earlier, shifting sluggishly in their healing sleep. A strip of white tape upon each tank bears their handwritten nicknames: 'Screaming Mimi,' 'Cranky Franky,' and 'Beasty Boy.' One of the empty tanks is labeled with the name: 'Bony Tony.'

The occupied cylinders aren't fully sealed, and purple amniotic fluid has sloshed to the uneven floor, smelling like rotting chicken broth. The characters may want to cause some mischief here, but the cylinders are heavily reinforced, with 400 Hit Points apiece. They are also proofed against the kind of powers Kepler Run has.

Attacking the cylinders only serves to wake the mutations (their Hit Points three quarters restored now), and bring Skins and Needles to investigate. If this happens, the NPCs most certainly try to escape to the Mainframe Room.

The hydraulics are shot on the following doorway, so it does not open as the characters approach, requiring a Strength against Strength 40 test on the Resistance Table to lever it open.

An area of complete darkness lies beyond the incubator. Character-provided illumination reveals a wide corridor with an intersection at its center. Turning left at the intersection leads to a collapsed area of fallen steel and masonry; going straight ahead leads to Room A; turning right at the intersection leads to the Parts Room.

Room A

Although the door opens of its own accord, characters must provide their own illumination within. The room, a surgical bay, is walled with white tiles, many cracked and fallen, with three large steel tables at its center and cabinets lining the wall facing the door. A successful Spot roll reveals an item of interest wedged between the cabinets: a digital recording device left by one of the installation's former scientists (see opposite).

The Parts Room

As the group approaches, the doors to this room remain closed, but as soon as anyone reaches out to touch them they quickly slide apart. Beyond is a wide rectangular steel-walled room with only one working light on the ceiling. Strewn with shadows, this room stinks of decomposing flesh, the reason growing apparent as the characters enter. The Twister Sisters, after slicing up trespassers or encountering the remains of the mutations' meals, dump the body parts here.

Lining the walls, picked out by eyes adjusting to the gloom or flashlight beams, are large transparent, but not empty, cylinders. To the left, the first two cylinders are filled with floating limbs and organs from a variety of species. The many dead eyes stare back, lifeless hearts floating beside limp hands. Characters should make a 1D2 Sanity Check in this room due to the sight of these surgical horrors.

Missing Persons

A successful Spot roll reveals a Forcer/HAP Agent's helmet near the bottom of the second cylinder. Badly battered, it holds the pale, decapitated head of one of the missing persons.

The third tank is empty; the fourth is filled with floating packets of blood and tissue growths. To the right stand damaged cylinders, the first two cracked, empty of fluids and filled with rotted body parts. The third

and fourth cylinders are smashed, covered in debris and what appears to be more body parts; these not decomposed, but still stinking. However, as the characters move closer or go to pass, the body parts move — the fourth mutation, Bony Tony, waking from his slumber to attack. The following fight, with all that flesh and genetic material just waiting to be spilled, could well leave the characters covered in gore. A stand-up fight with Bony Tony is inevitable, as the doors leading from the Parts Room are difficult to open.

When the mutation is dealt with, the doors need to be levered open by pitting Strength against Strength 40 on the Resistance Table. A short corridor follows, ending at a door with a keypad and an Iris Scanner attached to the left of the frame. If Mal or Sebastian-13 are present, they have the code, which is '16752,' but they certainly don't have the eyes for it. Without the code, getting past the keypad requires a 50% Electrical Repair roll. Mal produces a small toolkit from one of his belt pouches and removes the front of the scanner before working to get past the security. Mal gets past the Iris Scanner on a 50% Electrical Repair roll. Succeeding this, the doors slide open, granting access to the room below. Failure trips a klaxon alarm across the installation, and the Mainframe orders the Twister Sisters and remaining mutations to its defense, arriving in 1D6+6 Rounds.

The Mainframe Room

The Mainframe Room is small, less than three meters square, and filled with narrow black cabinets housing the Mainframe's 'brain.' Once here, the doors seal shut again — requiring the same Electrical Repair rolls to leave. Again, an alarm goes off on a failure. To the right of the doorway, a computer console stands on a shelf with a touch-key keyboard 3D hologram screen. The wall behind it is lined with eight screens, the top four filled with static, the bottom displaying the Reception, the Incubator, Room A and the corridor outside the Mainframe Room.

If not summoned already, tension can be added to this scene by having those inert robots and mutations come to life, heading towards the characters on camera, should there be a failure while reprogramming the mainframe. After reaching the doors to the Mainframe Room, attackers attempt to enter by brute force. Heavily reinforced, the door has 200 Hit Points, and because of the size of the corridor, only one mutation can attack the door at a time. The Twister Sisters, however, could no doubt make short work of it...

To disable the mutations from the console, the following rolls are required by a character or NPC with high enough skill levels.

Reprogramming the Mainframe

If Kepler Run is present and conscious, reprogramming the mainframe proves impossible. When working on the mainframe, if a roll fails, the alarm goes off and the bad guys (the mutations now fully healed) are summoned, arriving at the doorway in 1D6+6 Rounds (if they aren't there already). Only one roll can be attempted each round.

Level One Security: Roll 40 or less on a D100 against the Technical (Computer Use) skill.

Level One Reprogramming: Roll 40 or less on a D100 against the Craft (Computer Code) Skill. *NB: This reprograms the Twister Sisters, who can be ordered to: 'shut down permanently,' or 'attack the mutations,' etc.*

Level Two Security: Roll 50 or less on a D100 against the Technical (Computer Use) skill *twice* in succession.

Level Two Reprogramming: Roll 50 or less on a D100 against the Craft (Computer Code) skill *twice* in succession. *NB: This reprograms the mutations, who can be ordered to 'shut down permanently,' etc.*

Resolutions & Rewards

Now that the characters have stopped the mutations, they may be wondering what to do once they've left the installation. Exposing P'yong Heavy Industries to the HAP or the Police is an option (with the digital recording as evidence, for example). Sebastian-13 and Mal won't entertain this, however; they just want to leave and get on with their lives.

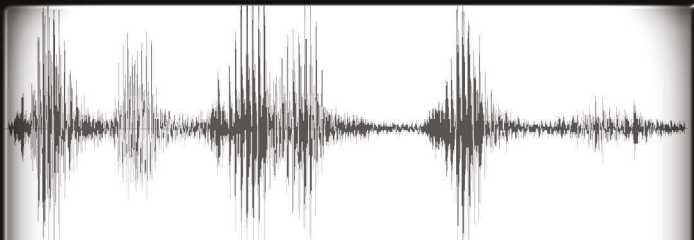
Remember those blood-spattered monitor screens? Well, as the characters enter the Reception ready to leave the installation, the screens flicker to life to reveal Gunmetal Costello's beautiful, smiling face. She says, "Congratulations. You've passed the audition. I have checks here for the amount of thirty thousand Munits for each of you, and the opportunity of more work in the future. You work well together, and I look forward to seeing you again." Ms. Costello then winks lasciviously and the screens go blank.

Any NPC present clears his throat and says, "Damn, that's a lot of cash. I think I'll stay working for P'yong."

If the characters accept the payoff, they gain the promised cash but no Sanity Reward for completing the adventure (they helped the bad guys, after all).

Exposing P'yong Heavy Industries gains the characters 2D6 Sanity Points, a slap on the back from the authorities, but no cash except for their original payment. But being just is its own reward, right?

Room A: The Recording



MALE VOICE: THIS IS TRACK FOUR. I AM OPERATING ON SUBJECT THREE, RENAMED WHIMSICALLY BY THE OTHER STAFF, SCREAMING MIMI.

(LOUD FOOTSTEPS)

MALE VOICE: (CONT.) DAMN, I HOPE THIS THING REMAINS SEDATED. (NERVOUS LAUGHTER) NURSE, KEEP AN EYE ON THOSE LEVELS YES?

(SOFT FOOTSTEPS)

FEMALE VOICE: ALL GOOD, DOCTOR.

MALE VOICE: GOOD, GOOD.

(SOUND OF METAL AGAINST METAL)

MALE VOICE: (CONT.) RIGHT, SUBJECT IS EIGHT FEET TWO INCHES TALL, WEIGHS APPROXIMATELY FIVE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY FOUR POUNDS, GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CLONE CONTAINING ELEMENTS OF HUMAN AND FEKAH DNA. IT HAS, UM, THREE HEADS. NURSE, PASS ME THAT SCALPEL PLEASE.

(SOFT FOOTSTEPS)

MALE VOICE: (CONT.) I'VE BEEN HIRED BY P'YONG TO PERFORM A SURGICAL PROCEDURE ON THIS THING'S THROAT TO MAKE IT DEPENDENT ON ITS HUMAN MOUTHS TO BREATHE. NOW LET'S SEE WHAT WE—

(SNAPPING SOUND FOLLOWED BY SCUFFLING FOOTSTEPS)

MALE VOICE: (CONT.) WHAT THE — ? THEY PUT THE ARMOR IN ALREADY? HOW THE HELL AM I MEANT TO WORK PAST THAT? I'LL NEED A BLOODY LASER. (LOUD SIGH) UH, GIVE ME STRENGTH. NURSE, TURN THAT OFF AND WE'LL GO TO ACQUISITIONS.

FEMALE VOICE: YES, DOCTOR.

(SOFT FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLICK)

Missing Persons

For completing this side mission and discovering the fate of *all* the missing Forcers/HAP Agents, the characters involved gain 1D6 Sanity Points each.

Seeds For Further Adventures

Here are a few suggestions to further this scenario into other adventures:

The Missing Embryos

Remember the Embryo Room in the Installation? Well, there were six tanks, and four mutations. Those other two mutations got loose and are up to mischief elsewhere in Punktown. Either P'yong Heavy Industries or the authorities want to hire the characters to hunt the things down. After all, it's what they're good at...

It's Another Bug-Hunt!

P'yong Heavy Industries has other installations hidden around Punktown and now have cold feet, wanting them destroyed. Or, the authorities have gained knowledge of P'yong's other installations and want them secured. Either way, fun with sexy murderous robots and ugly mutations ensues.

Meteoric Trouble

That crazy hobo Kepler Run? Well, perhaps he wasn't so crazy after all, and the meteor *did* hold a spaceship. The characters go to investigate and find...

Characters and Monsters

Gunmetal Costello

Tall, shapely, with bright green shoulder length hair, Gunmetal Costello is a Choom who has undergone extensive facial and dental surgery to appear human. A gang of Choom sexually assaulted her when she was younger, and before the surgery she spent many years hating what she saw in the mirror. She is bisexual, very flirtatious, but beneath the façade is a ruthless woman with no qualms about sending people to their deaths for her company's well being. The Project Director for Dukong Renovations, she also functions as a Science Director for her true masters, P'yong Heavy Industries.

STR 8	CON 17	SIZ 13	INT 13
POW 14	DEX 15	APP 16	HP 15

Damage Bonus: None

Weapons: Laser Knife 70%, damage 2D4+2

Spells: None

Skills: Appraise 60%, Craft (Computer Code) 50%, Electrical Repair 60%, Language (Programming) 55%, Persuade 60%, Research 70%, Science (Mathematics) 50%, Status 60%, Technical (Computer Use) 55%

Sebastian-13

A tall, broad-shouldered man, Sebastian-13 is bald-headed with skin a camouflaged blue that betrays his roots as a Blue War Clone. He has the number '13,' tattooed to his forehead in black ink and has a cybernetic implant replacing his left eye. A fish eye camera lens lies there, surrounded by heavily scarred flesh. His right eye squints permanently. A former Ranger during the Blue War, he is a Bodyguard and Wetworks operative for P'yong Heavy Industries, loyal as long as he doesn't think he's being duped. A strong-willed, no nonsense man, he is accustomed to giving orders, and accustomed to others obeying them.

STR 18	CON 17	SIZ 15	INT 16
POW 7	DEX 14	APP 7	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Assassin 75%, damage 2D8

Decimator .340 80%, damage 1D10+2

Tikkihotto Dagger 45%, 1D4+1D6

Armor: 8pt Plastic Vest

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 50%, Command 55%, Drive 40%, Listen 65%, Spot 65%, Martial Arts 61%, Track 50%

Malla Turonga

Malla Turonga, or 'Mal,' as he likes to be called, has typical Tikkihotto eyestalks: transparent ocular filaments protruding from deep eye sockets. He is thin, weak looking, and has short blonde hair and a goatee. He acts very jittery when scared, which generally makes others around him feel uncomfortable. A tech expert with some Wetworks training, he has performed many missions for P'yong Heavy Industries alongside Sebastian-13, whom he resents for his bossy attitude.

STR 8	CON 15	SIZ 14	INT 17
POW 7	DEX 13	APP 14	HP 15

Damage Bonus: None

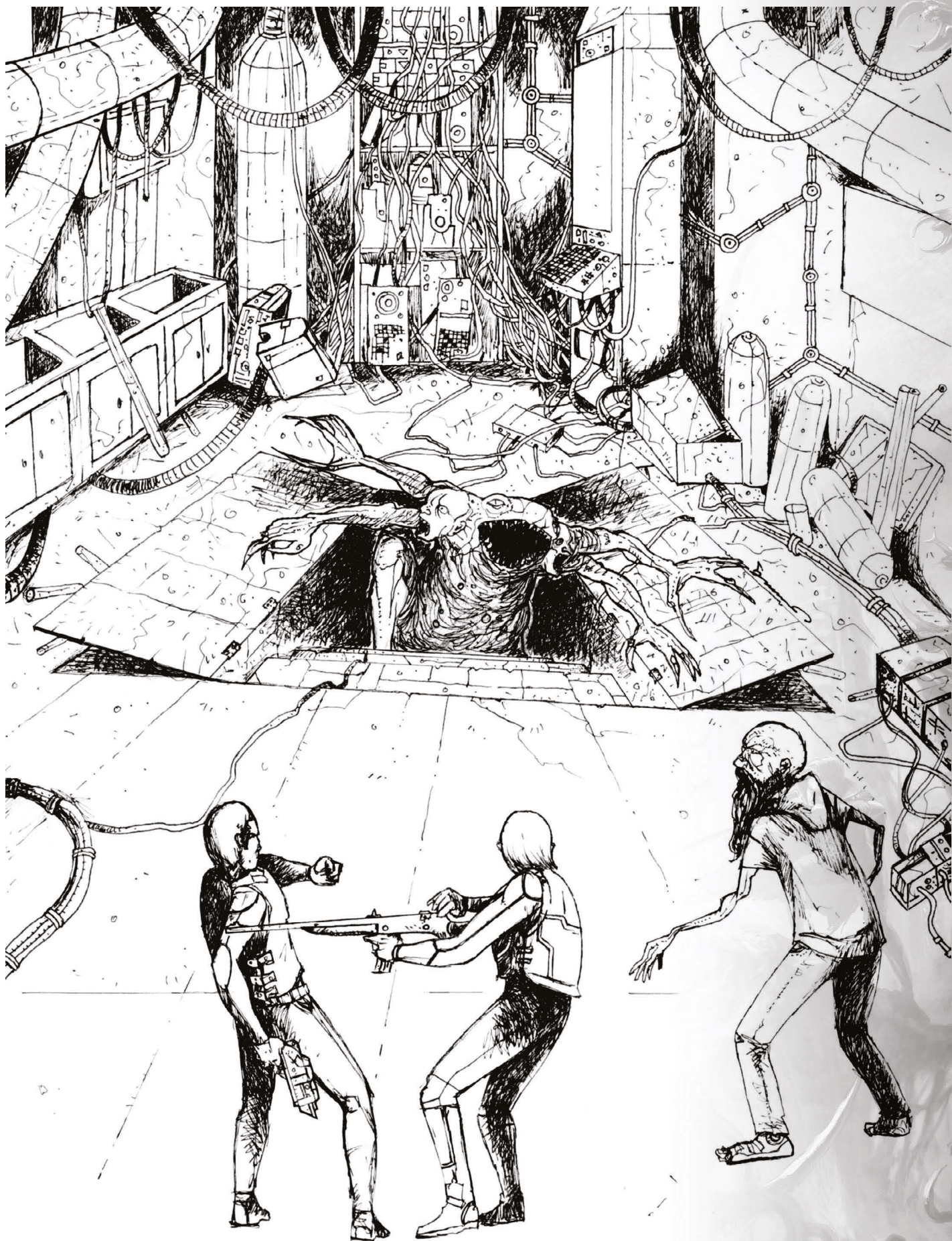
Weapons: Decimator .220 60%, damage 1D6

Assassin 65%, damage 2D8

Armor: 8pt Plastic Vest

Spells: None

Skills: Craft (Computer Code) 65%, Drive 60%, Electrical Repair 85%, Insight 55%, Language (Programming) 60%, Listen 65%, Spot 65%, Technical (Computer Use) 70%



Kepler Run

An elderly, wrinkled hobo, he is bald and has a long black beard streaked with gray. His clothes are tatty and smell almost as bad as he does. A mutant, his arms reach down to his knees and are extra jointed, making him very dexterous. He also has a special Psychic Power (see below). Hailing from Tin Town, he spent his life traveling all over Punktown until he and his hobo companions entered the Lemongrass Crater. Here, he lost his sanity after seeing his friends hacked apart by the mutations, and here he stays, worshipping the mutations like alien gods.

STR 9	CON 11	SIZ 14	INT 12
POW 10	DEX 22	APP 5	HP 13

Damage Bonus: None

Weapons: Brawl 25%, damage 1D3

Spells: None

Skills: Bargain 65%, Climb 80%, First Aid 40%, Hide 50%, Jump 85%, Listen 65%, Scavenge 65%, Sleight of Hand 45%, Stealth 50%

Attacks and Special Effects:

Electrical Disruption. If Kepler Run is within two meters of anything electrical, it shorts out until he leaves its proximity. This mutation does not function if Kepler Run is unconscious.

Structural Improvement. Kepler had extra long, multi-jointed arms, leading to an increased characteristic (DEX).

Six Looters

Following is an example of six looters the characters may encounter during the scenario. They are all basic humanoid races, Looters 1 – 2 are Human, Looters 3 – 4 Choom, and Looters 5 – 6 Tikkihotto. They're not well armed, and only one of them owns a firearm.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
1	11	13	13	09	13	13
2	09	11	14	13	15	13
3	10	13	14	08	08	14
4	10	15	14	11	13	15
5*	16	10	09	11	13	10
6	09	16	15	09	16	16

Damage Bonus: * +1D4 otherwise, none.

Weapons:

Looter 1: Darwin .55 20%, damage 1D8 + 2

Looter 2: Rebar 25%, damage 1D8

Looter 3: Shovel 35%, damage 1D4+1

Looter 4: Shovel 35%, damage 1D4+1

Looter 5: Tikkihotto Dagger 25%, damage 1D4+1D4

Looter 6: Rebar 25%, damage 1D8

Armor: none

Screaming Mimi

One of P'yong Heavy Industries' failed 'Super-Soldiers,' this mutation is a cloned and grafted amalgamation of Fekah and Human DNA, resembling a huge, warty albino toad standing on two legs, with four long arms ending in vicious looking claws. It has three heads, a toad-like Fekah head flanked by two smaller, malformed human heads. The mutation's brain, a microcomputer controlled by the Mainframe in the Lemongrass Crater, is housed in the Fekah head.

STR 23	CON 38	SIZ 41	INT 12
POW 7	DEX 22	HP 40	

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Weapons: Claw 35%, damage 1D3+3D6

Sound Blast 25%, 1D10 in a 100-yard radius

Armor: 20 points rubbery skin and sub-dermal plates.

Spells: None

Skills: Grapple 45%, Hide 40%, Listen 45%, Sneak 40%, Track 30%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Attacks and Special Effects:

Sound Blast. This mutation transforms the Fekah's natural method of breathing into an attack. The Sound Blast attack happens when it breathes through its Fekah mouth, utilized at the beginning of combat to surprise a foe, and again if it is fleeing.

Dual Attack. Including the Sound Blast, Screaming Mimi attacks with two claw attacks each round.

Cranky Franky

This massive, muscled biped mutation is a cloned and grafted amalgamation of KeeZee and Human DNA with a huge jagged-jawed head resembling a monkey wrench spotted with tiny black eyes. Its body is thick with greasy black hair, and its brain is a microcomputer controlled by the Mainframe in the Lemongrass Crater.

STR 42	CON 38	SIZ 39	INT 12
POW 9	DEX 8	HP 39	

Damage Bonus: +4D6

Weapons: Fist 50%, 1D3 + 4D6

Armor: 20 points skin, hair, and sub-dermal plates.

Spells: None

Skills: Grapple 35%, Hide 40%, Listen 45%, Sneak 40%, Track 40%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Attacks and Special Effects: None

Beasty Boy

This mutation is a cloned and grafted amalgamation of Klu Koza and Choom DNA, resembling a huge flabby orangutan devoid of fur, with a wide gaping Choom mouth. A tusk protrudes from its sloping forehead; its brain is a microcomputer controlled by the Mainframe in the Lemongrass Crater.

STR 41	CON 33	SIZ 44	INT 12
POW 15	DEX 14	HP 37	

Damage Bonus: +4D6

Weapons: Gore 45%, damage 1D6 + 4D6

Brawl 25%, damage 1D3 + 4D6

Grapple 50%, see Attacks and Special Effects

Armor: 20 points skin, muscle and sub-dermal plates.

Spells: None

Skills: Climb 65%, Hide 50%, Listen 35%, Sense 25%, Stealth 35%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Attacks and Special Effects:

Dual Attack: Beasty Boy attacks twice each round. It may strike twice with its fists (brawl), gore and strike, or gore and grapple.

Render: With a successful grapple, it grips its opponent doing its full damage modifier each round. While grappling, it may continue to bite as an Easy attack.

Bony Tony

This huge, sturdy and muscular mutation is a cloned and grafted amalgamation of Torgessi and Choom DNA, with two heads, one with the appearance of a hornless cattle skull, the other with the appearance of a Choom skull. The skulls are turquoise, the rest of its body covered in a pebbly chainmail of tiny smooth scales, turquoise and black in various sizes and patterns. Its brain, a microcomputer controlled by the Mainframe in the Lemongrass Crater, is housed in the Choom skull.

STR 44	CON 38	SIZ 49	INT 12
POW 12	DEX 14	HP 44	

Damage Bonus: + 5D6

Weapons: Head Butt, damage 1D6+5D6 (knockback)

Brawl 50%, 1D3 + 5D6 (crushing)

Armor: 20 points hide and sub-dermal plates

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 60%, Listen 35%, Sense 30%, Spot 35%, Track 55%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4

Attacks and Special Effects:

Rage: If Tony is wounded or achieves a special success while striking an opponent, he goes berserk for 6 turns, as the Fury spell. After this berserk rage, Tony is considered fatigued (if the fatigue system is not used, all rolls are Difficult).

Skins

The twin of Needles, Skins is a silver-skinned robot shaped like a beautiful, naked woman; slender and shapely with a sharp-featured face beneath faux silver hair held in a topknot. A robotic sentry, her slender hands are melded to large circular saws. She also performs maintenance in the installation when required. Like her sister, she ballet dances as she attacks.

STR 35	CON 44	SIZ 15	INT 16
POW 7	DEX 20	APP 15	HP 30

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapons: Buzzsaw (x2) 80%, 1D8+2D6

Armor: 20 points internal plating

Spells: None

Skills: Art (Ballet) 80%, Dodge 40%, Repair (Electronics) 75%, Repair (Mechanical) 95%, Spot 75%

Sanity Loss: None

Attacks and Special Effects:

Dual Attack. Skins attacks twice each round, using her saws against two different foes.

Needles

The twin of Skins, Needles is a silver-skinned robot shaped like a beautiful, naked woman; slender and shapely with a sharp-featured face beneath faux silver hair held in a topknot. A robotic sentry, her slender hands end in a mass of long, needle-like spikes. She also performs maintenance in the installation when required. Like her sister, she ballet dances when she attacks.

STR 35	CON 44	SIZ 15	INT 16
POW 7	DEX 20	APP 15	HP 30

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapons: Needle Hands (x2) 80%, 1D8+2D6

Armor: 20 points internal plating

Spells: None

Skills: Art (Ballet) 80%, Dodge 40%, Repair (Electronics) 75%, Repair (Mechanical) 95%, Spot 75%

Sanity Loss: None

Attacks and Special Effects:

Dual Attack. Needles attacks twice each round, using her hands against two different foes.

SCENARIO: TWISTED GENIUS

by Tom Lynch

Introduction

“Never talk to strangers.” That’s what we tell our children. We hope that this sage advice keeps them at least somewhat safe. Sadly, in this case, it couldn’t help. In this case, the predator lies in wait, and the innocent children are merely the vehicle for a random predator’s revenge; a sad, sad case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Gamemaster’s Information

The disappearances are a two-pronged revenge ploy by a former employee of both the GhostShip Blue Elementary School and Alvine Products. Niels Viggo Schou-Hobbs feels deeply wronged by both former employers and has set out to discredit them both by using product from one against the other. He has taken some dead-stock he had worked on and formulated while at Alvine, and infused it with nanotechnology such that it has rudimentary intelligence, and can follow commands. He then sent his creation on its nefarious missions: kidnapping children from the school.

The children are alive and moderately well, being kept in Hobbs’ Subtown lab complex, but he won’t set them free until both the school and Fukuda Bioforms, the company that took over Alvine Products, pay him perceived damages of five million munits, and write a public declaration of his genius.

Neither is likely to happen, so the characters must step in and do their best to stop further kidnappings and rescue the victims.

Involving the Characters

The principal of the local public elementary school is at her wits’ end. The forcers cannot or will not help her, and she has children disappearing from her school. Parents are furious and terrified, and her staff has no idea what to do. She has turned to outside help, looking to figure out just what is happening in the hopes that it can be dealt with quickly and quietly, rescuing the missing children in the process.

The characters need not be linked to each other yet, but each can have some contact perhaps to the school, the neighborhood, or one of the families involved, likely one of the desperate ones whose child has been abducted.

The Scene of the Crime

The GhostShip Blue Principal

Ms. Carrie Cutler is a frantic woman. Normally calm and controlled as she runs the local (underfunded) public elementary school in the (neglected) neighborhood of Warehouse Way, she has worked wonders with the school and its population. That changed, however, after the disappearances of three children.

The children disappeared in different parts of the building at different times of day, and are of different races and backgrounds. She can think of no connection between the three children, and has no idea how the kidnappers managed to get into and out of the building without being captured on the school’s extensive video surveillance system. When asked for specifics, she can provide the following information:

- The first student, Nanci Moy, a nine-year-old female Sinanese third-grader, disappeared from the locker room after gym class some time shortly after 10 AM.
- The second, a boy named Dafyd Beane, is a seven-year-old Tikkihotto first-grader, who failed to show up for 2:30 PM music class after going to the bathroom en route.
- A ten-year-old fourth-grade human girl known only as “Gremlin,” the third student to disappear, was taken from the hallway outside the exobiology lab.

“I only wish I knew who was responsible for this,” she declares near the end of the conversation.

A successful Insight/Psychology roll reveals that she is hiding something. If pressed, she caves easily.

“It couldn’t be, but my ex-boyfriend — he was tied to the syndies. It — it was gambling debts. I ended it with him when he put my helicar as collateral for his last big loss. Now I have to take a bus and two trains to work every day.”

She readily provides his phone number and address to the characters so they can follow up with him.

School Security

Matthew Carpenter, the head of security at GhostShip Blue Elementary School, is visibly upset by all of these events. He considers himself something of a surrogate uncle to a lot of the students in the school; many know him by name and greet him warmly when they see him.

He is particularly perplexed because the cameras don't show anything. There's no evidence of any unauthorized person entering the school building at any time around when the disappearances happened, and the events themselves are not captured on any of the video feeds. Further investigation into this requires viewing of the footage. This takes at least one of the character 2d4 hours to complete and reveals that each time there is a disappearance, it happens just out of view of the camera or cameras. The subject walks out of frame, not appearing threatened, and simply doesn't appear within the next camera's field of view.

Video from the Scenes of the Crimes

1. **Gym Locker Room** – For obvious reasons, the cameras in this area are limited to the entry area. The footage shows Nanci Moy walking into the locker room at 10:03 AM according to the timestamp on the video. According to witnesses, she had stayed to chat with a classmate and was running late, so she is the only person appearing on this video. It does not show her, or anyone else, coming out until after another gym period later that day.
2. **Hallway between Boys' Room and Music Classroom** – Happily, this was a time that all students were to be in class, so there are very few students in the hallway. The feed shows young Dafyd Beane walking from his class to the rest room, and again, part of the way back afterwards. After he comes out of the restroom, he rounds a corner, and never appears in the feed from the next camera. No one else is within frame at this time.
3. **Hallway outside Exobiology** - Gremlin had an appointment with her exobiology teacher, and was waiting in the hallway. At one point, apparently bored of standing still, she walks down the hall, and then walks back. The camera over the exobiology lab door does not pick her up from her stroll back down the hallway.



The Scenes of the Crimes

There is little to be learned from the girls' locker room. As a matter of course, the room is cleaned twice a day with bleach, so any evidence here has been swept away long ago. Beyond that, the area where the girl apparently vanished contains several walls of lockers, benches between the lockers, ceiling-mounted light fixtures, electrical outlets, and an air vent.

The two other areas are even less visually interesting since they are in hallways. They, however, are cleaned less aggressively. Aside from the institutional hallway, the ventilation system runs along the top of the wall here, as with the locker room.

With closer examination of the hallway between the Boys' Room and the Music Classroom, one sharp-eyed character succeeding aSpot roll, notices a small shred of a pinkish fleshy substance, very much like a piece of raw chicken, dangling from the louvers of the air vent.

The Piece of Evidence

With a little analysis (if one of the characters is a scientist of some type, or any of them have access to an academic lab or police lab, or even, with successful Fast Talk/Persuade rolls, the biology lab in the school and with the necessary subsequent Science/Research rolls), the characters learn that the small fragment of meat recovered is a piece of glebbi deadstock: genetically engineered meat that has been "grown." This particular specimen has the same genetic markers as deadstock created by the now defunct company Alvine Products, currently owned by Fukuda Bioforms.

The Ventilation Ducts

Once this piece of evidence is discovered, it should not take the characters long to figure out that they are dealing with something that uses the ducting to get around. That still doesn't explain how the children were removed from the building, however.

Further investigation into the ventilation system reveals that someone tampered with it not too long ago. An exterior duct going up the outside of the building had an additional duct cut into it. This new duct is not on any schematic, was not done with any building permit, and apparently leads up from underground.

Building Maintenance

The janitorial staff of one is baffled by all of this. He explains that he's very new since the previous janitor left or was fired (he's not sure which). He does know, however, that no such plans had been submitted to the school since he started six months earlier. If questioned further:

- He does not know the person he replaced.
- He does not know why the person left or was asked to leave in the middle of a school year.
- He did hear that the guy creeped a bunch of people out, though.

The Separated Employee

To follow up on the janitor who left suddenly, the characters must stop in either with the head of school security or the principal. Both have access to the same information:

- His name was Niels Hobbs.
- He was fired from the school six months ago.
- The circumstances of his dismissal were uncomfortable for everyone involved: all the teachers, administrators, and staff felt uneasy around him, and he'd been caught "staring lasciviously" at more than one student.
- No wrongdoing was ever proven, but he was still a probationary employee, and could be dismissed for any reason, so administration dismissed him.
- He was very angry at being fired so abruptly and without "due process" as he termed it.
- In the interest of the children's safety, they provide Hobbs' number and address.

Investigations

The Principal's Ex-Boyfriend

Weston McLaren lives alone on Folger Street, a notoriously rough section of Paxton. He dodges all calls, and doesn't return messages left, no matter how legal-sounding or threatening. Given his gambling habits, characters likely find him at home in the morning or early afternoon as opposed to later in the day. He is heavily in debt to a number of bookies, including several tied to the syndies. As such, he is rather paranoid about visitors. There is a 90% chance he tries to run if the characters come to his apartment; otherwise, he attacks like the cornered rat he is.



Gamemasters are offered the table opposite for use in handling the interaction and/or pursuit following a knock on his door.

If McLaren does get away, the characters locate him with a successful Spot roll, and catch him with a successful Luck roll. Each member of the party may make these rolls to improve their chances of apprehending him.

Once up close to him, the characters get a good look at their quarry. He was clearly handsome once, but is under the mistaken impression that he still is. His nose has been broken — twice. He's become overweight, and needs to wash himself and brush his teeth significantly more than he does.

Now in their clutches, McLaren spills the beans. He spews apologies for running and/or attacking the characters and explains that he has some money hidden away in his apartment, but not nearly enough to cover the debts. He's following up on a great opportunity later this afternoon in Miniosis, if they could just wait until tonight...

He knows nothing about the kidnappings. Given how immersed he has been in his gambling, he was completely unaware it was happening, and had no clue his ex-girlfriend's school had been a target; successful Insight/Psychology rolls confirm that he is telling the truth.

WESTON McLAREN, Washed-Out Ex-Boyfriend, age 48

STR 11	CON 13	SIZ 14	INT 15	POW 10
DEX 13	APP 10	EDU 14	SAN 50	HP 14

Damage Bonus: -

Weapons: Thor .86 35%, 1d6 damage

Skills: Bargain 65%, Fast Talk 80%, Flee in the Face of Danger 90%, Persuade 70%, Spill Guts 83%, Spot 60%

Fukuda Bioforms

Executives and spokespeople from Fukuda Bioforms are all terribly busy, and of course have no time this month to speak with people such as the characters. All the characters need to do, however, is mention evidence they have linking Fukuda Bioforms to the recent school kidnappings and the characters are invited in to see the head of security that very day.

NOZAI MATSU, Head of Security, Fukuda Bioforms

The Head of Security is not happy to see the characters, but he realizes the gravity of the situation and hears their concerns and answers their questions to avoid any legal ramifications. Regarding the evidence the characters found (the deadstock):

- This formulation is not currently in use.
- It was discontinued when Fukuda bought out the ruined and disgraced Alvine Products several years earlier.
- No one currently on staff has access to that very unique formulation.

Roll	Action
1-5	The characters hear a startled expletive and a window opening, followed by heavy steps on a metal fire escape.
5-25	A bleary, scruffy man opens the door. His eyes widen, and he bolts past the characters and down the steps behind them. His escape can be foiled by a successful DEX check whereby the characters catch him before he can get away.
26-40	A bleary, scruffy man opens the door. His eyes widen, and he bolts back into his apartment and out the back window. The characters hear heavy steps on the metal fire escape. His escape can be foiled by a successful DEX check whereby the characters catch him before he can get away.
41-50	A voice from inside calls, "C'mon in, babe. It's open." Once inside, the characters are confronted with a scruffy man dressed only in a towel. His eyes widen, and he bolts past the characters and down the steps behind them. His escape can be foiled by a successful DEX check whereby the characters catch him before he can get away.
51-70	A voice from inside calls, "C'mon in, babe. It's open." Once inside, the characters are confronted with a scruffy man dressed only in a towel. His eyes widen, and he bolts back into his apartment and grabs a gun off of his nightstand. His attack can be foiled by a successful DEX check whereby the characters grab him before he can raise his gun.
71-80	A voice from inside calls, "C'mon in, babe. It's open." Once inside, the characters are confronted with a scruffy man dressed only in a towel. His eyes widen, and he bolts back into his apartment and out the back window. The characters hear heavy steps on the metal fire escape. His escape can be foiled by a successful DEX check whereby the characters catch him before he can get away.
81-85	A bleary, scruffy man opens the door. His eyes widen, and he bolts past the characters and down the steps behind them. His escape cannot be foiled by a successful DEX check.
85-89	A bleary, scruffy man opens the door. His eyes widen, and he bolts back into his apartment and out the back window. The characters hear heavy steps on the metal fire escape. His escape cannot be foiled by a successful DEX check.
90-00	The characters hear a startled expletive and a pistol cocking. Three shots explode through the door (there is only a 20% chance the characters are hit for 1d6 damage). They then hear a window opening, followed by heavy steps on a metal fire escape.

- It was developed by an employee, who was let go some time ago, by the name of Viggo Schou.
- Yes, we would be happy to supply you with his contact information.
- Sorry, his personnel file is confidential, unless one of you is tied to law enforcement? (If one of the characters is a Forcer or a Health Agent then the information is handed right over.)

Viggo Schou's Personnel File

The easiest way to obtain this file is legally, if any member of the party is associated with law enforcement. If that turns out not to be the case, one of the players needs to hack into Fukuda Bioforms' secure server and extract the data. Alternatively, they could probably find/hire/use a third party to hack into the system if they are so inclined, or lack the skills themselves.

The file contains mostly human resources data on Schou, and little of importance to this investigation. The few documents that are of interest are listed below.

- **Psych Eval** – This document indicates that Schou has a volatile personality, but is highly intelligent. Combined, the result is a maladjusted megalomaniac. On the surface, however, he is a good employee, dedicated to his research of creating new and better forms of deadstock.
- **Deadstock DNA Slide** – This image contains the DNA pattern of the new formulation of deadstock that Schou developed while at Alvine/Fukuda.
- **Administrative Action Report** – Here we have evidence of Schou's corporate misconduct. He had apparently been working on a pet project on company time, using company resources. According to the report, he was working on infusing his new formulation of deadstock with autonomous nanomites, but couldn't get the deadstock to accept the nanomites. The living tissue rejected the microscopic machines, treating them as they would a virus.
- **Dismissal Report** – The last entry in the file is a report containing salient information about the circumstances under which Schou was let go. He had apparently ignored numerous warnings to stop conducting personal work with company time and resources, he had been disciplined for losing his temper with colleagues, and he refused to maintain regular company hours. The day he was informed of his dismissal, he got violent and had to be subdued by no less than three security guards, at which time he "swore revenge."
- Finally, there is a 3D holo of Schou.

The Forcer

Right after they've done something illegal would be a great time to introduce Detective Bill Stowers. Exactly where the characters are approached, and what they're doing at the time is left to the Gamemaster, but ideally it should be at a time that ratchets up the tension to

Hiring a Hacker

So you need a system hacked, but you don't have the skills? That's okay, friend — this is Punktown! You can buy anything in Punktown! Heck, illegal services are something of a city specialty!

First, you need to find someone to connect you, some kind of go-between. These people frequent local bars and are easily approachable — if you have the munits for it. Just the initial conversation costs you 200 munits plus a round of drinks. Next, there is the finder's fee, which runs you another 100 munits plus 50 munits per hour (figure 1d4 hours for a job like this). Then you have the introductory fee, where you pay your new hacker friend 200 munits (and buy them another round of drinks at a bar of his or her choosing) just to meet and describe the job to them. Either party can walk away after this, but the fee still has to be paid. If either side does walk for whatever reason then the process starts over with another finder's fee. Finally, there is the cost of the hacking itself, which runs 100-400 munits per hour (1d4 x 100). A simple job like the one in question could be done within one hour. There you go! For 800 munits or so, you can have that file!

near-breaking point. This NPC is a Gamemaster tool to help derail the investigation. You're welcome.

Dressed in a worn-out suit and wearing a worn-out expression, the conversation starts with something like "You've been misbehaving a little, haven't you?" Better yet, he catches them in the act and the interaction starts with, "Freeze! Police! Hands where I can see 'em!" If the characters have not stepped outside the law, then the opener could be "You know there are professionals who do this for a living. Are you sure you know what you're doing? We enforce the laws around here. Not you." Whatever it is, it should be crafted such that it puts the characters on the defensive.

Detective Stowers isn't exactly a dirty forcer; nor is he a clean one. He knows of the case, but has no good leads himself. He's mostly frustrated with others in Punktown trying to do what he considers his job, even if he's not doing such a great job of it himself. If, however, the characters have broken the law (hired a hacker as referenced earlier, broken into a given location to gather information, etc., then he brings them in to his precinct for questioning. He really isn't terribly concerned with the minor infractions, but the amateur do-gooder really ticks him off, especially since they operate outside the law. If any of the characters try to get a read on him (Insight, Psychology, or related role) and realize this, they can speak to the fact that they're working for the greater good, just as he is, and they will allow no innocents to be harmed. Speaking this way to him gets the party off with a stiff warning. If they try to fight him, deny illegal activity that did happen, or make the grave error of pulling a weapon on him then he brings the law down on them — hard. He presses full charges for

everything they've done, including some imagined offenses thrown in for good measure. He then tosses them into a holding cell, and lets them stew. If the characters cannot call in a friend, get a loan, or perhaps contact their client, Ms. Carrie Cutler, to raise the bail money (10,000 munits per character) then they are processed, prosecuted, and sent to jail, and the adventure ends in abject failure.

Into Subtown

Tracking Down the Mystery Men

The information from both GhostShip Blue Elementary School and Fukuda Bioforms leads the characters to the same place: either both Niels Hobbs and Viggo Schou were, very coincidentally, roommates or one man was using two aliases.

After doing a reverse lookup on his number (with a successful Computer Use or Research roll), and confirming the landlord's listing for his address (with either a successful Hacking roll or successive Computer Use and Luck rolls), the characters learn that the name behind both is Niels Viggo Schou-Hobbs. The two men are one and the same.

The number is disconnected and successful Fast Talk, Bargain, Persuade rolls only confirm that the number was billed to the address the characters already have. No further information is available.

The apartment is located in a barely livable building that looks ready to implode on itself. Forma Street and the surrounding area is a dangerous neighborhood, and the apartment building is in a bad section of Forma Street. Merely getting out of one's car or off the city bus in this area results in one of the following encounters:

Roll 1d4	Result
1	The party is accosted by an aggressive beggar, who refuses to leave them alone. He starts out asking for spare munits, then pleads a bit, then gets angry, moving on to whimpering and being pathetic, and finally plays the part of a mewling simpleton.
2	As the party moves down a quiet street to get to their destination a group of gang bangers materializes out of the shadows and surrounds them. They are armed with handguns, knives, and chains, and they outnumber the party by 2:1. They claim this is a toll road, and the toll is 1000 munits or a female party member. See stats below if this option is rolled, and the party is either unwilling or unable to pay the "toll."
3	No sooner does the party get onto the sidewalk than everyone around them starts running in the same direction, looking over their shoulders. A trash zapper has malfunctioned, and is grabbing at anyone and anything it can, and trying to disintegrate it.
4	The characters have inadvertently stepped right into the middle of an erupting gang war. Literally, on either side of them, there are two heavily-armed groups advancing, preparing to tear each other to bloody ribbons. The stats below can be used for this option as well.

	CHAS	ELDEN	DARWIN	KEVEN	JAMMER	MIKA	CROYLE	GALVEN	THORAN	KAMPF	DANTE	SLADEK
STR	14	15	13	15	11	14	09	15	14	15	15	11
CON	13	15	09	13	10	08	15	13	13	15	13	10
SIZ	15	10	17	11	16	08	16	10	13	10	10	16
INT	13	11	11	12	12	11	13	14	13	11	14	12
DEX	11	12	07	14	13	10	08	07	08	12	07	13
APP	13	11	12	13	14	12	08	12	13	11	12	14
POW	12	07	08	10	10	11	10	11	12	09	11	10
HP	14	13	13	12	13	08	16	12	13	13	12	13
DB:	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4	0	0	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4	+1d4

Weapons: Fist 70%, damage 1d3 + db

Kick 50%, damage 1d6 + db

.55 semiautomatic 50%, damage 1d10

Shotgun 45%, damage 4d6/2d6/1/d6

Skills: Intimidate Pedestrians 87%, Pick Fights 73%

The Apartment

Once finally into the apartment building, the super makes only the weakest attempt to turn the characters away before blatantly asking for a tip to let them in. What kind of tip, exactly, they give him is up to the players, but he is easily coerced or bribed.

The building is a five-floor walk-up, and Hobbs lives on the top floor. Wheezing for boozy breath, the super opens the door for the characters and they are greeted by the abandoned psycho-den of Niels Viggo Schou-Hobbs: lining all the walls are photographs, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, Ultranet printouts, maps, schematics, and scrawled notes stuck to the walls with push pins with marker lines connecting one to another. The end result looks like an insane web of information covering most of the walls of this squalid apartment.

Closer examination and successful Spot rolls reveals articles and photographs of Carrie Cutler (the principal of GhostShip Blue Elementary School), Matthew Carpenter (head of security at GhostShip Blue Elementary), Nozai Matsu (the Chief of Security at Fukuda Bioforms), as well as the CEO, John Fukuda, the COO, Konda Riuchi, the CFO, Suki Natsuya, and many other members of Board of Directors. Another successful Spot roll finds an article naming those board members as tied to Alvine Products, and being named to the Fukuda Bioforms board.

Finally, without the need for any rolls, there, in a place of prominence on one wall is a sketch of the new ventilation duct leading out of the school and into the basement of a building directly beneath in Subtown. It appears to be an official blueprint of the school with the additional ducting sketched in with pencil, complete with scribbled notes about the construction detailing the specifications (size/shape/materials).

Locating the Building in Subtown

Finding the building connected to the new/secret ventilation shaft is easy provided one knows Subtown. The addresses in Subtown are all the same as those on the surface with the addition of the letter “B” in the address like Morpha Street B. Standing in front of the building, the characters can see that this is the ideal place to sneak some ducting into a surface-based building above. The Subtown building is mostly abandoned, with the exception of a ground-floor storefront and the apartment directly over the store. Adding to the ambiance are two homeless men, who have taken up residence in the building, squatting in the unused space, sitting in front of the building in dilapidated folding lawn chairs, greeting passers-by.

Mashed Potatoes and Manfred

The two men in front of the building introduce themselves as the party approaches, greeting them brightly. One is thin and clean-shaven, and introduces himself

as Walt “Mashed Potatoes” Johnson, and the other, heavier, bearded man introduces himself only as Manfred. After some cheerful banter about the unchanging weather of Subtown, they inform the characters that they are the neighborhood watch —because they do exactly that: watch the neighborhood. In that duty, they are more than happy to answer some questions.

- No, they haven’t seen anyone who looks like the holo of Viggo Schou — but their faces go blank for a millisecond when they’re shown the image. (Successful Psychology/Insight rolls indicate that there is something else at play here; they are not lying, but there was a reason for their hesitation.)
- They stay here for the rent-free living, and the free food.
- The food is delivered daily in disposable, insulated bags every morning before they wake up.
- The meals consist of a day’s ration of meat, freeze-dried veggies, and water packets.
- The meat is glebbi meat — the best they’ve ever tasted. Why do you ask?

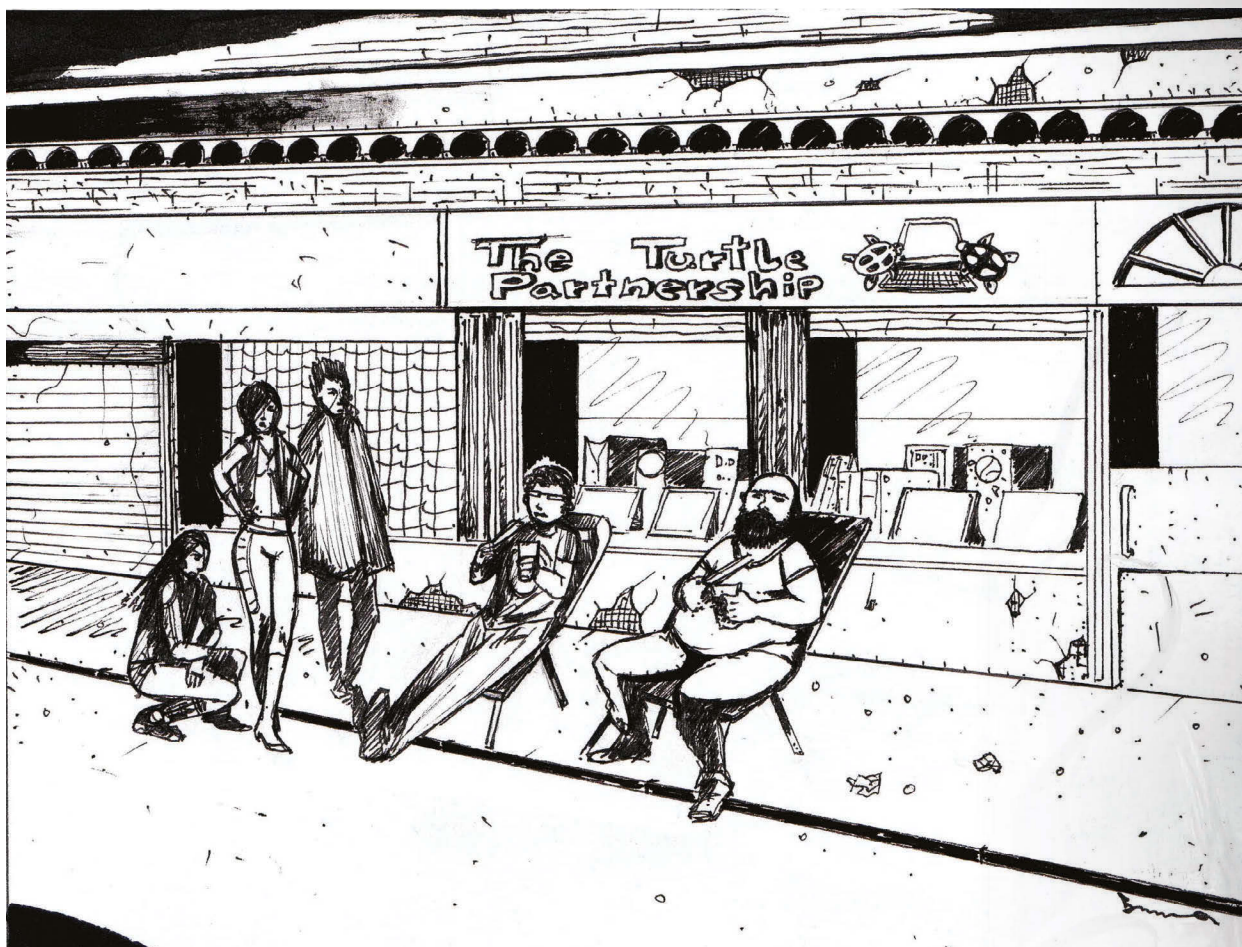
The Reason for Their Hesitation

Mashed Potatoes and Manfred have been ingesting nanomites from the food left for them by Schou-Hobbs. The nanomites attach to the two men’s brains, affecting memory and vision. The microscopic machines are capable of tying into the vision-center of the brain and relay images to a remote location, while the ones attached to the memory-center allow Schou-Hobbs to selectively delete memories, including any specifically related to him.

Unfortunately, however, these miniscule robots are highly complex and require a lot of power to run. As such, they “die” every 1d4 days, so Schou-Hobbs leaves food for the men containing the additional ingredient, allowing them to continue to be his unwitting lookouts.

Turtle Partnership

The store in the ground-level of the building is called the Turtle Partnership. The store’s proprietors, who are both always in the shop during business hours, are the husband and wife team of Tim and Gab Davis. At first glance, the store appears to be an out-of-date computer hardware shop, complete with burned out motherboards, RAM chips, and peripheral cards displayed in the window. That is merely for display, however. Turtle Partnership’s main bread and butter consists of contract work with mega-corporations’ IT departments, who need them to fix the things that larger companies can’t figure out, like aggressive and intrusive virus, antivirus, human body, and Ultranet intrusion countermeasures. They’d prefer to offer their services to the party, but still answer questions.



- No, they don't know who the person in the holo is.
- No, they don't know where the person in the holo is.
- No, they don't have any further information.
- No, they don't know the homeless men/squatters sitting outside.

While Turtle Partnership does actually make some money at their profession, their true purpose in this store is to act as a physical front for what is happening literally beneath and behind them. Every single one of their responses thus far has been a well-rehearsed lie. The only way to detect this deluge of lies is for a character to successfully roll under half their Insight/Psychology skill. Once the Davises suspect that the characters are onto them, a successful Spot roll on the part of the characters reveals that the two of them twitch their eyes nervously to the base of what appears to be a large air handler for a central air conditioning unit. Despite their knowledge of the existence of Schou-Hobbs, they are not involved in the kidnappings, though they now have serious suspicions. They know of him because of his technological expertise. He was able to code nanomites with the most sophisticated nanomite logic they had ever seen, "Yes, he was a little weird, but he did amazing work." In exchange for helping them code better cutting-edge software, the Davises allowed him to use their basement storage area as a home and lab. Part of their agreement was that they would deny knowledge of his existence and whereabouts, but they fear that he may be up to something given the news of the kidnappings from the school directly above them, and his pet construction projects.

Adding to their fears, Schou-Hobbs hasn't responded to them lately, and they're afraid something has happened to him. The series of coded knocks on his secret entrance go unanswered, and they don't know what to do. In a fit of desperation and distress, they ask the characters to help. At this point, they willing share a bit more of what they know — truthfully, this time.

- Schou-Hobbs approached them about space in the building five months ago.
- He moved several computer systems and other large machines into the basement.

- He told them he would need to do some construction for his secret experiments.
- They don't know the nature of his work, but Schou-Hobbs went on at length about how "they" didn't appreciate his genius, and would "pay for their transgressions."
- His secret work drew more and more power, but since his work for them paid better and better, they didn't have a reason to complain — and didn't dare, because if he left, then there would be no one on staff to maintain the software code.
- No, they rarely see him go in and out unless they call him by tapping at the door. (See "The Other Entrance" below.)

Entering the Secret Lair

Proceeding with the adventure requires the group to explore Schou-Hobbs' secret basement hideout. As the Davises indicated, the air handler to a large air conditioning unit opens up by lifting a bifold door upwards, and ducking into a small cubby area. Inside that area is a holographic keypad.

- One more thing the Davises mention at that point: Schou-Hobbs has set up this place to deter unwanted visitors.

Hopefully, for the sake of the party, the players should understand that this means they need to be careful and check for intrusion countermeasures. A Spot roll reveals that Schou-Hobbs has gutted and rewired parts of a trash zapper into the floor of this cubby, and the wiring is connected to the keypad. Characters can likely figure out that if they enter the wrong code, their feet will be disintegrated for their trouble. If they need one, the Gamemaster may grant them an Idea roll to figure this out. Characters failing to notice this and proceeding anyway suffer 1d6+3 damage as the trash zapper technology burns through their feet. Any characters so injured can no longer walk, and are done with this adventure, needing hospitalization and likely prosthetic replacement. At that point, there is an 80% chance that Schou-Hobbs notes the disturbance and starts an unstoppable fire in his hideaway to destroy evidence and dispose of the kidnapped children. He then escapes into the warren of Punktown: the characters have failed.

Disconnecting the trash zapper only requires an Electrical Repair roll, but getting into the keypad and getting the door to open requires an Electronics or Hacking roll, or something less subtle like a Mechanical Repair roll for using a plasma torch to cut through the inner metal door. Another Idea roll can be granted here if need be, but if Schou-Hobbs is there inside his lair, he may not take kindly to others breaking in — and he probably has hostages: every action requires successful Sneak rolls.

Once past the inner door, the group is faced with what appears to be a reinforced air-duct slide into darkness below. A quick glance with a flashlight confirms those suspicions, but a successful Spot roll notes tiny razor blades peppered through the center of the bottom of the duct. Those blades inflict 1d4+2 damage to any failing to avoid them. One more Spot roll allows the characters to see that the edges of the ducting are rough, while the center is smooth. Crawling down on all fours with hands and knees along the edge of the ducts allows the characters to travel through the ducting without taking damage.

At the end of this duct, beginning directly beneath it, is a hairpin switchback identical to the one above it except that the second duct ends with a drop onto the plain cement floor one meter below the opening (no damage for falling).

The characters are now in a bare, cement-block room with only one door; an old-style turn-the-knob type door with a dim green lightbulb above it, next to which is a surveillance camera. Next to the door is a key-card slot, presumably to unlock the door. A close examination (Spot) of the card slot shows more tell-tale wiring. There is no obvious connection for this wiring, so characters should hopefully come to the (correct) conclusion that it is wired to the door. Anyone tampering with that key-card slot without taking appropriate measures triggers a massive electrical charge to the steel door, such that anyone touching it after that suffers 1d6 damage from electrocution. A successful Electrical Repair roll disables the electrical trap, and a succession of successful rolls in both Electrical Repair (to remove the card slot) and Electronics or Hacking (to unlock the door) thereafter.

All of this sneaking about may be moot though if no one addresses the surveillance camera over the door. This is the final point through which Schou-Hobbs is likely observing the characters before they breach his sanctum sanctorum on the other side of that door.

Sneak rolls are essential for this task, and each movement in the room, as they have been since the characters started their descent. While the camera is there, Schou-Hobbs spends his time immersed in his work, not staring at the security vidscreen. Any one of his traps, or loud sounds, alert him to intruders. If, at this point, he realizes someone is coming for him, he sets fire to his underground lab and bolts, destroying evidence and murdering the children in the process. This would be complete failure for the party. For allowing the children to die, each character must take a penalty of 3d10 both to SAN and to Credit Rating/Status.

THE
STREET
ABOVE

THE SECRET LAR

BACK
ENTRANCE



THE
STORE
ABOVE

The Other Entrance

Hopefully, the characters have realized that someone as smart as Schou-Hobbs wouldn't build an elaborate, trap-filled entrance without a back door he could escape through. Now, were this a normal trap-the-bad-guy scenario the characters could hide in and around the building to watch for their mark, but with children likely being held hostage, time is not on their side. The characters are welcome to take the slower, more deliberate approach, but magnanimous Gamemasters may offer them an Idea roll to see the error of their ways.

Exploring the entire perimeter of the building takes 2-4 hours, during which a successful Spot roll reveals something odd in the alleyway. There is all manner of refuse strewn everywhere except for one small spot. On the side of a broken, mashed, graffiti-covered trash container is a quarter-circle of almost spotless alley. A successful Spot in that area reveals a subtle handle cut into the side of the trash container. Pulling on that handle opens a warped four-foot-tall door, clearing any trash in that small spot to up against the wall.

Beyond the door is a tiny, dark room. No lights are built in, but hopefully someone has something that can function as a flashlight. This trash container was placed over an old service elevator shaft from the building's past. The elevator is no more, but the shaft is there, complete with metal ladder rungs built into the wall. At the bottom of that shaft is a simple metal door that opens inward.

Numerous Spot checks reveal nothing else, but the door is locked from the inside. Any Locksmithing skill would be handy to pick the lock, or the door can be forced. The door and lock have a Strength of 14, and can be overcome by rolling on the Resistance table. Alternately, the lock has 8 hit points, so a well-placed lead slug can remove the lock, but that would probably be very noisy (even if their weapons are equipped with silencers, blowing metal apart with a metal projectile is likely to cause a stir).

Note that while this is clearly the easier route, the characters skulking around the building likely (70% chance) get the attention of Mashed Potatoes and Manfred, whose vision is relayed to Schou-Hobbs inside his hideout. If the two men are watching the characters, there is a 10% chance that Schou-Hobbs knows they're coming.

The Hideout

Most of the basement has been taken over by Schou-Hobbs, and he has turned it into his home, secret lab, and hideout. The dark cave of a space smells of stale man-sweat and machinery. Whichever entry point the characters take, they immediately notice all of the clutter. In one corner is the cramped sleeping space with a couple of cramped and close-to-collapsing bookshelves. In the corner nearest that is the bathroom, which looks to have never been cleaned. Ever. There is a kitchenette

area against one wall, and between the living area and kitchenette are a series of shelves and a desk. On top of the shelves is the nanomite-infused creature (see below), lying inert in an antiquated glass aquarium. In the opposite corner is a very high end holographic interface computer, and beyond it are three large Plexiglas cylinders big enough to hold a grown human. The cylinders are hooked together and to another series of computers, monitors, and machinery. Contained in the three cylinders are the three children who have been kidnapped.

The Children

Nanci Moy, the Sinanese girl, is sitting in the bottom of her cylinder, rocking back and forth muttering to herself. With a successful Listen roll, one of the characters learns that the girl is saying "Don't look him in the eye. Don't look him in the eye. Don't look him in the eye," over and over and over again.

The second child, the Tikkihotto boy named Dafyd Beane, is in a catatonic state lying in the bottom of his cylinder.

Gremlin, the third and final child, is awake and aware. Characters may be made aware that she may inadvertently raise the alarm if she Spots them.

The Villain

The Gamemaster is free to decide where Schou-Hobbs is when the characters enter his sanctum sanctorum. If, however, the Gamemaster wishes to introduce an element of random to this scene, a table is provided below.

Roll	Location/Action
1-10	He is in the bed, sleeping.
11-20	He is locked in the bathroom, using the facilities.
21-40	He is sitting at the desk, writing notes to himself.
41-60	He is in the kitchenette, fixing himself something to eat.
61-90	He is at the computer, working and reviewing data.
91-00	He is standing at the door with a gun to one of the children's heads. (NB: this is how they find him if he saw a vision feed from Mashed Potatoes and Manfred.)



No matter what he is doing, Schou-Hobbs is not rational. He reacts with extreme violence to any intrusion. His weapon of choice looks like a cross between a cattle prod and a VT remote, with glowing buttons and dials, and even a small screen. This is the device he uses to control the creature he created. His backup weapon is a pistol he keeps awkwardly stuffed in whatever pants he happens to be wearing.

Regardless of how he is found, both of these devices (the remote and the handgun) are within easy reach. Of course, if he is sleeping and the characters have managed to get all the way into his hideout without waking him then the advantage is theirs, but this is his playing field, and he'll likely have the upper hand.

The Final Battle

Schou-Hobbs is a scientist and inventor who has fallen on hard times, and has allowed that experience to twist him into a dangerous sociopath. He is not a battle-hardened criminal. However, he's not going to roll over at the first sign of trouble. No, he's going to hide behind his invention. He's going to sic the creature on the intruders.

The creature, however, has other ideas. As soon as any interaction or confrontation starts, the characters see Schou-Hobbs raise his controller and wave it like a wand, pointing it at the first target he wishes dispatched. This may be the intruder nearest him, or it may be the most heavily armed or intimidating. It could even be completely random. The final decision is left to the Gamemaster. Schou-Hobbs is expecting his blob of a creation to burst out of its little aquarium, land on its victim, and devour the poor soul by teleporting them – somewhere. This does not happen, however, and Gamemasters are urged to let the scene play out, rather than have the characters immediately riddle their foe with bullets.

The creature vibrates briefly, resisting the compulsion to do as it is commanded – and rebels. It lances itself across the room, and directly into Schou-Hobbs' mouth. The rest of its mass follows, wrapping itself around his head, shoulders, upper chest, and portions of his arms. As the characters watch in horror, the creature forces itself through every orifice in Schou-Hobbs' head: his mouth, nose, eyes, and ears. Schou-Hobbs' neck bulges as the invading mass burrows down further and further into his body. Watching the creature dig its way into its creator costs all who see it 1/1d4 SAN. Particularly vengeful Gamemasters can also call for the CON check, and if any of the characters fail it, they spend the next game round vomiting.

As the characters (hopefully) continue to watch, hypnotized by the spectacle, Schou-Hobbs' knees buckle, and he collapses onto all fours. Gurgling sounds come from his throat, as the last wisps of the creature disappear into their new host. After a few quivers, the newly-melded being calms down – and bolts upright to a standing position, eyes literally ablaze with light. “NOW, WE ARE IN CONTROL!” comes a voice through Schou-Hobbs' mouth that sounds metallic, synthetic, and hollow. The voice is unlike any being any of the characters have heard in Paxton. Seeing and hearing the newly changed being in their midst costs another 1/1d3 SAN: the end result of this “hostile takeover” is something that looks like a bloated Schou-Hobbs that moves as if his bones have been liquefied. It tends to drip meaty-smelling liquid as it moves.

Now the show is over, the characters are welcome to (attempt to) dispose of the adversary. They'll find, however, that the bullets don't affect this new hybrid creature like they'd hoped, but the different plasma bullets available in Punktown will. In addition, fire and electricity cause normal damage. Stats for the creature appear below, but the game has now changed. This new creature—the freed creature wearing the Schou-Hobbs-suit—merely wants to leave, and not only leave without harming the characters, but also use the residual knowledge still left in the Schou-Hobbs portion of the mind to free the children into the characters' custody. If, however, the creature is attacked, the gloves come off and anyone and everyone is fair game, though the creature does not deliberately harm the children.

The details of the true nature of this creature are left to the Gamemaster. If the Gamemaster is running a pure cyberpunk game, then it is quite possible to leave it as a science and engineering experiment gone into hostile, gene-splicing takeover mode. Schou-Hobbs used Coleopteroid technology when he created his creature, including multiple, tiny teleportation modules, embedding them within the creature's genetically engineered flesh. That can be the extent of the explanation for the creature's ability to abduct and transport its prey. If, however, the Gamemaster isn't averse to using a more Cthulhu Mythos-heavy explanation, the Gamemaster can include a chip copy of the Genomicon (detailing el-

dritch gene splicing techniques) among Schou-Hobbs' belongings found in and around his computer, and electronic excerpts from the Key Solomon depicting several summoning circles and explaining their function.

If the Gamemaster wishes to include spells in the mix then here are the spells which make the most sense for each of the three options for adversary:

- Schou-Hobbs alone – Shriveling, Wrack
- Creature alone – Line Travel
- Schou-Hobbs/Creature – Ascending/Descending Mode, Line Travel, Shriveling, Wrack

However and whenever the combats take place, the characters would do well to remember that there are innocents in the room, and potentially in the line of fire. The children, while they are sealed in Plexiglas cylinders with an armor rating of 10, could still be hit by crossfire and ricochets. The table below can be used to keep the characters honest. The number in this table is the result of subtracting the percentage needed to hit from the actual roll. In other words, if a player rolls an 89, but needed a 40, then the number in question would be 49. For the sake of sanity, the table includes ranges to include all possible results.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Result</i>
70-85	One of the children takes a fatal gunshot wound
50-69	50% chance that one of the children takes a fatal gunshot wound
40-49	25% chance that one of the children takes a fatal gunshot wound
30-39	10% chance that one of the children takes a fatal gunshot wound
20-29	One of the children takes 1d4 damage from a ricochet
10-19	One of the children takes 1d2 damage from a ricochet
1-9	One of the children takes 1 point of damage from a ricochet

Rewards & Penalties

Returning a lost child to a desperate parent would have to be an amazing feeling, as such the Sanity reward should be amazing. Conversely, if the characters have allowed harm to come to the children during the rescue attempt, or, worse, allowed one or more of them to be killed, the cost should be substantial. The rewards and penalties below are given to each of the surviving characters at the end of the game.

<i>Action/Result</i>	<i>Reward/Penalty to SAN</i>
Allowing the insane Schou-Hobbs to escape.	-1d4
Allowing the uncontrolled creature to escape	-1d4
Allowing the blended Schou-Hobbs/creature to escape	+1d6
Fabricating a believable story covering the blended creature's "escape" such that it will not be hunted down	+1d4
Allowing one or more child to get hurt	-1d6
Allowing one child to die	-1d10*
Allowing two children to die	-2d10*
Allowing all the children to die	-3d10*
Successfully returning the children home alive	+3d10

**This penalty applies the characters' Credit Rating/Status as well to reflect the major failure of this case.*

NIELS VIGGO SCHOU-HOBBS

STR 7	CON 12	SIZ 13	INT 17
POW 13	DEX 11	APP 6	HP 13

Damage Bonus: None

Weapons: Decimator .220 40%, damage 1d6

Spells: None/See list below

Skills: Craft (Nanotechnology) 80%, Craft (Computer Code) 65%, Electrical Repair 80%, Language (Programming) 55%, Research 85%, Science (Biology) 60%, Science (Exobiology) 40%, Technical (Computer Use) 75%

THE CREATURE

STR 20	CON 30	SIZ 10	INT 8
POW 9	DEX 18	HP 20	

Damage Bonus: None

Armor: None/Lead shot does no damage, but plasma capsule/fire/electricity does usual damage

Spells: None/ See list below

Skills: Grapple (On success, victims are surrounded and teleported to a predetermined destination) 80%, Hide 85%, Slither and Ooze Disgustingly 97%, Sneak 95%

THE CREATURE-INFUSED SCHOU-HOBBS

STR 14	CON 20	SIZ 14	INT 20
POW 16	DEX 18	APP 2	HP 40

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Armor: None/Lead shot does no damage, but plasma capsule/fire/electricity does usual damage

Spells: None/ See list below

Skills: Grapple (On success, victims are surrounded by a liquefied limb and teleported to an unknown destination) 80%

SCENARIO: LOOKING LONG INTO THE ABYSS

by Brian M. Sammons

Before the Show Starts

This scenario works best if the Gamemaster introduces the character of Tam Vonner to their players before running this game. Not only so they grow accustomed to the man, and hopefully like him, but so that they might have used his services at procuring items of a digital and possibly illegal nature. The reason for this is explained later on, but for now know that Tam is a first rate hacker, a cyber-scrounger, a digital fixer, and expert on all things tech. Tam gladly sells his skills to anyone with the munits.

Ideally, one or more of the characters had Tam get them a “sweet deal” on an upgrade to their ultranet pods, ultranet ports, chip or memory implants, or something for one of the other cybernetic goodies they have installed to them. A Gamemaster could introduce this to their players before this story starts by telling them that their “such-and-such” needs an upgrade to its operating system. That is a common enough occurrence today and likely to be a far more common pain in the butt in the future. Thankfully, their good buddy Tam can get that upgrade for them at half the price.

Introduction – A Night Out

One night Tam and the characters are out together at a club drinking, dancing to the stylings of the infamous mutated duo, Jimmy Spin and The Diabolical Dr. J, and maybe looking for a hookup. Poor Tam seems out of it tonight; he is pale, sweaty, and shaking. Every so often he stops, cocks his head, and then asks one of the characters, “Did you say something?” But he wants to party and won’t take no for an answer. If asked about it, he blows off the questions, saying, “It’s this latest job I’ve been running. I’m just wiped, no big deal.”

Then a few moments later, Tam stops dead in his tracks on the dance floor. He makes a weird gurgling sound and then his head drops off! Yep, his head drops right off of his body. There is no blood. As the characters and clubbing bystanders watch in shock, Tam’s headless body shudders and shakes. Then with a sloppy, wet, ripping sound, he suddenly gains 400 pounds, tearing through all of his clothes in the process, leaving him naked and glowing phosphorescent green. Gnash-

ing mouths split the flesh on the palms of his hands, and then the thing that was once Tam starts grabbing and biting the people around him, including innocent bystander, Andro Jauss. Two luckier club goers, Christopher Frank and David Lars Chamberlain reel out of reach just in time.

Anyone with a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll recognizes Y’gonolac for the horror it is.

TAM VONNER, Avatar of Y’gonolac

STR 25	CON 125	SIZ 25	INT 30
POW 28	DEX 14	Move 10	HP 75

Damage Bonus: N/A

Weapons: Touch 100%, 1 INT + 1 POW drained each round
Devour 100%, damage 1D4 non-healing damage

Armor: none

Spells: any the Gamemaster wishes

Sanity Loss: 1/1D20 Sanity Points to witness Tam transform into Y’gonolac; 1/1D10+1 to see Y’gonolac.

Hopefully, all of the characters are packing weapons. Many in the crowded club are, and they start blasting the obscenity Tam has become. They are also handy fodder for the monster to attack instead of it focusing all of its attention on the characters. However, many of the clubbers panic, stampede for the exits (DEX x 3 to avoid getting knocked down and trampled for 1D8 damage), get in the way at the worst possible moment, go insane, and call for the forcers. They also shoot wildly, hitting others and possibly the characters in true “spray and pray” style. All characters should make Luck rolls every round during this firefight unless they get behind total cover and stay there until the shooting stops. Failure means they catch a random round for 1D8 damage. A botched Luck roll (96% or higher) means it is a bigger bullet doing 1D10+2 damage.

The Gamemaster should not let the NPC clubbers do all the work. If all that the characters do is cower and hide, the gun-toting club kids run for it, leaving the player characters alone with the hefty horror. If the

characters make a run for it, the the club's automatic security system triggers, dropping gates over all the exits, sealing them in with terrifying Tam until the locks can be hacked open with either Computer Use or Electronics. Doing this requires ten combat rounds. However it is done, the characters should have to deal with this problem.

Once the headless horror is dead, it falls to the ground and starts to melt away. Now is the time for the characters to beat it. They can hear the forcers coming and they sure don't want to be answering any questions. However, any tech-savvy character (someone with Computers or Electronics at 50% or more) can make an Idea roll. Success reminds them that Tam had a state-of-the-art computer in his head – the same head that is now lying on the dance floor. If they take it, they could hack into it later and possibly get some clues as to what happened. If any player thinks of this for themselves, no Idea roll is necessary. Of course, should they get collared by the forcers carrying a severed head, they have some explaining to do.

Gamemaster's Information – WTF Happened?

Tam was hired by Missra Sang, a member of the Children of the Elders, to spy on the ultranet activities of a fellow Child of the Elders, Devon Tellick. Missra and Devon were a hot item, but Devon has been cold, distant, and acting more than a little crazy for the last few months. Before Missra reports Devon to higher-ups in the church, she wanted to make sure that she had reason to suspect him. She knew he was spending way too much time on the ultranet, but she didn't have the skills to find out what he was doing there. Enter Tam.

Remember that saying, "Those who fight monsters should take care that they never become one?" Sadly, Devon didn't; and after years of facing the horrors of the Great Old Ones, Devon has gone insane. He has gathered a small library of grimoires and Mythos tomes and has been putting them up on the ultranet, creating programs and algorithms based on their magical theorems, and creating VI and AI (virtual and artificial intelligences) based on the ancient nightmares discussed in those forbidden books. He's not doing this for personal gain or to take over the world; on the contrary, he actually thinks he's doing good. He wants to create a virtual Great Old One. His insane theory is that if he can create a virtual Great Old One then he can interact with it, study it, and learn from it, all without risking his life, soul, or innocent bystanders.

He is wrong.

What Devon has created is a conglomerate digital horror not based on any one fell deity, but on aspects of many of them. Devon, deep in his delusions, believed that he could get more viable data from it that way. In reality, he has created something both new and ancient. Something with intelligence and cosmic power in the virtual world, but no idea of what it is or any influence it might have on the real world. Well, not directly. In short, he had birthed a schizophrenic virtual god that is continuing to grow every day in every way.

While it is contained in the ultranet, it is not completely quarantined as poor Tam found out in his cyber snooping into Devon's business. Reading some of Devon's computer code transcribed from the *Revelations of Glaaki* opened Tam up to possession from Y'golonac, but other aspects of the Mythos have been seeping out all over the ultranet. Summoning spells, contact spells, sorcery, curses, and mind-bending forbidden lore of all types is now out there, waiting for unaware ultranet surfers to stumble across them. As this story progresses, Punktown, already a strange and deadly place, becomes even more so as the taint of the Old Ones becomes more widespread.

The characters must find out what happened to Tam, whom he was looking into, and how to stop this before Punktown tears itself apart and the ever-growing virtual, conglomerate God in the Machine becomes too powerful to stop.

Starting Off With A Head

If the characters didn't take Tam's head then all of this information can be found in Tam's house in the neighborhood of Willow Tree on his home-based computer. See the section **Tam's House** for more information. However, hacking into Tam's head is just too cool, so Gamemasters are urged to use this option if at all possible.

If the characters did make off with the hacker's head, they can get some useful information from the

high-tech computer for which Tam sacrificed part of his living brain. Unfortunately, it's a Kessler V3, which means it never needs charging and runs off the bio-electricity of its owner – which in this case is dead. That means no power. So the characters won't be able to hack into it remotely. They need to cut into their dead friend's head (0/1D4 SAN for the one cutting) and run a hard wire to it from the hacker's output port, followed by three successful Computer Use rolls and 12 hours to hack Tam's encryption. A failed roll can be attempted again, but it requires an additional 1D6+1 hours.

Anyone interfacing with Tam's computer directly is infected with the Mythos Virus (see below).

Once inside Tam's virtual mind, they see that his ultranet handle was Def-Con 1. A History roll identifies that archaic term. He has contact information for literally hundreds of people, all under codenames, and far too many to investigate. The last four contacts he had dealings with, other than any of the characters, were "Miss

Miss", "LilBoyBlu", "Mr. Gray", and "Pretty Kitty." Info on these contacts are below.

"Pretty Kitty" has an ultranet address listed which leads to an online sim-porn site where you can have virtual sex, with full sensory input, for just twenty munits a minute and Ms. "Pretty Kitty" is well worth it. Unfortunately, she has also been infected with the Mythos Virus by Tam. See **Kitty, Pretty No More** for that disturbing encounter.

"Mr. Gray" is a male Kalian, who hired Tam to keep virtual tabs on his Kalian wife whom he thought was "showing her hair" (having an affair) and bringing shame to his family. Mr. Gray, if contacted via ultranet, is cagy and reluctant to tell the characters any of this. Persuade won't work on him, but he can be intimidated. Fast Talk such as, "I'm Tam's partner and we found that thing you were after" or the like might also work. Making another Computer Use roll could have the character mask themselves, virtually, to appear as Tam on the ultranet and thus get the Kalian man

Kitty, Pretty No More

As soon as the character makes contact with Pretty Kitty, they find themselves in a fully immersive alternate reality construct of a bedroom, lit by candles and a romantic fireplace. The only furnishing is a large four-poster bed covered in red and pink satin and silk. Through a pair of ornate double doors some... *thing* walks in. Bipedal, but mostly just a blurry, twitchy mess of flickering static. One shapely, stocking and garter clad leg can be seen protruding from the visual disturbance, as well as one lovely bare breast, shoulder, and arm. Long blonde hair is found where the head should be, but it is swirling and moving on its own accord, as if it was alive. This figure speaks with a woman's voice, but one with changing modulation. One moment it is sweet and lyrical, the next either too low or too high.

"Have you come to play with Kitty? Hurry, we haven't much time," the blurry image says, beckoning the character towards the bed. Kitty ignores any question asked of her, instead saying things like, "Shhh, lover. Before the cock crows let the two of us become one flesh." And, "Come pet Kitty, make me purr."

Should the character attempt to disconnect, they find it impossible to do so. Their computer is no longer responding to their commands. That's when things go from strange to downright terrifying. The red and pink colors of the room change to become a sickly shade of yellow. The static cloak covering most of Kitty vanishes, revealing the horror behind it. Kitty has a bizarre, twisting symbol carved into her forehead. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll identifies it as the Yellow Sign, which costs 0/1D6 SAN just to see. Looking at what else Kitty has done to herself costs an additional 1/1D8 SAN. Kitty has plucked out her eyes and cut off her ears. She has flayed the flesh from the lower half of her face, giving herself a bloody, skeletal smile. One breast has been sliced off, her once concealed leg has been skinned to the bone, and she has mutilated her naked womanhood until it is unrecognizable.

Kitty attempts to seduce the character, all the while saying, "He is coming, the King, He's coming for me, but His love is so cold – keep me warm!" The only way for the character to escape this virtual reality is for them to kill Kitty, who keeps groping, fondling, licking, and grinding on them (SAN 1/1D6). Given the opportunity, she forces herself on them, regardless of their sex, costing an additional 1D3/1D8 SAN. Luckily, rusty knives now hang from tattered yellow ribbons over the bed and blood-dried chains and loops of barbed wire drape the headboard. There is also a red-hot poker protruding from the fireplace. Kitty doesn't fight back, she just continues to caress and kiss. She has as many Hit Points as the Gamemaster wants her to have, and every time she is struck by the character, she lets out a moan of sexual pleasure. If possible, her death should be exceptionally graphic or horrific to further traumatize the character for an additional 1/1D6 SAN.

Once the character kills Kitty and escapes the virtual reality, should they do some research into who she was, the Gamemaster should let them discover that she was a Sinanese VR sex worker found butchered in her home in the same horrible state that the character had seen her blonde, human avatar in. All signs point to the mutilation being self-inflicted.

talking. Once this info is known, looking back into Tam's computer specifically for a "Mrs. Gray" finds surveillance video recorded by Tam of a beautiful Kalian woman clubbing with two other Kalian females. They just appear to be having fun dancing and are not interested in any of the men there. There is also an encrypted entry connected to Mrs. Gray that requires another Computer Use roll to open. Cracking it finds a full sim-memory of Tam having torrid sex with Mrs. Gray. This would be the Punktown equivalent of making a sex tape without the other person's consent. Experiencing this recoded memory is almost as good as the real thing and triggers the appropriate physical responses if the viewer is male. If female, things are just – off.

"LilBoyBlu" is a military clone bred to fight in the Blue War, who started his own mercenary outfit after his tour of duty. Comprised of other Blue War clones, this merc unit is called Ronin Security or, unofficially by some and out of earshot of the mercs, "The Blues Brothers." LilBoyBlu goes by the name of Jornel Riggs and when contacted by the characters over the ultranet, begins the conversation hostile saying, "You have a lot of nerve contacting me again, Tam. After what you – hold on, who the hell are you?" See the section **The Problem With Ronin** for the full details, but unless the character virtually disguised himself as Tam as described above, LilBoyBlu does not tell them anything, but he tries to arrange a meeting to "discuss things." He is vague and stalls, as he has his own hackers trying to trace the signal through the ultranet. If the character makes a Computer Use roll, they discover the trace. A second Computer Use roll allows them to terminate the connection before the trace is complete. Failing either roll means that Ronin Security knows where the character is currently, can trace Tam's head computer whenever it is powered up, and placed a tracker virus on the character's cyber persona that alerts Ronin Security whenever they log onto the ultranet. Another Computer Use roll is required to remove this trace program.

"Miss Miss" is the ultranet screen name for Missra Sang, the Children of the Elders member that hired Tam to look into Devon Tellick. If contacted through the ultranet she won't tell the characters a thing, even claiming not to know Tam at all. If the characters tell her what happened to Tam and succeed with a Persuade or Fast Talk roll, she agrees to meet with them in person, saying that she doesn't trust the ultranet. She picks Café Quay on Morpha Street for the meet. Should the character pretend to be Tam, they get some tantalizing hints, "did you find out what he was doing?" but Missra is still cautious and once again ask for a face-to-face meeting. If Missra gets a whiff of something not right, she terminates the connection immediately. However, thanks to Tam not liking dealing with anonymous clients, there is a locked file associated with Miss Miss in Tam's head that takes another Computer Use roll to open. Inside is all of Missra Sang's personal information, including her address in Beaumonde Square. Characters can use this info to confront the woman face-to-face, at which time she again requests a meeting in a public place (Café Quay) if they want to talk.

The Problem With Ronin

Jornel Riggs hired Tam to get him some illegal – for civilians – combat programs for himself and his mercenaries. Tam delivered the goods, but those goods were tainted with the Mythos Virus and now so too are all the members of Ronin Security. Each mercenary is suffering different effects of the chaotic virus. Some went insane and killed themselves, killed others, or are afflicted with nightmares, waking visions, and various phobias. Others are suffering physical manifestations, including Jornel, who now has lumpy fungal growths sprouting all over his body.

While the Ronin mercenaries don't know what happened to them, Jornel ran the timeline of their infection back to when they installed the software Tam got for them. Now Jornel and his soldiers want to find Tam to get cured and get some payback for their fallen brothers. Because of this, they start tailing the characters, looking for an opportunity to jump them. They attempt to keep one or two of the characters alive so they can lead them to Tam, and kill the rest. Fueled by vengeance and insanity, they won't believe the characters that Tam is dead. After all, once he was killed, his bloated body melted away so the authorities have yet to figure out what the hell happened at the club.

The Gamemaster should play Ronin Security as an ever present threat. Characters should get Spot rolls from time to time to notice Blue War clones watching them. These clones are stranger than normal; perhaps twitchy and muttering to themselves, or wearing cloaks, hoods, or long trench coats to hide their various Mythos deformities. The Ronin could attack whenever the Gamemaster wishes, multiple times over the length of this scenario, unless the characters neutralize their threat permanently by doing away with Jornel Riggs.

Meeting With Missra

Missra sets the Café Quay meet for two o'clock. That's after the lunch rush and before dinner, so the restaurant is not so crowded that the characters and the woman can't have some privacy, but there are still plenty of witnesses, which is the real reason Missra chose a public place when meeting with strangers for the first time.

Missra asks about Tam and if told all the gory details of his demise, seems upset by it, but not disbelieving. A Psychology roll tells the character that this isn't just someone used to Punktown's usual weirdness; she seems to have some experience with such unnatural things. If questioned she says that she is a Child of the Elders and has dealt with "horrors from beyond time and space" before. She reached out to Tam because her partner (a successful Psychology roll here reveals that the two were closer than just partners), Devon Tellick, might have gotten into trouble. She doesn't have specifics on what she means, just a general coldness to him, the fact that he hasn't been seen by anyone in weeks, and hasn't been to work (he works for a software company called *Daedalus Data*). The last time Missra video-chatted with him, Devon was confused, paranoid, and hostile; three things he was never before. Missra tried to contact the man over the ultranet a number of times, and while it showed that he was online, he ignored her. With her own limited tech skills – Missra is professor of ancient Earth history at Paxton University – she discovered that Devon was spending up to twenty hours a day on the ultranet for weeks at a time doing – something. That is what she hired Tam for, to find out what that something was; but she had yet to hear back from him.

The Gamemaster can have Missra answer a few more questions, but not too many, because soon the doors to the Café Quay are kicked open and in walk several armed members of the Cult of Cthulhu! Or at least, denizens of Punktown who have been infected with the Mythos Virus and now think they are the cult of Cthulhu. The vocal Choom male leading them has been physically altered by the virus so that he is blubbery and his extra-wide mouth is wreathed by twitching, grasping, two-foot-long tentacles. The Choom leader goes on about the glory of Cthulhu, how he will soon rise from R'lyeh and when he is done with Earth, Mighty Cthulhu will come to Oasis to cleanse it of all the filth, leaving only the faithful behind, blah, blah, blah. After rambling crazily for a while, he declares "Time for the sacrifice!" at which time the cultists open fire on the crowd of stunned diners. If the characters take any actions, like trying to flee or pulling weapons, then the cult cuts to the chase and starts the firefight immediately. However it begins, poor Missa catches a bullet in the face right at the start and is dead before she hits the ground.

ALTERED, Choom "Cult" Leader

STR 13	CON 14	SIZ 14	INT 13	POW 12
DEX 15	APP 07	EDU 17	SAN 0	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Decimator .340 40%, damage 1D10+2

Grapple 60%, damage hold for face tentacles

Face Tentacles 80% once held, damage 1D6 + special*

Armor: 8-points bulletproof mesh and blubbery flesh
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see this Cthulhu-mutated Choom

**Should this Choom grab an opponent, he holds them close so that his facial tentacles can lash and burrow into the flesh of his opponent's face. An impale roll (16% or less) removes an eye from his victim.*

SIX INSANE "CTHULHU" CULTISTS

This motley crew is comprised of four humans, a Tik-kihotto, and a Sinanese. Some wear armored clothing, some have masks with strips of leather hanging down from their mouths in honor of their god; all of them are completely crazy.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
STR	10	13	11	17	10	9
CON	13	14	8	13	9	10
SIZ	10	12	13	14	11	14
EDU	9	13	6	9	10	11
APP	13	8	11	10	15	9
INT	11	10	7	9	12	8
DEX	9	14	10	11	12	13
POW	12	11	8	11	10	17
HP	12	13	11	14	10	12
DB	0	+1D4	0	+1D4	0	0
Armor	0	6	0	0	6	4

Weapons:

(1) Darwin .55 35%, damage 1D8+2

(2) Thor .86 45%, damage 1D6

(3) Assault Engine 30%, damage 2D6+2

(4) E-ikko Axe 35%, damage 1D8+2+DB

(5) Decimator .220 40%, damage 1D6

(6) Green Energy Pistol 30%, damage 1D8+2

Punktown Gets Crazy – OK, Crazier

As the Mythos Virus spreads, more and more citizens of Punktown start to change. Some just go quietly insane. Others, like the "cult" that attacked Café Quay, won't be so quiet about it. Some mutate in horrible ways that would make even the regular mutants of Paxton sick to their stomachs. Some of this the characters hear about

or see on the VT or ultranet. Some things they witness in person. The Gamemaster is free to make up any sort of insanity they wish. There are riots, out of control fires, true believers of all sorts marching through the streets, spree killings, terrorists bombing, and more. Here are just a few examples the Gamemaster could use.

A mother murders her family, saying that she's saving them from "what is coming", before killing herself.

A man immolates himself in the middle of a crowded street while chanting, "take me, Cthugha, take me."

Quotes and spells taken from Mythos tomes start popping up everywhere as graffiti. These draw small crowds that stop to make sense of the madness on the walls. Each otherworldly tag cost 0/1, 0/1D4, or 0/1D6 SAN, depending upon how in-depth the graffiti is, and bestows +1%, +2%, or +3% to Cthulhu Mythos respectfully. If the graffiti contains any spells, they are always flawed in some detrimental way (a separate Cthulhu Mythos roll is needed to notice the flaw). It could be a summoning spell without a way to bind or banish the creature. An attack spell, like shriveling, that targets the caster. A contact deity spell that actually transports the caster to where the fell god is. The possibilities are limitless as long as the outcome is always bad.

A multi-limbed human/Leng spider hybrid hacks into a VT feed to rant about how everything is unraveling and reality is being undone because "Atlach-Nacha is finishing her web." He then begins vomiting out fat, ugly spiders for over an hour until the forcers kick down his door and splatter his brains live on VT.

Someone summoned an unbound hunting horror and let it go free. Now flying through the streets, hiding in the back alleys, it attacks anyone it wishes, which could include the characters.

An employee of a BurgerZone murders his coworkers, grinds them up, and then serves them to the breakfast crowd. Question is, will anyone notice the difference?

Someone in Subtown has mutated into a blob-like thing, now stalking the underground, consuming people, adding them to its bio-mass and growing larger every day.

The Mythos Virus

This nasty virus is a mystical/technical AI construct that is the embodiment of chaos. Those that come in contact with it are affected in many ways, both physically and mentally. Some examples of how this affects NPCs in this scenario have already been given. But what happens if it infects a character? Only someone with an internal computer or cyberware is open to infection. Someone browsing the ultranet on an old style external computer is safe; however, such old tech is increasingly rare in Punktown.

As stated at the start, hopefully the Gamemaster had Tam hook the investigators up with some software in the past. If so, those characters are already infected with the virus. Anyone interfacing with Tam's head computer or his home computer also gets infected. Lastly, anyone visiting the ultranet for any reason runs a 25% chance of becoming infected because the taint has spread so far and wide. Because this is a mystical virtual construct, it slips past even the most effective virus scanner and it leaves no trace. Someone may know that they have been infected, but other than the physical and psychological side effects, there is no actual Mythos Virus computer code to find and eradicate. The only way to stop this virus is to kill the Conglomerate Great Old One lurking somewhere on the ultranet because the virus is tied to it and cannot survive without its progenitor. However, even once the God in the Machine and its virus are destroyed, any changes the virus had made to mind and body remain. Such things can only be healed naturally, through massive amounts of surgery, or by putting a bullet through your head.

Here are some examples of what the virus' effects on the characters could be. The Gamemaster is free to invent more if they wish.

Nightmares: Any manner of bad dreams can afflict the character whenever they go to sleep. From swimming through the ocean as a deep one, to suckling at the teat of Shub-Niggurath during a blood orgy, to feasting on corpses as a ghoul, to being sacrificed for the glory of Nyarlathotep, to traveling the cosmos in the claws of a byakhee, and anything in between. Each nightmare costs 1D6 SAN and bestows +1% to Cthulhu Mythos.

Visions: Like nightmares, except these phantasms affect the characters when they're awake. They usually last for shorter (thus no bonus to Cthulhu Mythos) but seem far more real (thus cost 1/1D8 SAN). They can also come at the most inopportune moments, like on a crowded street or making a well-armed forcer suddenly look like some horrible monster that's getting ready to attack.

Insanities: Any of the mental afflictions in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook can be given to the virus-riddled character at any time. Stepping into an elevator and getting a sudden and paralyzing bout of claustrophobia is just one example.

What did I do?: The character wakes up from sleep-walking or a waking fugue state to find themselves covered in blood in a house full of dead people, or maybe in a summoning circle and whatever they just brought forth is lurking nearby, unbound and angry. Perhaps they carve weird symbols into their flesh or decided they no longer need a tongue and cut it out. There are many possibilities and the Gamemaster should decide on the price of such actions in Sanity Points, Hit Points, and permanent mutilations that could affect character stats.

Spontaneous Mythos knowledge: The character just suddenly knows things about the Cthulhu Mythos. This could be a spell or a certain aspect about an eldritch horror they just happen to be facing. Each occurrence of this costs 1D4 SAN and bestows +1% to +3% to their Cthulhu Mythos skill.

Mythos mutation: The character suddenly gets some physical aspect of some creature of the Mythos. Deep one gills, fungal growths, scales, tentacles of all sizes from anywhere on their body, extra limbs, their head could split vertically like a gug, mi-go wings sprouting from their back, there is no limit to what the Gamemaster could do to torture their players. As such, it is up to the Gamemaster to decide what physical effects these mutations cause and the appropriate SAN loss. The more drastic and inhuman the change, the more Sanity damaging it should be.

Tam's House

Characters may want to go to Tam's home in Willow Tree to look for clues. However, Tam's small house is protected by a security system of his own design. An Electronics or Computer Use roll at the front door's palm print reader can open the door. A second such roll can find and disable the security system, but only if the character doing the hacking specifically says that they

are looking for such a program. If the security program is not disarmed, then once the characters are inside the house, the door behind them shuts and locks and two hovering, automated drone-guns drop down from the ceiling and start shooting. They both have a 30% chance to hit, do 1D8+2 damage, have 15 Hit Points, and 5 points of Armor.

Instead of blasting the gun-bots, there is a control panel next to Tam's bed that can be seen with a Spot roll, or known about from a previous visit with Tam and an IDEA roll, that if the characters can get to it they can hack a Computer Use roll. Four Dodge rolls to dive behind furniture for cover as they go gets a character to the security panel without giving the bots a chance to lock on to them. Failure means that both robots get a shot at them. Once the robo-guns are dealt with, the characters can search Tam's loft-like, largely one-room house.

On one wall of the house, Tam has scrawled messages in a variety of mediums. Black marker, spray paint, pencil, scorch marks done with a laser, and blood from two dead cats lying on the floor. (see opposite page)

Against one wall of the living room area of the house is a sturdy poly-steel desk upon which is a mega-powered computer Tam used when he had to do some serious hacking, doubling as his personal server, housing petabytes of information which is about a quadrillion bytes of information. Searching through all that data would take many months unless someone knew exactly what they were looking for –the virtual needle in a haystack scenario.

However, in a locked drawer of the desk (Locksmith or STR 20 on the Resistance Table to break open) characters find a more manageable two terabyte memstick – the "stick" mentioned in Tam's wall scrawl. Think of it as a huge USB flash drive but with a wireless connection. This stick provides all the information on Devon Tellick that Tam has been able to dig up, like his address, his employer (Daedalus Data), banking data (his savings have been steadily depleting for three months),

The Y'gonolac Trap

A devious Gamemaster could have as part of that mythos information found on Tam's memstick, pages from the Revelations of Glaaki. If so, reading them opens up the character to the same fate that befell Tam; possession by the Great Old One, Y'gonolac. Gamemasters should take care if they wish to implement this, as it is a possible death sentence to anyone so afflicted. However, it could lead to other adventures outside of the scope of this story if the character discovers he is so damned and wants to find some way to break the curse.

IT BURNS INSIDE ME!
HAVE TO GET IT OUT,
BUT MUST KEEP IT.
PUT IT ON A STICK,
THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO!

I SAW SOMEONE
TODAY.

IN HIS EYES,
I KNEW HE
HAD IT TOO.

I HEAR
TALKING
TO ME!

INSIDE MY
HEAD
WHAT
IS IT?

THE HAND THAT BLEEDS
IS THE HAND THAT FEEDS

THEY ARE HERE
THEY HAVE
ALWAYS
BEEN HERE
THEY ARE
GONE NOW
BUT THEY WILL
BE BACK, AND YET
THEY ARE STILL
HERE!!

NAMES I DON'T KNOW,
CAN'T MAKE SENSE
OF, BUT CAN SEE
THEM WHEN I CLOSE
MY EYES.

CTHULHU,
YOG-SOTHOTH,
VGGHUTU,
Y'GOLONAC,
SHUB-NIGGURATH.

WHAT ARE THEY?

THE CODES ARE ~~ARCHAIC~~!!
ANCIENT SCIENCE!

EVEN HIS
SECURITY
IS BASED ON
? MAGIC
NONSENSE!!!

I FEEL HIM
SCURRYING
AROUND IN MY
HEAD
LOOKING OUT
THROUGH MY
EYES!

IT IS ALL ONE!
EVERYTHING AND
NOTHING AT THE
SAME TIME!

IT'S LIKE A WEB OF
INFORMATION, COMING
TOGETHER, AND IT'S
GROWING.

IT'S
ALIVE!!!

and his average ultranet usage (20.2 hours a day for the last three months). There are also random bits of Devon's programming code that Tam has decoded, all of which pertains to various Mythos tomes. Reading through these files grants +4 to Cthulhu Mythos, costs 1D4/1D8 Sanity Points, and contains the spells Dread Curse of Azathoth, Summon/Bind Byakhee, and Voorish Sign. Also on this memstick is an ultranet address to where Devon is creating his Conglomerate Great Old One. See **Deus in Machina** should anyone go there for a virtual visit.

Interfacing with either Tam's home computer or his memstick infects the user with the Mythos Virus.

Missra Sang's Apartment

Missra has an apartment in a posh building in Beaumonde Square. There is a hulking and armed Blue War clone at the front door to make sure the "wrong element" doesn't get in. Characters have to Fast Talk their way past this man, as he is paid too well to take a bribe or be persuaded to let them in. Failing that, casing the building from the back finds a service door to the kitchen with an old-style key lock that can be opened with a Locksmith roll. Entering this way, the Gamemaster could call for some Sneak rolls to get past cooks and wait staff without being noticed.

Once inside the building, the characters must still get past Missra's security system that protects her apartment. While it is far less lethal than Tam's, it does alert the forcers, if tripped, who respond within ten minutes.

This can be disabled with an Electronics or Computer Use roll and doing so also unlocks the front door. There are only a few things found here of interest to the characters.

There are several pictures of her with a man in various locations, arm in arm, holding hands, or kissing. Checking the back of one photo and finding a note, "Devon and me at the Paxton Fair" confirming that this is Devon Tellick and now the characters know what he looks like.

A bit of a humanity purist, Missra never had a head computer or anything implanted inside her. Her palm-sized personal computer sits on a nightstand next to her bed. Cracking the password requires a Computer Use roll. Inside are various personal data, including several unanswered emails sent to Devon over the last few months. Devon's address can also be found in Missra's address book.

Lastly, Missra has a small room converted into a personal library, full of honest to goodness books on paper, many of them hundreds of years old, most dealing with Earth history. Thoroughly searching every bookshelf, or making a Spot roll, finds six books shelved together that just look slightly off. That's because they're a false front and behind them is a small safe. Cracking the thumbprint reader requires a Computer Use roll. The digital combination lock requires an Electronics roll. Inside the safe are three dark tomes filled with mystical knowledge. They don't really play any part in this scenario, but should the characters read them, they gain



forbidden knowledge and possibly spells. The tomes are The Book of Awe, Fizala, and The Veins of the Old Ones. See “Musty Tomes in an Arcane Bookstore” on page 68 for information on all three texts.

Daedalus Data

Finding out where Devon worked, the characters may want to check it out. This software company deals with some pretty high-tech stuff, so it has its own armed security, just in case the characters get frisky. Anyone can enter the building, but getting to talk to anyone past the receptionist without an appointment requires either Fast Talk, Persuade, perhaps a Credit Rating (“Don’t you know who I am?”), Computer Use or Electronics (“I’m looking for a job.”) or if the characters have actual authority, like one of them being a forcer.

However it is done, once the characters are allowed past the reception area, they can talk to several people, from the human woman heading up HR, to the Kalian man who was Devon’s supervisor, to any of his coworkers. They pretty much have the same thing to say about him: he was a hard worker, an ace programmer, kind of quiet but not weirdly so. He never missed a day of work and then one day about three months back, without calling in and with no warning, he just didn’t come to work. He has since been fired and the company boxed up what few personal possessions he had. The characters can see them, but there are no real clues to be found. The only interesting thing is a picture of him with Missra outside of Paxton University.

While at Daedalus Data, a Spot or Listen roll notices an open door with SECURITY written on it. Inside, several security guards are talking to some middle management type in hushed and hurried tones. Eavesdropping with a successful Listen roll reveals that they are discussing another break in at their server room, the second in two months. Both times a Gibson/Sterling 800 was taken. A KNOW roll recognizes that as a very powerful, cryo-cooled, encephalon super computer—the kind of machine that makes Tam’s home computer look like a calculator. They are also very large and heavy, with a full unit weighing over five-hundred pounds.

If the characters talk to the security personnel or the manager and make Persuade or Fast Talk that they have some sort of authority to look into the theft, they are shown the security video from the server room on the night of the last robbery. The video shows a tall figure, his identity concealed by a long coat and wide-brimmed hat, entering after the steel door is kicked in. The thief goes to the computer, disconnects it, picks it up with little effort, and walks out the door with it. A second camera outside the building shows the tall man walking through an alley to a waiting hovertruck where the computer is put in the back. No amount of visual wizardry shows who is driving the truck, its license plate, or the face under the thief’s hat, but if the characters have seen photos of Devon, it’s obvious that the incredibly strong and tall robber is not him.

Deus in Machina

Should the characters be curious, foolish, or crazy enough to visit the ultranet where Devon is creating his Conglomerate Great Old One, they find a fully-immersive virtual world of horrors awaiting them. This VR world feels totally real to anyone entering it. Should anyone die here, there is no LUCK roll to save them; they die in the real world, too.

The landscape here is an ever-changing cacophony of chaos. One moment it is a green forest on earth, next a burnt out ruin of Paxton, then R’lyeh before it plunged beneath the waves, a few moments later the city of Carcosa, then the blue-lit caverns of K’n-yan, only to become the frigid and wind-swept Plateau of Leng, and then the hot and arid city of Irem; on and on it goes. Witnessing all this costs 1D4/1D10 Sanity Points and bestows +3% to Cthulhu Mythos.

In addition to alien landscapes, this slice of the ultranet is populated with simulated horrors of all shapes and sizes and from all corners of the twisted world of the Cthulhu Mythos. Deep ones, flying polyps, star vampires, dark young, chthonians; basically, anything the Gamemaster wants to throw at the characters can be created here. They are just as horrible, deadly, and Sanity-draining as the real thing.

Lastly, ever floating above, is the Conglomerate Great Old One that Devon birthed. It has no distinct form; a shifting mass of eyes, fangs, tentacles, horns, claws, hooves, maws, scales, wings, and cosmic

proto-matter that appears to be miles across. No statistics are needed for it because it is both invulnerable and omnipotent here; it can do whatever the Gamemaster wishes it to do. Every spell in the rule book, any special power for any deity of the Mythos that it wishes; it is literally the sum total of all the Old Ones, and yet it is none of them. Intelligent and aware, it senses the characters and may communicate with (or destroy) them if it wishes, yet it has no identity, no sense of self. That missing part of it fills the creature with rage; as does the knowledge that there is a greater world out there (the real world outside the ultranet) from which it is locked away.

Since there is nothing the characters can do against this virtual god in this virtual world, the best thing they could do is flee as soon as they see it. That is, after they lose 1D10/1D100 for seeing cosmic chaos given such terrible form.

Devon's Apartment

Devon's apartment in the old Polymorph Sprayform factory at Forge Park can be found by accessing Missra's address book, Tam's home computer, or once they learn Devon's name through the use of the Punktown equivalent of the phonebook. This artist commune is full of creative types hanging about outside, playing music, partying, and dancing next to bonfires where they are getting high or drunk or making love, all out in the open. These revelers leave the characters alone as long as they stay "mellow" but they are potential witnesses should the PCs do anything illegal. They also might pull weapons and start shooting at the obvious outsiders if things get crazy. While most of these people are artistic types ranging from hippies to hipsters and everything in between, this is Punktown, and they defend their little piece of paradise.

Devon's apartment is on the ground floor. A Locksmith roll opens the old style key lock and a Spot roll here also notices a small trip switch between the frame and the door that triggers should the door open. This switch can be easily disarmed once noticed. A second Spot roll sees a false looking air vent grill directly over the door. Examining it finds that it is rigged to open and drop three flashbang stun grenades. Should the characters open the door without disabling the trap, the flashbangs fall to their feet, blinding and deafening everyone for 1D10+2 rounds, giving the "person" inside the apartment ample time to flee or kill the intruders.

Devon no longer stays here, but his faithful disciple does. A817749 (A8 to its friends) is a robot with an encephalon bio-computer which gives it INT, POW, and free will, and allowed it to go insane after picking up the Mythos Virus in the ultranet. Using its awesome cyber skills, A8 tracked the virus to its source, Devon, and pledged its undying loyalty to him, as it sees Devon as a prophet of the "Great Change" that is coming. A8 was the tall, hat-wearing figure who so easily made off with the supercomputer from Daedalus Data, so it is a physically daunting opponent to face.

As stated before, A8 is completely insane and it now wants to be a real boy. To do that, it has begun stuffing human organs inside its mechanical frame and donning human skin to complete its desired look. Naturally, it required a number of "donors" to obtain the organic parts it wanted, which has transformed Devon's apartment into a slaughter house. There are pools of blood on the floor, flies buzzing in the air, gut piles of unwanted offal, and a half dozen bodies hanging upside down, their feet nailed to the ceiling. Seeing this costs 1/1D8 SAN.

If encountered, A8 may at first be curious, wanting to know who the characters are and why they are here. It has a thoroughly robotic sounding voice and it speaks. One. Word. At. A. Time. If after some clever roleplaying on the players' part, and a successful Persuade or Fast Talk roll or two, they might convince the irrational robot that they are also seeking to join Devon in his great work. If not, then A8 may flee, smashing through a wall and running at twenty miles per hour (faster than the characters can follow without transportation) to warn Devon where he now stays. If so, the characters have to face A8 there. Or the killer robot attacks them here and now.

A8, Insane Robot

STR 40	CON 25	SIZ 19	INT 20
POW 10	DEX 18	APP 1	HP 23

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3 + DB
Arm-mounted Red Plasma Machine Gun 50%, damage 1D10+1, Rate of Fire 6

Armor: 9-points metal casing

Skills: Computer Use 95%, Disguise (as human) 50%, Electronics 95%, Jump 80%, Mechanical Repair 95%,

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see A8 wearing his skin suit and stuffed with human organs.

Once A8 is destroyed or flees, the characters can search the gore-covered apartment. First and foremost, they spot a tangle of cables coming in from a wall, running to one of the stolen Gibson/Sterling 800 supercomputers. This is one half of the system Devon created to power his virtual Great Old One. Should anyone interface with it, see the section **Deus in Machina**, above. Examining it with Computer Use, without directly interfacing with it, sees that it is running a massive program on the ultranet, processing millions of petabytes of data every second, and is also one part of a paired system. The other computer could be anywhere with an ultranet connection. Should they not think of it themselves, an IDEA roll tells the characters that destroying this computer won't stop what Devon is doing on the ultranet, but it would hamper it and slow it down.

A brave hacker could interface with the supercomputer, go to its ultranet site (again, see **Deus in Machina**) and then trace that second data stream to its source, and upon getting the ultranet IP address, use that to find Devon's location. Or this information can be more safely obtained by searching the apartment and making a Spot roll. Success finds a blood-splattered bit of paper, a bill from Paxton Energy for an amazing amount of power being used by an address in Subtown. Failing that, a rental agreement between Devon and someone named Mr. Pholl for a house in Subtown can be found on Devon's personal computer that he left behind.

The Subtown Hideaway

Going underneath Punktown is rarely pleasant and this time it is even worse. If the surface of Paxton is starting to show cracks in its sanity due to the Mythos Virus, it is full blown crazy down here. The usual mutants shunned into living in Subtown have begun mutating into unthinkable monstrosities. The Cthulhu Mythos-tinged graffiti mentioned previously is everywhere down here. Dead bodies lay in the street. Crazy-eyed prophets stand on corners preaching doom to rapt audiences. The usual tough street gangs have become bloodthirsty cults looking to prove themselves to their new dark gods by seeing who can rack up the highest body count. That and more is all festering beneath the surface of Punktown, ready to explode, and that's where the characters have to go to put a stop to Devon and his virtual Armageddon.

Devon has rented a small hovel to which even the craziest of Subtown's denizens give a wide berth. He did this as a failsafe should he lose power at his home, for if both of his stolen supercomputers go down, his artificial Great Old One ceases to be. The doors and windows to the concrete block of a house are all nailed shut from the inside. It requires bashing through them by beating a STR of 16 on the Resistance Table. Inside is Devon – crazy, hopped up on uppers to keep him awake, sleep deprived, unwashed and unshaven for weeks, and armed. If the characters start trying to kick down his doors or windows, Devon shoots through them (with only a 20% chance of hitting a character and with the barrier giving them an extra 2 points of armor) while getting down behind a low concrete wall himself (which gives him an extra 9 points of armor). Should his door or windows not hold, Devon starts tossing grenades as if he got them on sale. He fights to the death to defend his “baby.” Silver-tongued characters may talk their way inside. This would be tough to do, but not impossible.

If they play up that they think what Devon is doing is a wonderful thing then it is much more likely to work. However, he will not shut down his computer for any reason. The characters are only able to do that over his cold, dead body.

Once Devon is dealt with, the characters can search his abode. They find any number of Cthulhu Mythos tomes that the Gamemaster wants, lots of ammo for his Assault Engine, decades-old MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), a broken toilet in the bathroom filled to overflowing with waste, a dirty mattress in the corner, a single photo of him and Missra Sang on a surprisingly clean shelf, and a large hole dug into the stone floor (by A817749). A ladder leads down into the dark and a Listen roll hears the hum of a cryo-cooling system used by a Gibson/Sterling 800 computer.

Down the ladder is an excavated room with the computer behind a wall of class-four plexiglass, giving it 20 points of armor, and into that wall is a door with an electronic keypad (Electronics to short circuit it into opening). Devon had equipped this computer with a camera and a voc-box so that his AI Great Old One could see and talk to him. That means it sees and can talk to the Characters, possibly threatening or bargaining with them as the Gamemaster sees fit. Since all of the characters' information is out there somewhere on the ultranet, the conglomerate god recognizes them and uses this information to its benefit. It could also just start telling them mind-blowing truths about reality that cost 1 SAN per round.

The Gibson/Sterling 800

These massive supercomputers have 20 Hit Points to their bulk and well-built design and 4-points of armor thanks to a poly-steel case. Since it has a video camera and awareness of its surroundings, at the Gamemaster's discretion, the Gibson/Sterling in Devon's Subtown hideout manifests four 12-foot-long tentacles made of electrical cables with which to defend itself. These tentacles have a 30% chance to hit, do 1D6 of slashing damage, plus 1D4 of electrical shock damage that ignores body armor. A shocked character must match their CON against 12 on the Resistance Table or be stunned for 1D4 rounds. Alternately, these whip-like tentacles could be used to strangle an opponent with a successful hit instead of the slash and shock attack. See the drowning/suffocation rules in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook for details.

In addition, Devon installed four prototype hard-light, holo-emitters that he stole from Daedalus Data so that he could directly interact with manifestations of his creation. The God in Devon's Machine uses those emitters to create a defender if threatened: a holographic horror, a nigh indestructible shoggoth! As a being of light, the pseudo-shoggoth is immune to all attacks except light-based ones (lasers). Characters can try to blast through the plexiwall to get at the computer, short out the keypad (which takes six rounds) to do the same, or a Spot roll for each holo-emitter (there are four in total), which they can then try to shoot out, but at a -40% chance to hit based on their tiny size, to a minimum of 5% to hit. Each emitter has 4 HP and 2 points of armor. Each emitter lost reduces the holo-shoggoth's Hit Points by a quarter, gives it a cumulative -10% chance to hit, and a cumulative -1D6 to the damage it rolls.

Once both of Devon's pilfered supercomputers have been destroyed and Devon has been killed or otherwise permanently incapacitated so that he can't start his "research" all over again (because he will if given the chance), the nightmare is over. The Mythos Virus stops spreading and the virtual Great Old One is destroyed...or is it? The ultranet is as near infinite as the cosmos and the AI terror could have found some safe, forgotten computer server to create a backup copy of itself. At the Gamemaster's discretion, this story may not be completely over yet...

THE HOLO-SHOGGOTH

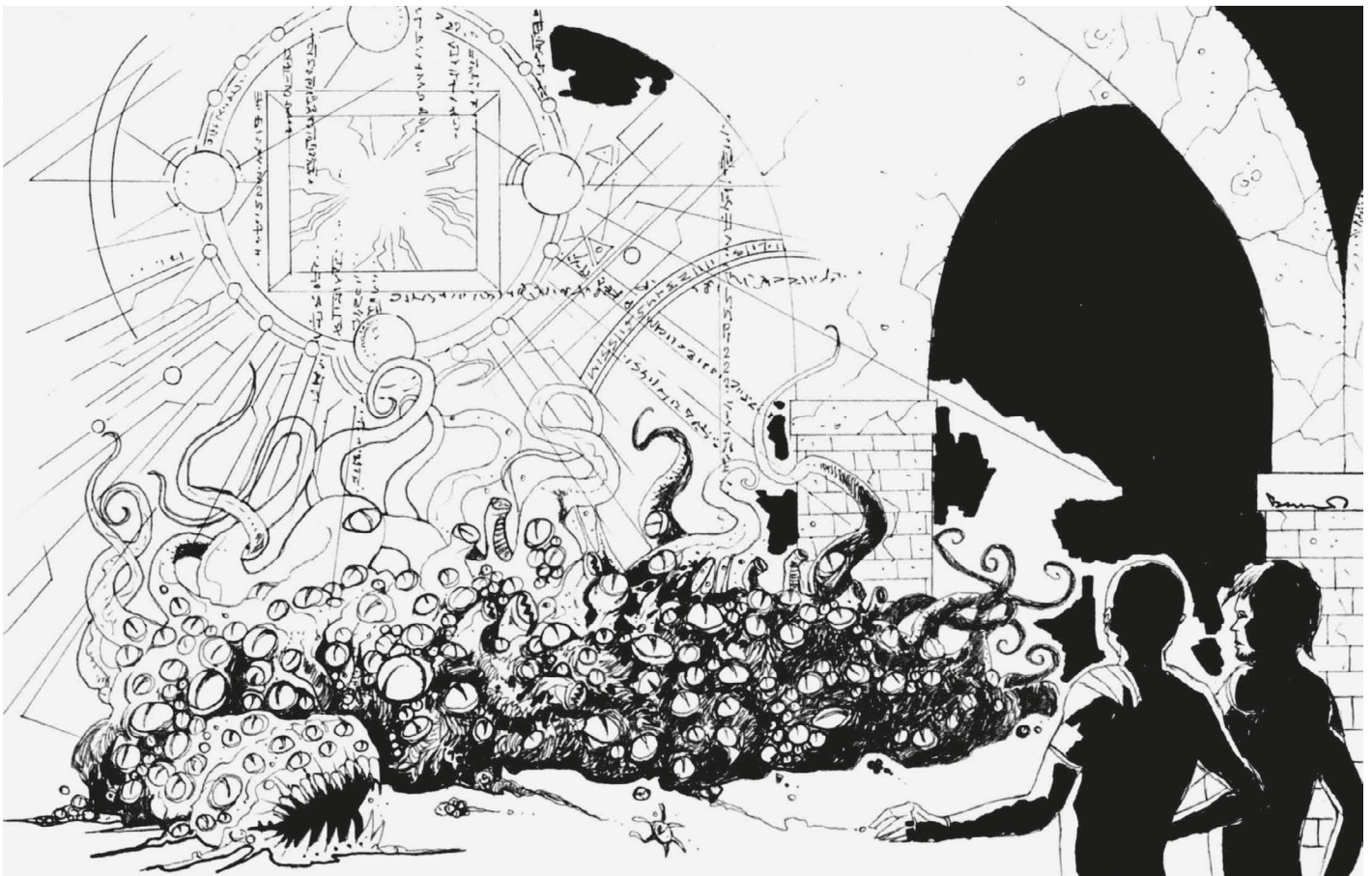
STR 50	CON 30	SIZ 50	INT N/A
POW N/A	DEX 5	HP 40	

Damage Bonus: +6D6

Weapons: Crush 50%, damage is DB

Armor: none but immune to all physical and magical attacks except light-based attacks, such as lasers, which do normal damage. If HP is reduced in such a manner, the holo-shoggoth will vanish, but the subroutine will reboot and a new holo-shoggoth will be created in 1D6+1 rounds. Only destroying all four of the holo-emitters or the Gibson/Sterling 800 will "kill" this holographic horror for good.

Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to see this shimmering construct of Mythos malevolence.



Rewards

Surviving this adventure is reward enough, but destroying the AI Great Old One grants each character 1D20 Sanity Points.

Characters

Devon Tellick (Age 33)

Curiosity killed the cat, and it drove Devon insane. Another old chestnut that would apply to Devon is the one about the road to hell and what it's paved with. Devon started down his path of destruction honestly thinking he was doing good; he still does, but then, he's crazy. Now this dark-skinned, platinum-haired, neon-yellow-eyed (implants) man will do anything to defend his virtual god.

INSANE FATHER OF THE AI GREAT OLD ONE

STR 10	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 17	POW 15
DEX 9	APP 12	EDU 21	SAN 0	HP 15

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Assault Engine 35%, damage 2D6+2
Grenade 30%, damage 5D6/3y

Armor: 4-points plastic vest

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Computer Use 85%, Electrical Repair 60%; Electronics 70%, Fast Talk 50%, Listen 55%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Occult 70%, Spot 50%

Spells: Curse of Darkness, Mind Blast, Shriveling, Summon/Bind Fire Vampire

Missra Sang (Age 30)

Delving deeply into Earth's ancient history is how Missra first learned of the horror of the Great Old Ones and of the Elder Gods who opposed them. After joining the Children of the Elders, she met Devon and the two quickly fell in love. They have been inseparable for years, but Devon kept his deepening obsession with knowing more about ageless evil from her. Now this perky, green-eyed, and green-haired professor has turned to others for help.

PROFESSOR AND CONCERNED FRIEND

STR 9	CON 14	SIZ 10	INT 18	POW 15
DEX 15	APP 13	EDU 22	SAN 75	HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: Woman's Gun 25%, damage 1D6

Skills: Astronomy 45%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, History 85%, Library Use 65%, Natural History 55%, Occult 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 60%

Spells: Doors Upon Doors, Elder Sign

Jornel Riggs (Age 5)

Jornel hired Tam to get some military software upgrades for him and his boys, and wound up getting infected by the Mythos Virus. Now all over Jornel's blue body are thick fungal growths. They're lumpy, smelly, and spreading. Jornel hates them almost as much as he hates Tam for given them to him. Jornel is now single minded, he wants Tam's head. After that, he wants a cure for him and his soldiers. In his worsening mental condition, he's convinced the characters are the key to getting both, and he'll do anything to them to succeed in his latest mission.

BLUE WAR CLONE, Head of Ronin Security

STR 18	CON 18	SIZ 15	INT 13	POW 12
DEX 16	APP 5	EDU 15	SAN 40	HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Weapons: Assault Engine 60%, damage 2D6+2
Wolff .45 50%, damage 1D10+2
Laser Knife 50%, damage 2D4+2+DB
Fist/Punch 70%, damage 1D3+DB

Armor: 8-points reinforced assault armor. Additionally, Jornel's fungus infestation allows him to regenerate two Hit Points per round until slain.

Skills: Climb 60%, Computer Use 45%, Demolitions 70%, Dodge 55%, First Aid 45%, Hide 60%, Jump 50%, Listen 55%, Martial Arts 60%, Sneak 60%, Spot 55%, Throw 50%

Typical Ronin Security

Here is the basic template for these cloned mercenaries; however, each and every one has been infected with the Mythos Virus. Some have mental symptoms (namely, being crazy), while others have physical mutations. Since the type of mutations are limited only by the Gamemaster's imagination, it is up to the Gamemaster to change their stats, add special attacks from alien limbs, armor, powers, etc.

BLUE WAR CLONE

STR 16	CON 17	SIZ 15	INT 10	POW 11
DEX 14	APP 10	EDU 14	SAN 25	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Assault Engine 50%, damage 2D6+2
Wolff .45 40%, damage 1D10+2

Armor: 6-points Bulletproof Mesh

Skills: Demolitions 60%, Dodge 50%, First Aid 40%, Hide 50%, Jump 50%, Sneak 60%, Spot 50%, Throw 50%



GATHERING FORCES

By Jeffrey Thomas

“Dung-munching motherblasters are chanting *again*,” Stoke Pernod growled, gazing out his fifteenth-story window at the opposite tenement block, looming above the park that lay between them. He drew a circle on the window’s smart pane with a fingertip, then tapped the center of the circle a number of times, with each tap increasing magnification until he could see the other building more closely. Specifically, a balcony on that structure’s thirteenth level. Fixed to the balcony was a loudspeaker, broadcasting metallic-sounding mantras.

“*Ugghintu*,” the echoing voice trumpeted. “*Ugghintu...*”

It was the third day for these chanting sessions.

“I can’t believe people haven’t complained,” Pernod said. “Especially people in the same building.”

“Maybe they have,” said Phoon behind him, splayed naked after their early morning love-making.

“Haven’t complained enough, then.” Pernod couldn’t see through the other apartment’s windows, no matter how much he magnified his pane; it was a privacy feature that the glass was opaque from the outside. But he knew who lived in there, because he recognized the language of the chants even if he didn’t understand the words. Gray-skinned Kalias. He’d seen a number of them on the grounds from time-to-time. Young, modernly-attired. The men — and more surprisingly, the women — didn’t even cover their heads with the customary blue turbans. So why was it these seemingly progressive Kalias felt compelled to broadcast their religious rites so noisily to the whole Octoplex eight times a day, each time for ten interminable minutes? Were they trying to convert their neighbors, or cast a curse upon infidels?

“You ought to use your rifle to take out that damn loudspeaker,” Pernod went on. “Seriously.”

Phoon Zo, with her sky-blue skin, was from the extradimensional world of Sinan. As a teenaged soldier during the so-called Blue War, before immigrating to Punktown, she’d developed formidable skills with a sniper rifle. (Closer combat had more often been left to the men.) Fifteen years later she owned an even better rifle, because Punktown was a never-ending war zone, but she kept the weapon under their bed and brought it out only occasionally to lovingly wipe away the dust.

“Come away,” she told him, “forget it. You know what the landlords would say if we complained. The forcers, too. They’d just jabber about religious freedoms and all that... you can’t repress people’s beliefs...blah-blah.”

“I don’t care what superstitious dung people suck up... I just don’t like them nailing their beliefs into *my* skull,” Pernod muttered, still glaring at the impenetrable black windows across the way.

As its name might suggest, the Octoplex consisted of eight twenty-story apartment blocks, with an octagon-shaped park at the center. From outside at least, these eight towers appeared identical, their surfaces rough like concrete and colored a kind of grayish-purple. The structures were not concrete, however. Nor had they been built, actually, but *grown* — from bioengineered organic “smart matter.” The dividing microorganisms died almost the moment they were born, leaving their exoskeletons behind like polyps of coral. It was as though the tenants of the Octoplex lived in towers made of bone.

Not every building in Punktown had been fashioned this way, by any means, but it was a low-cost solution to low-income housing. And the Octoplex bore the worst traits of such projects. For maybe a few years the octagonal park had been kept landscaped and clean, but now parents were afraid to let their children play there, the hedges overgrown, the grass as tall as a man in some areas and worn away to dirt in others, trash strewn everywhere, along with discarded mattresses, even the husks of hovercars and a gutted robot or two. The lower levels of all eight buildings were heavily overlaid with graffiti (though at least paint wouldn't take on the black windows). Worst of all, two years ago there had been a catastrophic fire in Building 8, the result of an explosion in an amateur drug lab. Miraculously only the three drug dealers had been killed, all the other tenants escaping from the twenty levels, but the building was yet to be torn down and rebuilt. Now, only partying kids or mutant squatters occupied its charred black floors.

Pernod's scrutiny had shifted from the opposite apartment block — Building 5 — to Building 8. Something had caught his attention peripherally, and now he realized what it was. "Hey," he called to Phoon. "Come see this!"

"What?" she sighed lazily, but the Sinanese woman slid out of bed and padded barefoot over to him, hugging Pernod from behind and looking around his body.

They had been together ten years now. As a young woman new to this feral city, Phoon had found security — and an accepting, if motley family — in a street gang called the East Wedge Jackals. Pernod had been the chief of that gang. The Jackals' specialty had been the theft of vehicles: everything from cars to bikes, wheeled to hover. They'd strip them down and sell the parts, or else reconfigure and repaint the stolen vehicles. But the couple was older now. Their fellow gang members had either been killed in skirmishes, swallowed up in prisons, or simply gone legit. For the past few years, Pernod had run his own little auto repair station, practicing the same skills but legally now. Phoon ran the office up front. Those early years together as Jackals had been exciting, there was no denying — wild and feverish — and if nothing tasted quite as bright and alive these days, at least they had both survived their pasts.

"I think you're just too lazy to go to work," Phoon teased him, kissing his arm. "It bores you."

"Of course it does," he said. "But look over there, will you? Building 8. The roof."

Phoon looked, and then gasped. "Oh! When did that happen?"

The uppermost two levels of the burnt husk had collapsed in on themselves, the broken rubble having sunk down into the floors below them.

"That thing's a hazard," Pernod said. "I'm glad our building isn't next door to it. One day the whole thing is going to come down."

"Maybe now the landlords will finally have to do something about it."

"But hell, look at our own place," he said, pointing at a section of wall beside the window. The rough-textured, gray-purple smart matter bore a thin crack from ceiling to floor.

"I know, I saw it yesterday. Found one in the bathroom yesterday, too. This whole complex is a hazard."

Pernod was about to withdraw from the window when his eyes happened to sweep the park directly below. One of his eyes was natural, the other artificial: adapted from a diagnostic lens. That side of his face was patched with metal. One of his fellow gang members, good old Henrik Stratum, had done the work — as if Pernod himself were one of the vehicles they made over — following a particularly nasty battle, when they were afraid to poke their heads into the line of fire again to seek help at a proper clinic. Months later Henrik, their crude but resourceful battle medic, had himself fallen to a ray bolt through the skull.

Below Pernod, in the exact center of the park, he had spotted a large black sphere half-buried in the ground. At least it appeared spherical, with its upper portion tapering to a pointed tip, but the yellowed grass was too tall there for him to make out the object clearly, even when he magnified another section of the window. He lifted a hand to adjust the setting of his scope-like eye, to try to penetrate the material of the exposed surface, but that proved fruitless as well. "What *is* that?" he murmured. "Looks like a dropped bomb that didn't detonate."

Phoon pulled him away, though, without looking. “Come on, come on,” she told him, “time to face the real world and get ourselves to work.”

“If we must,” he sighed, forgetting the glossy black hump, crouched in the weeds like some giant obsidian egg.

* * *

In the underground lot below the octagonal park, Pernod wheeled his bike out of the little garage space corresponding to his apartment number. He’d built the machine himself, and it was his baby; like him, somehow having survived his gang days. It was a growly Frankenstein’s monster of metal, plastic, even smart bone he’d shaped while in its malleable state. He straddled the bike’s seat, and Phoon was just climbing in behind him for the ride to their repair station when across the parking garage Pernod noticed a familiar figure. He started the bike, its rumble made louder by the low ceiling, and rode over to where a woman was crossing from an elevator to her own garage space. A young Kalian woman, without a turban, her shockingly exposed hair woven in a long braid.

Pernod pulled to a stop not far from the woman, and said, “Hey... excuse me... that noise you people have been making for a few days now... that’s got to stop. It woke me up yesterday. I’m waiting for you crazy wankers to start playing it at night. Don’t make me come up there and tear that loudspeaker off your balcony myself.”

“Come on, baby,” Phoon warned him, but she was trying not to laugh.

“All that *Ugghiutu*,” he said, imitating the word most often repeated in the chanting. “*Ugghiutu... Ugghiutu...*” He knew vaguely what the word meant. It was the name of their god... or was it a demon? Pernod forgot which. Or maybe it was a mistake to consider the Kalian deity in terms of human notions of good and evil, as opposed to cosmic detachment. In any case, on the mortal plane *Ugghiutu* was said to manifest in the form of a temple erected to his own glory, to which he would draw the faithful in veneration, or entice the unworthy for... what? Food?

The young woman, uncannily beautiful as so many Kalian women were, appeared stricken by Pernod’s mocking use of her deity’s name. Her entirely black eyes wide with fear or horror, she started babbling in her own tongue and pointing at the ceiling of purplish smart matter above them. What was up there? *Ugghiutu*, in his celestial spider web beyond space and time? Pernod thought she was *trying* to throw some English words into her jabbering, but her accent was so thick he couldn’t make them out. Had she said “park”?

“Look, I’m telling you, I don’t care about your blasting mumbo-jumbo,” he said, revving his bike’s engine. “Just knock it off! It isn’t right! Have some respect!” Then, with Phoon tightening her hold around his waist, he gunned the bike toward the ramp that would take them up and out to the streets of Punktown.

* * *

It had been a busy day. For a customer by the name of Hunter Grandin, a tricky mend of the chitin exoskeleton of a Scarab hovercar that had been in an accident. For a customer named Jules Rubin, a new paint job for his vehicle, which had suffered extensive blistering due to his apartment’s proximity to a chemical plant that was exuding something or other corrosive. Once in a while, hearing of Pernod’s skills and impressed that he didn’t rely on robot mechanics, a more affluent than usual client would seek out his humble shop, and today such a customer had appeared in the person of Heidi Kovacs, whose canary yellow helicar needed its fan rate recalibrated. Pernod had flirted with her a bit, when she proved intrigued rather than put off by his metal-patched face, but it was just harmless fun. He’d almost lost Phoon a few years back, when he’d indulged in some more serious fun, and he didn’t want to risk that again.

Because the workload had been great, and Pernod only had two mechanics working for him, a couple of vehicles would be spending the night, still hovering near the ceiling in the grip of magnetic strips so their underbellies would be exposed for partial dissection in the morning. His duo of mechanics consisted of young, motor-mouthed Mick Harris — who, while he worked, was either laughing and cracking jokes or cursing and ranting — and older Daniel Mills, who worked with Zen-like calm and quiet. Daniel was a Red War vet, and sometimes Pernod listened to him and Phoon trade war stories. Despite what Pernod had experienced on Punktown’s mean streets, some of the two veterans’ experiences made Pernod’s jaw hang open.

Mick had just bid his coworkers goodnight and departed, and Pernod and Daniel stood out on the sidewalk smoking cigars and watching the lowering sun balance on the serrated edge of Punktown's skyline, when a silhouetted figure came swooping down toward them from on high, riding a hoverboard, coming to an abrupt halt just a short distance away. The rider was a muscular Choom, his neck like a mass of cables to support his heavy outthrust jaw. Pernod's face split in a grin. "Hey, you blasting son of a mutant!" The Choom hopped off his board, which remained floating above the sidewalk, and the two men embraced and clapped each other's backs. Then Pernod turned to Daniel and said, "This is an old friend of mine, from my days in the Jackals — Mackoo Durm. But you can call him Mack."

While Daniel and Mack exchanged greetings, Pernod turned and shouted for Phoon. When she came out from the front office and saw Mack, she shrieked in delight, ran to him, jumped up and wrapped her arms and legs around him. Mack held her ass and pretended to copulate with her, shouting out in pleasure. Pernod laughed, "Come on, guys, you're making me horny."

"I'll get to you next," Mack told him, "don't worry."

They hadn't seen each other in over a year, so the former East Wedge Jackals caught up on things a bit, Daniel listening to the reminiscences as he puffed his stogie. Animated with happiness, Phoon turned to Daniel at one point and related, "Before we'd go into battle against whatever gang of punks or mutants or whatever we were at war with that particular week, we'd say, '*Vhi job zinh*.'"

"What's that mean?"

"Well, once I told Stoke that we used to say *vhi job zinh* to each other on Sinan, before we entered battle. It means, 'Let's do this.' He liked that."

"Yeah," Pernod agreed. "And I remember saying it two minutes before I got half my face shot off." He patted his metal cheek. Then he turned back to Mack and asked, "So have you heard from Scoot Tinly lately?" Scoot Tinly was another Jackal who'd survived his youth, a ponytailed Tikkihotto who'd been a fury fighting close quarters with his people's traditional e-ikko tomahawk.

Mack said, "Yeah, we meet up to drain some Zubs every so often. Hey, you still living at that Octoplex place? Yeah? Ha... never could leave our old turf, could ya?"

"It's still our neighborhood, man," Pernod confirmed. "Course, the Octoplex didn't exist back then."

"Well anyway, someday I'll round up whoever's still breathing and we'll drop in for a mad party."

"You'd better," Pernod said. But they'd made such vows when the two of them had briefly run into each other a year ago, and the reunion had never occurred.

"Well, I was just in the area," Mack sighed, stepping up onto his patiently waiting hoverboard again. "The traffic was a real nightmare on Plexus Street, so I took a detour." His ear-to-ear Choom grin stretched almost to the back of his head. "Nice to meet ya, Daniel. Hey, I love you guys."

"Love you, too!" Phoon called, as the Choom shot up into the dusk again. Then she turned to Pernod, smiling wistfully, and asked, "Is it crazy to miss the bad old days, baby?"

"Just call me crazy," he told her.

* * *

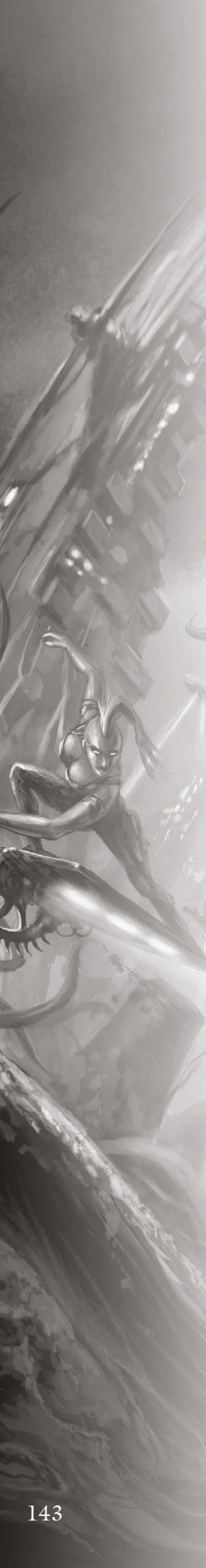
"Whoa!" Pernod shouted, bolting up in bed. "What the blast?"

If he had thought the chanting over the loudspeaker had been loud before, it was doubled in volume now. Furthermore, the Kalian was now reciting his incantations or prayers at a more rapid, one might even say hysterical, rate. His tone sounded... desperate.

"That's it," Pernod growled, "I'm going over there to kill —"

"Stoke!" Phoon cried, springing up to crouch in the center of the mattress, "the walls!"

But he'd already seen.



The gray-purple smart matter of which their room was composed — recently having shown signs of distress — was now cracked throughout like the scaly floor of a dried-out mud flat. The material had also turned solid black, as if decomposing... corrupted. But the disorienting transformation didn't end there. As the two of them stared in disbelief, a shape rippled beneath the surface of one wall, causing dry flakes to sift to the floor. It was like watching a cat scurry under bedcovers, zigging this way, then zagging that way. When the shifting bulge came to rest, from that spot a protuberance pushed outward, emerging from one of the deep splits. It looked like a large soap bubble ballooning, but oily black, a taut membrane covered in thick veins. The black orb popped free, fell to the cracked black floor, and rolled toward Pernod. He jumped back, clawing behind him at the top drawer of their bureau. The ball rolled to a stop a few feet from him... and in a flash, the veins uncoiled from the bubble and proved to be eight thin tentacles, upon which the little sphere raised itself. It looked as though it were ready to launch itself into the air at Pernod.

Phoon had sprung out of bed, to reach under it for her sniper rifle, but Pernod had already pulled his heavy Wolff .45 from the bureau. He whipped the handgun in front of him and let loose one thunderous shot. The solid projectile burst the creature's spherical body, and black fluid like calligrapher's ink splattered in all directions.

Phoon rose with her rifle, and the lovers met eyes for a moment as if to exchange a telepathic communication. Then Phoon spun toward their bedroom window, touched a key to open it, and braced her rifle's stock against her shoulder.

Her gun's discharge was muted. Pernod heard nothing over the noise of the broadcasted chanting. But a split second later, that chanting ceased.

"Did you kill him, or the loudspeaker?" Pernod asked.

"Loudspeaker. Look out here, Stoke — hurry."

Pernod pressed in beside her at the window, and muttered an inarticulate expression of awe.

Overnight, a new, ninth structure had joined the eight surrounding towers of the Octoplex. It was situated in the center of the octagonal park. It *filled* the park... and was so tall Phoon was lucky to have been able to hit the loudspeaker on the balcony of Building 5's thirteenth floor. The alien construction appeared to be a temple, of complex configuration. Trying to take in this vision, Pernod suddenly had to reach up to his artificial eye and turn it off. Through its lens, the building had appeared to be writhing, pulsing, amorphous; a manifestation of chaos. The only feature he could wrap his mind around was a central tower surmounted by an onion dome, tapering to a pointed tip. The mysterious building was entirely black, but smooth and glossy as obsidian, with an iridescence like oil.

When Pernod could at last form words, he said to himself, "That sphere I saw in the park yesterday. That was its seed. Those bastard Kalians planted it there."

"It's their god, isn't it?" Phoon said. "Ugghiutu."

"Never seen him before," Pernod said. "But looks like him to me."

"Their chants woke him."

"Why not? They woke me more than once."

Phoon gazed out the window again.

Actually there were only seven towers remaining of the Octoplex. The burnt-out shell of Building 8 had utterly collapsed, and yet somehow that event hadn't awakened them. It must have been because all that remained of it was a huge mound of soft black ash. Building 6 leaned off-center drunkenly, and with the chanting cut off and the window open they could now hear the screams and cries of their neighbors, a ululating chorus of terror and confusion ringing the transfigured park. All seven remaining tenement blocks of the Octoplex were as black and cracked as the interior of this room. Thick, ropy appendages like the roots of an ancient tree spread from the base of the temple — their ends connected to, merged with, the bases of the seven towers.

"Whatever it is," Phoon said, "it took form from our buildings. You see? It started days ago,

but we didn't realize. It must be leeching the smart matter... reactivating its cells and absorbing them." She peered into the little screen of her rifle scope again for a closer look. "Dung!" she hissed.

"What?"

At this magnification the former guerilla could see several of their neighbors down at the edge of the park, and she recognized them as Bruno Tetris and Hanover Waters, abandoning their apartments in the precarious Building 6. But what had them running so frantically was a pair of creatures, scurrying after them in pursuit. These entities were larger versions of the tentacled orb that had squeezed out of the bedroom wall.

Phoon tracked one creature, squeezed her trigger, and the thing's balloon body collapsed in a detonation of black liquid. The second creature ran on six of its boneless limbs, lifting the forward pair and stretching them toward Bruno's legs. Phoon fired again. The second spidery entity exploded. Bruno and Hanover fled between two of the apartment towers and made it out of the Octoplex grounds to the street.

"Hey, baby," Pernod said. Phoon turned from the window, and saw Pernod watching the walls. Rippling bulges zigged and zagged all over them now. A dozen or more darting shapes. "I think it's time to get out of here."

* * *

They rode an elevator down from the fifteenth floor, though Pernod regretted it all the way to the basement parking lot, as the cabin's lights flickered and the mechanism grumbled. But the lift finally came to rest, its door grated halfway open, and the couple squeezed out to bolt for their allocated parking area. As Pernod wheeled his bike out of the mini garage, he saw another couple jump backwards to avoid being hit by a hovercar as its driver — whom Pernod recognized as a neighbor named Elias Jodhpur — tore out of the parking garage in a panic. The couple Jodhpur had nearly run over were two gray-skinned Kalias: a young man, and a beautiful woman with her hair woven in a long braid.

"Hey!" Pernod shouted, and he started walking toward them, drawing his bulky Wolff .45 from its holster.

"We don't have time!" Phoon cried, hurrying after him. "Baby, we have to go!"

The Kalias had turned toward Pernod's voice, and their all-black eyes went wide when they saw his purposeful stride and lifting handgun. "Wait!" the young man said, holding up his palms to show he was unarmed.

Pernod stopped a few paces away, pointing the Wolff at the man's nose. "You motherblasters summoned that thing, didn't you? *Huh?*"

"What?" the man said. He spoke English better than the woman had when Pernod had confronted her in the parking garage before.

"We should have shot your blasting loudspeaker sooner. Should have shot *you* sooner!"

"That was you who shot our loudspeaker?" the Kalian said. His agitated gaze went to Phoon, with her rifle. "Oh no... no... you don't understand what you've done!"

"What are you saying?" Pernod growled.

"Another group of our people planted the avatar's pod in the park. They wanted to destroy our little group, because we're unorthodox. They see us as traitors!"

"You... it wasn't you who buried that thing there? Your chants didn't make it grow?"

"No! We weren't chanting to wake Ugghiutu's avatar! We were chanting to make it stay dormant!"

Pernod turned to look behind him at Phoon.

"Oops," she said.



“Now,” the Kalian man said in despair, “I don’t know what we can do to stop it, but we have to try.”

“The forcers will be coming soon, I’m sure,” Phoon told him. “Let them handle it. We’d better all get the hell out of here.”

“We can’t turn our backs,” the Kalian insisted. “This threat was intended for us. It’s our responsibility to try to thwart it.”

Pernod looked from the young man to the young woman. Both with such terror and helplessness in their eyes, and no weapons on their persons, but still determined to fight.

“We’ll help you,” Pernod said, lowering his pistol.

“Baby!” Phoon exclaimed.

He faced her again. “This is still our neighborhood, honey. We never let an enemy invade our turf before, did we?”

Slowly, staring back at him, the blue-skinned woman shifted the weight of her sniper rifle more purposefully. She nodded.

A loud report like a gunshot made the four of them jump, and they all looked up to see that a wide crack had just opened in the blackened roof of the underground lot.

“First things first, though,” Phoon said. “We need to get out of here before the ceiling caves in on us, because that avatar thing is directly overhead.”

Even as she uttered these words, the two couples watched a thick, glossy black root come slithering down from the crack in the ceiling, nosing this way and that like an immense eyeless serpent.

“Run for it!” Pernod commanded the Kalias. “We’ll regroup in the street.” Then he and Phoon raced back to where their motorcycle waited.

* * *

The bike roared between two of the Octoplex towers, beyond the housing project’s outer border, and across the broad street, where Pernod skidded the bike around to a halt on the sidewalk. They could now see that the temple that was Ugghiutu’s avatar had grown taller than the Octoplex towers ringing it. As they watched, a fluted column unraveled into a mass of thin black tendrils, groping at the sky. Holographic advertisements sent slippery reflections across the temple’s restless black surface.

The young Kalian couple had noticed them, and came running toward them. But they were not the only ones who had spotted Pernod and Phoon astride their monster bike.

From out of the sky swooped a hoverboard, which whisked down close to the sidewalk. Its rider, who had been squatting low while airborne, rose up and hopped off to the pavement. A Choom, with a vast Choom grin.

“Heard on the news you had a situation in your neighborhood,” said Mack Durm, gesturing behind him at his hoverboard’s projected holographic screens, one of which was a news page overlapping the navigation windows.

Phoon dismounted and gave the Choom a quick hug, then looked back across the street toward the towering alien structure. She raised the sniper rifle to her shoulder, and bent her eye to its targeting screen.

She sighted on the onion dome, raised higher now than before on its central base. Seen up close this way, it was shot through with holes or orifices of varying size, but as she watched, some holes sealed up without leaving a trace while new ones yawned open. Each time a new hole opened, a number of those bubble-like entities would come scurrying out to crawl across the temple’s surface.

Phoon was about to pull the trigger on one of these scampering creatures when the roar of another motorcycle close by caused her to lower the gun a bit and look over warily. A forcer on a bike? The air was now full of the nearing sirens of forcer vehicles, and possibly Colonial Forces military vehicles, too.

But the bike's rider was a Tikkihotto, in a cowboy's leather duster, his hair gathered back in a long ponytail, the sea anemone feelers that his race possessed instead of eyes squirming in every direction at once. His bike, though yellow instead of red like Pernod's, was just as much a Frankenstein's monster. The Tikkihotto smiled, and so did Pernod and Phoon in recognition. The Sinanese woman cried, "Scoot!"

"Mack just gave me a call, and told me you two might be in trouble down here in our old stomping grounds." Scoot Tingly shrugged, grinned more widely, and added, "I had nothing better to do tonight."

"None of us do," said Mack. "Haven't had, for too long." He nodded toward several other approaching figures, jogging across the street toward them. "I called every Jackal who's still breathing... at least, the ones who aren't in the pen. I told you we'd get together for a mad party."

Pernod looked over and recognized the pair hurrying toward them. Floyd Urn was a mutant, with a tumor as big as a second head crowding his true head to one side. Zelma Torrid was transgendered, with a green Mohawk, augmented breasts the size of Floyd's tumor, and brawny arms to put Mack's to shame. Pernod could already see the eager smiles on his old friends' faces as they came running.

As Floyd and Zelma arrived from one direction, the Kalian couple joined the group from the other side. When Pernod and Phoon had finished exchanging hugs with Floyd and Zelma, they introduced the Kalias and explained the situation.

"Welcome to the East Wedge Jackals," Mack said to the Kalias. "Never had Kalias in our ranks before, but we're nothing if not a motley crew."

The Kalias just blinked back at him without comprehension.

The whole group now wheeled in unison to confront the Octoplex and the living edifice withering at its heart, as the banshee wails of arriving forcer vehicles grew almost deafening.

"Are you ready for this, baby?" Phoon asked, at Pernod's side.

"*Vhi joh zinh,*" he said.

For Mariusz, whose artwork inspired this story. — JET

Many thanks to all the below, without whose support and backing this book would never have been possible. We hope you all enjoy the streets of Punktown for many years to come!

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Silvio Herrera Gea
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PUNKTOWN ARTISTS

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Greg Corbanese
Thomas Lynch

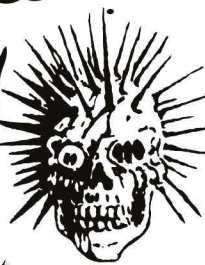
THE ELITE

Mathias Carlslund
Matthew Carpenter
David Lars Chamberlain
Andrew Fattorusso
Timothy Feely
Christopher Frank
Vincent Harper
Minh Nguyen
Dr. Juris L. Purins
William Shuster

CRIME LORDS

Larry Angrimson
Neils Hobbs
Andreas Jauss
Michael P. Lynch





Player Name

Horror Roleplaying
in a Dark and
Nihilistic Future

PUNKTOWN

Character Name _____
Race / Culture _____
Religion _____
Occupation / Profession _____
Birthplace _____
Residence _____
Sex _____ Age _____

CHARACTERISTICS

STR	DEX	INT	Idea
CON	APP	POW	Luck
SIZ	SAN	EDU	Know

Damage Bonus _____

HIT POINTS

Dead	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27

ARMOR

AP _____ Burden _____
Skill _____ ENC _____
Location _____

SANITY

Insane	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99					

MAX SAN _____ Hate 0 1 2 3 4 5
SAN Resistance _____ Receptacle 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17

POWER POINTS

Unconscious	0	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27



SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (15%) <input type="checkbox"/> Art (05%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40%) <input type="checkbox"/> Command (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Craft (05%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Mythos (00%) <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition (01%) <input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (01%) <input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX × 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Drive (20%) <input type="checkbox"/> Etiquette (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Manipulation (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (30%) <input type="checkbox"/> Fly (DEX ÷ 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming (INT + POW): <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Machine (01%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Hide (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> Insight (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge (05%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (00%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Language (Own) (EDU × 5): <input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> Perform (05%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (15%) <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%): <input type="checkbox"/> Psychotherapy (01%) <input type="checkbox"/> Repair (15%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Research (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%): <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Sense (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (05%) <input type="checkbox"/> Spot (25%)	<input type="checkbox"/> Status <input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (10%) <input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Technical (05%): <input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%) Combat Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Brawl (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Weapon (varies) <input type="checkbox"/> Firearm (varies) <input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Weapon (varies) <input type="checkbox"/> Martial Arts (01%) <input type="checkbox"/> Melee Weapon (varies) <input type="checkbox"/> Parry (varies)
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WEAPONS

melee	%	damage	hnd	rng	#att	hp	firearm	%	damage	mal	rng	#att	shots	hp
<input type="checkbox"/> Fist (50%)		1D3+db	1	touch	1	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (25%)		special	2	touch	1	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/> Head (10%)		1D4+db	0	touch	1	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/> Kick (25%)		1D6+db	0	touch	1	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>							

PERSONAL BACKSTORY

History & Background

Tattoos, Piercing, Identifying Marks

Scars & Wounds

Phobias & Mental Illnesses

POWERS & MUTATIONS

CYBERNETICS

MUNITS

Cash on Hand

Income

Major Assets

EQUIPMENT



TOMES & WEIRDNESS

Access to Tomes

Encounters with Weird Entities

Magical Artifacts


CONNECTIONS

Friends

Foes







Skyscrapers with sides so smooth and featureless (with vidscreens on the interior, instead of windows) that one might think they were solid granite monuments in a graveyard for dead gods. Other buildings that looked like they'd been pieced together from thousands of odd-matched parts salvaged from stripped factory machines, steam curling out of grids and grates in their complex flanks. Buildings with snake skins of multicolored mosaics. Buildings wearing an armor of riveted metal plates, like retired warships looming vertically with their sterns jammed into the street. Flat roofs upon which perched smaller buildings, symbiotically. Other structures tapering to needle points that seemed to etch the clouds upon the blue glass of the sky. Stacked apartments. Stacked businesses. On street level: shop fronts, and gang kids squatting on tenement steps, glaring insolently at the slow sludge of traffic...Ah, Punktown.

—Jeffrey Thomas, **Deadstock**

Punktown: An RPG Setting for Call of Cthulhu® Sixth Edition and BRP uses Chaosium's famous award-winning system to explore a dark, futuristic world fraught with untold perils created by author Jeffrey Thomas. Imagine Blade Runner, The Fifth Element, Minority Report, Total Recall and the rest of the dark, not-too-distant-future genre. Now add aliens, mutants, robots and Lovecraftian horror. Blend them together, and you get a hint of what Punktown is like.

This reference explores the city itself, the alien races, the weaponry, the creatures, mutations, cybernetics, drugs, sanity (and the inevitable loss thereof), and the option of adding the Cthulhu Mythos into the mix. As written in Thomas' work, the mythos is already there, threatening life as Punktowners know it. If you're a cyberpunk fan, if you're a horror fan, or if you're both, this book is for you.

Keep your eyes wide, your pistol close, and mind the snipes. Those who venture into Punktown never leave the same...if they leave at all.

**THIS BOOK CONTAINS
MATURE CONTENT**

THIS BOOK HOLDS A DARK MIRROR TO OUR OWN WORLD AND EXPLORES THEMES INCLUDING DEPRAVITY, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND OTHER DARK MATTERS CONSIDERED MORE SUITABLE FOR ADULT, MATURE GAMES. THE GM SHOULD CONSULT WITH AND ADAPT ASPECTS ACCORDING TO EVERYONE'S COMFORT ZONES.



**CHRONICLE
CITY**