CONSPIRACY X

THEY ARE AMONG US

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CHAPTER 1
INDOCTRINATION

As always, it started with a phone call . . .

"Good evening Richard, it's Joan . . . Aunt Martha is ill and requests your presence."

The second I heard her voice my heart jumped. I tried to speak, but my throat was suddenly so dry. I thought for a moment that my skin was going to crawl off me.

All this amounted to only a moment of hesitation . . . then it was over. Okay, I can handle this. I have handled it before.

"Thank you Joan, I'll leave immediately. Joan . . . is it serious?"

"When Aunt Martha is ill, it's always serious."

The tone of her voice never changed. Every time I spoke with her she sounded cold and withdrawn, as if what she's done with her life had turned her to ice, made her forget that she's human. Hell, for all I know, she may not be human.

The drive to Baxter Research and Development Center lasted only 45 minutes, even though I slowed at every yellow light and came to a complete stop at every stop sign. I dreaded the meeting. It had been almost a year since I had been called upon to save the world.

I hoped they had forgotten me after my last mission. I mean, three agents dead, one of them a close friend. You would think they wouldn't want the kind of help I give.

I wish I could be satisfied with my position in life -- Dr. Richard Vallen, Director of Operations at the Atlanta CDC and Head Research Fellow at Baxter R&D labs. A smile crossed my face when I thought of all I'd accomplished.

Then I thought about what it is I do on the side. Who would have ever thought that little Richie from Saratoga would be saving the world, fighting aliens and bad guys, making sure all the young girls and boys in the world can be safely tucked in at night, blissfully ignorant to the nightmares that surround them. Not me. Not any sane man.

After five security checks and one very thrilling retina scan, I made it through the research center and into the safety of my lab. I took a deep breath to prepare for my meeting with the Ice Queen. No, not another code name . . . that's just how I think of Joan. She's my contact in the organization.

My next inhale is stifled by the smell of menthol cigarettes and expensive perfume. No time to get settled . . . she's here.

"Hello, Richard, you made good time."

The smoke swirled around her. Cliché back lighting allowed me to see only her silhouette . . . she seemed like some kind of unholy angel. Funny, that's exactly as I see her even without the smoke and lighting. My throat went dry again.

"Well I tried to get here as fast as I could . . . I didn't think you would . . . well, I mean after last time . . . you just hadn't required my services in a while . . ."

"Honestly, there was some reservation about calling you at all. You did manage to wipe out your entire Cell the last time. Let's see, was it three or four casualties?"

Indoctrination

Personnel
Ops Center
Cell Creation
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

If you don't know enough, be prepared to face extreme dangers. Ignorance is deadly.

If you know too much, be prepared to face extreme dangers. That is the nature of conspiracies.

I bet she smiled as she ripped open my emotional scars.

"It was three, and Pete was a good friend of mine. Took me a year to realize that it wasn't my fault. You never told us what we were up against. You never prepared us! We all knew the risks, and that we were researching extraterrestrials, but you didn't tell us The Black Book was involved. It didn't matter that we could handle the aliens . . . it was the human puppets with automatic weapons who took us down!"

I thought I was going to vomit. Every thing that ever pissed me off about this insane organization was forcing its way to the surface. I wanted to fly across the room and throttle this woman who had been controlling my life for four years now. Inside my head I screamed.

"Don't berate me! . . . I've risked my life for you and your precious organization. I've watched friends die to protect humanity. I've seen things you wouldn't believe and could not possibly imagine in your worst nightmares. Congratulate me . . . give me a fucking medal . . . don't treat me as if you are doing me a favor by sending me out there. Out there aliens hide behind the faces of our leaders. Out there possessed psychics conjure phantasms that chill veins. Out there deranged humans serve up little kids for alien experiments and slaughter those who try to fight for this god forsaken reality!"

Of course I said none of this. I swallowed it all, and it tasted like bile.

"Are you done with your little tirade, Richard? We have no more time for your whining. Regardless of who's at fault for the loss of your last team, we need another Cell developed in the area. Your position in the CDC makes you the appropriate focal point for the team. You provide the connections your group needs to be successful."

"You need to choose at least two other scientists. We have chosen the remainder of your team. Here are their files. You should not be so unprepared and out-gunned this time."

As she handed me the files, I was struck by a sense of impending doom. I quickly glanced through the dossiers and noticed that two of the agents were government assassins. That made me nervous. The third agent was a psychic. That scared the piss out of me.

"What's going on Joan? This looks like it's going to be real nasty. You better start explaining what's going on ... and this time don't leave out any details."

With an exhale, the silhouette got smokier.

"A week ago we learned that an FBI investigation stumbled onto a scientist doing his own private research into aliens. Two FBI agents acquired a refrigerated case containing embryos of unknown origin from the scientist's lab. One of our operatives in the FBI began moving to take over the investigation and to take custody of the embryos. Before this could happen, however, the two FBI agents ended up dead, the embryos and the scientist vanished. We did some digging. It seems this scientist was affiliated with The Black Book. At this point we don't know whether he is alive or not. No body has turned up."

"Two days ago we got word from our agent in USAMRID, Maryland that the case with the embryos showed up there. Another agent verified just yesterday that the embryos are to be transported from Maryland to the Dulce Base in New Mexico. This is where your group comes in. Your team will learn how the shipment is being transported, intercept it, secure the embryos, and bring them back here. If you can, find out what happened to the scientist, but that's secondary to the embryos."

"Examine those files immediately. You are meeting with the rest of the group in about an hour. You will then make your decision about who else you are bringing into this. Don't take too long, the transfer of the embryos is happening in two days and your group better be prepared."

Well, that basically gave me no time. And I was decidedly of the view that six people were not going to be enough to accomplish this mission. In my honest opinion, we were all going to get our heads blown off.

So for an hour I sat and waited for the other agents to show up. I read their files and decided who else I would "honor" with admission to this little sordid affair. If only I could stop thinking about last time I brought a group together.

Everything was going fine. Well . . . as fine as dissecting the remains of a decomposing alien could go. I left for twenty minutes . . . it was my turn to get lunch. On my way back, I heard shots. I rushed into the lab. Blood was splattered, bodies littered the floor. It was a blood bath. We were scientists, not fighters. My colleagues and friends were dead. I was supposed to be their leader, I should have been blown away with them, but no such luck. Now I am to lead another group against God knows what odds. I have no choice . . . the world needs people to protect it. But of course no one knows this, because we do such a damn good job of covering everything up.

The other agents are here now. My heart is beating faster.

I hope we win.

What is a Roleplaying game?

A roleplaying game is like many other games. The idea is to get together with some friends, play the game as defined by a set of rules, and work toward a particular individual or group goal. Above all the point of a roleplaying game, as with any other game, is to have fun. Unlike most other games, however, there are no fancy shaped figures, no colorful play money, and no fold out cardboard gameboards. The game takes place on an endless playing surface: your imagination. The ultimate goal of the game is to create an on-going interactive story in collaboration with the other players.

In a roleplaying game, players take on the role of characters they create and guide them through a world run by the Game Master. Players decide the actions of the main characters in the story, the story's protagonists. They will develop their characters continuously, bringing fresh new elements to the overall story line as the game progresses. The Game Master creates and describes the background of the world and the plot surrounding and engaging the characters. He or she immerses the characters in the conspiracies and dangers that plague the game world. The Game Master brings life to the supporting cast of characters, deciding and detailing the reactions of the game world's inhabitants.

Winning and losing are not the Focus of a roleplaying game. There is no set game time limit or single winner or loser. Players and groups might have individual goals and objectives, and if and when they meet them, they might feel is if they had won, but the game does not necessarily end at that point. Game Masters should feel a sense of victory if their missions entertain their players. Even if a player's character is cut down by a hail of enemy gunfire, the player may not feel that he has 'lost' providing that his character died heroically and by doing so enhanced the story. Besides, a player may always rejoin the story later with another character. The object of the game is to have fun and create an interesting and engaging story, not to beat the other players or compete against them.

Players

As Conspiracy X players, you take the role of the central characters in an endless spine-tingling horror movie. You will use your imagination to create and guide your imaginary self though various situations, be it unearthing an ancient tribe of Aborigines who possess strange psychic abilities, or investigating sinister abductions in a sleepy mid-west farm town. Playing a roleplaying game is similar to being an screen writer, actor and audience all at the same time.

As the screen writer, you allow yourself to suspend what you know to be true, and to walk through the dark shadows of your imagination. As you create your character, you decide if he is a crazed, psychopathic ghost hunter or obsessed and methodical alien investigator. You decide the character's physical and mental characteristics, motivations, attractions, fears, and darkest secrets. You decide if the character will be a hulking and dim-witted brute, or a short, wiry scientist. You create the character you want, the perfect protagonist for your screenplay.

As the actor, you bring that character to life. You bring all the elements that you created together and develop a unique and engaging persona. The crazed, psychopathic ghost hunter will need a strong boisterous actor to fill the role. The obsessed scientist needs someone to present distracted absent-mindedness as realistic as possible. As the aliens draw near, you decide if you want to stand firm and hold your ground, or run madly from the scene with your arms flailing wildly. You raise your hands in victory, or cover your head in shame as you mourn your sorry mistake. The decision how your character will react to the unexpected is made on the spot. You bring that reaction to life as you act it out. You make the otherwise lifeless words and numbers jump to life as they are molded into a seemingly real character.

As the audience, you watch your fellow players and Game Master as they engage and react to your character and your actions. You see the plot unfold through the words and descriptions of the Game Master. You applaud (or

curse) the player character efforts and triumphs. You suffer (or rejoice at) their failures. You view an evolving storyline all the richer and more rewarding because of your active participation.

THE GAME MASTER (GM)

Game Mastering a roleplaying game is more challenging than playing. While all the players gather munchies and tell stories before the game, you busily bust your brain finishing the final details of the upcoming mission. Players complain when things don't go as planned, and you will be the one they complain to the most. So why would anyone want to be the Game Master? Some say all GMs have at least a little masochism in them, to take the abuse game after game. But the truth is that there is just as much reward for a good Game Master as there is for a good player, perhaps even more.

So what does a Game Master do? Well, in addition to the roles as screenwriter and actor which are shared with the players, the Game Master is a referee.

The Game Master as screen writer, creates the scenes and storylines through which the players navigate. You must be ready to account for each detail, to properly described each location with just the right amount of realism. Each character the players encounter must be fleshed out as much as needed given its role in the plotline. The GM prepares a storyline that will flow from one scene to another smoothly, just as would be expected of a good movie. The Game Master assures that the player characters assume the leading roles, are drawn into the plot, and work well within it. The Game Master creates the conflict and moves the plot along, adapting it to the player's actions as necessary, and guiding it to one of many possible outcomes. Pre-game preparation is crucial as the plot must hold together as the story is revealed. Yet you will never account for all player actions beforehand. At some point, the players will act in a way you could not have imagined. Scene writing on the fly is one of the Game Master's greatest challenges. Success at such ad libbing is one of the Game Master's greatest triumphs.

The Game Master as actor is responsible for roleplaying all of the supporting cast, bit parts and even locations that are encountered by the player characters throughout the story. Although each player simply roleplays one character, the Game Master handles all the rest. Just as the players act out the protagonists, the Game Master acts out the secondary characters: the villains, sidekicks and foils that inhabit the fictional world. More than that, the Game Master brings life to the story's locations. Their descriptions must come alive, just as if they were characters of their own, so that the players can readily feel the difference between one place and another. Bringing out the hustle and bustle of a big city street and the eerie quietness of a small town can be just as challenging as bringing a human character to life, often more so. Some places develop their own personality, and the Game Master has to keep those personalities constant, so the players can tell when something is just not right. The group might like to spend a lot of their downtime relaxing and getting a bite to eat at a local coffee shop, but when they suddenly start getting the uncomfortable feeling that they are being watched, it is the GM bringing the place to life.

Lastly, but most importantly, the Game Master as referee polices the game. The GM knows the rules thoroughly and explains them to the players. The Game Master reacts to the player's declared activities over the course of the game and interprets the rules when necessary to provide seamless play. The Game Master needs to make certain that everyone is playing on the same level and that no one person monopolizes the game time. Often it is these duties that make the Game Master's job the hardest, since it is the Game Master's responsibility to settle disputes and tell the players things they might not want to hear. Just like a referee in a football game, the Game Master's decisions come under intense scrutiny, and yet without them the game would not progress very far.

You and your fellow players are at center stage. You are the driving force of the story. You create a vast world of endless possibilities filled with aliens and the supernatural, intrigue and conspiracies. It is truly a world limited only by your imaginations.

SETTING

On the surface, the world slooks very much like the one outside your bedroom window. The same people are walking the same dirty streets, the same animals rummage through the same garbage, and the same mindless drivel is shown on the same television stations.

Sometimes that world just doesn't seem right. You wake up in the morning and get the feeling that something isn't as it should be. Why do certain figures appear out of nowhere and become famous overnight? Why do the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer? What is the government really paying for when it shells out 75 bucks for a screwdriver? Why is it the more questions you ask the less answers you get? Why is it any answer always leads to another question? Sometimes you cannot see what defines your world. This is the nature of conspiracies. This is the nature of Conspiracy X.

In Conspiracy X, the players assume the roles of the operatives and conspirators of Aegis, a secret organization at work within the United States government. Aegis has been aware of an extraterrestrial presence on Earth for over forty years. Unwilling to deal with the aliens on any but their own terms, Aegis monitors alien activity and counters those endeavors it deems not in humanity's best interest.

But Aegis is not the only conspiracy in existence. The Black Book operates within the American military-industrial complex, making deals and treaties with extraterrestrial agents on Earth. The Black Book supports alien efforts in building and maintaining bases of operations on Earth. This group facilitates alien abductions and experimentation in exchange for advanced technology and knowledge.

Once part of the same organization, Aegis and The Black Book now wage a secret war of covert operations, abductions and human experimentation behind a facade of lies and disinformation. As part of Aegis, you make use of any weaponry you can in your fight against The Black Book and it's inhuman allies. The Aegis arsenal combines traditional high-tech surveillance equipment and state of the art weapons with psychic warfare, supernatural rituals and stolen alien technology.

The conflict rages strong after nearly fifty years and the stakes are high. Humanity's existence on Earth as Master or Pawn depends on the player's vigilance and success.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

If you have never played a roleplaying game, you are probably completely confused. If you have played other roleplaying games, you are likely only partially confused. The main thing you need to know at first is that you are here to have fun. The rest will come in time.

One of the best ways to get a feel for a game is to see others play it. This isn't always possible, especially if you are the first person you know who has Conspiracy X. *In that case, the following example of play should give you an idea of the basics of roleplaying* Conspiracy X.

In the example below, Rick is the Game Master. Dave is playing Buster MacArthur, a retired Army captain. Jim is Dr. Rusty Gaven, a researcher with the Center for Disease Control. Shirley is playing Janice Hopkins, a psychic just getting used to her paranormal abilities.

The group is on a mission investigating claims of UFO sightings in a small, upstate New York town. The lead they are currently following came from a dairy farmer who disappeared shortly after his claim of a UFO sighting became public. The group decided to investigate the site of the farmer's encounter and take a peek at his place of residence for clues to his whereabouts.

Rick: As you pull up to the farm you see a quaint house surrounded by a white picket fence at the top of a small hill. A barn stands behind the house, picturesque but dilapidated. The house is dark. The night sky is clear and filled with stars. What are you doing?

Jim: Okay, I am going to knock on the door and flash some Center for Disease Control ID and tell them that I am investigating some reports of rabid animals in the area.

Dave: No, we can't do that again -- too risky. Remember last time? The guy flipped out and called in a swarm of his hunting buddies to go after the animals and we weren't able to accomplish anything! Hell, we don't even know if there is anyone home.

Shirley: I can take care of that, I'll use my Clairvoyance to see if there is anyone in the house.

Rick: Okay, you are a Lesser Clairvoyant, do you want to spend a Psi Point for automatic success?

Shirley: No, it's not worth it. I'd rather chance it for free.

Rick: All right, let's get the Zener cards shuffled and . . . Which card is it?

Rick shuffles the five Zener cards used for testing psychic powers and draws one without letting Shirley see it.

Shirley: (closing her eyes and concentrating) The Star.

Rick: Huzzah! You are correct. Your questions?

Shirley: Is anyone in the farmhouse?

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"The question is not whether you are paranoid or not. It is whether you are paranoid enough!"

It's always good to get everyone's ideas before you proceed. Not all will be great, some may be absurd, but even absurd ideas are better than none and may spark a more useful idea in someone else.

Deciding when to use your abilities is just as important as how you use them. Make certain you have an idea of what information you want before you start using your abilities.

Rick? No.

Shirley: Are there any vicious animals in the farmhouse?

Rick: No.

Shirley: Will we be attacked if we check out the house?

Rick: Sorry, that's a Precognition question, you're a Clairvoyant. Try again.

Shirley: Sorry. Is the farmhouse booby-trapped?

Rick: No.

Shirley: (to Dave and Jim) I'm pretty sure the house is clear.

Dave: All right, I grab a flashlight and have a look inside.

Shirley: I better get some light as well and I'll follow the Captain inside.

Jim: I'll grab my case from the trunk and put on some rubber gloves. Then I'll go inside and hope they haven't disturbed anything of importance.

Rick (to the group): As you get to the front fence, you see the gate swings freely in the night breeze. The latch appears to be missing, in fact a whole section of the fence seems to be the victim of a point blank shotgun blast.

Dave: Seems like we missed all the fun. I go test the back door and see if I can open it.

Rick: The door won't be a problem, it is a storm door and the wooden door behind it is open.

Dave: Okay, I go inside and look around.

Shirley: I follow right behind him and provide a little more light.

Rick: Okay, you enter into the kitchen. There are all the basic kitchen things, a stove, refrigerator, microwave, the usual. A small dinette set stands in the middle with a dirty plate left on the table and a newspaper folded up next to it.

Shirley: I'll check out the newspaper, what's the date?

Rick: You see that it is dated the day before yesterday and a striking headline catches your eye.

Rick had expected the players to find the newspaper and typed up a newspaper story about the farmer's UFO sighting. The article attributes the farmer's sightings to his fondness for alcohol and editorializes the importance of controlling consumption. Three local residents were quoted calling the farmer "kooky".

Rick: As you finish up the article Dr. Gaven arrives.

Jim: Good, I want to take a close look around, searching for things that might tell me who might have been here recently. Gaven's Perception is three.

Rick: Okay, you begin a nice close search of the area. That will take some time. What are the rest of you doing?

Dave: I'm going to quietly take a look through the rest of the house to make sure that there really is nobody here.

Rick: Okay, what's your Stealth skill?

Dave: Three, why?

Rick: No reason.

Rick rolls some dice behind the notebook he is using as a screen.

Rick: Hmmmm . . .

Dave: What?

Rick: Nothing, never mind.

Rick: Okay Jim, Dr. Gaven finds bits of mud and dirt and a bit of burned tobacco in the ashtray. You don't notice anything too out of the ordinary. Just then you hear a couple of car doors slam shut.

Jim: I am going to go to the door and see who it is.

Rick: Your Perception is three? Roll. You need a seven or less.

Rick has determined that the difficulty of Gaven seeing the guy sneaking up to the house in the dark is three. Since that is equal to Gaven's Perception, Jim needs to roll a seven or less on two six-sided dice to notice him.

Jim: Uh-oh. I rolled an eight . . .

Rick: As you open the door, a gloved fist swings out of nowhere at you. You see a few more shapes moving outside. They are closing in on the front door.

Jim: I am going to use the martial arts techniques that I just learned and try my block-grab-throw combination!

Props are a great way to get players involved and to add to the atmosphere of the game. The more realistic the props, the more it feels like they are actually there.

Even if there is nothing dangerous to hide from, a good GM should not just blurt that out. Roll some dice, make some meaningful noises. That should keep the players guessing. That way, when the plot calls for something to be lurking around the corner (and a die roll is necessary), they will not be sure if anything's coming.

Rick: The shadowy figure's Martial Arts skill is three, yours is two, so you need to roll four or less to block.

Jim: Oh man, ten, no way.

Jim fails his block and as a result cannot continue his combination. His foe punches him square in the face and knocks Dr. Gaven down.

Jim: Wait! I know I don't have any psychic ability, but I can still use ESP. I am going to see if my Sixth Sense warned me as I opened the door.

Rick shuffles the Zener cards again and draws the top one. Jim successful guesses that it is the Circle.

Rick: Okay, you were lucky. You have five seconds to backtrack, what are you going to do?

Jim: Easy, I slam the door on him and scream "MACARTHUR! WE GOT COMPANY!"

Rick: Ouch. Take it easy, guy. I've got neighbors.

Shirley: I run and help him hold the door.

Rick: You slam the door quickly and start yelling for Buster. As the door is being closed, a hand reaches in and holds it open slightly, but you and Janice prevent him from opening it further. What are you going to do now, ESP-boy?

Jim: What does he look like?

Rick: You are only able to see the hand, and that is covered in a black glove.

Shirley: I am going to run to the back of the house.

Jim: I'll try and hold the door closed.

Dave: Do I hear what is going on?

Rick: Yes, you heard Dr. Gaven screaming bloody murder.

Dave: Okay, I come running with my gun drawn to see what's going on!

And there you have it, a roleplaying game. What happens next? Well that is up to you. There might be a group of Black Book agents waiting to ambush our heroes, or it might just be the local police investigating what they think is a burglary. The players have no idea -- they must react as quickly to the situation as if they were really there. A single decision could be a matter of life and death.

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO CONSPIRACY X

For the most part, the world of Conspiracy X looks pretty normal. But behind the scenes, it is a lot more sinister than the world you live in (so you hope). The following timeline traces certain key events from a time before the creation of Aegis, up to the present day. This is by no means a complete history, but it should serve to give you a good idea of some of the strange and sinister forces that shape the world of Conspiracy X.

1933: WATCHMAKER

Walter Stein, a native of Venice and an British intelligence agent, spent many years studying the occult in Germany during the 1920s and 30s. There he became well acquainted with a fellow student of the arcane arts, Adolph Hitler. Stein followed Hitler's occult involvement very closely, schooled himself from the same texts. Hence, Stein became the world's foremost authority on Nazi Occult activity outside of the party itself.

Stein soon became frantic over developments in Germany. Hitler's rise to power coincided directly with his initiation into The Secret Doctrine, a gathering of the most elite and powerful Mages in the world. Further, the core of the Nazi party leadership was dominated by powerful occultists. Stein realized that although they had studied occultism together, Hitler had traveled down the shadowed path of dark magic. Stein knew that Hitler's admission into The Doctrine could be disastrous for all those who opposed him. With this power and a cadre of dark mystics, Nazi Germany had a secret weapon the Allied forces would be ill-prepared to meet.

The Nazi mystics sensed Walter Stein's presence, and in 1933 he fled to England, narrowly escaping forced service into Germany's Nazi Occult Bureau. Upon arriving in England, Stein warned Winston Churchill of the impending danger posed by Hitler's indoctrination. It was clear that action must be taken to either quell Nazi progress in matters Arcane or find a way to match it. Stein had further grim news, however. Stein had uncovered evidence while spying on the Nazis that Hitler's English intelligence network was alarmingly extensive. There was little chance of an English counter-occult program remaining hidden from Nazi spies. Churchill had no choice but to contact President Roosevelt and ask the Americans for help. Churchill arranged a meeting between the crippled President and Stein.

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Remember, the Game Master only needs to give out the information the players have actually learned. Don't volunteer any information the characters haven't learned yet. There will be times when they need a helping hand to keep the game moving, but unless your players are really stuck, let them think things out themselves.

Spear of Destiny

The Spear of Destiny is a vessel of mystical power that has be sought after by tyrants and warlords for millennia. Alleged to be the spear of the roman centurion Longinus that pierced the side of Christ at the crucifixion. The legend that surounds the Spear claims that whomever wields it and is able to unlock its secret power holds the destiny of the world in his hands for good or evil. Whether or not this may be true, those who have claimed to hold the spear have met with great success. Otto the Great, Constantine, Napoleon and many other conquerors and emperors have all laid claim to the Spear, and the effect they have had on history is undeniable.

The moment Adolph Hitler saw the Spear, he was overcome by a glorious vision of his own future that left him a changed man. Driven by the belief that he would one day hold the Spear and shape destiny, he vigorously pursued a path of occult knowledge and political power. When Hitler took control of Germany he also took control of the Spear and fulfilled his vision, securing his place as one of history's greatest villans. The Spear stayed in Hitler's possession until it was recovered by the Watch shortly before his death.

Roosevelt was skeptical, but decided to leave no stone unturned in his efforts to defeat the Nazis. Less than a week after Walter Stein's meeting with Roosevelt, one of the President's most trusted advisors was placed at his disposal. Stein was charged with the creation of an organization whose purpose was to monitor and analyze Nazi Occult activity. Most importantly, the group was to devise counter-measures in the event that mundane firepower alone could not stop Hitler. This group became known among it's participants as The Watch.

The Watch was an eclectic collection of individuals whose only common thread was power and influence. Stein was the group's unofficial leader. Roosevelt's advisor acted as the president's proxy. Eleven other members brought the total to thirteen. Most of the original thirteen were high-ranking Military Intelligence officers or scientists, the most notable exceptions being a Catholic Archbishop and a powerful and respected U.S. Senator. FDR kept the existence of The Watch completely secret, even from the American government and military, to avoid the inevitable public backlash in the event that government-sanctioned occult research ever be uncovered.

Despite the doubts of President Roosevelt, over the next decade the Watch was consistently and horrifyingly successful. Only Stein was unshaken by discoveries that threatened the sanity of the other members of The Watch. The conspirators used their authority and positions to fund and conduct research into the occult, gradually expanding to all areas of paranormal and psychic investigation. The accomplishments of The Watch's occult and psychic research allowed them to undertake several successful missions that kept the Axis occult power in check. The Watch's wartime operations included the assassination, by both mundane and arcane means, of several leading Nazi occultists and the recovery of certain artifacts of mystical significance, including the famed Spear of Destiny By 1945, The Watch had become extremely powerful organization, and yet remained completely hidden from the world.

The end of the World War II was in large part due to the success of The Watch's endeavors in destroying Nazi occult power. That ultimate success also meant the loss of the primary impetus for the Watch's activities. As usual with any powerful and motivated group, however, The Watch soon found another Focus. From the debriefing of Axis scientists and review of German military records, the conspirators learned that accounts by Allied airmen of mysterious German experimental aircraft, dubbed "Foo Fighters", were erroneous. Axis command records revealed that Luftwaffe pilots reported identical craft, and assumed them to be Allied experimental aircraft. This evidence, coupled with similar reports uncovered from accounts during World War I and earlier, convinced the Watch that the phenomena of Unidentified Flying Objects deserved attention and investigation. While continuing its occult and parapyschology research, The Watch redirected a large part of its manpower and resources toward the study of UFOs and their possible source. It would not have long to wait for answers.

1947: DISCOVERY AND BETRAYAL

By 1947, UFO sightings had become more frequent. The U.S. government and military decided to institute new programs to discretely investigate these strange phenomenon. Monitoring these investigations, unseen, was The Watch.

THE ROSWELL INCIDENT

March 17, Cascade Mountain Range, Oregon: The Watch's parapsychology team gathers a group of psychics together in a research center in the Cascade Mountains. The team was to test the range of their psychic abilities by attempting to contact a similar group in New England. The experiment yields spectacular but unexpected results. Contact is made, not with the target team, but instead with strange, unearthly minds. The contact lasts only thirteen seconds, but that brief time would change the course of history. Although they could make out little of what they mentally encountered, the psychics become certain of one thing: extraterrestrial life is present on Earth.

July 1, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: During the flight monitoring of a V-2 rocket fitted with advanced guidance systems, radar stations begin to track a UFO moving over the missile range erratically, but under apparent intelligent control.

July 2, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: Under direct orders of Brigadier General Martin Scanlon, a 24-hour radar vigil is established to track the object. Through a contact in General Scanlon's staff, The Watch learns of the developing situation.

July 3, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: The Watch convenes to decide on a course of action. Two options arise from the discussion. Some members of The Watch believe that the crew of the UFO could be contacted telepathically, using knowledge gathered from the March 17 contact and subsequent research. They propose that The Watch open a line of communication with the aliens and attempt a peaceful exchange of information. They are opposed by those members of Watch overwhelmingly concerned with the danger posed by an unknown intelligent extraterrestrial race. They recommend shooting the craft down and analyzing the technology, so that when later communications are initiated, something is known of the aliens. After a long and heated debate, a narrow majority decides to attempt

peaceful communication. The mission is designated: Operation Dove. The research team of parapsychologists and psychics in the Cascade Mountain research center is enlisted. They establish a base of operations on an isolated mesa in the New Mexico desert.

Complete consensus had not been reached within The Watch. Those who opposed Operation Dove, convinced of the folly of contacting extraterrestrial unprepared, form a second team. This rogue group secretly meets and initiates Operation Pigeon Shoot.

July 4, White Sands Proving Ground, New Mexico: While the Dove team waits on the mesa top for the UFO to reappear, Operation Pigeon Shoot readies itself in secret on the far side of the missile range. A V-2 rocket with the experimental guidance system is hastily reprogrammed and loaded with high explosives.

The exact order of the events that follow is unclear. The following account of the incident has been reconstructed from the chaotic records that remain. At 21:18 (local time), radar contact is reestablished with the UFO that had been tracked over the last four days. As the Dove psychics attempt to contact the crew of the craft mentally, Pigeon Shoot finalizes their preparations and awaits the launch command. A few minutes later, the alien craft appears to notice the psychics efforts, stops and hovers within sight of the mesa. Encouraged, the psychics redoubled their efforts. Presented with the stationary target they hoped for, the Pigeon Shoot team launches the rocket.

Three events appear to have occurred nearly simultaneously. First, the psychics succeed in contacting the alien minds in the UFO. Second, the V-2 rocket detonates on the hull of the ship. Third, an intense psychic assault devastates the assembled psychics.

The ship immediately begins to accelerate away at an incredible speed, but is fatally damaged. The craft touches ground once, gouging the earth and scattering debris over a large stretch of a ranch near Roswell. Several miles later, it crashes into a cliff side.

July 5, Roswell, New Mexico: Prepared, in fact hoping, for this eventuality, Operation Pigeon Shoot springs into action. By dawn the next day, the final crash site is located and a recovery team is dispatched. The recovery team loads the wreckage, including four alien bodies, onto trucks for transport to Roswell Army Air Base for temporary storage. At Roswell, the wreckage is packed away and loaded onto cargo planes for transport to Fort Worth Army Air Field. By nightfall the day after the crash, some of the wreckage arrives at Fort Worth. The Watch's influence in the military allows the Pigeon Shoot team to operate freely at the Roswell and Fort Worth without fear of questioning. Although it is obvious to the soldiers stationed there that something was afoot, none ask any questions.

While Operation Pigeon Shoot secures the alien wreckage, Operation Dove attempts to salvage what they could of their team. Of the nine psychics who attempted to make contact, two die almost
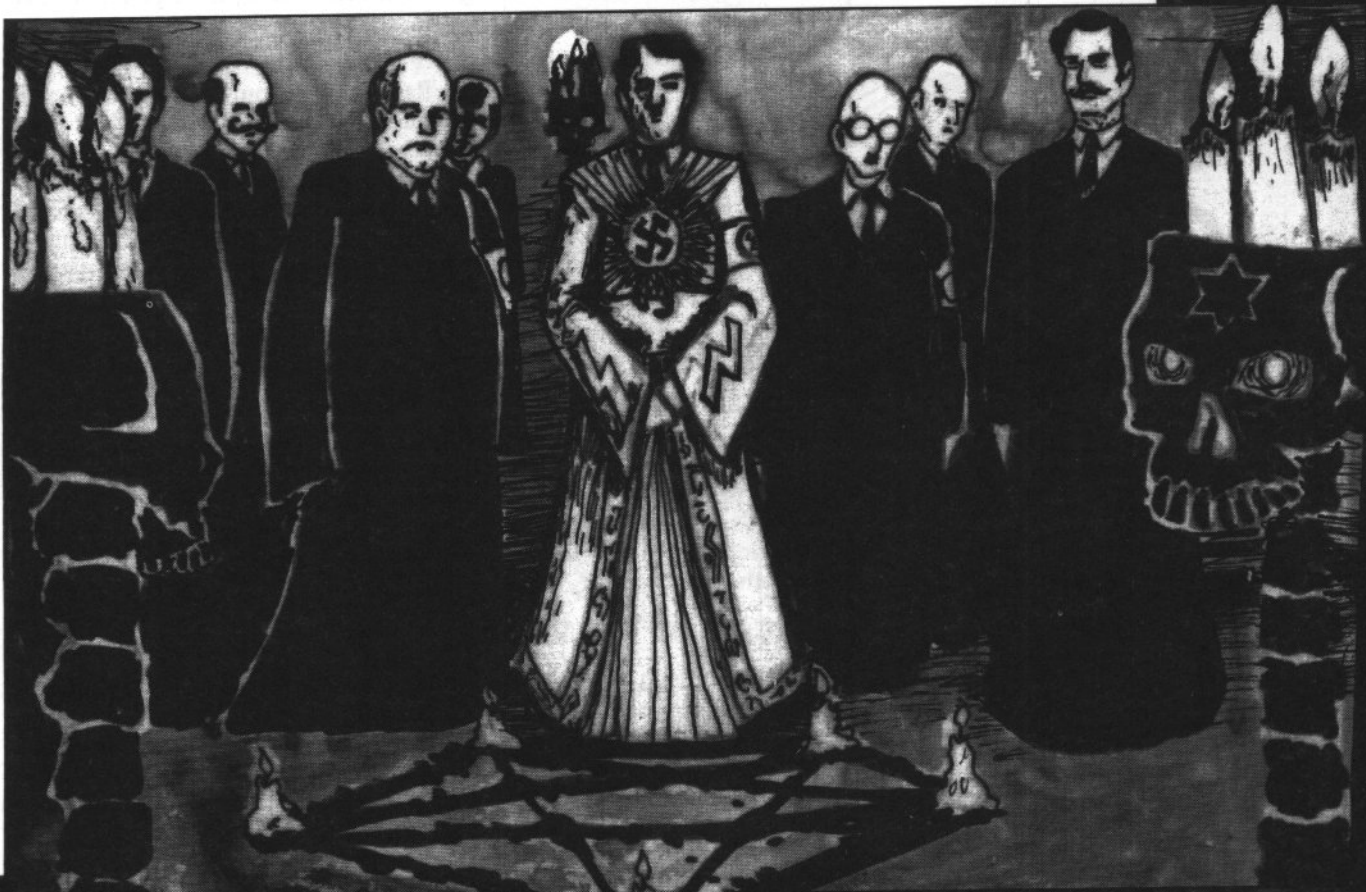
immediately of cardiac arrest and brain hemorrhaging. Another actually bursts into flame. A fourth slips into permanent catatonia. Three more soon develop debilitating psychoses. Only two survive with their sanity intact. After nearly a full day of damage control and debriefing, the Dove leaders realize they have been betrayed by other members of The Watch. Moving quickly, the remnants of Operation Dove pull themselves together and attempt to outmaneuver their new enemies. Using what military pull they could immediately muster, and aided by a little psychic sleight-of-hand, Dove manages to redirect one of the cargo planes heading for Fort Worth to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. There, a Dove team secures the cargo.

Unbeknownst to either group, the chaos at Roswell hid the actions of yet another group of Watch members. These individuals, some of the most powerful of the founding members of The Watch, learn of the split in their group and are dismayed. They commandeer another of the cargo flights and take the shipment to Washington, DC. They make certain that the shipment they appropriate includes an alien corpse and an impressive amount of crash debris. The group, the plane and the cargo mysteriously vanishes. A very long time would pass before any hint of their whereabouts would arise.

July 6, Roswell, New Mexico: By 03:00 the day after the crash, all Watch personnel had been evacuated from Roswell Air Base and White Sands Proving Ground, believing that all traces of the crash had been recovered. All are mistaken. While patrolling his property that morning, a local rancher, Mack Brazel, finds the trough and debris left when the craft touched down briefly before crashing. Later in the day, he calls the Roswell sheriff to report his find. The sheriff in turn calls Captain Jesse Marcel at the Roswell Air Base, thinking the wreckage is the result of a military test.

Captain Marcel investigates the touchdown site, patrols the trench and gathers some of the debris. He loads up his jeep with debris and returns to the Base. The Base Commander, visions of promotion dancing in his head, issues a press release that the Army had recovered the wreckage of a UFO. This news reaches the Operation Dove team at Wright-Patterson AFB. A few well-placed calls are made, and Captain Marcel and the debris are immediately summoned to Wright-Patterson. Part of the Operation Dove team returns to Roswell to oversee the recovery of the debris at the ranch.

July 7, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio: Under orders from Operation Dove, General Roger Ramey, the Commanding Officer of Wright-Patterson, holds a press conference in which the Roswell press release and its officers are portrayed as fools for having misidentified a weather balloon as a UFO. The embarrassed Captain Marcel is ordered to pose holding fragments of a weather balloon claimed to be the recovered debris. In Roswell, Operation Dove agents finish cleaning up the debris field and escort rancher Brazel to the Roswell Base for three days of questioning.

July 8, Roswell, New Mexico: The debris collected from the ranch is sent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

July 9, Roswell, New Mexico: Mack Brazel is released from custody at the Roswell Base and soon appears on a local radio show to confess. He explains that the UFO story was a hoax and that he knew the wreckage was just a balloon all along. The combination of this "confession" and the Watch's pressure on other witnesses keeps the incident under control. The American public accepts the story and the Roswell crash remains all but forgotten for over forty years . . .

BREAKING THE WATCH

In the aftermath of Operation Pigeon Shoot's betrayal of its comrades in Operation Dove, The Watch splits into two distinct groups. The stated purpose of both groups was the protection of the human race from the predation of extraterrestrial and supernatural forces. Beyond that, the two organizations developed diametrically opposed.

AEGIS

The remnants of Operation Dove regrouped at Wright-Patterson AFB and set up a temporary center of operations. In an attempt to avoid a recurrence of the damage caused by Pigeon Shoot's treachery, a new organizational pattern was imposed.

The new organization, modeled after the secret mystical societies of Europe, was composed of small independent groups or "Cells". The original founding group became the master Cell and selected members for the first generation of Cells. Each offshoot Cell had only a single contact to the "parent" Cell, whose true identity remained unknown. These Cells in turn recruited members into "child" Cells as necessary, and the process continued until an extensive network was established. The Cell structure minimized the information that could be revealed in the event hostile forces infiltrated or uncovered any particular Cell. Were this to happen, only the "child" Cell and its contact to the "parent" Cell would be compromised. The new organization, which continues to this day, was given the name Aegis, after Zeus' magic shield in Greek mythology. The Operation Dove members who formed Aegis' original "master" Cell came to be called Aegis Prime.

THE BLACK BOOK

At the same time Aegis was forming, the members of Operation Pigeon Shoot started construction on a secret underground base in the New Mexico desert. This base was to become the research center and headquarters of a covert project within the U.S. military, answerable to no government authority and unknown to all but its agents and a few highly placed officials, who assured that any investigation was curtailed. The project was funded exclusively through the portion of the U.S. military budget assigned to covert or "Black" projects, leading the project's secret sponsor in the U.S. Senate to refer to it as The Black Book.

RELATIONS BETWEEN AEGIS AND THE BLACK BOOK

Despite the original common purpose of Aegis and The Black Book, the circumstances leading to the division of The Watch resulted in a great deal of animosity between the two organizations. This enmity was heightened as the Focus of The Black Book slowly drifted away from the protection of the human race and toward the acquisition of alien technology and knowledge by any means necessary. The Book's Military-Industrial Complex backers demanded concrete returns on their investment of time, power and monies. To this end, The Book began making deals with extraterrestrial; working with them, rather than against them. Over the years, the alliance between The Black Book and both the Greys and the Saurians grew very powerful. Aegis took a much harder stance on human-alien communication, in response to the disastrous results of Operation Dove. Because of the close ties between the extraterrestrial and The Black Book, Aegis came to view The Black Book as just as much of a threat as the aliens themselves.

THE 1950s: SMOKE AND MIRRORS

The 1950s were an important period of growth for Aegis. Strong ties within the American intelligence community allowed Aegis Prime to create a number of powerful first generation Cells. These Cells were composed of high ranking officers from various agencies, giving Aegis Prime access to a large pool of information and resources. These Cells formed the backbone of the Aegis organization and established a strong foothold in the military and intelligence community, in particular the newly created U.S. Air Force and Central Intelligence Agency.

THE MKULTRA PROJECT

During the CIA's creation, Aegis Prime made certain that Aegis operatives were placed in key positions throughout the new organization. The newly commissioned agency was to become Aegis' primary powerbase in the intelligence community, complimenting the military resources gained through the similar "guidance" Aegis Prime provided to the fledgling United States Air Force. The CIA soon became Aegis' single largest source of operatives and information. The free reign given to the new agency by the U.S. government allowed Aegis operatives to work under the auspices of the CIA without fear of investigation.

Capitalizing on Cold War paranoia and rumors that Red China and the Soviet Union were achieving incredible results in their research into "brain-washing" techniques, the Central Intelligence Agency commenced research programs on mind control and human behavior modification. Aegis operatives monitored the programs, waiting to step in and take control of any that began to produce useful results. Should such results occur, the operatives would intercept and falsify reports to the CIA Inspector General so that only failure or very limited success would be revealed. In this manner, Aegis subverted any successful program's resources, and transferred the knowledge and further research to their benefit. Not all successful projects were "secured" by Aegis Cells, however. Some projects lacked properly positioned agents, others were just too distasteful. Still others were canceled without warning or

The disintegration of the Watch sent shock waves throughout the U.S. government. The Watch's members were in such powerful positions in both the military and government that every aspect of the American government was effected by the schism. Within two months of the Roswell incident, the military was divided into several branches. The division which had the greatest impact on the forming secret organizations of Aegis and The Black Book was the new distinction between the Army and the Air Force. It is doubtful that the breaking of the Watch was entirely responsible for the division, but it certainly played a role in hastening the event. Shortly after the restructuring of the military, the National Security Act was born. The NSA created the CIA, which became indispensable to the burgeoning organizations as a source of intelligence data. The National Security Act also provided a portion of the military budget for secret projects, and provided a cover for both The Black Book and Aegis by allowing them to act covertly in the interest of "national security". These events established a tone of secrecy and deception within the government and military which Aegis and The Black Book utilized extensively in the following decades.

explanation, or ended with the sudden disappearance or death of a key researcher. These mysterious events lead Aegis to conclude that at least some of the CIA's secret mind control projects ended up in the hands of The Black Book.

The fear of Communist superiority in any area provided a smokescreen and apparent motive for a wide range of behavior modification projects conducted by the CIA. Early projects such as BLUEBIRD and ARTICHOKE concentrated on a few specific techniques, most commonly mind-altering drugs, hypnosis and brain surgery. These projects resulted in some impressive successes, but the most ambitious and successful project by far was MKULTRA.

The MKULTRA Project was in fact several research projects combined into one. Widely disparate subjects were being investigated, such as psychoactive drugs, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, cerebral implants, microwave radiation, Extra Sensory Perception and brainwashing through cult indoctrination. Most of these topics had been studied previously, and MKULTRA broke little new ground in each field independently. What made MKULTRA so successful was its study of the interaction and combination of these varied disciplines. These experiments yielded the MKULTRA team two very impressive programs.

Through a combination of cerebral implants, psychoactive drugs and microwave transmitters, the MKULTRA scientists were able to create hidden split personalities. The test subjects were completely unaware of their condition and exhibited normal, obedient behavior until the introduction of a triggering stimulus, often via radio or microwave transmission. The triggering stimulus induced a trance-like state in which the subjects would carry out preprogrammed orders without hesitation or question. After the mission or task was completed, the subject would revert back to a normal state, completely unaware of actions taken while in the induced trance. These individuals were often used as covert assassins or couriers, unaware of their own role and therefore nearly undetectable.

MKULTRA's experimentation involving parapsychology led another research group to develop a strong psychic Warfare (Psi-War) program. These parapsychologists took individuals who showed an aptitude for extra-sensory perception and subjected them to a regimen of psychoactive drugs, hypnosis, sensory deprivation and advanced meditation techniques. The result was a group of powerful psychics capable of impressive feats of psychic power in several disciplines. Unfortunately, the treatments often left the psychics addicts, insane, or worse.

The Psi-War program in particular caught the attention of Aegis operatives within the CIA. They prepared to take control of the MKULTRA project by the usual means. Before this power shift could be fully realized, however, rumors of the MKULTRA project and specifically the Psi-War program found their way to the public and the news media. Public outrage caused a Congressional investigation during which the CIA downplayed the success of the program and emphasized that the subjects were all volunteers, which was not, in many cases, true. The investigation caused the official end of the MKULTRA project in 1963. But as was often the case, the project lived on, hidden from the public, and exempt from congressional inquires or other governmental accounting. The new MKULTRA project remains to this day wholly under Aegis control.

Project BLUEBOOK and Project MOONDUST

As more and more Americans reported UFO sighting in the early 50s, the military's official denial of the phenomenon became increasingly suspect. Such categorical denial quickly became as much a cause of speculation as the origin of the UFOs. In 1952, the U.S. Air Force gave in to the public pressure to "do something" about UFOs and created Project BLUEBOOK, an official Air Force investigation into such reports. Given its subject matter, BLUEBOOK soon came to be entirely, although secretly, controlled by Aegis. It was Aegis' intention to use BLUEBOOK as a smoke screen for Aegis operations and as a source for public disinformation.

To reduce the possibility of a link being discovered between Project BLUEBOOK and Aegis, the BLUEBOOK staff contained no Aegis operatives. BLUEBOOK was a legitimate and official Air Force project, although Aegis made certain that the personnel chosen for the project were predisposed toward skepticism of the phenomenon.

The primary instrument of Aegis' control over the BLUEBOOK was another Air Force project completely hidden from the public eye, Project MOONDUST. Project MOONDUST was created in 1953 and charged with "the retrieval and exploitation of crashed foreign spacecraft". Within top military circles, MOONDUST's stated purpose was the recovery and examination of downed Soviet and Eastern Bloc spacecraft and satellites, but the MOONDUST charter clearly made it responsible for the recovery of extraterrestrial spacecraft as well. For this role it was exploited heavily by Aegis, and was staffed almost exclusively by Aegis personnel. All UFO reports were filtered through Project MOONDUST before transmission to Project BLUEBOOK, and only those reports deemed of little significance or validity were passed on.

At the end of its study, Project BLUEBOOK concluded that there was in fact no substantial evidence to support claims that UFOs were anything but misidentified terrestrial craft, weather phenomena or hallucinations. The Project's report was widely accepted by the populace and proved quite effective at undermining the credibility of those UFO reports that followed.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

As always, there were those who were not convinced by BLUEBOOK's investigations and who saw the final BLUEBOOK report as the disinformation it was. Many of these people investigated UFOs and related phenomena on their own, attempting to uncover the truth and form their own conclusions. The most dangerous of these truth-seekers formed civilian investigative groups to better share information and resources. Fortunately for Aegis, these groups were often much too eager to recruit new members for their own good. Aegis Cells had little trouble infiltrating the organizations, subverting what information they managed to uncover, and guaranteeing that they never got too close to important information. Many of these groups were much more interested in finding evidence to support their pet theories than conducting serious investigations. This made them ideal mouthpieces for Aegis lies, and further degraded the credibility of all such organizations.

One civilian organization stood apart from the majority. This group could not be easily dismissed given the credibility of its membership. In 1956, Navy physicist Thomas Brown founded NICAP, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, an Unidentified Flying Objects and related events study group. Although NICAP was a civilian organization and contained many well-known civilian UFOlogists, a disturbingly large number of members were retired Air Force and CIA personnel. The Aegis operatives who were monitoring the group became acutely aware that many of the NICAP members had secret agendas. The operatives learned that some NICAP members were reporting back to groups within the CIA and other Intelligence Community organizations. Other members seemed to be working for an organization or organizations that Aegis could not identify. Due to the extent of NICAP's infiltration by agents from outside organizations with unknown objectives, little of the data it managed to collect can be trusted. Also, Aegis' inability to identify all the organizations operating within NICAP made Aegis Prime more paranoid than ever. Despite all this, NICAP served Aegis as a fertile ground for recruiting well-connected operatives and Cells.

THE MAJESTIC TWELVE DOCUMENT

During the 50's, Aegis often uncovered evidence that secret organizations, other than The Black Book, were at work within the US government. The most puzzling document discovered by a Cell within the CIA described the creation of a secret organization charged with investigating UFOs and alien phenomena in response to a "flying saucer" crash near Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. The document detailed that group's members including high level government and military officials and respected scientists, and that its designation was The Majestic 12. The document, while superficially convincing, was plagued with errors that undermined its credibility. To those familiar with the actual events at Roswell, it was obviously a work of disinformation. Still, the events described in the MJ-12 document were uncomfortably close to the actual events, and the composition of the fictitious MJ-12 was reasonably close to that of The Watch. Aegis believed that either the writers of the document knew at least partially what really happened at Roswell, or were being fed information by someone who did. But the questions remained, who wrote the document and what were their intentions? Unable to determine if the document represented the discovery of themselves or The Watch or neither, Aegis destroyed the MJ-12 document and waited. They observed no reaction and the document did not immediately reappear. Aegis Prime grew even more paranoid.

Following the Roswell incident in 1947, the government initiated a series of projects to determine the validity of UFO sightings and reported alien encounters across the country. Though the projects were legitimate, both The Black Book and Aegis controlled or maintained informants within the projects. In December 1947 one such endeavor, Project Sign, was created by the Air Force. By the summer of 1948 Sign (nick named Saucer) determined that the technology responsible for UFOs was extraterrestrial in origin. In February 1949, Aegis became concerned with the openness of Project Sign. The program was taken over and renamed Project Grudge. The research done by Grudge was downgraded in priority and eventually ended in December 1949. The final report of Grudge stated that there was no conclusive evidence indicating existence of alien life. The government received flak over its abrupt change of view, so a new research program was begun. Created by the Air Force, Project BLUEBOOK was to be the Government's official position on UFOs. It reached the same conclusion as Project Grudge. Yet another of the Government's investigations was the Project Sigma. created in 1948. Project Sigma proved to be a Black Project rather than an open government investigation. Its purpose was to establish communications with alien life. Despite the mandate of the Freedom of Information Act, the Government has not confirmed Sigma's existence or success. However The Black Book knows that Sigma did meet with success. Many of the projects undertaken during the late 1940s and 50s served Aegis and The Black Book well by providing easy access to information and cover for investigations.

GROOM DRY LAKE RESEARCH FACILITY

After the MJ-12 incident, Aegis Prime reevaluated its security measures. Two key aspects of the organization were deemed insecure: Aegis' base of operations at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and its current procedures for distributing information. Wright-Patterson had attracted too much attention in recent years, resulting in rumors that 'Hangar 18' contained alien technology and extraterrestrial bodies. The rumors were correct, but the hangar number was wrong. Wright-Pat was just too close to population centers for proper security. A new base was needed, far away from prying eyes.

The methods Aegis used for distributing information between Cells was the other chink in Aegis' armor. Current procedures involved passing encrypted files physically between parent and child Cells. This was slow, relatively insecure, and required frequent contact between Cells. Aegis needed another way and new developments in technology provided it.

Both problems were addressed in a single, aggressive plan. Aegis constructed a secret military base, under the auspices of the Air Force, on the Nellis Bombing and Gunnery Range in Nevada. The Nellis Gunnery Range is a massive military base, roughly the size of Connecticut, used by the Air Force for live-fire tests and training missions. The detonation of munitions was not only accepted, but expected on the base. Aegis could deal with intruders and trespassing aircraft (terrestrial and otherwise) with whatever force deemed necessary, and blame training and testing operations for the gunfire and explosions.

The base was built on the shores of Groom Dry Lake and was designated a no-fly zone. On early flight maps the no-fly zone was marked Area 51, which became one of the base's many nicknames. Others included Dreamland, S-4, and The Groom Dry Lake Test Facility, but the base was given no official name or designation. Indeed, the military has no records of the base, and those officers who are aware of its existence are all members of Aegis. Aegis operatives simply call it The Ranch.

To alleviate the security problem inherent in distributing information through human connections, a massive computer system and database was constructed at the Ranch. This computer network, dubbed HERMES, became the repository for information gained through Cell investigations and research. Cells no longer needed to contact each other simply to relay information. HERMES also gave Cells a means of alerting Aegis Prime if their parent Cell was neutralized, preventing the Cell from being completely cut off. Each cell's connection to the HERMES network was provided by computer terminals specially manufactured at the Ranch for Aegis Cells. The main HERMES system was installed and went on-line before the base was completed.

In time, The Ranch became a large research facility housing a myriad of Aegis research projects. Several Aegis Cells are based there, though none of them know who else on the facility is an operatives. The vast majority of researchers and workers at the Ranch are civilians and Air Force personnel unaware of the base's true purpose or commanders. The researchers work on small aspects of a project and never see its full extent. Those who do are either recruited into the Cell supervising the project or simply "removed."

The most prominent projects at The Ranch involve captured alien spacecraft. Most of the long term research centers around reverse-engineering extraterrestrial craft in order to exploit the alien technology. The most successful project to date in this area is the Aurora interceptor. The Aurora is a fantastic aircraft combining the best aspects of terrestrial aerospace technology, Atlantean cybernetic control systems and captured Saurian propulsion systems. The Aurora is one of the few craft at Aegis' disposal that has a respectable success rate for pursuing and overtaking alien craft. While six Aurora have been built, only four pilots have been found that can handle them so far.

DALLAS 1963: THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

By the early sixties, Aegis had infiltrated every aspect of the government and was developing Cells in the private sector as well. Aegis had done a remarkable job burying itself within layers of government programs. The combination of the Cell structure and the HERMES network thoroughly concealed Aegis from public and government eyes. Even so, a not so insignificant incident in 1963 threatened to compromise the integrity of Aegis.

Through a routine illicit wiretap in the White House, President John F. Kennedy discovered that one of his own Secret Service bodyguards was an agent of some type of secret society called Aegis. After further surveillance by his own men, Kennedy discovered that his Secret Service agents were under the orders of this organization and were engaging in covert actions for the agency. President Kennedy confronted one of the agents and threatened him with a full Congressional investigation and imminent exposure. In exchange for his silence, Kennedy demanded that the agents make themselves available to him at any time to use as his personal covert operations team.

The Secret Service Aegis Cell was caught completely off guard. They contacted their parent Cell and waited for instructions. The horrible answer was swift in coming. The parent's Cells mandate came directly from Aegis Prime. Kennedy must be eliminated. It would happen during his upcoming visit to Dallas.

Unknown to the Secret Service Cell or Aegis Prime, one of the Cell members was a double agent working for The Black Book. While Aegis was plotting the assassination, the double agent apprised The Black Book of the situation. The Book seized the moment and approached President Kennedy with a counter-proposition. The Black Book offered Kennedy protection from Aegis, and a group of agents to use as he saw fit, in exchange for Kennedy's assurance that any investigation in The Black Book's involvement with the Government would be silenced. Kennedy accepted the deal.

The Aegis Cell recruited Lee Harvey Oswald, one of MKULTRA's success stories, for the dirty work. They supplied him with the details of the President's motorcade route and the buildings along the route whose security would be "overlooked" by the Secret Service. Unknown to Oswald, the Cell also positioned two psychics in the crowd outside the book depository as backup. Both psychics had powerful telekinetic abilities and were to insure that once Oswald's bullets hit, President Kennedy would be fatally wounded.

As the President's motorcade came into view, Lee Harvey prepared to take the shot. Suddenly, a Black Book agent burst into the room. Startled, Oswald hastily fired twice before turning to face the agent. Before The Black Book agent could bring his weapon to bear Oswald fired on him. The agent was wearing a bulletproof vest, but was stunned by the impact of the bullets long enough for Oswald to escape. The Black Book immediately tipped off the police, giving Oswald's description and general location. Oswald was captured within minutes.

Outside, Lee Harvey's shots hit the President, but off target. The Aegis psychics took over from there, bouncing the bullet through several vital organs in the President's chest. The damage was critical, but most likely not fatal. Yet, Oswald's attack was not the only one directed at the President at that instant. From a nearby grassy knoll, another assassin simultaneously shot the President, with a weapon quiet enough and powerful enough to blow Kennedy's head off. Although Aegis could not take credit, Kennedy had indeed been assassinated.

Aegis took two extremely important lessons from the whole episode, lessons which would change future Aegis operations. First, it was obvious that The Black Book knew about the plan beforehand. This increased Aegis' already excessive paranoia and forced them to regard The Black Book as a constant and lethal enemy never to be underestimated. Second, Aegis realized that they were not solely responsible for the Kennedy assassination. This again raised suspicions in Aegis of another secret group operating toward similar goals. The fact that the third party acted in a way helpful to Aegis did not dampen Aegis' concerns about this other group's motives. Aegis learned little more at the time despite intensive investigation, and in the end, Aegis simply counted the mission as an uneasy victory.

THE CHALLENGER

The success of the 1960s and 1970s in the area of space exploration had an amazing impact not only on all humanity, but also, perhaps even more so, on the extraterrestrial operating on Earth. For reasons that Aegis could only speculate, the Saurians were particularly troubled by the recent push into space. The Saurians seemed to fear most the development of a reusable space shuttle.

In February 1986, Aegis learned that the Saurians planned a fiendish plot to sabotage the space program. Aegis discovered that The Black Book had provided the Saurians with details about the route which the solid rocket boosters would travel. In exchange, The Black Book received technology necessary to build space craft of their own. Interestingly, Aegis also learned that knowledge of the principles behind the Saurian technology was not part of the deal. Thus, The Black Book remained dependent on the Saurians.

Many scientisits, ex-CIA, and ex-military personnel were dismayed by the silence surrounding the possibility of public knowledge of extraterrestrial life. Consequently, some of these people found themselves creating their own investigative research teams. Aegis more than the Black Book picked up on the trend and used the civilian organizations as a wealth of information since they could freely conduct investigations without questions from the government or public. The general view was that people involved in those organizations were a little bit crazy to begin with, thus no one was asking questions.

While the solid rocket boosters were en route to Cape Canaveral in Florida, a team of three Saurians masquerading as humans (the infamous Men in Black) replaced the security team and sabotaged the rockets. On January 28, 1986, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded just moments after launch due to a malfunction in those booster rockets. The results were greater than the Saurians could have hoped. Not only was a reusable shuttle destroyed, but the graphic horror of the tragedy, transmitted into nearly every American home, shattered the public's faith in space exploration and NASA's space program in general. The act of Saurian terrorism revealed to Aegis the depth of NASA's vulnerability, and result in an increase in the number of NASA Cells.

THE MAJESTIC TWELVE DOCUMENT RESURFACES

One year after the Challenger tragedy, Aegis found itself facing more problems from outside forces. In 1987, the MJ-12 document that Aegis had buried so long ago resurfaced in the hands of two crusaders for "the right to know the truth about aliens". Aegis was unable to discover where the document came from, or how and why anyone would send it to these two UFOlogists. The MJ-12 document supported the accounts of witnesses from Roswell who had begun coming forward with their stories; but until then the appearance of the document had been paid little attention. This newfound credibility, however, actually aided Aegis as it supported a document which was a work of disinformation.

The widespread acceptance of the MJ-12 document upon its release revealed that more and more people were willing to believe in the existence of UFOs. In fact, since the early 70's, a radical "New Age" movement had been slowly gaining popularity. An integral part of the New Ager's doctrine was the belief that aliens were cosmic "Space Brothers" who wished to help humanity along the path to its own "Spiritual Awakening." Aegis was suddenly forced to deal with a public intrigued by extraterrestrial and willing to accept evidence of alien life. This mind set made Aegis' cover up operations more difficult. Fortunately, many UFO enthusiasts believed the MJ-12 document, or the New Agers, or both. This ensured that their belief in a phenomena that was real was based on details that were lies.

MKULTRA 1990S: THE SHOOTING AT HARPER'S CROSS

Although the CIA's MKULTRA project was considered an overall success, the project met with its share of failures. During the 1960s, many of the project's research teams were pursuing genetic engineering experiments in an attempt to outpace similar covert projects underway in Eastern Bloc nations. These projects silently spurred each other onward and quickly escalated into a covert race to create the first bio-engineered "super soldier." The lengths to which the scientists were willing to go to beat the Soviets and the disregard they showed their human test subjects caused the Aegis Cells within MKULTRA to
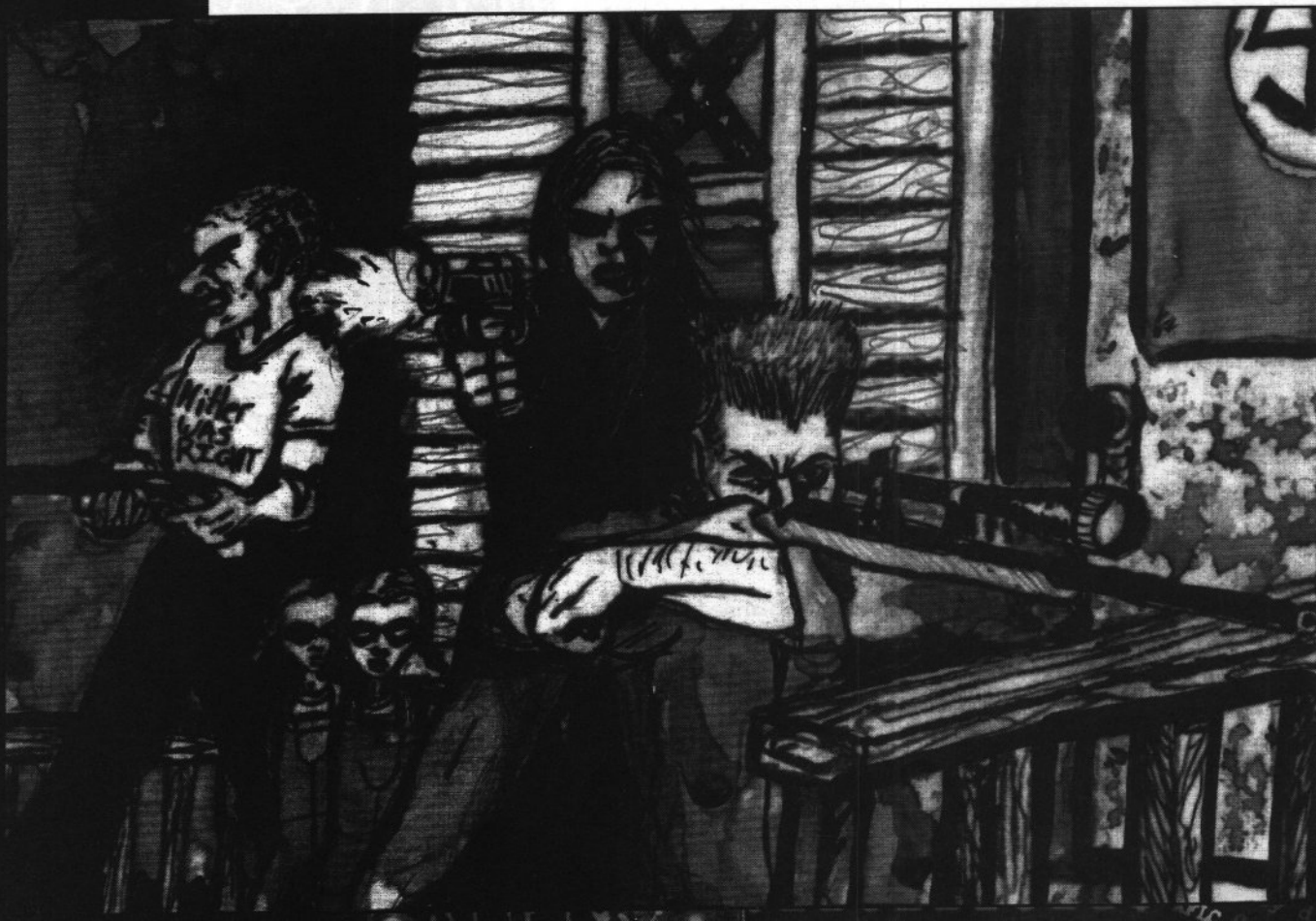
distance themselves from the projects.[2] This is not to say that they did not keep tabs on the projects' success or lack thereof.

One of MKULTRA's more spectacular failures was an experiment in which genetically modified teenagers were subjected to a battery of drugs and hypnosis sessions. These teenagers were normally docile and well-behaved, but would become violent and detached from morality on command. This seemed to be an excellent step toward the creation of so-called "super soldiers." However, it soon became clear that many of the "patients" were unstable and psychotic as a result of the dichotomy in their own behavior. Indeed, one subject's psychotic episode sparked a riot among the other patients and resulted in the destruction of much of the lab facility and the death of almost half the research staff. The experiment was quickly shut down. An Aegis Cell stepped in, oversaw the cover up operation, and recovered all useful information that could be salvaged from the experiment. Through extensive therapy and repressive hypnosis, the Cell was able to rehabilitate a good number of the patients and allow them to be reassimilated into society.

Aegis closely monitored the young charges for signs of relapse, but after nearly two decades of normal behavior, Aegis canceled its surveillance program. This proved to be a tragic mistake. During the late 80's, Aegis began receiving reports of former MKULTRA subjects experiencing psychotic episodes, often resulting in a homicidal rampage and the death of the subject. It seemed the Aegis hypnosis was crumbling, leaving the MKULTRA patients violent sociopaths. Having lost track of most of the patients after ending its surveillance, Aegis was forced to wait for the test subjects to act up before they could neutralize them.

One of the worst cases to date arose when agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) requested FBI support during a stand-off situation at the home of one Jackson Reeves and family. Reeves had been one of MKULTRA's test subjects and his name in the BATF request triggered warning bells in Aegis. Upon further investigation, the situation was found to be worse than expected.

The BATF had been watching Reeves, a militant white supremacist, for some time. He lived with his wife, son and two young daughters on a rural farm in Harper's Cross, Iowa. While the BATF was building a case for illegal weapons possession, Reeves and a neighbor began a dispute over certain land. The escalating argument triggered a psychotic episode and Reeves began firing high caliber weapons at his neighbor's house at night. Reeves nightly attacks prompted the BATF to take action. Reeves was arrested on a number of weapons and assault related charges, but was released on bail and later failed to appear in court. After adding a few more charges to their warrant, BATF returned again to the rural homestead to arrest Jackson Reeves.

Anticipating that Reeves would resist arrest, and considering the nature of the charges, the BATF surrounded the Reeves home with agents. Not surprisingly, Reeves response was hostile. The BATF agents were met at the door with gunfire, and one BATF agent was wounded before he could make it off the Reeves' porch. The agents fell back and attempted to negotiate with Jackson. Any chance of a quick and painless resolution to the situation was lost, however, when the Reeves' dog escaped the house, flushed out and attacked a BATF agent, who shot and killed it. The dog's death triggered a psychotic rage in Jimmy, the Reeves' teenage son. Jimmy rushed the BATF agents, guns blazing, and managed to kill one agent and wound two others before being cut down by the BATF crossfire. After his son's death, Jackson refused to negotiate, and BATF called in the FBI.

An FBI SWAT team sent to provide backup was made up entirely of Aegis operatives. The team had been used extensively during Aegis' cover up operations of MKULTRA failures and had become quite proficient at taking out delusional and psychotic "super soldiers". During the flight to Harper's Cross, the team received word that Aegis had made another unpleasant discovery. Jackson Reeves' wife Tammy had been positively identified as another MKULTRA "patient" who had been chosen for her high scores in ESP testing. Furthermore, Aegis had found indications from the BATF surveillance reports that the Reeves' two young twins were exhibiting signs of uncontrolled psychic or supernatural ability. The SWAT team reassessed the threat that the Reeves' family posed and revised the Rules of Engagement at Harper's Cross to "Shoot on sight". The team would be taking no chances.

The FBI backup arrived at the Reeves' home to find a stalemate. Jackson Reeves would neither negotiate nor present the assembled agents with a clear target. BATF would not assault the home for fear of endangering Reeves' wife or children. The Aegis team had no such reservations. After a quick briefing on the current situation, the SWAT team took up positions and attempted to coax either Jackson or his wife out into the open. They convinced Jackson to begin negotiating by promising his wife safe passage. When the opportunity presented itself, Aegis snipers took the shot and killed Tammy Reeves. One hour after the death of his wife, Jackson Reeves gave himself up to the BATF agents without further violence.

Aegis acted quickly to bring the situation to a close and prevent any further attention. Reeves was taken quietly into custody to await trial. Initial testing indicated to Aegis that the Reeves twins, Ginger and Amanda, were both supernatural Foci. The twins were split up and sent to separate foster homes, but Aegis kept a close eye on them both, unwilling to risk a repeat of the Harper's Cross incident.

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HERMES link

When a new Cell is created, the parent Cell places a request for a new computer link and gives its link to the child Cell. The automated system receives reports from Aegis Cells, analyzes and links them to other data, then reformats the information for operative retrieval, removing any references that could expose Aegis personnel and operations

THE PHOENIX SITUATION

Ginger Reaves was sent to live with a foster family in Arizona. The family was kind and caring, but Ginger's violent and bigoted upbringing made her assimilation into the new family difficult. The subtle but ever-present supernatural manifestations that followed Ginger to her new home wore at her family's sanity, though a connection between her and the strange apparitions was never conclusively established. After four years of increasingly strained relations, the attempt to give Ginger a "normal" family life came to a sudden and tragic end. Ginger's foster family was killed in a freak spontaneous fire on Halloween. Twelve year old Ginger was made a ward of the State and institutionalized.

The Aegis Cell watching Ginger decided that she posed too great a threat to herself and others, and more importantly to Aegis anonymity. The Cell began to arrange for Ginger's release into Aegis custody and the subsequent "loss" of any records of her existence. This process took several weeks, and during that time, Ginger made friends with one of the other children at the institution. Together, Ginger and her new friend escaped the institution mere hours before Aegis operatives arrived to take custody of her.

The operatives tracked Ginger and her companion to the isolated temple of a religious cult outside Phoenix. The cult was extremely paranoid and fanatical, and the agents were prevented from following Ginger into their fortified compound. The uncharacteristically high security of the cult's compound and the unusually well-armed guards both piqued the agent's curiosity, and convinced them that the forcible acquisition of Ginger would be folly.

An Aegis operative spent nearly a month infiltrating the cult and gaining entrance to the compound. Once inside, he made a series of frightening discoveries. The leader of the Cult, Harold Simms, was a powerful and charismatic occultist who had assembled a large following of fanatic disciples. Simms had convinced his thralls that Armageddon was fast approaching, and that he, as their Messiah, would lead them through the destroyed world to paradise. Simms had amassed a huge arsenal of weapons to "ease" the cult through their journey. More importantly, Simms was preparing to conduct a powerful ritual that he claimed would shield his followers from the upcoming destruction, and impart him with the divine power he would need to shepherd them to the promised land. Part of Simms preparation involved taking a large number of young women as his wives. The infiltrator determined that two of the adolescents taken by Simms as consorts were supernatural Foci, one was Ginger Reeves.

Aegis concluded from the undercover agent's reports that Simms' likely goal for the ritual was to become one of the Incarnate, an individual with a powerful connection to the supernatural world. Aegis knew that such status invariably drove the individual mad. With the power of two supernatural Foci and an group of heavily armed fanatics at his beck and call, an insane Simms could bring forth his own Armageddon. The Cell decided that Simms must be stopped at any cost.

Aegis tipped off the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to Simms' stockpile of weapons, planning to use their inevitable raid as cover for a strike team. The team would acquire Simms' two young Foci and rob him of his power. Somehow, Simms was forewarned of the BATF raid and prepared an ambush for the BATF agents. Unprepared and outgunned, half the BATF team was cut down immediately and the rest forced to beat a hasty retreat. The BATF, joined by the FBI, surrounded the compound and demanded that Simms surrender. Simms of course refused and soon the cultists and the assembled agents prepared for a prolonged standoff.

Given the siege, the operative inside the compound was unable to report to Aegis on the situation for nearly two weeks. When word finally got out, the tone was terse and panicked. Simms had begun his ritual several days earlier and was very near completion. Aegis had less than twenty-four hours to put an end to the ritual.

Using every ounce of pull the Cell had in Washington, Aegis managed to get the federal agents the go-ahead to take out the compound by any means necessary. Just before dawn the following day, the assembled agents launched a full scale assault on the compound. Over one hundred agents and several armored vehicles were employed. In the course of the assault, the compound was set ablaze and destroyed, and many cultists were killed. The Aegis strike team, however, was able to secure Ginger and the assault was considered to be successful, if only to Aegis. The body of Harold Simms was never found and was assumed to have been incinerated by the inferno that destroyed the temple. Once again, Aegis was reminded that Aliens and The Black Book were not the only threat. Old loose ends kept coming back to haunt Aegis, and they could never allow their vigilance to falter.

THE STATUS QUO

AEGIS

Aegis today retains the Cell structure it assumed when it was first created. The individual Cells are largely independent and autonomous, but able to easily share information via the HERMES computer system. By maintaining a loose connection with their parent Cell, each Cell assures that their heavy reliance on HERMES does not become a true vulnerability.

Because of the autonomy granted them by Aegis Prime, each Cell is free to interpret and carry out the ultimate goals of the organization as it sees fit. This is not to say that Aegis Prime will not step in if a Cell gets out of control. For the most part, a cell's missions are initiated by their own needs and plans. On occasion, their parent Cell or Aegis prime will mandate a mission. Cells are obligated to fulfill such mandates and may not refuse them. Rogue Cells are dealt with very harshly indeed.

Cells are free to create their own child Cells, in an attempt to be more effective. A parent Cell may receive a request for aid from the child Cell. The parent operatives are expected, but not obligated, to respond.

The primary goals currently mandated by Aegis Prime are the conclusive determination of the true goals and motivations of the various alien races currently operating on Earth. Aegis Prime ultimately hopes to determine how much threat these races pose to the continued prosperity of the human race.

Aegis' secondary objective is to learn as much as possible about the aliens' physiology, technology and psychology and to develop weapons capable of exploiting any weaknesses discovered. In the event that the alien threat can not be neutralized peacefully, Aegis wants an immediate and effective strike force capacity.

All Aegis Cells have standing orders when investigating aliens. If a clear level of threat or motivation can not be estimated, the Cell is to assume a hostile intent and neutralize, by any and all means, the alien presence.

Aegis sees the supernatural as a relatively minor menace. Indeed, it is seen as a potential weapon to be exploited in the fight against the aliens. With regards to supernatural manifestations, Aegis Prime has made it clear that emphasis should be placed on investigation and research, rather than eradication.

THE BLACK BOOK

Aegis knows that The Black Book operates from a central underground base in the mountains near Dulce, New Mexico. The base provides storage for most of their equipment and acquired alien technology, as well as housing for a majority of their agents. Unlike Aegis Cells, The Black Book operatives are strictly controlled by the commanders at Dulce. All operation teams live in the base. Only individual spies and intelligence agents networked around the country are not. Whereas Aegis prefers to recruit influential operatives into Cells and allow them the freedom to work as they see fit, The Black Book operatives are all the equivalent of foot soldiers. The agents know very little of what the organization as a whole is doing, and for the most part blindly follow orders they receive from Dulce. This structure inhibits a flexible response to quickly evolving situations, but ensures that the integrity of the operation as a whole can not be jeopardized by the capture of any agent.

The Black Book's greatest strength lies in the pacts it has made with extraterrestrials, and the information and technology gained therein. In addition to some personal weaponry and equipment gained from the Saurians, The Black Book has a fleet of ships built with a combination of Saurian and Human technology. These hybrid craft, called TD-121s, are small interceptor-type fighter aircraft equipped with Saurian weapon and drive technology, and human control systems. The Saurian components are supplied to The Black Book complete, without the knowledge to build or repair them. Therefore maintenance of the ships requires continued Saurian cooperation.

The Black Book has made some attempt to lessen this dependence. They have developed a hypersonic troop transport vessel built from technology derived from the Saurian systems in the TD-121. The transports, designated "Black Manta", are stealth aircraft capable of vertical take off and landing. Aegis managed to steal some of the Black Manta technology and combined it with Atlantean cybernetic control systems to the TD-121 only effective rival, the Aurora.

Aegis has learned that The Black Book has become so entwined with the Saurians that groups of Saurian Black Book agents, referred to as The Men in Black, have been formed. These agents are believed to be altered to look human and always work in groups of three. Further, they possess superhuman strength and agility and generally carry Saurian technology.

The Book also has made several treaties with the Greys. These pacts generally involve The Black Book abducting humans and exchanging them for Grey psychic aid. The combination of Grey mind control abilities and Black Book cunning and firepower creates a lethal counterforce to Aegis operations. In at least two respects, Aegis has the upper hand over The Black Book. Aegis has managed to learn far more about Atlantean technology than The Black Book. Although Aegis is not certain why this so, Aegis seized this opportunity and exploited it as far as possible. In addition, Aegis' knowledge and abilities in the realm of psychic phenomena are far superior to that of The Black Book, despite its alliance with the Greys.

The credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena, who strive valiantly, who know the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spend themselves in a worthy cause. Who at the best, know the triumph of high achievement and who, at worst, if they fail, fail while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.
-Theodore Roosevelt

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CHAPTER 2
PERSONNEL

"What are you doing?" Tristan looked kind of disgusted.

Kai turned towards him, revealing the mutilated jelly donut in her hands and the tell-tale white powder all over her face.

"Um . . . eating my donut. Why?"

I laughed at her from behind my coffee cup.

"We can't take you anywhere, Kai. You see, Tristan, when she was born her mom thought she had the spirit of the coyote in her or something like that. She likes to rip the food apart like she's just killed it. Ever since I've known her she's been a real joy to take to fancy restaurants."

"Oh, so you think you're some kind of wild animal? Great, my first time working with other people in the organization and I'm stuck with a gun-wielding wack-ball. No offense, but this makes me a bit nervous." Tristan smiled out of courtesy, but his tone was sincere.

Kai shot Tristan a plastic smile and took a wetnap out of her worn leather jacket. She carefully cleaned off her fingers and mouth. Tristan stared at her, confused by her reaction. Suddenly realizing that he might have actually pissed her off, he started to utter a half-assed apology.

Kai leaned into him, put her hand on the back of his neck and pulled him closer, as if to kiss him. Her sweet smelling breath warmed his cheek.

"I think, Tristan, that you take things a little too seriously. Now that's just a hasty judgment, but I call 'em as I see 'em. And what I see is a 6 foot 4 Aryan hulk who's spent a little bit too much time alone. I don't think you understand that a little levity goes a long way." While she was whispering to him she scooped up jelly with her finger.

"As for me being a gun-wielding wacko, well . . . you can't do much better than having me watch your back. So lighten up, kiddo, and we'll all have some fun on this ride." She pulled away from him, smeared the jelly on his nose, giggled, rolled her eyes, and walked away.

I handed Tristan a napkin.

"Kai has always been a goof ball, but it's her sense of humor that keeps her from being a cynic like Vallen. Don't worry about her. You're wondering if you made an enemy of her, well you didn't. She doesn't joke around with people she doesn't like."

"So Johnson, why do you two know each other so well?"

"A few years ago I was working in South America tracking Drug Czars for the DEA. I stumbled upon a downed craft like nothing I'd ever seen. I settled in to watch the thing. Pretty soon another group showed, Kai and two others. They started moving on the vehicle. Suddenly, something that looked like a cross between a lizard and a human popped out of the ship and waxed Kai's two compadres. Kai dropped the thing almost as fast as it took out her teammates, but I could see another sneaking up about to waste her. I said what the hell, and plugged it from the tree I was hiding in.

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There is no right or wrong when deciding on a background. As long as you are happy with it and feel comfortable playing someone with that background, go with it. Also, don't feel limited by the profiles sketched out here. Feel free to develop your own, in consultation with your Game Master.

Follow these simple steps when forming a character:

1. Create a character concept
2. Select physical and mental Attributes
3. Modify luck attribute, if desired
4. Modify influence attribute, if desired
5. Choose background organization or operation
6. Pick Traits
7. Fill in history and personal details

"The next thing I know there's this posse of South American military types moving in. My guess is they too wanted the ship. Kai said time to go, and we got the hell out of there. Eventually Kai radioed God-knows-who and this silent black helicopter came swooping down and picked us up. So after I saved this girl, her buddies in the chopper tell me I'd seen too much, and that I now posed some kind of threat to national security. So they give me one choice . . . join them. I thought I was in some kind of bad action flick, but it all turned out to be far too real.

"For the most part I did solo stuff like you've been doing. But sometimes they would team me up with Kai on tracking missions. Kai's pretty tough. She's fast and a good shot. But she gets cocky sometimes, and rushes into situations. My job is to watch her back."

The more I talked about her, the more interested Tristan became in Kai. That made me a little antsy. I mean, it's not like I've got any kind of sexual thing for her, but she's like a little sister to me, or maybe a cousin. When Tristan asked the inevitable question, it just shook my good mood for the day.

"So, are you and she just friends, or is there something more going on?"

I forced a smile at Tristan. Just then Kai returned, bouncing up behind me, just like Tigger from the old Pooh stories.

"Hey there, sorry to interrupt all this guy talk, but we gotta meet Vallen and crew at the lab."

During the drive back to Baxter Labs, Tristan kept staring at Kai. He knew that being in Aegis was like living in some kind of bizarre nightmare world, but the different attitudes held by Vallen and Kai really puzzled him. Vallen was clearly burnt out and completely disillusioned. He even appeared frightened by his involvement in the organization. But Kai saw things as an adventure, and life as a black comedy. Maybe it's because she's younger. Before Kai was part of Aegis she was just as adventurous. Kai served in Project Moondust, recovering crashed alien craft. She'd seen a lot more aliens than most. I think she sort of believes she's living in some kind of comic book world where the bad guys are green and scaly. I don't think she fully understands how many bad guys there are in the world, or that most of them are human. Vallen gets it, that's why he's so down. Until Kai gets betrayed bad by another human, she'll be content to live in her comic book world of action and adventure. I just hope I'm there to protect her when it happens.

CHARACTER CREATION

Before you can start playing any game you have to know who you are and what your objectives are. With most board games, it may be as simple as deciding which color peg you will be taking to the finish line. Roleplaying games are a bit more involved.

Each player controls one character, a fictional person created by that player. Creating a character takes some time, but when you are done you should have a completely unique individual who is interesting and exciting to play.

All characters generated by the player begin the game as a member of a top secret organization called Aegis. Aegis' sole mission is to protect humanity from aliens and the supernatural. While the goal is fundamentally heroic, many different types of people are recruited by the organization. You, as a player, should not feel constrained to create a traditional "heroic" character. Create someone you think you will enjoy roleplaying, even if he or she does seem somewhat eccentric to others.

WHO AM I?

Before you start creating a character, sketch in your mind a broad concept of what kind of character you want to play. Think about the types of people who would be recruited into the Aegis organization. Because Aegis' missions require the services of many different types of people, no one mold is mandated. Certain general types, however, make better operatives. Note that the types profiled below attempt to balance a strength and weakness in one character. This makes for a more interesting, multi-dimensional character.

THE INQUISITOR

Aegis likes having people who think, people who want answers to the questions staring them in the face. The inquisitor follows any lead, no matter how slight. They delight in the search for clues and the mental manipulation of information already gathered. The inquisitors primary fault is a tendency to "solve" the problem too soon. They jump to conclusions early on in the investigation and subsequent information gathered either supports that conclusion or it irrelevant. Long term goals are only worthwhile if they fit into the inquisitor's general preconception about the world.

THE LEADER

Aegis's cellular structure leaves a great deal of responsibility in the individuals who form a Cell. Strong leaders are needed to keep the Cell united, and the goals in sight. Leaders know how to keep a cool head under pressure and can get people to work with them toward a goal they define. Leaders also tend to be a little single-minded and bull-headed. Problems can arise if others disagree, especially if the dissenter is as strong a leader. Long term goals do not frighten leaders. They simply break them down into short term objections and complete each in turn.

THE SCIENTIST

There are some people who like to trace a problem to its source and who will not rest until that source is found. To them, clues and leads are great, but only to the extent they meaningfully advance their quest for the truth. Rather than track down a million clues, the scientist would rather test the clues they have a million different ways. Their biggest problem is knowing when they have an answer. To a true scientist, 99% is not enough, more tests must be done. A scientist will work toward a long term goal, but may get caught up in minutia from time to time.

THE DRIVEN

The driven are people who have experienced aliens and the supernatural first hand, and thus have a personal stake in their missions. Some even possess a certain level of psychic abilities. Due to their personal attachment to certain cases, the driven will either be a great help or a great hindrance. Either they will have information that will help the Cell accomplish the mission, or they will have excess personal baggage that will cloud their ability to objectively analyze the situation, or both. The driven will accept a long term goal only if it fits their own objectives.

THE EXPLORER

Explorers are people who have a great amount of pure curiosity which drives them mission after mission. They know that curiosity killed the cat, but they just have to see where that next lead takes them. They are certain that with a little more inquiry, the whole picture will become clear. The problem with explorers is they don't know when to stop. It's exploration that thrills them and not necessarily what they find. Explorers have trouble sticking with long term goals. They go where the chase takes them.

THE BRUTE

There are some people who think a good hard kick solves all problems. Brutes delight in destruction, be it at the end of a detonation cap or the end of a fist. While this is not always the most effective way to solve a problem, there are times when brute force is the only way to go. While most tend to follow orders well, they need to be watched carefully and probably wouldn't make the best of negotiators. Long term goals have little meaning to them since most problems get placed aside unless them can be taken care of immediately through violence.

THE CHARACTER

Once you form a general idea of your character's nature, it's time to pick the character's aspects. Aspects include physical and mental abilities, skills and other character features and should be chosen so that they reflect the character's general nature. While a doctor might be skilled in the use of heavy machinery, it is unlikely that such a skill would be more advanced than the doctor's medicine skill. Give your character the aspects you want and think they will need, but keep in mind that you should have a rational reason why they possess those features.

CHARACTER POINTS

Not all aspects of a player's character can be chosen freely. Those that give the character some edge or advantage, must be purchased from a pool of Character Points (CP). Character Points keep new characters relatively balanced. Each advantage that a character possesses carries a point cost which the player must subtract from that character's initial pool of 100 CPs. When the player has run out of points, no more advantageous character traits may be purchased.
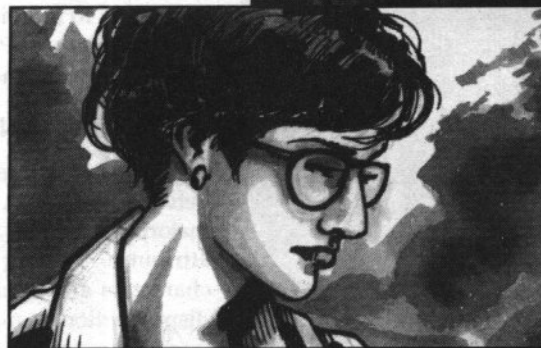
To illustrate character creation, we will follow the process of building the character of Susan Coyote, aka "Kai". Kai is a very capable woman who has managed to gain considerable experience in Aegis despite her relatively young age. Her somewhat rash nature and straightforward approach to problem solving would likely classify her as a "Brute" character.

Kai's penchant for leaping before she looks often places her into dangerous situations. The reason she has survived so long is largely due to her cat-like Reflexes Attribute of 4. All of Kai's other Attributes are 3.

Some players may find that 100 points is not enough for them to build the character they wish to play. Any player who wants to spend more than 100 CPs may increase a character's CP pool by saddling the character with one or more disadvantages or limitations. Like advantages, each disadvantage has a CP value. Rather than subtracting this value from a character's CP total, however, this amount is added to the CP total as soon as the character assumes that disadvantage.

There is no limit to the number of disadvantages that a character may have, but players will find it difficult to roleplay a character that has too many. A character overburdened with disadvantages will not seem very real or coherent, and may be completely unplayable.

The aspects of a character that may be purchased by a player fall into two main categories: attributes and traits. Attributes are a set of physical, mental and social statistics shared by all characters. Most humans have similar ratings in most attributes. Nevertheless, purchasing attribute ratings begins to define your character. In assigning your character's attributes, you decide whether your character is extraordinarily agile, uncommonly weak-willed, extremely powerful, abnormally unlucky, or a relatively balanced, normal example of humanity.

Unlike attributes, the particular combination of traits that a character possesses will vary greatly from individual to individual. Traits include the character's particular range of skills, psychological problems, the character's ESP ability, connections in other organizations, even the character's habits and moral codes, if any. In choosing traits, the player makes the character truly unique.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

All physical and mental attributes range from one to five in humans, and there is a great deal of difference between the levels. Most people vary very little in any of their mental or physical attributes. The vast majority, fully 80%, of all humans on Earth would be rated three, the average, in all physical and mental attributes. Having an attribute higher or lower than average is very uncommon. However, the player characters are, after all, the protagonists in the Conspiracy X storyline, and we would expect to see a disproportionate number of characters with atypical physical and mental attributes.

Strength and Size measure a character's overall health and fitness. Taken together, these two attributes define the person's body type and physique. When Strength and Size are the same, a great number of body types are possible. For example, someone with a Strength and Size of 3 could be tall and wiry or rather short and muscular. An individual with an exceptionally high Size, say perhaps 4, but only a typical Strength 3, however, would most likely be rather overweight. Conversely, someone with an unusually high Strength 4 but only average Size 3 would be built like a brick wall.

A character's physical profile is rounded out by the Agility and Reflexes attributes. A character's coordination, manual dexterity, balance and flexibility are all reflected in the Agility attribute. The Reflexes attribute deals only with the speed of an individual's reactions.

A character's natural mental faculties are gauged by the Intelligence and Willpower attributes. In general, the intelligence of a character is a function of the individual that roleplays that character. It is difficult and sometimes frustrating to play a character much less intelligent than you are. It is nearly impossible to play a character who is more intelligent than you are. Nevertheless, the Intelligence attribute has several functions within the game system. Most importantly, Intelligence determines a character's aptitude at analytical skills, by way of an attribute modifier, and the ability to learn through experimentation and experience.

Willpower represents a character's strength of mind and sanity, as well as overall mental endurance. A character's Willpower reveals the propensity to break down under stress or pressure, and helps describe how the character will react in situations that tax his or her grip on reality. An individual with an exceptional Willpower is a veritable tower of iron, remaining untouched by even the most terrifying events. An unusually low Willpower describes someone who is anxious, perhaps neurotic, and is likely to crack easily in rough situations.

The Perception attribute has both physical and mental components. Perception measures both the acuity of a character's five senses and the ability to interpret and comprehend what is sensed. Someone with a low Perception could have perfectly good eyesight and hearing, for example, but just be rather oblivious and unable to draw accurate conclusions. By the same token, someone with even marginally bad eyesight or hearing could have an exceptionally high Perception due to the ability to make incredible deductions and inferences from a single piece of evidence.

COST AND VALUE

All physical and mental attributes have the same cost and value associated with exceptionally high or low ratings. Rating three attributes cost a character no CPs, since that is the norm for humans. If the player wishes that the character be a fairly representative example of humanity, possessing threes in all attributes, this may be accomplished without drawing from the initial pool of 100 CP. On the other hand, the player may decide to assign one or more exceptional character attributes. This incurs a corresponding increase or decrease in the character's CP pool..

LUCK

The Luck attribute indicates how often Fate makes her presence known in a character's life. A character's Luck can be skewed toward fortune or misfortune, or it can be perfectly balanced between the two. When the outcome of a particular event seems certain, the Luck attribute determines how often the vagaries of our chaotic universe step in to twist that outcome, and whether the twist occurs in the character's favor or not.

In game terms, the Luck attribute is defined by two numbers, Good Luck and Bad Luck. In certain situations, a player or the GM may request that a Luck Test be made to see if an otherwise automatic success or failure is thwarted by Miss Fortune. In these cases, the individual whose Luck is in question rolls two die. If the sum is equal to or greater than the character's Good Luck, Fate smiles on her (the GM will adjudicate the result). If the sum is equal to or less than the character's Bad Luck, Fate is not so kind. If the roll falls between the two, Fate turns a blind eye to the character and the expected outcome prevails, be it success or failure.

Generally, Good Luck is 12 and Bad Luck is 2. Fortune seldom meddles in the affairs of normal people. The characters are the main actors in this drama, after all, and Fortune often lets her presence be know to these individuals, for better or worse. If a player so desires a character's Good Luck may be lowered, or Bad Luck raised. To reduce Good Luck by one point (to a minimum of 8), 20 CP must spend (yes it is costly, did you think bribing Fate would be cheap?). Conversely, for each point added to a character's Bad Luck (to a maximum of 6), 20 CP are added to her or her pool (but do you really want fate working against you?). Note that a result of seven always means that Fate ignores the character. That is unavoidable as Fate is capricious and no one may guarantee her favor or displeasure.

INFLUENCE

One of the key elements allowing Aegis Cells to operate as independently and autonomously as they do is the degree of power, authority and pull held by Aegis operatives. Aegis Cells rely on their own resourcefulness in equipping themselves and providing back-up support necessary to their investigations and operations. To this end, each agent contributes whatever supplies and support he or she can through requisition, redirection, or threat. The character's ability to do just that is reflected in the Influence attribute. Influence relates directly in most cases to with the agent's rank in an outside organization. Operatives with low Influence are field agents and rank and file researchers brought into Aegis for their particular skills or abilities, rather than their power and authority. Characters with a high Influence hold superior positions and are able to throw their weight around and get labs and bases built, equipment redirected, investigations curtailed and otherwise provide the control Aegis and it's operatives need to get things done.

All Aegis operatives receive rating one Influence at no cost in CP cost. Influence can be increased at a cost of 15 CP per rating, up to a maximum of five. No character may begin the game with less than a rating one Influence.

RECRUITMENT

The vast majority of Aegis operatives are recruited by people they know, or more specifically, by people who know them, while working for a government agency. The most common agencies are those in the Military, the Department of Justice, the Intelligence community, or the Scientific community. The best candidates are members of agencies which cross over into one or more of these categories.

Operatives are not chosen at random or lightly. Individuals are brought into Aegis only if they hold a useful position of power or possess exceptional skills or abilities. The ideal operative fits both criteria. When operatives are picked they are not given a choice about admission to Aegis. Care is taken to choose operatives who would not react adversely to such recruitment, but when necessary "evidence" is procured to ensure their loyalty. Aegis seldom has to rely on threats or force to secure agents, but when required, it will not hesitate to do so.

Players must choose the background organization from which their characters were recruited. In most, but not all, cases, this will be a government organization or agency. With only few exceptions, the character will continue a normal career in that organization, waiting for the occurrence of a situation that requires the attention of Aegis. The player's choice of organization does not affect his pool of Character Points either positively or negatively. The player's choice of organization will affect the training that is readily available to the character, the skills at which the character is proficient, and the types of resources that may be procured for the Cell by pulling strings.

In addition to her impulsiveness, Kai frequently finds herself in tough situations through no fault of her own. Fortunately, she is just as often saved by a freak coincidence. Both Kai's Good and Bad luck are increased by 2 points, making her Good Luck 10 and her Bad Luck 4.

Note range in attributes, 4 is more than twice 2, keep in mind that 1s and 5s in Attributes are very rare and should always be accompanied by an explanation.

Kai has spent all of her adult life in Aegis, and she is still a relatively low ranking military officer, however she has leveraged her connections within the secret organization to wield a small amount of power. Kai's Influence Attribute is 2.

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OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR AEGIS RECRUITS

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is the United States government's agency charged with the prevention and control of infectious diseases. Further, the CDC works to educate the public on disease prevention and health in general. To this end, the CDC conducts medical research, aids in the control of epidemics, and performs surveillance of infectious diseases. The Center for Disease Control maintains facilities across the country and around the world, employing over seven thousand people.

State of the art laboratory and medical facilities are valuable resources to Aegis Cells, and the highly skilled CDC researchers make excellent operatives. Aegis teams also find that the fear and ignorance clouding most people's perceptions of many diseases, such as the recent furor over necrotizing fasciitis, the so-called "Flesh Eating Bacteria," can be easily exploited to provide cover for clandestine activity.

SCIENTIST

Available training: Awareness, Communication

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptozoology, First Aid, Medical, Photography, Research, Science

PULLING STRINGS

Quarantine: When the CDC discovers an outbreak or potential outbreak of an infectious disease, it may quarantine the affected party or area for observation or treatment. This quarantine is enforced by local and state law enforcement agencies and the National Guard, if necessary. The quarantine may last anywhere from 24 hours to a full week, depending on the severity and lethality of the outbreak. The difficulty of imposing such a quarantine depends on the size of the area or population affected. Quarantining an individual or family requires a Df1 Influence test, an apartment, office building or complex would be Df2. Quarantining a small town or neighborhood would require a Df3 test, and a large town would be Df4. To quarantine an entire city would be Df5, and a metropolis like New York or Los Angeles would require a Df6 Influence test. Important Note: Imposing a quarantine, particularly of a large area, is by no means a low profile endeavor. Operatives using a quarantine to help cover up activities should be prepared for the inevitable media interest and publicity, as well as official inquiries by other official government agencies.

C.B.F. 95

CDC Labs: The Center for Disease Control laboratory and medical facilities in Atlanta are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for CDC personnel. If a successful Df2 Influence test is made, samples sent from field operatives will receive skill level 3 biological, medical, toxicological, and virological testing and analysis, and the results will be returned to the field personnel within 3D hours.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The CIA and its advisory committee, the National Security Council, were created in 1947 with the passage of the National Security Act. The agency is the principal supplier of foreign intelligence for the U.S. government. The CIA's information gathering techniques include, but are in no way limited to; the exploitation of human intelligence targets (HUMINT), the interception of communications signals such as telephone and satellite data (SIGINT), and both clandestine Special Operations.

The Central Intelligence Agency is without a doubt the most capable intelligence agency in the U.S. government, and arguably the world. It is the premier source of data on foreign nationals and countries. Although its mandate specifically prohibits the CIA from spying on U.S. citizens, it often performs special operations targeting foreign interests and personnel on U.S. soil.

AGENT

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Surveillance

Available professional skills: Autofire, Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Language, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon, Small Arms: Pistol

PULLING STRINGS

Access to Spy Satellite Data and Images: The CIA monitors some of the most sophisticated and advanced spy satellites in the world. The images produced by the best CIA satellites enjoy such high resolution that objects as small as one centimeter can be clearly distinguished. Car license plates can be read from orbit. With a little work, monitoring agents can read the headlines on at the local newspaper stand. A successful Df3 Influence will provide a CIA agent with satellite photos more than one day old in 1D hours, or 2D hours for the most recent data. A Df4 influence test and 1Dx10 minutes will retask the satellite for a live feed that will last 3D minutes. To receive and view a live satellite feed, a satellite uplink and a video monitor is needed.

DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

The DEA is charged with disrupting and apprehending major domestic and international drug criminals, while addressing the growing problem of drugs and violence in communities across the United States. Their methods range from extensive surveillance and undercover work, both in America and abroad, to SWAT team assaults on large drug operations. The DEA is also responsible for engaging foreign drug criminals in their home countries. In this role, the agency conducts paramilitary interdiction and search and destroy missions on foreign drug operations. The DEA employs over 7,000 special agents and support staff and maintains offices in all fifty states and over fifty countries.

The combination of investigative and paramilitary functions in the DEA, and its extensive network of offices makes it an attractive source of operatives for Aegis. DEA operatives also enjoy a great deal of leeway in relations with other governmental agencies. Local, state and even federal law enforcement officers will seldom interfere in DEA operations, providing that their activities are not too unusual. This gives DEA agents an edge when conducting covert missions, and makes cover-up work much easier than usual.

AGENT

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Surveillance

Available professional skills: Autofire, Demolition, First Aid, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Shadow, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle, Stealth

PULLING STRINGS

No Questions Asked: Local police and even most federal agencies tend to give the DEA a wide berth. These organizations can be warned off any DEA investigation with a well place phone call (and an Influence test Df2 for state or local police, Df3 for Feds). DEA agents do not have free reign, however. Excessive unusual activity will most likely prompt inquiry higher up the chain of command concerning the team's jurisdiction and operations. For most Aegis Cells, this is definitely something to be avoided.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The FBI is the primary investigative agency of the US Department of Justice and has jurisdiction over more than two hundred types of federal law violations. Top priority has been given to the five

Indoctrination

Personnel

Ops Center

Tradecraft

Psychics

Supernatural

Extraterrestrials

Game Mastering

Retasking a satellite involves changing its orbit so that the satellite passes over a specific point on the ground at a specific time. Retasking is a costly and delicate procedure that shortens the life of the satellite.

categories deemed most harmful: terrorism, drugs and organized crime, foreign intelligence gathering in the U.S., violent crime and white-collar crime. The Bureau also has authority to investigate matters not intended to result in criminal prosecution, such as background security checks and activities that could threaten national security.

The FBI's broad jurisdiction and extensive intelligence network make it a prime target for Aegis infiltration. The excellent qualifications of FBI special agents make the Bureau an ideal source for operatives. The FBI's training, analysis and laboratory facilities make it an excellent resource for investigative Cells.

AGENT

Available training: Awareness, Surveillance

Available professional skills: Autofire, Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Forgery, Lockpicking, Medical, Photography, Science, Shadow, Small Arms: Pistol

PULLING STRINGS

Access to the FBI Forensic Laboratory: The FBI has one of the largest and most comprehensive crime laboratories in the world. It is the only full-service federal forensic laboratory. An Influence Df1 test can get a sample priority treatment, returning a Skill level 3 scientific and forensic analysis within 24 hours.

Access to FBI Training Facility: FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia houses dormitory, classroom, research, and other ancillary training facilities to provide a unique law enforcement training experience. One of the most recent additions is Hogan's Alley, a mock town where training exercises are conducted. An Influence test (Df1, +1 level per person if more than one character attempts to get training from the Academy at the same time) must be made for characters to receive instruction in any one of the following traits:

Training: Awareness, Rappelling, Surveillance

Skills: Autofire, Computer Programming, Computer Use, Drive, First Aid, Forgery, Lockpicking, Martial Arts, Medical, Science, Shadow, Small Arms, Stealth

GROOM DRY LAKE RESEARCH FACILITY

The Ranch is currently the largest dedicated research facility maintained and operated by Aegis. Several Cells operate out of the base, each independent of the others, but all working on various projects relating to extraterrestrial technology and biology. The isolated nature of the Groom Lake Facility, and the protection of the surrounding military base, make it an ideal testing platform for captured alien craft and for terrestrial craft incorporating alien technology.

Given the sheer amount of activity involving extraterrestrial technology and research at the Ranch, "uninitiated" personnel sometimes learn enough to start drawing conclusions about the bigger picture. When this happens they are either brought into an Aegis Cell (if they have some value to the Cell), or are neutralized. The pilots that test-fly the craft are almost always brought into Cells, as it is very difficult to hide alien technology in a spacecraft. Scientists and researchers at the Ranch are brought into Cells if their work is valuable enough, otherwise they are "debriefed" by technicians familiar with MKULTRA's techniques and "released" to spread misinformation. Often the background and records of such personnel are doctored to destroy any shred of credibility they might otherwise enjoy.

TEST PILOT

Available training: Parachutist, Survival, Zero Gravity Movement

Available professional skills: First Aid, Gunnery, Martial Arts, Pilot, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle

SCIENTIST/ENGINEER

Available training: none

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Engineering, Medical, Repair/build, Research, Science, UFOlogy

PULLING STRINGS

The Aurora: Aegis operatives with connections at the Ranch may request the use of one of Aegis' six Aurora interceptor aircraft. In addition to making a difficult Influence test (Df4), the character's Cell must include a pilot capable of flying the craft. To pilot an Aurora, the aviator must have the Pilot: Aurora skill, must have been implanted with an Atlantean Pilot Interface Control System, and must have Strong ESP, as the Aurora incorporates Grey Psychic Lenses in addition to Atlantean and Saurian technology. Understandably, this makes Aurora pilots rather rare, numbering only four at last count. If the Influence test is made and the Cell has a qualified pilot, the Cell will be allowed to use an Aurora for one mission

(no longer than one week). If the aircraft is damaged, all future requests will receive a +1Df penalty, and if the Aurora is destroyed all future requests will be summarily denied. So be careful.

Alien Technology: As one of the main centers for the analysis of E.T. research and a major repository for Aegis' recovered tech, the Ranch usually has several pieces of alien technology that it can make available to Aegis operatives. To get an alien tech 'loaner' for one week the character must contact the Ranch, usually via HERMES, and make a successful Df3 Influence test. Even if successful, however, there is a chance (roll 1 or 2 on 1D) that the requested technology will be unavailable and only one such request may be made in any given week. The GM may also limit the availability of any technology. The character should be extremely cautious with the device as they are very rare, and if the item is not returned in good condition all subsequent requests will receive a +1Df penalty.

Groom Lake Research Labs: Any current or former Ranch personnel may make a Df1 Influence test to get a quick analysis of alien technology. A skill level 3 engineering, physical or chemical analysis of any E.T. sample sent to the Ranch will be returned within 24 hours. More mundane terrestrial samples can also be analyzed, but they will not be given precedence and may take much longer (1Dx12 hours).

ILLUMINUS

In most cases, Aegis prefers to recruit operatives from government agencies or projects. Nonetheless, there are notable exceptions. The most frequent exception is the recruitment of those individuals who possess pronounced psychic abilities. The other exceptions commonly made are the recruitment of individuals with extensive knowledge of the occult, and the secretive Illuminus.

When evaluating a candidate for recruitment into the organization, Aegis considers two main qualities: the individual's skills and abilities, and his or her influence and power. No individual is more influential or better connected than the Illuminus.

An Illuminus is likely to be a person of incredible personal influence and authority, but his or her real power comes from his association with other such individuals. These men and women are members of secret and not-so-secret societies like the Freemasons and the Rosicrucians, organizations of great power and far-reaching influence. Through these secret brotherhoods, the Illuminus has access to unimaginable information and power, as any member of the society may call on its aid and resources at any time.

Aegis operatives should be cautious, however, when dealing with an Illuminus, as no loyalty is greater than that of an Illuminus to the brotherhood. While an Illuminus makes an excellent agent of the organization, particularly in forming, leading and outfitting Cells, the brotherhoods hold secrets that they will not divulge to anyone, and their primary allegiance is always to the order.

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Surveillance

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

Available professional skills: Computer Use, Cryptology, Disguise, Forgery, Language, Lockpicking, Occult, Parapsychology, Photography, Ritual, Shadow

PULLING STRINGS

Network of Contacts and Connections: The strength and power of an Illuminus comes from the vast network of informants and people in high places that are directly or indirectly connected to the Illuminus' organization. A few discreet inquiries (and an Influence test) can yield the Illuminus a local contact in almost any location and for whatever purpose desired. The contacts thus gained by an Illuminus should be considered temporary, helpful once only. The next time the character needs a contact in the same area, another Influence test will have to be made. Finding a particular Media contact is Df2, a contact within the police department anywhere in the U.S. is Df3, obtaining a contact with the local crime syndicate (if there is any) is also Df3. An extremely powerful Illuminus can also find these contacts in foreign countries, though the difficulty of the test will be increased by one. Also, if the Illuminus is looking for a connection rather than just a contact, the difficulty of the test is increased by one.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

NASA was created in 1958 to conduct civilian space science and aeronautical research. Of course, the new agency would be available to the military for research projects and other missions as necessary. Aegis' connections within the US Air Force and NASA's predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, made extensive infiltration of the new agency simple. In a very short time, NASA had become an important source of material, personnel and research for Aegis.

Despite funding and public relations problems in recent years, NASA remains a vital resource in Aegis' efforts to combat extraterrestrial operations. NASA is, after all, the only organization in America that maintains a fleet of spacecraft (not counting The Ranch). NASA astronauts are uniquely qualified to operate in microgravity environments and NASA researchers have been designing and analyzing spacecraft for decades.

ASTRONAUT

Available training: Communication, Parachutist, Survival, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Zero Gravity Movement

Available professional skills: Computer Use, First Aid, Gymnastics, Language, Medical, Photography, Pilot, Small Arms: Pistol, UFOlogy, Video

SCIENTIST/ENGINEER

Available training: Communication

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Demolition, Engineering, Language, Medical, Repair/build, Research, Science, UFOlogy

PULLING STRINGS

Satellite Data: Since NASA launches and monitors vitually all US satellites, it is relatively easy for them to get the latest data from those satellites. An Influence Df2 test and a few (1D) hours is all that is necessary to get the latest data from any number of US civilian satellites, including the LandSats, ComStars, even the Hubbell telescope. The resolution of most civilian satellites is relatively low, however, and cannot distinguish objects smaller than a few meters.

Mission access: An Influence test can also get a character access to nearly any NASA mission. The security and content of the mission will determine the difficulty of the test. A relatively easy test (Df2) will get the character information about routine commercial or scientific rocket payloads, basic research programs or civilian satellites launches. The Space Shuttle missions are higher security, since they are manned, and subsequently a little more difficult to tap into (Df3). A successful Df4 test allows the character to replace or add crew to a Space Shuttle mission, or even scrap the mission entirely. Due to high security, military missions are very difficult to mess with (Df5 or 4, for unclassified missions).

Secret SDI Gun Stars: Although the US military's "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative never lived up to the hype surrounding its capabilities, it did manage to produce and launch two prototype killer satellites. These satellites are equipped with magnetic rail guns capable of destroying aircraft and missiles from orbit. These guns fire a metal projectile roughly the size and shape of a hockey puck. During tests, the satellites proved able to knock out air targets and even some surface targets, but were too inconsistent to be relied on. Rather than admit to wasting several billion dollars on a failed system, the satellites were left in orbit and officially forgotten. Now only a few technicians at NASA are even aware that the two satellites, designated GS Fred and GS Ginger, even exist.

A Df4 Influence test and 1D hours are required to prep either satellite and ready it for activation. Once

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Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

prepped, the satellite remains in a state of readiness for eight hours before returning to its powered-down dormant state. The satellite also returns to the unready state after it is fired. After the satellite has been assigned a target, 1D rounds (5-30 seconds) are needed to acquire and lock onto that target. Any vehicle, structure or landmass may be targeted, but the satellite is unable to lock onto anything smaller than Size 5. Once the target has been acquired, the satellite malfunctions and does not fire on a roll of 1 on 1D. Otherwise, the satellite fires a projectile. The satellite's effective Gunnery skill is 2 and the base Df for the shot is 3, modified for the target's size and movement. If the projectile hits, the target must make a Malfunction roll (+8). If a person somehow manages to get hit, Sp6 damage is inflicted.

Secret Russian Orbital Psychotrons: The collapse of the Soviet Union lead to the loss of much of the former USSR's space program. In a desperate salvage attempt, the new Russian government began to cooperate with NASA, sharing resources like their Mir space station and our Space Shuttle. With newfound access to Russian records, NASA discovered that the Russian Mir station served as an orbital workstation for psychic cosmonauts. One of the duties of these cosmonauts was the maintenance of a secret Russian satellite called Alexis, which functions as a giant, orbital psychotron.

The satellite Alexis is capable of two psychic disciplines, Telepathy and Bio-PK, and is operated by a cosmonaut in Mir. A Df5 Influence test is required to gain access to the satellite, and even then there is a chance (roll 1 or 2 on 1D) that the desired discipline has been depleted. Both disciplines take about seven days to charge, and therefore cannot be used more than once each week.

After a character is allowed access to Alexis and the satellite is found to be properly charged, 1D hours is required to prep the cosmonaut and maneuver the satellite into position. One ready, the satellite remains in position for eight hours. When activated, the satellite effects an area from ten meters to one kilometer in radius with either Telepathy or Bio-PK. Everyone within the effective radius is affected, so care must be taken to make the use effective.

More information on the satellite Alexis can be found in Chapter Five: Psychics.

NASA Training Facility: If not being used by astronauts, it is possible to gain access to NASA training facilities during a downtime. An Influence test (Df1, +1 level per person if more than one character attempts to get training from the same facility at the same time) must be made for characters to receive instruction in any one of the following traits:

Training: Communication, Parachuting, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Swimming, Zero Gravity Movement

Skills: Computer Use, Photography, Pilot, Repair/build, Video

SR-71 Blackbird: The United States Military recently decommissioned its fleet of SR-71 Blackbird spy planes and gave them to NASA for use as high altitude test vehicles. Though not as fast or agile as the Aurora, the SR-71 is capable of overtaking some extraterrestrial craft, and it is still very effective in conducting high altitude reconnaissance photography. Both roles make it a useful craft for Aegis operations. A successful Df2 Influence test will get a Cell access to a Blackbird for a single mission, no longer than one week. The Cell must provide a pilot and any munitions to be loaded onto the plane. Photography equipment can be requested along with the aircraft.

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

The National Security Agency was established by Presidential directive in 1952 as a separately organized agency within the Department of Defense under the direction, authority, and control of the Secretary of Defense, who acts as Executive Agent of the U.S. government for the production of communications intelligence (COMINT) information. The NSA has two principal missions:

1. The information systems security (INFOSEC) mission seeks to protect all classified and unclassified national information systems against exploitation, and combats communications interception, unauthorized access, or related technical intelligence threats.

2. The foreign signals intelligence (SIGINT) mission seeks to unify the organization and control of all the foreign signals collection and processing activities of the U.S. government. The NSA carries out its SIGINT in accordance with objectives, requirements and priorities established by the Director of Central Intelligence with the advice of the National Foreign Intelligence Board.

In sum, the NSA's job is to keep American communications secure while exploiting those of foreign countries. The primary tool used by the NSA to accomplish its dual mission is cryptography, the study of codes and ciphers. The NSA works as diligently to break the codes used by other countries as it does to keep those used by the US government as safe as possible. The NSA heavily monitors communications both foreign and domestic. The NSA is exempt from the federal law requiring court approval for domestic wiretaps, and regularly monitors large numbers of telecommunications lines in the United States, including any communication in which one terminal is outside the U.S.

As can be readily seen, the amount of information on U.S. citizens that can be gained through the NSA's sources is immense, and accounts for Aegis' interest in recruiting NSA agents.

AGENT

Available training: Communication, Surveillance

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Engineering, Language, Lockpicking, Photography, Stealth, Video

PULLING STRINGS

No Questions Asked by Government Agency: Only relatively recently did the government admit to the very existence of the National Security Agency. Even today the NSA is rarely asked about its activities by other government agencies. The NSA is exempt from many federal laws, and this breeds an attitude of being above the law in NSA operations. A few phone calls, a Df2 Influence test and 1D hours has any inquiring governmental minds reprimanded and told to back off. However, the agency is not totally untouchable. As the NSA has no actual investigative authority or jurisdiction, extended operations are likely to draw very unwanted attention. The NSA in extremely unwilling to attract unwanted attention, and is likely to throw any indiscreet agents to the wolves and get them quickly dismissed, prosecuted and publicly denounced if necessary. So watch your step and keep things quiet.

The Nation's Best Computer Security Database: Codebreaking and electronic security (particularly circumventing electronic security) is the lifeblood of the NSA. NSA operatives are the best cryptographers, codebreakers and hackers in the country. The NSA provides security procedures and recommendations for the rest of the government and the U.S. military. They know computer security, in fact they wrote the book, quite literally. The NSA computer security manual is the hacker's bible, and the agency maintains a constantly updated database of security holes and weaknesses for internal use only. A Df1 Influence test and a telecommunications connection will allow any agent to log onto the agency's database, reducing the difficulty of any hacking attempt by one.

The "Codebreaker" Supercomputer: One of the NSA's most recent acquisitions is a giant supercomputing facility in a remote corner of the Arizona desert. The custom-built supercomputers housed at the facility are designed specifically to break codes and computer passwords as quickly as possible. Even the most secure password schemes in use today can be usually be broken in a matter of hours by the codebreaker computers. Access to the facility is highly restricted, logging onto the system via telecommunications link requires a Df4 Influence test along with a Computer Programming 2 test. Any hacking attempts performed while connected to the codebreaker supercomputer take only one quarter the usual time.

Access to "Blanket" Wiretaps: Since the NSA is exempt from the federal law prohibiting unauthorized domestic wiretaps, the agency generally maintains a huge number of active taps on individuals targeted for various reasons more or less related to national security. A Df3 Influence test is all that is required to have the agency monitor a certain group of phone lines for specific information and pass the data on to the agent. For example, all phones in a particular town or metropolitan neighborhood could be monitored for a particular person's voice, or all calls into or out of a specific company's offices (throughout the country) could be watched for mention of "Flight 453". 2D hours will be necessary for the blanket wiretap to be set up and the taps can be left in place for up to one week.

OCCULT RESEARCHER

Another exception that is often made to the Aegis practice of recruiting only from government programs and agencies is for those individuals who are well-schooled in arcane knowledge. Although the Watch was originally formed to study the occult and the supernatural, the official

research programs ended with the betrayal at Roswell and most of the original occultists employed by the Watch are long dead. To maintain a continuing research program into the occult, Aegis has been forced to recruit individuals who have managed to unearth profound arcane secrets on their own, without government sanction.

These individuals tend to work alone, and many have little contact with the mundane world. Most do keep abreast of each other's progress through mystic societies and an informal but ancient communication network of contacts and cryptic passcodes. Unfortunately, due to the nature of their study and prolonged isolation from mundane society, many are also at least slightly unstable, though strangely that often appears to have a beneficial effect on their work.

Available training: Awareness

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Cryptozoology, Hypnosis, Languages, Meditation, Occult, Parapsychology, Repair/build, Research, Ritual, Science

PULLING STRINGS

Translators: Although most occult researchers work and live alone, they do maintain informal lines of communication to pass on important information or to ask for assistance with some particularly troublesome work. Most often this is used to request aid in translating some passage or manuscript in a language with which the researcher is unfamiliar. A Df3 Influence test will enable an occult researcher to locate a translator for any terrestrial language, living or dead. A great number of arcane texts are written in tongues that have not fallen on human ears for centuries, if not longer. Depending on the size of the text, the distance it needs to travel, and the difficulty of the language, the translation could take less than a day or several weeks, months or years, at the GM's discretion.

OUTSIDER PSYCHIC

In the case of powerful psychics, no other qualification is necessary to warrant Aegis interest. The more capable the psychic, the more interested Aegis becomes, regardless of whether the individual is a stock broker, priest or renegade biker. In fact, when an extremely powerful psychic is found, Aegis will often not give him or her any choice but to join. If the offer is refused or the character of the psychic judged too unstable, Aegis will often eliminates the individual, rather than risk having the psychic's abilities used against them. Aegis Prime makes certain this policy is strictly enforced, as it is convinced that psychic disciplines are one of Aegis' most promising weapons against its enemies both human and otherwise.

Available training: Awareness, Parachutist, S.C.U.B.A. Diving

Available professional skills: Brawling, Computer Use, Disguise, Drive, Escape, First Aid, Gymnastics, Hypnosis, Meditation, Occult, Parapsychology, UFOlogy

PULLING STRINGS

Due to the diverse backgrounds possible for operatives recruited from this category and the stigma attached to those who claim to possess psychic abilities, Outsider Psychic characters may only exert influence through their connections, if they have any.

PROJECT MKULTRA

After several years as a CIA experiment into various methods of mind control and behavior modification, the MKULTRA Project now rests solely in the hands of Aegis. MKULTRA'S research employs a synergetic approach incorporating a range of techniques that have yielded several impressive successes. MKULTRA scientists have been able to construct and submerge a second personality in subjects, and to program that personality to act as an assassin or courier. They have also developed procedures whereby powerful psychic disciplines can be refined in some individuals. Other groups within the MKULTRA Project have produced designer drugs and machines for the purposes of mind control and behavior modification.

The research laboratories that were created for MKULTRA research are monitored by Aegis Cells, though few are actually run by Aegis operatives. The Cells use the labs as sources of tech and occasionally personnel, pulling researchers or psychics out for inclusion in a new Cell.

SCIENTIST/PARAPSYCHOLOGIST

Available training: Awareness

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Engineering, First Aid, Hypnosis, Language, Medical, MHIC-EDOM, Parapsychology, Repair/build, Research, Science

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PSYCHIC

Available training: Surveillance

Available professional skills: Computer Use, First Aid, Hypnosis, Language, Martial Arts, Meditation, MHIC-EDOM, Occult, Parapsychology, Small Arms: Pistol

PULLING STRINGS

Psi-Drugs: One of the key tools of the MKULTRA parapsychology project was a battery of designer drugs that enhanced the power of trained psychics. The potency of these drugs has been slowly increasing over years of research, but still scientists have been unable to remove the drugs' unpleasant and sometimes lethal side effects. Operatives with MKULTRA connections can request a shipment of Psi-Drugs (Df is 1 per vial, each vial contains 6 doses), but only one such request may be made in any given week.

Mind Control Drugs: MKULTRA research into various mind altering pharmaceuticals yielded a number of substances that will effectively and predictably alter a subject's state of mind. The drugs developed by MKULTRA produce a wide range of effects and leave little or no trace of their passage. When administered to a subject, the recipient must succeed in a Willpower test vs. the number of doses or suffer the effects of the particular drug for one hour per dose. Requesting four vials (6 doses per vial) of any drug is a Df2 Influence test, but any given character may only make one such request per week.

Specific drug effects: Schizophrenia, Flashbacks, Homicidal, Acute Paranoia, Pacifist, Aggression (Itchy Trigger Finger).

MHIC-EDOM Device: The crowning glory of the MKULTRA technology group was the development of a device designated MHIC-EDOM, for "Microwave Hypnotic Intracerebral Control - Electronic Dissolution of Memory". The rather cumbersome moniker is usually referred to by its acronym, pronounced "mick-eedum", which eventually degenerated to "Mickie Doom" or just "Mickie". The MHIC-EDOM was designed to mimic, to some extent, the effects that can be produced by psychics skilled in the Trance discipline. Two functions are built into the MHIC-EDOM. The first places the target in a pseudo-hypnotic trance via Focused microwaves and invokes a desired mental state (such as rage or complacency) by stimulating specific parts of the brain. The second function uses microwaves and a controlled electrical charge to temporarily disable the target's long term memory, effectively preventing the target from remembering anything that happens while the effect lasts, which is usually less than an hour. The two main limitations of the device is the complexity of its use (the user must have the MHIC-EDOM skill) and its range, which is limited to a few dozen meters. More information on the use of MHIC-EDOM devices can be found in Chapter 3: Ops Center.

A Df3 Influence test for someone with connections within the MKULTRA project will get them a MHIC-EDOM "loaner" for the duration of a mission (but no longer than one week). If the device is returned in anything less then working condition, any subsequent requests will receive a +1Df penalty.

PROJECT MOONDUST

The United States Air force's Project Moondust is a secret, but semi-legitimate, project initiated in the early 1960's for the exploitation of foreign aerospace vehicles and technology. Project MOONDUST's duty is to be the first at the crash or re-entry site of any foreign spacecraft, satellite, or missile. Ostensibly, Moondust was to gather intelligence on the Eastern-Bloc space program, but the procedures, facilities and personnel developed ideally suited Aegis in its need for efficient extraterrestrial craft retrieval. Not surprisingly, this overlap of purpose was entirely intentional as the creation of Moondust and its support services was completely controlled by Aegis. Originally under the jurisdiction of the Air Force Department of Intelligence, Project Moondust has changed name and supervisory affiliation several times. It is currently under the administration of the USAF Air Intelligence Agency based at Fort Kelly, Texas.

Project Moondust works in teams of three individuals, each specializing in a particular task, but all cross trained to ensure mission viability in the event of casualties in the field. The three members that make up a Moondust team include an Ops Specialist who makes sure the team gets to the crash site and back, a Tech Specialist who concentrates on actually gathering the data at the site, with an emphasis on technical photography, and a Linguist whose responsibility is overcoming any language or cryptological barriers the team may encounter.

Two other groups work directly to support Project Moondust. Operation Blue Fly is charged with transporting the team to and from the crash site. Blue Fly personnel are ace pilots who specialize in special operations stealth insertion and extraction aircraft. The National Air Intelligence Center (NAIC) is responsible for researching and exploiting any data or wreckage that the Moondust teams manage to bring back. The NAIC conducts a great deal of weapons development and analysis, and is largely responsible for USAF computer security.

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MOONDUST OPS

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Survival, S.C.U.B.A. Diving

Available professional skills: Autofire, First Aid, Demolitions, Martial Arts, Photography, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle, Stealth, Throw

MOONDUST TECH

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Survival, S.C.U.B.A. Diving

Available professional skills: Autofire, Engineering, First Aid, Martial Arts, Photography, Small Arms: Pistol, Stealth, UFOlogy, Video

MOONDUST LINGUIST

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Survival, S.C.U.B.A. Diving

Available professional skills: Autofire, Cryptology, First Aid, Language, Martial Arts, Photography, Pilot, Stealth, Small Arms: Pistol

OPERATION BLUE FLY PILOT

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Survival

Available professional skills: Autofire, First Aid, Gunnery, Martial Arts, Pilot, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle, UFOlogy

NAIC SCIENTIST/ENGINEER

Available training: Awareness

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Cryptology, Engineering, Language, Photography, Repair/build, Research, UFOlogy

PULLING STRINGS

Bluefly Transport: One radio call and a Df2 Influence test is all that is needed to get a Airforce Bluefly fast response transport to or from anywhere in the world. It will take Bluefly 1D hours to reach the team's location. Insertion is via parachute drop and pickup is by stealth helicopter, so don't expect to see them coming or going.

Alien Technology: NAIC will sometimes assign pieces of alien equipment for 'field testing' to Moondust personnel for short periods of time. To get an alien tech 'loaner' for one week the character must contact the NAIC labs and make a successful Df3 Influence test. Even if successful, however, there is a chance (roll 1 or 2 on 1D) that the requested technology will be unavailable and only one such request may be made in any given week. The GM may also limit the availability of any technology. The character should be extremely cautious with these ultra-rare devices. If the item is not returned in good condition, all subsequent requests will receive a +1Df penalty.

PROJECT RASPUTIN

The fall of the Soviet Union ushered in a new era of cooperation and openness between the governments of the former Soviet Union and that of the United States. As a result of this new-found collaboration, Aegis discovered an extensive soviet psychic war project, code named Rasputin, in the final stages of dissolution. The project had made incredible progress but the new Russian government could no longer afford it. Aegis immediately seized the opportunity and moved the entire operation, including many of the project's scientists and personnel to America.

Most of the personnel rescued from the cancellation of project Rasputin were given the funding and resources necessary to continue their research, hidden behind cover projects that were never actually conducted but continued producing consistently unimpressive results. A few of the Rasputin personnel were brought directly into Aegis. Most of these were psychics, but a fair number of researchers were indoctrinated as well.

The methods and direction taken by Project Rasputin differed greatly from those pursued by their American counterparts in MKULTRA. With access to both their own and the MKULTRA data, the Russian researchers have greatly advanced Aegis' understanding of psychic phenomena and continue to provide valuable research and personnel to the organization.

SCIENTIST/PARAPSYCHOLOGIST

Available training: Awerness

Available professional skills: Computer Programming, Computer Use, Engineering, First Aid, Hypnosis, Language, Medical, Parapsychology, Psychotron, Repair/build, Science

PSYCHIC

Available training: Communication, Parachutist, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Zero Gravity Movement

Available professional skills: Computer Use, First Aid, Gymnastics, Language, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon, Psychotron, Small Arms: Pistol, Stealth

PULLING STRINGS

Psychotrons: One of the key differences between Project MKULTRA and Rasputin is MKULTRA's Focus on mind control. The researchers of Project Rasputin were not as concerned with various methods of mind control as they were with enhancing and developing psychic disciplines. The most impressive result of such work was the development of psychotrons.

A psychotron is a device that reacts to and stores psychic energy for later release. The exact composition and properties of 'psychic energy' is still largely unknown, but the Project Rasputin engineers were able to create devices that were capable of storing the energy like a battery. A psychotron is 'charged' by a skilled psychic with a particular discipline, but afterwards the psychotron can be activated and directed by any skilled user with even rudimentary psychic abilities (which means no voids or psinks). Psychotrons vary in appearance from small hand-held devices to bulky headgear. In fact, each engineer knowledgeable in creating psychotrons modifies the process to some extent, so that each engineer's work is unique, like the work of an artisan or craftsman.

Connections within the now defunct Project Rasputin will allow a character to make a Df2 Influence test to get a psychotron fully charged with a specific psychic discipline. There is a chance (roll 1 on 1D) that a psychic skilled in the desired discipline is unavailable and in such a case another request may not be made for at least a week. Furthermore, no additional requests may be made until the device is returned, and if it is comes back in anything but perfect condition, any further requests will suffer a +1 Df penalty.

More information on psychotrons can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

Secret Russian Orbital Psychotron: The largest and most ambitious psychotron ever built is the Alexis satellite designed by Project Rasputin's greatest scientist, the late Tatyana Markova. Markova was a pioneer in psychotron design, personally overseeing the construction of the Alexis satellite and the development of the training program for the cosmonauts who would be its operators aboard the Mir space station. Markova disappeared in the late seventies, presumably assassinated by the CIA, though no records or evidence can be found to corroborate that theory.

The satellite Alexis is capable of two psychic disciplines, Telepathy and Trance, and is operated by a cosmonaut in Mir. A Df3 Influence test is required to gain access to the satellite, and even then there is a chance (roll 1 or 2 on 1D) that the desired discipline has been depleted. Both disciplines take about seven days to charge, and therefore cannot be used more than once each week.

After a character is allowed access to Alexis and the satellite is found to be properly charged, 1D hours is required to prep the cosmonaut and maneuver the satellite into position. One ready, the satellite remains in position for eight hours. When activated, the satellite effects an area from ten meters to one kilometer in radius with either Trance or Telepathy. Everyone within the effective radius is affected, so care must be taken to make the use effective.

More information on the satellite Alexis can be found in Chapter Five: Psychics.

UNITED STATES MILITARY

When The Watch was created in 1933 it drew much of its resources and facilities from the U.S. Military. After the betrayal at Roswell in 1947, The Watch broke into Aegis and The Black Book, but both organizations remained closely tied to the military. After the split, Aegis became more influential in the newly formed Air Force, while The Black Book remained primarily aligned with the U.S. Army.

The various branches of the United States Military have remained vital to the ongoing operations of both organizations. The immense budget and power of the Military makes it a valuable resource, and an excellent source for Aegis operatives. Military personnel brought into Aegis are either high ranking officers whose substantial influence renders them excellent choices to form and command Cells, or specialists whose exceptional skills and training make them superior operatives.

PILOT

Available training: Awareness, Communication, Parachutist, Survival

Available professional skills: Autofire, Computer Use, First Aid, Gunnery, Martial Arts, Pilot, Repair/build, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE SPECIALIST

Available training: Parachutist, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Survival, Rappelling, Awareness

Available professional skills: 'Autofire, Demolition, First Aid, Gun Fu, Heavy Weapons, Martial Arts, Melee Weapon, Small Arms: Pistol, Small Arms: Rifle, Stealth, Throw, Tracking

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Base Clearance: Military personnel find it much easier to get cleared to enter military facilities than do civilians. An Df1 Influence test provides access to a recruiting office or a Reserves base, Df2 to any base with normal security, Df3 to high security bases and weapons testing sites, and Df4 to just about anywhere in the Pentagon.

Military Training Facilities: The military prides itself on its well-trained, highly skilled personnel. It runs some of the finest training and education facilities in the world. These facilities are generally made readily available to military personnel. During downtime, a successful Influence test (Df1, +1 level per person if more than one character attempts to get training from the same base at the same time) will provide characters with instruction in any one of the following traits:

Training: Awareness, Communications, Parachuting, Rappelling, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Survival, Swimming

Skills: Autofire, Demolitions, Drive, Gunnery, Heavy Weapons, Martial Arts, Pilot, , Repair/build, Small Arms, Stealth

Military Satellite Data: To ensure accurate and timely battlefield reconnaissance, the US military maintains a network of surveillance satellites. Despite being located in orbit high above the earth, these satellites are capable of 10cm resolution -- enough detail to recognize the make and model of vehicles and to track the movements and actions of individuals. A Df3 Influence test will secure a satellite photo of any 2km by 3km area on the planet. A photo older than 24 hours will take 1D hours to procure. More current data will take 2D hours to allow for data processing and the potential that the satellite itself may need to be retasked. A Df4 Influence test and 1Dx10 minutes will get the character a live satellite feed that lasts 1Dx10 minutes. A satellite uplink and monitor must be available to display the feed.

UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE

The Secret Service is charged with the protection of the United States President, Vice President and their immediate families, as well as former Presidents and their families. The safety and welfare of visiting heads of state are also the responsibility of the Secret Service. The agency also provides security for the White House, the Treasury Building and Annex, the Vice President's residence and other sites of diplomatic importance as requested by the President. Finally, the president may direct the agency to protect official US representatives abroad.

As a bureau of the U.S. Treasury Department, the Secret Service is also mandated the investigation and prosecution of violations of Federal Law regarding coins, currency, stamps, Government bonds, checks, credit or debit card fraud, computer fraud and false identification crimes.

The investigative jurisdiction of the Secret Service and its members' proximity and relationship to current and former heads of the US government make it an ideal source of operatives. Secret Service Cells are ideally suited for keeping tabs on the Presidency.

AGENT

Available training: Awareness, Surveillance

Available professional skills: Autofire, Drive, First Aid, Forgery, Gun Fu, Martial Arts, Quick Draw, Shadow, Small Arms: Pistol

PULLING STRINGS

Sending Presidential Orders: By orchestrating duty rosters and the Presidential agenda (Df4 Influence test), operatives within the Secret Service can arrange to be in the right place at the right time to send forged presidential orders and communiqués. Depending on the importance of the orders, they will be found to be fraudulent in a few hours or they may remain undetected for days. The repercussions of the false order will also vary depending on its importance. For example, a Presidential stay of execution may go unnoticed for a few days, and even after it is discovered, it is quite possible it will be ignored. On the other hand, a Presidential directive to prepare for war with France will probably not last through the hour, and the operative better have a really good reason for causing the resulting international crisis.

Waxing The Pres: A successful Df5 Influence test will allow the agent to get details of security measures, agenda and travel routes for a particular Presidential appearance. This will also allow the agent to make minor security modifications, such as getting himself stationed at a crucial point, or making sure a particular building is overlooked by the advance team. Assassinating the President requires a great deal of planning and action on the characters' parts. An entire mission and several game sessions should be devoted to such a task. Under no circumstances should a Presidential assassination be left to a single die roll.

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CHARACTER TRAITS

Traits are the positive and negative aspects that give a character a unique identity and define his or her abilities and personality. All characters have the same nine attributes. The particular mix of traits each possesses, however, will be fairly unique, will give the player an excellent idea of what makes the character different from all the others, and will start to make the character more than just a collection of numbers.

Each trait is assigned either a cost or a value, depending on whether it is beneficial or detrimental to the character overall. If the trait has a cost associated with it, the cost is subtracted from the player's Character Point pool when it is selected. If the trait has a value, that number is added to the player's Character Point pool. Character Points that are not used during the creation process are lost, so there is no reason not to spend them all.

The character traits available to a player are divided into five general categories: Skills and Training, Psych Profile, Medical History, Talents and Abilities, and Background and Resources.

SKILLS AND TRAINING

BUYING SKILLS

The Skill Costs table lists the Character Point cost for buying each level of a given skill. In order to buy a certain level in a skill the player must buy all of the preceding levels. For example, in order to buy a level 3 skill, levels 1 and 2 must also be purchased. The Skill Costs table lists both the cost per level of skill, and the cumulative cost for each level.

A character may begin the game with any skill at level one or two. Characters may only have skills at level three or higher if they are listed in the Professional Skills heading for the organization from which the character was recruited. There is one exception: a character may have one skill at level three or higher that is not in her Professional Skills. This represents private study or specialization within her field.

FREE SKILL

All characters begin with level one Brawling skill. This first skill level does not cost CP.

TRAINING

Skills are areas of knowledge where the degree of knowledge that the character has is very important. It is necessary to know, for example, not only whether a character knows how to handle a firearm, but just how accurate he is.

In contrast, training covers areas of competence in which the fact that the character is capable of the procedures in question is the key concern, rather than the level of that character's expertise. As a result, unlike skills, training areas are not associated with a level and are never tested. Instead the completion of a Training area will allow a character to perform a particular set of activities, which may require some related skill or attribute to be tested. For example, while the S.C.U.B.A. Diving training is never itself tested, a character scuba diving will have to make Agility tests to perform many actions. In most cases, acquiring proficiency in a training area is much less time consuming that learning a skill. Most training can be accomplished in just one or two weeks of solid instruction. In order for a character to take a particular training, it must be listed in the Available Training list of the organization from which he or she was recruited.

SKILL LIST

Each skill is listed with the Attribute which modifies it in parentheses.

AUTOFIRE (STR): Characters with this skill are experienced in firing fully automatic weapons. When firing a long burst, the maximum number of bullets that might hit a target is equal to the character's Autofire skill level plus the character's Strength Attribute modifier. However, if the weapon being fired is a light machine gun, heavy machine gun or minigun, the Strength modifier is not added, replaced by a straight +2 bonus.

BRAWLING (STR): The 'art' of untrained street fighting. A less disciplined fighting style than Martial Arts relying more on strength than finesse. Each time a level in this skill is gained, the player may choose five moves. These may be in the form of combinations, but each move in a combo counts toward the five per level limit. For example, upon gaining a level a player could reach the limit by choosing Punch, Knee, Block, and Grab-Smash (three separate moves and a two-move combo). Each move in a combo requires a separate skill test, but all moves in a combo can be performed in a single combat action. Many of the moves available (see the Combat section of Chapter 4: Tradecraft) are similar to Martial Arts moves, and are interchangeable for purposes of defenses. For example, a Block move, whether it be the

Skill Costs Table		
Level	Skill Cost	Total Cost
1	2	2
2	4	6
3	8	14
4	16	30
5	32	62

Kai's extensive military training has made her a very skilled and efficient operatives. She is a trained Parachutist and has the following skills: Small Arms: Pistol 3, Martial Arts 3, Stealth 2, Demolitions 2, First Aid 2, Gun Fu 2, Brawling 1, Drive 1, UFOlogy 1 and Throw 1.

Brawling or Martial Arts move, is effective against both Brawling and Martial Arts Punches.

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING (INT): This skill denotes familiarity with several computer languages and how to use them to solve specific tasks and create programs. This skill can also be used to "hack" other computer systems in order to gain unauthorized access. This skill does not replace or supersede the Computer Use skill. Computer Programming does not represent a general knowledge of popular commercial software and applications. A skilled programmer with little or no Computer Use skill could write a word processing program, but would be lost in WordPerfect. Sadly, this situation is not as uncommon as one would think.

COMPUTER USE (INT): Knowledge of different computer systems and their uses. The individual can perform most common tasks with computers. He can create and delete files, install software, and search a system for specific information. Also, this skill represents a measure of familiarity with common software and hardware products for computers like telecommunications programs, image enhancement software and databases. In order for a research project to benefit from a computer system, some member of the research staff must succeed in a Computer Use test. The difficulty of the test is equal to the difficulty of the project itself. Difficulty levels of research projects are discussed in Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

CRYPTOLOGY (INT): The study of codes and how to devise and decrypt them. A cryptographer uses complex mathematical formulae to create codes that can only be broken with great effort and time, if at all. All modern cryptography relies on the use of computers -- the more powerful, the better. A skilled cryptographer with a powerful computer can break most non-military codes in just a few days, perhaps even hours. Although a computer is required for serious work, a good cryptographer can create or decrypt simple codes with a pencil, paper, and a little time.

CRYPTOZOOLOGY (INT): Cryptozoologists study strange or misplaced animals, such as "Nessie" (the Loch Ness Monster), Bigfoot, the Yeti and the more obscure Canadian "Wendigo". Cryptozoology also covers the mysterious disappearance or appearance of animals, such as alligators in New York City sewers or kangaroos in midwest America, and of course the ever-enigmatic phenomenon of frog and fish falls.

DEMOLITIONS (INT): This dangerous skill encompasses the handling, setting, and detonating of all types of explosives. Most often the end result of the demolition is the destruction of a structure or the breach of a barrier, so the Demolitions skill also includes the knowledge of the best placement and amount of explosives to accomplish these tasks. Someone skilled in demolitions also has the knowledge of how to create basic explosives out of common materials like detergents and cleansers.

DISGUISE (PER): This is the skill of using make-up to change someone's appearance, either to just be unrecognizable or to mimic someone else's appearance. When creating a disguise, the player decides how difficult she wishes the test to detect the disguise to be. This difficulty is also the difficulty to create the disguise. If the desired result is just to make someone look different, and not necessarily like someone specific, the test difficulty to see through the disguise remains the same, but the difficulty to create the disguise is lowered by one.

DRIVE (REF): The Drive skill is actually a collection of skills, all pertaining to the operation of a particular type of land or water vehicle. A character may of course have several of the sub-skills, and
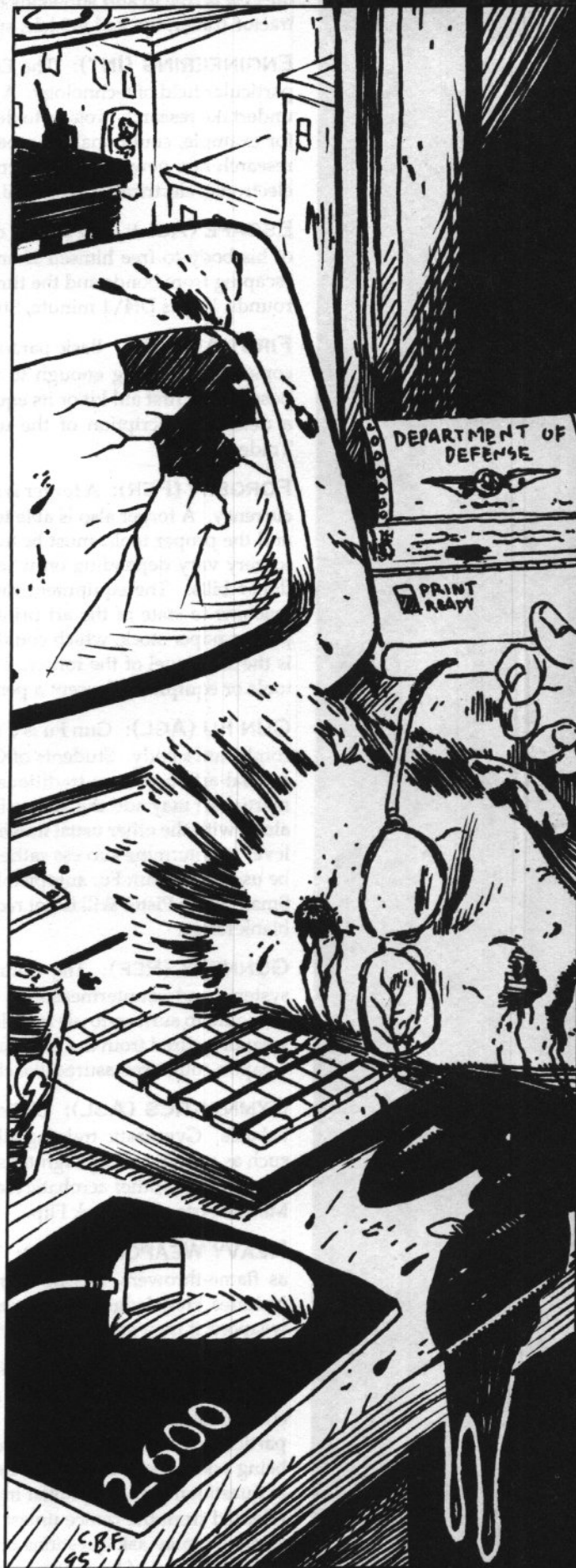
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the GM is free to add sub-skills to the list as desired. Sample Drive sub-skills: motorcycle, automobile, tractor-trailer, tracked vehicle, speedboat, hovercraft.

ENGINEERING (INT): The Engineering skill encompasses several sub-skills, each specializing in a particular field of technology. A character with engineering skill may analyze machines in that area and undertake research projects to design new or better versions of that technology. An aerospace engineer, for example, could analyze a particular aircraft to determine its flaws or efficiency, or could conduct research into new or better aircraft or aircraft components. Sample Engineering sub-skills: aerospace, electronic, electrical, mechanical.

ESCAPE (AGL): The skilled escape artist is practiced in stretching, dislocating, and contorting parts of his body to free himself from bonds, or to fit into small spaces such as airducts. The difficulty of escaping from bonds and the time it takes depend on the type of bonds. For example: Handcuffs Df3\4 rounds, Ropes Df4\1 minute, Straight Jacket Df5\2 minutes.

FIRST AID (INT): Basic paramedic training covers procedures for stabilizing wounds or just keeping someone alive long enough to make it to a medical facility. Basic resuscitation techniques are also possible. A first aid kit or its equivalent is required to use this skill without a +1 Difficulty penalty. For a detailed description of the uses of the First Aid skill, see the section on Combat in Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

FORGERY (PER): A forger is skilled in the creation of flawless copies of official documents, including currency. A forger also is able to detect such fakes. An example of the original document to be forged, and the proper tools, must be available to create a forgery. The tools necessary to pull off a successful forgery vary depending on whether the individual is creating a fake driver's license or bogus twenty dollar bills. The equipment ranges from a standard commercial color laser printer and lamination machine to state of the art printing equipment. Often the most difficult component to acquire is the proper paper stock, which could give the forgery away instantly. The base difficult of detecting a fake is the skill level of the forger. Forgery can also be used to forge signatures, which requires no special tools or equipment (except a pen).

GUN FU (AGL): Gun Fu is a modern close combat technique that uses a pistol as an extension of the combatant's body. Students of Gun Fu train using pistols in much the same way that students of other martial arts use more traditional weapons such as sai, swords and knives. Characters skilled in this martial art may add the Moves Draw Pistol, Shoot, and Pistol Whip to Martial Arts or Brawling combos along with the other usual moves. When these moves are performed, the character uses his Gun Fu skill level to determine success rather than his Martial Arts or Brawling skill. Only the following guns may be used with Gun Fu: autopistol, hold-out pistol, machine pistol, magnum revolver, and revolver. The Small Arms: Pistol skill is not required to use Gun Fu. Gun Fu may only be used in close combat at point blank range.

GUNNERY (REF): The Gunnery skill denotes a familiarity with all types of vehicle-based weapon systems and countermeasures. This skill covers all vehicular ordinance from a helicopter gunship's minigun, to surface-to-air missiles fired from an anti-aircraft battery, to advanced electromagnetic pulse weaponry fired from the Aurora interceptor. The Gunnery skill also covers the deployment of vehicular weapon countermeasures like chaff pods, flares and radar jammers.

GYMNASTICS (AGL): Skilled gymnasts are athletes capable of impressive feats of acrobatics and balance. Gymnastic training allows an operative to move easily in dangerous and precarious terrain, such as running along high-tension wires or back-flipping over a car. A gymnast may also incorporate tumbling and other acrobatic feats into hand to hand combat styles. This allows the character to use the Martial Arts move Back Flip.

HEAVY WEAPONS (AGL): This skill covers all manner of personal or crewed heavy weapons such as flame-throwers, missile launchers, machine guns and grenade launchers. Heavy Weapons skill includes knowledge of the weapon's use and basic maintenance. The skill does not cover the same weapons if they are part of a vehicle's integral weapons system (see Gunnery skill).

HYPNOSIS (WILL): This skill allows a character to place a subject in a trance-like state. While in a trance, the subject can recall any memory to the smallest detail, even if that memory had been consciously forgotten or even buried due to trauma or brainwashing. However, if the memory is particularly traumatic, the person may not be able to answer questions coherently. If the event that is being asked about occurred when the subject was young, she will talk as she did at that age. In addition to questioning, the hypnotist may implant suggestions and commands that the subject must obey when released from the trance unless she can succeed at a Willpower test vs. the hypnotist's skill. Only the hypnotist may ask questions or plant commands, and only a willing subject may be hypnotized. The Difficulty level of hypnotizing someone is equal to the subject's Willpower and usually takes about ten minutes.

LANGUAGE (INT): The Language skill is actually a group of sub-skills each covering the ability to use a separate form of verbal or non-verbal communication. As with the Drive skill, the sub-skill must be specified when the skill is bought and the Language skill may be taken more than once to represent the ability to communicate in more than one language. Most common sub-skills include a foreign language such as German, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic or Japanese. However, this skill also could embrace proficiency in Sign Language, Morse Code, Semaphore, Braille or Lip Reading. In most cases, the GM should not require the player to make a language skill test everytime he or she tries to say something. Rather, the skill level should be used to give an indication of the speaker's fluency and mastery of the language.

Skill level 1 denotes a complete novice, the character will not be able to handle much more than tourist basics "I am not a communist!" and "Do you know the way to the airport" with a painfully thick accent.

Skill level 2 speakers are comfortable with the language and have little trouble expressing themselves adequately. The nuances of pronunciation have yet to be mastered, and the character still has a noticeable accent and may make an occasional faux pas.

Skill level 3 marks complete fluency in the language. The speaker is capable of expressing him or herself eloquently regarding complex subjects and is likely to betray an accent only when excited or angered.

Skill level 4 represents true mastery of a language, the character speaks with the flawless accent of a native and could be capable of writing excellent poetry or other creative literary works.

Skill level 5 speakers have not only mastered the core language, but several dialects and local accents as well as ancient variants no longer in use. The character can pass as a native among any population that speaks some variant of the language.

LOCKPICKING (AGL): The skilled lockpick is capable of opening virtually any modern mechanical key lock, if given the right tools. Otherwise, small bits of wire or a credit card may do in a pinch (at a +1Df penalty, of course). The Lockpicking skill also enables a character to use welding torches, a stethoscope or similar device to attempt to open combination locks and safes. More sophisticated locks require the use of more advanced tools: drills, small explosive charges, metal acid, etc.

MARTIAL ARTS (VARIES): This skill encompasses any trained fighting art such as boxing, wrestling, karate, tae kwon do, savate, and military hand-to-hand combat training. Each time a level in this skill is gained, the player may choose five moves. These may be in the form of combinations, but each move in a combo counts toward the five per level limit. For example, upon gaining a level a player could reach the limit by choosing Punch, Kick, Block, and Grab-Throw (three separate moves and a two-move combo). Each move in a combo requires a separate skill test, but all moves in a combo can be performed in a single combat action. For details on hand-to-hand combat see the Combat section of Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

MEDICAL (INT): The Medical skill connotes formal medical education in the diagnosis and treatment of a wide array of illnesses and injuries. A skill level of three or higher signifies a qualified professional physician who most likely possesses a Medical Doctorate and is capable of performing complex surgery and other advanced procedures. Medical skill also denotes the knowledge of modern medical pharmaceuticals and their administration, though only licensed physicians may prescribe drugs legally. Details on the use of the Medical skill to treat injuries and trauma can be found in Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

MEDITATION (WIL): This is the skill of entering a calming, introspective state of mind through controlled breathing exercises, mantra chanting, yoga and other techniques. The skill allows a practiced mediator to produce several effects for game purposes. Focus Chi Power induces an adrenaline surge (Df5/1combat round). Become One with the Universe gives the character one Strong ESP point or one Psi Point, but it must be spent immediately (Df5/15 minutes). Restive Contemplation allows the character to reduce the Df of any Willpower test by and add one to his Willpower Stat modifier while meditating (Df3/5 minutes).

MELEE WEAPON (AGL): This skill covers the use of a specific melee weapon such as a sword, garrote, knife, police baton, etc . . . in hand to hand combat. The skill may be taken more than once to represent mastery of several weapons. This skill includes the ability to block with your chosen weapon. Only characters with Melee Weapon skill may incorporate the Martial Arts moves Melee Weapon Strike and Melee Weapon Block into Martial Arts Combos. The Martial Arts skill is not required to take Melee Weapon. The base Df of striking an opponent with a melee weapon is 2, but movement and defender actions can modify things.

MHIC-EDOM (INT): The MHIC-EDOM or "Mickie Doom" is a hand held device developed by the CIA's Project MKULTRA. It allows the operator to artificially induce desired mental states in subjects remotely. The device can temporarily throw the target into a homicidal fury or reduce him to an obedient sheep. A second function of the device interrupts the brain's long-term memory, blanking the duration

of the device effect from the subject's mind permanently. The MHIC-EDOM's main limitation is its complexity, requiring a skilled operator to produce the desired effects.

OCCULT (INT): This is the study of magic and the supernatural. Characters with the Occult skill are familiar with witchcraft, ritual magic, alchemy, astrology, palmistry, numerology, demonology, creatures of folklore, etc. The skill also includes knowledge of places, dates, objects and people with occult significance. It does not provide skills in the performance any specific occult rituals.

PARAPSYCHOLOGY (INT): Parapsychology is a field of research covering a wide range of paranormal studies, Focusing largely on psychic disciplines and ESP. Parapsychologists also study ghosts, spirits, channelers, out of body and near death experiences, as well as more esoteric paranormal phenomena such as Vorteci and Spontaneous Human Combustion. A skilled parapsychologist is familiar with important cases, people and events in the field and is fully qualified to conduct useful research into psychic abilities and related subjects.

PHOTOGRAPHY (PER): This is the skill of using cameras and developing equipment to take high quality pictures. Just about anyone can use a camera, but this skill is required to take professional quality pictures or develop film personally. This skill can also be used to retouch and alter photographs, and detect faked photos as well. A skilled photographer will often capture elements of a scene that were undetected or undetectable when observed first hand. To reflect this, a skilled photographer can use her Photography skill in place of her Perception to make Perception tests to notice visual clues in a scene that she photographs. For example...

Two operatives arrive on the scene of a murder just moments before the local police show up. Sam quickly searches the area (using her Perception of 3) while Beth photographs the scene (Photography skill 3) before the pair take off to avoid the police. The GM has determined that there are three key clues that can be gained from the scene by a Perception test; a bloody three-finger hand print on the wall (Df2), several 9mm bullet casings (Df3), and a small triangular burn on the victim's temple (Df4). Sam, rushing her search, fails to notice anything but the hand print. Later when Beth develops her film of the scene, she may make a Photography skill test for each of the three clues, with a skill of 3. She is likely to have picked up the shell casings, and may well catch the burn on film as well.

PILOT (REF): The Pilot skill is actually a group of sub-skills each covering the operation and control of one type of aircraft or spacecraft. As with the Drive skill, the sub-skill must be specified when the skill is bought and the Pilot skill may be taken more than once to represent the ability to fly more than a single type of aircraft. Sample Pilot sub-skills: Prop plane, jet plane, passenger jet, hang glider, helicopter, fighter jet, and even Space Shuttle. Other sub-skills may be chosen with the GM's approval.

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PSYCHOTRON (WIL): The character is versed in the use of psychotrons, devices developed by the Russian Project Rasputin that collect and store psychic energy for later release. This skill is required both to use the devices and to charge them with psychic energy (which also requires the user to be a psychic). Without this skill there is no chance to use a psychotron. Details of the use of a psychotron can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

REPAIR/BUILD (INT): The Repair/build skill is the implementation counterpart to the Engineering skill, and as such has the same sub-skills: aerospace, electronic, electrical, and mechanical. The Engineering skill pertains to the design and analysis of machines; the Repair/build skill represents knowledge of the methods, tools and procedures necessary to actually build and repair the machines and devices that the engineers design. Repair/build is a more practical and general skill which also includes the ability to perform quick unorthodox "repairs" with inadequate tools and alternative materials. This quick-fix technique is called jerry-rigging and will reduce the Df of a repair test by one while reducing the time required to just 2D minutes. The downside to jerry-rigged repairs is that they will only work reliably for 4D minutes, after which time a Malfunction roll must be made. If the machine continues to function another roll must be made after another 4D minutes of operation, and so on until the machine dies again. Additionally any Malfunction roll that is made for a machine with jerry-rigged repairs must add 1 to the result for each such repair currently in effect. Breaking and repairing machines is covered in more detail in Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

RESEARCH (INT): This skill is vital to the success of any research project, from library research to scientific experiments. Not all members of a research team need the skill, only the leader of the project. The level of Research skill the project leader possesses is the maximum number of people that may participate in the project. If some of the participants also have the Research skill, they may act as project leaders themselves, heading groups working on a smaller part of the whole project.

RITUAL (WIL): The Ritual skill represents knowledge and instruction in a particular occult or religious ritual. Most characters generally have very little access to this type of knowledge, so the GM should feel free to restrict a player's choice of Ritual to one that the character could conceivably have been exposed. Only two character backgrounds are likely to include knowledge of specific Rituals, the Occult Researcher and the Illuminus. The specific ritual that this skill represents must be chosen when the skill is bought. Rituals are listed in Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

SCIENCE (INT): Science is a meta-skill covering the knowledge of all the traditional sciences including, but not limited to: astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, geology, zoology, psychology, or physics. When taking this skill, one particular sub-skill of science must be selected, although the skill may be taken repeatedly to represent multi-disciplinary knowledge. Science tests outside your subskill incur a +1Df penalty.

Characters with the Science skill may further pick a specialty within their subskill (such as astrophysics or biochemistry). The difficulty of any Science test in that particular specialty is decreased by one. Science tests out side the specialty, but covered by your subskill, have a +1t penalty.

Dr. Blake is an marine biology (specialty in biology). Prof. Groom is a biochemist (specialty for either chemistry or biology). Jim has studied zoology. They separately attempt a Biochemistry 3 test. Groom's test is at a Df of 2 because it is within his specialty. Blake's test incurs a +1t penalty because it is outside his specialty but still within his subskill. Jim is in the wrong discipline so his test is Df4.

SHADOW (PER): Shadow is the skill of following someone unseen through an urban environment (your skill level vs. their Per Stat). The skill covers following both on foot or by car. If only one person is shadowing, the target must be kept in sight nearly at all times. Thus, the technique is best performed by a number of shadowers who can cooperate. In this case, the various shadowers must keep in constant communication, often by radio, as each follows the target for a while before passing off to another. This reduces the chances that the target will realize he or she is being followed. Apply normal teamwork benefits.

SMALL ARMS (AGL): The Small Arms skill is composed of two sub-skills: Pistol and Rifle, each of which must be bought separately. Each skill covers the use and basic maintenance of the appropriate weapons. Complete details and examples of the use of these skills can be found in the Combat section of Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

STEALTH (AGL): Characters with the Stealth skill are well versed in hiding themselves and moving without being detected (your skill level vs. their Per Stat). They use shadows and natural cover to conceal themselves, and employ techniques in moving silently, camouflage and distraction. The success or failure of any attempt at Stealth is still heavily dependent on the particulars of the situation, as not even the most stealthy operative will be able to cross open, guarded ground in daylight without detection. As a result, choosing the right time and place for infiltration is as large a part of Stealth as moving quietly and effectively using shadows.

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When UFOlogists talk about the Men In Black they are not necessarily referring to the Black Book's elite operatives -- Saurians disguised as humans. Any dark-suited investigator, particularly those claiming (truthfully or not) to be affiliated with the government is classified by UFOlogists as a "Man In Black". Therefore a large number of so-called MIBs are in fact actual government agents, Aegis operatives, Private Investigators or Jehovah's Witnesses.

Actually, the correct term would be micro gravity environment, as even in orbit and the depths of space we are never completely free of gravity's ever-present pull. But we will leave such details to the scientists . . .

THROW (AGL): The Throw skill allows a character to use weighted or balanced projectiles accurately and effectively. Such projectiles include shuriken, throwing knives, axes and throwing spikes. This skill does not apply to the throwing of non-aerodynamic projectiles like rocks and grenades, which is governed by the Strength Attribute. Df level is dependent on the weapon and range (see Strength tests in Chapter 4: Tradecraft).

TRACKING (PER): Tracking is the ancient art of following a creature (human, animal or otherwise) through a wilderness environment by tell-tale signs such as foot prints, spoor, broken vegetation and other subtle signs of passage. Because of the nature of the skill, it is of limited, if any, use in most urban environments. Key elements in determining the difficulty of a tracking attempt are the size and number of the target or targets, the age of the tracks and the terrain through which the tracker's quarry is traveling. For example, tracking a group of three men through muddy terrain just minutes after they passed would be simple (Df1). A more typical situation would be tracking a single individual through a forest with slight underbrush a day after he passed (Df3). A true master tracker would be able to follow week old rabbit tracks over solid rock back to his hole (Df5). The Tracking skill also incorporates knowledge of techniques of covering one's tracks to elude hunters, making any hostile tracking attempt much more difficult.

UFOLOGY (INT): The study of Unidentified Flying Objects and related phenomena such as crop circles, cattle mutilation, ancient astronauts, the Bermuda Triangle, the Men in Black, etc. Includes knowledge of specific incidents, cases and reports, and various theories, but does not include any knowledge of Aegis or The Black Book. Much of this skill's use for Aegis operatives is separating the fringe reports from the valid sightings, but a decent UFOlogy skill is also necessary to infiltrate civilian UFO groups.

VIDEO (PER): The skill of using a video camera and editing video tape to produce broadcast quality videos, similar to the Photography skill. A skilled videographer with a video camera can substitute his skill for his Perception Attribute for the purpose of Perception tests just as described in the Photography skill. However, this skill alone does not allow the faking or retouching of video tape. For that the Computer Use skill is also necessary.

TRAINING LIST

Cost: 10CP each

ZERO-GRAVITY MOVEMENT: A character trained to move easily in a zero gravity environment generally is or has been part of a spaceflight program, as there is little need for it otherwise. Moving without the familiar pull of gravity is very difficult for those not used to it and generally degenerates to clutching desperately to whatever surface is available and pulling oneself along slowly. Individuals properly trained, however, move easily in such situations by kicking off available surfaces and performing slow motion acrobatics to control direction and speed. The result is a strangely graceful combination of swimming and controlled falling.

Individuals trained in Zero Gravity Movement are also familiar with E.V.A. (Extra Vehicular Activity) equipment, such as spacesuit jet packs and compressed gas rockets used for movement on 'space walks' outside of orbiting spacecraft.

AWARENESS: Awareness training covers a wide variety of programs intended to teach people how to detect some specific situation more easily. Depending on the source of the training the situation could be Detect Ambush, Notice Concealed or Hidden Weapons, Spot Sniper, Detect Lies, Detect Disease Symptoms, Crime Scene Clues, or any number of other possibilities (subject to GM approval). The end effect is to reduce the Difficulty of Perception Attribute tests in the applicable situation by one. This training may be taken more than once for different situations, but the same training may not be taken more than once for additional benefit. Players should be sure to match their awareness specialty to their character's profession. A soldier would have Awareness: Spot Sniper, a doctor would have Awareness: Detect Disease Symptoms. A plausible explanation would be necessary for a scientist to have Awareness: Notice Hidden Weapons.

COMMUNICATION: Communication training familiarizes the character with the use of a number of high-tech communications systems. This training is necessary for a character to effectively use satellite uplinks, vehicle and base radios, signal scramblers, radar systems and radar jammers.

PARACHUTIST: This training is necessary for a character to be able to perform parachute jumps without assistance. Untrained individuals may only perform successful parachute jumps with the aid of a trained parachutist, who must remain with the character for the entire jump. Trained parachutists also are familiar with controlling their fall and can land in a target no larger than a few meters across.

RAPPELLING: Rappelling is the technique of using ropes to quickly descend sheer surfaces in a series of long controlled jumps. Rappelling works equally well down a rock cliff or the side of an skyscraper. Rappelling also enables an operative to descend quickly from a hovering helicopter to the ground in a controlled, but rapid, fall. Rappelling is used extensively by rescue teams working in mountainous areas, by S.W.A.T. teams for surprise entry into large metropolitan buildings, and by paramilitary units for quick deployment from helicopters.

S.C.U.B.A. DIVING: Characters with S.C.U.B.A. training are instructed in the use of various types of Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus and the proper techniques in prolonged underwater diving. Scuba gear is used extensively by scientists performing marine research, military forces and adventurous civilians. As should be apparent, a character must be able to swim before he or she can take S.C.U.B.A. training.

SURVEILLANCE: Surveillance training familiarizes characters with the proper placement and use of a variety of advanced surveillance gear. This training is necessary for characters to be able to use bugs and bug detectors, wiretaps and wiretap detectors, laser eavesdroppers, and shotgun microphones.

SURVIVAL: Survival training teaches techniques of survival with little or no proper equipment in a particular type of wilderness environment. This includes methods of acquiring food, clothing and shelter using only materials readily available in such an environment. It also connotes a familiarity with dangers inherent in particular weather, terrain or animal hazards. The training is tailored to a specific environment, which must be specified when the character is trained, but much of the survival training in one environment will often be applicable to other, similar environments. Possible survival training includes forest (temperate), arctic, mountain, desert, and marine (at sea).

PSYCH PROFILE

CAUTIOUS

Value: 10CP

A characters who is cautious lives by the adage 'measure twice, cut once'. She feels that if something is worth doing it is worth taking the time to do well the first time. She is rather unappreciative when placed under strict time constraints.

If a cautious character wishes to rush any test, she must make a Willpower test (Df1D) to be able to overcome her careful nature (this includes snap shots in combat).

EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS (VALUE 15CP): In addition to the usual effects of being cautious, the character must make a Willpower test (Df1D) to resist taking your time on any test.

CODE

Value: 5CP

Some characters live by an unbreakable code of conduct based on their concepts of morality or honor. These codes are an essential part of the character's personality and will never be consciously broken. The individual must obey the tenants of that code of conduct and may never choose to act contrary to it, even if the consequences are dire. If a character lives by the code "Never Betray a Friend" and is put into a situation where the only alternative to betraying his friend is to go to prison, for example, he had no choice, he always chooses prison. If the character accidentally breaks the code, or is tricked into breaking the code, all tests attempted thereafter will suffer a -2 target penalty until the transgression is righted. If the character mentioned in the previous
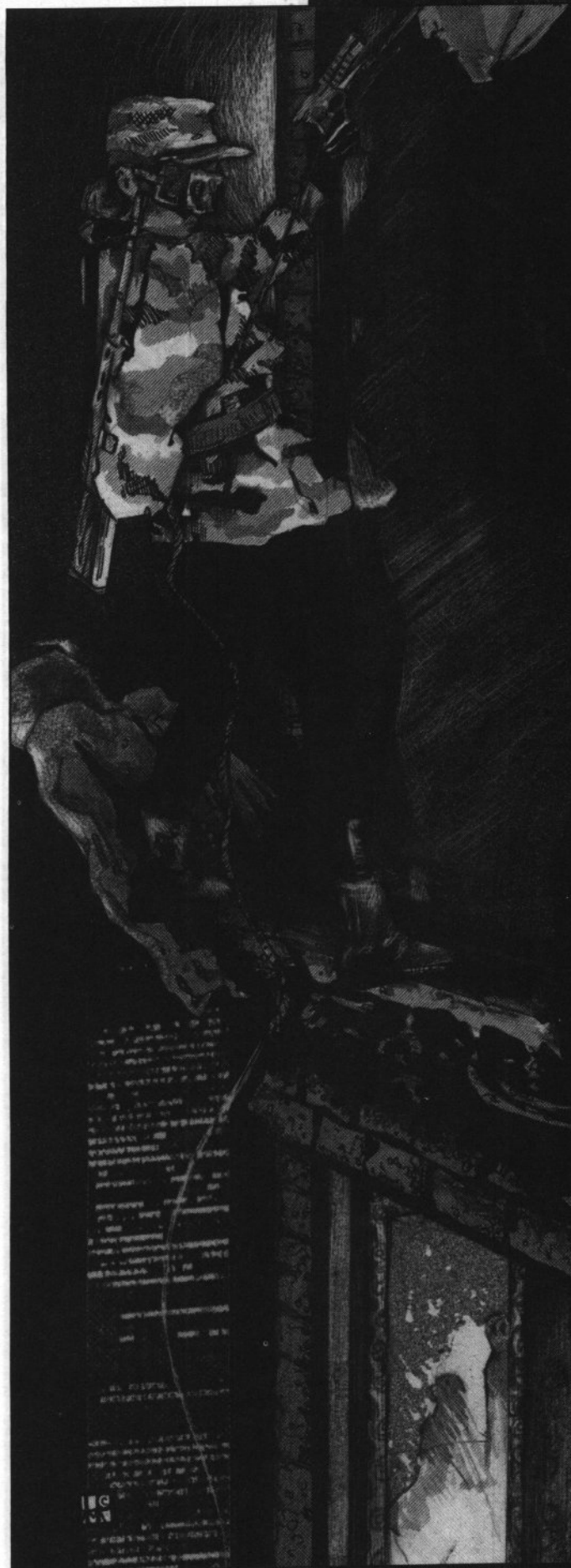
example was tricked into betraying his friend, which resulted in the friend being imprisoned, he would suffer the penalty until he was able to free her (by clearing her name, or perhaps breaking her out of prison). The exact requirements of atonement will depend on the circumstances, and as usual the GM has final decision.

If atonement is not possible, the character's guilt and its subsequent penalty may be absolved by spending a week of downtime in psychotherapy. The psychologist must test the Psychology skill against the Willpower of the patient, if the test is successful, the character's conscience is cleared along with the penalty.

CORRUPTED BY THE SUPERNATURAL

Value: 30CP

Prolonged or intense exposure to supernatural phenomena caused by psychic Seepage can corrupt a character's mind. Once a character has been corrupted by the Seepage, she is slowly driven increasingly insane by her heightened sensitivity to this pervasive energy. Eventually, the individual succumbs entirely and becomes a Focus for the energy of the Seepage. At this point the individual gains some control over her supernatural powers, but she is hopelessly lost. At that point, a character is completely out of the player's control and she must be handed over to the GM to play.

The exact nature and manifestation of this corruption depends on the circumstances which caused it. Corruption can be caused by curses, possession by spirits, or by participation in occult ritual, which need not be voluntary. Rituals that can cause corruption include the "traditional" spirit summoning rituals as well as more esoteric ones such as mutilation by a werewolf or a vampire's blood-letting. The possible nature of the character's corruption, its effects and eventual end result, as well as possible ways to counter or remove the corruption are detailed in Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

CREATURE OF HABIT

Value: 5CP

Somewhere along the line, the character has picked up a habit that he just can not kick. The behavior is so ingrained into the character that he usually doesn't even realize he is doing it. Habits are usually restrictive and possibly annoying to a character's teammates, but if the character is unable to indulge in his habit, he suffers a -2 target penalty to all tests he makes until he can. For example, a character whose habits include smoking cigarettes would be at a -2 target penalty any time he wasn't smoking.

Kicking a habit is tough, in order to permanently kick a habit the character must make a successful Wil4 test at the beginning of each week for four consecutive weeks. During this time, the character can resist his habit, but still suffers the -2 penalty. At the end of the fourth week, a final Wil4 test is made, if it is successful the habit is permanently gone. The weekly Willpower test can be made one rating easier if a psychologist counsels the character during the preceding week and makes a successful Psychology test against the character's Willpower.

FLASHBACKS

Value: 10CP

The character is haunted by vivid flashbacks of some horrific event in his past. The flashbacks usually occur suddenly, often triggered by a particular sight or smell or sound, and completely overwhelm the individual. Luckily, flashbacks seldom last more than a few moments.

The player should first determine what event the character flashes back to (with the GM's approval) and then determine what sort of stimuli are likely to trigger a flashback.

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Dr. Richard Vallen is tormented by flashbacks to the slaughter of his first Cell, a research team, in their lab. He arrived too late to save them and was the only survivor. His flashbacks are caused by the sight of multiple, recently killed corpses or sometimes by the strong smell of chemicals and blood.

When the character encounters a stimulus that could trigger a flashback, he must make a Willpower test (Df1D) or stand frozen and unaware of his surroundings for 1D combat rounds.

HOMICIDAL TENDENCIES

Value: 10CP

An individual with a homicidal bent tends to go a little overboard in combat situations. She often favors automatic weapons in gunfights and forms of martial arts that result in multiple broken bones. Her 'enthusiasm' during combat often leads to problems for the rest of the group as the body count threatens to rise beyond their ability to explain or cover up.

Whenever a character with homicidal tendencies gets into a fight, any fight, she must succeed in a Willpower test (Df1D) in order to avoid taking the most lethal action possible. In gun battles, this means firing long bursts of autofire whenever possible, taking head shots whenever feasible and using the largest weapon available. In hand to hand combat, this means using the most damaging combos at her disposal, and taking full advantage of the lethal potential of her surroundings (homicidal characters often wind up throwing a lot of opponents off rooftops or out of windows).

KILLER INSTINCT

Value: 10CP

Some people are just a little too high strung in tense situations. Some like to call this "well honed combat reflexes". Others call it very dangerous. In any case, the character's first reaction in any fight is to attack first and ask questions later. While this may occasional save the character's life, it also may end up killing bystanders or teammates.

Whenever the character has a weapon drawn, he is considered to be continually operating under the declared opportunity action "I attack the first thing that surprises or startles me." The character may make attempt a Willpower test (Df1D) to curb his destructive instinct.

IMPULSIVE

Value: 10CP

An impulsive character strongly believes that 'she who hesitates is lost' and has little patience. She acts quickly, feeling that any action is better than inaction. This does not necessarily mean that she acts without thinking, but she will make speed a priority.

The impulsive character must make a Willpower test (Df1D) to take your time with any test (this includes taking careful aim in ranged combat).

Extremely Impulsive (Value: 15CP): In addition to the effects of being impulsive, the character must make a Willpower test (Df[1D]) to resist rushing any test.

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER (MPD)

Value: 20CP

Someone with MPD has developed a second fully formed personality that will sometimes surface and take control of him in times of stress. The second personality will have a different name, mannerisms, and speech patterns, and will not be aware that it is sharing its body with another personality. When either of the personalities are in control, the other blacks out completely. The second personality may not use any of the skills, abilities or talents of the 'main' personality and must have a completely separate Psych Profile. The player may purchase talent, skills and abilities for the secondary personality just as he would for the primary personality drawing from the same 100 CP base total, except that the alternate personality may not have any skills higher than level two and any points gained from taking disadvantages for the secondary personality may only be spent on advantages for that personality. The second personality will take control of the character during any stressful situation, such as combat or interrogation, if the player fails a Willpower test (Df1D). The main personality will regain control 2D minutes after the situation is over. Regardless of which personality is in control, a test should be made to see if the other personality surfaces anytime the character needs to make a knockout test to avoid losing consciousness.

PACIFIST

Value: 15CP

The character is opposed to any type of physical violence. A pacifist will always try to find a non-violent solution to any problem or conflict. She will avoid direct combat, but may not have a problem with non-lethal means of subduing opponents, such as tear gas and tranquilizers. The pacifist may also practice

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Some Possible Codes: Never Attack an Unarmed Opponent, Never Steal, Never Lie to a Friend, Never Trust an Alien, Don't Use Guns, Don't Use Drugs

Some Possible Habits: Smoking, Drinking coffee every morning, Dress casually, Jogging daily, Picking fights in a bar, Leaves calling card at scene of crime

Kai possesses the following Traits: Impulsive, Strong ESP: Sixth Sense(1), Combat Experience and No Records.

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some form of 'non-violent' martial art that consists only of blocks, throws, and holds, such as Tai-Chi-Chuan or Judo. In order to take any violent action, she must succeed in a Willpower test (Df1D).

PARANOID DELUSIONS

Value: 10CP

The character believes that he is the target of some sinister, and usually unfathomable powerful, conspiracy. Coincidences that hinder the character will be proof to him that the conspiracy is engineering events against him. The paranoid sees strangers in dark suits following him everywhere. Friends who try to assure him that everything is all right are obviously being controlled by his unseen adversaries.

When the GM rolls a Perception test for a paranoid character that fails by one point, the character will sense something suspicious. He may see or hear someone following him, or he may smell poison in his food, or see ominous black helicopters circling overhead. The GM should take care to assure his paranoid delusions are plausible, so that their delusional nature is not immediately apparent to the player.

Acute Paranoia (Value: 15CP): The character detects something amiss if the Perception test is missed by one or two point

PHOBIA

Value: 15CP

A traumatic childhood experience has given rise to an irrational, overwhelming fear. It could be fear of water, heights, spiders, corpses, open spaces, the dark, or just about anything else. When confronted by the source of her fear, the character must pass a Willpower test (Df1D) or become paralyzed with fear. She must make another test after 2D combat rounds, rerolling the difficulty, if the source of the phobia is still present.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Value: 15CP

A schizophrenic sometimes hears voices telling him what to do or mocking him. The voices may come from a physical object, or may just be disembodied voices from thin air. In any case it is very, very distracting and not just a little unsettling. Of course the schizophrenic's state of mind is not at all helped by the fact that no one else can hear these voices.

When a schizophrenic finds himself in a stressful situation (combat, interrogation, defusing a bomb), he must succeed in a Willpower test (Df1D) or become distracted by the voices. For the duration of the situation, the character suffers a +1 Difficulty penalty to any actions.

MEDICAL HISTORY

ADRENALINE SURGE

Cost: 10CP each

A character with Adrenaline Surge is capable of working herself into a frenzy, flooding her system with Noradrenaline and Endorphins. This gives the character a brief burst of inhuman strength and completely blocks pain signals from reaching the brain. An Adrenaline Surge lasts 1D rounds, during which time the character's Strength and Willpower for all purposes are increased to five. While a character is operating under the influence of an Adrenaline Surge ignore all damage short of instant death (the stage above Splatter). Once the Surge wears off apply any damage taken during the Adrenaline Surge to character immediately, plus an additional Tw2 wound. Taking this advantage allows a character only a single Adrenaline Surge per mission, but it may be bought more than once.

ATLANTEAN NANOTECH

Cost: 30CP each

Most of the enigmatic Atlantean's impressive personal abilities are derived from their mastery of nanotechnology, microscopic machines capable of working on an molecular or even atomic level. The Atlanteans inject themselves with a solution containing specially designed nanotechology machines, called nanites. The nanites are transported by the bloodstream throughout the Atlantean's body, and quickly perform amazing alterations to Cell structures.

The Atlantean nanites are specialized. Some nanites construct delicate cybernetic systems throughout the body, giving the Atlantean conscious control over its natural organic systems. Others connect its nervous system to the wireless computer network that the Atlanteans use to pilot their spacecraft. Other nanites rework the very structure of the Atlantean's body, making it superhumanly strong and fast.

Humans and Atlanteans are similar physically, and it has been discovered that Atlantean nanites

perform much the same function in human bodies as they do in Atlantean bodies. For some reason, most likely because of unknown differences between the two races, Atlantean nanites do not function as flawlessly inside a human body. Nonetheless, some humans have been injected with Atlantean nanites successfully. Such injections usually occur through human experimentation with captured technology. More rarely, the Atlanteans perform the injections themselves.

Players should be aware that all Atlantean nanosystems are very susceptible to high levels of electromagnetic radiation. Whenever a character with one or more nanosystems is exposed to high levels of radiation from any source, a directed burst of microwaves, or the beam of a particle accelerator or an EMP weapon, the individual will take Wn2 damage and there is 1 in 6 chance that the nanosystem will be burnt out and destroyed completely. It is theorized, but as yet unproved, that the metallic bodysuits often worn by Atlanteans shield them from this effect.

Players may give any of the following nanite systems to their characters, but because of the rarity of Atlantean technology, an explanation should be given in each character's background and history.

BLOOD SURGEON REPAIR SYSTEM

This system appears to be one of the most common among Atlanteans, as none have been encountered to date without it. The system maintains a constant level of medical nanites in the subject's blood stream, waiting for any sign of damage. If trauma occurs, the nanites quickly cluster at the wound site to repair the damage. In Atlanteans, the system is so effective that even the massive tissue damage from a bullet wound is repaired in seconds. In humans, however, the system is not as reliable or efficient.

Whenever a character with the Blood Surgeon system receives takes lethal damage the nanites immediately cluster at the wound site and begin to repair the damage, as would be the case with Atlanteans. The reduced efficiency that results from operating on a human body, however, limits the initial effect to stabilizing the wound. No stabilization test is necessary, as success is automatic. Thereafter the nanites speed the healing process, allowing the character to heal in half the time usually required. The reduction of healing time also applies to any non-lethal damage the character sustains. The nanites will also reduce the pain caused by any wound (lethal or non-lethal), reducing the usage penalty usually associated with the wound by one stage (Splatter Wounds and Breaks only result in a +1Df usage penalty, and Flesh Wounds and Bruises cause no penalty at all). This effect is not cumulative with the similar effect gained by successful Medical or First Aid treatment.

As well as being more limited in their effectiveness, Atlantean Blood Surgeon systems operating in humans sometimes malfunction. Occasionally the Blood Surgeons will fail to properly diagnose the extent or source of the damage correctly, and actually harm the host by attempting to repair nonexistent wounds. Whenever the Blood Surgeons are activated by lethal damage the Player must roll a die, if the result is 6, the Blood Surgeons have malfunctioned and cause an additional Wn2 damage to the host. After the Blood Surgeons malfunction, they will not treat either the original wound or the additional damage caused by their error. If the nanites are reactivated by another wound, they will then take into account the original wound and the subsequent damage caused by their malfunction. That is, providing they don't malfunction again..

ASPECT MODIFICATION SYSTEM

One of the reasons the Atlanteans have been so difficult to capture, or even to monitor, results from a system that seems to have been originally designed to serve their tremendous vanity. The Atlanteans

have developed a nanotech Aspect Modification System that allows them to significantly modify their physical features at will, just by concentrating on the desired appearance for few moments. The system can modify eye color, skin color, and hair length, color and style within seconds. The system can also produce (or reproduce) skin coloration abnormalities such as blemishes, tattoos and scars, though it is unlikely that any Atlantean would adopt such features. The Aspect Modification System can also change the host's facial features by adjusting subcutaneous musculature and fat deposits, though this may take a few minutes. If the host is willing to lie still and allow the system to work undisturbed for at least an hour, it can even modify the host's height by up to six inches by lengthening or shortening key bones, though body mass can not be as easily adjusted.

The system is not as easy to control for humans. A human host attempting to control the Aspect Modification System must concentrate intensely for the duration of the change. Each modification is an extremely taxing process, particularly in the case of the more drastic transformations. A human host must succeed in a Willpower Attribute test to maintain concentration long enough to enact a modification. Successful or not, the host takes non-lethal exhaustion damage.

Skin, hair and/or eye color modifications require five rounds and a Df2 Willpower test. The exertion deals Br3 damage to the host. Changing the host's facial features requires ten rounds and a Df3 Willpower test. The mental strain and discomfort of the process does Tw2 damage to the host, even if it fails. Changing the host's height requires a full hour of concentration and a Df4 Willpower test. The extreme painful from such a process causes Tw3 damage.

PILOT INTERFACE CONTROL SYSTEM

Possibly the most valuable Atlantean system, at least as far as Aegis Prime is concerned, is the Pilot Interface Control System. These nanites rewire the host's nervous system to enable it to link directly to the standard cybernetic interface that controls any Atlantean vehicle. Since Aegis engineers have incorporated an Atlantean control system into the Aurora interceptor aircraft, only pilots who are 'equipped' with the Pilot Interface System can even attempt to pilot it. Without such a system, any attempt to steal or hijack an Atlantean craft is doomed to failure. A pilot who is host to such a system needs very little other training to fly an Atlantean craft due to the incredible sophistication of the ship's cybernetic systems. Nonetheless, compared to the amazing aerobatics a trained Atlantean pilot is capable of, the human would look about as capable as an arthritic monkey (which is about how the Atlantean would see him, anyway).

The incredible speeds that Atlantean craft operate at also require faster reflexes than possible with an unaugmented human nervous system (or Atlantean, it would seem). To keep the host from turning the craft into so much hypersonic debris, the Pilot Interface System temporarily boosts its host's speed well beyond the norm. In humans, this requires a round of concentration and a Df3 Willpower test, and lasts for 2D rounds. During the duration of the boost, the host's Reflexes Attribute is increased by one.

Unfortunately, as with all Atlantean systems, the Pilot Interface does not mesh as well with the human body as it does with the Atlantean. In a human host, the system tends to produce slight nervous twitches and ticks, particularly after it has been implanted a while. The twitches are just a nuisance, compared to the main side effect, however. Occasionally (roll a 6 on 1D) when a human host triggers the Reflexes boost function, the system overloads the host's nervous system, producing a black out and seizure.

BIO-BATTERY ENERGY SYSTEM

All Atlantean technology found to date has been completely devoid of any discernible power source, or any noticeable connections to such a

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source. This remained one of the key mysteries of Atlantean technology until the discovery of this nanosystem. The Bio-Battery Energy System produces electrical energy from waste chemicals and substances in the host's body. This makes the host's metabolism incredibly efficient and removes any need for the host to eliminate solid or liquid waste. The Bio-Battery system stores the generated energy in nanite batteries located subcutaneously in the palms of the host's hands. The system also renders the skin of the host's palm a superconducting circuit, which acts as an energy output link for Atlantean tools. The host simply grasps the tool and it is powered. A little ingenuity and some electrical jerry-rigging will allow the host to power small terrestrial devices that are usually run off batteries.

The system produces a number of interesing and useful side effects. The host can consciously generate a build-up of electrical charge to be discharged when the host touches a conducting surface. This electric discharge is capable of frying any non-shielded electronic device, like a computer or car starter, or stunning any human for 2D rounds who fails a Df4 Size Attribute test. Use of the system in this way does leave it depleted, though, and it will be unavailable for any purpose for a full hour.

As usual, the system was not designed for human physiologies, and some unpleasant side effects exist. The amount of energy created by the host's system is now much greater than the human norm. The body temperature of a host runs in excess of 100 degrees on average. It is suspected that one of the roles of the Atlanteans' metallic bodysuits (besides the stylish look) is that of a heat sink. This increase in body temperature causes the host to stand out like a beacon on any infrared vision device. Further, the human host's inability to radiate this heat effectively makes her very susceptible to heat exhaustion, particularly in warm climates. Whenever the host exerts herself continuously for more than five rounds (running or fighting, for example), she must make a Willpower test at a difficulty of 2, plus one for each additional five-round period she continues exerting herself. For example, a Bio-Battery host is engaged in a prolonged foot chase. She must make a Willpower test after the fifth, tenth and fifteenth rounds, against Difficulty 2, 3 and 4 respectively. If the host fails any such test, she will pass out for 2D rounds.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Cost: 10CP

An ambidextrous character can use either hand equally well, without suffering the off-hand penalty. The character is still penalized for trying to perform more than one action simultaneously.

DEEP SLEEPER

Value: 10CP

When the character sleeps, he falls quickly into very deep R.E.M. sleep and is extremely difficult to awaken. Anything short of physical damage has little chance of stopping the character from sleeping a full, uninterrupted eight hours. When the character is aroused from slumber prematurely (any damage at all will do it), he will remain groggy and suffer a +1 Difficulty penalty on any tests until he has gotten a full eight hours of sleep. After eight hours, the deep sleeper will wake up normally and without prompting.

DISTINGUISHING MARK

Value: 5CP

The character possesses some noticeable trait or mark that lends itself to easy identification. It may be possible to disguise the mark, but it would be difficult to remove entirely. The mark could be a prominent tattoo or scar, a skin discoloration, strange eye color, or a behavioral trait like a nervous tick or limp. The GM, as always, has final approval. The mark makes identification easy, increasing the difficulty of Shadowing or hiding in a crowd by one.

EXTRAORDINARILY AVERAGE

Cost: 10CP

When trying to keep a low profile, anonymity is a blessing. This character takes that to an extreme and epitomizes the statistical average for the population she lives in. Her appearance is extraordinarily forgettable, neither memorably attractive or noticeably ugly. The character blends in with crowds extremely well, and just about everyone knows someone who fits the character's description. APBs and requests for info bulletins - "Have you seen this man? If so contact the Houston Police Department at ..." generate many false leads.

The character gains a -1 Difficulty bonus to any attempts to Shadow or remain unnoticed in a crowd and the Difficulty of picking her out of a line-up is increased by one. These effects will not apply in locales where the local populace looks sufficiently different that the character no longer looks 'average'. For example an extraordinarily average Caucasian male will still stand out like a sore thumb in Haiti (but he will look like every other Caucasian the Haitians had seen . . .).

HIGH METABOLISM

Cost: 10CP

A character with a high metabolism burns fuel at a much faster rate than most people. The character is always restless, usually a little hyperactive and never gains weight regardless of how much she eats. This excess energy gives the character a +1 target bonus to any Reflexes tests, or skill tests that are modified by reflexes. In order to keep her energy levels up such a character must eat a lot more food than the average person. The character must eat a full meal every three hours, or suffer a +1 Difficulty penalty to any Willpower tests for every three hours she goes without. Because of the speed of the character's metabolism, drugs affect her twice as fast and wear off twice as fast. This could be a help or hindrance, depending on the circumstances.

HIGH PAIN THRESHOLD

Cost: 15CP

A character with a high threshold for pain gets hurt and takes damage just like anyone else, it just doesn't seem to affect him as much. The Difficult of any Stun or Knockout tests the character needs to make are reduced by one.

LIGHT SLEEPER

Cost: 10CP

The slightest noise or disturbance wakes this character from sleep, instantly alert and aware of his surroundings. Often this results in a fitful and unsatisfying sleep, but it is very difficult to surprise him when asleep, as he may make Perception tests without penalty.

LOW PAIN THRESHOLD

Value: 15CP

Some people are more susceptible to pain and injury than others. Characters with a low threshold for pain receive a +1 Difficulty penalty to any tests they need to make to avoid being stunned or knocked unconscious.

PHYSICAL TRAINING

Cost: 10CP

A character in physical training spends several hours each day exercising and working out. This keeps her toned and fit and gives her a +2 target to all Strength tests and +1 to her Strength Attribute modifier.

PSYCHIC BURN-OUT

Value: 10CP

At one point in the character's life, he possessed the ability to control powerful psychic disciplines. Tragically, that power was ripped from him by some disastrous event, making him a Psychic Void unable to use even the inherent ESP that most of humanity takes for granted. This burn-out could have been caused by an overdose of drugs (particularly the variety used by MKULTRA to enhance psychic powers), by psychic trauma (like contacting a powerfully psychic but hostile mind), physical trauma to the brain, or some other reason. Whatever the cause, the psychic burn-out is irreversible and the ex-psychic must live with only a vague remembrance of the power he once knew. One mild advantage is gained through this tragedy, however. The formerly psychic can still possess the mental discipline that allows him to shield his thoughts from prying minds. Someone born a Void would never be able to develop that skill. The ability to shield his thoughts, paired with the usual difficulty 'reading' a Void psychically, makes a burn-out Void very difficult to affect with Empathy, Telepathy or Trance. This trait may only be given to characters who were recruited from Project MKULTRA, Project Rasputin or as an Outsider Psychic. Characters with this trait may not also have Psychic, Supernatural Focus, Psychic Void, or Psychic Sink.

More information on specific psychic disciplines and shielding one's thoughts can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

RUNNER OR SWIMMER

Cost: 10CP

The character maintains a daily regimen of running or swimming. This keeps him healthy and gives him a +2 target bonus to all movement and endurance tests. The movement bonus applies only to movement on foot for Runners, or in the water for Swimmers. If a player takes both Runner and Swimmer, then the character receives the +2t bonus for both types of movement, but the endurance target bonus is noncumulative and remains +2. A character must be able to swim to take Swimmer.

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SLOW METABOLISM

Cost: 10CP

People with a Slow Metabolism have bodies that use fuel extremely efficiently. They need very little food to sustain themselves and generally have rather high endurance, but must constantly fight against becoming overweight. Characters with a Slow Metabolism only need to eat one decent meal each day and get a +1 target bonus to any endurance tests. Drugs take twice as long as usual to effect such characters and last twice as long.

TALENTS AND ABILITIES

ANIMAL ANIMOSITY

Value: 10CP

The presence of the character spooks all animals nearby. The animals will be openly hostile, and either run or attack if the character comes too close. Normally tame house pets will hiss or bark at the character, wild animals will attack immediately, and herds generally stampede at the sight of him.

ANIMAL EMPATHY

Cost: 10CP

Something about the character calms and relaxes animals near her. Animals never harm or attack someone with Animal Empathy, even if they have been specifically bred or trained to be hostile, providing she does not harm them. Both wild and domestic animals are affected, neither will attack the character and will be calm and quiet in her presence.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

Cost: 10CP

Some people have a nearly flawless memory and can remember every detail of things they have seen or heard, even years after the fact. Characters with photographic memory may recall anything seen in the past, allowing a Perception test as if they were right there, regardless of how much time has past. This does not, however, allow them to see things that weren't detectable the first time.

PSYCHIC

Cost: Lesser 30CP Greater 60CP

While 99% of humanity possess psychic abilities in the form of ESP, only a relatively small number of individuals demonstrate advanced psychic powers. Such characters have spent a great deal of time and

effort developing one or more of these powerful Psychic Disciplines. Only characters who have been recruited from certain backgrounds (Project MKULTRA, Project Rasputin, or Outsider Psychic) may take these advanced disciplines during character creation. However it is possible for almost anyone to develop these powerful disciplines later in the game. Characters with the Psychic Void, Psychic Burn Out, Supernatural Focus or Psychic Sink traits may not be a Psychic. A complete description of the various disciplines available and their effects can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

PSYCHIC LINK

Cost: 5CP

Some Psychic Disciplines and ESP abilities require the psychic to be able to see the target individual. Certain people have a strong psychic bond to each other which allows them to target each other with these abilities regardless of distance, even if the other person is out of sight. Characters with a psychic link share a close emotional bond, family members - particularly siblings or twins, partners and couples have all demonstrated this psychic link.. When a player chooses a psychic link for her character, she must decide who she is linked to, and why. The other party involved often has a similar link, but not always. In relatively rare cases, an individual may have a link to several people (most often family members) so characters may have multiple psychic links. A Character with the traits Psychic Void, Psychic Burn Out, or Psychic Sink may not have this trait.

PSYCHIC VOID

Value: 15CP

Often referred to just as Voids, Psychic Voids make up the small percentage of human beings that possess absolutely no psychic potential and are completely incapable of extra-sensory perception. These individuals are often loners who have difficulty relating to other humans on any level. Voids cannot use ESP or develop advanced psychic disciplines, and are unable to perceive the more subtle supernatural phenomena, particularly Telepathic Illusions.

Psychics find it difficult to "read" or effect Voids with psychic abilities such as Read Aura, Telepathy or Empathy. Whenever a psychic attempts to target a Void with any psychic ability or ESP, the corresponding Rhiner test is reduced by one. Therefore a Lesser Empath attempting to "read" a Void would make an R1 test rather than the usual R2. By the same note, R1 tests become impossible when targeting a Void (R0) and normally automatic successes become R4.

More information on Psychic Voids can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics and Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

PSYCHIC SINK

Cost: 15CP

Within the already small population of Psychic Voids, there exists a group of individuals with even more uncommon abilities. They are similar to Voids in their lack of psychic potential or ESP and the subsequent difficulty psychics have in affecting them. In addition, these individuals actually drain the power of psychics and supernatural phenomena around them. This strange effect has caused them to be named Psychic Sinks, or Psinks for short.

A Psychic Sink has the same effect on psychic powers directed at them as Voids. They have the further effect of draining the power of any Psychic Disciplines or ESP used near them. Anyone attempting to use a psychic discipline or ESP ability near the Psink must spend a Psi Point or Strong ESP Point to do so. This is in addition to any Psi or ESP point expenditure the discipline or ability would normally require. If the Psychic does not have the points available to spend, the discipline or ability may not be used.

The power of supernatural phenomenon are reduced in the presence of a Psink as well. The chance of a supernatural manifestation, due to ritual or high Seepage level is reduced near a Psink. Even the supernatural powers of The Incarnate are reduced when a Psink is present.

A Psink's dampening effect extends out from the individual in all directions for a number of meters equal to the Psink's Willpower attribute. If the Psink concentrates, he may increase the range of this effect by making a Willpower test. The player may decide how hard his character is concentrating by choosing the Difficulty Level (Df) of the test. If the test is successful the normal range of the Psink's effects may be multiplied by the Df. It is important to note that if a psychic or the psychic's target lies within the range of multiple Psinks, the effects are cumulative!

More information on Psinks can be found in the Chapter 5: Psychics and Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

QUICK DRAW

Cost: 10CP

The character has a gift for the fine art of the Quick Draw, which allows him to draw and use any small weapon in the same combat round without incurring the usual +1 Difficulty penalty. The weapon the character is drawing must be no larger than a machine pistol (knife, hold-out pistol, derringer, autopistol, revolver, machine pistol, sawed-off shotgun or magnum revolver).

STRONG ESP

Cost: 5CP per point/per ability

For each of the ESP abilities (hunches, sixth sense, aura reading, and second sight) the player may buy up to four points (total cost 20CP) of Strong Esp. Each point allows the player to draw another Zener card if she fails when using that ESP ability. When a player uses a Strong ESP point, the Zener cards are not replaced or redrawn; the player gets another try with full knowledge of the card that has already been drawn. As long as a character has Strong ESP points, any successful use of that ability do not count toward the usual limit of one successful use of any particular ability per mission. All Strong ESP points for all abilities are replenished at the beginning of each mission. Characters with the Psychic Burn Out, Psychic Sink, or Psychic Void Traits may not have Strong ESP.

Jim (normal ESP) and Shirley (Strong Sixth Sense 2) are creeping into an abandoned warehouse when a hidden Black Book agent fires a machine gun burst at them. Both decide to try to use their Sixth Sense to warn them beforehand. The GM shuffles the Zener cards and Jim predicts the top card will be the Star. The GM flips the card and reveals the Wave, no good, Jim will be caught by the burst of autofire. Now it is Shirley's turn and the GM again shuffles the cards. Shirley concentrates and predicts the Square. The GM flips the top card and reveals the Wave again. Normally that would be it, but Shirley decides (wisely) to use one of her Strong Sixth Sense points to draw again. The GM flips the second card and reveals the Square! Shirley tackles Jim, throwing them both behind cover as the hail of bullets pass harmlessly overhead. Since Shirley only needed to spend one Strong ESP Point, she still has one left. This means that her Sixth Sense will still be available later in the mission should she need it.

For more information see Chapter 5: Psychics

TIME AND DIRECTION SENSE

Cost: 10CP

Like some animals, the character has a keen sense of time and distance. She is aware of the exact time of day or night at all times, as well as the date. The character will always know the direction and approximate distance to anywhere she has been before. This does not mean she necessarily will know where she is, but she will know how far and what direction she has traveled, and how to get back to someplace familiar. If a character with direction sense awakens in a dark room after being knocked unconscious, she will know exactly how long she was out as well as how far and in what direction she was taken. It will not tell her exactly where she is. For example, her talent may tell her that she was unconscious for three hours and is now a hundred miles north of where she was and 300 feet underground, but not that she is now in the subbasement of a tenement on Davis street in Peoria.

SUPERNATURAL FOCUS

Cost: 20CP

Some people possess a strange and rare link to the supernatural world. These individuals somehow Focus the energy of psychic Seepage into the immediate area, greatly increasing the likelihood and power of supernatural manifestations. The life of a Supernatural Focus is likely to be filled with bizarre occurrences and weird phenomena. It is quite possible that the Focus has seen a ghost at some point, and may have been witness to some of the stranger aspects of the supernatural, such as fish falls or a perspective warping vortex. Many Foci turn to the study of religion or the occult to explain the mysterious events that surround them.

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A Supernatural Focus increases the ambient level of psychic Seepage in his immediate area, adding power to supernatural creatures and occult rituals. Sometimes the presence of the Focus will be enough to invoke a supernatural manifestation in and of itself. Such "random" manifestations may work to the Focus' advantage or may be dangerous, even lethal.

Characters with the Psychic Void, Psychic Sink, Psychic Burn Out or Psychic Traits may not be Supernatural Foci.

More information on Supernatural Foci and psychic Seepage can be found in Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES

CAN'T SWIM

Value: 5CP

The character has never had the opportunity or desire to learn how to swim. In water, he can only flail around and scream for a few rounds before sinking.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE

Cost: 10CP

Someone with combat experience is no stranger to violence, gunfire and explosions. Such hardened individuals do not need to make a Willpower test when exposed to automatic weapon fire or explosions.

CONNECTION

Cost: 15CP

The character knows someone in another organization that he can count on for help, and who can count on him for help. This allows the character to extend his influence to his connection's organization for any reason as if it were his own (no penalty). Having a connection within the character's own agency or organization gives him a -1 Difficulty to influence tests within the organization. When the connection is taken the player must choose the connection's organization from the list of Aegis recruitment organizations.

CONTACT

Cost: 10CP

The character knows someone in another organization that can get her information. This allows the character to extend her influence to her contact's organization for information purposes only. She cannot get equipment or access to facilities through a contact. Choose the contact's organization from the list of Aegis recruitment organizations.

CRIMINAL CONNECTION

Cost: 15CP

Connections with organized crime in a particular city can be as dangerous as they are helpful. Such connections can provide the character with fast access to illegal or hard-to-get equipment and weapons, but she runs the risk of getting caught up in conflicts between rival syndicates and the police. The player must specify the city where the criminal connection is located. As with all connections, an Influence test is required to get any help or aid. Help may take the following forms:

Untraceable weapons: The character can be provided with nearly any small arm, guaranteed untraceable, within hours. (Df1)

Chop shops: Give them a day, and just about any vehicle, commercial or private, can be acquired and modified to taste. Cabs, ambulances, delivery vehicles, armored cars, even police cruisers. (Df3)

Muscle: If the character needs a little back up, a quick phone call can bring a car load of thugs itching for a fight. Don't expect subtlety. (Df3)

Safehouse: If the character or her Cell needs a safe place to lie low for a while, the criminal connection can definitely produce. All the modern conveniences and guaranteed safety from the authorities. (Df4)

CRIMINAL CONTACT

Cost: 10CP

The character knows a 'snitch' who can get him information on shady dealings throughout the city. The contact can tell him where to find specific criminals, crime scenes and info on criminal operations, details of security systems in most prominent buildings, and entrance to criminal establishments. Of course, the snitch is always a good source for the general "word on the street". Like the criminal connections, the player must choose which city his contact operates in.

DEAD

Value: 10CP

At some point in the character's past, it was necessary to fake his death. This may have been needed to recruit him into a secret project without raising the suspicion of his former employer, or it may have been to protect him from hostile forces who were hunting him. In either case, any records from the character's life before he 'died' are now defunct and background checks will not reveal any of the character's postmortem activities. If the character now has a New Identity, a fingerprint or similar search will have a 1 in 6 chance of finding the 'dead' identity as well as the new one. A character from a legitamate government organization (US Military, NASA, Secret Service, DEA, FBI, NSA or CDC) who takes Dead must also take New Identity or Severed Ties.

FAVOR

Cost: 5CP

Someone in another organization owes the character. The individual may not care much for the character but feels bound to honor her request, once. This allows her to extend her influence to his organization for any purpose, one time. If she plays her cards right and returns the favor, he might be willing to help her again sometime.

GUARDIAN ANGEL

Cost: 20CP

A benevolent supernatural spirit has attached itself to the character and is acting as the character's protector. The reason for such an 'attachment' varies. The spirit could be that of a close relative who vowed to care for the character, or the spirit could be the result of a spell or ritual. The character need not even be aware of the reason for the spirit's strange affinity, or even of the existence of the spirit at all.

Regardless of the cause, the spirit will attempt to help the character in situations that threaten the character's life. When such a situation occurs (the spirit will not manifest for insignificant dangers), the player may roll 1D to determine whether the spirit can (or will) attempt to help. If the result is equal to or less than the ambient Seepage level of the area, the spirit may manifest itself briefly to aid the character. The player may use the spirits powers of Telepathic Illusion or Telekinesis for one round (five seconds) to help the character. One caveat however, the forces of the supernatural are unpredictable, and if the result of the die is a six, the spirit turns hostile for a moment. The GM may then use the spirit's power of Telepathic Illusion or Telekinesis to harm, rather than help, the character. In these cases the spirit will most likely act indirectly, by drawing attention to the character, for example.

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Details on Seepage levels, spirits, telepathic illusions, telekinesis and the supernatural can be found in Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

HAUNTED

Value: 20CP

This is the evil counterpart of Guardian Angel: a malevolent spirit has attached itself to a character for the purpose of driving him mad. The purpose of a haunting spirit is seldom the death of the victim, perhaps because, like a parasite, the fiendish specter would perish along with its host. The possible causes of a haunting are as varied as those of the benevolent Guardian Angel, a curse, spell, ritual, or perhaps the character killed a particularly evil Supernatural Focus, or strong-willed Incarnate.

Whatever the source, the Haunt manifests in much the same way as the Guardian Angel. During any particularly dangerous or critical moment the character faces, the GM may roll a die to determine whether or not the spirit will seize the opportunity to act. As with its more kindly kin, if the result is less than or equal to the ambient Seepage level of the area, the spirit can and will manifest, but to the character's detriment. A Haunt has the same powers of Telepathic Illusion and Telekinesis at its disposal. The Haunt is also subject to the same mysterious and momentary change of heart as the Guardian Angel, if the result of the die roll is six. Perhaps it considers the threat to its host too great, in which case the player may use the spirit's powers to his or her advantage.

Details on Seepage levels, spirits, telepathic illusions, telekinesis and the supernatural can be found in Chapter 6: The Supernatural.

MEDIA CONNECTION

Cost: 15CP

The character has well-placed connections in the Media. The exact nature of the connection is up to the player. The player must choose a particular newspaper, magazine or television network for the connection, which will determine the nature of the help that is available. Some examples of the help such a connection could give and the difficulty of the corresponding Influence test are given below.

Press Pass: The character is provided with official press passes allowing her to pose as a reporter or attend 'invite only' functions. (Df1)

Equipment: The connection could provide the character with news vans, video cameras, or even the use of "eye in the sky" news helicopters for short-term "assignments". (Df3)

Release False Stories: With enough influence, the character could convince the media agency to jeopardize its own credibility by releasing false news stories and reports to cover up the character's activities or to provide disinformation. (Df5)
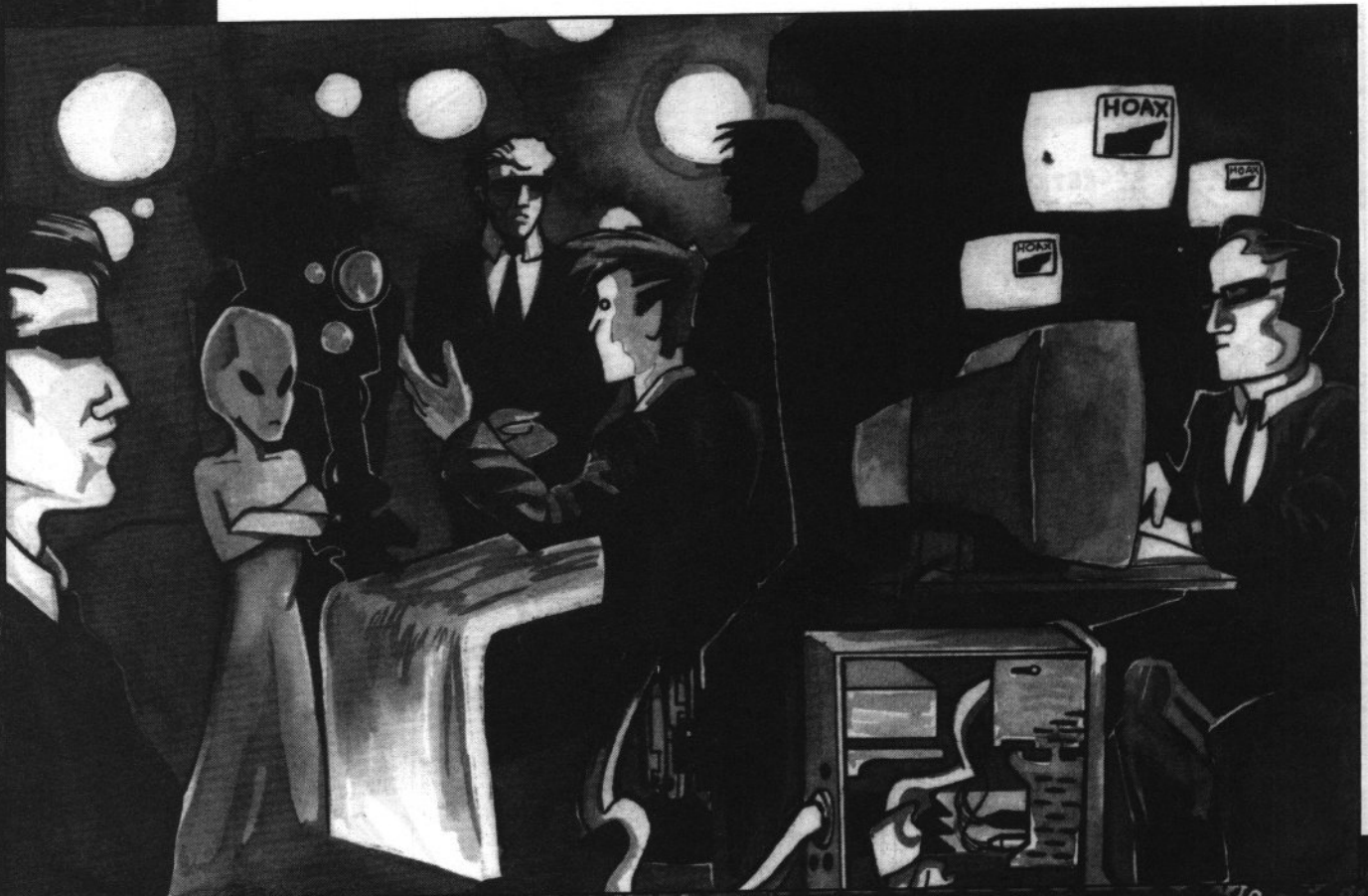
MEDIA CONTACT

Cost: 10CP

A contact within the media industry can provide a character with valuable information, as most media agencies have large intelligence networks of their own. Such a contact can provide unreleased information on stories in progress, tips that the organization receives, the names of sources, info on particular stories that get canceled from "high up", and media blackouts that are imposed by the government. Of course, the contact can also provide access to the agency's extensive archives. As with the Media Connection, the player must specify the media organization that employs the contact.

MEDIA LEAK

Cost: 5CP

The character knows a reporter for a newspaper, magazine, or TV news show that has less than the highest scruples. By giving the leak information anonymously and "off the record", the character can be assured it makes it into the news by the next issue. This is an ideal method for distributing disinformation. The player must choose which news agency the leak is associated with when Media Leak is chosen.

NEW IDENTITY

Cost: 15CP

The character, or the character's allies, have gone through the considerable effort of creating an separate set of records for a new identity, complete in every detail. The character has most often maintained his normal identity and records, but has a complete and virtually perfect set of false records he can use as well. This is a great boon to the undercover or covert work the character performs, as the alternate identity will hold up under nearly any background check. The faked documents are usually detected only when a fingerprint or physical description check brings up the character's true identity records (only a 1 in 6 chance, in most cases).

NO RECORDS

Value: 10CP

The character has managed to have all records of her life destroyed. Any background search, regardless how thorough, will turn up nothing. This is most often done for members of covert black operations teams to provide full deniability of the individual's actions. The CIA, Project MKULTRA, and Operation Moondust are among the organizations that employ these untraceable agents. A character with No Records may not be employed by a the CDC, FBI, NASA, NSA, DEA, or the Secret Service, and may not take Dead or New Identity.

Occasionally this tactic is used on someone to neutralize or discredit him. If, for example, a researcher at The Ranch decided to come forward and tell the story of what he witnessed on the base, Aegis may decide to have all the researcher's records erased. Employment and academic records would be particularly important in this case, to assure that his story impossible to prove.

Regardless of the reason for the erasure, a character with No Records will have no identification, passport, social security number, credit cards, driver's license or any other official records. If the character needs these or any other such record, he will have to find forged documents or some other way around the problem.

NOTORIETY

Value: 15CP

The character has attained some degree of fame within a certain group of people. This publicity is most definitely unwanted, even if its cause reflects favorably on the character. Whether it is for good or ill, being easily recognized is not an ideal situation for someone who is operating in a covert conspiracy. The player should detail the situation which brought the character this unwanted fame, and the type of people who are likely to recognize him. If the character is a Secret Service agent, she might be known among law enforcement or government officials for thwarting an attempt on the President's life. If she is an Occultist, she may be recognized by watchers of a particular pseudo-news television program for a flashy expose on the Occult. The GM of course must approve the player's choice. If the character comes in contact with someone who may recognize her, the GM should make a Perception test for the NPC (Df1D+1) to see if the character is recognized.

POLICE CONNECTION

Cost: 15CP

A well-placed law enforcement connection can prove invaluable to operations or investigations within that city. Access to police crime labs and evidence lockers can free a team from needing to send samples

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back to the Cell's lab (if they have one) and a powerful connection can ensure that the Cell can pursue its investigations within the city without being harassed by the police. Police connections are specific to one city, which the player must choose when the connection is chosen. Some examples of the help a police connection can provide (and their respective difficulty) follow.

Backup: The police are already on patrol all over the city, so one phone call can bring them running. The character's connection can assure that at least two squad cars arrive within 1D minutes. (Df1)

Safehouse: The safehouses used to house important witnesses awaiting their turn to testify can also be ideal for a Cell looking for a place to hide from prying eyes. They are even protected by the city's finest. (Df2)

Access to crime labs or evidence lockers: Police crime labs are usually small but well-equipped. They will usually not support more than a few researchers (less than six) but are well-furnished with equipment, particularly in the fields of pathology, ballistics, chemistry and toxicology. The evidence lockers store all evidence taken from crime scenes and suspected criminals. If the police have managed to take a piece of damning evidence before the Cell could get it, this is the place to find it. (Df3)

Close investigation: If enough influence can be brought to bear, the character can have an entire investigation closed prematurely. This can help cover up the activities of the Cell and make sure they are allowed to complete their operation in peace. (Df4)

Vehicles and uniforms: Characters with particularly highly-placed connections can find themselves police for a day. There is virtually no better cover for an urban operation than that of the boys and girls in blue. Characters should be very careful not to be revealed as impostors, or they may find their connection serving time and much unwanted scrutiny directed at them. (Df5)

POLICE CONTACT

Cost: 10CP

An officer of a municipal police department is willing to provide the character with extensive information on the investigations and operations of the city police department. The contact can get the character access to the police computer system and records archive, information on current investigations in progress and ongoing surveillance information. The character can even get into closed crime scenes. The player must specify what city his contact works in when the contact is taken.

PUPPET

Cost: 15CP

A puppet is someone that the character can call on for information and aid. This person is generally not very powerful, but can personally aid the character. This person knows nothing of Aegis or of the truth about the conspiracies, but may suspect that not everything about the character is on the up and up. The puppet may be a government agent, or a member of a private research organization. Whatever the case, the puppet usually follows the character's instructions either because he believes he is doing the 'right' thing or he hopes to be clued in onto what is actually going on. Some puppets, though, are just in it for the money or the adventure. A puppet is usually reliable, and is useful for situations where the Cell has need of someone who is not associated with Aegis or when the Cell needs to be distanced from some action to avoid detection or blame. Still, puppets should not be endangered unnecessarily, as they can be valuable assets and may prove worthy of recruitment into the character's Cell. Puppets are also excellent candidates to begin a new Cell if the characters feel that is necessary.

When a player takes a puppet, he or she should give the GM a description of the type of person the puppet is. The GM will then create a normal (100 CP) character for the puppet and play him as necessary as an NPC.

SEVERED TIES

Value: 20CP

The character is no longer an active member of any government organization other than Aegis. She may only exert her influence through connections, contacts and favors. This only applies to characters who were once part of a government organization. Unaffiliated psychics or occultists have no ties to sever.

VETERAN

Cost: 10CP

Characters who have been part of Aegis for a while often pick up skills and training that would not be available to others in their profession. Aegis veterans may add Small Arms: Pistol, Autofire, Martial Arts, Occult, UFOlogy and Parapsychology to the list of skills that they may begin the game with at professional level or higher. Veteran characters may also add communication and surveillance to their starting training list.

WANTED BY THE LAW

Value: State 10CP Federal 20CP

The character is wanted, perhaps justly, perhaps not, by law enforcement officials in connection with some crime. The player should determine exactly what crime is accused, and whether the allegations are true. The character may be wanted by either State or Federal agencies, which determine both its value in CP to the player, and just how often the character is likely to run into trouble. A character Wanted by the Law may not be currently employed by a legitimate government agency (US Military, NASA, Secret Service, DEA, CIA, FBI, NSA or CDC).

WATCHED

Value: 15CP

The character has attracted the attention of a group that could make things difficult for him and his Cell. The character may not be under active surveillance (people tailing him or bugging his home), but even so the player will have to be extra cautious not to arouse the group's suspicion. There are many organizations that could be watching the character. The exact nature of their suspicion and the methods they use to keep tabs on the character will vary greatly. It is likely that the group is unaware of the truth, particularly about the character's participation in Aegis, in which case it is vitally important that they remain unaware. Some groups, namely The Black Book or groups of Extraterrestrials, may be aware of the character's connection with Aegis. These groups are usually just as interested in keeping the truth hidden as the character.

Any "suspicious" activity has a 1 in 6 chance of drawing the organization's attention. What behavior exactly constitutes "suspicious activity" is left largely up to the GM and would depend at least partially on what "normal" activity would be for the character. In most cases, odd or sudden travel, unexplained absences at work, or an unusual frequency or type of visitors, would certainly count as suspicious. At that point, surveillance or investigations will probably be initiated into the character's activities.

DETAILS

By now you should have a good idea of what you want your character to be, and have taken the skills and abilities you think they will need. The final step it to bring life to your character by fleshing out the little details that make characters more than just the words and numbers on the paper before you. Make note of such things as name, ethnic background, right-handed or left-handed, favorite foods, fears, allergies, etc.

Establish your character's background as best you can before the first time you play. Work with the Game Master to create a background that suits you and perhaps will even help the GM in preparing new missions.

Make a few decisions that will determine your character's motivations and goals. If you can think of your character's reaction to simple things, deciding how he or she would act in grander scales becomes much easier.

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Possible "Watchers":
The Black Book, Aliens,
Media, Government
(FBI, NSA, CIA, CDC,
Secret Service),
UFOlogists, Occultists

CHAPTER 3
OPS CENTER

The six of us sat together in what looked like some kind of high-tech war room. The room was hidden behind some very clever secret passages in Baxter Labs. A screen on one wall projected images of building plans for a warehouse. On another wall, a map of the United States showed a little glowing lights indicating USAMRID, Maryland, and Dulce, New Mexico. Off to one corner was a computer work station -- the link up to the HERMES main frame. On the corner of the table closest to where Vallen was sitting was a red phone with no buttons, just a red light that would flash were someone to call.

"I made the decision to send Johnson, Kai, and Jeanette to the site of the warehouse. You'll be looking for clues, anything that could lead us to the whereabouts of the scientist who originally had the embryos. We know that he was a Black Book defector, but how he ended up with the embryos is a mystery. And we have to question why The Black Book didn't bring him back with them when they retrieved the embryos. There's a chance he got away and may still be alive. Aegis needs to know this, and if he is attainable, we need to bring him in.

"One thing is clear, this is the closest Aegis has ever gotten to learning about the Saurians, so we don't want to screw this up."

Vallen's voice was filled with confidence, like many years ago when I knew him. Before he was a part of this, he was a very powerful man, filled with ambition. Back then I knew, even before I ever understood what he was involved in, that I had lost him to some secret too dark for him to share. I was so jealous. Finally, I got over him, and out of the blue he brings me into this dark world. My thoughts returned to the present at the mention of my name.

"No offense to Jeanette," Johnson was speaking, "I'm sure she's a fine scientist, but why are you sending her with us? Wouldn't she be more useful to you at the Institute?"

Vallen glared at Johnson. His forehead wrinkled and his tone of voice changed.

"I really don't think I need to justify this . . . but to satisfy your curiosity, I'm sending her with you because if you come across any of the good scientist's notes, she is best suited to interpret them. Besides that, you will be surprised at how resourceful she is. You will find her assistance necessary at some point, I'm certain."

Vallen glanced over at me. I couldn't help but smile at him. It was a tender smile, just like those I give him years ago. I quickly glanced around the room to see if anyone saw it. Tristan did. He looked at me as if he understood everything that had ever occurred between Vallen and I. It was as obvious to Tristan as it was to me that Vallen wanted me to go with Kai and Johnson because I would be well protected if trouble arose.

"So are there any other questions before you suit up and head out?" Vallen couldn't help the irritated tone that lingered in his words.

Johnson noticed it, and dug a little deeper, "Just one sir, that phone over there, is it a direct line to Aegis Prime or something?"

"What? This phone?"

Vallen picked up the phone. No cords connected anywhere.

"This phone is purely for effect. I always wanted a Batphone when I was little, so I've got one now." Vallen cracked a smile and the worry lines disappeared.

Johnson laughed and the tension in the room abated. "Okay ladies, let's gear up and go."

Johnson grabbed what seemed to be the usual gear for Kai and himself: a couple of assault rifles, two handguns a piece, extra ammo, intrusion equipment, a mini video camera. While Johnson loaded up, Kai fitted me with a flack vest. It was bulky and hard to maneuver in, but I was relieved to know that Kai was watching out for me.

"Now remember Jeanette, if there's any trouble stay down and keep covered, we'll handle it. Let us secure the place before you even enter it. Will you need anything?"

I was little nervous.

"I've got everything I'll need in my bag. I packed ahead of time for this."

Kai looked at me kind of strangely when I said that. I could tell she was curious about what was in my bag. She'll learn soon enough.

Vallen turned to Johnson. "Remember to contact us in four hours. By that time we'll be in and out of AMRID. If there's problems, get on the Cellular. That goes both ways, so if we run into trouble you'll know."

As the three of us continued to get ready, Vallen briefed Tristan and Alise on their part of the plan.

"So the three of us are heading over to the Institute in Maryland. I'm using some connections so we will going in with the CDC as our cover. After we get in, I will head down to one of the labs to work on a viral strain with a colleague of mine. The two of you will locate Dr. Boland's office.

"Our plant in USAMRID has indicated that Borland is the scientist who has the embryos. Be careful, Boland's Black Book. We want to keep this low profile, so avoid confrontation. Our goal is to find out the details of the transport of the embryos. Alise, you'll need to be prepared to hack into Boland's personal files. Our plant went trashing and came up with five possible pass codes. He uploaded them to HERMES, so get them before we go.

"Tristan, you will back up Alise. Also, once in his office, see if you can pick up some indication of how they're traveling. Remember, this needs to happen quickly and quietly. Then we'll rendezvous with Johnson's team."

A short time later my group departed. I could hear Johnson explaining how things were supposed to go. I heard him mention my name once or twice and I just nodded in agreement. I really didn't hear a thing he was saying. My mind was distracted by Vallen. I couldn't help but wonder whether he brought me into Aegis because he wanted me back in his life. Since he couldn't leave the organization, maybe he wanted me in it. Hell, what am I thinking? Right now, I have to pay less attention to my personal life and more to the dangerous situation I'm about to walk into.

FORMING THE CELL

When characters are recruited into an Aegis, they pool their collective resources to establish a base of operations. This is generally referred to as the Cell. This base houses the equipment and facilities that they may rely on during the course of an operation. Other equipment and resources may be acquired during the course of an operation by pulling strings. These other resources, however, are less reliable and not as readily available as the equipment, facilities and staff of the Cell.

After the players have finished creating their characters, they should gather to create the Cell. Creating a character is largely a task for the individual player. Cell creation, on the other hand, is an exercise in cooperation. The players must draw from their character's various backgrounds to build an effective base that will provide them with adequate resources during their operations. In the end, the Cell and it's facilities will be the property and responsibility of the entire team, not an individual character. This is so even if one character drew upon more resources to create the Cell than the others.

There are five properties of the Cell that need to be addressed: Location, Facilities, Staff, Equipment and Special Resources. Each element of these properties is rated by the type and amount of influence necessary to acquire it for the Cell. There are five different areas of influence: Military, Intelligence, Science & Research, Criminal, Police, and Media. A character's background dictates what type of influence may be wielded. A character may also exert influence through his Connections, giving him influence in areas he would not normally have.

Dr. Hector Berenson, a director at NASA, is a liaison with the U.S. Army Space Command and has a close friend on the CBS Board of Directors. Dr. Berenson may directly or indirectly exert influence in the areas of Science & Research (due to his position at NASA), Military (through his connection in the U.S.A.S.C.) and Media (from the CBS director).

A player may spend Resource Points on any property of a Cell that requires the area of influence exercised either by her character's organization or by her character's connections. Note that contacts

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Influence Icons

Military

Intelligence

Science & Research

Criminal

Police

Media

within an organization do not allow the character to use that organization's influence. In addition, some organizations allow the player to spend points on Special Resources unavailable outside that particular organization.

Through his position at NASA, Dr. Berenson may arrange to have one of NASA's fleet of SR-71 Blackbird spy planes shipped to the Cell, and then 'lost' from official NASA records. Only someone from NASA or with a connection within NASA could have this done, Science & Research influence alone would not be enough.

The amount of pull necessary to acquire a particular element for a Cell is rated by the number of Resource Points. Like Character Points, players spend these points to obtain the element during the formation of the Cell. However, Resource Points are different in that characters with the same area of influence may pool points together to appropriate an element they would not normally be able to afford. Characters may only contribute points toward the acquisition of Special Resources if they are from, or have a connection within, that organization.

Dr. Berenson's Cell includes a NASA astronaut and a researcher with the Center for Disease Control. When pooling points to obtain the SR-71 Blackbird, the astronaut may contribute points, but the CDC researcher may not (unless he has connections within NASA).

Each member of a Cell may spend five Resource Points per level of Influence they possess. Resource Points that are not spent are lost once Cell creation is completed.

PROPERTIES OF A CELL

LOCATION

Choice of location is important. Further, a Cell may have more than one location. Any details not provided here should be fleshed out by the players.

UNDERGROUND

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 15RP

A covertly constructed, underground base is without exception the best possible location for a Cell. Security is unparalleled. Underground bases vary greatly, depending on the specific needs of the Cell that creates them. They range from cavernous aircraft hangars and research facilities built under mountains to secret sub-basements beneath downtown skyscrapers.

Restrictions: Facilities for aircraft are understandably more difficult to build underground. Entrances for vehicles also require special consideration. Underground hangars and garages require vehicle elevators. Airstrips will be either above ground, and visible, or will cost another 5 Resource Points to build underground.

MILITARY BASE

Resource Cost: 🎖 15RP

One of the most desirable locations for a Cell, a military base allows the members of the Cell to operate with a freedom that is seldom possible with other sites. The Base Commander may be a member of the Cell itself. If so, and if the base is small, the Aegis operatives may be the only personnel on base. Other Cells may be hidden among the numerous facilities and projects on a larger base. Security and workspace are seldom problems for Cells located on military bases. On the other hand, operatives must be aware that security from other military personnel who are not Aegis operatives is still an issue. A surprise spot check from a curious Brigadier-General can mean disaster for an unprepared Cell. Military bases include Barracks and a Brig.

Restrictions: Only characters in the U.S. Military and Operation Moondust may spend Resource Points for a Military Base location. The characters must be active members, connections within these organizations are not sufficient.

MARINE RESEARCH VESSEL

Resource Cost: ⚗ 10RP

The Marine Research Vessel is a massive ocean-going ship designed to serve as a maritime research center for extensive research projects at sea. The ship contains living quarters and supplies suitable to maintain continued operations for several months or more. The ship's command center is equipped with a radar array, GPS terminal and base radio. The deck includes a Helipad and room to accommodate up to two additional watercraft, such as Mini-subs or Speed boats (must be purchased separately).

Restrictions: Only a single additional Large facility may be built into the boat (and no airstrip)

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Operations and
Organizations
Influence Types

CDC	🎖
CIA	📷
DEA	🎖 📷
FBI	📷
Groom Lake	⚗
Illuminus	all
NASA	⚗
NSA	📷
Occult Researcher	⚗
Outsider Psychic	none
Project MKULTRA	⚗
Project Moondust	🎖
Project Rasputin	⚗
US Military	🎖
Secret Service	📷

RESEARCH FACILITY OR INDUSTRIAL PARK

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ ⚗️ 10RP

Providing the Cell with ample room for Large facilities, high security, modern utilities and considerable freedom from surveillance, a portion of a Research and Industrial Park makes an ideal Cell locations. Such installations are often disguised by legitimate "front" operations to avoid suspicion by local or government agencies. This location come with a Mainframe computer facility.

Restrictions: It is prohibitively expensive to incorporate more than two Large facilities into a portion of a Research Facility or Industrial Park.

ESTATE

Resource Cost: (Special) 5RP

Independently wealthy individuals have an option for the placement of the Cell that is not available to other characters. A private estate provides exCellent security and seclusion as well as an established suite of facilities and room to build more. The Estate provides the Cell with a pool, gym, garage and six bedrooms (dormitories) at no extra RP cost.

Restrictions: Since palatial estates are not available to most characters, all five Resource Points must be spent by characters who are either Illumini or Occult Researchers. No more than one additional Large facility may be incorporated into the estate, and no airstrip.

WAREHOUSE

Resource Cost: 🎖️ 🗡️ 5RP

Generally the only way to locate Large facilities within city limits is to base the Cell in a warehouse in the industrial district. The Cell's activities are also less likely to draw unwanted attention in a city's relatively unpopulated industrial zone. At night the area is often nearly deserted, allowing the Cell to operate under cover of darkness. The primary disadvantage of a warehouse Cell is the lack of amenities and added difficulty in providing adequate security.

Restrictions: Though spacious, warehouse space is difficult to modify to accommodate more than a single Large facility. Further, as should be expected, no airstrip is possible.

OFFICE BUILDING

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⚗️ 🗡️ 5RP

Modern facilities, decent security and exCellent opportunities for "front" organizations make the urban office building a good choice for a Cell that needs an metropolitan base of operations and does not mind

neighbors. Office suites provide, free of charge, several modern business necessities: ten inbound phone lines, a computer workstation, fax machine, copier and most importantly, a paper shredder. Many Cells containing high ranking agents from organizations such as the CDC, FBI or CIA. This allows the office to pose as the local branch office of that agency. A small staff from the "front" agency handles daily business and routine operations unaware of the true nature of the facility.

Restrictions: Office buildings suffer from space restrictions. Also, due to zoning ordinances, living quarters and similar facilities must be carefully camouflaged. An office building Cell may not have an airstrip, and can have no Large facilities.

BOMB SHELTER

Resource Cost: 2RP

The legacy of decades of cold war paranoia and preparation, bomb shelters exist in every town and city across the nation. Their disuse, seclusion and security make them ideal bases for smaller Cells with few resources, and exCellent bolt-holes for equipment and weapon stashes for larger Cells. Wise placement of bomb shelter caches ensures that a Cell is never too far from supplies.

Restrictions: The major drawback to a bomb shelter is lack of space. A bomb shelter may have no Large facilities, no airstrip, no Helipad, and the total combined maximum lab and workshop staff may not exceed five.

FACILITIES

The facilities at the Cell's base will determine what types of research, training and other activities can be undertaken without the assistance or involvement of outsiders, which is always as security risk. The Cell base is itself considered extremely secure, as are all of its facilities and attendant personnel, so keeping investigations on-base is always preferred. In addition to the facilities listed below, the Cell base automatically includes such security measures as necessary for it to comply with Aegis security standards, as well as any mundane facilities such as kitchens, dining space, and restrooms.

Some facilities are listed as being Large, or may be considered Large if a certain number of them are incorporated into a Cell. Pay careful attention to these facilities, as the number of Large facilities that may be built into a particular Cell location is often limited.

BARRACKS

Resource Cost: 2RP (2 or more =Large)

Minimal on-site quarters for up to ten people. Includes five double bunks, lockers, showers, lavatories.

BRIG

Resource Cost: 2RP (2 or more = Large)

A secure holding area for up to four prisoners, complete with meal slot and dual-function toilet/sink.

BIOHAZARD SUITE

Resource Cost: 5RP + RPs equal to the maximum staffing level

The Biohazard Suite is not so much a facility in itself, but rather an addition or modification of a Laboratory facility. Converting a lab to a Biohazard Suite involves making it airtight, adding an airlock and decontamination area (called the Gray Zone), an air filtration system and Biohazard Space Suits. These modifications make the lab a Biohazard Level 4 secure area, fully equipped for work with lethal viruses, chemical and biological agents and extraterrestrial biological samples and life forms.

When working in a Biohazard Suite, researchers first enter a preparation room where they don Biohazard Space Suits. They then enter the Gray Zone airlock where they are showered with UV radiation and antiseptic chemicals. Finally, the scientists enter the Biohazard Suite and connect their suits to external filtered air supplies. When finished, personnel pass once again through the Gray Zone to be decontaminated before entering the real world.

COMPUTER FACILITIES

Each operative will be assigned a hand-held Mark II HERMES link uniquely coded to that person, by the new Cell's parent. This link enables the agent to access and upload data in the massive HERMES computer system run by Aegis. Some Cells, particularly older ones, have Mark I HERMES terminals located in their bases. There is no Resource Point cost for having a Mark I, but security concerns are paramount given its relatively bulky size.

Each Mark I and Mark II is coded with a unique ID number. If a link or terminal is replaced, the ID number for the previous link is flagged as "decommissioned". If a link or terminal with a decommissioned ID connects to HERMES, the system orders the accessing machine to self destruct.

BIOHAZARD LEVEL 4 is the highest classification of danger caused by infectious or unknown biological agents. This category includes lethal airborne agents for which their is no known cure, such as the Hantavirus, and unknown alien biological agents including alien beings themselves. Aegis classifies work with incapacitated Atlanteans as warranting Biohazard Level 4 treatment due to potential hazards from uncontrolled nanotechnology. In several instances, contact with Greys has led to infection by unknown extraterrestrial agents. There has been sufficient contact with Saurians in their natural form to determine their risk of contamination. In addition to these three races, isolated encounters with unfamiliar E.B.E.s (Extraterrestrial Biological Entities) reveal that they too pose a risk of infection. Lastly, Biohazard procedures have been found useful for safely containing and studying some paranormal entities.

Cells may purchase other computer facilities.

Personal Computer /Workstation: There's not much difference between a PC and a workstation nowadays. Either is more than adequate for most uses, including most research and engineering. These are top-of-line, multi-processor systems, an order of magnitude more powerful than a typical home or office system.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 1RP

Mainframe: Not much more powerful than a workstation, mainframe computers are generally used to process large volumes of data, such as bank transactions, airline reservations, database searches and the like. A mainframe can directly manage terrabytes of data, usually in tape form, and efficiently sort and search it, but for real scientific number crunching, a supercomputer is needed. On the other hand, most super-computers cannot handle the bandwidth of a mainframe.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 5RP (three or more = Large)

Supercomputer: Used mainly for crunching astronomical reams of numbers. Uses include cryptography, engineering analysis, and heavy-duty scientific research. Whereas a mainframe is useful for searching reams of sorted and catalogued information, it takes a supercomputer to extract information from what appears to be random noise, such as searching for a certain person's voiceprint on every call on a particular Cellular network.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 10RP (two or more = Large)

ENVIRONMENT CHAMBER

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 5RP

These chambers are designed to allow total control over a small environment. They may take a variety of forms, from large cylindrical metallic chambers to small rooms. The operator can make the atmosphere within the chamber vary in composition and pressure, from near vacuum to 30 atmospheres of pure hydrogen. The atmosphere of the chamber can be completely recycled to ensure that less than one part in a billion of the original contents remains. Temperature and humidity are controlled through the gasses injected, and sprayers throughout the chamber can flood it with any chemical that will not destroy it. Designed specifically for handling people and objects exposed to extra-terrestrial environments like the moon surface and near-orbits, it is also effective for more mundane uses, for example as a decompression chamber.
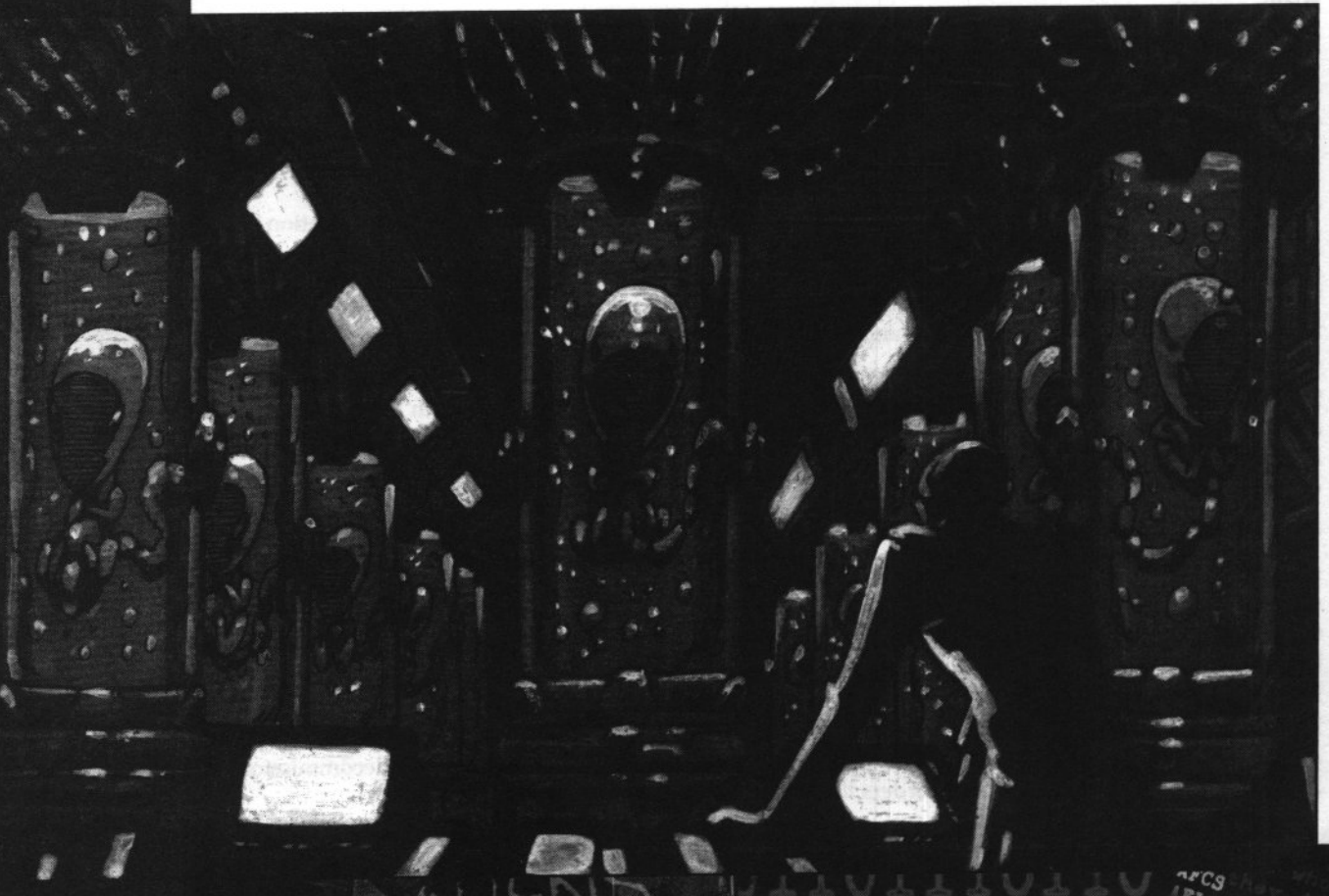
DARKROOM

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🛡 3RP

Used to develop ordinary photographs, a normal darkroom is readily available to the general population. Many Aegis Cells install a more sophisticated darkroom that can process not only ordinary film, but also professional quality, high-speed, infrared, military, and other exotic types of film. This facility can also handle any type of film, from polaroid to foreign military satellite cartridges. If the processing method for the film is known, or can be found out, then the film can be developed. Otherwise, correctly determining the proper procedure is a Photography 3 test. Darkroom come equipped with a revolving windowless door.

DORMITORY

Resource Cost: 📷 ⚗ 🖊 1RP (4 or more = Large)

One or two person room with minimal accommodations, sort of like a cheap hotel room.

LABORATORY

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ RP equal to the maximum staff supported. More than 5 staff is considered a Large facility. +1 RP per science supported by the lab (physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, etc . . .)

Quality Rating: +5RP for +2t; +10RP for -1Df (Both may be purchased)

Laboratory space can range from a well-equipped workbench to a small wing of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Lab space is assumed to equipped with all the relevant equipment for a lab of that size. For example, a small biolab would have microscopes and chemical stores, whereas a medium-sized one would have its own gene-sequencers and cryostorage facilities, and a large would have terrariums as well. It is not necessary to enumerate all the equipment in the lab, although the players may do so if they wish. Simply assume that the lab has everything that doesn't require more operators or physical space than the lab has available.

MEDICAL FACILITIES

All medical facilities are kept stocked with all items necessary to keep them in full operation. Doctors and Nurses must be acquired separately as staff, and count as scientists and lab assistants, respectively. Like all other staff, they work only for the Cell, and are always "on call".

Field Hospital: 5 beds, supplies equivalent to medic kit.

Resource Cost: 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 3RP (3 or more = Large)

Hospital: Supports 2 patients. Provides a bonus (-1Df) to medical and first aid tests (performed by the caregiver). If this test is successful, then the bonus also applied to stabilization and healing tests (performed by the patient.)

Resource Cost: 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 8RP (Large)

Intensive Care Unit: An ICU supports only one patient, but gives that patient a much better chance of recovering from traumatic wounds than normal hospitalization. This bonus operates in the same manner as the hospital bonus, but is -2Df.

Resource Cost: 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 10RP (Large)

STORAGE VAULT

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 🗡 2RP (Large)

Regular storage rooms do not cost anything. This is a secure, airtight, radiation proof, steel walled storage facility for sensitive or dangerous materials. Approximately 4m wide by 4m deep.

SUITE

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP (2 or more = Large)

Two person group of rooms with kitchen, living area and bedrooms.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINES

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 2RP

Any major use of ordinary telecommunications lines or resources falls under this category, including: 20 dial-in phone lines suitable for data, voice or fax transmission, long-distance internetwork computer connection linking two or more geographically remote locations, or a satellite earth station uplink. Each of these items are considered separate facilities and must be purchased separately.

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Both the Laboratory and the Workshop have a Quality Rating associated with them. If purchased, this bonus is applied to the tests of any applicable work or research performed in those facilities

TRAINING FACILITIES

Firing Range (Large): Allows training/practice in Small Arms and Autofire skills.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚔ 2RP

Gym: Allows characters to maintain Physical Training or Runner traits, and to train/practice in Brawling, Gun Fu (with blanks), Gymnastics, Martial Arts, Throw and any other physical skills.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚔ 2RP

Pool (Large): Allows maintenance/training in Swimming, S.C.U.B.A. Diving, Zero-Gravity Movement and may prove a useful resource in other respects.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚔ 2RP

VEHICLE FACILITIES

Airstrip: An airstrip can be anything from a long stretch of hard-packed gravel to a mile long paved runway for cargo planes, the major tradeoff being between utility and consciousness. Fighter jets generally require short strips, even shorter ones can be used if a carrier-like catapult is used. The space shuttle needs a strip approximately 4 miles long. The airstrip includes appropriate control tower facilities, as well as radio and radar equipment.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🧪 8RP (Large)

Garage: More than simply a storage area for cars, a garage is also equipped for standard vehicle maintenance and simple repairs.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🧪 1RP for each 4 Size levels of vehicle to be stored (more than 12 levels = Large)

Hangar: The hanger will include the proper facilities for maintenance of any aircraft the Cell controls, including facilities for refueling, ordinance changes, and minor repairs. An aerospace workshop is required to effect major repairs or actual modifications to the craft.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 1RP for each 4 Size levels of aircraft the hanger will house (Large)

Helipad: A helipad allows helicopters and VTOL aircraft to take off and land. Like an airstrip, the helipad includes such radar and radio equipment as is necessary to safely operate the craft. Unlike airstrips, helipads can be located in urban areas, and the Cell is assumed to have secured whatever official permits are necessary for unimpeded operation.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 5RP

Vehicle Elevator: A vehicle elevator allows a hangar, helipad or garage to be underground, providing greater security. It also allows the facility to be located where there would not normally be enough storage space, or where they would otherwise draw unwanted attention, such at the top of an office building.

Resource Cost: 🎖 3RP

WORKSHOPS

Resource Cost: Base cost depends on type. +1RP per each additional staff space. More than 5 extra staff = Large.

Quality Rating: 5RP for +2t; 10RP for -1Df (Both may be purchased)

Aerospace: This workspace can be used to repair and modify aircraft of all kinds. Two or more workshops, and many months of time, would be required to actually assemble an aircraft from scratch. Although it will remain stocked with replacement and repair parts for any craft the Cell actually owns, the workshop does not automatically stock specific parts for other types of craft. An aerospace workshop requires a hangar to be useful.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🧪 5RP (Includes workspace for 3 staff)

Automotive: A fully equipped automotive workshop stocked with generic replacement parts for most major foreign and domestic vehicles. Equipment includes everything necessary for complete tear-down and rebuild, from screwdrivers to vehicle lifts. Two shop equivalents are required to service larger vehicles, such as semi-tractors or tanks. A garage is necessary for the automotive workshop to be useful.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🧪 ⚔ 3RP (Includes workspace for 1 staff)

Electronic: Everything necessary to diagnose and repair most modern electronic equipment, from radios to vehicle sensor arrays. Two shops will allow for copying or construction of new circuit boards

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and small integrated circuits. Three shops will allow for fabrication of small quantities of high-density integrated circuits by electron beam etching.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP (Includes workspace for 2 staff)

Mechanical: A mechanical workshop contains lathes, milling machines, band-saws and other equipment necessary for fabrication of machine parts, such as might be needed for custom equipment or automotive or aerospace repairs. Fabrication of large parts such as rotor-blades, wing struts, etc. would require 3 or more workshop equivalents.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP (Includes workspace for 2 staff)

STAFF

Some Cells, particularly larger ones, may wish to include additional personnel besides the Aegis operatives themselves. These individuals are generally hired or recruited to fill a particular need of the Cell, such as researcher or pilot/driver for a particular vehicle. Cell staff is considered a permanent part of the Cell, although they may not know the true purpose of the group, the nature or existence of Aegis or the alien visitors. It is up to the Aegis operatives to decide whether their staff will be kept in the dark or indoctrinated as full Aegis operatives.

All staff have level 3 mental and physical attributes, 2/12 luck and no exceptional Traits except skills and training. The skills and training that each type of personnel has is listed below, though the GM may allow some variation.

RESEARCH STAFF

SCIENTISTS

Skills: Science (pick subskill), Medical or Parapsychology (choose one) 3, Research 3, Computer Use 2

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP

LAB ASSISTANTS

Skills: Science (pick subskill), Medical or Parapsychology (choose one) 2, Computer Use 2, First Aid 2

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 1RP

ENGINEERS

Skills: Engineering 3, Programming 3, Computer Use 2

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP

TECHNICIANS

Skills: Repair/build 2, Computer Use 3

Training: Communications Training

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 1RP

OPERATIONS STAFF

SOLDIERS

Skills: Small Arms: Rifle 3, Small Arms: Pistol 2, Martial Arts 3, Autofire 2, Heavy Weapons 1

Resource Cost: 🎖 2RP

INTELLIGENCE

Skills: Small Arms: Pistol 2, Martial Arts 3, Stealth 2, Shadow 3

Training: Surveillance

Resource Cost: 📷 2RP

PILOTS

Skills: Pilot 3, Small Arms: Pistol 2, Repair/build 2, Gunnery 3

Training: Parachutist Training

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 2RP

All staff personnel have the skills Drive 1 and Brawling 1

EQUIPMENT

PISTOLS

Auto Pistol: The auto pistol has long been the standard sidearm for law enforcement agencies and the military. It is a semi-automatic pistol which fires medium powered ammunition.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ ⚔ 1RP for a crate of 5 pistols and a box of ammo containing 100 clips (9 rounds per clip). An additional 4 boxes of ammo can be purchased for 1RP.

Dart Pistol: A small pistol that uses compressed gas to fire a dart. Virtually harmless in itself, the dart is used as a vehicle for a drug, usually a tranquilizer. If the dart penetrates the target's armor, if any, the drug is successfully delivered whether the target takes damage or not. The dart delivers a single dose of the drug per hit. The weapon is quiet, being only slightly louder than a silenced pistol. Also, the user has great control of the lethality of a hit by varying the drug used.

Resource Cost: ⚗ 1RP for a crate of 5 dart pistols, a box of 100 reusable darts, and a box of 50 CO_2 tubes (each good for 10 shots). 10 more boxes of darts or CO_2 can be purchase for 1RP. Both darts and CO_2 canisters can be used interchangeably in both dart pistols and rifles. Drugs must be purchased separately.

Derringer: Derringers are very small double-barrel pistols that can be concealed just about anywhere; in a pocket, a purse, even a large wallet. Despite their small size, derringers fire high caliber rounds with all the stopping power of larger guns. The barrels can be fired one at a time or both at once (roll to hit once for both shots).

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚔ 1RP for 5 derringers and a box of 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Extra boxes of ammo can be purchased for 1RP each.

Hold-Out Pistol: Hold-Outs are small semi-automatic pistols that fire low caliber rounds, sacrificing firepower for conceivability. These pistols are only slightly larger than derringers and can be hidden just as easily.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚔ 1RP for 5 pistols and a box of 100 clips (5 rounds per clip). Another 4 boxes of ammunition cost 1RP.

Revolver: A medium power, reliable pistol with a revolving six-shot chamber that was once rather common among law enforcement agencies. They have lost popularity because of their limitations in speed and ammunition capacity. These weapons may not have a silencer attached to them (regardless of what you see on TV).

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ ✒ 1RP for 10 pistols and 20 boxes of 100 bullets each. An extra 50 boxes of ammo cost 1RP.

Magnum Revolver: The gun preferred by no-nonsense lawmen and anyone else who likes their side arm to have kick. The magnum revolver is one of the most powerful handguns made. The gun looks similar to a large revolver, but is capable of much greater firepower. The main drawback to the gun is the extreme recoil. (So you have to ask yourself, do you feel lucky?) Due to the weapon's impressive recoil, a Str4 test is required to fire a Magnum in back to back rounds.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ✒ 1RP for 5 Magnums and 10 boxes of 50 bullets each. 20 additional boxes of ammo cost 1RP.

Machine Pistol: The machine pistol is an auto pistol capable of fully automatic fire, thus requiring a larger magazine to store the extra rounds. The pistol's short barrel makes it less accurate than rifles or sub-machine guns. Even with the larger clip, it is only a little more difficult to conceal than a normal auto pistol.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ✒ 1RP for a crate of 5 pistols and a box of 50 ammo clips (18 round per clip). 4 additional boxes of ammo can be purchased for 1RP.

Taser: The taser is a small pistol that is used by law enforcement agencies and security forces to subdue violent individuals. The pistol fires a small barbed dart that remains connected to the pistol by a thin conductive wire. On contact, the taser sends a jolt of electricity down the wire forcing the target to make a Size 4 test to avoid being knocked unconscious for 1D rounds. Even if successful, the target will be stunned for the next 1D rounds. As long as the dart stays attached to the target, the shooter may send more jolts down the wire (expending charges but requiring no roll to hit). Tasers hold two darts and a rechargeable battery good for 10 electric jolts.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 ⚗ A box of 5 tasers costs 1RP.

Sub-Machine Gun: Sub-machine guns are in common use by paramilitary and special ops teams world-wide because of their rate of fire and small size. The sub-machine gun is a short barreled, fully automatic carbine often fitted with a folding stock to allow greater concealment and freedom of movement.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ✒ 1RP buys a crate of 5 submachine guns and a box of 50 ammo clips (30 rounds per clip). Another 5 boxes of ammunition cost 1RP.

RIFLES

Rifle: This represents any of the high caliber, semi-automatic rifles in common use by both civilians and the military. Rifles are very accurate over long distances, particularly when incorporating telescopic scopes. They are ideal for hunting or sniping, the only real difference being the target.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ A crate of 5 rifles costs 1RP, including 10 boxes of 100 rounds. A crate of 50 boxes of ammunition costs 1RP.

Assault Rifle: Assault rifles are the primary weapon of armed forces world-wide. An assault rifle is essentially a standard rifle that can be fire either single shots or fully automatic bursts. A wide range of accessories exist to modify assault rifles, including telescopic sights, grenade launchers and folding stocks.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ✒ 1RP for a crate of 5 rifles and a ammo box containing 50 clips (30 rounds per clip). Another 5 boxes of ammo costs 1RP.

Shotgun: A single barrel shotgun that holds 8 shells and requires the shooter to 'pump' a shell into the chamber to reload. All shotguns can fire either shot shells or slug shells. Shot shells contain nine separate projectiles fired at once; slugs are single large bullets. Shot is devastating at close range and spreads out to cover a large area at effective range. This same spread makes shot useless at longer ranges. Slugs are powerful and damaging rounds, but their size makes them rather inaccurate. The shotgun is a staple for grumpy farmers who want to keep nasty vermin off their land.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ ✒ 1RP for a crate of 5 shotguns and 5 boxes of 50 shells (each box can be either shot or slug). An additional 10 boxes of shotgun shells can be purchased for 1RP. Pump shotguns, double-barrel shotguns and sawed-off shotguns all use the same ammo.

Double Barrel Shotgun: A shotgun with twin side-by-side barrels which can be fired separately or simultaneously. If you fire both barrels at once, roll only once to hit. The weapon is "broken" open to load and remove spent shells which increases the reload time, but the blast of two shotgun shells is sometimes worth a little extra time.

Resource Cost: ⚗ ✒ See Shotgun.

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Sawed-off Shotgun: Made at home by shady people looking for the firepower of a shotgun and the conceivability of a large pistol. A sawed-off shotgun is a double barrel shotgun that has had the stock and most of the barrel sawed off (hence the name). The gun's range is extremely limited, but within that range it is rather hard to miss.

Resource Cost: 🗡 See Shotgun.

Automatic Shotgun: A truly brutal weapon, the automatic shotgun does for the shotgun what the machine gun did for the rifle -- fully automatic fire! The weapon looks like a very large assault rifle with an obscenely wide barrel. The automatic shotgun uses 'clip' magazines like an assault rifle. If doing large amounts of damage is what you need the automatic shotgun does the trick. With each burst fired, the shooter's firing arm takes Br2 damage (like we said, brutal).

Resource Cost: 🎖 🛡 1RP for a crate of 5 Autoshotguns and a box of 50 clips (30 rounds per clip). Extra boxes of ammo cost 1RP.

Elephant Gun: The elephant gun is a very large caliber rifle most often used for hunting really large game like elephants and rhinoceros. The weapon's long barrel and massive bulk make it difficult to lug around, but it is capable of delivering incredible firepower at extreme distances. Even just the size and thunderous report of the large rifle is enough to make people stand up and take notice (and then run away).

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 1RP gets a pair of rifles and a box of 100 rounds. An additional 5 boxes of ammo cost 1RP.

Dart Rifle: These small compressed gas rifles function exactly as larger versions of the dart pistol. The rifle has greatly increased range.

Resource Cost: ⚗ 1RP for a crate of 5 dart rifles, a box of 100 reusable darts, and a box of 50 CO2 tubes (each good for 10 shots). 10 more boxes of darts or CO2 can be purchase for 1RP. Both darts and CO2 canisters can be used interchangeably in both dart pistols and rifles. Drugs must be purchased separately.

HEAVY WEAPONS

Light Machine Gun: A large fully automatic rifle that can be carried by a single person (Str2 test), but is usually fired resting on a bi-pod or mounted on a vehicle. A Str3 test is required to fire it without support. Light machine guns are common heavy support weapons among infantry units due to their firepower and portability.

Resource Cost: 🎖 1RP gets a single machine gun and a box of 10 belts of 100 rounds. 5 extra boxes of ammo can be purchased for 1RP.

Heavy Machine Gun: A very bulky, large caliber fully automatic weapon that is generally carried by two people (Str3 test to carry) and fired from a tripod or mounted on a vehicle. Capable of spewing hundreds of bullets in just a few seconds, the heavy machine gun needs a constant supply of ammunition which is supplied by long belts of ammo. The machine gun is a standard infantry support weapon and is effective against both personnel and lightly armored vehicles.

Resource Cost: 🎖 2RP buys a single machine gun and a box of 10 belts of 100 rounds. 5 extra boxes of ammo can be purchased for 1RP.

Minigun: A minigun is a high caliber machine gun capable of an incredibly high rate of fire. In order to avoid overheating and warping the barrel of the gun, a minigun incorporates eight rotating barrels that each fire a single round in turn. The minigun is intended to be mounted on a vehicle, usually a helicopter. With a special harness the gun may be carried and fired by a single strong individual (Str3 test to carry and Str4 test to fire, even then with a +2Df to hit).

When firing a minigun, double the number of rounds fired per burst and the number of bullets per burst that can hit a target. For example, a character with an Autofire skill of 3 can attack six different targets rather than the usual three.

If the minigun is fired from a vehicle using the Gunnery skill as it was designed, treat the attack as if the firer's Autofire skill were 5.

Resource Cost: 🎖 One minigun costs 2RP, which includes a large crate containing a single long belt of 1,000 rounds. Four additional boxes of ammunition can be purchased for 1RP.

Flamethrower: The flamethrower is a rifle-size weapon that fires a jet of burning incendigel from a large tank worn on the back like a knapsack. The gel splatters and runs like a liquid and ignites any flammable material on contact. A flamethrower fuel tank contains enough incendigel for 50 'bursts', generally a single burst is fired at a target. The jet of flaming gel may also be swept across a large area, allowing the user to attack up to three human-sized targets and expend 1D+1 bursts of fuel.

When a living target is hit with incendigel, roll 1D and add one for each burst that has hit the target. If the result is greater than the target's Size Attribute the target is engulfed in flames. If the result is equal to or less than the target's Size, he or she is 'merely' on fire.

If the incendigel tank is hit by a weapon that inflicts lethal damage, there is a chance that it punctures and bursts, roll 1D. If the number is greater than or equal to the damage level of the attacking weapon, nothing happens. If the result is less than the damage level, the tank explodes, covering a five meter radius with burning liquid and engulfing the wearer in flame.

Resource Cost: 1 flamethrower and 2 fuel tanks cost 1RP. Another 1RP will buy 4 more fuel tanks.

LAUNCHERS

Grenade Launcher: The grenade launcher is a squat, short-barreled rifle that fires 40mm grenades accurately over long distances. The weapon holds only a single grenade at a time and breaks open to be loaded like a double-barrel shotgun.

Resource Cost: 1RP gets a crate of 5 grenade launchers. 40mm grenades must be purchased separately.

Underbarrel Grenade Launcher: A single shot 40mm grenade launcher that is mounted under the barrel of an assault rifle. Underbarrel grenade launchers increase the versatility of an assault rifle, but are not as accurate as a normal grenade launcher. The launcher is fired by its own trigger, "breaks" open to be loaded, like a double-barrel shotgun.

Resource Cost: 1RP buys a crate of 5 launchers, but ammunition must be purchased separately.

Vehicular Grenade Launcher: An automatic grenade launcher that fires belts of 40mm grenades. This heavy weapon must be mounted on a vehicle to be fired and is most often found on fast-attack all-terrain vehicles and helicopters.

Resource Cost: 1RP gets a single vehicular grenade launcher, and the grenades must be purchased separately.

Missile Launcher: Shoulder-fired missile launchers are the only effective weapon that infantry have against aircraft. Missile launchers take advantage of the tremendous amounts of heat their targets give off by firing heat seeking guided missiles. Missile launchers may only be fired at aircraft and other large sources of heat, they are incapable of "locking-on" to any other target.

Resource Cost: A single missile launcher and a crate of 5 missiles costs 1RP. 1RP will also buy an additional 5 crates of missiles.

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Rocket Launcher: Rocket launchers are the last word in heavy weaponry, firing an unguided high-explosive rocket capable of destroying small buildings and armored vehicles. However the rockets are inherently inaccurate and are completely ineffective against anything under Size 5 or fast-moving targets (aircraft, in particular). This is by no means a subtle weapon, but it's firepower far exceeds any other man-portable weapon.

Resource Cost: A single rocket launcher costs 1RP, which includes a crate of 10 high explosive rockets. Five more crates of ammo cost another 1RP.

Disposable Rocket Launcher: The disposable rocket launcher is a single-use device that incorporates a launcher and a rocket in a small, collapsible package. The rocket delivers a warhead very similar to that of a standard rocket launcher, but the compact design of the launcher renders the rocket even more inaccurate. As implied by the name, a disposable rocket launcher can not be reused (so please remember to recycle).

Resource Cost: 2 crates of 5 disposable rocket launchers cost 1RP.

THROWN WEAPONS

HAND GRENADES

Resource Cost: All grenades cost 1RP per 2 crates of 20.

A small explosive shell designed to be thrown by hand. The exact shape can vary depending on type, but all are about the size and shape. All have a pin that is pulled out to arm a short fuse, which is lit when the grenade itself is released. The effects of different grenades vary greatly. Hand Grenades are not interchangeable with the 40mm grenades used as ammunition for grenade launchers.

Fragmentation: The outer shell of the "frag" grenade is prescored and lined with notched wire designed to fill the blast radius with metal shrapnel. The grenade's blast is an untamped explosion with a Blast Rating of 3.

Smoke: Smoke grenades releases a large cloud of colored smoke. The speed at which the smoke is blown around depends on the strength of the wind. Assuming at most a light breeze, the grenade will form a thick cloud of smoke 100 to 150 meters long in about five rounds. These grenade is used for signaling and creating cover. Their effectiveness is severely reduced with very strong winds. In a windless situation, like inside a building, the smoke will rapidly fill the enclosed area, making vision nearly impossible and breathing difficult.

Tear Gas: Releases a cloud of tear gas that provides cover like the smoke grenade, but has the additional effect of irritating any exposed skin, particularly the eyes and nose. Someone exposed to tear gas must make a Willpower 5 test to function at all, and even then the character is considered blind and suffers a +2Df penalty to any attempted actions. The effects wear off after about an hour. The use of a gas mask will protect the wearer from all harmful effects of the gas, though the cloud will still obstruct vision.

Incendiary: These grenades cover a 20m radius with burning chemicals, igniting all flammable material. Treat any personnel caught in the blast as if they had been hit with a flamethrower (see Flamethrower under Heavy Weapons). These grenades are primarily used to destroy equipment rather than personnel.

Stun: Also known as Flash-Bang grenades, these small explosives produce a brilliant flash of light and a deafening bang. The grenade does little real damage, but the disorienting effects of the flash and explosion are likely to stun anyone nearby. Everyone within 30m who is not protected must make a Willpower 5 test or be stunned. To be protected from the grenade's effects a character must be completely behind some obstacle like a wall or vehicle.

Throwing Knife: Throwing knives are specially balanced for throwing, although they can be used in hand to hand combat as a normal knife.

Resource Cost: 1RP buys a crate of 50 knives.

MELEE WEAPONS

Mace: A small aerosol spray canister containing Mace, a chemical agent that causes painful skin irritation and temporary blindness if sprayed in a person's face. Mace is commonly used by law enforcement officials and letter carriers as an effective means of stopping unwanted aggressors, be it criminals or vicious dogs. Someone who is maced suffers effects identical to tear gas (see Tear Gas under Hand Grenades). Each canister is good for about 20 'bursts'.

Resource Cost: A box of 20 Mace canisters cost 1RP.

Club: Clubs are short blunt weapons often issued to police and security forces as non-lethal (usually) weapons. A number of varieties exist from the classic wooden nightstick to more modern plastic clubs resembling martial arts tonfa to high-tech collapsing spring steel models.

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Resource Cost: 🛡️ 🔲   A crate of 24 nightsticks or billy clubs cost 1RP.

Knife: For our purposes a knife is any short-bladed stabbing and cutting weapon including hunting knives, switchblades and bowie knives. They are designed to deal vicious wounds but are not balanced enough to be thrown with any accuracy.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ 🛡️ ⚗️ ⚔️   A box of 24 knives cost 1RP.

Stun Gun: Stun Guns are small self-defense weapons similar to a taser that deliver an electrical shock through contact with two small metal probes. Treat the shock as a Taser hit, but a successful hit must be scored each time to deliver a shock. The stun gun is powered by an integral rechargable battery and should be considered as having unlimited ammo for game purposes.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🛡️ ⚗️   1RP gets a box of 10 stun guns.

EXPLOSIVES

Claymore Mine: The Claymore mine is an antipersonnel weapon that fires shrapnel into a cone-shaped area 30 meters long and 10 meters wide at the farthest point. Anything caught within this area takes Sp3 damage and the blast itself is a Blast Rating 2 tamped explosion. The mine can be triggered either by a remote radio switch or by tripwire. A Demolitions 1 skill test is required to properly set up the mine.

Resource Cost: 🛡️   Two crates of 5 mines cost 1RP.

C-4: C-4 (or plastique) is a malleable, clay-like explosive that is used extensively by the military. One block is about two kilograms of explosive but can be broken up for smaller explosions. C-4 can only be detonated by electrical impulse, fire will not work. In fact, C-4 is flammable and will burn without detonating. Additionally, wet C-4 detonates just as easily as dry, making it a truly versatile explosive. Setting C-4 charges is tricky business, though, and requires a Demolitions 3 test to do properly.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ⚔️   5 crates of 50 blocks of C-4 cost 1RP. 50 radio detonators/timer detonators can be purchased for 1RP.

Dynamite: Dynamite is a common explosive used in civilian demolition, mining, and construction. TNT is rolled into sticks containing a length of primercord fuse. Dynamite is a rather stable explosive that can only be detonated by fire or electrical impulse, but will become inert and useless if it gets wet. Setting proper TNT charges requires a Demolitions 2 test.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ⚔️   5 crates of 100 sticks of dynamite cost 1RP, which includes a huge spool of fuse cord. 50 radio detonators/timer detonators can be purchased for 1RP.

Satchel Charge: The satchel charge is a canvas bag containing 16 blocks of C-4 and a preset timer/radio detonator. The satchel charge is a pre-set explosive charge intended for use by individuals with little or no demolitions skill. To this end the use of a Satchel Charge does not require Demolitions skill, but instead a Heavy Weapons Df1 skill test. Any level of Demolitions skill will also suffice. Though the satchel charge is not tailored to any specific need, it makes an exCellent tool for teams in need of crude demolitions capability.

Resource Cost: 🛡️   5 satchel charges cost 1RP.

COMBAT ACCESSORIES

Gas Mask: A gas mask is a rubber mask that filters out toxic gases such as smoke, tear gas, and most nerve gasses. It protects the eyes, nose and mouth (the most vulnerable areas to most toxic gases). Wearing the mask restricts the wearer's vision, reducing all Perception Attribute test targets by 2.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ 🛡️ ⚗️ ⚔️   1RP buys a crate of 10 gas masks.

Silencer: When attached to the end of a semi-automatic or automatic firearm, a silencer greatly reduces the sound of a gunshot. Noticing the sound of a silenced gunshot becomes a Perception test (Df1 per 5m distance from the shooter). Firing a short or long burst with a silencer will burn out the silencer if you roll less than the number of rounds fired on 1D. A silencer may be attached to an auto pistol, hold-out pistol, machine pistol, sub-machine gun, rifle, elephant gun, or automatic rifle.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ⚔️   1RP gets a box of 10 silencers

Telescopic Sight: A telescopic sight reduces the apparent range to a target when it is mounted on top of a firearm. It provides a -1Df for any aimed single shot at effective, long or extreme range only. Telescopic sights may be attached to auto pistols, revolvers, magnum revolvers, submachine guns, rifles, elephant guns, and assault rifles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ 🛡️ ⚗️   1RP will purchase 10 scopes.

Building a typical radio or timed detonator requires only an Electrical or Electronic Repair/build Df1 skill test and about 1 hour.

Laser Sight: The laser sight is a low-power laser mounted on a firearm that projects a small red dot parallel to the gun barrel. The sight lets the shooter see where the barrel is pointing, giving him a +2t against targets within 30 meters. A laser sight may be mounted on any small arm.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 10 laser sights cost 1RP.

Starlight Scope: A starlight scope is designed to be used in minimal light situations. It functions as a regular telescopic sight, but it also negates any penalties for poor lighting. A starlight scope is much larger than a normal telescopic scope, however, and may only be mounted on rifles, elephant guns and assault rifles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 1RP will buy 5 scopes.

Tripflares: These are small warning flares that are triggered by a tripwire. They are not bright enough to blind anyone and will not provide substantial light to the area. They are generally used to warn of an approaching someone or something.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 1RP buys a box of 100 tripflares.

Flashlight Mount: In combat, at night or in a dark building, you need to be able to see your opponents, but you don't want to tie up one hand with a flashlight. The flashlight mount is a small flashlight that attaches to the barrel of a gun. The flashlight's switch is wired to the gun's trigger so that as long as your finger is on the trigger, the light is on. This can be fitted to any firearm from pistol to assault rifle in size.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 20 Flashlight mounts cost 1RP

Folding Stock: This is a wire or plastic stock that replaces a weapon's normal stock. It can be folded in or out in a single combat round, allowing stocked weapons to fire snap shots without losing the ability to make aimed shots. Available for sub-machine guns, rifles, shotguns, automatic shotguns and assault rifles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 🗡 A box of 10 folding stocks cost 1RP.

Briefcase MP: This looks like a standard leather corporate briefcase, but is in fact a weapon system for covert urban operations. A standard machine pistol is built into the briefcase, which is armored (Ar4). To fire the machine pistol, the shooter holds a safety catch on the bottom of the case with one hand, braces the case against his chest and pulls a concealed trigger on in the briefcase's handle with his other hand. Lacking any sights, the briefcase is rather hard to fire accurately. Aimed shots may be taken with the briefcase, and any shots at all receive a +1Df penalty. It is recommended that operatives load the machine pistol with tracer ammo, in order to increase their chances of hitting. The machine pistol built into the case is normal in every way, and may be removed easily and fired as a normal weapon.
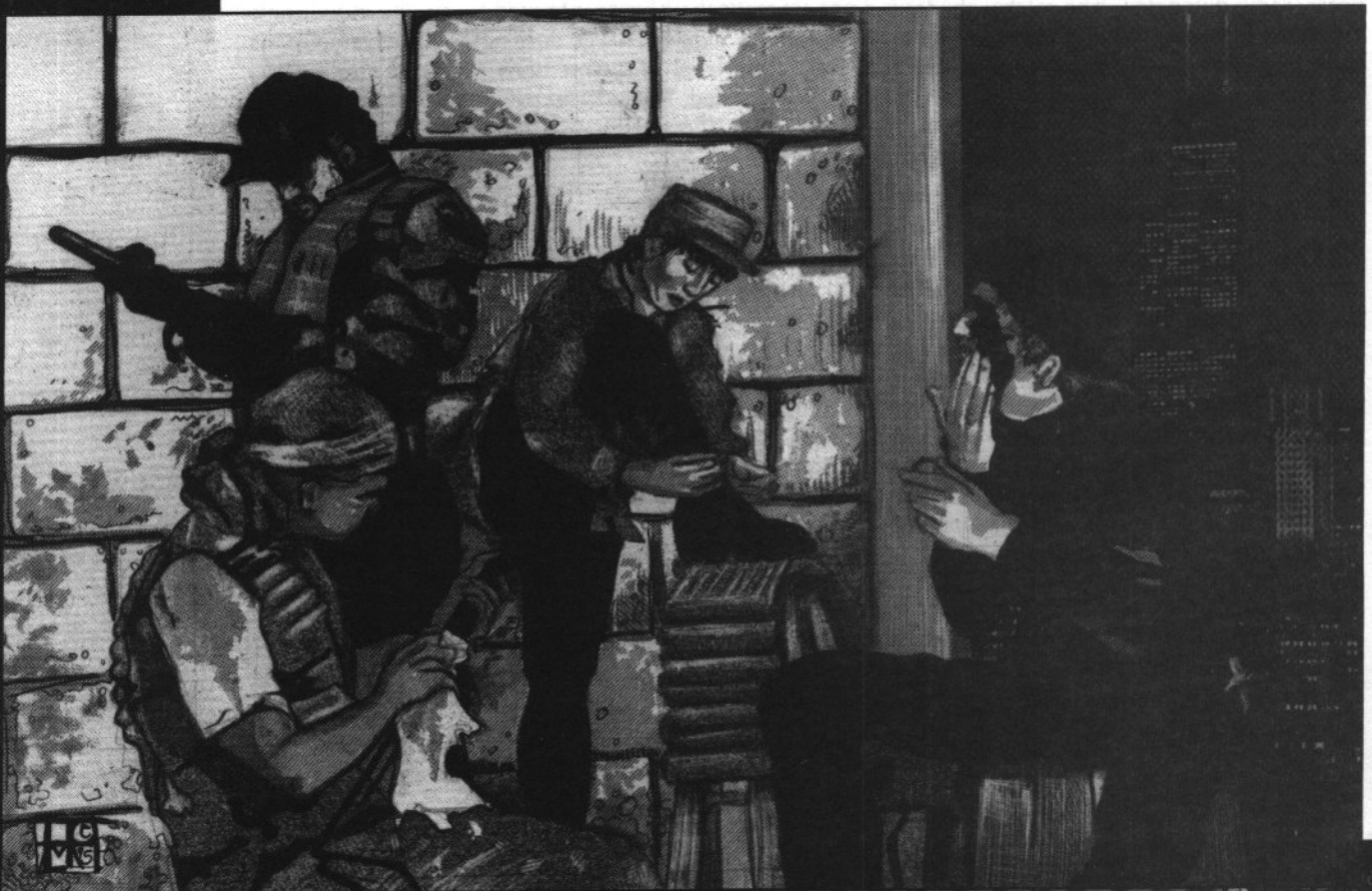
Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ ✒️   1 briefcase and machine pistol, with a box of 100 clips of tracer ammo cost 1RP. Additional ammo can be purchased as listed under Machine Pistol.

AMMUNITION

Armor Piercing Bullets: AP bullets are steel jacketed rounds coated in teflon specifically designed to defeat body armor. Armor tests to stop AP bullets are one Df higher. However, the same characteristics that allow the bullet to easily penetrate body armor also cause it to pass right through the target's body, inflicting less damage than a normal round. Reduce the Damage Level of any wound caused by AP rounds by one. Armor piercing rounds are available for all small arms.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ 🛡️ ✒️   Pay one extra RP when acquiring small arms ammunition to convert the ammo to armor piercing.

Tracer Bullets: Tracer rounds have incendiary material on the back of the bullet making the path of the bullet visible to the naked eye. The bullet's trajectory appears as a brief, luminous red line, or trace. When tracer bullets are fired from a fully automatic weapon in a long burst, the target number to hit is reduced by two. The key disadvantage to tracer rounds is that the bullets are highly visible and will give away the shooter's position.

Resource Cost: 🎖️   Pay one extra RP when acquiring machine pistol, submachine gun, assault rifle or machine-guns ammunition to convert the ammo to tracer.

40mm Grenades

Resource Cost: 🎖️   All types of 40mm grenades are acquired in crates of 20, 2 of which can be purchased for 1RP.

These are fired from grenade launchers only and may not be used as hand grenades. The grenades resemble large bullets approximately the size of a closed fist.

High Explosive: HE rounds are very effective at destroying lightly armored vehicles and breaching barriers. The grenade contains an shaped-explosive warhead with a tamped Blast Rating of 4.

Tear Gas: Other than its longer effective range, this grenade is identical to a Tear Gas hand grenade.

Smoke: Other than its longer effective range, this grenade is identical to a Smoke hand grenade.

Flechette: Flechette grenades are vicious anti-personnel weapons that fire a cluster of small steel darts. The effect is similar to a shotgun, except the area covered is much larger and the flechettes are armor piercing. The range brackets for flechette rounds are 10/20/30/40/50, and they are treated like armor piercing shotgun rounds that do Wn3 damage.

Flare: Flare rounds fire a parachute flare into the air which burns for 1D+3 rounds while floating down to the ground. While burning, the flare illuminates a 100 meter diameter area (centered directly below it) with dim, shadowy light. Areas already shadowy or brighter are unaffected. When a flare is fired, anyone who does not take precautions (shielding their eyes) must make a Reflexes 4 test or reflexively look at the flare, temporarily blinding them for the duration of the flare plus 1D rounds.

Ripper: These are particularly nasty rounds that are loaded with hundreds of small dime-sized circular steel blades, like miniature shuriken. When fired the blades fly out of the barrel and immediately catch the air, spinning off in every direction. This effectively creates a cloud of razor sharp metal. The cloud measures ten meters in diameter, centered five meters in front of the barrel. Everything within the cloud takes Fw3 damage, no test 'to hit' is necessary.

INTRUSION EQUIPMENT

B&E Kit: The Breaking and Entering kit is a sturdy black nylon duffle bag containing a number of tools useful for surreptitious but often none-too subtle entry into a building. The tool kit includes such burglar basics as bolt cutters, Prybars, a glass cutter, a hack saw and an industrial strength flashlight.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ✒️   1RP buys 4 kits.

Lock Picks: Lock Picks are the traditional locksmith and burglar's tool. The set consist of a number of picks and tension bars that allow someone skilled in their use to open virtually any key lock. The picks are carried rolled into a soft black cloth lined with pockets.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ✒️   5 sets of lock picks cost 1RP.

Lock Pick Gun: The lock pick gun is a vaguely pistol-shaped device that picks locks automatically, with no skill needed from the user. Treat the gun as if it had a level 2 Lockpicking skill. Used almost exclusively by police forces, lock pick guns are usually illegal to own without a permit and are relatively difficult to obtain in any case.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ✒️   4 guns cost 1RP.

Lock Pick, Electronic: An electronic lock pick set consists of a small pack of electronic tools necessary

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to bypass most electronic keypad or card-key locks. Without such tools, lock pick attempts against these locks are virtually impossible. The tools are not really a lock picks as such, as they are useless against standard, non-electronic locks.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡️ ⚔️ 1RP for a pair of kits.

ELECTRONICS

GPS Terminal: This device is a small hand-held electronic unit that receives data from the orbiting satellites that comprise the Global Positioning System. The terminal's display then computes and displays the unit's position by longitude and latitude accurately to within a few feet.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖️ ⚗️ 5 terminals cost 1RP.

Laptop Computer: This laptop is a powerful computer with capabilities equaling or surpassing most desktop models. The laptop includes telecommunications software and a Cellular modem. The computer is installed with the software needed to communicate with any network or telecommunication system in use today, and the hardware necessary to connect to phone jacks, pay phones, network connections, even phone taps. The computer can run off its internal batteries for about four hours, or it can be plugged in to any outlet for unlimited use. When plugged into a wall outlet the batteries take about six hours to recharge.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖️ ⚗️ One computer costs 1RP.

Portable Radar: This is a small radar unit shaped like a squat cylinder only one meter in diameter. It is attached to a small display unit and has a range of five miles. Any solid objects like trees or buildings block the radar unit's line of sight, so care must be taken to place the unit where it will be most effective. As always with radar, remember that a group of small objects flying close together will appear as one large object.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ ⚗️ 3 per unit

Telemetry Robot: Telemetry robots remotely piloted machines designed for dangerous situations such as bomb disposal, or in areas with dangerous levels of radiation or biohazard. Although most robots are the products of separate experimental projects, and therefore relatively unique, they conform to the same basic characteristics and abilities. Most telemetry robots are composed of a large tracked chassis, about a meter long and half as wide. On top of the chassis is mounted a video camera and a long manipulative arm bringing its height to about a meter and a half. The video camera transmits a constant picture back to the operator who controls the robot through a small, portable control unit. The control unit consists of a small video screen and two joysticks, used to steer the robot, direct its video camera and control the manipulative arm.

The robot is rather slow (Agility 1 for movement purposes), but is capable of negotiating most obstacles, including staircases. The manipulative arm is generally a simple two or three fingered claws that is surprisingly strong (Strength 3), but imprecise. Many telemetry robots employed by law enforcement agencies also possess the ability to mount a weapon linked to the robot's video camera. The weapon of choice is a shotgun or small water cannon. The robot's skill with either weapon is limited to 1.

The range of a telemetry robot's control unit is one kilometer, which may be boosted through normal communications equipment. If the robot loses contact with the control unit for any reason, the robot will stand still and take no action on its own, as it has no real intelligence or autonomous programming.

Resource Cost: 🛡️ ⚗️ A telemetry robot costs 2 RP, which includes the control unit and a water cannon for those robots capable of mounting one. Shotguns must be purchased and mounted separately.

Submersible Telemetry Robot: Submersible robots were built to assist marine research teams exploring hazardous areas underwater. They look like small, meter-long submarines and operate in much the same manner and have largely similar capabilities as the land-based robots described above. For obvious reasons they have no need for a mounted shotguns or water cannon. The robots speed (Ag11) range (1km) and strength of its manipulative arm (Str3) are the same as its land-based cousin.

Resource Cost: ⚗️ One submersible telemetry robot costs 2RP and includes control unit.

Photo Recon Drone: Photo Recon Drones are small (Size 2) remotely piloted aircraft used for covert aerial reconnaissance. The Drone resembles a small prop airplane painted with appropriate camouflage. The Drone's small size and nearly silent prop engines make it very difficult to detect. The Drone is piloted via a control unit similar to those used on the telemetry robots, though the transmitter is substantially more powerful, giving the Drone a 10 kilometer range. Only a camera is mounted on the drone as there is no need for arms or armament. The larger frame of the Recon Drone can, however, mount additional surveillance and photographically equipment as necessary. For purposes of movement and targeting the Drone should be considered a vehicle with a Speed of 1, Size of 2 and no Maneuver bonus.

Robot Water Cannon

Use the same range brackets as a sawed off shotgun but the spray gives the robot a +2 target to hit. If the cannon hits, the target must make a Size 4 test or be knocked off his feet and stunned.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ One drone and it's control unit cost 2RP.

SOFTWARE

Unless otherwise noted, each of the following software systems are available in three separate versions, each tailored to a particular grade of computer: Workstation/Laptop, Mainframe and Supercomputer. The capabilities of each version may vary considerably, as noted in the program's description. Usually a single copy of any of the software programs can be installed on any number of individual computers, but programs built for one system can not be run on other platforms. So software written for Workstations will not work on Supercomputers or Mainframes. Software written for Laptops will work on Workstations and vice versa.

Image Processing: The image processing program allows an operative to doctor photographs and video tape with a very high level of quality. The software will also help determine if a photograph or video tape is genuine or has been faked. The hardware needed to scan photographs and connect the computer to a VCR is included in the package. The difficulty of determining the authenticity of a photo or video is the Photography or Video skill of the photographer. Likewise the photographer's skill is also the difficulty of digitally retouching film or video. In both cases, the applicable skill is Computer Use. Note that the original film or video tape is unaltered by this process and if left intact could provide damning evidence.

The Mainframe version of this software provides a +2 target bonus, the Supercomputer version provides a -1Df bonus.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⚗ Any version of the software costs 1RP.

Science Expert System: Expert systems are valuable scientific research tools that incorporate large databases of information with powerful research tools and 'expert' knowledge systems. Each expert system is tailored for a particular scientific discipline such as Biochemistry, Genetics, Nuclear Physics or Virology. Systems for non-traditional sciences like Parapsychology and the Occult are also available.

When aiding in research, the Expert System provides a bonus to the Science test. The bonus itself depends on the type of computer that is running the program. Workstation/Laptop versions add 2 to the target roll, Mainframes reduce the Df by 1, and Supercomputers both reduce the Df of the test by 1, and halve the time needed for that phase of research. In order to gain the benefit of the program's bonus, a member or members of the research team must make a Computer Use skill test whose Df equals that of the project itself.

The more powerful Mainframe and Supercomputer versions of the Expert System software can answer basic questions from non-scientists through an advanced neural-network query system. Mainframe programs can answer questions as a Skill Level 1 scientist, and Supercomputers as Skill Level 2. In order to get a useful answer, the individual posing the query must succeed at a Computer Use test v. the Df of the question.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ Each version of the software costs 1RP.

CAD/CAM: CAD/CAM stands for Computer Assisted Design and Computer Assisted Manufacturing. These advanced programs function for Engineering projects much the same as Expert Systems do for scientific research. Each CAD/CAM program is geared toward a specific branch of engineering such as electrical or mechanical. The program will provide a bonus to any applicable Engineering or Repair/build skill test. Workstation/Laptop versions provide a +2 target bonus, Mainframe programs give a -1Df bonus, and Supercomputer CAD/CAM programs give both a -1Df bonus and reduce the time required to complete any project by half.

Like the Science Expert System software, in order to take advantage of the software, a Computer Use test must be made by a project team member whose Df is equal that of the project itself. Mainframe and Supercomputer CAD/CAM programs can also be queried on basic Engineering and repair questions by succeeding at a Computer Use test whose Df is equal to that of the question. Mainframe programs answer with a level 1 skill, Supercomputers with a level 2 skill.

Resource Cost: ⚗ Any CAD/CAM system costs 1RP.

Global Mapping: Global mapping software contains detailed, up to date maps of every explored area on the planet. A Computer Use 1 test can bring up a terrain map of any desired location. If the computer running the software is connected to a GPS Terminal, it will show the terminal's location as a continuously updated dot on the map accurate to within 3 meters. If the computer can be connected to two radio receivers, the Global Mapping software can triangulate on any signal both receivers can pick up and pinpoint the location of the transmitter. As long as the signal is clear, the software can continuously update the location on the map. In order to triangulate on radio signals, the operator must make a Computer Use 2 test and also have Communications training.

Workstation/Laptop versions of this software can only track a single radio signal, but Mainframe and

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Supercomputer versions can keep tabs on an unlimited number of radio targets.

Resource Cost: Global Mapping software costs 1RP.

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT

Audio Bugs: Audio bugs are tiny microphones with radio transmitters that are used extensively in surveillance operations. Even the largest Bugs are no larger than a shirt button and are therefore easily hidden nearly anywhere. They run on internal batteries good for 72 hours of constant use, although they only activate when there is data to transmit, so their actual useful life is often much longer. Modern bugs are very sensitive and can pick up a whisper at fifteen meters. Their transmitter is not terribly powerful, however, forcing the receiving unit to be within half a kilometer.

Resource Cost: A box of 24 Audio Bugs cost 1RP.

AV Bugs: Audio Video bugs are advanced surveillance equipment that function very similar to an audio bug, with the added function of an integrated black and white video camera. Despite the added electronics, AV Bugs are often only moderately larger than audio-only bugs and their batteries last just as long. AV bugs transmit data as long as there is sufficient light to see, regardless of whether anything is going on in the scene. This makes the actual life of an AV bug much shorter than an audio bug.

Resource Cost: A set of 12 AV Bugs cost 1RP.

Bug Detector: A small hand held device that registers the transmission of any active audio or AV bugs within ten feet. Since it only detects transmissions, inactive bugs or bugs that only record and do not transmit will remain undetected.

Resource Cost: Three detector units cost 1RP.

Camera

Resource Cost: Four cameras (any mixture of type) can be acquired for 1RP.

This is a professional quality camera with all accessories including telephoto lenses, tripods, filters, and flashes. Although anyone can use a camera to document a scene, a skilled photographer is capable of recording elements that may have been missed by other observers. In addition to the standard camera, several specialty models are available, though only a skilled photographer will be familiar with their use. Both types of cameras are loaded with rolls of film good for about 50 exposures.

Micro: These cameras are designed for covert operations. They hold enough film for 36 exposures, yet are no larger than a cigarette lighter. Micro cameras are sometimes built into larger objects like briefcases or pens so they can be used without attracting attention.

Submersible: This camera functions exactly like a normal camera, except that the casing is fully waterproof and may be used complete submerged under water. The camera is capable of normal operation in depths well exceeding standard SCUBA diving allowances. (The film is not water resistant however, and may not be removed or loaded while submerged.)

Infra-red: Infra-red cameras photograph using the infrared spectrum of light instead of the visible spectrum. This allows monochrome photographs to be taken in total darkness using an integral infrared flash. The photographer is able to view the scene through the camera's integral infrared view finder.

Starlight: Starlight cameras use light in the visible spectrum, but intensify any light they receive, making it possible to take clear photos with only minimal light. They produce only black and white photographs. Pictures may be taken in any light at all, no matter how dim.

Thermographic: Theromographic cameras take pictures of heat sources instead of light. Areas of the photo that radiate a particular temperature range are assigned a corresponding color. Colors in the red end of the spectrum represent higher temperatures and cooler areas appear as shades of blue.

Video Camera: These are the large, professional quality video cameras used by television news crews and direct-to-video film makers. The video camera capable of professional quality production, but only in the hands of a skilled videographer. The cameras require video tape to record, but all such cameras are capable of transmitting their picture to a receiver up to half a kilometer away.

Video cameras are also available (micro, submersible, infra-red, starlight and thermographic) that function identically to the corresponding film cameras. One minor exception is the Micro Video Camera, which can not record to tape due to its size and is limited to transmitting its picture to be recorded elsewhere.

Resource Cost: Three video cameras (any type) cost 1RP.

Headset Microphone: This is a set of earphones with built in, forward facing microphones. These headsets are often used by SWAT assault teams when infiltrating a building. They reduce the Df of any hearing-based Perception test by one, providing the source of noise is in front of the wearer.

Resource Cost: 6 Headsets cost 1RP.

Both Audio and AV bugs can be wired to any available source of alternate power, such as a building's electrical system, when they are installed. This requires only a Electrical Repair/build Df1 test and about five minutes. So wired, the bug need not rely on its internal batteries unless power to the building is cut.

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Infrared Flashlight: Just as a flashlight projects visible light, the infra-red flashlight projects a beam of light in the Infra-Red (IR) range of the spectrum, which is normally invisible to humans. Used in conjunction with infrared goggles or cameras, it provides the same lighting a normal flashlight would, but is undetectable by humans without IR vision devices.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗   12 IR flashlights cost 1RP.

Infrared Goggles: These goggles allow the wearer to see in the infrared spectrum instead of the normal visual spectrum. This allows the wearer to view a clear monochrome image of her surroundings, even in complete darkness, providing she has a source of infrared light (such as a flashlight or spotlight). IR goggles do not restrict vision like nightvision goggles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗   10 sets of IR goggles cost 1RP.

Laser Eavesdropper: The latest in surveillance equipment, the laser eavesdropper is a vaguely gun shaped device that fires a low powered laser. When the laser is bounced off a window, it `reads' the vibrations of the glass like a speaker and can reproduce the sounds inside the room exactly. The laser beam degrades slightly over distance, so the eavesdropper can only be used up to a range of ten kilometers, providing line of sight can be acquired. Because the laser eavesdropper must be kept very still it may not be used from or at moving vehicles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡   1 laser eavesdropper costs 1RP.

Nightvision Goggles: Nightvision goggles operate in much the same way starlight telephoto lens and rifle sights do, by amplifying existing, although minimal, light. The goggles allow the wearer to see clearly in near complete darkness, providing there is any light available at all, regardless how dim. The goggles do restrict the wearer's field of vision, however, increasing the target of any Perception tests based on peripheral vision by two (such as noticing someone sneaking up on your side).

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 🎖   6 sets of NVGs cost 1RP.

Remote Monitor: Remote monitors are high resolution displays built for viewing images transmitted by video cameras, AV bugs, satellite imagery or any other source of visual data. A single monitor may be linked to several sources simultaneously, allowing the operator to switch quickly between them.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 ⚗   1 RP buys 6 High Res monitors.

Shotgun Microphone: The shotgun microphone is a large hand-held parabolic mic used by broadcast news teams as well as surveillance agencies. Its name comes from the mic's cone-shaped area of effect, similar to the spread of shotgun pellets. The mike is extremely sensitive over long distances (-2Df for audio Perception tests out to 1km) but also rather bulky and difficult to conceal.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🛡 ⚗   2 Shotgun Mics cost 1RP.

Tape Recorder: This device is a professional quality audio tape recorder that can record directly from a integral microphone or from any number of audio receivers such as bugs, wire taps, or headset and shotgun microphones. The recorder is loaded with long-term 24 hour spools of audio tape for extended surveillance operations.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🛡 ⚗   1RP buys 6 recorders and as much audio tape as the Cell could possibly need.

Telescope: This small (approx 1 meter length) telescope is useful for long distance surveillance, providing a clear view up to 20km away. The telescope is mounted on a gyro-stabilized tripod for clear and steady viewing even at extreme range and an integral laser rangefinder that displays inside the scope's view.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🛡 ⚗   4 'scopes and impact resistance carrying cases cost 1RP.

Starlight Telescope: This is a high tech variant of the standard telescope described above. The Starlight scope allows crystal-clear viewing up to 20km distance even in the dead of a cloud-covered night. The only drawback is that the unit is restricted to displaying monochrome images, just as any night-vision apparatus.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗   2 night vision scopes cost 1RP.

Video Cassette Recorder: This device is a industrial strength version of the standard consumer VCR. It can record high-quality image data from any source, most often a remote monitor or TV. If connected to a computer equipped with Image Processing software it allows operatives to doctor video tapes to show just about anything they'd like (Computer Use and Videography skill is also needed). Data is stored on long-term 12 hour video tape.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 ⚗   1RP buys 6 VCRs and a stock of video cassettes.

Wire Tap: Wire Taps are small electronic devices that can be attached to a telephone line in moments. They can then eavesdrop on any telephone conversation transmitted through that wire. The receiver has

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a range of one half kilometer. Wire Taps only work on conventional telephone lines, they can not connect to Cellular phones as there are no wires to tap.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 ✎ 1 per dozen taps

Wire Tap Detector: The wire tap detector is a small device that monitors a phone line for signs indicating the presence of a wire tap. The detector only detects that the line is being monitored and gives no indication as to who is monitoring the line or where the tap is placed. Like bug detectors, a wire tap detector will only notice taps that are currently in use. Inactive wire taps will remain undetected.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 ✎ 5 units cost 1RP.

SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT

Biohazard Suit: This is a large one-size-fits-all plastic overall including rubber boots, gloves, and gas mask. A biohazard suit protects the wearer from harmful gases, micro-organisms, chemicals and weak acids. The suits are quite sturdy, but by no means armored. If any weapon succeeds in hitting and doing any amount of Lethal damage, the suit's integrity is breached and must be patch immediately to avoid contamination. For this purpose, scientists working in hazardous environments often wear pre-cut lengths of duct tape attached to the legs of the suit to act as instant patches.

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 1RP buys 25 suits.

Biohazard Space Suit: These suits are the ultimate biohazard protection gear. They are pressurized, airtight, and very bulky suits that bear more than a passing resemblance to an astronaut's space suit. Biohazard space suits provide personal Biohazard level 4 protection and have their own battery powered air supply and filtration unit that will provide uncontaminated air for eight hours. The bulk of the suits make movement difficult, increasing the Df of any Agility tests while worn by one level.

Resource Cost: ⚗ 2RP per suit.

Radiation Suit: Radiation suits are heavy-duty lead lined suits used to protect workers from lethal levels of ionizing radiation. The suit is fully filtered and enclosed and as such provides the same protection from chemicals and micro-organisms as the Biohazard Suit. In addition, the lead lining and thick material of the suit itself protects against levels of radiation and heat that would otherwise be lethal in seconds. The thickness and durability of the suit also provides Armor Rating 2 body armor.

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 12 Rad Suits cost 1RP.

Geiger Counter: The Geiger Counter is a small held-held gauge that measures radiation levels. The unit has effectively no range and only measures radiation in the immediate area.

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 12 Geiger Counters cost 1RP.

Quarantine Tent: A large, inflatable, airtight tent for the containment of large specimens or individuals suspected of contamination with possibly hazardous agents. The tent is equipped with an airlock to allow safe entrance and exit. The tent is large enough for four individuals to work comfortably on a single subject. The takes about fifteen minutes to set up completely and includes four Biohazard Suits. When deflated, the tent is small enough to squeeze into the back of a station wagon.

Resource Cost: ⚗ Each quarantine tent costs 1RP.

Radbadge: The Radbadge is small plastic card, about the size and shape of a conventional name tag, with a large red chemically treated square on it. As the badge is exposed to radiation, the red square gradually turns black, signally potentially dangerous radiation levels. The badge is worn in areas where radioactive materials are stored or used, to warn of possible radiation leaks. Radbadges do not turn red in the absence of radiation, and are therefore useful only once.

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ A box of 100 disposable badges cost 1RP.

Specimen Jars and Collection Tools: A set of small sealable specimen jars for holding biological, chemical, or organic specimens and the tweezers, razors, and glass slides used to collect those specimens.

Resource Cost: ⚗ 🛡 1RP buys 12 sets of tools.

DRUGS AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Doctor's Bag: Contains the tools and drugs needed to effectively examine and treat minor ailments and injuries with the Medical skill. Without the equipment and supplies provided in the doctor's bag, the Df of any Medical test is increased by one. Each bag contains one vial of Sodium Pentothal and one vial of Tranquilizers.

Resource Cost: 🎖 ⚗ 🎖 5 Doctor's Bags cost 1RP.

First Aid Kit: The small kit contains the necessary supplies to administer effective First Aid, including bandages, antiseptics, antibiotics, and a burn salves. Using this kit reduces First Aid skill targets by 2. The kit contains enough supplies for six uses.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 1RP buys 25 kits.

Medic's Kit: A Medic's Kit contains standard issue equipment for Emergency Medical Technicians for attending to a variety of wounds in emergency situations. Using the Kit reduces First Aid test Dfs by one, and gives a +2 target bonus to Medical tests, for stabilization and resuscitation attempts only. The Kit only contains enough supplies for six uses.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 10 Medic Kits cost 1RP.

Sodium Pentothal: Sodium Pentothal is a narcotic drug that is more commonly referred to rather inaccurately as "truth serum". The drug is administered to a subject to reduce his alertness and increase the chances that he will reveal information sought by interrogators. The term "truth serum" is misleading because the answers the subject gives are not necessarily true.

Once Sodium Pentothal is administered to a subject (requiring a Medical 1 test, failure renders the subject unconscious), the subject quickly lapses into a state of semi-narcosis, conscious, but with little control over what he or she says. The effects of the drug wear off in about five minutes, after which there are no harmful side-effects. While under the effects of Sodium Pentothal, the subject must make a Willpower 4 test to resist answering any question posed to him. If the test fails, the subject must answer the question as truthfully as he can, though he need not give out information that was not specifically asked for. Also while under the drug's effect, any physical or mental actions receive a +2Df penalty, making it a passable sedative. Attempts to hypnotize a subject under the effects of Sodium Pentothal also receive a -2Df bonus.

Resource Cost: 📷 ⚗ 10 vials of 6 doses of Sodium Pentothal cost 1RP.

Tranquilizer: Tranquilizers are drugs used to sedate people or animals, usually rendering them unconscious. Most often tranquilizers are administered via dart or syringe, either of which may be loaded with up to 6 dose levels. Once the subject has been injected with the tranquilizer, one dose level takes effect every two rounds. Every time a dose level takes effect the subject must make a Size test v. the total number of levels that have taken effect to avoid losing consciousness. If the subject passes the test and remains conscious, the Df of other Attribute or Skill test she makes must be increased by the number of dose levels that have taken effect. Once the tranquilizer reaches full effect, one dose level will wear off every 15 minutes.

An Aegis operative jumps out of a van and shoots a Black Book agent with a dart loaded with 6 dose levels of tranquilizer. The drug does not begin to take effect until the next round and the agent immediately begins to run. At the start of the second round after he was shot the first dose level takes effect and the agent must make a Size 1 test which he automatically succeeds. But the one dose level's effect makes his Agility tests to run one level tougher, forcing him to slow down a little. Two rounds later another level takes effect and the agent must make a Size 2 test. Since the agent is average Size (3) he still succeeds automatically, but now his tests are increased by two, forcing him down to a slow stumble. Two rounds later the third dose level takes effect and the agent is forced to make a Size 3 test, which he manages to pull off. However, his Agility tests to get away are now 3 levels tougher as well, reducing the agent to a crawl. Two rounds later the Aegis operative casually walks up to the agent who fails his Size 4 test and loses consciousness. Four rounds later the drug reaches full effect and begins to wear off, but since each level of tranquilizer lasts fifteen minutes, the agent will remain unconscious for another hour and a half.

Resource Cost: 🧪 10 vials (12 dose levels each) of tranquilizer cost 1RP.

TOOL KITS

All tool kits are contained in large but portable metal cases. The tool kits allow the use of the corresponding Repair/build skill without a +1Df penalty. Tool kits available are aerospace, computer, electronic, electrical, and mechanical.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 2 tool kits (any type) cost 1RP.

COMMUNICATIONS GEAR

Base Radio: The Base radio is a large, stationary radio transceiver with a large antenna similar to those found at radio stations and military listening posts. Maximum range is usually about 100 kilometers but can vary depending on weather, altitude, and interference.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 A Base radio costs 2RP.

Cellular Phone: This phone is identical to a standard commercial Cellular phone, with a few important exceptions. While any character can get a Cellular phone at any electronics outlet, phones acquired though Resource Points and assigned to the Cell are registered to government organizations or are electronic 'clones' of legitimate phones. Therefore the Cell will never be charged for their use and need not fear the units being associated with anyone in the Cell.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🗡 🧪 6 illicit 'clone' Cellular phones cost 1RP.

Hands Free Radio: This is a small, concealable radio transceiver with a range of a half kilometer. The speaker is worn in the ear like a hearing aid, and the microphone is attached to the wearer's clothing, usually the lapel or collar. The radio is voice activated, and turns itself on and off as necessary. These radios are commonly used by bodyguard and security forces to keep in touch with one another.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 12 radios cost 1RP.

Personal Radio: Personal radios are commonly used by groups of people who need to keep in close contact over medium distances such as police officers and park rangers. The units either conform to the typical "walkie-talkie" look, or are worn on the belt and connected to a separate handset microphone. The FM radio transmitter/receiver has an average effective range of about two kilometers.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 1RP buys 6 units.

Satellite Uplink: A small satellite dish that allows a stationary radio unit to send and receive signals from an orbiting satellite. The satellite can relay the signals to any other radio unit that is also connected to a satellite uplink. Although portable, the uplink is still rather bulky and is generally installed on a vehicle.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🧪 1RP per uplink.

Scrambler: The scrambler can be attached to any radio transceiver (including a Cellular phone), enabling the user to send encrypted messages intelligible only to another radio connected to a scrambler with the same settings. A computer attached to a radio and a scrambler can decipher scrambled transmissions providing it can intercept about 15 minutes of transmissions. To defeat this, teams using scrambled transmissions often change the scrambler settings at regular intervals.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 4 scrambler units cost 1RP.

Signal Jammer: A signal jammer attached to a radio transmitter allows a trained operator to jam specific radio frequencies within the range of the transmitter by overwhelming that frequency with garbage transmissions. Any receiver within range tuned in to that frequency will only pick up static.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 One jammer costs 1RP.

Vehicle Radio: Vehicle radios are large radio transceivers installed in a vehicle that run off the vehicle's battery. Vehicle radios have a range of approximately twenty kilometers.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 🧪 1RP purchases 2 radios.

RESTRAINTS

Handcuffs: Solid steel police-quality hand cuffs. A Str5 or Escape 4 test is required to free yourself.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 1RP per 12 sets of cuffs.

Straight jacket: Straight jackets are long term restraints that bind a subjects upper body completely. A Str5 or Escape 5 test is necessary to get out.

Resource Cost: 📷 🧪 1RP for 4 jackets.

Plastic Binder Strips: These are one-use plastic strips that make effective and quick hand restraints. The strips, which are in common use by many police departments nationwide, are simply strong plastic loops that are tightened around the subject's wrists and must be cut to release the subject. A Str4 or Escape 2 test is necessary to liberate one's hands.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 1RP buys a box of 500 binder strips.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT GEAR

Climbing Gear: Includes all equipment necessary for climbing and rappelling down sheer surfaces, including both mountain cliffs and urban buildings. Ropes, pitons, crampons, hammers, picks, and grappling hooks are all provided.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 1RP buys enough equipment to outfit 6 individuals.

Cold Weather Gear: Cold weather gear protects against the damage sub-zero temperatures can inflict. The kit includes a parka, insulated coverall, boots, gloves, goggles, and face mask.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 5 outfits cost 1RP.

Diving Suit: Diving suits are large, pressurized, metal and plastic diving exoskeletons used for extended deep exploration of areas of the ocean floor. The suit contains enough oxygen for eight hours of continual use. The hard exoskeleton acts as Armor Rating 3. The grippers that the suit has instead of hands are not terribly dexterous, limited to basic grasping and lifting.

Resource Cost: ⚗ A single suit costs 2RP.

Wet suit: Wetsuits are worn by divers as insulation and protection against minor cuts and abrasions when diving (Armor Rating 1). The suits are also colored matte black and provide the same advantages to covert ops teams as black camo fatigues.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ ⚫ 12 suits cost 1RP.

Drysuit: Drysuits are insulating body suits worn when SCUBA diving in extremely cold water. Without a drysuit, a diver would die from hypothermia in minutes.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 6 drysuits cost 1RP.

Flashlight: A large, waterproof, industrial strength flashlight.

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬜ 🎖 ⚫ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 24 flashlights cost 1RP.

S.C.U.B.A. Gear: Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus. Includes mask, flippers, weight belt, snorkel, and oxygen tanks. The oxygen tanks last for up to an hour underwater.

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The old stand-by
Rope still makes a good restraint. Competent rope bonds require a Str4 or Escape 3 test to free oneself.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ 🛡️ 🧪   4 sets of SCUBA gear cost 1RP.

Oxygen Rebreather: An oxygen rebreather is a device that allows a diver to breath underwater much like SCUBA gear. However, a rebreather recycles the air that the diver exhales, reducing the amount of oxygen that the diver needs to carry. Rebreathers have several advantages over conventional SCUBA gear. They allow divers to remain underwater for up to 24 hours at a time, they are smaller and lighter than conventional SCUBA gear, and do not produce the tell-tale bubbles that can reveal a diver's position. The one main disadvantages their expense.

Resource Cost: 🎖️ 🧪   1 rebreather costs 1RP.

Survival Kit: Survival kits are common equipment for teams operating in or near wilderness environments. The small kit contains many items that will prove useful for obtaining the essential food, shelter and clothing: a knife, flint and steel, compass, first aid kit, flare gun and six flares, six fishhooks, and five meters of fishing line.

Resource Cost: 🎖️ 🧪 📷   10 kits cost 1RP.

Base Camp: The Base Camp is an assortment of supplies that provide all the necessary requirements to establish a semi-permanent base of operations in a wilderness environment. The Camp includes tents, sleeping gear, cooking apparatus and food for six people. The equipment is lightweight and can be carried easily in backpacks (provided) by six individuals and set up or broken down in less than two hours.

Resource Cost: 🎖️ 🧪 📷   A base camp costs 1RP.

CLOTHING AND BODY ARMOR

Bulletproof Briefcase: This case looks like a standard stylish leather briefcase, but its Armor Rating of 4 lets it take a lot of punishment. The case is indispensable for tremendously secret documents and the occasional impromptu shield from gunfire.

Resource Cost: 📷 🗡️   1RP buys 4 units

Camouflage Fatigues: These are standard military-issue combat fatigues. Stealth tests are one level easier when wearing fatigues appropriate for the terrain. Available for forest, jungle, desert, arctic, and night (black).

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ 🛡️   1RP buys 24 sets of fatigues (any style or mixture thereof).

Flak Vest: Flack vests are bulky, non-concealable armor vests (Armor Rating 3). They are slightly obsolete now, as the vests are effective mostly at stopping shrapnel and smaller projectiles. Kevlar has largely taken its place. Aegis operatives still find them useful, however. Due to its bulk, the vest is twice as effective as other armors at ablating energy attacks.

Resource Cost: 📷 🗡️ 🎖️ 🛡️   10 vests cost 1RP.

Helmet: A steel combat helmet with an Armor Rating 3. Helps to protect against all sorts of physical harm from gunfire to thrown rocks and bottles. Head shots from the rear or sides will hit the helmet on a 3 or higher on 1D. Head shots from the front will only hit the helmet on a 5 or better.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖️ 🛡️   10 helmets cost 1RP.

Kevlar Vest: Kevlar vests are light, concealable (Per4 test to detect) bulletproof vest (Armor Rating 4) that are now in common use by law enforcement agencies and paramilitary units world-wide. The one weakness of kevlar is due to its flexible fabric nature: bladed weapons are treated as armor piercing.

Resource Cost: 📷 🗡️ 🎖️ 🛡️   6 vests cost 1RP.

Uniform: Any uniform for an existing organization can be acquired for undercover or covert operations. This includes police, military, fast food joints, repair or maintenance companies, state road crews, circus clowns, anything.

Resource Cost: 📷 🗡️   24 uniforms cost 1RP (any type or mix). The type of uniform must be specified when acquired.

STANDARD VEHICLES

The following vehicles are common civilian models that can be found in wide use everywhere. As such, no descriptions are given except to catalogue any extra equipment or capabilities worth noting. One key difference between vehicles used by Aegis Cells and similar vehicles employed by the rest of the populace lies not in any physical variation, but rather their acquisition and records. All vehicles employed by Aegis Cells are registered to legitimate front organizations or government agencies, with no connection to any Aegis entity. A few hours work and some phone calls (and an Influence 1 test) can have any vehicle's registration and ownership transferred to another front organization, which should

help avert unwanted suspicion. Interestingly, most vehicles acquired by Aegis tend to be painted black, often with darkened windscreens when applicable. Whether this is by design or coincidence is not entirely clear.

Motorcycle: Speed:3 Handling:-1Df Size:4 Crew:1 Passengers:1

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ 🛡 🗡 2RP

Compact Car: Speed:1 Handling:-1t Size:5 Crew:1 Passengers:3 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ ⚗ 🗡 2RP

Coupe: Speed:2 Handling:+1t Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:3 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ 🗡 2RP

Sedan: Speed:2 Handling:-- Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:4 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Sports Car: Speed:3 Handling:+2t Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:1 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ 🛡 🗡 3RP

Station Wagon: Speed:2 Handling:-1t Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:5 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Pickup Truck: Speed:2 Handling:-1t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2 Auto Safety Kit

Suffers no off-road penalties

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Jeep: Speed:2 Handling:-1t Size:5 Crew:1 Passengers:3 Auto Safety Kit

Suffers no off-road penalties

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Van: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:8 Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Recreational Vehicle: Speed:1 Handling:+1Df Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:4

Auto Safety Kit

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 4RP

Tractor-Trailer Rig: Speed:1 Handling:-1Df Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:2

Auto Safety Kit, Vehicle Radio

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ ⚗ 🗡 2RP for the Rig, trailer(s) must be purchased separately. Flat bed trailers cost 2RP, Box trailers cost 3RP.

Snowmobile: Speed:1 Handling:+1t Size:4 Crew:1 Passengers:1

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 🗡 1RP

Jet Ski: Speed:1 Handling:+1t Size:4 Crew:1 Passengers:1 2 life jackets

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ ⚗ 🗡 1RP

Speed Boat: Speed:2 Handling:-- Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:3

First Aid Kit, Flare Gun and 5 flares, 4 life jackets

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 3RP

Prop Plane: Speed:4 Handling:-- Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:8

2 Parachutes, Vehicle Radio

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 4RP

Helicopter, Observation: Speed:4 Handling:-1Df Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:1 Vehicle Radio

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 4RP

Helicopter, Passenger: Speed:4 Handling:-- Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:5 Vehicle Radio

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 ⬧ 🛡 ⚗ 🗡 4RP

Helicopter, Transport: Speed:4 Handling:+1Df Size:9 Crew:2 Passengers:0 Vehicle Radio

Resource Cost: 📷 ⬧ ⚗ 4RP

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Many vehicles list a Auto Safety Kit as equipment, this simply consists of a First Aid Kit and 10 Signal Flares.

Jet, Cargo: Speed:4 Handling:+1Df Size:9 Crew:3 Passengers:0 Vehicle Radio, 3 Parachutes

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 5RP

Jet, Civilian: Speed:5 Handling:-- Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:8 Vehicle Radio, 2 Parachutes

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗ 📺 5RP

SPECIAL VEHICLES

Ambulance: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:3

An ambulance is exCellent cover for covert operations teams, particularly in urban areas with several ambulance companies. The sirens and lights clear the way for the team's rapid deployment or extraction, and the equipment carried in the vehicle may save the lives of anyone who were wounded during the operation. An ambulance is equipped with a vehicle radio and medical supplies that provide the same benefit as a medic's kit (though for game purposes, supplies are effectively unlimited).

Resource Cost: 📷 🗡 🎖 🛡 ⚗ 5RP

Biohazard Ambulance: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2

The Biohazard Ambulance is an unmarked van containing much the same supplies as a mundane ambulance, plus additional gear to contain biohazards and treat individuals exposed to infectious agents. In addition to the standard Medic-Kit and Vehicle radio carried by it's mundane counterpart, the Biohazard Ambulance contains the following equipment; 3 biohazard suits, 2 tasers, 3 flashlights, specimen sampling gear, body bags and a flamethrower.

The biohazard ambulance also contains two rather specialized items. The first is a portable Biocontainment Pod, commonly called a bubble stretcher. The biocontainment pod is very similar to a normal stretcher except that it is enclosed by an airtight plastic bubble to better contain contaminated individuals. A small air tank supplies the patient with air until he can be removed to a quarantine facility. The second item is a small pressurized tank, similar to a fire extinguisher, filled with disinfectant chemical. The chemical spray is used to quickly disinfect individuals (usually wearing biohazard suits) leaving a contaminated area.

Resource Cost: ⚗ 7RP

Security Sedan: Speed:2 Handling:-- Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:4

Security sedans are customized luxury sedans built for the particular requirements of bodyguard work and other high risk missions. The body and windows of the car have been heavily armored (Ar5) and the tires are made of solid rubber. A vehicle radio and scrambler, autonav computer, radar detector, Cellular phone and car fax are installed as standard features. To protect against gas attacks, the car can also be made airtight at the flip of a switch, which also activates an independent air supply that can provide five passengers with three hours of breathable air. To compensate for the car's extra weight, a more powerful engine is installed, giving the car a slightly better top speed and overdrive capabilities. When the overdrive is engaged, the sedan's speed is increased by one for one round. The overdrive can damage the engine, though if used for prolonged periods. Whenever the overdrive is activated roll a die, if the result is less than the number of rounds that the overdrive has been used in the last 30 minutes, the player must make a malfunction roll for the sedan's overworked engine.

Resource Cost: 📷 5RP

Police Cruiser: Speed:2 Handling:-- Size:6 Crew:1 Passengers:4

Masquerading as police officers can provide one of the best covers available to a covert ops team. It could also prove to be the team's undoing if not done properly. Operatives should take care to follow proper police procedure as much as possible to avoid unnecessary suspicion. Standard equipment includes a pump shotgun, box of 50 shot shells, vehicle radio, first aid kit, 50 signal flares, and a radar gun.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 🗡 4RP

SWAT Van: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:5

These vans are used by SWAT teams nationwide to carry 6 member assault teams to and from operation sites. The back of the van is taken up by equipment lockers and four SWAT team members, the other two members sit up front. The body of the van has been well armored (Armor Rating 5) and is equipped with the following gear; six submachine guns with flashlight mounts and folding stocks, a box of 50 clips of SMG ammo , six helmets, six flak vests, six gas masks, six personal communicators, one case (20) each of stun and smoke grenades, a vehicle radio, a sledgehammer, and a medical kit.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 7RP

Lab Van: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2

The lab van is a large vehicle that has been installed with a variety of high-tech scientific equipment. Lab vans are employed by police departments for crime scene investigations and by research organizations for quality field work. The van constitutes a small, 2 investigator laboratory fully equipped for Biological, Chemical and Medical research (no bonus). The following equipment is also included in the lab van's supplies, one quarantine tent, four biohazard suits, four sets of specimen jars and collection tools, a Geiger counter, eight radbadges, a dart rifle, twelve darts, six vials of tranquilizer, and several sealed cages for small (Size 1) live specimens. A vehicle radio and car fax are standard as well.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 ⚗ 7RP

Surveillance Van: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:3

A normal van specially equipped for surveillance work. Equipment in the van includes; a vehicle radio connected to a satellite uplink and scrambler, four hands-free radios, Cellular phone (and scrambler), electrical and electronic tools, six wire taps, twelve bugs, a tape recorder, a video recorder, a remote monitor, a laser eavesdropper, four AV bugs, a shotgun microphone and a Starlight telescope.

Resource Cost: 📷 🛡 ⚔ 7RP

Lab RV: Speed:1 Handling:+1Df Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:4

The lab RV is an extensive mobile laboratory that provides a quality research platform for field work in isolated and remote areas. The RV contains research lab facilities large enough for four researchers to work simultaneously. The lab is equipped to handle biological, chemical or medical research projects, and while the quality of the facility is not sufficient to provide a bonus, the RV is equipped with a computer workstation running Chemistry, Biology and Medical Expert System programs. Additional equipment carried by the Lab RV includes; 2 quarantine tents, 8 biohazard suits, 4 Radiation suits, 6 personal radios, 8 sets of specimen jars and tools, 2 geiger counters, 24 radbadges, 4 dart rifles, 80 darts, 10 vials of tranquilizer, a Doctor's bag, 4 Medic Kits, 10 industrial strength flashlights, a spotlight, video camera, remote monitor, vehicle radio and satellite uplink.

Resource Cost: 🛡 ⚗ 12RP

Telephone Crane Truck: Speed:1 Handling:+1Df Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2

A telephone repair crew is another great cover for a covert operation, particularly for planting wire taps. The crane can be useful in many other situations as well (surveillance, for example). The truck also carries a full set of electric and electronics tools, a stack of orange road cones and a vehicle radio.

Resource Cost: 📷 ⚔ 5RP

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Snow Cat: Speed:1 Handling:+2Df Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:5

The snow cat is a large multi-passenger tracked vehicle built for traveling on ice and snow in adverse conditions. Unlike the snowmobile, the cabin is enclosed and heated. The Snow Cat contains a vehicle radio, survival kit, first aid kit and 25 signal flares.

Resource Cost: 3RP

Zodiac: Speed:1 Handling:+2t Size:5 Crew:1 Passengers:3

The Zodiac is a four-man inflatable raft employing a small but powerful electric motor. The small size and sturdiness of the raft and the silence of the engine make it a popular vehicle for covert operations teams.

Resource Cost: 1RP

Fishing Trawler: Speed:0 Handling:N/A Size:9 Crew:3 Passengers:10

Fishing Trawlers are large sea vessels built for extended, if not luxurious, excursions at sea. Trawlers are often used as a cover and operations center for ocean based missions and for clandestine signal interception. The cargo hold of the trawler can provide ample room to set up necessary facilities and the cost of the ship includes the cost of hiring its crew. Standard equipment includes a radar array, GPS terminal, base radio and a zodiac raft.

Resource Cost: 7RP

Mini-Sub: Speed:1 Handling:-- Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2

The Mini-Sub is a relatively small two-person submersible craft used for exploring sites deep underwater. The sub is equipped with a vehicle radio for communication with the surface, two robotic arms for specimen collection (Str4), a spotlight, air tanks good for two people for eight hours, two dry suits, and two sets of S.C.U.B.A. gear.

Resource Cost: 4RP

Helicopter, Assault: Speed:4 Handling:+2t Size:7 Crew:2 Passengers:0

Assault Helicopters are heavily armed and armored high-tech military helicopters. The hull has an Armor Rating of 5 and is armed with a variety of weapons; a minigun and 1,000 rounds of tracer ammo, four air-to-air missiles, and two rocket pods with eight rockets each. Additional or alternate weapon systems must be acquired separately. The helicopter is also equipped with 12 electronic countermeasures (ECM) pods that it can drop to thwart guided missiles. As with any aircraft, a vehicle radio is standard equipment and the helicopter cockpit is fitted with ejection seats which incorporate a parachute, survival kit, first aid kit and 10 signal flares.

Resource Cost: 7RP

Jet, Fighter: Speed:5 Handling:+2t Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:0

Jet Fighters can be any one of a number of military interceptor craft. Like most fixed-wing aircraft, the hull is unarmored (AR3) and the jet is equipped with a vehicle radio and an ejection seat and parachute. As part of the pilot's equipment the jet carries a first aid kit and survival kit in case he has to bail out. The jet can be fitted with wide range of weapon loads, most often six missiles and a heavy machine-gun (1,000 rounds of ammo). Fighter jets are armed with 12 ECM pods like the assault helicopters. Additional or alternate weapon systems must be acquired separately.

Resource Cost: 7RP

Jump Jet: Speed:5 Handling:+2t Size:8 Crew:2 Passengers:0

Jump Jets are military fighter planes designed primarily for attacking ground targets. In most ways Jump Jets are nearly identical to normal Fighter Jets, with the exception of the Jump Jet's VTOL, for Vertical Take-Off and Landing, capability. VTOL aircraft, , as implied by their name, do not require a runway for either lift off or landing. Instead, Jump Jets lift off a landing pad vertically, like a helicopter. This makes Jump Jets very useful for deployment in areas where building a runway is impossible prohibitively expensive. The Jump Jet's role as ground-support vehicle warrants slightly different armament in most cases, in addition to a heavy machine-gun (1,000 rounds of ammo) and 2 air to air missiles, Jump Jets usually carry two rocket pods of 8 rockets each. Though additional or alternate weapon systems may be acquired separately. As in Jet Fighters, Jump Jets are equipped with ejection seats and parachutes for the pilot and navigator, as well as survival kits and first aid kits a each station.

Resource Cost: 10RP

VEHICLE ACCESSORIES

Autonav Computer: An Autonav Computer uses a GPS link to determine the exact location of the vehicle it is installed in and display the vehicle's position on a small computer display monitor. The Autonav contains topographic maps of the entire country and street maps of most major cities.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗️   1RP

Inflatable Raft: This raft is a standard four person inflatable raft with oars, similar to those used in fresh water rafting expeditions. When deflated, the whole raft, oars and all, compresses to a package that can easily be stored in a car trunk.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗️   4 rafts cost 1RP.

Parachute: Parachutes are used as safety equipment on most aircraft, as well as for recreational purposes. The parachutes favored by Aegis operatives are black, non-reflective, steerable 'chutes designed for military special forces and airborne troops.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖   6 parachutes cost 1RP.

Spotlight: A powerful spotlight that can be mounted on any ground vehicle or helicopter or set up on tripod. The spotlight can be used to illuminate large patches of ground from aircraft, or light an area clearly for extended work at night.

Resource Cost: 📷 📺 🎖 🛡 ⚗️   6 spotlights cost 1RP.

Infrared Spotlight: Infrared Spotlights are large, vehicle mounted spotlight for use with infrared vision equipment. The spotlight is identical to a standard spotlight except that it project light in the invisible infrared range, meaning that users will still need some means of seeing in the infra-red spectrum for it to be effective. IR spotlights are most often used in conjunction with IR cameras and goggles.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 ⚗️   4 spotlights cost 1RP.

Winch: A strong winch and 100 meters of cable capable of lifting a Size 7 vehicle. The winch can be mounted on a jeep, pickup truck, or any helicopter.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗️   4 winches cost 1RP.

Signal Flares: Small colored warning flares used to mark an area at night are used to mark off road hazards and aircraft landing zones. The flare are also sometimes carried by divers since they include their own oxidant and can burn underwater.

Resource Cost: 📷 🎖 🛡 ⚗️   1RP per box of 500.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Special Resources are unique, extremely rare or secret items that are available only to characters with connections in particular organizations. Also listed here are any exceptions members of particular organizations benefit from when acquiring Cell resources. Those items and special considerations are only applicable to individuals who are members of or who have connections in the particular agency or organization. Special Resources do not have a listed requirement, only an RP cost.

NASA

SR-71 Blackbird: Speed:6 Handling:-- Size:8 Crew:2 Passengers:0

After the military decommissioned its fleet of SR-71 spy planes and gave them to NASA for test vehicles, Aegis Cells began transferring many of the planes to their own airfields. Now nearly all of the fleet of cold war spy planes are in the hands of Aegis, including several prototype interceptor aircraft incorporating the same airframe as the

SR-71. Only three SR-71s remain in official use as part of NASA's high-altitude, high-speed research program.

Despite more than thirty years of aerospace research since its development, the SR-71 blackbird remains the fastest and highest-flying production aircraft in existence. The aircraft's speed and its ability to carry conventional air-to-air missiles (a hold over from its original design as an interceptor) make the Blackbird the only unclassified aircraft in the world that is capable of overtaking and engaging most extraterrestrial craft encountered to date. It is the only aircraft available to Aegis that can accomplish UFO interception missions, with the exception of the Aurora.

Because of the high altitude and speeds maintained by the Blackbird, its crew must wear pressurized spacesuits rather than the standard pilot flightsuits. The crew stations are equipped with ejection seats, parachutes, first aid and survival kits.

In its role as interceptor, the SR-71 may be fitted with up to six conventional air-to-air missiles, although any munitions must be acquired separately. In the interest of security, any Cell that intends to incorporate an SR-71 must keep the plane in a hangar at all times when it is not flying missions.

Resource Cost: 15RP

PROJECT MOONDUST

Alien technology: Since Project Moondust's main role is that of crash recovery and technology analysis, alien technology is often available to Moondust personnel for testing and research. Specific pieces of technology available are detailed below.

Resource Cost: 10RP per item.

GROOM LAKE

Aurora: Speed:6 Handling:-2Df Size:8 Crew:1 Passengers:0

Since the late seventies, Aegis has been hard at work analyzing recovered alien spacecraft at the Groom Lake Research Facility in Nevada. The culmination of that program is the Aurora. The Aurora Interceptor is the most advanced fighter aircraft in existence, largely because it depends on technology that mankind would not have developed on its own for several centuries.

The Aurora is a triangular delta-wing aircraft with a titanium alloy airframe whose design relied heavily on results of high-speed, high-altitude tests performed by the SR-71 Blackbird. The plane is powered by a number of fusion pulse-detonation engines developed from analysis of Saurian propulsion systems. The engines give the Aurora a top sustained speed just short of Mach 4 (four times the speed of sound). Top speed can be maintained for over four hours, limited not by the capabilities of the engines, but rather of the airframe's ability to withstand the extreme temperatures generated at such high speeds.

The Aurora control system incorporates the latest developments in vectored thrust technology, giving it unsurpassed maneuverability among terrestrial aircraft. Atlantean cybernetic control systems allow the pilot to fly the Aurora by thought alone, enabling a skilled pilot to maintain complete control of the craft through aerobatic maneuvers that would be impossible with conventional aircraft. The most impressive such maneuver developed by the Aurora flight team is a zero-radius 180 degree post-stall turn, during which the Aurora turns completely on it's axis in just a few seconds, maintaining full forward velocity. The maneuver has been performed successfully at speeds well exceeding Mach 2 and has led many individuals witnessing it from the ground to misidentify the craft as extra-terrestrial in origin.

The Aurora weapons systems are also exceptional, although most often the plane is loaded with conventional high-yield air-to-air missiles (preliminary tests with extraterrestrial directed energy weapons have proved unsatisfactory). What makes the Aurora's weapon package notable is the target acquisition and missile guidance system which both make use of Grey Psychic Lenses. Missile lock is achieved through a modified version of a Grey Clairvoyance Lens, missile launch and guidance are enabled through a Grey Telekinesis Lens. The use of psychic ability in the Aurora's weapon system nullifies opponent's ability to detect missile lock and makes it very difficult to shake missiles once launched. As would be expected, the Greys themselves have the easiest time detecting and avoiding weapon lock, even so they are sometimes unable to react quickly enough to avoid the missiles.

Cells that wish to include a permanently assigned Aurora Interceptor must have hangar space to keep the Aurora hidden, a private airstrip, an aerospace workshop, and a pilot capable of flying the craft. To qualify, a pilot must have the Pilot: Aurora skill, the Atlantean Pilot Interface System, and Strong ESP.

Resource Cost: 20RP

Alien Technology: As the largest repository and research center for extraterrestrial technology recovered by Aegis, operatives with connections to the Groom Lake Facility usually have no problem getting alien tech transferred to their Cells for research and field testing. Specific items available are listed later in this chapter.

Resource Cost: 10RP per item.

NSA

Magic Van: Speed:2 Handling:-2t Size:7 Crew:1 Passengers:2

One of the NSA's strongest ELINT tools (electronics intelligence) is a secret fleet of vans packed with specialized computer surveillance equipment. The rumored existence of these ELINT vans and their capabilities have raised them to near-mythic status in electronic security circles and has earned them their unofficial nickname, 'Magic Van', half out of professional respect, half out of fear.

The van is capable of making a TEMPEST attack on any non-shielded computer in use within 100m, regardless of intervening obstacles. A successful TEMPEST attack allows the operator to reproduce the activity of any peripheral in use by the target computer. Once the attack succeeds and the computer is 'locked', the NSA agent can see anything that appears on the target computer screen, read what is being typed on its keyboard, and capture data sent to a printer. There is absolutely no way for the targeted computer or its operator to detect such an attack, unless the van itself is noticed and the operator realizes its significance.

The only requirement needed to conduct a TEMPEST attack is that the operator must have both Communications and Surveillance training. For the attack to succeed the operator must be within 100 meters of the targeted computer, which must be on. Tuning in to a particular computer takes 1D minutes. If the operator knows what data is likely to appear on a specific computer screen, he can scan through all available computers until he finds the expected data. When a TEMPEST attack is initiated, the GM should determine the number of computers in the attack radius. To determine the time it will take the attacker to locate and lock on to the target system, divide the number of computers in the area in half (round up) and roll that many dice. The sum rolled is the number of minutes before the operator successfully locates the target computer. For example, if an agent is parked outside a building with a network of 30 operating computers it will take him 15D minutes to find any one particular computer.

Resource Cost: 10RP

PROJECT MKULTRA

Psi-Drugs: MKULTRA Psi-Drugs temporarily enhance a psychics abilities. Controlled use of Psi-Drugs can increase a psychic operatives effectiveness and extend his abilities longer than would otherwise be possible. Careless use of Psi-Drugs can lead to addiction, insanity or death. Details on the use of Psi-Drugs can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

Resource Cost: 1RP for 6 vials (6 doses each).

Mind Control Drugs: MKULTRA developed a number of psychoactive drugs that can alter a subject's state of mind reliably and leave vitually no trace of their passage (Medical 5 to detect the drug's

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presence). The various drugs developed can be administered in any form (pill, powder, gas, injection) and require the subject to make a Size test v. the number of doses or succumb to the effects of the drug for 1D+dosage hours. Specific effects produced by the drugs include: Schizophrenia, Flashbacks, Homicidal, Acute Paranoia, Pacifist and Aggression (Killer Instinct). The behavior of a character under the influence of MKULTRA drugs will be the same as if the individual possessed the corresponding Trait of the same name.

Resource Cost: 1RP for 6 vials (6 doses), the type or types of drug acquired must be specified.

MHIC-EDOM: The MHIC-EDOM (Microwave Hypnotic Intracerebral Control - Electronic Dissolution of Memory) was the only entirely technological mind control technique developed by the MKULTRA project. The MHIC-EDOM is a small portable device, roughly the size and shape of a large flashlight, that enables a skilled user to affect and control a subject's state of mind. The operator must have the MHIC-EDOM skill to have any chance of being successful. The device has two functions producing different but complimentary effects.

The first function, Microwave Hypnotic Intracerebral Control, uses carefully controlled microwave emissions to invoke a desired mental state in the subject. The MHIC-EDOM operator must be with thirty meters of the target and must succeed at two consecutive MHIC-EDOM skill tests v. the target's Willpower attribute. Each attempt takes two rounds, during which only extremely sensitive individuals will notice anything out of the ordinary (a successful Perception 5 test will result in a ringing in the subject's ears and a slight headache). Once the operator makes two successful tests, she may immediately elicit the desired mental state in the subject. The following effects are possible:

Homicidal Rage: The subject will immediately lash out and attack the nearest person, friend or foe. The effect lasts for 2D rounds during which the subject will do his best to kill the anyone near him.

Trance: The subject immediately lapses into a trance-like stupor. He will take no notice of his surroundings and stand (or sit) staring blankly ahead. The trance lasts for 1D minutes, during which the subject may be hypnotized as if he were a willing participant. Any physical damage or pain will snap the subject out of the trance.

Fear: The subject is immediately forced to relive his most terrifying nightmare for 2D rounds, during which time he will run away from the operator or, if unable, curl up into a fetal position and cower.

The second function of the MHIC-EDOM uses a modulated burst of microwaves combined with a controlled electric shock to temporarily disable the subject's long-term memory. This function has a considerably shorter range than the first, the MHIC-EDOM operator must be with 10 meters for the electrical charge to arc properly. The operator must then make a Df2 MHIC-EDOM test. If successful the subject is immediately stunned and dazed for 1D rounds. The subject's long term memory will be effectively erased for a one-hour period centering on the device's use. Aside from the initial stun effects, the subject's mental faculties are not impaired, he will still be able to act as he would normally for that time, but he will not remember anything that happened during that hour at all.

Resource Cost: 5RP

PROJECT RASPUTIN

Psychotrons: Psychotrons are electronic devices that allow a trained operator to release previously stored psychic energy, much like a battery. The user need not be psychic, but must not be a Void or Psink. Details of the capabilities and operation of psychotrons can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

Resource Cost: 5RP

ILLUMINUS

Because of the far reaching network of connections enjoyed by an Illuminus, no restrictions whatsoever are placed on how she may spend Resource Points during Cell creation. An Illuminus may spend RP on any aspect of a Cell, including other Special Resources, regardless of any requirements. RP cost of any aspect remains the same.

OCCULT RESEARCHER

Occult library: Most Occult Researchers pride themselves on the extent of the library of arcane tomes and manuscripts they have accumulated. These mystic libraries aid any Occult research projects, giving the Occultist a +2 target bonus. An occult library will also allow a researcher so inclined to attempt to uncover the mystery of an arcane ritual, a task impossible with any other reference work (such as a computer Occult database). More information on mystic study and arcane ritual can be found in Chapter 6: Supernatural.

Resource Cost: 5RP

ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

Operatives working within certain organizations have access to Alien Technology as a Special Resource. The following items are generally available to these operatives. The GM, at his or her discretion, may add or remove items from the list as necessary to preserve game balance and the continuity of the game world. For example, if a GM has decided that in her game world, no one has ever managed to capture Saurian technology, she may decide that those items are unavailable. Likewise, if she decides that another alien race of her own design is operating on Earth, she may include item of technology from that race.

The Plasma Claw is the Saurian race's primary personal weapon. It is often found in downed Saurian craft and occasionally in use by the Men In Black. The weapon generates and fires fist-sized spheres of plasma that are directed by the wearer's hand movements.

Field Generators are devices built into the harnesses worn as clothing by Saurian soldiers. These generators are very rare and have only been recovered from UFO wreckage and secret bases. The Field Generator is capable of projecting a defensive energy shield or an anti-gravity effect.

The Power Generator is one of the most commonly recovered pieces of Saurian technology, as they are used extensively as power sources by The Black Book operations. The small devices provide an unlimited source of electricity capable of supplying an average office building with all the power it needs.

Since most of the Atlantean's machines are nanotech-based, the Particle Accelerator Rifle is one of the few pieces of their technology that are easily used when recovered. The PA Rifle is a devastating heavy weapon that is only slightly larger than its terrestrial equivalent, and just as easily used.

One of the only items of Grey technology that can be identified as such is the Psychic Lens. These devices greatly aid and enhance the use of psychic abilities for a variety of purposes, though each Lens seems specialized for a specific task or purpose.

Each of the previous items require a long-term research project (usually Engineering: Electronic, or Electrical, but Psychic Lenses requires a Parapsychology project) to be completed before the specifics of their use can be determined and characters can begin developing training and skills in their use. All these devices are detail fully in Chapter 8: Game Mastering.

CHAPTER 4
TRADECRAFT

We turned the corner, and there wasn't a security guard in sight. Alise looked carefully at the doors, checking them for motion detectors and surveillance cameras. She found both.

"This is not going to be as easy as Vallen thinks." I could tell Alise was concerned. "This is a military base. We can't just waltz in and gain entrance to a high security office. Well Tristan," she turned toward me, "do you have any suggestions?"

"Tell me the list of pass codes slowly," I positioned myself in front of the lock's number pad. "People can be very predictable when they find a series of numbers they like. They tend to stick with them."

I held my fingers over the buttons of the number pad and closed my eyes. As she whispered combinations of numbers, I concentrated. I've done this a million times. Suddenly, my eyes popped open and my fingers moved as if they were not my own. The door unbolted, then swung open.

"That was impressive," Alise cautiously walked into the room. Once it was clear we were alone, she whipped out her laptop and began hooking it up to Boland's PC. "So what do you think about his password? We've got a couple of numbers that look like birth dates, and then a woman's name. We can try either avenue since they're pretty common codes, but I don't know him well enough to guess."

"I read his file. It looks like Boland does research work for The Black Book, but his connections don't run very high. From what I can sense about him, Boland isn't necessarily a bad man. I think he just got caught up in the Book before he realized what he was getting into." I paused, listened intently for any noise down the hall, then brought my attention back to the problem at hand. "He's just not the type for birth dates, and that means we're overlooking something. What else did you get from HERMES?"

"Um . . . ," Alise fumbled through the list, "just a random quote. 'My peace is gone. My heart is heavy.' HERMES says it's by . . . "

"Goethe . . . I know the quote. That's what we're looking for." I began to peruse Boland's book shelf. "Look, he's got books by Wagner and Neiztche, so he's well read, but he concentrated mostly on German authors. He was probably very patriotic towards Germany, maybe even bought into the whole 'superiority of the Aryan race' bullshit." I tilted my head, and looked at another selection. "The quote doesn't fit that mentality. He's changed over the years, regretting the decisions he made." My fingers tingled as I pulled the book from the shelf. "Got it! Try Faust."

"Bingo, we're in!" Alise smiled without removing her eyes from the screen. "You're talented, Tristan."

Moving away from the bookshelf, I went to the desk and picked up a lighter. I sensed something immediately: his fingers on the lighter, constantly flicking it on. The feeling shifted and I could sense Boland in a loud place. A neon track number flashed.

"Hey, Tristan. Are you still with me?" Alise walked over to me, and my eyes slowly re-focused. She looked down at the desk. "Hey, what do we have here?" She picked up a pad and pencil. Her scribbling revealed the impression of an E-mail address. "I bet this was the last thing Boland wrote. Let's see if I can find it." Alise turned back to the laptop. "Lucky for us Boland kept copies of the stuff he sent out."

"You know Alise, you're a damn fine detective. I hazard a guess that you weren't always involved in the CDC. I mean you really know what you're doing . . . "

"Stop fishing, Tristan," Alise interrupted. "If you want to learn about me, I can't really stop you. If you have any respect for me, however, keep out of my private life, okay?" She didn't look up as she spoke, just continued to search through computer files. After a couple of minutes, she came up with something: a memo.

"This is it," Alise sounded excited. She read aloud: "Taking kids to the station at 6pm, rendezvous with sitters at Steven's. See you in two days." She saved the file to the laptop. "'Station' . . . does that mean bus or train? Also, who the hell is this Steven? If the rest of the message is so cryptic, why is 'Steven's' not?"

"Maybe 'Steven's' is blatant because there is no other way to put it," I suggested. "Call the train station and find out if they have any places called 'Steven's' nearby."

"How do you know for sure it's the train station?" Alise asked, narrowing her eyes.

"Trust me. It's the train station, and that means we don't have much time. Let's go."

We cleaned up any trace of our presence and headed for the exit. Just as I reached the door, the hair on my neck stood up and I sensed a heavy feeling in my chest.

I whispered, "Bad guy at the door" and ducked out of sight. The door opened to reveal a huge security guard standing there, blocking the light from the hall.

"What the hell are you doing in here?"

Before he could move, Alise struck with lightning fast reflexes. As her open hand impacted upon the guard's face, I saw some kind of flash. I couldn't make heads or tails out of what the hell happened next. All I knew was a guard twice the size of Alise was out cold on the floor, and her hand wasn't even broken. Whatever just happened wasn't in any way normal. As if this whole situation wasn't bad enough, now I was frightened of Alise. I didn't want to look in her eyes. I was too afraid of what I might find.

"Don't ask any questions," Alise warned. "Let's just get Vallen and go before the gorilla wakes up."

"You'll get no arguments from me." I followed after her, staring back at the unconscious guard. Alise hurried down the corridor as she called Vallen on the Cellular.

"Richard, I was just notified that we have . . . um, a situation back home that needs our immediate attention."

Vallen joined us directly. We called Johnson's team to tell them where to meet us. It looked like we were all going to the train station.

* * * * *

Johnson and I moved together like a machine. It was difficult to focus on him through the green glare of the night vision goggles, but sound was enough to guide me. The smell hit as soon as we entered the warehouse, and my feet kept sticking to the floor. I really didn't want to know what I was sticking to; it reeked as if it died a while ago. Johnson's voice in my communicator broke the silence.

"I want you to stay real close to me, Kai. I've got a bad feeling about this."

Now, for as long as I've known Johnson, he'd never based anything off intuition. Naturally, I became very nervous. "Hold up a minute, Johnson. Before we go any further, you tell me what's wrong." He stood close enough to me in the dark hallway that I could feel his body warmth.

"The last run I was on . . . " he started reluctantly, "the last time I was part of a Cell, we were doing a warehouse job, and things went wrong. We lost two good agents: one dead, the other scared into catatonia. There are too many similarities here, and I'm replaying the scenario in my head. I just don't want you to get hurt," he looked at me and then back towards the end of the hall, " . . . either of us for that matter. Of course, we've got to baby-sit the newbee, too. I just feel real uncomfortable with this."

"It will be okay," I reassured him, trying to focus on the mission at hand. "We'll move together down the hallway, then to the right. The blueprints we checked out earlier indicated that the power box is no more than ten feet from the corner. We'll keep close -- I'll hit the power, you watch my back."

We secured the building with no problems. Nothing alive was left here. Broken glass vats spilled some kind of greenish goo on the floor. As I walked I could hear the glass crunch, followed by the squishy sound of my boots in the slime. Johnson pulled out his radio.

"Jeanette, we are secure here. You can move in, copy?"

"I read you. What equipment?"

"You're going to need some gear to collect samples. We've got some weird stuff here." I started looking around as Jeanette arrived. There was an over-turned desk riddled with bullet holes. I found remnants of what might be blood on the floor. Jeanette would have to grab samples of that.

"Johnson, look," I pointed to the ceiling. "There's a camera. That means there's monitoring equipment somewhere around here."

"Jeanette, you continue to grab samples of what ever you can. Take a look through the desk too, and see if you can find something useful."

After searching for a few minutes, Johnson found a secret panel leading to a hidden office. Meanwhile, while gathering samples, Jeanette found a couple of computer disks taped to the inside of the desk. I spent some time fiddling with the VCR in the monitoring area and called out when finally it worked. "Hey guys, I got some feed from the day of the incident." Jeanette joined me in the office, but Johnson remained outside to keep an eye on things. "Okay, this is the scientist; but who's he's talking to? It's huge . . . or maybe the scientist is a midget?" The video went on for a minute or two, then fritzed out for a couple of seconds. When it came back, the desk was turned over and there were muzzle flashes at the edge of the screen.

"What's going on?" I asked, continuing to try to piece the events together. "The really tall guy's kicking butt, and he's taking a lot of bullets without going down. It looks like the scientist was working with someone, and a Black Book strike team showed up at the wrong time. It doesn't look like they expected anyone but the scientist."

Jeanette stared in awe at the screen, obviously viewing the scene with inexperienced eyes. "What's that thing that guy has on his arm? It looks like some kind of claw." I froze the frame.

"Oh shit, that's a Saurian power claw. I've seen too many of those in my day." I turned toward the novice beside me. "This is bad, Jeanette. I think we're in deeper than we expected."

"Kai, we may have a problem," Johnson's voice over the radio startled me. Suddenly the power shut down.

"What's going on Kai? Why did the power go off?" The nervousness in Jeanette's voice wasn't making the situation any easier. I pulled her down to the floor with me and whispered.

"Be silent and move only when I say. We are going to head for the door, so put these on." I handed her a spare set of night vision goggles and hoped she wouldn't freak out on me. My heart was pounding so loudly I could hear it echo inside my skull. I couldn't stop thinking about Johnson. I didn't know if he was down, but I couldn't risk breaking radio silence until I knew what was going on. Moving across the floor like a spider, I silently edged my way towards the door of the office. Silhouetted against the window across the warehouse, I could see someone walking. That's not Johnson -- that's not the way he moves. Then it dawned on me how tall the shadow was. My mouth dried up. If I had not just watched this guy on the video take out at least three people with no problem , I wouldn't be so scared. Slowly I reached back and motioned for Jeanette to follow.

I maneuvered out the door and shot a smoke grenade across the room to serve as a distraction. Jeanette and I jumped up simultaneously and bolted for the hallway. We reached the exit in seconds. I looked back to see Johnson rounding the corner. I guess he liked my distraction. "What are you waiting for? Open the door!" Johnson yelled, pushing past Jeanette.

"I'm trying, but its stuck!" Her voice was tinged with panic. "It's jammed from the other side. Help me!" Jeanette could see the tall man at the end of the hall now, and she started to whimper. Suddenly, she was uttering something that sounded like French, and a strange mist started filling the hall. The next thing I knew, I heard something on the other side of the door fall, and we spilled out of the building. We took off like a shot and piled into the van.

"That's it, no more warehouses ever. Every time I set foot in one of those places, things go wrong." Johnson looked toward Jeanette's white hands on the steering wheel. "We probably lost everything we picked up in the place because that guy showed up. I mean, it was one guy, so what the hell we were running for? I think it might have been pretty useful to interrogate him." Johnson sounded really annoyed. Jeanette continued to drive in silence, and while she obviously had something to tell us, she was too shaken up to do so. I had to admit though, for someone who just had the crap scared out of her, she drove pretty well.

"Johnson, we definitely didn't want to try to detain that guy. He was on the video, and we watched him take out at least two guys and a Saurian, as far as I could tell. Smart money says he's an Atlantean."

"You've got to be kidding me!" Johnson's eyes seemed to pop out of his head. "We have The Black Book, Saurians, and now an Atlantean all vying for the embryos? Oh yea, this is going to be fun." He cradled his head in his hands. "Okay, we need to get on the horn and let Vallen know what's going down."

I moved up front with Jeanette to check on her. "Hey there, how you holding up?"

"I am okay, I should explain what happened back there, but I need a little time. Oh by the way, all the samples I took, the disks I grabbed, and the tape are in my bag. You see, I'm not so useless after all." There was resentment in her voice.

"Look Jeanette, I'm sorry I offended you before. You did real well in there and I shouldn't have underestimated you." Johnson actually sounded sincere.

Without a doubt Jeanette had proven herself as a valuable member of the team, and Johnson would not doubt her again.

THE RULES

All games, by definition, have rules. Conspiracy X is no exception. The one major difference between role-playing and most other games, however, is that no single set of rules can possibly cover the infinite number of situations that will present themselves during the course of the game. Any system of rules governing a role-playing game must be considered, at best, a guideline. In fact, the Game Master's most important function, aside from role-playing the various non-player characters in the game, is to interpret the rules consistently and improvise rules for new situations fairly.

Above all, remember that the purpose of playing Conspiracy X is to have fun. If the group ever decides that a particular rule is interfering with that, the aberrant rule should be revised, or removed entirely. Likewise, a GM should never feel bound to follow the rules exactly at all times. If the enforcement of a particular rule would slow the game or otherwise decrease everyone's enjoyment, the GM should feel free to ignore that rule for the time being. The rules given here are intended to improve the gaming experience by providing a consistent frame work to give support to exciting stories, not to limit it or restrict the players' imaginations.

TEST BASICS

The rules often call for players to test a Stat against a Difficulty Level (Df), usually to determine the success or failure of actions attempted by the characters. The Difficulty Level may be an arbitrary number specified by the rules, the Game Master, or another Stat. In order to resolve a test, the player must compare the Stat being tested with the Df in order to determine the test's Target Number.

Abbreviations

Str	Strength
Ref	Reflexes
Agl	Agility
Wil	Willpower
Int	Intelligence
Per	Perception
Df	Difficulty Level
t	Target Number
PV	Project Value
DL	Damage Level
Bl	Blast Rating
Ar	Armor Rating
WL	Wound Level
Fw	Flesh Wound
Wn	Wound
Sp	Splatter Wound
Br	Bruise
Tw	Thwack
Bk	Break
CP	Character Points
RP	Resource Points

Conventions

XD	roll X dice and add the results together (1D = roll one die, 2D = roll two dice
FwX	a wound with a Wound Level of Flesh Wound and a Damage Level of X
DfX	a test with a Difficulty Level of X
+/-XDf	the Difficulty Level of a test is modified by X, e.g. +1Df, -1Df.
+/-Xt	the Target Number of a test is modified by X. e.g. +1t increases the Target Number by one, and -2t lowers the Target Number by two.
DfX/N minutes	a test with a Difficulty Level of X that will take N minutes to attempt.
AglX	an Agility test with a Difficulty Level of X
Str(1D)	a Strength test with a Difficulty Level of 1D
Str vs. Size	a Strength test with a Difficulty Level equal to something's Size Attribute.
RX	a Rhine test in which the player may draw X Zener cards
+/-XR	a Rhine test is modified by X, e.g. +1R, -2R
PilotX	a DfX skill test (Pilot); remember to modify the Target Number by the appropriate Attribute Modifier (in this case Reflexes)

The Target Number of a test is the number that the player must roll equal to or less than on two six-sided dice for the test to be successful. If the roll is greater than the Target Number, the test fails. The base Target Number is determined as follows:

If the Stat level is greater than the Df, the test is Automatic and succeeds without needing a die roll.

A Normal test is one in which the Df is equal to the Stat being tested, and the base Target Number is 7.

A Hard test is one in which the Df is one greater than the Stat being tested, and the base Target Number is 4.

If the Stat level is two or more less than the Df level, the test is Impossible. Again, no roll is needed.

Attribute Level	Modifier
1	-2t
2	-1t
3	No Modifier
4	+1t
5	+2t

ATTRIBUTE MODIFIERS

Some Attribute Tests and all skill tests are modified by the character's Attributes. For example, to avoid being stunned after taking damage in combat, a character must test her Strength Attribute modified by her Willpower Attribute -- this is abbreviated as a Str(Wil) test. Attribute modifiers change a test's Target Number. The exact bonus or penalty depends on the level of the modifying Attribute, as shown in the following table.

RUSHING OR TAKING YOUR TIME

Depending on the situation, the Game Master may allow a character to rush a task, performing it in about half the normal time. Tests for rushed actions are one Difficulty Level higher than normal.

On the other hand, if the character is willing to go slowly and take twice the normal time to perform some action, the Difficulty Level of that test may be reduced by one.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

At times, you may decide that doing one thing at a time is just too damn slow. If a character is coordinated enough, she may attempt to perform two or more actions simultaneously. For each extra action, the Df of all actions attempted is increased by one. Therefore, a character trying to do two things at once would suffer a +1Df penalty to both actions, and someone trying to juggle three different activities would incur a +2Df to all three actions. This applies to both physical and mental activities, so running and firing two guns at a time (+2Df each test) and coordinating two research projects (+1Df each test) are both valid possibilities.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Anytime a character attempts a Hard skill test, the character may learn and increase her level of skill. If the player rolls doubles and the number on each die (not the total of the two) is equal to or less than his character's Intelligence attribute, one CP is earned toward the achievement of the next level of skill. For example, Sheila's character has an Intelligence of three, and her character attempts a Hard skill test. If she rolls double ones, twos or threes, she will earn one Character Point toward gaining the next level of that particular skill. Note that this will sometimes result in a failed test improving the character's skill. Once a character earns enough CPs in a skill to purchase another level of that skill (using the skill cost table in Chapter Two: Personnel), they may do so.

TEAMWORK

When two or more characters are working together to perform a tasks such as repair work, research, some perception tests (like standing watch), or lifting large objects, the test are conducted slightly differently. The character with the highest Stat being tested becomes the task leader (in the case of tied Stats, the GM selects one of the players). For some tasks, the skill level of the task leader limits the number of helpers. In repair or research efforts, a leader may supervise no more assistants than she has skill level. Other team efforts are limited by space, such as the number of people that may crowd around a boulder or rush at a door. The GM will adjudicate these situations.

Further, only characters whose applicable Stat is equal to or one less than the task leader's Stat may help. If there is at least one helping character whose Stat is equal to the task leader's, reduce the Df of the test by one. For each other helping character, add one to the Target Number of the test.

TESTING LUCK

When a character is faced with an Impossible test, she has the option of testing her Luck in an attempt to succeed by sheer chance. Note that Luck may only be tested in cases where the character has the requisite skill or attribute, but the test's Difficulty Level is too high. A character with no Pilot skill may not attempt to fly a plane by sheer luck. However, a pilot with a level one skill may test his luck attempting a Df4 maneuver (such as dodging an incoming missile).

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To test her Luck, the player rolls 2D. If the result is greater than or equal to the character's Good Luck Attribute, some quirk of fate allows the character to succeed. On the other hand, if the result is less than or equal to the character's Bad Luck, some cruel twist of fate causes a normal failure to become a disaster. If the result does not fall into either category, then the test simply fails as usual.

An operative is leaving the scene of a gunfight with two wounded comrades in the back seat of his car. The car itself has been severely damaged by a grenade's near miss. The obvious damage attracts the attention of a police patrol, which attempts to pull him over. Not wanting to have to explain what he's been doing or who he is, the operative guns the accelerator and attempts to outrun the cops. After a round, he realizes his damaged vehicle is hopelessly outclassed and decides to test his luck. If the player rolls his Good Luck the GM may decide that a large truck suddenly pulls out of an alley, cuts off the police and allows the character to escape. If the player rolls his Bad Luck or less, not only does he not put any distance between himself and the law, but his attempt to push his already damaged vehicle causes further deterioration, requiring him to roll on the Equipment Malfunction and Damage table once again.

Conversely, GMs may require a player to make a Luck roll in the case of an Automatic test. If the player rolls her Bad Luck or lower she fails the test that would have otherwise been guaranteed. If she rolls her Good Luck or higher, not only does she succeed as anticipated, but the GM must come up with some way to make the test was a fantastic success, beyond what she could have expected.

A brilliant computer hacker decides to break into a computer system in search of leads for the Cell's investigation. Though security is high, it is no match for the hacker and his formidable codebreaking skills. If successful, the character risks uncovering the GM's plot far ahead of schedule. Hoping to stall the players, the GM decides to force the player to make a luck roll for the otherwise automatic hacking test. If the player rolls his Bad Luck or less, the GM may cause a power surge to temporarily disable the character's computer system for a few days while repairs are made. If the player manages to roll his Good Luck or better, he would not only succeed, but succeed spectacularly, much to the GM's chagrin, no doubt. For example, he may stumble upon an unprotected email with a password that gives him Administrator access.

ATTRIBUTE TESTS

Attribute tests are used when no skill is directly applicable. For example, a player wants his character to run across a yard, smash through a closed door and quickly scan the room for enemies. This series of actions probably involves a movement test, and a Str test. The GM may also ask for a Per test to determine if the character spots a clue.

A number of specific attribute tests are discussed below. If none of these particular rules are applicable, the GM will set the Df depending on her view of the difficulty of the action attempted. A more detailed discussion of Difficulty Levels is presented in Chapter 8: Game Mastering.

Running	Jumping	Difficulty	Ranged Attack Penalty
0m-1m	1m	0	-
2m-5m	2m	1	-
6m-10m	3m	2	-1t
11m-20m	4m	3	-2t
21m-30m	5m	4	+1Df
31m-40m	6m	5	+2Df
41m-50m	7m	6	+2Df

MOVEMENT

Most of the time, exactly how fast and how far a character travels in a given time period is relatively unimportant. In some cases, however, such as during a combat or chase, it can be critical. Resolving movement is a simple matter of assigning a Df to an Agility(Str) test based on the distance the character wishes to cover in one round. Also note that ranged attacks against a fast moving Target Number are more difficult. The distances, their corresponding Df and the ranged attack penalty, if any, are shown here.

When someone fails a movement test, he can still move any distance that could be traveled by an automatic Agility test. Thus, a failed movement test does not mean that the character just stands around. For example, a character with an Agility of 3 tries to cover 30 meters in a round (Df4). If he fails, he may still travel up to 10m (Df2).

Characters that fail movement tests risk fatigue. Immediately after the test is failed, the character must make a Willpower(Str) test v. the number movement tests failed since the character last rested. Rest in most cases can simply be taking a few rounds to catch her breath. Resting two rounds for each failed test will give the character a clean slate, as far as fatigue is concerned.

ENDURANCE

Endurance tests are made when the character attempts to function under adverse conditions. Wil(Str) is tested. The specific results of a failed test are up to the GM, but will often be a Difficulty Level or Target Number penalty to any tests while the conditions persist. For example, if a character failed an endurance test to stay

Fighting Fatigue - Willpower(Str) v. number of failed movement tests.

Situation	Difficulty
Staying awake 24 hours	3
Out in extreme weather without proper gear	1 per 30 min.
Holding one's breath	1 per 45 sec.

awake for an extended period of time, the character falls asleep. If the character failed a test to function in arctic weather without protective clothing, a +1Df to any actions would be imposed until the character put on some protective clothing or found somewhere to warm up.

Someone sneaking up behind you	Df(6-Size)
Gunshot in the same building	Df3
Gunshot in the next room	Df2
Silenced gunshot in same room	Df4
Spotting a sniper on a roof a block away	Df4
Noticing a large concealed weapon	Df3
Finding a bullet casing in an alley	Df4/10minutes
Dim light (fog, dusk, etc.)	-2t
Dark, some light (moonlit night)	+1Df
Obscured view (cover, foliage, etc.)	-2t
Distance	+1Df/50m

PERCEPTION

The Perception Attribute is tested for a number of reasons: to detect stealthy attackers, to notice investigative clues, to spot UFOs, etc. The following examples should help GMs assign consistent Difficulty Levels to the wide range of Perception tests that may come up.

STRENGTH

To carry a heavy object, the character has only to make a successful Strength test to lift it. Sample lifting Difficulty Levels are listed below.

The Target Number penalty for pressing an object modifies the test to lift it.

If the Strength test is automatically successful, the object does not encumber the character. If the character had to make a Normal or Hard test to lift the object, any Agility tests the character makes while carrying it will be one Difficulty Level higher. This penalty is cumulative, so if a character is carrying two heavy objects he will receive a +2Df penalty to all Agility tests.

Lifting	Difficulty
Pistol, Cat	1
Rifle, Chair	2
Light MG, Big TV	3
Heavy MG, Sofa	4
Person	Size
Press	-2t

Pressing something means lifting it over the character's head.

Strength Feat	Difficulty
Break a Window	2
Bust Down a Heavy Door	4
Snap Handcuffs	5
Climb a Rope	character's Size

To throw an non-aerodynamic object, the character tests Str vs. a Df set by the range thrown. At 10 meters the Df is 1, and increases by one for every additional 10 meters. Only Size 1 objects may be throw more than a few meters. To throw a heavier object, make a lift test (see above) at -2t.

FUNDING

A character's Influence Attribute is a measure of his standing within his profession or organization. It is also a good gauge of the material assets and funding that the character can produce on short notice. During a mission, the characters will likely have need to pay for any number of things, from hotel rooms and meals to bribes and airfare. Rather than keep track of how much money an individual has at hand, such situations are resolved by testing the character's Influence. The Df of the test is determined by how much the character wants to spend plus what they spent in the last week, as shown on the following table.

Amount	Difficulty
less than $500	1
less than $5,000	2
less than $10,000	3
less than $20,000	4
less than $100,000	5
less than $500,000	6

If the test is an Automatic success, the amount of money can be considered readily available. The purchase may be made immediately.

A Normal funding test will require 1D hours to manage.

A Hard funding test will require 1D days to get the money together.

If a character fails a funding test, all subsequent tests are increased by +1Df for a week.

The time required for Normal or Hard funding tests is, of course, at the mercy of the relevant financial institutions. No amount of Influence will let you do banking on Sunday (legitimate business, at least). Any funding tests outside of the United States will take at least quadruple the time, if they are possible at all.

Keep in mind that having the money is only part of the problem. The funds will do you no good if what you want is not for sale. Shipping time, licenses, availability and legality all need to be taken into

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Personnel
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Tradecraft
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account. For example, no amount of money is going to let a character buy military equipment, unless the character has connections with international arms dealers -- even then such transactions will be risky, to say the least.

SKILL TESTS

Skill tests are used when a particular skill is directly applicable. For example, punching someone, shooting at a Target Number, performing first aid, picking a lock, repairing a motorcycle all involve skill tests in one form or another.

A couple of specific skill tests are discussed below. Several more are presented in the Combat section. If none of these particular rules are applicable, the GM must set the Df depending on her view of the difficulty of the action attempted. A more detailed discussion of Difficulty Levels is presented in Chapter 8: Game Mastering.

RESEARCH

In a war with technologically advanced beings with exotic physiology, knowledge is power and scientific research is a vital part of Conspiracy X. Aegis operatives must conduct research on everything from extraterrestrial technology and biology to mystic ritual and psychic abilities in their effort to combat the forces that menace humanity.

Research projects are divided into two types distinguished by the amount of time it takes to complete them. Short-term projects can be completed in a few days and are often undertaken during missions. Long-term projects last weeks or months and are usually only pursued between missions. A full week of research is necessary before a project team can attempt the skill test for a long-term project. Only one day of research is needed before a skill test may be made in a short-term project. Other than the time scale involved, both types of projects are resolved using the same rules.

Characters conduct research by attempting to achieve a number of breakthroughs, or critical discoveries that advance the scientist's understanding of the subject. Most research projects require only a single breakthrough to be successful, but some may require several breakthroughs. For example, determining the purpose of a recovered piece of alien technology may only require one breakthrough in a short-term Engineering: Electronic project. Deconstructing the item and discovering the principles behind its operation, on the other hand, might require several long-term project breakthroughs in a number of science and engineering disciplines. Research projects that require more than one breakthrough are noted by an 'x' and the number of breakthroughs needed in parentheses, e.g., Science:Biology(x2).

The researcher determines how radical or conservative the methods and procedures employed will be. The aggressiveness of the research program determines its chances for success and the likelihood that the research will result in a breakthrough. Ambitious projects are more challenging, but have a much better chance at innovation. Slow and steady projects are successful more regularly, but much more time is usually needed for each breakthrough. Indeed, it is possible for a research project to be successful for a long time before ever making a breakthrough.

At the outset of a research program, the researcher must assign a Project Value denoting the aggressiveness of the research plan. A PV of 1 is very cautious; a PV of 6 is no-holds barred and risky. The PV is both the Difficulty Level of the associated skill test, and the chance that the project leads to a breakthrough if it is successful. Once the requisite amount of work has been completed (one week for long-term, one day for short-term), the researcher makes a skill test v. the Project Value. If the test is successful, the researcher must roll one die to see if the research has resulted in a breakthrough. If the result of the die roll is less than or equal to the PV, the research has lead to a breakthrough. If the result is greater than the PV, progress has been made, but nothing major has been accomplished. Successful research that does not lead to a breakthrough will give the project team a +1t bonus on subsequent research tests if and when the project is continued. Any such bonuses are cumulative until a breakthrough is achieved.

Having a project team, instead of one researcher, is highly recommended. The standard teamwork bonuses apply, but the project leader must have the Research skill. The leader may be assisted by a number of aids equal or less than his Research skill. In a Science research project, team members may aid as long as they have any Science subskill.

After a mission in which the Cell recovered a relatively undamaged Grey alien, Dr. Probe, the Cell's biochemist elects to begin a research project to develop a chemical agent that's lethal to Greys, but harmless to humans. The GM decides that this is a long-term Science:Biochemistry (x2) project. Dr. Probe's Research skill of 3 allows him to include up to three other researchers on the project. From the Cell's research staff, Probe selects a Chemist and two lab assistants to make up the team.

Assembled in the lab, Dr. Probe elects to begin the project somewhat carefully, and assigns a Project Value of 3. The Biochemstry test Df3 and yielding a 3 in 6 chance of breakthrough if successful. Since Dr. Probe's biochemistry skill is 3, the aid of the staff scientist's Chemistry 3 skill reduces the Df of the test by one to Df2,

which is an automatic success. Probe must then roll a three or less for a breakthrough. He rolls a five, and the first week's work will only get the team a +1t on subsequent research.

As the second week of the project begins, Dr. Probe decides to step up the pace and pushes the Project Value to 5. The aid of the staff chemist reduces the Df from 5 to 4, making it a Hard test with a Target Number of 4. The lab assistants now come into play since they each have Biology 2 and provide +1t, raising it to 6. Finally, the bonus received by the first week of successful research brings the Target Number to its final value of 7. Dr. Probe's player mutters a quick prayer to Forrester, the patron saint of Mad Scientists, and rolls the dice. A six -- success! He must now roll only 5 or less to achieve the first of the two required breakthroughs to complete the project. To no one's surprise, Probe rolls a 3 and gets his breakthrough. Two weeks into the project, Probe's team is half finished developing their Grey nerve gas. The bonus gained by week one is lost and the second phase of the project is begun.

HACKING

Hacking a computer system is a long and drawn-out process that usually takes as many days to accomplish as the Difficulty Level of that particular system. Hacking often takes so long because it generally involves a technique known as "social engineering." Social engineering is basically the art of tricking people into revealing their passwords and security measures to you, usually over the phone. The base Difficulty Level of hacking a typical system is listed on the following table.

Local bulletin board	1
University Computer System	2
Small Business	2
National Online Service	3
Small Corporation	3
State Agency	3
Large Corporation	4
Federal Agency	4
High Security Agency (F.B.I. or N.S.A.)	5
Military Computer System	5

All hacking tests are Computer Programming tests. Computer Use may be substituted at a +2Df penalty.

The base Difficulty Level is modified depending on the type of access desired. There are two levels of access: User and Administrator.

User access gives the hacker access to someone's account on the computer system. A hacker can take advantage of any features of the system that a normal, legitimate user would be able to. Usually this consists of viewing information and sending messages. This level of entry seldom allows the hacker to actually change any information on the system. User access is gained at the base Difficulty Level.

Administrator access allows the hacker to use one of the System Administrator (Sysadmin) accounts. Sysadmins monitor the computer system and are responsible for keeping it running smoothly. In order to do this, Sysadmins have control over most aspects of the system. Sysadmins (and hackers with Administrator access) can monitor what anyone is doing on the computer, read people's mail, add, change or remove files, or even shut down the computer system completely. Attempting to gain Administrator access to a system makes the hacking test one Difficulty Level harder, unless the hacker already has an account on the system (or user access).
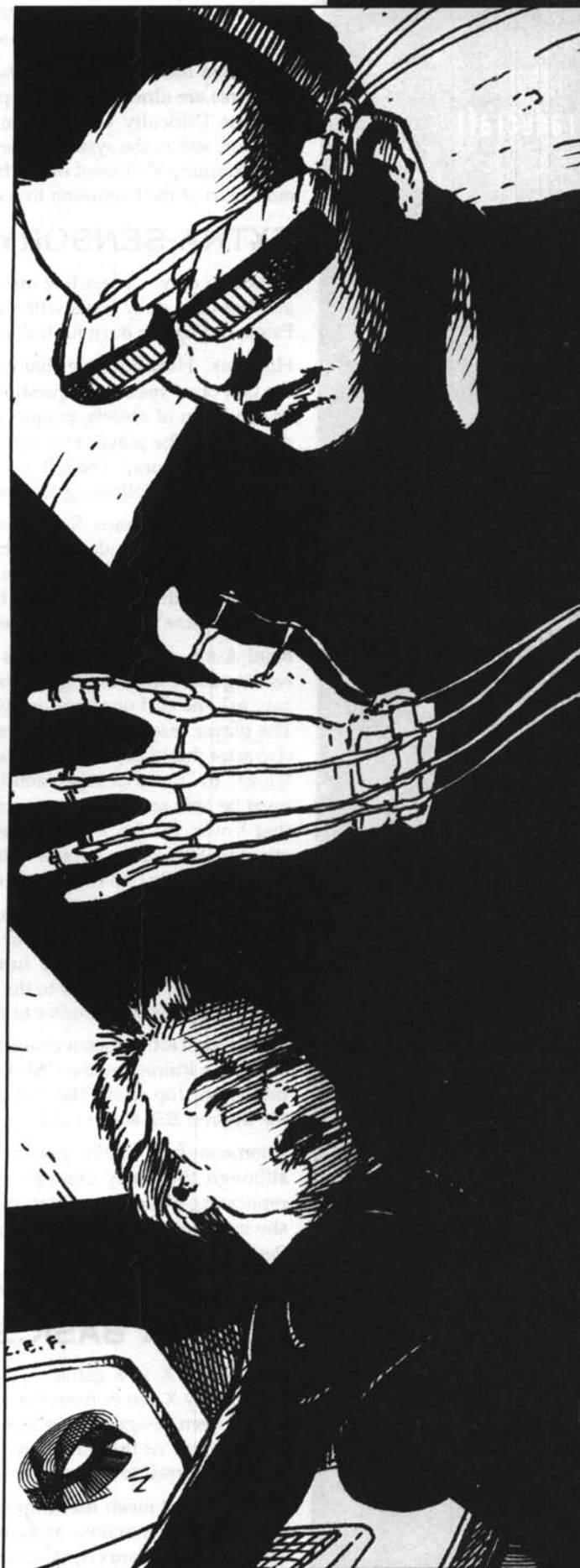
Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
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A hacker may attempt to cover her trail within the hacked system by making an additional Hacking test vs. the base Difficulty Level of the system. Success increases by one the Difficulty Level of an opponent detecting her intrusion and actions.

Any failed hacking test alerts the Sysadmin of the system to a possible intrusion. Heightened security measures are almost always implemented (+1 hacking Difficulty Level for a number of weeks equal to the base Difficulty Level of the system). The Sysadmin may also search for any hackers and their accounts still in the system. The Difficulty Level of finding any hacker accounts or modifications is the Programming skill level of the hacker. Once a hacker account is found, it is destroyed and the hacker must start at the beginning to regain the account.

EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION

Although only a select few are capable of powerful psychic disciplines, normal humans use their psi abilities on a daily basis without even realizing it. All human characters except those with the Void, Psink, or Psychic Burnout traits may use their basic psychic powers in the following manner.

Hunches: Hunches give characters flashes of insight into their current situation. The player may ask the GM one "yes or no" question about the present. Specifically, the player may ask about the location or condition of objects, people, or areas. This is similar in many respects to the Clairvoyance psychic discipline. The player may not ask questions about the future (Second Sight), past or people's state of being (Read Aura). The following examples are all valid inquiries: "Is there a corpse in Alex's car?", "Is the guy we are following armed?", "Does the base computer still work?".

Sixth Sense: Humans' Sixth Sense warn them of imminent danger, sometimes allowing them to avoid hazards that are undetectable by "mundane" senses. When used successfully, Sixth Sense allows a character to replay the previous combat round, taking into account what the player knows is about to happen. Sixth Sense may only be used in cases where the danger to the character was not detected by his "mundane" senses such as sight and hearing.

Read Aura: A person's aura is a field of psychic energy that radiates from their body. Successfully reading someone's aura gives the character insight into the feelings or status of that person. The player may ask the GM one "yes or no" question about the target's current mental or physical state of being. The player may ask questions about the kind of person the target is, but not about specific things the character thinks or has done. For example, "Is George insane?" is fine, as is "Is Bernie a liar?" "Is Bernie lying?" or "Does George intend to kill us?" isn't legal. In order to read someone's aura, the character must be able to detect the target with one of her "mundane" senses of sight, hearing, touch, etc. Note that Voids, Psinks, the Incarnate and non-humans do not have auras. When someone successfully attempts to read the aura of a target that has none, the GM should simply state that there is no aura to be seen and give no further information.

Second Sight: A character's Second Sight gives her hints of what the future holds. Often this manifests itself as precognitive dreams or visions. When used successfully, the player may ask the GM one "yes or no" question about the future. For example: "Will we be attacked if we investigate the cult's compound?", "Will I live to the end of the mission?", and "Will the Yankees win the game tomorrow?". Second Sight is very similar to the Precognition psychic discipline.

The Rhine Test: When a character wishes to use ESP, the player must make a successful Rhine test. To conduct a Rhine test, the GM first shuffles the Zener cards (found on page 223) and allows the player to predict the top card. The GM then reveals the card, and if the player was right, her character may use the desired ESP ability. If the player was wrong, her character's ESP has failed her momentarily.

If someone fails a Rhine test, they may not repeat that particular attempt again for the rest of the mission, although they may attempt to use ESP in other situations. This prevents a player from simply rephrasing a question and trying again. Once a character has successfully used a particular ESP ability, she may not use that ability again for a week unless she has the Strong ESP trait; found in Chapter 2: Personnel.

More detail on advanced psychic disciplines and parapsychology can be found in Chapter 5: Psychics.

COMBAT BASICS

Conspiracy X is a game of mystery, discovery, horror and bravery. A good deal of the edge of Conspiracy X comes from the ever-present danger of corruption and death. Combat reflects that edge -- it has been designed to be short and deadly. Most characters that take shots or other wounds are going to go down. At the very least, they will be out of that combat. Do not enter combat lightly, and do not expose yourself to danger. You have been warned.

This does not mean that combat is always to be avoided. If you are properly prepared (read Kevlar), use opportunity actions and cover at every opportunity and proceed with utmost caution, you increase your chances of surviving considerably.

SURPRISE

If combat is initiated by someone (or thing) who is hidden or otherwise unobserved they may surprise their opponents. Usually this involves succeeding in a Stealth skill test vs. the other group's best Perception attribute. If the tactic is successful, the attacker or attackers have one round to perform any action they wish before normal combat is begun.

TIME

Combat is resolved in a succession of combat rounds, each lasting approximately five seconds. Many actions will take only a single round; some will take more. A few common examples are listed below.

Because of the large number of possible actions that may come up during combat, specific rules are only given for a few. Use your own judgment and common sense to determine how long any other particular action would take.

Reload Clip or One-Shot Weapon	2 rounds
Reload Revolver	4 rounds
Perform First-Aid	12 round (1 minute)
Give Medical Attention	120 rounds (10 minutes)

Note: Reloading a weapon is a Agl3 test.

When players are communicating during combat they should be careful to limit themselves to what they would be able to say (or yell, as the case may be) in five seconds. Game Masters should feel free to cut them off if they start getting too talkative. Remember, combat is a time of fast actions and split-second decisions. He who hesitates is lost!

SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS

The combatant who has the highest Reflexes usually has the first opportunity to act in each round. The character may act immediately, defer action until a later part of the round, or wait for something specific to happen before acting (all these options are explained in more detail a bit later). After the fastest combatant has acted (or decided not to), the second fastest (second highest Reflexes) character has a chance to act, and so on until the slowest character has had an opportunity to act. After this, next round of combat begins with the highest Reflexes character acting first again.

When two or more combatants have the same Reflexes, the order of their actions is determined by what they are doing. Characters with equal Reflexes who are performing the same type of action (e.g., ranged combat) do so simultaneously. Any damage from either attack is applied immediately after both attacks have been completed. Two or more characters with the same Reflexes fighting hand to hand combat must roll a die to determine who gets to attack first, highest roll acts quickest, reroll any ties.

When two characters have the same Reflexes Stat actions proceed in the following order:

1. close combat
2. ranged combat
3. movement
4. other

DEFERRED ACTIONS

Characters have the option of deferring action until later in the round, in order to wait and see what happens. The character may act any point later in the round, but may not interrupt or preempt someone else's action.

OPPORTUNITY ACTIONS

An opportunity action is declared when a combatant wishes to take an action as soon as some specific event occurs. The action is taken simultaneously with the triggering event. An opportunity action is considered to be in effect until the person declaring it aborts it or takes another action. An opportunity action may be aborted at any point up until a triggering event occurs, at which point the character must act. Declaring "I shoot the next person who moves" could be disastrous if the next person to move is on your side. Once the character has performed his opportunity action (or aborted it and acted otherwise), he may not act again until the next combat round.

EVADING

When a character is aware of any type of attack during a combat round in which she has not yet acted, she may use her action to attempt to evade the attack. The evader must make a Reflexes test vs. the Reflexes of the attacker. If the test is successful the character immediately makes any movement-type action. This includes (but is not limited to) running away, ducking behind cover, diving to the ground, jumping out of the way, or even tackling the attacker. The entire move is resolved before the attack being evaded. Even if the evasion fails to get the character completely out of harm's way, the attack may be modified because of her movement. After the Evade the attack must still be taken, even if the target is no longer able to be attacked.

It may seem counter-intuitive that close combat goes before ranged combat when two combatants have equal Reflexes. Ranged weapons, however, are not designed for close engagements, and few train for their use in such situations (such skill is call Gun Fu). This does not mean that characters with guns always go second. By using snapshots (which may not be done with melee or hand to hand combat) or opportunity fire, ranged combatants may get an edge over hand to hand attackers.

When determining the Difficulty Level of a Evade test, take into account any factors that increase or decrease the attacker's Reflexes. For example, dodging an attack from someone with Reflexes 3 performing a snapshot would be Df4 (+1 for the snapshot). Drugs, cybernetic implants or other modifiers will affect the Df similarly.

RANGED COMBAT

To hit a target with a ranged weapon, a character must test her skill with whatever weapon she is using. The Difficulty Level of the test is dependent primarily on the distance to the target. The maximum distance at which any weapon is useful is divided into five ranges, from point-blank to extreme. Each range has a Difficulty Level (from one to five) associated with it. The Df set by the range and the weapon is further modified based on the situation (darkness, cover, aim, etc.) to determine what the final Target Number is. Then roll, success means you hit the target, failure means you did not. Pretty simple.

AIMING

With any ranged weapon, a character may spend a round carefully aiming. The first shot in the following round will be one Difficulty Level lower, providing nothing happens first to throw off the character's aim first (being hit with any sort of weapon falls solidly in this category). In order to make an aimed shot with a submachine gun, rifle, assault rifle, or shotgun, the weapon must be equipped with a stock. Characters may not aim automatic fire.

CALLED SHOTS

Combatants have the option of aiming for a particular part of a target. This is usually done to avoid armor or cover, do more (or less) damage (by one Damage Level), or to produce some sort of special effect like shooting a gun out of someone's hand. Also, if a character wishes to fire at an opponent who is in close combat with one of the character's team, a called shot must be made. All called shots add one to the Difficulty Level of an attack. If the attacker is trying to accomplish several effects with the attack, the penalties are cumulative. For example, an attack to avoid cover and armor and do extra damage will be three Difficulty Level harder than normal. Characters may not call shots using long burst automatic fire.

Base Difficulty Levels for Ranged Attacks

Range	Difficulty
Point-blank	1
Close	2
Effective	3
Long	4
Extreme	5

Sample Ranged Attack Modifiers

Target Size	Modifier
0	+2Df
1	+1Df
2	-1t
3	No Modifier
4	+1t
5	-1Df
6+	-2Df

Situation	Modifier
Aimed shot	-1Df
Attacker running	+1Df
Called shot	+1Df
Cover (half or more)	only Called shots
Defender running	varies (see Movement above)
Dim light	-2t
Off Hand penalty	-1Df
Short burst	+1t
Snapshot	+1Df
Target prone	+1Df
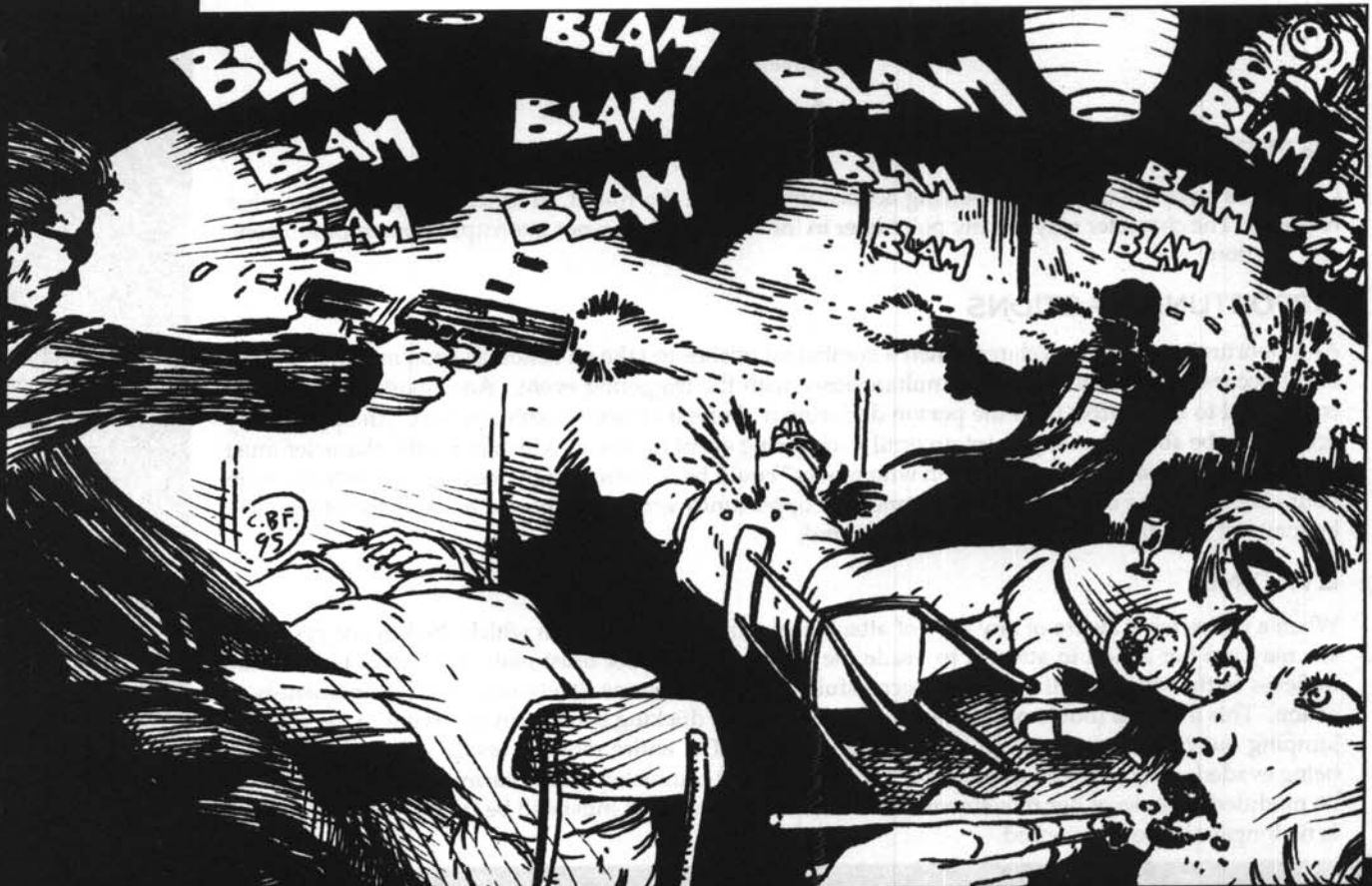
COVER

Characters can take cover behind any object solid enough to stop a bullet (or whatever other weapon might be fired or thrown at them). If more than half of the target is protected by cover, the target may only be hit by attackers that fire called shots at some unprotected part of the target's body. Cover also acts to prevent attackers from making called shots at any part of a target that has cover.

SNAPSHOTS

A snapshot is a hasty, unaimed shot that sacrifices accuracy for speed. Firing a snapshot means the attacker may act as if his Reflexes were one higher than they actually are (this only counts for determining the order of actions). The downside is that the Difficulty Level of the shot is increased by one. Weapons with stocks may not fire snap shots. Scopes and called shots are ineffective when taking a snapshot.

AUTOMATIC FIRE

In addition to single shots, some weapons may fire bursts. A burst is a volley of several rounds intended to hit several targets, or a single target several times. There are two types of bursts: short and long.

A short burst fires 1d6 bullets at a single target. The burst has a +1 Target Number modifier to hit, and increases the Damage Level of a successful attack by one.

A long burst fires 3d6 bullets at several targets, although a single person or object may be targeted more than once. The number of shots in a long burst that have a chance of hitting is equal to the level of the attacker's Autofire skill plus his Strength modifier. Each shot is rolled separately. If multiple targets are fired on, all must be within ten meters of each other. Everyone in the area of a long-burst attack must make Wil3 test or evade (or be knocked prone if they have already used their action for this round).

Operatives Luis and Sanchez arrive at a small suburban house with the intention of questioning the residents about strange radio transmissions that they have tracked to the house. Not expecting trouble, they knock on the door but get no answer. Luis tries the door and finds it unlocked. Announcing themselves as federal agents, Luis pushes open the door only to find a battered and bloody man leveling a shotgun at them. Since neither player took the precaution of declaring an opportunity action, both Luis and Sanchez attempt to dive out of the way of the shotgun blast by evading. Both characters and the shotgun wielding maniac have Reflexes of 3, so the two characters must make a Normal Reflexes test to successfully evade. Luckily, both Luis and Sanchez evade successfully with rolls of 4 and 6 respectively. The two operative dive to either side of the doorway and out of immediate peril.

The maniac still must take the declared shotgun attack, and blows a head-sized hole in the door frame. Since the evasion counts as the operatives' only action this round and the maniac has made his attack, the next combat round starts.

Luis draws a pair of autopistols from under his coat and Sanchez readies her submachine gun. While the two agent prepare, the maniac blows another hole in the door frame. Another round passes. Both agents have a Small Arms: Pistol 3 skill. Luis is Ambidextrous and Sanchez has Autofire 3 as well.

For the next round, Luis declares that he will dive across the doorway, firing short bursts from both autopistols at the shotgun maniac. Sanchez elects to defer her action until she sees if Luis' gambit pays off. Luis decides to try a Df3 dive movement action to gain a -2t defense. The maniac is about 20 meters inside the doorway, putting him at close range for Luis's autopistols, a Df2 pistol test. But Luis is attempting three actions at once (two shots and a dive), incurring a +2Df penalty to both. This brings the final Df of his Pistol test to 4. Luis would normally have to make a Hard test by rolling a 4 or less. Luis does receive a +1t bonus, however, for firing a short burst. The end result being that Luis must roll a 5 or less to hit with either gun.

As Luis begins his attack, he discovers that the maniac declared an opportunity action -- "I shoot anyone who appears in the doorway". As an opportunity action, the maniac gets to attack as Luis dives across the doorway, before Luis shoots. Luckily the shotgun maniac has only a Small Arms: Rifle 2 skill. Luis is within close range of the maniac's shotgun, a Df2 test. Luis rolls his movement test, succeeds, and the maniac gets a additional -2t penalty. The maniac must roll a 5 or less to make the Normal test with a -2t penalty. The maniac rolls an 8 and blows yet another hole in the door frame.

Luis now rolls his attacks, but gets a 7 and 10, missing completely. He sprays 1D bullets from each gun into the room. Sanchez then springs into action after Luis makes it to cover, stepping to the doorway and firing a full auto long burst at the maniac. Sanchez is taking no other actions and since the range to the maniac is close for her SMG as well, her shots are Df2. The long burst fires 3D bullets into the room, and Sanchez's Autofire 3 skill means she may roll to hit for 3 of them (she has not Str modifier). Since her Pistol skill is 3, the tests are automatic successes and she riddles the maniac with all three rounds.

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Ranged Weapons	Stat	Pb/Cl/Ef/Ln/Ex	Dam	Rof	Ammo
Auto pistol	Pst	5/40/60/70/80	Wn3	1/S	9
Hold-Out pistol	Pst	2/10/15/20/30	Wn2	1	5
Derringer	Pst	2/10/15/20/30	Wn3	1/2	2
Revolver	Pst	5/40/60/80/90	Wn3	1	6
Magnum	Pst	5/40/60/80/90	Wn4	1	6
Machine Pistol	Pst	2/20/30/35/40	Wn3	1/S/L	18
Submachine Gun	Pst	5/40/60/65/70	Wn3	1/S/L	30
Rifle	Rif	10/75/125/150/175	Wn4	1	5
Elephant Gun	Rif	10/50/100/125/150	Wn6	1	1
Assault Rifle	Rif	10/50/70/80/90	Wn4	1/S/L	30
Shotgun	Rif	15/50/75/100/125	Wn3	2	2
Pump Shotgun	Rif	15/50/75/100/125	Wn3	1	6
Sawed off Shotgun	Pst	1/5/10/20/30	Wn3	2	2
Automatic Shotgun	Rif	10/50/70/80/90	Wn3	1/S/L	30
Light Machine-gun	Hvy	20/80/120/130/140	Wn5	S/L	100
Heavy Machine-gun	Hvy	20/80/120/130/140	Wn6	S/L	100
Minigun	Hvy	25/100/150/200/250	Wn5	S/L	100
Frag Grenade	Str	10/20/30/40/50	Wn3	1	NA
Smoke Grenade	Str	10/20/30/40/50	NA	1	NA
Tear gas Grenade	Str	10/20/30/40/50	*	1	NA
Incendiary Grenade	Str	10/20/30/40/50	*	1	NA
Grenade Launcher	Hvy	10/40/60/80/100	#	1	1
Underbarrel GL	Hvy	10/30/50/75/80	#	1	1
Automatic GL	Gun	15/50/70/100/120	#	2	50
Rocket Launcher	Hvy	30/50/75/100/150	Sp5	1	1
Disposable RL	Hvy	10/30/50/75/100	Sp5	1	NA
Flamethrower	Hvy	5/20/40/60/70	*	S/L	50
Taser	Agl	1/2/3/4/5	*	1	2
Can of Mace	Agl	2/NA/NA/NA/NA	*	S/L	10
Dart Rifle	Rif	10/40/60/70/80	Fw1	1	1
Dart Pistol	Pst	5/20/30/40/50	Fw1	1	1
Throwing Knife	Thr	2/4/6/8/10	Fw2	1	NA
Shuriken	Thr	4/9/12/16/20	Fw1	2	NA

RANGED WEAPON TABLE

The following table lists the game statistics for various ranged weapons. Stat is the Stat tested to determine if the target has been hit: Small Arms: Pistol (Pst), Small Arms: Rifle (Rif), Heavy Weapons (Hvy), Gunnery (Gun), Strength (Str), Agility (Agl) or Throw (Thr). Ranges are listed in meters for point blank (Pb), close (Cl), effective (Ef), long (Ln) and extreme (Ex). Dam is the base Wound Level and Damage Level before staging is rolled. A "*" symbol indicates that special rules apply (see weapon description in Chapter 3: Op Center). "#" references the grenade type used. Rof is the type of attacks that may be made: single shot (1), short burst (S), or long burst (L). Ammo is the number of bullets the weapon carries. Once this number of bullets have been shot, the gun must be reloaded.

CLOSE COMBAT

Close combat means fighting up close and personal. It includes both melee strikes, brawling and martial arts. Melee combat involves knives, swords or any other hand held weapon. Brawling is relatively undisciplined hand to hand fighting. Martial arts is highly evolved brawling.

CLOSE COMBAT DEFENSE

If the defender is actively defending (by dodging, parrying or blocking, for example) then he tests his skill against the attacker's combat skill. The attacker must succeed and the defender must fail for the blow to land and do damage. A combatant always has the option of attempting to counter an attack with a defensive move, there is no limit to the number of attacks that can be countered in a round. The defender only has one chance to defend against any particular attack, of course.

MELEE WEAPON COMBAT

To hit a target with a melee weapon attack, a character must test his Melee Weapon skill against a Difficulty Level of 2. This may be modified by the particular circumstances of the combat situation as the GM sees fit.

BRAWLING AND MARTIAL ARTS COMBAT

To hit a target with a Brawling or Martial Arts attack, a character must test her Brawling or Martial Arts skill against the Difficulty Level of the move attempted. Combatants may only attempt moves they have studied (those moves they choose when they purchased the skill, see the Brawling and Martial Arts skill descriptions in Chapter 2: Personnel). The possible Brawling/Martial Arts moves, their Attribute Modifiers, their Difficulty Level, and the damage done are listed in separate sections below.

Melee Weapons	Damage
Nightstick	Tw2
Nunchucks	Br4
Knife	Fw3
Sword	Wn(Str)

BRAWLING MOVES

Block(Str) Df=attacker's skill The Block is a standard defensive move that deflects an opponents attack with the defender's arm or leg. The Block is only effective against a Punch, Kick, Nerve Punch, Touch of Death, Disarm, Shoot, Dirty Blow or Grab.

Break(Str) Df4 This attack deals a savage blow to an opponent using either the attacker's or defender's momentum, or both. A successful Grab must be performed before a Break can be executed. Damage done is Bk(Str). The Break may also be used to as a defensive maneuver to counter or break a hold (Df=opponent's skill), in which case it does no damage.

Choke(Str) Df1 This move may only be used on an opponent that has been Grabbed and held. The defender must make a Will(Str) test v. the number of consecutive rounds in the choke hold, failure means he has fallen unconscious. If the choke is continued after unconsciousness, the victim must make a Str(Wil) test every round vs. the number of consecutive round unconscious or die. Once the attacker's Grab is broken or escaped, the defender must make a Normal stun test, or is stunned for one round but then is fully recovered.

Dirty Blow(Str) Df4 Brawlers are not known for fighting fair, and this move is why. The Dirty Blow targets a vulnerable point on an opponent's body with a vicious attack intended to cause intense pain and serious damage. Damage done is Wn2.

Dodge(Ref) Df=attacker's skill The Dodge is one of the most common defensive moves. Instead of attempting to stop the opponent's attack, the combatant simply attempts to get out of the way. Dodge is effective against any close combat attack. However, dodging puts the combatant at a disadvantage and she suffers a +1Df penalty to her next move.

Feint(Ref) Df=defender's skill A feint attack attempts to catch the fighter's opponent off-guard and distract him with false attacks. Success throws the opponent off balance and gives the combatant a -1Df penalty for his next move, providing it is against the same opponent. Feint can only be taken as part of a combo.

Grab(Str) Df2 The Grab represents innumerable techniques that bind and hold an opponent. Once a combatant is Grabbed, any moves he attempts suffers a +1Df penalty until the hold is broken (a Break move response does not suffer the +1Df penalty). The Grab may also be used to counter an opponent's Grab (Df = opponent's skill). If successfully employed as a "counter", both combatants have a hold on the other.

Knee(Str) Df2 A quick knee strike to a male opponent's groin or abdomen can leave him reeling and stunned. Although no real damage is done, a combatant hit with a Knee strike must immediately take a Normal Size test or be stunned.

Haymaker(Str) Df3 The Haymaker is a the Titanic of punches. It does Tw(Str) damage and if it connects the defender is knocked prone, whether stunned or not. Given the involved wind-up before a Haymaker, it may not be included as part of a combo.

Head-Butt(Str) Df2 This unconventional technique involves the attacker striking his opponent's head with his own. Poorly executed Head-butts cause the attacker to knock himself out. The Head-butt requires the defender to be successfully Grabbed first. It does Br(Str) damage to the defender's head, and Br2 damage to the attacker's head. Any resulting stun tests suffer a +1Df penalty. Head-butts do not incur the usual +1Df penalty to perform when held (see Grab above).

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Head Smash(Str) Df3 To perform a Head Smash the attacker must first successfully Grab the heads of two opponents (two moves). The Brawler then smacks both of their heads together, inflicting Tw(Str) damage to each and making a really satisfying sound.

Improvised Weapon Block(Str) Df=attacker's skill Improvised weapon block allows a fighter to use found objects effectively in combat. At the GM's discretion, an Improvised Weapon Block may be effective against any attack that a Block move is effective against, depending on the item.

Improvised Weapon Strike(Str) Df2 Improvised Weapon Strike is a brawling staple, allowing the fighter to use nearly any solid object as a weapon. Unlike the Martial Arts Weapon Strike, no additional skill is needed, as the Brawling skill is used to resolve the test. Due to the unwieldy nature of improvised weapons, this move may not be included in a combo. Damage done depends on the object used as a weapon.

Improvised Weapons	Damage
Ax	Wn(Str)
Board (2x4)	Tw2
Broken bottle	Fw2
Chain	Br(Str)
Chainsaw	Wn4
Chair	Tw(Str)
Club	Br(Str)
Meat cleaver	Fw3
Shovel	Tw(Str)
Sledgehammer	Bk(Str)

Punch(Str) Df1 Whether it is a quick jab or a powerful hook, the punch is the standard brawling attack. Damage is Br(Str)

Smash(Str) Df3 A smash is performed by slamming the fighter's opponent into a large inanimate object such as the floor or a wall. Like the Throw move, a successful Grab move is required before Smashing someone. Unlike the Throw, after a Smash, the attacker retains the hold on his opponent. Damage is Br(1D). If the brawler wishes, a Smash may be used to disarm his opponent rather than do any damage. This is done by smashing the arm holding a weapon into something rather than smashing the whole person. Such an attack is resolved normally with success forcing the defender to drop whatever was being held.

Tackle(Siz) Df=defender's Size A successful Tackle knocks the opponent to the ground and does Br(Siz) damage. Successful or not, the attacker will end up on the ground.

MARTIAL ARTS MOVES

Trained martial artists may perform the Brawling Break, Block, Choke, Dodge, Feint, Grab, and Punch moves as Martial Arts moves. The game effects are the same, except all but Dodge and Feint are modified by Agility, not Strength. Martial Arts may perform several other moves as well.

Disarm(Agl) Df2 A properly executed Disarm targets specific nerves in an opponent's arm, momentarily numbing it and forcing her to drop any held object or weapon. No damage is done.

Flip(Agl) Df=attacker's skill This move may only be performed if the character has the Gymnastics skill, and is used at the level of that skill. The flip counters Punch, Kick, Nerve Punch, Grab, Touch of Death, Sweep, Disarm, Weapon Strike, Haymaker, Knee, Dirty Blow and Improvised Weapon Strike. In addition, the opponent's next maneuver is +1Df. A flip may also be executed just for the penalty it gives the opponent, in which case the move is Df2.

Jump Kick(Agl) Df3 To perform a Jump Kick, a combatant jumps high into the air and aims a vicious kick at the head of her opponent. If the Jump Kick connects, the defender is knocked prone, whether or not he makes his stun and KO tests. Damage is Tw(Str). Jump Kicks may not be a part of a Combo.

Kick(Agl) Df2 With hundreds of variations, this strong blow is delivered with the attacker's foot. Damage is Tw(Str)

Nerve Punch(Agl) Df4 The Nerve Punch is a quick strike targeting sensitive nerves and pressure points on the opponent's body. The intention is not to harm the opponent, but to render him unconscious. After a successful Nerve Punch, the defender must make a Normal Size test or fall unconscious for 2D rounds. Even if the Size test is successful, the defender is stunned.

Sweep(Agl) Df3 The Sweep attack attempts to knock the defender down by sweeping his feet out from under him. If successful, the opponent is knocked prone but takes no damage.

Throw(Agl) Df3 Throws force an opponent to the ground, often a good distance away. To attempt a Throw, the opponent must first be Grabbed. A successful Throw tosses the opponent 1D meters. Damage done is Br(meters thrown).

Touch of Death(Agl) Df5 As can be inferred from its name, the Touch of Death is the most lethal technique available to the martial artist. The complexity of the maneuver prevents any but the most skilled masters from performing it. The move entails a precise blow to the opponent's vitals and when properly executed kills almost instantly. Damage done is Wn(skill).

Weapon Block(Agil)Df=attacker's skill Like Weapon Strike, this move must be used with the Melee Weapon skill and similarly allows a martial artist to include Weapon Blocks into combos. At the GM's discretion, an Improvised Weapon Block may be effective against any attack that a Block move is effective against, depending on the item.

Knocked Prone

When a combatant is knocked to the ground, the only moves allowed are: Flip, Sweep, Dodge, Block, Grab, Choke, Smash, Head-Butt, Break (to counter a hold only) and Dirty Blow. These moves suffer a +1Df penalty. Alternatively, the character may use his action to get to his feet, though this forgoes any other offensive attack. A successful Flip immediately puts a combatant back on his feet and ready.

Note when creating combos

Starting a combo with a block or dodge will allow you to start an offense in response to an opponent's attack or even interrupt an opponent's combo. There is no reason to place a defensive move anywhere else in a combo. You are always entitled to attempt a defense in response to an opponent's.

Weapon Strike (Agil)Df2 This move may only be used in conjunction with the Melee Weapon skill and is tested at that skill's level. This allows a character to incorporate weapon strikes into Martial Arts combos. Damage done depends on the weapon being used.

GUN FU MOVES

Certain martial arts moves incorporate the use of a pistol in close combat. These moves may only be performed by a character with the Gun Fu skill.

Draw Pistol(Agil) Df1 Draw Pistol may be incorporated into Martial Arts combos just as any other move. The move is performed at the character's Gun Fu skill level. Draw pistol simply allows a fighter with a holstered pistol to draw it as part of a combo, presumably in preparation for a Shoot or Pistol Whip move.

Pistol Whip(Agil) Df2 This Gun Fu attack uses the butt of the pistol to deliver a sharp blow. Damage is Tw2.

Shoot(Agil) Df2 This is the move that makes Gun Fu a devastating technique. The combatant may fire his weapon at his opponent, using his Gun Fu skill, providing the target is within close combat distance (about arms reach). The Shoot move and the Gun Fu skill are absolutely useless at ranges greater than a meter or so. Although the Block move is an effective defense against Shoot, this should not be taken to imply that the defender is somehow deflecting the projectile itself. When a combatant successfully defends himself by Blocking someone using the Gun Fu Shoot move, he is simply knocking the shooter's arm out of the way so that the shot misses.

COMBINATIONS (COMBOS)

A combo is a series of moves that is executed at one time as a single move (for example "the old one-two" punch-punch, or a favorite of judo masters block-grab-break-throw). Combos are specified when the Brawling, Martial Arts or Gun Fu skill is chosen during character creation or advancement. Each individual move in a combo is attempted in order. If the move is successful, the effects are applied immediately and the next move in the combo may be attempted. If a move fails, however, the execution of the combo halts with that move and combat continues with the next combatant. Only one combo may be executed during a round by any one fighter, be it offensive or defensive.

CREATING ULTIMATE COMBOS...

Keep the following points in mind when creating combinations.

• *If an offensive combination is interrupted by a defensive combo, the defensive combo must be resolved completely before the offensive combo can be resumed.*

• *Martial Arts and Brawling moves may not be mixed in a combo, a combination must be comprised of moves from one or the other. Gun Fu moves, however, may be used with either Martial Arts or Brawling moves.*

• *When executing a combo, the moves do not all have to target the same individual. For example, Punch-Punch-Punch can be used to pummel one opponent, or to attack three different combatants.*

• *The first move in a combo may be used as if it were an individual move if the player so chooses, but the fighter must declare such intentions before the attack is resolved. If declared as a single move, the remaining moves of the combo are not executed.*

Corporal Jackson chases a Black Book agent down a blind alley. The agent disappears and the Corporal Jackson finds the alley blocked by a pair of thugs. As the two approach Jackson, their hostile intentions become clear as one draws a large knife from his jacket.

As the combat begins, each combatant must roll a die to decide who gets first

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attack, as each has Reflexes 3. Jackson wins the roll but decides to defer action. The knife fighter acts first and lunges at Jackson with his weapon. The thug has both Brawling and Melee Weapon: Knife at a 2 skill level. Jackson's level Martial Arts skill level is 3. The thug rolls a 7 and succeeds at the Df2 test to hit with a melee weapon. Jackson then gets an opportunity to defend and elects to perform a Dodge-Punch-Kick-Kick combo. The Dodge vs. the skill of his attacker (2) is automatically successful, but makes his next move +1Df. Since the next move is a Punch (at Df1), it is still automatically successful. The Knife fighter attempts to block the punch but fails the Hard test necessary and takes Br3 damage. The Corporal's following two kicks are both Df2, again automatic successes that the thug attempts to block but fails. After taking two consecutive Tw3 hits, the thug drops unconscious to the ground.

The second thug then rushes in to attack Jackson with a Grab-Knee combo. A much more experienced brawler, this fighter has Brawling 3 skill and automatically succeeds the Df2 test to Grab Jackson. Jackson fails his chance to Block and his assailant succeeds the automatic Df2 test to perform the Knee. Jackson makes the Normal Size test necessary to avoid being stunned.

At the opening of the next round, Jackson's attacker is maintaining his hold. The two combatants roll to determine who has the option of attacking first. Jackson loses the roll and his attacker immediately opts for a Punch-Punch combo. The Df for Jackson to block either of these attacks is 4 (attacker's skill 3 +1Df because of the hold) and his fails both, taking two Br3 hits. Jackson is able to shrug one off

completely and remains conscious despite taking the other one. Deciding he better end the beating quickly, Johnson tries a Break-Feint-Nerve Punch combo. Johnson succeeds in breaking the hold by making a Df3 test (Grab penalty is not applicable), then feints (Df2, automatic success) and makes the now Df3 test for the Nerve Punch. The Thug makes the Normal Size test to avoid being K.O.'d but is stunned anyway.

As Jackson's opponent is stunned at the beginning of round three, he may do nothing but stagger backwards. Jackson finishes him with a Jump Kick which sends him sailing back into a pile of trash.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

SHOTGUNS

Shotgun bonuses	
To Hit	+2t to attacks at effective range or further
Damage	short & close range: +1DL
	effective range: +2DL
	long & extreme range: -1DL

Shotguns can fire two different types of ammunition: shot, which consists of nine lead balls, and slugs, which are single, very large, bullets. Firing shotgun slugs is treated the same as firing any other firearm, firing shot is a special case. Slugs cause Wn4.

When firing shot, the chance of hitting a target increases at longer ranges as the individual shots spread. This gives the shooter +2t to hit at effective range or greater.

The character may wish to hit two separate targets that are within one meter of each other at effective range or greater. In this case, no bonus is granted, and one is subtracted from the Damage Level of each attack.

Since shot balls spreads out as they travel, up to effective range the target is in danger of being hit by multiple balls. Further than effective range, the spread is too wide for multiple hits. At short and close range, the Damage Level is +1, at effective range it is +2, but at long and extreme range it is -1.

THROWING GRENADES

Thrown hand grenades are detonated by a short timed fuse, unlike those launched out of grenade launchers, which detonate on impact. This means that hand grenades do not explode immediately after thrown in a combat round. Instead a grenade will explode at the very end of the round, after everyone has taken an action. If a player is planning on throwing a grenade it is often a good idea to defer action until all the targets have already acted, so they can't run away.

When an indirect fire shot or a thrown grenade misses it is usually very important to determine where the explosive lands (hopefully not too close to the thrower). To find out where a missed lob lands, roll a die and consult the Missed Lob Diagram to see if the shot is short, long, or to either side. Then roll 1D per range bracket, this is the distance in meters the shot was off.

SCATTER DIAGRAM
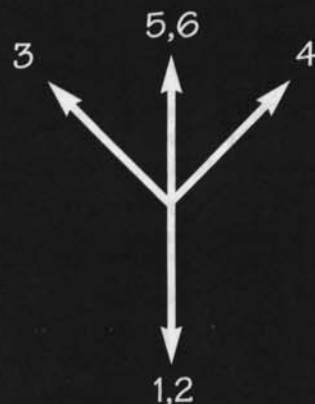
EXPLOSIVES

Explosives do damage to everything within a certain number of meters, called the blast radius. The blast radius, as well as the amount of damage done by the explosion, is determined by the blast rating of the explosive charge. The number of sticks of dynamite or blocks of C-4 (also called plastique or plastic explosive) needed to produce an explosion with a certain blast rating is given in the Explosive Charges table below. The second, lower number listed is the amount of explosive needed if the charged is tamped. Tamping a charge involves placing heavy objects (usually sandbags) around the charge to channel the blast in a certain direction.

Explosive Charges		
Blast Rating	Sticks of Dynamite	Blocks of C-4
3	1/.5	.75/.5
4	3/2	1/.75
5	5/3	2/1.5
6	10/5	3/2
7	15/10	5/3
8	20/15	8/5
9	30/20	10/7
10	40/25	15/10
11	50/30	20/13
12	65/40	25/15
13	80/50	35/20
14	100/65	45/30
15	125/80	55/35
16	150/100	65/45

The damage rating of an explosion is determined by the Blast Rating. The Wound Level is Wound, except for objects in contact with the explosive, in which case the Wound Level is Splatter. The Damage Level of the explosion is equal to the Blast Rating at the center of the blast radius and is reduced by one per ten meters of distance for untamped charges, or by one per five meters of distance for tamped charges. Therefore, the total blast radius of an explosion will be the blast rating times ten for untamped charges, and the blast rating times five for tamped charges.

Weapons with exploding warheads such as rockets and hand grenades are given blast ratings in their descriptions, which also says if they should be treated as a tamped or untamped charges.

Explosive are often used to blast holes in large barriers. To determine the diameter of a breach in meters, multiply the blast rating of the charge by the strength rating of the barrier.

Barrier	Multiplier
Wood	1
Stone or Brick	.5
Concrete	.25
Steel	.1

DAMAGE

All attacks have a damage rating that consists of a Wound Level and a Damage Level. The Wound Level is a word that indicates the type and effect of the damage. Flesh (Fw), Wound (Wd) and Splatter (Sp) damage is lethal. Bruise (Br), Twack (Tw) and Break (Bk) damage is non-lethal. The Damage Level is a number, generally between zero and 6, which determines how difficult it is to shake off the effects of the damage.

BODY ARMOR

All body armor is given an Armor Rating, generally from 1 to 5. When a hit is taken, the character makes a body armor test against the Damage Level of the attack. A successful test converts lethal damage to non-lethal damage (i.e., Fw becomes Br, Wd becomes Tw and Sp becomes Bk) or totally stops non-lethal damage. Make the body armor

test before applying any Damage Level modifiers, such as Called Shots and Short Bursts.

Body armor also provides limited protection from many of the energy weapons carried by aliens because of it's ablative properties. However, such attacks rapidly destroy the armor. Each time body armor is struck by an energy weapon, reduce the Armor Rating by the Damage Level of the attack, any remaining damage is applied to the character.

STAGING DAMAGE

When an attack is successful, both the defender and attacker attempt to stage the damage either up or down to the next Wound Level. Obviously, the defender is trying to stage the damage down, and the attacker is trying to stage it up. The defender tests her size against the Damage Level of the weapon used, with success meaning the damage has been staged down (i.e., Fw becomes nothing, Br becomes Tw, etc.). At the same time, the attacker tests the Damage Level of the weapon against the Size of the defender, with success meaning the damage has been staged up (i.e., Wd becomes Sp, Br becomes Tw, etc.). Note that if both the attacker and defender either succeed or fail, the wound level remains the same.

Flesh or Bruise damage staged down is shrugged off and ignored. Break damage stages up to Splatter. Splatter damage stages up to instant kill.

THE EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

The main effect (in game terms) of being wounded is to reduce a character's ability to function, this usually takes the form of penalties to Difficulty Level and Target Number numbers, although death can be considered the ultimate ability impairment. Any penalty incurred by wounds remains until the wound is completely healed. Each time a character is wounded, there is also a chance that the character will be stunned (temporarily unable to act) or knocked unconscious. In addition to these immediate effects, there is the possibility of untended lethal wounds deteriorating and becoming fatal.

Once damage staging rolls have been made for an attack and the final damage has been determined, record the Wound Level and Damage Level on your character sheet. If the character has already taken a wound of that level, add the Damage Level of the new wound to the level of the existing wound and use the new level. If a new wound would increase the Damage Level above six, keep the Damage Level for that Wound Level at six and add the remaining Damage Levels to the next higher Wound Level. Treat this instance as if you had taken two separate wounds at the same time for purposes of resisting stun and KO.

Next, the wounded character must make a stun test and a KO test (both are Size[Wil] tests). The base Difficulty Level of the test is equal to the Damage Level of the attack, modified by the Wound Level and

Damage Type (see the Damage Table below). Note that those characters taking lethal damage are always stunned.

Stunned characters may take minor actions such talk, walk slowly, roll over, but otherwise they lose their next action.

Unconscious characters can do nothing for a certain period of time, or until revived.

Stun Test: Size(Wil) v. Damage Level (modified by Wound Level) to avoid losing next action.

K.O. Test: Size(Wil) v. Damage Level (modified by Wound Level) to avoid becoming unconscious.

Damage imposes usage penalties for any tests except those relating to the taking, resisting or healing of damage. The Difficulty Level of any Skill or Attribute test is increased according to the Wound Level. Use only the modifier for the highest Wound Level.

The effects of damage and healing details are summarized below.

Wound Level	Usage Penalty	Stun Avoid	K.O. Avoid	K.O. time	Stabilization time	Healing time	Stabilization & healing/Df mod
Flesh (Fw)	-2t	Normal Size(Wil)	DL-2	1D rounds	1 hour	1 hour	-2Df
Wound (Wn)	+1 Df	Automatic stun	DL	1D minutes	1 minute	1 Day	--
Splatter (Sp)	unusable	Automatic stun	DL+2	1D hours	1 round	3 Days	+2Df
Bruise (Br)	-2t	DL-2	DL-3	1D rounds	N/A	1 minute	-2Df
Thwack (Tw)	+1Df	DL	DL-1	1D minutes	N/A	1/2 hour	--
Break (Bk)	unusable	DL+2	DL+1	1D hours	N/A	1 Day	+2Df

FALLING

Individuals falling from very great heights can be dealt with fairly simply. They are dead unless they make a Good Luck roll. In other circumstances, the GM will provide the Wound Level. The following table gives some examples. Where a situation does not fit precisely, the GM should need only compare the specific situation with the general examples given below to find the appropriate Wound Level. For example, if a character is thrown out a fifth floor window, the "out a second story window" damage should be a fair approximation. The most important thing is to be consistent and fair. Note that the Damage Level in all cases is the Size of the person falling.

Falling (or Thrown)	Damage
off a ladder	Br(Size)
down a flight of stairs	Tw(Size)
off a bridge into a river	Tw(Size)
out a second story window	Bk(Size)
off a highway overpass	Bk(Size)
out of (or off of) a moving vehicle	Fw(Size)
off a ten story building	Sp(Size)

BURNING

The variety of situations that could lead to a character to catch on fire precludes exhaustive rules. The following guide should help GMs make consistent and balanced decisions on a case by case basis.

There are two general situations to be considered: one where the character is hit with a flaming object and the other where the character or her clothing is on fire.

Flaming Brand and Blowtorch describe situations where a character is hit by a burning object. Both create a chance that the character will be set On Fire. On Fire and Engulfed In Flame do the listed amount of damage each round. On Fire should be used in any situation where part of the character has caught fire and is burning. Each round that a character is On Fire, there is a chance that the fire will spread and the character will become Engulfed In Flame. Fell Into A Volcano is included for cases where characters are subjected to intense heat or flame, such as rocket exhaust or falling into molten ore.

Characters who are On Fire or Engulfed In Flame may attempt to smother the fire by making an Agl3 or 4 test, respectively. A fire extinguisher will douse the fire in one round.

Flaming Brand	Fw2 -- catch On Fire on a roll of 1 (1D)
Blowtorch	Fw2 -- catch On Fire on a roll of 1 or 2 (1D)
On Fire	Wn2/round -- becomes Engulfed In Flame on a roll of 1 (1D)
Engulfed In Flame	Wn3/round
Fell Into A Volcano	Sp4/round

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More than one way to skin a cat...

There are certainly more ways for characters to be injured than the old and relatively uncreative stand-bys of kicking, shooting, stabbing and strangling described above. It is very likely that the characters will run afoul of most of them, and they will almost certainly invent a few of their own that the GM would never have expected. Since no GM or book of rules can possibly plan for every conceivable act of violence that will arise during the course of a lively game, two of the more common situations will be described here: falling from great heights and being set aflame. Relatively unusual methods of harming oneself and others, granted, but the PCs are generally rather unusual individuals themselves. These examples should serve as a guide for the GM when it becomes necessary to improvise rules for the more exotic techniques that the PCs will discover to inflict damage on themselves, their comrades, and perhaps the enemy.

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Special Agents Riggs and Stone are planting bugs and wiretaps in a federal office building when they are attacked by a former post office employee driven insane by MKULTRA mind control drugs. As the rogue public servant rushes down the hall at them brandishing an axe, both agents draw their sidearms and take aim.

Both agents fire their autopistols striking the postal worker in the chest. The bullet's impact stops the attacker in his tracks, but reveals that he is wearing a Kevlar vest. The body armor converts both attacks to non-lethal damage resulting in two Tw3 hits. The madman has a Size Attribute of 3, making his tests to stage the hits down a Normal test. Both tests succeed and he takes only Br3 damage from each. Since both hits have a Wound Level of Bruise they are added together to make a single Br6 wound, the maximum level. (Any further Bruise level damage will automatically be staged up to Thwack.) The mad postal worker must now attempt to resist being stunned or knocked out. The stun test is Df4 and the KO test is Df3. The madman fails the first and is stunned, but makes the second and remains conscious.

As the mad postal worker staggers back from the impact, the two agents fire again, this time calling shots to avoid the body armor. Both shots again find their mark and the initial damage rating is two Wn3 hits. One of the gun wounds is staged down to Fw and the other remains at Wn level. The mail carrier takes two additional wounds, a Wn3 and a Fw3. Although the Wn3 leaves him automatically stunned again, the madman manages to make both KO tests (Df1 for the Fw3 and Df3 for the Wn3).

As the now bloody, but superhumanly determined, postal worker staggers a step closer, the two amazed agents sigh and take aim again. This time, both Riggs and Stone elect to make called short bursts to avoid armor and do additional damage. Again both bursts hit and the madman takes two Wn5 hits (Wn3 pistol damage, +1DL for short burst, +1DL for called shot). Both wounds automatically stage up to Splatter with no hope of being staged down, resulting in a final, vicious Sp10 wound. Since the limit of any Damage Level is six, the nigh unstoppable mailman takes Sp6, and the remaining 4 Damage Levels bring him well into Instant Death.

RECOVERY

HEALING

Each Wound Level has a healing time, which is the amount of time that must pass before the character may make a healing test. The character tests his Strength against the Damage Level of the wound. If successful the Damage Level of the wound is decreased by one. If the test fails, the damage level remains the same. After another healing period has passed, another attempt may be made. Once the Damage Level of a wound is reduced to zero, the wound is totally healed and any penalties from the wound are removed.

Lethal damage must be stabilized (see below) before healing may occur.

There is a possibility of permanent damage from Splatter wounds. Once the wound starts to heal, roll one die. If the result is less than the Damage Level of the wound, there will be some sort of permanent damage to the character. The exact details are up to the Game Master, but could include permanent Target Number penalties, scarring, loss of limb or anything else the GM feels is appropriate.

If the Difficulty Level is so high that a healing test indicates an automatic failure, the patient has slipped into a coma. While in a coma, the character is completely unconscious and unresponsive to any external stimuli. Luck Tests must be made for the patient's wounds to heal. Good Luck results heal the character's wound by one Damage Level. Bad luck results cause complications to set in and the character's wounds to become unstable again.

WOUND STABILIZATION

When lethal damage is first sustained, it is unstable and could deteriorate causing further damage. Each Wound Level has a stabilization time, which is the amount of time before the character must check to see if the wound has either stabilized or deteriorated. The character tests her Strength(Wil) attribute against the Damage Level of the wound. If the test is successful, the wound has stabilized and no longer needs to be checked. Failure means that the Damage Level is increased by one and another test must be made after another stabilization period has passed. Note that if a stabilized character receives further damage of the same Wound Level, the Damage Level of the old wound is added to the Damage Level of the new wound before making stabilization tests.

DEATH

When a Damage Level reaches six (regardless of Wound Level), the character begins to die. One stabilization period after the Damage Level reaches six, the character may make one last stabilization test. If it fails, the character dies, although she may be resuscitated by medical attention or first aid as described below.

FIRST AID AND MEDICAL ATTENTION

Successful use of the first aid and medical skills can make most of the tests required for stabilization and healing much easier. The effects of first aid and medical attention are not cumulative. The bonus for medical attention supersedes the bonus for first aid. Either skill may be used for any of these tests, but the Difficulty Level of any first aid tests is -1.

A successful First Aid or Medical test against the Damage Level of a stabilized or non-lethal wound decreases the Df of the next healing test (-1 for first aid, -2 for medical). In addition, the usage penalty imposed on a character with a stabilized wound is reduced to the next lower Wound Level.

A successful First Aid or Medical test against the Damage Level of an unstabilized wound will decrease the Difficulty Level of the next stabilization test (-1 for first aid, -2 for medical).

Instead of the usual first aid or medical test to stabilize, a caregiver may attempt a skill test at -1Df to merely keep the wounded character at the current state for one more period. No stabilization test is made after that period passes. A caregiver may perform this task as many times a he wishes, and if successful, keep the victim from taking any stabilization tests. However, this requires constant attention and work on the part of the medic for the duration of each stabilization period.

Immediately after a character dies, an attempt may be made to resuscitate him. The caregiver tests her skill against the number of minutes the character has been "dead". If successful, the injured character may make one more stabilization test. Each resuscitation attempt takes one minute.

The Difficulty Levels described above assume the physician or paramedic has the proper equipment. For First Aid tests, a First Aid Kit or Medic Kit is needed. For Medical tests, a Medic Kit or Doctor's Bag is necessary. Any First Aid or Medical tests made without adequate equipment are +1Df.

First Aid or Medical tests made in a hospital or other medical facility gain a modifier to their Difficulty Level. After a successful Medical or First Aid test, any stabilization, healing or resuscitation tests the patient needs to make will receive the same bonus.

> Field Hospital : +2t
> Full Hospital with Operating Room: -1Df
> Intensive Care Unit: -2 Df

After a brutal firefight, an operative is down and unconscious with a Wn5 wound. Luckily, two paramedics are on hand (First Aid 3 skill) who immediately begin first aid to postpone the operative's stabilization test. The Difficulty of the test is 5 (the Wound Level) - 1Df for the First Aid skill, -1Df because the medics are just attempting to postpone the stabilization test, and finally a -1Df teamwork bonus. The final Df for the paramedics' test is 2, automatic success.

The paramedics postpone the patient's stabilization test until they reach a hospital, where the emergency room doctors (Medical 3) attempt to provide medical attention. The Df of the Medical skill test is 5 (the Wound Level), -1Df for the hospital bonus, -1Df teamwork bonus (2 doctors) for a final Df of 3. The Medical skill test will then require a Normal test with a target of 7. The doctors successfully administer medical attention which gives the patient a -3Df bonus on any subsequent stabilization and healing tests. When the operative finally needs to test for stabilization, the test Df is 2 (DL5-3Df bonus due to the Medical aid and hospital) or automatic success.

The patient's wounds stabilize and he begins to heal. The healing tests will also be automatic (Df2) and the patient will be fully recovered in 5 days.

VEHICLE CHASES

One of the more exciting uses that have ever been found for motor vehicles is the vehicle chase. Chase scenes are classic contests of skill and nerves between two or more drivers risking life, limb and serious collateral damage. Given the average gamer's penchant for placing their characters in life-threatening situations, it seems unlikely that the game will progress far before someone finds an excuse to hop into the driver's seat and floor it in hot pursuit of enemy agents in one form or another. The following rules emphasize speed of play, roleplaying potential and spectacular crashes.

Vehicle chases are always resolved as contests between two vehicles, the Lead vehicle and Pursuit vehicle, whose drivers are called the Lead driver and Pursuit driver, respectively. If a particular situation involves more than one Pursuit vehicle, the chase is resolved as if it were several two-vehicle chases.

One chase round is an inexact time period, roughly 3 combat rounds or about 15 seconds. The exact distance covered is not specified by these rules. Instead, the GM should decide how many rounds will pass between any two locations specified in the adventure as the need arises. For example, the vehicles will reach the bridge in five rounds and will spend three rounds on the bridge before reaching the road block.

The distance between the Lead and Pursuit vehicle is therefore also rather subjective. At the beginning of the chase, the GM assigns the proximity of the two vehicles a rating between one and five. A distance of one describes the two vehicles neck-and-neck and five indicates that the Lead vehicle is about to lose the Pursuit vehicle completely. This distance Stat is assigned by the GM at the start of a chase. During a chase, the Lead driver attempts to shake the Pursuit vehicle by increasing the distance between the vehicles past five, while the Pursuit driver tries to close the distance between the two vehicles. Depending on the Pursuit driver's intentions, she may be attempting to run the Lead vehicle off the road, get close enough to fire at him or simply to follow him for a certain amount of time.

The Lead driver has two tactics available to him, outrunning or outmaneuvering the Pursuit vehicle. Outrunning relies on the Speed Stat of the Lead and Pursuit vehicle and the skill of the drivers. A driver attempting to outmaneuver his pursuers tries to shake the other driver by performing dangerous and risky stunts in the hope that his pursuer will lose control of his vehicle. Success in outmaneuvering pursuit depends on the drivers' skills and the Handling Stat of the two vehicles.

The Pursuit driver's options are more restricted. She may only push her vehicle to the limits of its speed and try to stay on her quarry's tail through any wild maneuvers he attempts. If the Pursuit vehicle is not substantially faster than the Lead vehicle, the chase will likely be decided by the skill and nerve of the two drivers.

The Out of Control Table

2-6 The vehicle fish tails, reducing its Speed Stat by one for this round.

7-9 The driver must make a Drive test vs. the Speed Stat of his vehicle. If the test fails, the vehicle skids into the nearest object. Reduce the Speed Stat of the vehicle by one for purposes of damage (see Collision below). If the vehicle remains driveable, its Speed Stat is reduced by 2 for this round.

10 Some overstressed part of the vehicle malfunctions. Roll on the Equipment Malfunction Table.

11 The vehicle flips and rolls. Roll for collision damage and determine randomly what side the vehicle lands on (1,2: Wheels 3: Right side 4: Left side 5,6: Roof). If, by some miracle, the vehicle lands on its wheels and remains drivable, Speed is reduced by 2.

12 The vehicle hits a ramp-like structure and becomes suddenly airborne. Add 2 to the Speed Stat of the vehicle for the purpose of collision damage. The vehicle lands on a random side as in the previous result.

To resolve a chase ...

• At the beginning of a chase round, both drivers decide whether they will attempt to increase their speed and try to outrun the other. Any driver who chooses to do so must make a Drive test v. the Speed Stat of the other driver's vehicle. The Pursuit driver must test Drive v. the Lead vehicle's Speed Stat and the Lead driver must test v. the Pursuit vehicle's Speed Stat. A driver that succeeds this test may increase his Speed Stat for that round only by one. At the beginning of the next round, the Speed Stat returns to normal.

• The Lead driver may try to outmaneuver his pursuer. To do this, the player describes to the GM the maneuver that his character is going to attempt. The GM then assigns the stunt a Difficulty Level, taking into account any hazardous environmental or road conditions (unpaved roads, ice, rain, etc.). The Lead

Though unnecessary for the purpose of most chases, sometimes a slightly more precise estimate of distance traveled by a vehicle per round is needed. For example, if a bomb is set to detonate in 30 seconds (2 chase rounds), the GM may need to know just how close to the blast the characters will be. In these cases use the following method:

• Round the speed of the vehicle off to the nearest 10 miles per hour.

• The vehicle will travel 200 feet (60 meters) per chase round for each 10mph of speed. Of course, in combat rounds, each 10mph of speed translates to about 70 feet (20 meters) per round.

It is recommend that most chases begin at Distance 3.

driver, and the Pursuit driver if she chooses, must then test their Drive skills against the maneuver's Df, as modified by the vehicle's Handling Stat. A driver that fails his or her Drive test must immediately roll on the Out of Control Table. If the Pursuit driver decides not to attempt the maneuver, she must reduce her Speed for the round by one.

• Providing neither vehicle has crashed or otherwise been removed from the chase, the speeds of the Pursuit and Lead vehicles are compared to determine if the Pursuit has managed to close on the Lead vehicle or if the Lead vehicle is losing the tail. The driver of the faster vehicle may decide to increase or decrease the distance between the two vehicles by one if he so wishes. In the case of a tie in speed, the Pursuit driver choose whether to increase or decrease the distance between the vehicles.

If the distance between the vehicles in a chase ever exceeds five, the Lead driver has succeeded in losing his pursuer and has escaped.

While the Lead and Pursuit vehicles vehicle are at a distance of 1, a Pursuit driver that gains a Speed advantage may elect to increase the distance to 2 and take the lead herself, becoming the new Lead driver. This situation is more applicable to a race rather than a pursuit, although it would be resolved with exactly the same rules.

OFFENSIVE DRIVING

Very often chases involve more hostile actions than two vehicles jockeying for position. In most cases, the intention of the Pursuit driver is to force the Lead driver to stop. To do this, the Pursuit driver may attempt to ram the Lead vehicle, cut it off, or have someone shoot at it. The same tactics may be used by the Lead driver to force his pursuer to give up the chase.

During any round in which the distance between the vehicles is 1, the Lead driver may elect to cut off the Pursuit vehicle and brake suddenly in an attempt to force the Pursuit vehicle to stop. The Lead driver must make a Drive skill test to avoid losing control of his vehicle (Df is 5 minus the Speed Stat of his vehicle). The driver of the Pursuit vehicle must then decide either to voluntarily slam on her brakes and stop, or attempt to swerve around the stopping vehicle (subsequently increasing the Distance to 2 and becoming Lead driver).

If the Pursuit driver slams on her brakes, she must make a Drive test against the Speed of her vehicle. If the Pursuit driver tries to swerve around the stopped Lead vehicle, she must succeed at a Drive test at a Difficulty Level of 5 minus the Speed of her vehicle, and modified by the Handling Stat of the vehicle. If either test fails, the driver immediately loses control and will likely hit the Lead vehicle (roll on the Out of Control Table). Of course, the Pursuit driver does have a third option, she may hit the accelerator and barrel through the sudden road block (see Collisions below).

During a chase round, the passengers in either the Lead or Pursuit vehicle may attempt to fire on the

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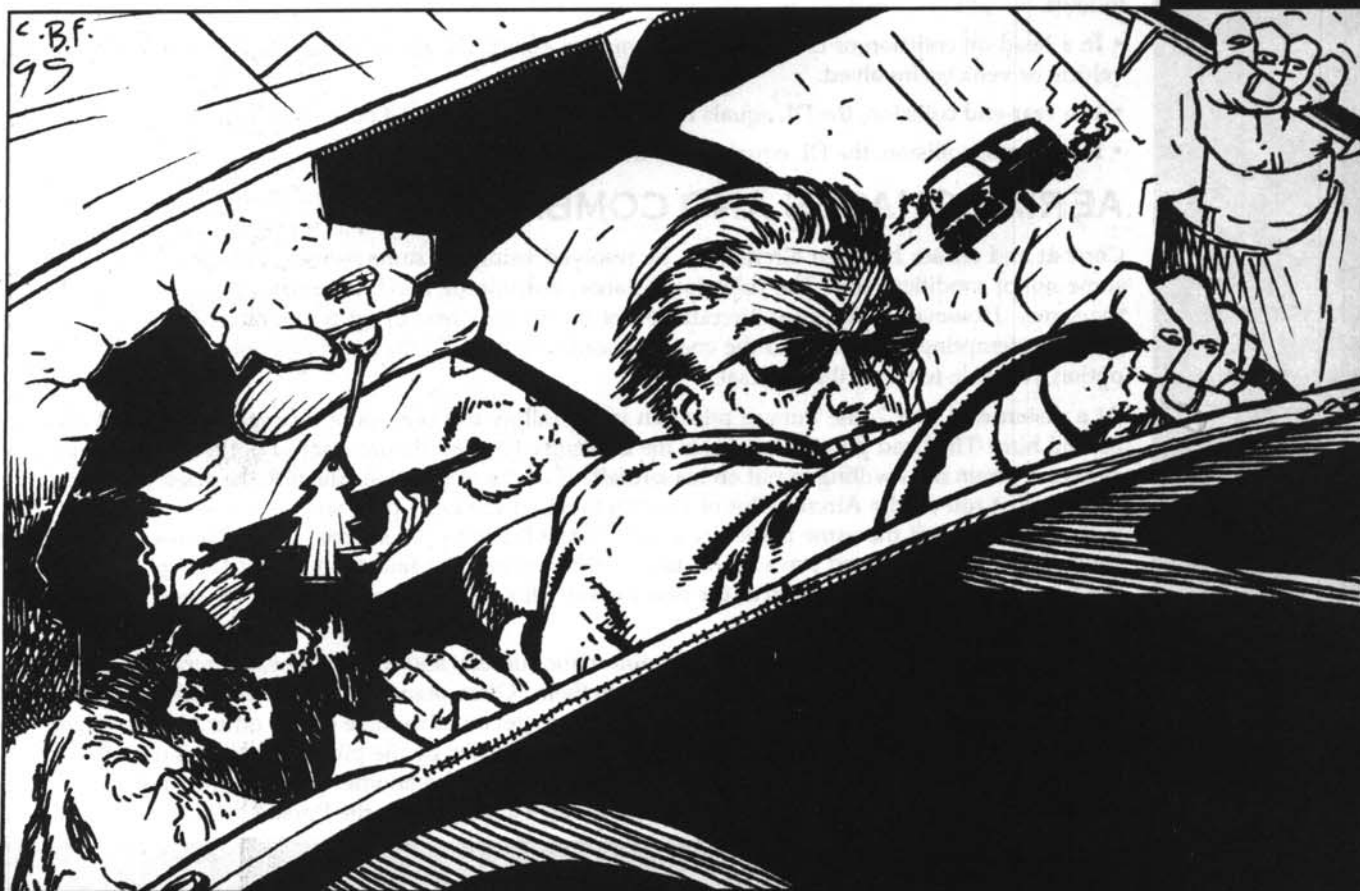
other vehicle. The Df of shooting a vehicle is equal to the distance between the two vehicles. Attempting to shoot a passenger, tire, or other smaller target increases the Difficulty Level by two. If an attack by automatic gunfire or explosives causes a driver to fail a Willpower test, or if he is stunned for any reason, the player must immediately roll on the Out of Control Table.

At the beginning of a chase round, when drivers are declaring intentions to outrun the other, a driver may also state that he or she is swerving to avoid weapons fire and ram attacks. Any driver who elects to swerve wildly in this manner increases the Difficulty Level of attacking her vehicle by one, however she also increases the Difficulty Level of any outrun, outmaneuver, or ramming tests she attempts during the round by the same amount.

The most basic form of vehicular combat is one driver purposefully ramming his vehicle into the other. Either the Pursuit or the Lead driver may elect to ram the other when the distance between the two vehicles is 1. An attempt to ram is declared at the end of the chase round after any change in the distance between the two vehicles has been noted. It does not matter who is ramming who, nor does it make a difference if both drivers decide to ram at the same time, the attack is resolved in exactly the same manner...

1. Determine if either vehicle was damaged. Both players roll on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table, subtracting their vehicle's Size Stat. The player whose character's vehicle is larger, subtracts the difference in Size Stats. The player whose character's vehicle is smaller, adds the difference in Size Stats. Any damage incurred should be applied before proceeding.

2. Both drivers test their Drive skill against the current speed of their own vehicle. If the test fails, the driver immediately loses control and must roll on the Out of Control Table, adding the Speed of his vehicle.

COLLISIONS

Crash damage to vehicles is determined by rolling on the Equipment Malefaction and Damage Table, modified by the following factors.

- Subtract the Size of the vehicle.
- If the vehicle collided with an inanimate object, add the vehicle's Size + current Speed.
- If the vehicle collided with another vehicle, add the Size of the other vehicle.
- In a head-on collision, add the Speed of both vehicles.
- In a rear-end collision, add the difference in Speed of the two vehicles.
- In a T-bone collision, add the Speed of the faster vehicle.

Crash damage inflicted to passengers has a Wound Level of Wn. The Damage Level is determined as follows.

- In a head-on collision or crash with an inanimate object, DL equals twice the combined Speed of the vehicle or vehicles involved.
- In a rear-end collision, the DL equals twice the difference in Speed of the two vehicles.
- In a T-bone collision, the DL equals twice the Speed of the faster vehicle.

AERIAL CHASES AND COMBAT

Combat and chases between aircraft can be resolved using the same rules as for surface vehicles with some minor modifications. The rules for distance, outrunning and outmaneuvering the other pilot are the same. However, since most aircraft do not incorporate rear-firing weapons, aerial combat centers around attempting to get behind the enemy in order to fire. To do this, Lead pilots have an additional option available to them: the reversal.

At a distance of 1 or 2, the Pursuit pilot can try to follow the Lead pilot through the reversal and stay behind him. The Lead pilot's player sets the Difficulty Level of the reversal's Pilot test, representing the degree of strain he is willing to put on his aircraft. If the Lead pilot fails the test, the attempt fails and the player must roll on the Aircraft Out of Control table. If the Lead pilot succeeds, the Pursuit pilot must make a Pilot test of the same Difficulty Level. If the Pursuit pilot succeeds, she follows the Lead pilot through the maneuver and stays on his tail. If the Pursuit pilot fails the test, the Lead pilot has gained the advantage and takes position as the new Pursuit pilot. The distance between the two planes remains the same.

A reversal at distances of 3 or greater is an automatic success, and turns the Lead aircraft around to face the other without adjusting the distance between them. Often planes then fly at each other, firing as they pass, and then both attempt reversals in an attempt to get an advantage on the other. In these cases, the Df of both reversals is the higher of the two Difficulties chosen by the pilots. If both fail or both succeed, the distance is set to 3 and the aircraft face each other again for another pass. If one pilot fails and the other succeeds, the successful pilot gains an advantage Wind and becomes the Pursuit pilot at a distance of 2.

Buckle Up! Passengers wearing seatbelts will take crash damage with a WL of Thwack rather than Wound.

Pedestrians be Damned! The damage taken by someone hit by a vehicle has a WL of Break and Damage Level equal to 3 plus the vehicle's Speed.

FLYING THE UNFRIENDLY SKIES

Due to the greater distances covered in aerial chases and combat, pilots may only attempt to fire on each other at a distance of 2 or less, and even at those ranges the gunners suffer a +1Df penalty. Unless the Lead aircraft is capable of firing to the rear (and few are), only the Pursuit aircraft may attack. The Lead pilot may only take evasive action (as swerving, above), attempt to outrun the pursuit, or try to maneuver for a shot with a reversal. Obviously, except for the suicidal, ramming is not an option.

MISSILES

The sole method of attacking another aircraft at a distance greater than 2 is by missiles. Most combat aircraft carry a small number of these self-propelled, self-guided projectiles for engaging enemy aircraft at long range. To launch a missile, the attacking gunner must acquire missile lock on the target, locking the missile's guidance systems on the enemy aircraft. Acquiring missile lock is a Gunnery test whose Df equals 6 minus the distance between the aircraft. A pilot taking evasive action will increase the Df by one of any missile lock attempted on his aircraft. Attempts to acquire missile lock are declared at the beginning of the round and resolved at the end of the round, taking into account any evasive action on the part of the target. Once missile lock is acquired, the gunner may immediately launch the weapon. If he elects not to fire, missile lock must be reacquired at the end of the next round. A pilot taking evasive action, attempting to outmaneuver another aircraft, or attempting a reversal may not acquire missile lock in the same round.

Once a missile is launched it speeds toward its target, decreasing the distance by 2 at the end of each round. The missile will detonate at the end of the round in which it reaches a distance of 1. To dodge a missile, the targeted pilot must perform a reversal at the last minute, when the distance between his aircraft is 1. The missile will attempt to follow the pilot through the reversal with an effective Pilot skill of 3. If the missile succeeds or the pilot fails, the missile detonates at the end of that round. If the pilot or gunner of the targeted aircraft drop an electronic countermeasures (ECM) pod to act as a decoy (a Gunnery2 test), the missile will suffer a +1Df penalty to follow the reversal. A reversal performed to dodge a missile does not affect the aircraft's position relative to the other aircraft, only the missile. If the missile reaches its target successfully and detonates with a Blast Rating 7.

AURORA MISSILES

The Aurora weapon system incorporates a target acquisition and missile guidance system built around Grey Psychic Lenses. The psychic lens serves much the same purpose as a conventional radar system, although the technology of each could not be more different. The pilot of an Aurora need only concentrate for a moment to activate the psychic lens. The lens then locates any air targets in the area via clairvoyance. When within range, the Aurora's weapons are also launched and guided

Afterburners

Many military jet aircraft are equipped with afterburners, which provide extra thrust by pumping large amounts of extra fuel into the jet's exhaust. This gives the aircraft a huge burst of speed but limits its maneuverability greatly. Any pilot of a plane equipped with afterburners may elect to fire the after burners when he declares an outrun attempt. While afterburners are active, the Pilot receives a -2Df bonus to any outrun tests, but incurs a +2Df penalty to any maneuvering tests.

psychically. In addition to reducing the number of controls the pilot needs to deal with, this unique weapon system has two major advantages. Target aircraft have no way of knowing when an Aurora has acquired missile lock, enhancing its stealth capabilities. Once a missile is fired, the psychic guidance system is unaffected by traditional ECM pods and other countermeasure electronics, making these missiles considerably harder to avoid. The only real disadvantage of the psychic lens system is that only pilots with strong ESP or psychic disciplines can make use of it. The pilot must spend 1 strong ESP point or Psi Point to launch a missile.

EQUIPMENT DAMAGE AND

Aircraft Out of Control Table

2-6 The desperate maneuvers the pilot just attempted has left him disoriented. The pilot suffers a +1Df to any Pilot tests he makes during the next round while he regains his bearings.

10 The pilot risks blacking out from the extreme g-forces produced by his maneuvers. The pilot must succeed at a Df(1D) Willpower test or momentarily black out (stunned) for a round.

7-9 The pilot loses control of the aircraft and it begins to spin wildly out of control. Speed is reduced by 2 and the pilot may take no further actions until he succeeds at a Df(1D) pilot test. If the pilot fails three consecutive tests the aircraft crashes into the ground.

11 The aircraft malfunctions, roll on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction table.

12 The aircraft's controls lock, forcing it into a sudden power dive! The pilot has only two options: he may bail out and save himself, or he can make a Df(1D) pilot test to pull out of the dive in time. If the pilot manages to pull out of the power dive, his craft's Speed is reduced to 0 for this round and will be reduced by two for the next.

MALFUNCTION

The following table can be used by the GM any time a piece of hardware is damaged or abused, rolling 2D and adding any applicable modifiers. The GM should then describe only the effects of the damage to the players, keeping the specifics from them until someone makes a successful Repair/build1 to diagnose all the damage.

DOWNTIME

Not all of a character's time is spent hunting down aliens and Black Book agents or recovering extraterrestrial technology. Most operatives have lives and duties outside of Aegis, and most of their time is spent there. Time actually spent on missions constitutes a minority of an operative's time devoted to Aegis activity, albeit a much more interesting minority. In between the life-threatening and world-shaking operations undertaken by an Aegis Cell, characters may participate in a number of Downtime activities.

After a mission is completed the GM should grant the players a number of weeks of Downtime, during which their characters may engage in any of the activities described below. Two weeks of Downtime is recommended for these purposes, although the actual

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EQUIPMENT DAMAGE AND MALFUNCTION

2- The item receives only dents, scratches and other cosmetic damage. No repairs necessary.

3 The abused device is damaged, but has not broken yet. After 2D rounds or uses (whichever is more appropriate) roll again on this table with no modifiers.

4 A minor part of the device has been broken. Tests involving this object receive a -2t penalty. A Df1/2D minute Build/Repair test will fix it.

5 An vital part of the device has been damaged. All tests involving this object suffer a +1Df penalty. A Df2/3D minute Build/Repair test will fix the damage.

6 Something in the device has been knocked loose. The item stops functioning as if it had been broken, but will resume working if someone gives it a good solid thump and the player rolls 4 or better on 1D.

7 The equipment has been broken and immediately stops functioning. Only a Df3/1D hour Build/Repair test will fix all the damage.

8 A minor part of the device has broken, but further strain will damage it more. Tests involving this object suffer a -2t penalty and after 2D rounds or uses, roll on this table again with no modifiers. 1D hours and a Df4 Build/Repair test are needed to fix all the resulting damage.

9 An important part of the machine has broken, incurring +1Df penalty to all related tests. Roll again on this table with no modifiers after 2D rounds or uses. A Df4/1D hour Build/Repair test will fix all the damage.

10 The device is only slightly damaged, for the moment, and incurs a -2t penalty. However it is obviously in the process of breaking further, perhaps indicated loud, unhealthy noises or thick clouds of smoke). After 1D minutes or uses roll again on this table with a +1 modifier. 1D hours and a Df5 Build/Repair test will fix the damage.

11 The object has been severely damage, +1Df penalty, and is rapidly (and obviously) deteriorating. After 1D minutes or uses, roll again on this table with a +2 modifier. 2D hours and a Df5 Build/Repair test will be needed to repair all the damage.

12+ The item or device has been destroyed. If possible, the machine explodes (untamped Bl equals half the object's Size, round down). No amount of time or skill will be able to repair it, but it may still be useful as a source of parts.

Modifiers

Explosions - Untamped	DL of explosion
Explosions - Tamped	DL(x2) of explosion
Fall from height	+1 per story
Gun fire	+Number of bullets that hit
Hit by a vehicle	+Size of vehicle
Hit by an axe	+4
Malfunction	-3

* In all cases except malfunction subtract Size of vehicle or object checking for damage.

interval between missions may in fact be much longer. The remainder of time is assumed to be taken up carrying out their non-Aegis obligations. The GM may wish to grant the players additional Downtime to reward for exceptional success, as the extra time will allow the players to further develop their character's abilities and improve the Cell. One or two extra weeks of Downtime is recommended for missions in which the players exceeded the GM's expectations. This does not just mean a spectacular success. The GM may wish to reward the group for an exceptionally well-played mission in which the characters technically failed, but managed to pull off a dramatic and exciting adventure none the less.

INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

Many characters elect to spend Downtime training and learning new skills. To do this the character must have access to a training facility capable of providing the desired instruction (several examples are given in the Pulling Strings sections of the organization list in Chapter 2: Personnel). One week of intensive instruction gives the character 2CP toward purchasing the next level in that particular skill. If

a character wishes to gain proficiency in a Training area, such as SCUBA Diving or Awareness, the character must make an Int(Per)3 test at the end of the week. If the test is successful the character gains expertise in the desired Training. A failed test earns the character only a +1t bonus if he repeats the training in a subsequent week.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The success of Aegis' on-going operations depends heavily on R & D work. Such work provides vital information regarding the aliens' strengths and weaknesses, analysis of weaponry and craft, and development of new weapons and countermeasures. Some Cells are devoted solely to research and conduct little, if any, field work themselves. Although the players' Cell will undoubtedly focus heavily on active investigation and hazardous missions, Downtime research will still play an important role in it's operations.

The research and development possibilities available to the Cell is limited only by the players' imaginations and the resources of the Cell. Reverse-engineering and replicating alien technology, designing new weapons, analyzing extraterrestrial specimens for weaknesses to exploit and studying arcane rituals are all research areas routinely pursued by Aegis Cells. These investigations are resolved as long-term Research projects as described Chapter 4: Tradecraft.

CONVALESCENCE

Even the most careful and well-prepared teams will at some point run into a situation that exceeds their ability to handle. Some groups seem to seek out such situations. All wars have casualties and it is inevitable that the PCs will eventually run afoul of one of the myriad aliens, assassins, or supernatural entities they combat regularly. Providing the characters are not sent home in small boxes, chances are they will have some extensive recuperating to do. Whether this convalescence takes place within the Cell or in a hospital depends on the facilities available. In either case, operatives with Break or Splatter wounds will be bed ridden and unable to take other actions during Downtime. Providing the characters are conscious, they may undergo therapy, if necessary or desired.

THERAPY

After years (often less) of fighting a covert war against a largely unseen menace from outer space and witnessing, even conducting, questionable experiments and arcane rituals, it is not uncommon to find Aegis operatives a trifle unhinged. Not surprisingly, instances of paranoia, aggression and schizophrenia are common among Aegis veterans. A few weeks of Downtime spent in psychological therapy and treatment can prevent borderline individuals from becoming a liability to their Cell.

Supernatural Corruption

It is important to note that the Corruption by the Supernatural trait may not be eliminated through therapy and treatment.
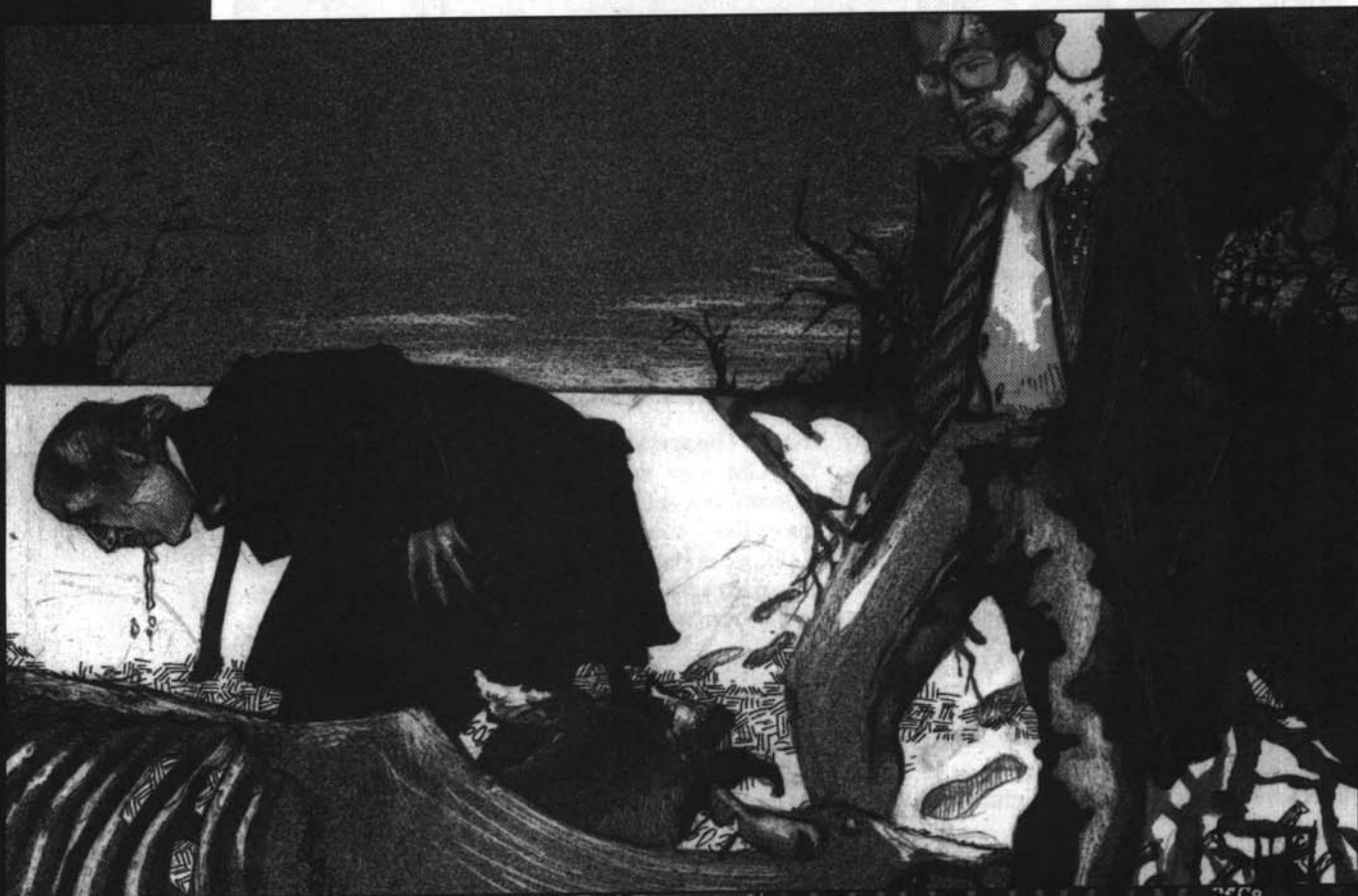
Psychic treatment is resolved as a long-term Psychology project whose goal is to rid the patient of detrimental psychological traits. At the GM's discretion, any trait in the character's Psyche Profile may be the reduced or eliminated through proper treatment. The number of Breakthroughs required for success is equal to the patient's Willpower attribute, as stronger minds are both harder to break and to repair. If the project is completed successfully, the targeted trait is eliminated and no longer plagues the character. If the trait is one that has multiple stages, it is reduced to the next lower level (e.g., Acute Paranoia becomes simply Paranoia).

PULLING STRINGS

After several missions the Cell will find it's resources slowly dwindling, as consumables like ammo and medical supplies are used up and equipment taken into the field is lost or damaged. The Cell may also decide at some point to expand their operations, build new facilities and recruit more staff. They may even decide to create a child Cell to assist their work. To accomplish all this, operatives may elect to spend their Downtime arranging to have new equipment and supplies discreetly shipped to the Cell or have new facilities built and the work orders lost.

A character that spends his Downtime pulling strings may spend a number of Resource Points equal to his Influence attribute on Cell resources. The same restrictions apply to the expenditure of RPs as during Cell creation (see Chapter 3: Ops Center for details concerning Resource Points).

EXTENDING INFLUENCE

During Downtime, while some operatives are training intensively, absorbed in research and experiments, or arranging for new equipment for the Cell, other characters are making secret arrangements and deniable alliances with shadowy figures in darkened halls and service corridors across the nation. Through pacts made and information shared, these men and women of Aegis are securing the power and authority to ensure that Aegis plans and operations go unchallenged by the petty and squabbling factions that fool themselves into believing they are the nation's government.

Any character may elect, during Downtime, to expand his or her power base throughout the country, and thereby increase the operative's Influence attribute. This endeavor is resolved as a long-term Influence project. The number of breakthroughs that must be achieved to increase the character's Influence by one is equal to the character's current Influence.
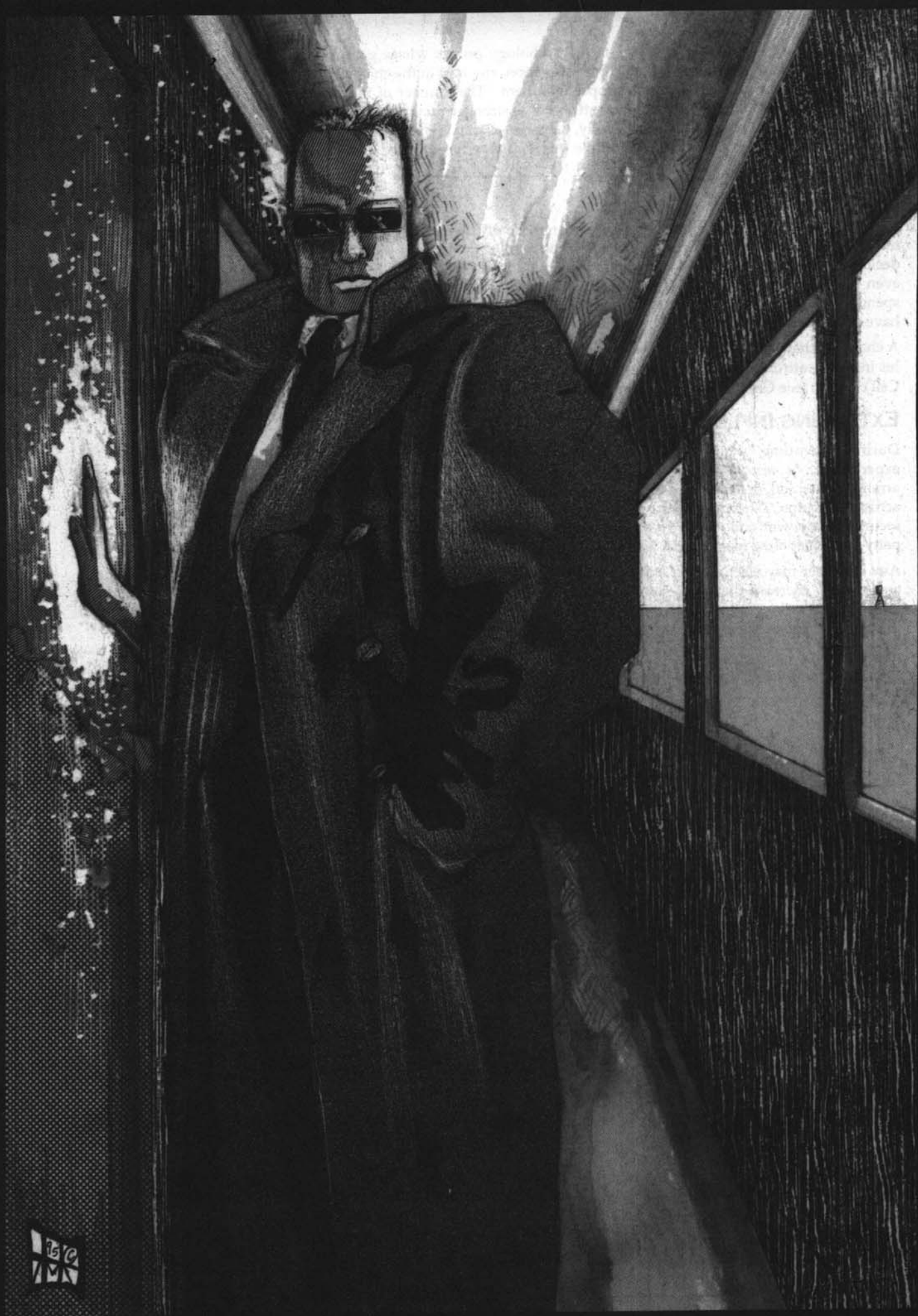
CHAPTER 5
PSYCHICS

"We'll see you soon," Vallen put away the cell phone.

"We will meet Johnson's team further down the line. They apparently ran into a few problems but everyone's all right."

I could tell Vallen was concerned about Jeanette.

"So what's the story between you and Jeanette? It's pretty obvious that there is something special between you two."

Vallen thought for a moment before replying. He clearly wasn't sure that he wanted to open up to someone who was pretty much a stranger. But really I left him little choice. I took his hand and looked deeply into his eyes.

"I see you and she dancing, you were both younger, the cross you wear, she gave that to you, but you're not religious. You love her deeply,"

I couldn't figure out why I was prying into Vallen's personal life. This was not the way I really wanted to learn more about him. It's so hard to resist though. Whether or not people are willing, I learn whatever I want about them. My voyeuristic tendencies disgust me . . . still I can't help myself. I like to pretend I'm trying to help people open up. Who am I trying to kid?

Vallen reached into his shirt and pulled out a well hidden chain with a cross dangling from the end. He just held it in his hand. My guess is that normally he trusts no one and lets no one close to him, but he was not angry with my intrusion into his psyche. I started to back off.

"I am sorry. I should not have done that Richard. Your life is private and I have no place there. I can't explain why, and don't take this the wrong way, but I feel closer to you than the others. I thought perhaps you might want a friend. Unfortunately I'm not so good at winning friends without reading them first. I think you and I see things on the same level."

"It's been a long time since I've had a friend. For the most part, I lost everyone I care about because of what we do, so I guess I really would like to have someone I could talk to. Thanks Tristan."

Vallen's voice was a little shaky. It is not the easiest thing for a man to admit that he could use a friend, much less admit it to another man.

Alise walked up carrying three train tickets.

"Dr. Boland is not very clever. He booked the ticket under his own name. Anyway, the train he's traveling on is about to leave, so if we're going to make it we gotta go now."

On the train I thought about what had happened with Alise before. She was acting as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. I wish she was as receptive to a confidante as Vallen. I am so curious how she was able to take down that guard the way that she did.

Vallen interrupted before I got the nerve to ask.

"Here's the situation. Johnson's team is still investigating down there, but they got some vital information for us. It turns out we not only have to worry about encountering The Black Book, but there may be both Saurians and an Atlantean involved.

"This is a bad situation. We don't want to mess with any of them without Kai and Johnson around, so

d local po...
school room and tol...
that they show...

for now we just want to locate Boland on the train. In the event that he is alone, we grab him. If he's traveling with anyone, we lay low until the others arrive. We've got a long train ride to deal with the situation, so let's not be hasty and start making mistakes."

Vallen was in complete control, a fact he seemed to notice himself. This further fed his confidence.

It was my job to locate Dr. Boland. I walked through the corridors of the train, clutching the lighter I found in his office. The lighter seemed to be the best connection to Boland. After about an hour of searching, I finally picked up on something. I rested my hand on the door of the compartment. There was a feeling of discomfort on the other side, and my hand holding the lighter began to tingle.

"This is it. This is where he is."

"Is there anyone in there with him?" Alise was getting anxious.

"I sense no one else with him. Let me go in, I've gotten to know him a little and think this will work best."

I could tell Alise was not fond of the idea. I would have liked to believe that she was concerned because she actually care for me, but my guess is that she just didn't want me to screw things up.

I opened the door and four heads rather than one turned to see the sudden intruder, me. There was Boland, sitting with three big, bulky guys, all wearing black suits, black shades, and earphone radios. Even while I was in the room with them, I still could only feel the presence of one person. That really freaked me out.

"I'm sorry, I must have the wrong compartment. Um, Linda Freeman isn't traveling in this box is she?"

I smiled stupidly, the only name I could think of was the name of my girlfriend in high school.

The three men just stared coldly at me. It was Boland who answered my question, in a pronounced German accent, just like my grandfather.

"No, no, you have the wrong place, but if I see her I'll let her know."

His voice trailed off as one of the Men in Black moved towards me and shut the door in my face.

I walked slowly down the hallway to where Alise and Vallen were waiting. As soon as they saw me, it was clear there was something wrong.

"So what happened, was Boland bigger than you imagined?" Alise was half-joking, but she knew things were not well.

"Okay, we have a problem. When I opened the door to Boland's cabin, I sensed he was the only person there. But . . . well . . . there were three big guys in suits sitting with him, and they were not happy to see me. Besides that, they were making Boland real uncomfortable."

Vallen took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes. It was really obvious that he was getting overwhelmed.

"So what do you think they were?"

"I don't know. Up till now I've never even seen an alien. I mean they looked just like us. Specifically, they looked a bit like me. Not facial features, but build and heritage. But they couldn't have been human."

"Is it possible that for some reason or another you just couldn't sense them, but they were human?" When Vallen asked, I knew he was just hoping that I had made some kind of mistake.

"I've been wrong about lots of things in my life, but one thing I can tell you for sure is whether something is human or not."

I was completely positive that we were in for a long, dangerous train ride.

"Okay, the best we can do is wait for Johnson's team, Kai will

probably be able to tell us what we're dealing with. Until then let's keep a close eye on Boland's compartment. None of them go anywhere without us knowing about it."

Vallen was tired, but he always seemed to have a solution. Now we just wait for the right moment.

PSI AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

Within the past few decades science has finally begun to confirm what philosophers have postulated for centuries -- that human consciousness possesses the capacity to directly sense, affect and interact with the physical world. Researchers have determined that the mind has the ability to sense and affect reality through an as yet unknown process. The phenomena surrounding this little understood faculty of the brain are referred to collectively as Psi, and its study is Parapsychology. This of course makes the learned men and women of science that study Psi Parapsychologists.

Unclassified private research organizations have only just recently begun to make real progress in understanding Psi and psychic abilities. Government-sponsored secret research into Psi phenomena, however, has produced some remarkable results. These projects, namely the CIA's MKULTRA and the former Soviet Project Rasputin, are now completely under Aegis control. Able to drawn on the prodigious results of these two covert programs in addition to the years of research conducted by Aegis operatives and their predecessors in The Watch, Aegis stands unrivaled in its knowledge of psychic phenomena.

PSYCHICS AND SUPERNATURAL FOCI

Current research has found that somewhere between 95 to 99 percent of humans exhibit some degree of psychic ability. In fact, most people use ESP on an almost daily basis. Such ESP usually manifests itself in the form of hunches, intuition, and other essential elements of human cognition that are usually taken for granted. While such individuals are technically psychics simply by virtue of being capable of ESP, that term is generally reserved for those individuals who exhibit greater control over Psi. Such control is most often gained through rigorous training in protocols that consistently improve the power and reliability of Psi ability. Infrequently, individuals manage to achieve a similar level of psychic control independently.

One phenomena had long puzzled parapsychologists. Certain individuals displayed normal psychic potential but seemed unable to control or reliably manifest that potential. In and of itself this fact was unexceptional, as researchers had clearly determined that some people show a greater aptitude for psychic abilities than others. The puzzling aspect of these subjects was the fact that they would occasionally demonstrate powerful and directed psychic ability that often far exceeded that of trained psychics.

These case studies remained a mystery until they were reviewed by the researchers from one of Aegis' occult research programs. The occultists postulate that the subjects exhibiting random psychic power were in fact Supernatural Foci. Foci are individuals who have a unusual link to the Psychic Seepage, the uncontrolled psychic energy that is radiated from each human and that is responsible for so-called "supernatural" phenomena. A Focus' link is thought to be genetic in nature, but this has yet to be proven.

Because Foci simply act as a catalyst for Seepage phenomena, they have no conscious control over its manifestation. They are essentially supernatural lightning rods. Some control can be attained through occult or religious ritual. Because the supernatural is actually an aspect of Psi (not the other way around, as was so long supposed), many of the effects of those rituals closely parallel psychic abilities. However, due to the inherent differences between Psychic Disciplines and Seepage energy, the results are sometimes drastically different. The various aspects of Psychic Seepage and the supernatural world are covered in depth in Chapter 6: Supernatural.

VOIDS AND PSINKS

A great deal of variation exists in the level of Psi ability and power demonstrated by individuals, ranging from the occasional hunch or precognitive dream, to lighting fires and reading minds. Nonetheless, some psychic faculty is measurable in almost all humans. A small percentage of the population, currently believed to be no more than 5%, exhibits absolutely no psychic ability whatsoever. This small group of people are called Psychic Voids (Voids). Even more puzzling, some of these Voids not only possess no psychic ability themselves, but actually reduce the abilities of psychics near them. These wondrous individuals are referred to as Psychic Sinks (Psinks).

Both Voids and Psinks are difficult to read or affect with psychic abilities. When any psychic attempts to target a Void or Psink with either the Telepathy or Bio PK disciplines, the rating of the associated Rhine test is reduced by one. To illustrate, a Lesser Telepath who wishes to read the mind of a Void must succeed at a R1 Rhine test rather than the usual R2. Any attempts to view the aura of a Void or Psink by means of either Empathy or Read Aura will automatically fail, as neither Voids nor Psinks have any aura whatsoever.

Psychic Seepage is an energy that is controlled not by an individual or set of defined rules, but by the collective subconscious of the human race. In essence, Psychic Seepage is the psychic ability of the human race as a whole. It most often manifests itself by giving form to the hopes and fears of the race.

In addition, the presence of a Psink will drain psychic energy from anyone attempting to make use of those abilities. The radius of a Psink's power is equal to his Willpower Attribute in meters, though concentration can extend it to a degree. To increase the area affected by the psychic drain, the Psink must make a Willpower test against the number by which she wishes to multiply the radius. The increased area of effect lasts as long as the Psink continues to concentrate.

Any psychic who attempts to use a Psychic Discipline or Basic ESP ability while either the psychic or the psychic's target is within the effect radius of a Psink immediately loses one Psi Point or Strong ESP point from the ability being used. If the psychic does not have a point to spend, the psychic ability fails automatically. The Psi or Strong ESP point is lost as soon as the psychic makes the attempt to use her ability known. A psychic may not abort the attempt in an effort to avoid losing the point. In addition, if a psychic is within the sphere of influence of more than one Psink the effects are cumulative, and the psychic will lose one Psi or Strong ESP point per Psink when using psychic abilities.

Aegis operative Joachim Sable, an MKULTRA-trained assassin and psychic (Greater Bio PK with 4 Psi Points), is chased into a dark alley by a pair of Black Book agents. Unknown to Joachim, the agents are a Void and a Psink (very bad news for a psychic). Joachim runs into a dead end and turns to face his attackers. As the two agents approach Joachim spends a Psi Point to attempt to give one of the agents a heart attack. Choosing randomly, Joachim attacks the Void. Since the Void is within the effect radius of his Psink partner, another Psi Point is drained out of Joachim, leaving him with two. Joachim still has Psi Points left in Bio PK, so he may still attempt the heart attack. Unfortunately, the Void is harder to effect with Bio PK, and the Rhine test Joachim must make is reduced from R3 to R2.

Knowing only that he has been forced to spend two, instead of one Psi Point, Joachim assumes his target is a Psink. Joachim feels he has no choice but to spend another Psi Point to ensure success and the Void clutches his chest and drops to his knees. Joachim has just one Psi Point left. The other Black Book agent then rushes Joachim, who attempts to use his last Psi Point to attempt to heart attack his assailant. Joachim then realizes that his current opponent, not the agent he just dropped, is actually the Psink. The Psink's drain forces him to expend a Psi Point that he does not have. Without the Psi Point to spend, Joachim's attempt automatically fails and the Black Book agent slams him into the brick wall . . . hard.

PSI POINTS AND PSYCHIC CLASSIFICATION

All psychics have a classification of Lesser or Greater which rates the extent of their abilities in each discipline that they possess. A psychic who possesses multiple disciples need not be the same classification in each. It is possible to be a Greater Telepath and a Lesser Pyrokinetic, for example. Both Lesser and Greater psychics are allotted four (4) Psi Points in each discipline they possess. Their classification in the particular discipline determines what they can do with those four points. Most often, spending a Psi Point will allow the psychic to increase the power of her abilities temporarily, or

ensure success in their use. Some particularly difficult or draining disciplines may require a Psi Point to be spent with every use. Spent Psi Points are regained on the seventh day after their use.

RHINE TESTS

In most cases, a player will need to make a Rhine Test for their characters to use psychic abilities successfully. The GM shuffles the Zener cards and the player picks one of the five symbols shown on the cards (star, wave, square, circle, cross). The GM then draws a number of cards specified by the ability being used (for Lesser Psychic Disciplines, usually two cards are drawn). If the card that the player picked is among the cards drawn, the player's character has managed to successfully use her psychic abilities. A Rhine test is referred to in the text by a capital "R" followed by the number of Zener cards that may be drawn. For example, a Rhine Test in which the player may draw two cards is abbreviated R2.

FORCE OF WILL

Through intense concentration and mental effort, some psychics are able to extend their abilities beyond that of other psychics of their class. Characters who spend two rounds (10 seconds) in intense concentration may make a Willpower test (Df5) to temporarily gain one Psi Point which must be spent immediately. The extreme mental and physical strain of this effort inflicts a Tw1 wound on the psychic, whether the test was successful or not.

DETECTING THE USE OF PSI

Anyone except Voids and Psinks who is the target of the Psychic Disciplines Telepathy, Empathy, Bio PK, Clairvoyance, or the basic ESP ability Read Aura may make a Perception test (regular perception) against the Willpower Attribute of the psychic to detect the attempt. If the target succeeds, he notices the use of Psi as a feeling of being watched. The exact nature of the Psi discipline being used is not determined, nor is any information regarding the source, but the target may act as he deem appropriate. If the target is psychic, this is likely to entail shielding his thoughts as described below.

SHIELDING YOUR THOUGHTS

A psychic who is conscious of psychic abilities being used against her (in particular Empathy, Telepathy or Bio PK) may resist the attacking psychic by making a Willpower test against the attacking psychic's Willpower. If the test is successful, the Rhine test for the attacking psychic is reduced by one. R3 becomes R2, automatic success becomes R4, etc.

MULTIPLE TARGETS

It is possible to affect two physical targets simultaneously with a single use of a Psychic Discipline. Most often this applies to psychokinetic abilities like Telekinesis, but some situations will arise in which a psychic may wish to use an ESP discipline on two targets, for example, to contact two people telepathically. In such cases, the psychic may spend one Psi Point for each extra target involved (i.e., one Psi Point to use TK to lift two objects at once, or three Psi Points to simultaneously read the aura of four attackers). Using more than one Psychic Discipline concurrently does not require any additional Psi Point expenditure or reduce the effectiveness of either discipline. For example, using Pyrokinesis to ignite a target that is being viewed through Clairvoyance is perfectly acceptable.

PROJECT MKULTRA AND PROJECT RASPUTIN

The two most successful (not coincidentally, the two best funded) projects in the recent history of parapsychology were both born of the cold war rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Pursuing any avenue of investigation that could lead to a potential weapon or intelligence-gathering technique to use against the West, the Soviet government began an program of research into the potential of human psychic ability. The Soviet's Project was given the code name Rasputin and was lead by a brilliant young physicist, Doctor Tatyana Markova. Dr. Markova pioneered Rasputin parapsychology research into the interaction of psychic abilities with living systems. Her work led to the development of psychotrons, and the development of a strong Bio PK discipline.

The Soviets focused Rasputin toward the development of Psi as a tool for untraceable assassination. The strong Bio PK that Soviet Psychics were able to develop, coupled with the extra power given them through the use of psychotrons, helped to bring that goal to fruition. The crowning glory of the Rasputin project was the construction and deployment of the orbital psychotron satellite Alexis. Soon after the satellite was successfully launched, Dr. Markova disappeared along with several key design notes on the design of Alexis. The Soviets blamed the CIA, but to date no record or other indication has been found to implicate the CIA in Markova's disappearances. Robbed of its star researcher, Project Rasputin maintained steady but unremarkable progress until its dissolution in the early 90's when many of its researchers were brought into Aegis.

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Sample Zener cards may be found on page 223. Simply photocopy them and cut them into individual cards.

The American counterpart to Rasputin was a CIA project by the name MKULTRA. It was intended to match and if possible surpass Soviet advances in mind control and parapsychology. Project MKULTRA followed a completely different path than that of Project Rasputin. MKULTRA took a multidisciplinary view of the field, and pursued any avenue of study that might produce useful results toward the rather broad goals of behavior modification and psychic applications. This contrasted rather sharply with Project Rasputin's comparatively focused work that concentrated largely on psychokinetic effects and the means of strengthening them (namely, psychotrons).

MKULTRA's focus, or perhaps its lack of focus, allowed it to develop an understanding of a wide spectrum of Psi phenomena, as well as mark some impressive breakthroughs in mind control techniques. Conversely, the relatively narrow focus of the Soviet Rasputin project and the brilliance of its star researchers resulted in the development of a deeper understanding of the fundamental processes behind Psi and the subtle energies that empower it.

SIDE EFFECT TABLE

2-4 The character metabolizes the drugs without any problems and suffers no ill side effects.

5 The psychic is in danger of becoming addicted the drug, he must succeed at Df1D Willpower test or develop a Habit trait of one dose of Psi Drug per day.

6 This time the Psi Drugs seem to be a little too psychoactive. The psychic suffers a vivid and terrifying hallucination, stunning her for 1D rounds. The character will suffer lasting Flashbacks of the vision if she fails a Df1D Willpower test (triggering condition: Psi Point expenditure).

7 The character keeps hearing voices in other people's heads. If the psychic fails a Df1D Willpower test, the echoes last even after the drug wears off and he develops the Schizophrenia trait.

8 The high dosage has started to desensitize the character's system and she is developing a tolerance to the effects of the drug. The effects of the Psi Drug is hereafter reduced by one for both purposes of the Psi Point benefit gained, and for determining the side effects, if any (one dose no longer has any effect, two doses only confers one Psi Point, etc.). Further tolerance results are cumulative. The psychic's tolerance will be reduced by one if she abstains from Psi-Drugs for a full month.

9 The extremely high levels of drugs currently coursing through the character's system put him in danger of sustaining permanent and debilitating brain damage. The psychic must succeed at a Df1D Willpower test or suffer Psychic Burnout and become a Void (as the character trait).

10+ The psychic has overdosed on the Psi Drug, perhaps fatally. The character immediately takes Fw(dose) damage (i.e. if the character has 4 doses in her system, she takes a Fw4 wound).

MKULTRA PSI DRUGS

One of the successes of the CIA's MKULTRA research program was a method of overcoming the operational limitations of psychic field agents. The CIA found that during covert operations, psychic agents tended to deplete their psychic faculties rather quickly. Since Psi Points do not recuperate fully for a week, a psychic's utility during protracted operations was severely limited.

To combat this difficulty, MKULTRA scientists were able to develop a series of drugs that temporarily boosted psychic agents' abilities, enabling them to maintain their accuracy and power much longer than they would normally be capable. Unfortunately, the drugs were not without some degree of "unpleasant" side effects. The researchers were able to determine that if an agent's daily intake was kept low, preferably no more than a couple of doses per day, the risk of permanent damage was minimal.

The MKULTRA Psi Drugs are administered as pills, each containing a single dose. Each dose takes four rounds (approximately twenty seconds) to take effect, giving the psychic one additional Psi Point. A maximum of four Psi Points can be gained at one time. Once the drug has reached its maximum effect, it immediately begins to wear off. The drug's effects dissipate fully after one minute (12 rounds) for each dose taken, at which point any unused Psi Points gained from the drug are lost.

For example, if a psychic takes four pills (the maximum useful dosage), the drug will take 16 rounds (one minute and twenty seconds) to take full effect. At that point, the psychic will have gained four extra Psi Points. The psychic then has four minutes to use the extra Psi Points before the drug wears off.

Psi Points gained through the use of these drugs can be considered generic, and may be used by the psychic for any discipline he is capable of, regardless of classification. These points cannot affect or enhance the use of a psychotron, nor will they interfere with a psychotron's functioning. Psi Points gained through the drugs cannot be used to charge a psychotron, as the drugs will wear off long before the requisite six hours of concentration needed to charge a psychotron are completed.

At the point that the Psi Drugs take their full effect (after dose x 4 rounds), the player must determine if the character will suffer any potentially harmful side effects. The player rolls 1D and adds the total number of Psi Drug doses the character has taken in the last 6 hours. The player then references the result on the Side Effect Table. Any side effects are applied to the character immediately.

PSYCHOTRONS

Psychotrons are psychic batteries capable of being charged with a specific Psychic Discipline. A full psychotron is charged with four Psi Points that a skilled user may use, whether he or she is psychic or not. Voids may not use a psychotron, neither may Psinks. In addition, every full hour that a Psink spends in proximity to a charged psychotron will drain one point of charge from the device.

In order to use a psychotron effectively, a Psychotron skill test must be made versus the number of Psi Points currently charged in the psychotron. Success allows the user to spend one Psi Point; failure means one Psi Point is drained from the psychotron with no effect. Only one Psi Point may be spent from the psychotron per turn. If the user does not possess the discipline that he is using from the psychotron, any use at all requires expenditure of a Psi Point, even if the use would not cost a psychic with that discipline a point.

Gregor, a Lesser Empath, uses a psychotron charged with Greater Telekinesis to move a Size 1 object. Because he does not possess the Greater Telekinesis discipline, he must spend one of the device's Psi Points, even though an actual Greater Telekinetic would not have had to spend the point to perform the feat.

To charge a psychotron, a psychic must spend six hours per day for two consecutive days concentrating on charging the psychotron with one of her disciplines. At the end of the session on the second day, the psychic spends one Psi Point, which is gained by the psychotron. To fill a psychotron to its maximum four Psi Point charge, the psychic must repeat this process four times. Thus, it takes eight days to fully charge a psychotron. The points charged in the device may only be used for that particular discipline and classification, and a psychotron may only be charged with a single discipline at a time. No other discipline may be charged into a psychotron until the original charge is depleted. A psychotron can be charged with Psi Points of the same discipline from psychics of different classifications, but such a case the points may only be spent for Lesser psychic effects.

THE SATELLITE ALEXIS

The satellite Alexis is the largest psychotron constructed to date. It has the unique ability to affect all individuals within a specified radius of a targeted point on, above or beneath the surface of the Earth. The satellite is actually two separate psychotrons, charged with Telepathy and Bio PK. Alexis is charged, maintained and

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used by psychic cosmonauts stationed on the Mir space station. At any given time there are usually two such cosmonauts stationed on the Mir. The cosmonauts have a Willpower Attribute of 4 and are experts in the use of psychotrons (skill level 5) and either Greater Telepathy or Greater Bio PK.

Once give orders for activation, the Mir cosmonauts begin preparing both themselves and the satellite, which takes 1D hours. Once initialization procedures are completed, the satellite and cosmonauts remain ready for eight hours, if no target is designated within that period the window of opportunity is lost and the satellite and crew must be re-prepped. Once a target has been assigned and the desired effect specified, the psychics activate the satellite and hit everyone within the radius of effect with the psychic assault. The desired information to be gather or effect to be attained must be specified within the mission parameters, along with the desired effect radius and ground zero. The radius of effect may range from ten meters to one kilometer.

Use Telepathy to determine if the President is in the White House. Ground Zero is the White House, effect radius is 100 meters. (accomplished by telepathic mind probe: Are you the President of the United States? if there is a yes answer, the cosmonauts reply in the affirmative).

Use Bio PK to put everyone on a particular military base in a trance for fifteen minutes beginning at exactly 1:00pm local time. Ground Zero is designated by longitude and latitude of the center of the base, effect radius is specified at one kilometer.

IMPROVING OR DEVELOPING PSYCHIC ABILITIES THROUGH PARAPSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

Any human with psychic potential (namely everyone but Voids, Psinks, and Supernatural Foci) may attempt to develop Psychic Disciplines. Those individuals who have achieved Lesser classification in a discipline may also work to increase their proficiency in the discipline to Greater classification. Both developing new disciplines and improving existing abilities are achieved through Parapsychology research during downtime.

In eveloping a new Psychic Discipline, the parapsychologist conducting the research need not be the character trying to develop her psychic potential. In fact this is usually not the case, because if the parapsychologist is also the program's subject, the Df of the research tests are increased by one. A successful Parapsychology research project requires a number of breakthroughs equal to the Willpower of the test subject. Once the required breakthroughs have been achieved the character's player rolls 1D. If the result is equal to or less than the character's Willpower, the project was a complete success and the character gains Lesser classification in the desired Psychic Discipline. If the result is greater than the character's Willpower, the experiment, while successful, did not manage to bring out the character's latent psychic potential. This does not prevent further experiments from being successful, however.

Extensive research has shown that it is difficult to train someone to be a proficient psychic. Once an individual has proven to be competent in a Psychic Discipline (by achieving Lesser classification), however, it is actually much easier for him to improve through training. A Parapsychology research project to increase a subject's classification from Lesser to Greater in a particular discipline is conducted similarly to a project intended to establish a Lesser classification in a new discipline. Once the required number of breakthroughs are achieved, however, no additional die roll is required. The psychic automatically achieves Greater classification.

Parapsychology research projects may also be undertaken to devise unknown Psychic Disciplines or for any other desired result. The number of breakthroughs required and any other considerations are, as always, up to the GM's discretion.

THE DISCIPLINES

Extensive research and experimentation conducted both by parapsychological research organizations such as Project's MKULTRA and Rasputin and like-minded individual researchers has resulted in the development of several Psychic Disciplines. The disciplines represent a number of specific protocols and methods intended to increase both the effect and reliability of psychic abilities. It is extremely rare that effects produced by untrained individuals will approach the magnitude of those routine by demonstrated by those who weild the various established Psychic Disciplines.

Each discipline is a specific application of either psychokinesis or extrasensory perception designed to produce particular effects or gather a specific type of information. Psychokinetic (PK) effects are much harder to produce reliably. Because of the difficulty in developing protocols that consistently reproduce the desired effect, the number of psychokinetic disciplines is significantly lower than those utilizing ESP. To date only three such disciplines have been established: Telekinesis, Pyrokinesis and Bio PK.

Extrasensory perception (ESP) is by far the more common subject of parapsychological research, owing largely to the relative ease that ESP effects are produced compared to PK effects. In fact, several minor ESP effects are produced by individuals on a daily basis, usually without realizing they are using Psi. Specifically, Hunches, Sixth Sense, Read Aura and Second Sight have been identified as minor Psi effects that nearly all of humanity seem to be capable of. These effects are often called Basic ESP abilities to differentiate them from the advanced ESP disciplines of Empathy, Telepathy, Psychometry, Clairvoyance and Precognition. Further information on Basic ESP effects may be found in Chapter 4: Tradecraft

BIO PK

Bio PK, short for Biological Psychokinesis, is an AP application of DMILS, Direct Mental Interaction with Living Systems. Psychics capable of Bio PK are able to make significant changes in the operation of the human body. Bio PK is capable of interacting both the psychic's body or the bodies of others, though only Greater psychics are capable of the latter. The effects possible with this discipline range from placing the target's mind in a trance-like state to inducing cardiac arrest. The effects of Bio PK when used on the psychic himself or on another target are identical.

TRANCE: Placing a target in a trace state requires two rounds of concentration. If successful, the subject immediately slips into the trance. Subjects in a trance are oblivious to their surroundings, although they may still use psychic abilities. While in a trance, the subject may be hypnotized as if she were a willing participant (although of course a skilled hypnotist is still required). The psychic who initiated the trance may break it at any time, or the psychic may set the trance to last a specific period of time. In either case, the subject may make a Willpower test every thirty minutes to break out of the trance (Df starts at 5 and drops by one for each half hour). If the entranced subject takes any amount of damage she will snap out of trance immediately. When used on others, after coming out of the trance, the subject will not realize he or she was ever in a trance.

SLOW METABOLISM: Once a subject is placed in a trance, the psychic may attempt to slow the subjects heart rate and breathing to almost nil. While in this state the subject's body functions ten times slower than normal. The subject can hold his breath ten times as long, go ten times as long without water or food, even the subject's wound stabilization period will last ten times longer. In fact, to the casual observer the subject will appear to be dead (a Medical or First Aid Df4 test will detect life signs). This effect will only last as long as the trance does.

STABILIZE WOUNDS: Bio PK enable the psychic to give a subject's system a psychic "boost", helping it to deal with trauma damage. If used successfully this way, Bio PK allows a subject with lethal wounds to automatically succeed at his or her next stabilization test.

INDUCE ADRENALINE SURGE: The psychic using Bio PK can gain conscious control over otherwise automatic systems in the subject's body, in this case the adrenaline and endorphin glands. When used successfully the psychic overrides the body's normal functioning to flood the subject's system with noradrenaline, producing effects identical to those of the Adrenaline Surge trait.

INDUCE CARDIAC ARREST: Naturally, Bio PK is capable of affecting the target's system in ways that are not nearly so beneficial. The psychic can use Bio PK to disrupt the normal working of the target's heart, causing the sudden onset of cardiac arrest. To do so, the psychic must concentrate for two rounds on the target and succeed at a Willpower test against the target's Willpower (in addition to any

Anomalous Cognition (AC)

A form of information transfer in which all known sensorial stimuli are absent. In this process, an individual is able to gain access to information from events outside the range of his or her normal senses. The exact mechanism by which this information is gathered is not currently understood. Several synonyms for this phenomenon are in use: Remote Viewing (RV), Clairvoyance, and ESP.

Anomalous Perturbation (AP)

A form of interaction with matter in which all known physical mechanisms are absent. In other words, some individuals are able to influence matter by an as yet unknown process. This phenomenon is also known Psychokinesis (PK).

Anomalous Mental Phenomena (AMP)

A general term that includes AC and AP. This is also known as Psi.

requisite Rhine test and Psi Point expenditure). If successful, the target immediately takes a Sp2 wound.

LESSER: Psychics adept at Lesser Bio PK can effect only themselves with the discipline. The requirements are Trance (R2), Slow Metabolism (R2), Stabilize Wounds (R2), Induce Adrenaline Surge (R2, plus one Psi Point if successful), Induce Cardiac Arrest (R2, plus one Psi Point if successful). For any of the effects the psychic may spend one Psi Point for automatic success.

GREATER: Those psychics who have achieved Greater classification in Bio PK have mastered the ability to affect others with the discipline, as well has themselves. The requirements for a psychic to use Bio PK to affect himself is the same as described above for Lesser psychics, though any Rhine test is R3 rather than R2. The requirements for affecting others with Bio PK follows: Trance (R3), Slow Metabolism (R3), Stabilize Wounds (R3 and one Psi Point, whether successful or not), Induce Adrenaline Surge (R3 and one Psi Point per attempt), Induce Cardiac Arrest (R3 and one Psi Point, regardless of success). As with Lesser Bio PK, a Psi Point may be spent to assure the success of any Rhine test.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Also known as Remote Viewing, clairvoyance allows a psychic to "see" areas that she would be unable to experience with normal sensory perception. There are two situations in which a Clairvoyant may use his powers.

Clairvoyance will let the psychic see beyond a barrier that is obstructing his view. This lets the Clairvoyant see past a closed door or wall into the room beyond, or into a closed box or car trunk. The obstacle that is blocking the psychics normal sight must be in view.

A psychic may also use Clairvoyance to see a remote location as long as he has a psychic link to location. A Clairvoyant holding a piece of cloth that was torn off a jacket can use Clairvoyance to see where the rest of the jacket is (and more importantly, the person wearing the jacket). The link must be part of a physical object at the site the Clairvoyant is trying to see. The link may also be an item of great sentimental value to the person the Clairvoyant is trying to sense. A Clairvoyant would not be able to sense a person just by touching one of her pens from her office, but if the pen in question were of particular value to the individual, perhaps a family heirloom or a "lucky" pen, the object can act as a psychic link.

In either case, when a Clairvoyant is viewing a location, normal obstructions to sight (such as smoke or darkness) are ignored. Objects hidden from view in the location may also be sensed without difficulty. If the psychic is sensing a room in which a jade statue is hidden behind a secret panel, and asks "Is the jade statue in the room?", the answer would be "yes". Of course, no mention of its hidden nature would be made unless the psychic asked specifically.

Clairvoyance will also allow a psychic to sense things that would otherwise be completely undetectable to normal senses. The presence of spirits or other supernatural manifestations are easily detected by a Clairvoyant, providing he asks the correct questions, of course.

As with other psychic powers, an additional Psi Point must be spent for any attempt to use Clairvoyance (Lesser or Greater) to sense the same location more than once in 24 hours.

LESSER: The psychic may ask three "yes or no" questions about the location he is sensing (R2). Spending one Psi Point will ensure success.

GREATER: A Greater Clairvoyant may use Lesser Clairvoyance at will with automatic success, but may only ask one question. If the Clairvoyant wishes, she may make a (R3) test and ask three questions if successful at no Psi Point cost. The psychic may also spend one Psi Point to use Greater Clairvoyance (R3) and ask six "yes or no" questions about a location if successful or use Lesser Clairvoyance (3 questions) with automatic success.

EMPATHY

The Psychic Discipline of Empathy is an extension of the Basic ESP ability Read Aura. Empaths are able to read the psychic aura that surrounds all human beings except Voids and Psinks. This aura is believed by parapsychologists to be evidence of Psychic Seepage. A person's aura reflects his state of mind and personality. This enables a psychic to "read" someone's aura and get an idea of what kind of person he is.

An aura reflects the mind and personality of a person, but not his thoughts. Therefore a psychic may determine the kind of behavior someone is predisposed to, but can not gain any information about specific actions he may have taken. For example, by reading someone's aura during a conversation, a psychic would be able to tell if the person was a liar, but not specifically whether he or she was lying

at the moment. Similarly, if faced with a number of murder suspects, the Empath could easily tell if any were killers, that is, if any were violent and capable of murder. But the Empath would be unable to tell if any of the suspects were the perpetrators of a particular crime.

In order for a character to successfully use Empathy to read someone's aura, she must be able to detect the target with one or more of her "mundane" senses of sight, sound, etc. The target does not need to be visible as long as his presence can be noticed somehow. If the player succeeds at the requisite Rhine test, she may ask a number (determined by the character's Empathy classification) of "yes or no" questions about the type of person the target is.

Continuously reading someone to gain more information is difficult. If a psychic wishes to use Empathy (either Lesser or Greater) or the Basic ESP ability Read Aura to "read" someone more than once in a 24 hour period, she must spend an extra Psi Point with each attempt.

LESSER: A Lesser Empath may spend one Psi Point for automatic success using the Basic ESP Read Aura ability. The psychic may also spend one Psi Point to use Lesser Empathy (R2). If successful, the player may ask three Read Aura "yes or no" questions about someone.

GREATER: The Psychic may perform the Read Aura at will with automatic success. The psychic may also spend one Psi Point to use Lesser Empathy with automatic success, or to use Greater Empathy (R3). If successful, the player may ask six Read Aura questions about the targeted individual.

PRECOGNITION

Precognition is the Psychic Discipline that enables a psychic to obtain information about future events, where the information could not be inferred through normal means. Many people report having dreams or waking visions that appear to be premonitions of future events. A psychic possessing the Precognition discipline can foretell the future much more reliably and accurately.

When using Precognition, the psychic must state beforehand the subject he is trying to divine information about. If successful, all the psychic's questions must pertain directly to the subject. If unsuccessful, no information whatsoever is gained. In either case, an additional Psi Point must be spent for any attempt to use Precognition or Second Sight to divine information on the same subject more than once in the same week.

Information gained through Precognition foretells events that will happen in the future. These are not "shades of things that might be," but definite visions of future events. To elucidate, a player asks "Will I be attacked if we enter the warehouse?" and the GM answers "No". The psychic must not be attacked if he enters the warehouse, regardless of anything that happens between the time of the

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premonition and the psychic's entrance into the building. However, the GM is free to interpret the information however she wishes. For example, the GM could have the rest of the party attacked, but the psychic left alone for some reason, since the psychic did not ask if the group would be attacked. Likewise, a crate falling on the psychic or some other accident can hardly be considered an attack, providing it was not caused intentionally.

Whenever this discipline is used, the GM must walk a fine line between giving the character the proper information, and keeping the coming storyline suspenseful. If the characters know everything beforehand, a game about conspiracies and hidden truths loses its flavor. This dilemma is most pronounced if a player asks (and at some point, they almost certainly will) "Will I survive the mission?" The GM must answer "yes or no", but the GM should discourage such questions by being creative with the interpretation of the answer. The easiest way to discourage such questions is to answer, "no, the character will not survive the mission", and then proceed to kill the character off at some point, preferably in an extremely gruesome way. Soon players with precognitive characters will take the hint and avoid such direct queries into their own mortality. On the other hand, the GM may wish to be much more subtle, and answer, "yes, the character will definitely live through the end of the mission". The GM is then free to maim or injury the character horribly, or to have him or her abducted by aliens or The Black Book, or similarly taken out of commission for a period of time, but not killed. Then again, the GM could not harm the character in any way, but let the player sweat out the rest of the mission contemplating the possibilities.

LESSER: One Psi Point may be spent for automatic success at using the Basic ESP ability Second Sight (this does not count toward the one use per mission limitation). Also, the psychic may spend one Psi Point to use Lesser Precognition (R2) and ask the GM three Second Sight questions on the particular subject.

GREATER: The psychic may use Second Sight at will with automatic success, although an additional Psi Point must still be spent for further divination on a particular subject in the same week. The psychic may spend one Psi Point to use Lesser Precognition with automatic success, or use Greater Precognition (R3) and ask six Second Sight questions on the same subject.

PSYCHOMETRY

The Psychic Discipline of Psychometry is a form of extrasensory perception referred to by some as Object Reading or Postcognition. Psychometry is the a psychic method of gathering information about the history of an object or location. A psychic generally must be in physical contact with the object or location (or target) being "read" to perform the discipline. Information so gathered will pertain only

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> **Some valid Psychometry questions:** Was Dr. Belamy killed in this room? Were experiments on aliens conducted here? Did this tape hold a conversation between Nixon and Elvis? Was this rifle used to kill the President? Was this Hitler's brain? Did this jacket belong to Laura Palmer?

> **Some invalid Psychometry questions:** Is the man who lived here still alive? (the question is not about the history of the place) Did the owner of this car kill Jimmy Hoffa? (unless he killed Hoffa in the car) Are there more devices like this? (the question is not about the object, but about other objects)

to events in the past that directly involved the target. Psychometry is unable to furnish information about the previous owner or occupant of an item or location, or about events that occurred in an item's presence, but not directly involving it. For example, using Psychometry to read a pen that was found at a murder site will not reveal any information about the crime, unless the pen itself was used as the murder weapon.

As with most other ESP disciplines, a Psi Point must be spent if a psychic wishes to use either Lesser or Greater Psychometry to divine information about the same object or location within 24 hours of a previous attempt.

LESSER: A Lesser Psychic may spend one Psi Point to ask one "yes or no" question about a target's history (automatic success), or to ask three such questions (R2).

GREATER: May use Lesser Psychometry at will without spending a Psi Point, although additional attempts within 24 hours with the same target will still require a Psi Point. A Greater psychic may spend one Psi Point to use Greater Psychometry (R3) and ask six questions about the target's history if successful.

PYROKINESIS

Pyrokinesis is certainly the most flamboyant of the psychokinetic disciplines. Pyrokinetic psychics are able to heat objects very rapidly, often causing them to ignite if they are inflammable. As with Telekinesis and Bio-PK, Pyrokinetic psychics must concentrate on a target object that is clearly visible. But again, objects "seen" with Clairvoyance may be targeted by Pyrokinesis, an impressive feat that of course requires the Pyrokinetic to be Clairvoyant as well.

LESSER: Lesser Pyrokinetics may ignite any easily inflammable object or substance in view (R2). Good targets include dry wood or paper, fuse cord, candle wicks, and gasoline. Other, less flammable objects may just feel unusually warm to the touch, or singed at best. A rule of thumb is that if the target would lite easily by a normal match, Lesser Pyrokinesis can set it aflame. Lesser Pyrokinesis can also burn out most sensitive electronics, but the psychic must be able to see the circuit board itself. The psychic may spend one Psi Point for automatic success.

GREATER: Greater Pyrokinetics may use Lesser Pyrokinesis at will with automatic success. Or the psychic may use Greater Pyrokinesis (R3) to cause a usually non-flammable substance in view to superheat in just one round. Greater Pyrokinesis can boil water, ignite wet wood, burn flesh (Wn1) or heat metal until it glows red (which will also cause Wn1 burns on contact). The psychic may spend one Psi Point to guarantee success.

TELEKINESIS (TK)

Telekinesis is the classic example of mind over matter. A telekinetic psychic has the ability to move animate or inanimate objects by thought alone. Psychokinetic disciplines are draining, however, and Telekinesis is generally limited to moving small objects for short periods of time. Greater Telekinetics, though, are sometimes capable of awesome acts of mental power.

The distance that either Lesser or Greater TK may move an object in a single round may not exceed the psychic's willpower in meters. Objects cannot be moved fast enough to cause appreciable damage from the impact, although contact with the object itself may be dangerous (like a flaming torch or chunk of plutonium). The psychic must be able to see the target object he is trying to move, but objects "seen" through clairvoyance are eligible targets.

LESSER: Lesser Telekinesis (R2) will allow the psychic to move an object of Size 1 or smaller for one combat round (five seconds). The psychic may spend 1 Psi Point for automatic success.

GREATER: Greater Telekinetics may use Lesser Telekinesis at will with automatic success. Greater TKs may also move a larger object for one round (R3) by spending 1 Psi Point per size above one. For example an attempt to move an average (Size 3) human with Greater TK would cost the psychic two Psi Points.

TELEPATHY

The method of Anomalous Cognition that targets the thoughts and mental processes of another human mind is known commonly as Telepathy, and its practitioners as Telepaths. Psychics can use Telepathy to both project thoughts into and read thoughts from a target regardless of distance or line-of-sight. Unlike some other disciplines, the target of Telepathy does not have to be in contact or in the view of the psychic. The target does, however, have to be a willing participant if he is out of the psychic's line of sight.

Although thoughts can be communicated between minds via Telepathy, the communications are generally rather limited. Further, contrary to certain claims, there is no possibility of projected thoughts being mistaken by the target as his own.

If the target is also a Telepath, she has additional option. An attempt to target someone telepathically constitutes a sort of de facto willingness to establish telepathic contact, therefore the target Telepath may use that link to make her own telepathic "attack" on the psychic that targeted her. If the Telepath who originated the contact then notices the counter-telepathy attempt and elects to shield his thoughts, his original telepathic attempt is considered aborted and fails automatically. Any Psi Points spent are still lost.

LESSER: The psychic may project images (R2) into someone's mind, this takes a some (2 rounds) concentration. The player may describe (on a slip of paper) an image in four words using only nouns and adjectives. It is also possible to read images from a subject's mind (R2) if the telepath can see the subject. When successful, the GM writes down four words (again only nouns and adjectives) that describe the images in the target's mind. The psychic will only read the thoughts that are foremost in the subject's mind. Thus, Telepathy is most useful when reading thoughts as the subject is guided to think of the desired information by a leading question. Spend one Psi Point for automatic success in either projecting or reading thoughts.

Alex, a Lesser Telepath, is confronting Martin, a UFOlogist who has photographed an Aegis Cell carrying an alien corpse, in the hope of discovering where the film is hidden. Alex approaches the UFOlogist as he is walking down the street and reads his thoughts. The image Alex receives is "Burger, Large Fries, Coke". No good, the guy is just thinking about lunch. Further probing is necessary. Alex walks up to the UFOlogist and asks, out of the blue, "Where is the film of the alien, Martin?" and immediately reads Martin's thoughts. Startled, Martin stammers, "I don't know what you are talking about" and hurries away. The image Alex read from Martin's mind says otherwise, "Brown Shoebox, Bedroom Closet". Alex smiles and heads for Martin's apartment.

GREATER: The psychic may use Lesser Telepathy at will with automatic success. The psychic may also use Greater Telepathy (R3) to send a message of eight words or less to someone. Unlike Lesser Telepathy, the player is not restricted in his use of words and may send entire sentences, providing they are no longer than eight words. Spending one Psi Point assures success. If the subject is in sight, the psychic may also spend one Psi Point to probe his mind for specific information (R3). The psychic may ask three "yes or no" questions about the subject's thoughts. The information gained will only reflect what the subject knows or believes to be true. If the psychic asks "Is he lying to me about the film?", the answer will be "no" when the target believes what he told the psychic about the film to be true. Of course, the target could be wrong.

CHAPTER 6
SUPERNATURAL

While Johnson and I were going over what I saw on the video, we pulled into a cemetery. "Um, Jeanette? Have you completely lost it?" Johnson asked, trying to keep his voice calm. "I mean, this is a nice place to sight see, but we definitely don't have time for this right now!" Jeanette sighed and turned to us.

"Look Johnson, you said you wouldn't doubt me again, so try and trust that I know what I'm doing." She sounded like her patience was waning. "I can find out if the scientist is still alive, and I can tell us generally where he is."

"I don't understand, Jeanette. There's more happening here than you're telling us," Johnson snorted at my gift for understatement. "Look," I continued, glaring at Johnson, "a good team sticks together and tells each other what's going on. Johnson and I have already told you we recognize your worth, but you've got to come clean with us."

"I already told you what I'm doing here. I'm meeting someone here who can give me the information about . . ."

"You have some kind of contact?" Johnson interrupted.

"Yes, in a manner of speaking, but it will take some time for her to show up," Jeanette hesitated. "Like about an hour and a half. Just don't interfere when I'm talking to her, live up to your words, and trust me!" Obviously regretting his promise, Johnson shifted in his seat. We were both pretty nervous, but we were resigned to waiting and hoping that Jeanette wasn't crazy. She was purposefully being vague, and neither of us liked that. Johnson did unsnap the strap on his holster for a quick draw, just in case. Shaking her head over his precaution, Jeanette jumped out of the van and turned back to us. "It will go faster if you help me."

It was pretty cold, out trudging around in the middle of a cemetery. Jeanette instructed us in drawing a pentagram in the dirt around some graves. This was pretty creepy -- out of a horror movie or something. I watched as Jeanette strategically placed candles on the points of the pentagram. The flames flickered in the breeze. Then she stood in the middle of it all and sprinkled strange powder on the ground around her while chanting. Johnson and I slowly backed away from her to sit on some tombstones and stared in awe as Jeanette began her strange divination. She sat cross-legged in the middle of the pentagram and waved her arms about as she half-spoke, half-sang in what sounded alot like French. A tingle ran up my back as I was reminded of the old spiritual dances and prayers my mother used to perform, back when we lived on the reservation.

Suddenly, the smoke from the candle's flames started to stir and form an image of an elderly Haitian woman. I gasped involuntarily as her face appeared, wrinkled and rounded. Johnson and I watched the smoke play games with the proportions. I realized that I was witnessing a spirit. I had never seen anything more amazing in my life. I nearly wept from regret for ignoring my people's folk lore and religions.

The smoke seemed to dance around Jeanette as she spoke to it. Finally it swirled around her head and disappeared. In the spirit's wake was a silence so deep that it disturbed me greatly. I felt as if there was noise all around me, but I couldn't hear anything because I was deaf. After an eternity, the stillness was

broken by the spirit's return. Jeanette lifted her hands into the air and smiled as the smoke twirled through her open fingers and circled her head. She spoke very tenderly into the air, as if ending a conversation with a dear friend, slowly closed her hands around the smoke, and the spirit was gone.

After a couple of minutes Johnson and I realized Jeanette was finished.

"Well," Johnson said, breaking the silence. "That was interesting. Did you find out anything?" I glared at Johnson before turning to Jeanette.

"That was amazing! I've seen plenty of weird stuff, but very little of it has been used for good. Maybe," I asked in a quieter tone, "when we have more time you can explain what you were actually doing?"

"I summoned the spirit of my grandmother Abelyne. She and I have a bond that is still strong even in death." Jeanette sounded defensive. "She watches over me and guides me."

"Did . . . did she open the door for us at the warehouse?"

"Yes Kai, she did." Jeanette told me proudly. "She also found the scientist, who is alive and relatively close by. He's in hiding, though, and won't come out until he feels it is safe to do so. Abelyne feels he is waiting for someone to bring him to safety." Johnson began to gather up the stuff.

"Okay, thanks Jeanette. That was fascinating, but now we have to get back to reality and find out what's going on with Vallen's team." He turned his back on both Jeanette and I, and headed back to the van. We watched, stunned.

"Johnson, wait up!" I yelled, catching up to his retreating form. "I'm so pissed that you can't see the potential in Jeanette's ability. Maybe I'm biased because I've had more exposure to this sort of thing, with my mom's gift for spirit talking and all, but that's no reason you should just dismiss everything we both witnessed!" Johnson kept walking. "Just because you can't do it, you get all jealous and can't believe it's a valid way to gather information!"

In response, the sky rumbled and it began to rain. In silence, we continued to march out of the cemetery. Jeanette caught up with me and touched my shoulder gently.

"Kai, thanks for understanding me."

Johnson stopped and spun around.

"Look, if you two girl scouts want to hang out here all day, calling up dead grandmothers and telling ghost stories, you can be my guest! But," he held up his hand, "as I remember it, our prime objective was to get the embryos. What Jeanette did was useful as far as the information we need goes, but right now we need to get back to Vallen and take care of business. I don't want anymore attitude from you, Jeanette. And Kai," turning to me, "never sit there and make rash judgments about how you think I feel." Johnson then turned back to Jeanette, leaving me blushing and somewhat angry. "I do appreciate your abilities Jeanette, but we are an hour late for our rendezvous and we have no more time for playing around. I am cold, wet, hungry, and we haven't got the time now to stop for food. And that pisses me off. So," he took a deep breath, "let's go, and you can tell us all the fine details of what your grandmother found out, in the van."

INTRODUCTION

When the sun sets and night's cold fingers envelope us -- we understand. In the depths of the fiercest storm, when sudden thunder seizes our hearts -- we believe. Eyes open wide to face primal fears. Where shadows move and rotting voices whisper our names endlessly. Where horrors walk the earth and man once again is hunted. Where black rituals silence the choking screams of youth with precise thrusts of cold steel. Where madmen cackle while molding the true nature of reality. It is here that we become intimate with fear. But with the rising sun, and the breaking of the storm, we find ourselves safe from its grasp. Somehow mankind collectively turns its head, convinced these things do not bear thought. Only the few choose to struggle with the truth.

Why do humans deny the supernatural? Because its very nature rebels against our precious science? Not likely -- there are many leaps of faith society prides itself in making. Perhaps it is a subconscious understanding that fuels our repulsion. The abominations that hunt and stalk in the night are not nearly so dangerous as the dark waters which spawned them. The currents of human fear guide the sea, silently pouring it into forms menacing and deadly. These waters are all around us, waiting to pull us under. They want to flow inside, drown and corrupt us, to rework us in its own image, using mankind as a physical embodiment of itself. This is the real fright, for we, of all earth's creatures, are most vulnerable to its power -- these waters stem from the deepest secrets of our own minds. So . . . perhaps it is best for us to deny the supernatural. After all, could anyone who knew the truth, stare into a mirror and expect a sane man to stare back?

How do you fight something intangible? How do you resist your darkest dreams, or destroy your greatest fears? We are a people with psychic potential untouched, unharnessed, uncontrolled. Power that pushes itself out of us, seeping through our beliefs and fears. This "Seepage" has become a sea of dark waters flowing across our minds, a sea through which unchecked energies surge . . . looking for release. Like a collective unconsciousness, filled with nothing but faith and terror. A world mind, sentient in its own way, but driven horribly mad. This first and most complex creation of humankind cannot be fought. In time we may learn to master our own psychic abilities, curb the "Seepage", and watch the last of the black sea dry up. But, until then, we may only combat its children.

Seepage: Definition

The Seepage refers to the uncontrolled psychic energies that stem from mankind itself. Essentially, it's psychic phenomenon waiting to happen. Guided by powerful fears, these energies are responsible for all supernatural activity. Although humans come a step closer to understanding and utilizing our psychic potential with every generation (therefore decreasing the Seepage), the Seepage levels are always growing. This is due to the efficiency with which we seem to handle the simple genetic desire for reproduction. There are more people living on this planet then ever before. In fact more than half the people ever born are still alive. So, each individual may contribute less to the shifting seas of the Seepage, but there are so many more minds to contribute. Further, the average life span is ever increasing, so each mind contributes for a longer period of time.

Seepage is not simple energy as we understand it, but psychic in nature. Sculptured by human minds, over the course of time the energies themselves have become vaguely sentient. Imagine an intellect made up of nothing but scared faiths and unspoken terror. A twisted and insane psyche on a planetary scale, lurking beyond normal perceptions, watching and waiting . . .

Some have been researching and experimenting with these forces for centuries. Unfortunately, as one studies

<<THE "SEEPAGE" AS SO DARKLY DESCRIBED HERE IS THE BASIS OF UNDERSTANDING ALL SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY. A PSYCHICALLY ACTIVE WORLD-MIND GUIDED BY OUR OWN FEAR. NOW I HOPE YOU'VE ALL READ UP ON YOUR PSYCHICS, BECAUSE THAT'S ESSENTIALLY WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH. PSYCHIC ABILITIES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF ANYTHING YET ENCOUNTERED. IT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG. AND WE'RE ITS POWER SOURCE! (ISN'T THAT GREAT?) WE NATURALLY CONTRIBUTE ENERGY INTO THIS COLLECTIVE. IN FACT, APPARENTLY WHATEVER "SEEPS" OUT OF US IS AT LEAST PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR AURA. ALL THESE YEARS, WE COULD SEE IT AND NEVER EVEN KNEW . . . PROFESSIONALLY I AM JEALOUS. I MEAN, THE MAN MIGHT HAVE BEEN A WACKBALL, BUT HE WAS A GIFTED WACKBALL. HIS WORK OPENED MY EYES AND LET ME LOOK INTO AN AREA THAT I HAD NEVER BEFORE KNOWN. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS MORE THAN THEORIZED THAT THE GREYS ARE A PSYCHICALLY ACTIVE RACE . . . OH, LET IT BE KNOWN FOR THE RECORD THAT I HAVE NO ACTUAL PROOF OF THE GREY'S EXISTENCE. I DON'T CAR POOL WITH ANY OF THE LITTLE GUYS OR ANYTHING, BUT I BELIEVE THEY'RE OUT THERE. BUT BACK TO THE POINT, ASSUMING THEY ARE REAL, AND ASSUMING THAT THEY'RE PSYCHICALLY ACTIVE . . . I WONDER IF THEY WENT THROUGH A SIMILAR PERIOD? COULD WE LEARN FROM THEM? (CHUCKLE) HERE I SIT, HARD-CORE BELIEVER OF THE MYSTIC AND SUPERNATURAL, AND I ONLY "THINK" ALIENS COULD POTENTIALLY BE OUT THERE . . . I SHOULD GET MYSELF STRAIGHTENED OUT. AFTER ALL, A LITTLE FAITH NEVER HURT ANYONE. OR HAS IS IT? THE SUPERNATURAL FEEDS ON FEAR AND FORMS ON FAITH. CONSISTING OF OUR OWN PSYCHIC ENERGIES, IT WOULD MAKE SENSE THAT IT IS EFFECTED BY OUR THOUGHTS. HEAR THAT AVID READER? WATCH WHAT YOU WISH FOR . . . BUT SERIOUSLY FOLKS, ALTHOUGH WHAT I JUST SAID IS ENTIRELY TRUE, THE SEEPAGE USES MASS BELIEF AS A BASIS OF FORMATION. WE ALL CONTRIBUTE, BUT I'M AFRAID THE FEARS OF ANY ONE OF US MEAN LITTLE, IF ANYTHING. THIS ALSO MEANS THAT'S IT INCREDIBLY HARD TO COMBAT. LIKE CHASING SPECTRES . . . >>

the supernatural and comes to truly comprehending its very being, the more one opens to its corruptive influence. Eventually, one slips under its dark surface without so much as a ripple. Indeed, close study of the writings, books, and manuscripts of these unfortunates raises a frightening question: Who is studying whom? The paranormal is so varied and diverse, it becomes impossible to determine its limits and exact means -- regardless of the research invested. Yet, it has learned how to crawl out of our minds, how to build horrors that strike deep into the human psyche. Perhaps it knows us, because it IS us. Conversely, what do we really know of it?

Seepage: Origin

Look at the ways of man. We sit on the edge of automation with cities growing taller and thicker than any natural forest. Yet homeless sleep within boxes inside these steel prisons. A surplus of food is grown, and then burnt to thwart price fluctuations, while millions starve. And now, nuclear weaponry sufficient to ignite the universe instills fear even in the people it is claimed to protect. As is readily witnessed, our power routinely surpasses our capability to control it. And our harvest is often not what we have sown. It is the same with our latent supernatural capabilities, the actual nature of which has yet to be described. How could such power evolve without the ability to master it? Energies so great they cannot be contained, but so abstract they cannot be tapped (with exception of psychics) . . . Perhaps it is just our way.

It is theorized that few paranormals have been documented of late because mankind is upon a grand turning point. With time and patience our potential will be unleashed, and our abilities will become great assets. We will learn how to harness the collective unconsciousness to help unite us all. Whatever the truth of these idyllic thoughts, until that time we will be plagued with the Seepage. Our unconscious, uncontrolled fears may be all too real, and the supernatural world will continue to exist outside of fiction.

<<WHY IS THERE SEEPAGE? NOT EVEN THE ANSWER-MAN SEEMS TO KNOW THIS ONE. I SEE LITTLE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE WAY WE LIVE OUR LIVES, AND SOME PSYCHIC POTENTIAL RAGING OUT OF CONTROL. BUT THEN, ALL OF OUR RESEARCH HAS YET TO REVEAL ANYTHING ABOUT THIS DANGEROUS FORCE. SO LITTLE IS KNOWN OF PSYCHICS, MAYBE THE MIND ENERGY DOES REFLECT OUR AGGRESSIVE NATURE. DUE TO THE NATURE OF MY WORK, I AM UNEQUIPPED TO TRAVEL. HOWEVER, I HAVE SUGGESTED TO AEGIS PRIME THAT STUDIES ON SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN OTHER CULTURES BE CONDUCTED. UPON CONFIRMATION, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE A CELL FORMED WITHIN ONE MONTH'S TIME. SO LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING UPDATES, AND REPORTS FROM THIS AREA.>>

Seepage: Methods

The Seepage is directed by the beliefs of mankind. Dating beyond memory, it has "fed" on human fear, and has been molded in its likeness. It continues to use faith and fear to guide its manifestations. Therefore, local beliefs and legend will often dictate the supernatural activity within an area (vampires still visit Romanians in their sleep).

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Conversely, it seems that random paranormal activity can occasionally instill and invent its own belief. For example, pixies, elves and fairies have been encountered in Europe for hundreds of years, "foo fighters" were described by pilots from all nations during World War II, and will-o-wisps are a fact of life to the denizens of the bayous of Louisiana. Curiously, each of these seemingly very distinct phenomenon are described as dancing balls of light. Different cultures and times ascribe different lore to the same manifestation, as befitting their particular world-view. In all cases, the event occurred before the stories and belief behind it existed, and therefore could not have been formed by the after-occurring faith. This suggests that the stories are attempts to explain paranormal experiences existing independently of the cultural traditions of which they are a part. The stories then spread, and with them belief and fear, and the random manifestations solidify into enduring phenomena.

Of course, inside the heart of man, it is different. The Seepage works slowly, finding those most open to its energies, corrupting their souls and twisting their bodies. It offers them gifts of power to gain a foothold, then licks their minds with madness until they are strangers unto themselves. Lost inside their own twisted psyches their bodies roam the night . . . performing for the Seepage like exquisite puppets.

Seepage: Levels

The supernatural energies that afflict the human race encircle the globe in a sea of swirling menace. Within its embodiment are pools and eddies . . . following the currents of terror. Psychic energies are relatively unaffected by distance, so where a highly populated area may have greater ambient supernatural potential, actual seepage levels would depend on the fears people carry with them on a daily basis rather than the concentration of the "source" (i.e., many minds). In addition, high seepage levels in a city or other population center may well be restricted to areas of fear and wonder. Settings far from population can also be rich in supernatural activity -- if there is doubt, just look toward Stonehenge. It is really dependent upon the degree of mental agitation and profoundly held belief in the area.

Pools are sites high in supernatural activity, that form a reservoir where some of that energy gathers as it slips out of men's minds. Stories build around Pools and the manifestations that occur therein. These places become feared or revered and entered only by the brave of heart. Lands like this always have a origin story, something that began their dubious and unsettling history. A tale that may very well have become lost amongst the annals of man . . . but the preternatural presence remains. A Pool that gains significant power, and outgrows local tales to become a world-wide legend becomes known as a Locus.

The Seepage can also fluctuate in other ways. For example, traditionally levels raise slightly with the uncertainty that the night brings. These gothic forces can also thrive in the wake of extremely emotional events, especially those resulting in death. The Seepage level of a well known murder site can become greatly increased for two reasons. First, the fear of those who become aware of the event will effectively guide energies to the crime scene. Second, a violent death (more importantly, the emotions which pinnacle therein) often leaves a powerful impression on the very fabric of the supernatural. The exaggerated supernatural potential of these areas only lasts for a short time. Soon the impression fades and the locals to get on with their lives . . . that is unless more sinister events occur in the same area, which may eventually lead to it becoming Haunted.

Varying Seepage levels will essentially determine the likelihood of bizarre and otherwise unexplainable events occurring within a particular location. A greater chance exists in high areas, a lesser chance in a low. This also effects

<<HIGH AND LOW SEEPAGE AREAS CAN BE DETERMINED IN TWO WAYS. THE FIRST IS WITH CLAIRVOYANCE. THE OTHER IS COMMON SENSE. HEY, IF YOU'RE STANDING IN THE CENTER OF STONEHENGE ON HALLOWEEN, DON'T BE SURPRISED WHEN THE DEVIL POPS UP TO SAY, "HI." GRAVEYARDS, CHURCHES, DARK BASEMENTS, AND INDIAN HOLY LAND ARE ALL HIGH IN SUPERNATURAL POTENTIAL. FOOTBALL STADIUMS, GROCERY STORES, AND BOWLING ALLEYS GENERALLY ARE NOT. FLUCTUATION GENERALLY GOES FROM AN ORIGINAL LEVEL TO A HIGHER ONE, AND THEN BACK DOWN. SOME KIND OF POWERFUL CALMING PRESENCE OR MANIFESTATION IS NEEDED TO LOWER BACKGROUND SEEPAGE LEVEL. I IMAGINE THAT IN THE DIM AND DISTANT PAST A HERO COULD HAVE LIFTED A CURSE FROM A VILLAGE, AND THEORETICALLY LOWERED THE BACKGROUND LEVEL. BUT IN THESE TIMES, THAT'S STRICTLY STORYBOOK . . . MAYBE WORLD PEACE WOULD WORK, BUT THEN AGAIN, THAT'S STRICTLY STORYBOOK TOO.

WITHIN A HIGH SEEPAGE AREA A FOCUS (THE SEEPAGE'S ANSWER TO PSYCHICS) WOULD FIND IT EASIER TO USE HIS OR HER ABILITIES. IN FACT, ANYTHING OF A SUPERNATURAL NATURE WOULD BE BIGGER, FASTER, STRONGER, MEANER, AND ALL AROUND LESS PLEASANT TO MEET IN A DARK ALLEY. WHICH ODDLY ENOUGH, IS WHERE YOU'LL MOST LIKELY FIND THEM. OF COURSE, WE SHOULD KEEP THINGS IN CHECK BY RESTATING THAT EVEN INSIDE A HIGH SEEPAGE AREA THE CHANCES OF A SUPERNATURAL EVENT OCCURRING ARE EXCEEDINGLY SLIM. THAT WHY IT IS CALLED "PARANORMAL" INSTEAD OF JUST REALLY RARE. WHILE THE SEEPAGE MAKES A FOCUS STRONGER, HE OR SHE RETURNS THE FAVOR WHEN THEY'RE INSIDE A POOL BY INCREASING THE CHANCE OF MANIFESTATION. THIS LEADS TO STRANGE STUFF HAPPENING AROUND FOCI ON A REGULAR BASIS.>>

the probability of Foci powers functioning and the difficulty of resisting corruption. Even supernatural "creatures" are effected. With their essence tied into the Seepage itself, they will naturally gravitate to areas more saturated with these forces, therein finding their paranormal powers enhanced. Conversely, low Seepage areas inhibit such manifestations.

AMBIENT SEEPAGE LEVELS

Just as any area in the world has a certain level of background radiation, so does it have a particular level of ambient supernatural energy, or Seepage. This energy is not radiated from the terrain or projected from space, but rather from the subconscious fears of mankind. Therefore the ambient level of Seepage in any locale is determined more by the local human populace than by natural factors. The level of Seepage in an area will determine the likelihood and power of supernatural manifestations.

If the area is one of great mystical or religious significance, supernatural energy will be slightly stronger there than the norm and the area is referred to as a Locus. A Locus is generally a place of legend that may be world-renown for its supernatural power. Some notable Loci include sites of ancient monoliths such as Easter Island and Stonehenge, some holy cities like Jerusalem, the Vatican and Tenochticlan, and mythic places whose very existence is a matter of debate, including El Dorado, Atlantis and Shangri-La.

Areas considered haunted or just "evil" by the regional population will see an increase in supernatural activity during times of environmental phenomena such as violent storms or the full moon and significant dates such as All Hallows Eve or Summer Solstice. These regions are called Pools. Some examples of Pools include burial grounds, haunted houses or mines and "cursed" woods or fairy circles.

The base level of Seepage found in most any given area is 1. The Seepage level in a Pool is normally 1 as well, but will increase to 2 when the Pool is "agitated". The "normal" level of Seepage found at a Locus is 2, rising at times to 3 in situations like those described in Pools.

It is common for a Pool or Locus to have one or more paranormal manifestations linked to it. These manifestations are often an integral part of the local folklore and legends, although upon investigation it is often unclear as to which predates the other. When a GM is creating a Pool or Locus, she may choose to assign a few appropriate manifestations to the site. During play, the GM may manifest these paranormal anomalies to hinder, confuse and frighten the characters, although she should not feel in any way obligated to cause the supernatural to manifest simply because the characters are in a high Seepage area. Paranormal activity should be used with moderation to prevent these strange and wondrous events from becoming commonplace. The game effects of the various manifestations are described under Telepathic Illusions and Phenomenon.

While the actual Seepage level of an area will vary only slightly, the actual amount of supernatural energy present at any given time can fluctuate wildly over the course of even just a few days. The primary feature of Pools and Loci that sets them apart from other locations is their capacity to store Seepage and spawn paranormal manifestations.

The amount of supernatural energy found in a Pool or Locus is measured in Seepage Points (SP). Each night at midnight, the GM determines the maximum SP that will be available in a given Pool or Locus by rolling one die for each level of Seepage in the area. Seepage points may be used by the GM to invoke supernatural manifestations and Incarnate abilities, or by occultists to provide a source of power for arcane rituals. Once depleted, points are regained at a rate of one SP per level of Seepage per hour. SP regeneration never increases the area's SP past the maximum set the previous midnight. When the next day's maximum SP are rolled at midnight the area's SP are immediately set at that level, regardless of how many points remained from the previous day. This makes midnight a dangerous time to be caught in an area of paranormal activity.

THE EMPOWERED

Focus: Definition

An individual who possesses an unusually strong connection to the Seepage is called a Focus. These rare persons are points where the Seepage concentrates its energies. They become supernatural magnets; strange and inexplicable paranormal activity surrounds them. As a link between the natural and supernatural, Foci are constantly surrounded by higher than normal Seepage levels. Life is distinctly different for a Focus. The occurrence of highly anomalous events, although not commonplace, is an irrefutable fact of their lives. It is not uncommon for the paranormal to manifest around a Focus when he enters an area of supernatural power. Staying within such areas will result in much more frequent supernatural activity than would be found otherwise.

Foci are a unique state between physical form and intangible energies, not only effecting (strengthening) any supernatural occurrence in their presence, but drastically reacting with entities (other Foci and Incarnate). The Incarnate and other entities or events draw on the ambient power about a Foci, whether or not he is willing to lend it. "Feeding" on his energies will not weaken a Foci, or hinder him in his own abilities. Although an Incarnate will most certainly be aware of a Focus within a certain proximity, the reverse cannot said to be true; nor will a manifestation occur randomly at a Focus/Incarnate conjunction.

Where a Focus is an unconscious victim to some events, he may also attempt to harness the ambient supernatural energies. When successful, he appears as a chaotic psychic or a powerful sorcerer. Conscious manipulation of the paranormal can be done in a variety of ways either by using a ritual, or by attempting to invoke a manifestation. Rituals are by far superior to invocations for controlling the supernatural, but they require lengthy preparation and execution time. Invocation can be done quickly, almost instantaneously. The drawback being the destructive and unpredictable nature of the results. Control of an invocation is a desperate hold that can be easily lost.

Foci are an odd lot, their lives drawn to the bizarre. Many of them have become great scholars of the occult skills, men and women constantly attempting to grasp the very nature of the supernatural, all the while dancing the thin line on the edge. Others consider themselves touched by darkness but always resilient to its distant beckoning. They are avenging angels, using hell's own power against itself. They are self-serving power mongers. They are savage willed, half-mad conjurers. Their descriptions rage on, since Foci are so rare that they all have a tendency to invent or discover their own explanations for who and what they are.

There is a darkness to Foci as well, for they are submerged within the Seepage, and one slip can be their downfall. A single mistake in the rituals many use to aid their abilities can let the Seepage inside them, filling them up, drowning the Foci until there is nothing left but the body, while something else looks out their eyes.

Focus: Invocation

Invoking is done by attempting to turn the psychic energy a Focus is contributing to the supernatural into a catalyst. His energies react with those naturally pooling around him, causing the potential occurrence of a manifestation. This occurs naturally, and with little effort. Some Foci are not even consciously aware that they invoke at all. They unconsciously invoke during times of stress. Regardless whether the Foci consciously tries to invoke or not, the results would be unexpected and clumsy, as if attempting to operate one's body by remote control. The results of an invocation (if any) are often just that, chaotic and potentially disastrous (random manifestation, and little guidance). Almost anything within the realm of the supernatural is possible: fires, telekinesis, terrifying illusions, or even animal teleportations. To his advantage, this method does not allow the dark fingers of the Seepage into his mind. There is no risk of the corruption that comes with rituals.

FOCI AND INVOCATIONS

A Focus has a number of effects on the supernatural world. As a focal point for arcane energies, a Focus enables the paranormal to manifest itself when it would otherwise be unable. Foci also lend power to supernatural Pools and Loci. While a Focus is within the borders of a Pool or Locus, the area regains one extra Seepage Point per hour. The Focus also increases the maximum SP that the site can contain on any given day by one, although this benefit is lost as soon as the Focus leaves the confines of the location. The most

<<BEFORE I GO ANY FURTHER WITH THIS REPORT, I BETTER EXPLAIN THE TERM, "MANIFESTATION," ESPECIALLY SINCE HE USES IT CONSTANTLY AND NEVER REALLY DEFINES IT . . . EVEN WHEN HE DISCUSSES IT LATER ON. MANIFESTATION REFERS TO THE GENERATION OF ANY SUPERNATURAL ACTIVITY THAT DOES NOT HAVE A PHYSICAL FORM. IN OTHER WORDS, A VAMPIRE IS NOT A MANIFESTATION BUT THE SUPERNATURAL FORCE IT USES TO MESMERIZE SOMEONE IS. PHENOMENA, TELEPATHIC ILLUSIONS, INCARNATE AND FOCI POWERS ARE ALSO MANIFESTATIONS. GOOD, NOW YOU KNOW.

A FOCUS IS SOMEONE WHO IS UNNATURALLY CONNECTED TO THE SEEPAGE. THIS DIRECT LINK EFFECTS THEM IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. THE MOST NOTICEABLE OF WHICH WOULD BE THE WEIRD STUFF THAT POPS UP ON A REGULAR BASIS. FISH FALLS, SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION, POLTERGEISTS, AND ANY NUMBER OF OTHER THINGS THAT COULD MAKE THEIR LIVES ABSOLUTELY SURREAL. ODD AS THIS STUFF MIGHT BE, LUCKILY FOR FOCI, THE SEEPAGE SEEMS TO LOOK AFTER ITS OWN AND THESE MANIFESTATIONS RARELY HURT THEM. THE SAME CANNOT TO BE SAID FOR THE FOCI'S FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR BACKUP. FURTHER, THERE IS THE OCCASIONAL FOCUS WHOSE HEAD JUST SUDDENLY EXPLODES ONE DAY.

FOCI MAY INVOKE THE SUPERNATURAL OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL. THIS IS A QUESTIONABLE TACTIC AT BEST. SOME ONLY LEARN TO CONJURE WHEN THEIR EMOTIONS PUMP LIKE QUICKSILVER. ALSO KNOWN AS -- DON'T PUSH A FOCI INTO A CORNER, ANYTHING MIGHT HAPPEN . . . I REALLY MEAN IT, "ANYTHING". OTHERS EVENTUALLY LEARN TO GRASP THEIR ABILITIES TO SOME EXTENT . . . IN THE SAME WAY YOU MIGHT GRASP THE LEDGE OF THE BUILDING YOU JUST FELL OFF -- BLIND AND DESPERATE. THERE'S STILL LITTLE TO NO CONTROL OVER WHAT MANIFESTS -- AT BEST A 50% CHANCE TO CONTROL IT. IN THE LONG RUN, THIS COULD EASILY BECOME MORE HINDERING THAN THE ORIGINAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SO TO ALL YOU FOCI, HOLY MEN, MYSTICS, MAGICIANS, OR WHATEVER YOU CALL YOURSELVES . . . WATCH OUT. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THIS STUFF, MAKE SURE THAT YOU READ UP ON RITUALS. THAT'S WHERE A FOCUS CAN PLAY A ROLE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE.>>

The Focus Invocation Table

2 Circle
3 Teleportation
4 Levitation
5 Divination
6 Vortex
7 Apparition
8 Mirage
9 Telekinesis
10 Pyrokinesis
11 Ball Lightning
12 Astral Conjuction! Roll twice on this table and generate twice the usual SP for the manifestation. An equal amount of SP must be spent on each manifestation.

The manifestations listed on this table are described in greater detail later in this chapter.

potentially spectacular of the Focus' effects on the supernatural arise from Invocation.

The player of a Focus may elect at any point to attempt to invoke a supernatural manifestation, just as the GM may in a Pool or Locus. However, unlike the invocations linked to Pools and Loci, Foci invocations are neither guaranteed success nor are they always controlled by the Focus' player. To successfully invoke the paranormal, the player must roll equal to or less than the Seepage Level on 1D. If unsuccessful, nothing at all happens. Even if successful, the player must roll 2D to see what actually manifests on the Focus Invocation Table.

The player must then roll for control with the GM, as the manifestations that follow a Focus do not always act in her favor. Both the player and GM roll 1D -- control of the invocation goes to the higher roll. The player wins any ties. One SP per level of Seepage in the area is drawn to the Focus to power the manifestation. The winner of the control roll, be it GM or player, may use the SP to power the resulting manifestation as he or she sees fit. If the Focus is in a Pool or Locus when the player loses a control roll, the GM has an additional option. If the Pool or Locus has less than the maximum SP allowed it at the time, the GM may elect to add the SP generated by the Focus to the SP total for the area. Outside of a high Seepage area, or if the Pool or Locus already possessing maximum SP, the GM's only option is a paranormal manifestation.

Not all Foci generate the same pattern of manifestations. When creating a Focus character, the player may choose to use the default Invocation given above, or he may choose to customize the table to represent the particular idiosyncrasies of the Focus' connection to the supernatural. The player must keep the same items on the table that are listed above, but he may change the order in which they appear. This allows the player to decide which manifestations are most often generated by the Focus and which are more rare (the entries in the center of the table will be considerably more probable than the extremes). Once the player has created a customized Invocation table, that table is rather than the default is used and may never be changed.

Focus: Relation to Psychic

Foci and Psychics seem nearly identical in nature, but they are actually as separate as night and day. First and foremost, the source of their power is essentially opposite. Foci manipulate the Seepage energies around them. Psychics control the power inside themselves. I have already described that the Seepage is psychic in nature, but this energy is extremely different because it is radiated from the minds of the world. A Psychic need only contend with his own personal energy -- energy that is self-generated and familiar. A Focus requires ambient, foreign Seepage and

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may fall victim to its pools and eddies. On the other hand, due to the origin of his energy, repeated or prolonged use of a psychic's abilities may result in fatigue and even damage. A Focus does not suffer from these hindrances. Another significant difference are the manifestations themselves. Psychics gain control of the powers they possess by training and discipline, usually in one or two definitive areas. This mastery results in psychics contributing relatively negligible amounts to the Seepage. A Focus' connection to the Seepage prevents such personal mastery and discipline (there are no psychic Foci . . . the very concept defies itself). Foci cannot attain total control of their invocations without a ritual, but this chaos allows them a grand variety of manifestations. Moreover, some of these manifestations present themselves with more strength than effect even the greatest psychic might generate.

There has been documentation of psychics and Foci (not necessarily with those titles) throughout history. Recently, it has been theorized that psychics are the next step in mankind's evolution. Yet none seem to comprehend the subtle yet significant differences between psychics and Foci. So . . . how do we explain Foci? Should we dismiss them as random mutations, or genetic regressions? I believe a far more terrible truth may exist. Foci could be a counter action to the awakening of psychic powers -- a deliberate creation of chaos to battle the control represented by psychics. This potential strikes terror . . . for it means that the Seepage can see the threat to itself represented by psychic mastery, and that it has taken steps to combat it.

Corruption: Definition

Corruption is a permanent mental change induced by the Seepage. It is a phenomenon that works directly on man and occurs in degrees, over an extended period. This phenomenon is extremely powerful, and can be the high price paid for a poorly executed ritual. Oddly, it can also be induced by a ritual curse (Vampiric Blood-letting), although no sane man would undertake this willingly. Those strong of will may resist the insidious effects for years, but the untiring onslaught will be their doom. The corrupted are in constant danger. They are living with the dark knowledge they are becoming something else, drowning in forces as old as thought.

The corruption of Foci and normal man alike always result in the loss of their own identity. A corrupted individual is no longer human, but merely a wandering echo of flesh for the Seepage. Feel no guilt in stopping them, for once they are fully corrupt there is no salvation. They are horrors wearing a man's skin, the only sorrow to be felt is for the battle already lost within him

<<WHERE THE HELL DID THIS GUY GET THIS INFORMATION? HE KNOWS PSYCHICS AS WELL AS SOME OF OUR TOP NOTCH RESEARCHERS. REMEMBER THIS THING WAS WRITTEN IN 1950, AND IT IS NOT EVEN ABOUT PSYCHIC ABILITIES! I DON'T SEE WHY HE WOULD DO THAT MUCH STUDY, AND THEN ONLY TO MENTION PSYCHICS IN PASSING. IN SOME OF THE BITS I CUT HE DOCUMENTS PSYCHIC ABILITY IN COMPARISON TO SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATION. HIS FIGURES AND CONCEPTS ARE RIGHT ON PAR WITH TODAY'S STUDIES! SO DID HE DO ALL THIS WORK ON HIS OWN? NO, I THINK OUR MYSTERY MAN HAD A GOVERNMENTAL CONNECTION AT SOME POINT IN TIME (I'M GUESSING GERMAN). PERHAPS HE WAS PART OF A PSYCHIC INVESTIGATIVE TEAM, AND HIS OWN INTERESTS LED HIM INTO THE REALM OF THE PARANORMAL. I'M BEGINNING TO BELIEVE HE WAS A FOCUS HIMSELF, AND THE INABILITY OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH TO EXPLAIN QUESTIONS HE HAD ABOUT HIMSELF LED HIM TO GREATER THINGS. IT IS PROBABLY THIS ANGLE OF THINKING THAT BROUGHT SUCH A BRILLIANT END PRODUCT. THIS IS THE ONLY ACCOUNTABLE GRIMOIRE (OR ANY OCCULTIST TOME, FOR THAT MATTER) IN HISTORY THAT DISCUSSES PSYCHICS AND THE SUPERNATURAL. SUCH COMPARATIVE STUDY WOULD PROVE BENEFICIAL. I BELIEVE THAT IT IS WITHIN THEIR SHARED COMPANY THAT THE TRUTH LIES. OH, I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER.>>

Within mundanes, corruption's true goal is to open their mind to the supernatural, attempting to turn them into a Focus. Oddly, it is those strongest in self who are most likely to become Foci (or with more accuracy, one of the Incarnate). All those who become corrupted are slowly melted down and then poured into one of the primal fears of man: the fear of being hunted, the fear of the unknown, and the fear of death. These are represented by the forms of the Incarnate (Foci) and Forsaken (mundane).

The process of corruption will last only until the victim submits. The longer the corruption takes to work, the greater time the Seepage has to increase its channel with the victim. If the corruption is successful too quickly, then the Seepage never establishes the pathway needed for it to keep connection. The result of a quick corruption is an individual who has the mentality of one of the Incarnate, but none of their supernatural power. They are known as the Forsaken . . . those who the Seepage tried to bring over, but failed.

With Foci the corruption works faster, and is far more dangerous. Their tie to the supernatural makes them especially vulnerable. The increased paranormal energies surrounding the Focus increases the power of corruption, making it harder to resist. When they finally swallow enough of the dark waters of the Seepage and drown, the result is always the same: an Incarnate.

Note that for purposes of corruption, if the character has one of the traits associated with one of the stages, that stage is considered completed, even if the character possessed the trait long before she became corrupted. For example, if someone is paranoid to begin with (perhaps taken during character generation) and then becomes corrupted as an Adept, he is considered to have already completed that stage of corruption and is already one step closer to snapping.

SUPERNATURAL CORRUPTION

When someone becomes corrupted, she is on her way to becoming one of the Incarnate. The process is slow but nearly inevitable, although with careful preparation and planning the final step, the snap, can be postponed almost indefinitely.

Corruption can occur as a result of a possession, a specific ritual of infection, or from the backlash of a failed ritual. The exact circumstances surrounding the corruption itself will determine what kind of Incarnate the individual is on her way to becoming. To illustrate: vampiric blood-letting, if successful, corrupts toward the creation of a Predator. an angelic possession that corrupts the host will eventually create a Prophet, and failed rituals almost always lead to Adept corruption. There are up to six stages in the process of corruption, although most people will not pass through all six before snapping and becoming either one of the Forsaken or an Incarnate. Characters with stronger wills and more endurance will progress through more stages before snapping, preserving their humanity longer, but increasing the chances that they become Incarnate at the end. Foci are the exception. Due to their already strong connection to the supernatural, a Focus that is corrupted will always become an Incarnate when she snaps.

When a character becomes corrupted, the GM rolls secretly to determine which stage of the corruption is currently attempting to impress itself upon the mind of the corrupted. Each time the character finds herself in a situation where the particular stage is applicable, the GM must roll 1D. If the die roll is greater than the Seepage level in the area, the corruption fails to effect the character's mind for the moment. If the result is less than or equal to the Seepage level in the area, the character must make a Df(1D) Willpower test. If the test fails, the corrupted character gains the current stage's trait and takes one step closer to becoming Incarnate or Forsaken. A successful Willpower test means that the character has managed to fend off the encroaching madness brought by the corruption. A character will never have to make more than one Willpower test to resist corruption in a single day, whether successful or not.

Julia is an operative that has been recently corrupted by a werewolf's ritual mutilation. The GM has determined in secret that the first stage of Julia's corruption will be the Killer Instinct trait. After several weeks in the hospital, Julia is healed and back on the job. At present, she is skulking around an office building after hours looking for a Black Book wiretap team. Suddenly, a night custodian walks out of a maintenance room behind her. Julia is startled by the sound of the door slamming shut. Since this is a situation that is applicable to the Killer Instinct trait, the GM must check to see if the trait tries to worm it's way into Julia's psyche. Since the office building is not an area of high supernatural power, the Seepage Level is only 1. The GM must roll a one on 1D for the corruption to take effect. Unfortunately he manages to do just that and Julia feels the sudden urge to spin and shoot at the unexpected target. The GM then rolls for the Difficulty of Julia's Willpower test and gets a 3. This is a Normal test for Julia and she succeeds handily, rolling 5. She spins to face the custodian, but reigns in the almost overwhelming desire to blow him away. Julia will be safe from the corruption for at least the next day, but she has felt it's pressure on her and knows she must be very careful to avoid letting it control her.

<<THIS IS WHERE THE ANSWER MAN BECOMES A LITTLE OBSESSIVE, TAKE EVERYTHING HE SAYS ABOUT "NO LONGER HUMAN" WITH A GRAIN OF SALT. IN ANY EVENT . . . THIS SECTION REVEALS THAT SOME INSANITY DOES NOT STEM FROM PROBLEMS IN OUR SOCIETY OR OURSELVES, BUT INSTEAD IS A DIRECT RESULT OF SUPERNATURAL FORCES. DON'T WORRY, THIS DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN RANDOMLY, IT TAKES SOME FORM OF PARANORMAL INFECTION. FAILED RITUALS, POSSESSION, VAMPIRIC BLOOD-LETTING AND WEREWOLF RITUAL MUTILATION ALL QUALIFY . . . FORTUNATELY, THEY DON'T NORMALLY PASS BY UNNOTICED. CORRUPTION ATTEMPTS TO CREATE ONE OF THE INCARNATE. FORTUNATELY THIS RARELY WORKS. IF THE VICTIM DOES BECOME INCARNATE, IT IS AT THE MOMENT HE SNAPS . . . ONE MOMENT YOU'RE DEALING WITH A CRAZY GUY, THE NEXT YOU'RE FACING ONE OF THE INCARNATE. NOT A PRETTY PICTURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVEN IF THE CORRUPTION FAILS TO CREATE THE INCARNATE, IT WILL STILL EVENTUALLY PRODUCE ONE OF THE FORSAKEN. I FEEL SORRY FOR THESE GUYS, NOT ONLY HAVE THEY BEEN DRIVEN INSANE BY SUPERNATURAL FORCES, BUT THEY DIDN'T MAKE THE GRADE. IT IS LIKE THEY ARE PARANORMAL POSEURS -- SOMEONE WHO THINKS HE IS ONE OF THE INCARNATE, BUT POSSESSES NONE OF THE POWERS. OTHER THAN THEIR DELUSIONS, WHICH CAN STILL MAKE THEM A THREAT TO THEMSELVES AND OTHERS (HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO ARGUE WITH A GUY WHO ONLY THINKS HE'S A VAMPIRE), THE ONLY UNIQUE THING ABOUT THESE PEOPLE IS THEIR AURA. THE AURA OF A FORSAKEN IS GREATER THAN THAT OF A NORMAL AND THEY CONTRIBUTE A HAIR MORE TO THE SEEPAGE.

AS OF YET, AEGIS KNOWS OF NO SURE WAY TO CANCEL OR CURE SUPERNATURAL CORRUPTION.>>

When a character fails a Willpower test to resist corruption, she completes that stage and gains the trait associated with it. The GM determines which stage of corruption is now attempting to force it's way into her mind (the stages are described in the Stages of Corruption Tables below). In addition, each time a stage of corruption is completed, the character runs the risk of snapping and instantly becoming either Incarnate or Forsaken. The corrupted individual must test her Willpower versus the number of stages of corruption she has undergone. If the test fails she snaps, and the Seepage instantly makes her an Incarnate or Forsaken. The player makes one last die roll, but regardless of the result she will lose control of her character as it becomes an Incarnate or Forsaken. If the result of the roll is equal to or less than the number of stages of corruption she has completed, she becomes Incarnate. If the roll is higher, she is unable to withstand the occult energies tearing through her mind. She breaks and becomes one of the pitiful, but dangerous, Forsaken. When a character becomes one of the Forsaken, she immediately gains all the traits for stages of corruption that

she had not yet completed and the transformation, such as it is, is complete. The character believes unquestioningly that she is a supernatural entity, be it vampire, sorceress or devil.

A few months after the encounter with the custodian that lead her to realize she had been corrupted, Julia has passed several stages of corruption and is now a Homicidal Paranoid with a Killer's Instinct. The current stage of corruption that is working its way into her increasingly warped psyche is Habit: Eat Human Flesh. Julia's Cell has just ended a high speed chase with a violent car crash in which one of the operatives was seriously injured. When the police arrive, Julia's teammates leave her to watch over their fallen comrade, concerned that her recent personality changes could cause trouble with the law. While looking after her unconscious charge, her corruption manages to impress itself on her. Her Willpower test fails and she completes her fourth stage of corruption. Immediately she is faced with another Willpower test, this time to see if she snaps. The Difficulty is 4, the number of stages she has completed, and a Hard test for her. She fails miserably and finally snaps. As her last act for the character, Julia's player rolls to see if she will become Incarnate or Forsaken. Perhaps fortunately for her preoccupied colleagues, she rolls a 6 and fails her ascension to Incarnate. When her teammates return from convincing the police that they didn't need to be there, they find her sitting atop his corpse with a bloody limb hanging from her mouth and a feral gleam in her eyes.

Incarnate: Definition

The Incarnate are usually corrupted Foci, but can be former mundanes. Once the unfortunate becomes corrupted, he will find the Seepage has built its own channel into his soul and is pooling its energies. Although there are steps one can take in opposition as the path widens . . . but once corruption is completed all one can do is drown . . . drown in the river of mankind's fear and unharnessed power filling her soul, drown in the evil taint of the Seepage. Once this occurs, an Incarnate is born. Avatars of the Seepage, nightmares brought to life, Incarnate are limited in power only by what their physical bodies can take. They are the monsters that walk the night. Like Foci, the Incarnate have the ability to invoke manifestations. Manifestations of which they control completely, with a power and permanence far beyond the capabilities of a Focus. Incarnate boil with supernatural energy, but they emit no aura due to their total control of their power. The Incarnate are the Seepage embodied and they cannot drown, for they are the water.

The mind of the former human is dead, worse than dead, the old restrictions do not hold true. Incarnate have different rules that govern them. They have total mastery over a few manifestations such as Telepathic Illusion and Telekinesis and are not plagued by the chaotic whim of the Seepage as Foci are. The Incarnate also possess other abilities that Foci cannot even aspire to. One of their only limitations is in the number of manifestations they can invoke, they no longer possess the wide range of a Foci's chaotic powers. However, compared to the control they wield over the abilities they possess, this limitation is hardly significant.

Incarnate: Predator

Our praised and productive "competitive edge" is actually just a by-product of man's ancient fear of being hunted. This fear can be seen within those who have a phobia of snakes, sharks, or spiders -- the fear is not due to the actual danger presented by the creature itself. It is the creature's predatorial nature that causes it to become an object of irrational fear. This stems from the roots

of our existence when we were not the dominate life form upon the planet. This fear is reborn within the Incarnate predators -- the hunters of the human race, often with cannibalistic tendencies. Vampires, werewolves, and even outlandish creatures such as the Wendigo have been created. Most of their supernatural abilities tie into physical prowess, although it is really determined by the individual circumstances. Mutation is a common eventuality for these beasts, giving them body to match their mind.

<<I HATE TO SIT DOWN AND DISAGREE WITH THE ANSWER-MAN ON ANYTHING, ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT HE'S UNKNOWINGLY DONE FOR US, BUT THE BOY DOESN'T HAVE IT ALL STRAIGHT HERE. OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING ABOUT THE INCARNATE GETS UNDER HIS SKIN, BECAUSE HE CLAIMS BOTH HERE AND WHEN HE SPOKE ABOUT CORRUPTION THAT THE SEEPAGE REPLACES THE PSYCHE OF ITS VICTIM, LEAVING SOMETHING THAT IS NO LONGER HUMAN. WELL . . . HE'S WRONG, IT'S WORSE THAN THAT. WHAT HE IS TRYING TO DESCRIBE SOUNDS TO BE MORE ALONG THE LINE OF POSSESSION, IN REALITY IT IS THE SAME MIND AS BEFORE, BUT NOW DRIVEN HORRIBLY INSANE. AM I MAKING SENSE HERE? LOOK, AT LEAST IF IT WAS A DIFFERENT PSYCHE IN THERE, THE INCARNATE MIGHT NOT HAVE ALL THE MEMORIES OF THE ORIGINAL UNCORRUPTED PERSON, BUT THEY DO! PICTURE IF ONE OF YOUR FRIENDS JOINED THE INCARNATE'S ROSTER, THEY'D KNOW WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU DO, WHERE YOU LIVE, ETC. THIS IS NOT GOOD. IMAGINE IF A MEMBER OF AEGIS GOT PULLED UNDER . . . NEEDLESS TO SAY, BE ON YOUR TOES, PEOPLE.

OKAY, WITH THAT OUT OF THE WAY LET ME WARN YOU ABOUT EVEN NASTIER STUFF. INCARNATE HAVE NO AURA, DO YOU KNOW WHY? AS THE ANSWER-MAN SAYS, NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR LACK OF POWER . . . IT IS DUE TO THEIR TOTAL CONTROL OF THE SUPERNATURAL ENERGIES COURSING THROUGH THEM. IN TRUTH, THEY GENERATE MORE POWER THAN FOCI, THEY JUST DON'T LET ANY "SEEP" OUT. THESE GUYS ARE CAPABLE OF STUFF YOU DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE. I'VE SEEN A PREDATOR RIP A GUY IN HALF WITH HIS BARE (THOUGH CLAWED) HANDS, AND THE INCARNATE DIDN'T EVEN BREAK A SWEAT. SPEAKING OF THE INCARNATE, LETS MEET THEM OKAY?>>

Incarnate: Adept

Wizards and Sorceresses, adepts are created out of our fear of the unknown. Men and women who were once occultists become this living obsession (yet another reminder to myself). The adept Incarnation is a result of their experimentation with the dark forces; it is not governed by the aptitude of the individual. The Seepage does not build off of the existing personality, it replaces it. Adepts quest for knowledge of the meaning of life, the universe, or the like. Desire to know overwhelms all, and with time these spell-casting knowledge mongers gather many rituals, always with some dark or fascinating goal. These Incarnations are often not openly threatening, the way a predator is. However, their desire for knowledge often leads them into some of the darker rituals, at which time it becomes surprising at how little concern for human life these warlocks have. Further, once angered, they become terrifying foes . . . armed with spells and rituals capable of tearing reality asunder.

Incarnate: Prophet

Of all of man's fears perhaps the greatest is the fear of death. In his desire to soothe this fear, early man created stories about the dead, not to honor them, but to comfort the living. From these early beginnings, religion was born. An existence beyond our mortal coil was hypothesized. A Prophet Incarnate feeds on the human fear of death by becoming a figure of faith. High priests, demons, messiahs, and even the gods themselves have come back to us. Based upon the beliefs held by the particular religion adopted, Incarnate take forms that vary from the awe-inspiring to the terrifying, from the peace-loving to the blood-thirsty. In all cases, Prophets consider themselves "chosen". Prophets of demons or inhuman deities often mutate to appear more of what they believe themselves to be. In whatever guise, Prophets can rarely be predicted

<<GIVE THEM A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOLKS. CONTESTANT NUMBER ONE ALL THE WAY FROM ROMANIA OR AS CLOSE AS YOUR OWN BACKYARD, HE SPENDS MUCH OF HIS TIME HUNTING AND KILLING, AND CONSIDERS HIMSELF "MORE THAN HUMAN". MEET THE PREDATOR! INCARNATE NUMBER TWO IN THE TRADITION OF THE GREAT MAGES, SPENDS A LOT OF HER TIME RESEARCHING SPELLS THAT CAN ALTER THE FABRIC OF REALITY. SHE'S IN PURSUIT OF THE ULTIMATE ANSWER, AND NOT AFRAID TO KILL IN ORDER TO GET IT. SAY HELLO TO THE ADEPT! AND OUR FINAL CONTESTANT, INCARNATE NUMBER THREE IS NO MERE MORTAL. HE'S GOT RELIGIONS TO UPHOLD, AND PROPHECIES TO FULFILL. HE'S THE SON OF GODS, DEMONS FROM HELL, AND EVERYTHING THAT YOU HOPE ISN'T TRUE ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE. A WARM GREETING TO THE PROPHET!

BUT SERIOUSLY FOLKS, I MET ONE OF THESE GUYS ONCE AND WAS LUCKY TO SURVIVE THE ENCOUNTER. I ONLY JOKE TO KEEP FROM SCREAMING. STEP LIVELY AROUND THESE BOYS AND GIRLS, BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN ANYTHING I CAN THINK OF . . . CAPABLE OF RECREATING ALL THE HORRORS WITHIN OUR RECORDED HISTORY, OR INVENTING THEIR OWN. MY ADVICE FOR HANDLING THESE INDIVIDUALS IS WITH A SNIPER RIFLE WHEN THEIR BACKS ARE TURNED.>>

STAGES OF CORRUPTION

The particular stages an individual's corruption takes depend on the form of potential Incarnate (or Forsaken) involved. These stages do not occur in any particular order -- that is up to the GM. The next stage may be picked by the GM or may be rolled on the following tables.

Predator Stages of Corruption Table

1 Adrenaline Surge -- Potential Predators in a killing and feeding frenzy or cornered by enemies is often capable of feats of superhuman strength and therefore should be treated with the utmost caution.

2 Creature of Habit -- Many potential Predators develop the gruesome habit of eating human flesh or drinking human blood. This symbolizes victory over the prey and a transference of its power.

3 Homicidal -- The primal hunting instinct is much pronounced in characters corrupted toward Predators. Unfortunately that urge is almost always directed at other humans.

4 Killer Instinct -- Not surprisingly the first reaction of any Predator is nearly always violence. As the corruption progresses, potential Predators slowly stop fighting this reaction and eventually welcome it.

5 Paranoia -- As a hunter itself, the Predator are always wary of other hunters stalking it. The potential Predator's mental instability often causes them to see hunters where there are none. Then again, they may just be looking for an excuse to kill.

6 Phobia -- As the corruption begins to take root in the corrupted mind, the potential Predator begins to fear objects that it believes have power over it, such as silver, crucifixes, or even the light of day.

Prophet Stages of Corruption Table

1 Code -- Potential Prophets are often under very specific orders from their superiors as to behavior. These may be a varied as being forbidden to enter consecrated ground or to harm a living creature.

2 Multiple Personality Disorder -- One grand day in the corruption of the potential Prophet, she realizes that the spirits have chosen to use her body as a vessel for their unearthly possession. When the spirit moves her, she speaks with the voice of angels and devils.

3 Pacifist or Homicidal -- Depending on the orientation and doctrine of the potential Prophet's masters, she may become a wrathful angel of vengeance or a messiah sent to assume the sins of the chosen.

4 Paranoia -- As the messengers of divine or infernal powers, a potential Prophet knows that she must constantly be alert to the forces of the adversary lurking behind every dark corner and shadow.

5 Schizophrenia -- The potential Prophet is in direct communication with her spiritual superiors at all times. The angels and devils that watch her may choose at any moment and through any medium to communicate unearthly directions or taunts.

6 Strong ESP: Second Sight -- It is a potential Prophet's nature to foresee the future and use that knowledge to further the goals of her divine or infernal masters. Those who complete this stage are gifted with four points of Strong ESP: Second Sight.

Adept Stages of Corruption Table

1 Animal Animosity -- The potential Adept's slowly growing link to the supernatural is somehow detectable to animals, making them uneasy and hostile.

2 Creature of Habit -- Not long after corruption begins, the potential Adept begins to forsake all other activity for research and study. They many suffer visibly if away from their dusty tomes and arcane formula. They usually attempt to bring them wherever they go.

3 Extremely Cautious -- Every occultist knows the danger of inaccurate research and imprecise ritual performance. One simple misstep will likely be the mystic's last. This attitude begins to creep into everything the potential Adept does. Ironically, incomplete research and rushed ritual is the very thing that corrupts many Adepts in the first place.

4 Paranoid -- The greatest fear of a potential Adept is that some occult rival will learn the secrets he has worked so long to uncover. They are covetous, secretive and suspicious to a fault.

5 Seepage Points -- The potential Adept's mystic link to the Seepage is a carefully nurtured and prized possession. This connection allows him to generate a single additional Seepage Point for the purpose of performing rituals.

6 Severed Ties -- At some point during the course of the potential Adept's corruption, he will decide that his mundane life is taking up too much time from his true calling. He will then cut himself off from anything that does not further his research.

Incarnate: Mutation

Mutation is a permanent physical change induced by Seepage. This is believed to only happen to the Incarnate. Although lore states otherwise, evidence has yet to surface to support it. Mutations occur slowly, but irreversibly. The Incarnate's own power slowly twist its body . . . the beast inside leaves its mark on the flesh. The processes of mutation seem to employ an inhuman form of regeneration -- instead of healing, it alters the body. Wolfen aspects may surface but still, a man cannot become wolf. Normally the mutation bends humans into Predators. Claws, fangs, additional mass, and fur, actually thick body-wide hair, have all been duly noted as common attributes. Rumor of sudden or periodic transformations are unjustified, as proven by extensive investigation on my part and by colleagues. Thus far, it has been determined that werewolves and other lycanthrope exist, but do not physically transform as fantasized in legend. They are Incarnate Predators projecting the Telepathic Illusion of wolfen transformation. Although wolfen or bestial mutation are the most common, they are by no means the full extent of paranormal mutations encountered.

Psychic Voids: Definition

Psychic Voids are entirely non-psychic individuals. They contribute nothing to the Seepage, nor do they possess any of the abilities most humans take for granted. ESP, hunches, and deja vu as experienced by the majority of the population are unattainable. Voids have no aura, and therefore cannot be "read" by other humans. This explains why a Void is difficult to understand or trust on an instinctual level. Regardless of a Void's actions, humans find it hard to trust anyone they cannot get a gut feeling about. Even those who have mastered their psychic potential will find it difficult to use their abilities on a Void. Its as if their mind is foreign to the energies being worked upon it, and that much harder to use as a result of it.

Being entirely separated from the Seepage leads to some odd occurrences within related events. For example, a Void cannot be possessed, for there is no connection with the Seepage and no way for a spirit to enter the Voids body. This same connection allows supernatural visions to enter one's mind, and therefore Telepathic Illusions are completely wasted upon a Void (although Phenomenon can be seen). A simple ghost would not be experienced by a Void, despite the shocking vision his comrades might share. Voids are limited to their five senses for information gathering, and are as unconcerned or unaware of the dark waters of the Seepage around him, as a rock on the bottom of the ocean is of the turbulence around it. Foci will find it difficult to effect a Void directly, since their powers would be stretched and weakened against those separated from their source. For example, a Focus would find it difficult to knock a Void down with telekinesis, but would not be at a disadvantage to lift a chair he was sitting on. The same is true for Psychics.

It can not be determined what results in the birth of a Void, they are as bizarre and indecipherable in that respect as Foci. On occasion, the rituals that are used to save victims of corruption can destroy all psychic potential within the human mind, though perhaps not unintentionally, resulting in a Void.

Psychic Sinks: Definition

A Psychic Sink, or Psink, is a bottomless pit for psychic energy. A Psink passively and continually absorbs psychic energy within a certain radius. This radius can also be actively expanded to several times its size by force of will. It is theorized that the Psink radiates the energy he absorbs, but it is difficult to determine. When aura reading, a Void is noticeable, but unreadable, while a Psink is hemisphere-shaped enigma. The abilities of a Psink (and disadvantages)

are shared by all those within his radius of influence, and all persons within that range will have no aura until outside of it (with the exception of Foci who will appear to be mundanes).

The Seepage, if it could, would be frightened of a Psink -- consistently pulling ambient energies into himself, for seemingly no end. A Psink lowers the paranormal energies within his radius. A Focus within that radius would find it increasing difficult to attempt to not only effect the Psink, but to invoke at all.

The Incarnate can and do fear Psinks, avoiding them entirely, or targeting them first if confrontation is inevitable. Foci feel similarly.

The Psychic's energies come from inside themselves, and therefore cannot be drained unless they attempt to use that power within a Psink's radius. Psychic capabilities do, however, become exceedingly difficult to use in a Psink's shadow. If a Psychic is required to do so, a Psink can be over-powered. They absorb psychic energies passively, and at a set rate. If a powerful Psychic pushes himself, it is possible to throw more energy at a Psink then he can handle. Any attempt of this sort, whether successful or not, is bound to leave the Psychic horribly exhausted. It is equally difficult to effect anyone near a Psink, for directed at him or not, any psychic energy attempting to operate within his radius will be absorbed.

Humans are often quite uncomfortable around Psinks, not only are they unreadable, but the ESP, hunches, and gut feelings (which constitute the untrained psychic abilities all humans posses) fail to work in the Psink's presence. Unintentionally, but unquestionably, Psinks take something away from mundanes, leaving a lessening or "graying" feeling in their wake.

Seepage manifestations are significantly affected by Psinks. Phenomena become vague feelings, and illusions fade from sight. Spirits of all sorts (being embodied of supernatural energies) can be weakened or destroyed by a Psink's proximity. And, the energy absorbing aspects of a Psink are cumulative.

<<YOU MIGHT NOT REALIZE IT, BUT YOU'VE PROBABLY MET A VOID BEFORE. EVER MEET SOMEONE THAT YOU JUST COULDN'T GET A FEEL FOR, SOMEONE THAT YOU DIDN'T TRUST, BUT WITH NO REAL REASON BEHIND IT? THAT MAY HAVE BEEN A VOID. THEIR TOTAL SEPARATION FROM THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUSNESS KEEPS US FROM HAVING EMPATHIC SENSATIONS ABOUT THEM, AND THAT LEADS TO A FEELING OF SEPARATION. THIS CAUSES A MAJORITY OF THE PUBLIC TO ALIENATE A VOID, WITHOUT EVER REALLY BEING AWARE THAT THEY ARE DOING IT. VOIDS ARE DIRECTLY EFFECTED BY THEIR NATURE AS WELL. BY NEVER EXPERIENCING A "GUT FEELING" OR A "HUNCH", THEY HAVE A HABIT OF RELYING ON LOGIC FOR THEIR DEDUCTIONS AND TEND TO BE LESS EMOTIONAL THAN MOST. OTHERS ARE ODDLY EMOTIONAL, LIKE THE GUY WHO WINDS UP LAUGHING AT A FUNERAL. MANY VOIDS HAVE LITTLE BELIEF OF THE SUPERNATURAL. AFTER ALL THEY CAN'T EVEN SEE A T1 (A COMMON MANIFESTATION), SO WHY SHOULD THEY BELIEVE? AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THIS CREATES UNIQUE ADVANTAGES AND HINDRANCES FOR THEM.

A PSINK IS A PSYCHIC BLACK-HOLE. THEY ABSORB ENERGY UNKNOWINGLY, AND WITHOUT TIRE. THE PERFECT GUY TO GO INVESTIGATING A HAUNTED HOUSE WITH, OF COURSE NOTHING SUPERNATURAL WILL HAPPEN . . . BUT THEN AGAIN, NOTHING SUPERNATURAL WILL HAPPEN (IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT). KNOW WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE? A PSINK AGAINST A GREY. I'D LOVE TO SEE HIS LITTLE GREY FACE AS HE TRIED TO CONTROL THE PSINK'S MIND, LITTLE BEADS OF SWEAT EMERGING FROM HIS OVER-SIZED HEAD. NATURALLY, THAT'S ASSUMING THEY'RE OUT THERE (GREYS, I MEAN . . .). MY THEORY ABOUT PSINKS IS THEY ARE A CREATION OF THE SUPERNATURAL. THE SEEPAGE IS A SENTIENT WORLD-MIND, RIGHT? IT'S WORKING ON OUR FEARS CREATING MONSTERS AND MADMEN, SPIRITS AND SPOOKS . . . WELL, I THINK THE PSINK IS CREATED OUT OF ITS OWN FEAR. PSINKS WHO SLOWLY CONSUME ITS ENERGIES (POETIC JUSTICE DON'T YOU THINK). BEYOND THE ADVICE IN THE TEXT, LET ME EXTEND ONE FINALLY THING TO YOU: DON'T GET TRIGGER HAPPY OR OVERLY FREAKED ABOUT A GUY WITH NO AURA. INCARNATE HAVE NO AURA, TRUE . . . BUT NEITHER DO ALIENS, VOIDS, AND ANYONE WITHIN X FEET OF A PSINK. SO LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP, OK?>>

THE MANIFESTATIONS

Divination: Definition

Although one of the more rare manifestations of Seepage, Divination is almost always significant. There are a number of locations and individuals known for their recurring but unpredictable visions. This manifestation results in sudden supernatural visions that provide actual, true information about a place, person, object or event, both past and future. Divinations "feel" different from illusions, but few are familiar enough with Seepage manifestations to know the difference. Ignoring a Divination might be dangerous, relying on a false Telepathic Illusion is usually deadly.

Divinations are functionally identical to the Psychic Disciplines Clairvoyance, Psychometry and Precognition. When Divination manifests, the GM or Player (as determined by the control roll) picks the most appropriate Discipline of the three and one character in the immediate area to receive the divine visions. The visions are resolved the same as the Psychic Disciplines would be (see Chapter 5: Psychics), except that the visions are automatically successful and do not require a Rhine test. 1SP gets the character a vision equivalent to the appropriate Lesser Discipline, and 2SP the Greater Discipline.

Telepathic Illusion: Definition

Telepathic Illusions are precisely that, illusions that can effect the human mind en masse. Thus, anything is possible: a cold spot in a room, a decrepit manor radiating despair, or bizarre and ethereal sounds. Most images are shadowy and unreal. Exacting and well defined images may be formed, although this is rare. Telepathic Illusions exist independently of any individual, yet they can only be sensed by minds capable of ESP and are often mistaken for hallucinations. Usually no physical evidence can be taken of their passing, and they cannot cause direct harm themselves. Nothing actually manifests physically. Of course, that is not to say they are not extremely frightening and realistic. Further, if the same Telepathic Illusion was seen by a group of persons, it is difficult to prove that something did not occur. Study shows Telepathic Illusions exist in lesser and greater manifestations.

Lesser illusions are rarely described precisely. Take the example of a haunted domicile. One who experiences this kind of illusion would feel and believe the supernatural and otherwise spectral manifestations within the house. But once outside of both the house and the illusion, the realness fades. The poor victim would remember his experience, but would find it difficult to determine what led to the conclusion of supernatural activity. The sights seen and sounds heard would suddenly seem inexplicable. This can be understood by examining the telepathic nature of the illusion. The lesser illusion reaches inside a victim's mind and inspires fear. It does not attempt the more difficult task of actually finding and tailoring an illusion that would both logically and emotionally do the same. This is especially true in the case of multiple observers, which most likely have varied phobias. This is not to say that the Seepage has localized intellect sufficient to conceive such a complex strategy but, like the spider whose web is composed of infinite beauty, it appears instinctual.

<<HEY COOL! IT'S SUPERNATURAL VR! THESE THINGS ARE DESCRIBED AS "UNABLE TO CAUSE DIRECT HARM," BUT WHAT ISN'T EXPLAINED IS THAT THEY ARE SIGNIFIERS OF HIGHER SEEPAGE ZONES. THAT OR THEY ARE PAIRED UP WITH SOMETHING THAT CAN HURT YOU. ABOUT HALF OF THE INCARNATE GUYS THAT HE TALKS ABOUT CAN GENERATE THESE, SEEMINGLY AT WILL. OF COURSE, IT IS THE NATURALLY OCCURRING TIS THAT ARE REALLY BEING DISCUSSED HERE, AND THOSE ARE FAIRLY SAFE AS LONG AS YOU KEEP YOUR COOL. TRY AND THINK OF IT AS A MOVIE, OR IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE IN A SUPERNATURAL AREA ALREADY . . . CONSIDER IT A CLUE APPLICATOR. MANY OF THE SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS ARE CREATED WITH TIS. IN THE WAKE OF HAUNTINGS AND OTHER SIMILAR EVENTS THERE IS ROUTINELY NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT IT. IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE WALLS THAT DRIP BLOOD ONLY DO SO ONLY IN YOUR HEAD. EVIL, ISN'T IT? NOT ONLY ARE YOU SCARED OUT OF YOUR MIND, BUT EVERYONE ELSE THINKS YOU'RE CRAZY.>>

Documented lesser Telepathic Illusions include: feeling the presence of the spirits in an Indian holy ground, a particular tree in a dark forest emanating something that can only be described as "evil", shifting shadows, odd lights, creaking haunting noises, strange smells, and any circumstance within which the emotions of the event were stronger than any sensory input.

A greater illusion can generally be determined by its clarity. In its wake, there is little to no question as to what the illusion was, and that illusion extremely difficult to deny or explain. The thrall of a greater illusion can also have a more powerful hold over the people witnessing it, inducing additional sensations with definition. With the exception of their greater clarity, greater illusions share all the properties of lesser illusions.

Examples of greater illusions include: actually speaking with a god, ghost or shade, a vision or waking dream, distinct voices, and any illusion that involves easily interpreted sensual input. These are rare and are often connected with the creation of ghosts.

TELEPATHIC ILLUSIONS

TIs fall into three rather distinct categories depending on the nature of the illusion that the manifestation creates: apparitions, mirages and vortices. This diversity makes Telepathic Illusions one of the most versatile and flexible manifestations. TIs can scare, disorient and mislead characters in an infinite number of ways. Even seasoned operatives will often find themselves caught off guard by a particularly vivid or terrifying illusion. The GM or player controlling the TI describes its appearance and controls the illusion through the life of the manifestation.

The number of Seepage Points poured into a Telepathic Illusion determines its lifespan. A 1SP illusion is fleeting and lasts only one round, a 2SP illusion will persist for up to 1D minutes, while 3SP ensure that the illusion will remain for a full hour.

APPARITION

Apparitions are TIs that possess the form of a creature or creatures, or more rarely an object. Primarily appearing as visual delusions, they can also incorporate sensations of touch, sound, smell, and taste. Examples include spectral figures, a momentary changing of one's own appearance (undertaking a demonic visage, coupled with a smell of brimstone), haunting voices, or phantom hounds. As with all TIs, the illusions occur only within the minds of those effected, and no direct harm can come from their passing.

MIRAGE

A mirage, as the name might suggest, is an environmental illusion, abstract and otherworldly in nature. A common TI in relation to haunted houses and religious figures. Bleeding walls or rocks, an unearthly fog, and the formation of an inexplicable cold spot are documented occurrences. Although the least direct of the supernatural visions, they can be most effective in altering the overall tone of a situation.

VORTEX

A vortex is a Telepathic Illusion that works directly on the senses rather than creating a particular vision. A vortex can throw off perspective, seem to twist objects out of shape, alter the sensation of gravity's pull, increase or decrease sound or light sensitivity, distort perception of size, or any other sensory adjustment. These have a tendency to be more bizarre than frightening, but have a powerful effect on those caught within their influence nonetheless.

Phenomenon: Definition

Phenomena are supernatural manifestations similar to Telepathic Illusions but with the addition that they may effect the physical world. Generally, manifestations of this sort can be determined by actual evidence of their passing: a spirit captured on a photograph, ectoplasm, fish falls or spontaneous fires, to name only a few examples. The ability of phenomena to effect the physical world makes them extremely dangerous. They are uncaring forces with neither bodies to stop nor conscience to hinder. Less harmful, and slightly more common are Phenomena that accompany Telepathic Illusions, the mind remembers a haunting spectre, while the photographic evidence shows only a humanoid glow.

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<<HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A FISH FALL? IF NOT, YOU'RE REALLY MISSING SOMETHING . . . I MEAN, YOU ARE STANDING THERE MINDING YOUR OWN, AND SUDDENLY THESE FISH START TO FALL OUT OF THE SKY. MAYBE NOT A LOT OF FISH, AND MAYBE NOT FOR LONG, BUT IT WAS DISTINCTLY RAINING FISH FOR A MINUTE THERE. THEN IT STOPS AND YOUR BRAIN STARTS REELING, LOGIC TRYING TO FORCE A PLAUSIBLE ANSWER ONTO YOUR LIPS. NOTIONS OF A GREAT WIND, POSSIBLY A TYPHOON, SLIDES ACROSS THE CANVAS IN YOUR HEAD. YOU CAN ALMOST SEE THIS BIG WATERSPOUT TWIST INTO THE SKY HURLING ALL OF THESE FISH INTO THE JET STREAM, WHERE THEY ARE CARRIED HUNDREDS OF MILES JUST SO THEY LAND ON YOUR HEAD . . . AND THEN YOU REALIZE HOW STUPID YOU'RE BEING. FISH FALLS ARE JUST ONE OF MANY PHENOMENON THAT CAN, AND DO, OCCUR ALL THE TIME, AND WE JUST DON'T HAVE AN EXPLANATION FOR THEM. LIKE THE FORCES OF NATURE, PHENOMENON ARE FORCES OF SUPERNATURE. THEY CAN RANGE FROM ENIGMATIC AND AMUSING, TO DEADLY. IN ALL OF THE READING THAT I'VE DONE, THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANY KIND OF CONSENSUS ON WHETHER PHENOMENON ARE A RANDOM SUPERNATURAL OCCURRENCE TO EXPEL ENERGY WHEN THE POOLED SEEPAGE GROWS TO HIGH, OR PURPOSEFUL EVENT DIRECTED BY FEAR. I LOOK AT IT AS BEING BOTH. I MEAN, DURING A STORM WE ALL KNOW THAT LIGHTNING DISCHARGES RANDOMLY, BUT YOU STILL WON'T CATCH ME RUNNING ACROSS A FIELD WAVING A FORK INTO THE SKY. OF COURSE, PHENOMENON GUIDED BY THE POWER OF THE INCARNATE OR A FOCUS CAN BE REALLY BAD NEWS.>>

CONSPIRACY X

PHENOMENA

Any time a Telepathic Illusion manifests, there is a chance that it will be accompanied by a Phenomenon to lend credibility and possibly evidence to witness' claims. If the Seepage level or less is rolled on one die, a Phenomenon manifests along with the TI. These phenomena are generally characterized by two distinctive traits. The first is an ability to be perceived by non-psychic means. This means that Voids will be able to sense the manifestation. Mechanical and electronic devices will also be able to record evidence of the Phenomena, recording the vague image of the "ghost ship" that witnesses saw plain as day, for example. The second trait of Phenomena is considerably more strange -- the appearance in many cases of ectoplasm. A clear or slightly discolored slime or film is sometimes found in areas where the supernatural has manifested. It may even cover witnesses or entire buildings. The ectoplasm evaporates within an hour after the Phenomenon disappears, leaving no trace to be analyzed.

Many Phenomena manifestations are routinely encountered by those who investigate the paranormal and arcane. A few of the most common are detailed below. All are manifestations frequently associated with both the presence of a Focus and recurring supernatural activity in Pools and Loci.

TELEPORTATION

Teleportation is the spontaneous movement of an object or objects from one point to another without traveling the corresponding distance in between. The most common result of an uncontrolled teleportation is a fish fall, which is a sudden anomalous rain of small animals or other organic matter from the sky. Falls happen as often out of a clear and cloudless sky as they do during a storm, and though fish are a common precipitant, so are frogs, insects, worms, salamanders and grain. Teleportation is also to blame in many cases of displaced animals, that is, kangaroos found in the American mid-west, panthers roaming the English country side and alligators in the sewer systems of large northern cities.

In low Seepage areas, teleportation is only capable of moving a few small animals or a single object. In highly supernatural zones, a huge number of small creatures, or even a human could be teleported. Distance is not an obstacle for the psychic nature of the supernatural, but for some reason organic matter seems to be much more prone to teleportation than inorganic. It is also important to remember that although there are no strict limitations, unique objects cannot be teleported (a Focus could not conjure the Hope diamond). Also, the objects are teleported, not spontaneously generated. They came from somewhere and depending on what they are, they might be missed.

After determining that a particular Invocation will result in a teleportation, the player and GM must roll off before determining who will control the manifestation. The winner of this die roll (this time GM wins ties) decides what exactly is going to teleport into the area. The winner of the control roll then gets to decided exactly where. 1SP can teleport several (up to a few dozen) very small animals or objects. 2SP can teleport a single larger (Size 2) animal or few hundred small items or creatures. These latter objects may appear over a period of several rounds or minutes. 3SP can teleport a large creature, even a human, several smaller animals or a legion of tiny animals that may continue to appear for up to a half hour.

BALL LIGHTNING

The presence of ball lightning has always left mystery in the wake of its passing. It has been described as a ball of light several inches to several feet in diameter, varying widely in color. Often seen during or just before large storms, they appear as flying spheres ignoring the

pull of gravity and wind's current. In areas of relative low paranormal activity, ball lightning is usually harmless, either dispersing upon contact with a physical object or passing through it intangibly. In greater Seepage areas, ball lightning has been known to explode violently, causing severe damage.

Once manifest, ball lightning will appear suddenly and float slowly (no more than 10m per round) as directed by the controlling player or GM. It last for 1D rounds per level of Seepage in the area. At the end of this time, the controller rolls 1D. If the result is greater than the level of Seepage in the area, the ball lightning fizzles out and disappears. If the roll is equal to or less than the Seepage Level, however, the ball lightning explodes violently (untamped Blast Rating equal to the Seepage Level). Only 1SP is needed to manifest ball lightning. If a Focus invokes more than one ball, a separate control roll must be made for each.

TELEKINESIS

Except for it's duration, the supernatural manifestation of telekinesis is nearly identical to the Psychic Discipline of the same name. Unlike Psychic Disciplines, supernatural telekinesis is automatically successful and does not require a Rhine test. The controller may spend SP as if they were Psi Points as described in the Telekinesis Psychic Discipline in Chapter 5: Psychics. In addition, any TK manifested will last for 1D rounds per Seepage level.

LEVITATION

Levitation is a very specific but powerful variation of telekinesis and an excellent example of how the chaotic power of the supernatural can be much more powerful than psychic abilities. When invoked it can cause the Focus, or someone near the Focus to raise into the air and float about slowly (5m/round tops). Sometimes this is controlled by the Focus, others times it is not, resulting in a chaotic flight which will leave the victim thankful that it was not very fast. When a Focus invokes a levitation, the winner of the control roll gets to pick who in the immediate area is going to levitate. 1SP will levitate a person for 1D rounds. Each round, the Focus and the GM roll off to see who directs the levitation for that round (the victim's vote is tie breaker).

PYROKINESIS

Like telekinesis, supernatural pyrokinesis is almost identical to the Pyrokinesis Psychic Discipline. Also like paranormal TK, supernatural pyrokinesis is automatically successful and does not require a Rhine test. 1SP invokes Lesser Pyrokinesis, 2SP invokes Greater Pyrokinesis or 1D simultaneous Lesser manifestations, 3SP creates 1D Greater Pyrokinesis manifestations or 2D Lesser manifestations.

CIRCLE

Circles are unique manifestations of the supernatural. They generate a momentary bubble of force that leaves its mark on the surrounding terrain. This power becomes most noticeable when vegetative matter is about, presenting itself as the more famously known crop circles. However, circles are always just circles, and therefore cannot explain all the variations labeled crop circles. Although harmless, circles can even leave their imprint on durable substances (circular cracks spreading out through pavement). Oddly, what this power seems to indicate is a failure of a more significant Phenomenon. It is as if the supernatural suddenly wells up, but then fails to take form and spirals out, leaving a Circle in its wake. Each SP spent on a Circle increases the diameter by ten meters.

Ghosts: Definition

Sometimes a particularly violent death of an individual leaves a powerful impression upon the Seepage. If the individual is a Foci, his death can lead to the creation of a ghost. Impressions of this ilk can exist for undetermined periods, possessing a quasi-intelligence and sense of self. Normally, the surviving personality is different from that of the dead man. Sometimes, the two personalities form something of a hybrid . . . the ghost retains only some of the predecessor's traits. Keep in mind that the originator of the psyche is now dead, and what is left is a supernatural attempt to recreate it. These are sentient Telepathic Illusions, which makes them more dangerous and unpredictable. They can devise purpose and goal, and can interact significantly with humans and the environment. They still lack the ability to touch the physical world, however, so any danger they present is through trickery. Ghosts cannot be harmed in traditional ways, only rituals may be used to effect them. A binding or banishment is most effective.

Some ghosts bond themselves to a person, place, or object. The area to which a ghost bonds is called a haunting (likewise a person or place is haunted). It is difficult to say whether the spirit can will the bonding to take place, but some (in fact, most) ghosts bond upon their creation. Theories hold that a bond is made to supply a constant flow of Seepage energy to the spirit. Without supernatural energy to sustain them, a ghost cannot manifest, and may eventually disperse, or are destroyed.

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I must note that although I have never personally witnessed such an event (nor have I spoken with any who has), many records mentioning ghost sightings state that the ghosts appear to be acting out the scenes of their own demise. There might be a goal to be achieved by this replaying of its mortal death. A better explanation is that the event is actually a pattern woven into the Seepage similar to certain spell-like rituals.

Poltergeist: Definition

The creation of a poltergeist is so similar to that of a ghost that finding a reason for their difference is uncertain. Some likely factors are high vs. low background Seepage levels, the means of death, and whether a Foci or one of the Incarnate was involved. A poltergeist is similar to a ghost in all respects, with the exception of its additional ability to invoke and control manifestations as one of the Incarnate. The spirit does remain limited by the ambient supernatural energies of its environment.

Most poltergeists will be found within a high Seepage area. Normally the manifestations are more frightening than damaging (extinguishing a candle flame, knocking things off of a shelf, or shutting and locking a door). Their actions are usually a series of childish tricks and cunnings. Some, however, have been known to be quite powerful, capable of violent or even deadly force. Telekinesis, Telepathic Illusion, and possession (for the most powerful) are their normal range of abilities. Being essentially a "living" Phenomenon, these entities effectively feed off pools of Seepage energy. Therefore, any supernatural activity has a chance of drawing their attention, and a Focus within a poltergeist's domain will invariably attract its attention. A spirit within proximity to a Focus, or to a setting with a high degree of supernatural activity, can manifest more strongly, and with greater frequency.

Throughout history, poltergeist have played many roles. The weaker ones have appeared as elves, goblins, or tortured spirits playing tricks on those unsuspecting. The strongest have bent their twisted psyches around other human concepts, and appeared as angels and demons, or even the gods themselves.

<<THROUGHOUT THE CHAPTERS ABOUT T1S AND PHENOMENON, GHOSTS AND POLTERGEISTS ARE DISCUSSED IN SOME DEPTH. SINCE THERE IS ACTUALLY VERY LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE ENTITIES AND 1 GROUP THEM UNDER THE CATEGORY OF "SPIRITS". GHOSTS CREATE ILLUSIONS, AND POLTERGEISTS PRODUCE BOTH ILLUSIONS AND PHENOMENON. IN TRUTH, THEY ARE SENTIENT ENTITIES EMBODIED OF PURE SUPERNATURAL ENERGY, WHICH MAKES THEM EXCEPTIONAL MANIPULATORS OF PARANORMAL POWER. UNLIKE A FOCUS, THEY CANNOT GENERATE, NOR DRAW IN ANY OF THEIR OWN ENERGY, MEANING THEY ARE LIMITED TO THE ENERGIES AMBIENT WITHIN THEIR ENVIRONMENT. LIMITED . . . OR ENHANCED. 1 THEORIZE THAT IF A GHOST (WITH ONLY THE ABILITY FOR T1S) WERE TO GAIN ACCESS TO A HIGHER SUPERNATURAL AREA, THE SPIRIT WOULD BE ABLE TO MANIFEST PHENOMENA. OF COURSE, YOU'D HAVE TO GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH A SPIRIT TO PROVE IT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, 1 HAVE A HUGE LINE OF OCCULTISTS JUST DYING TO VOLUNTEER TO DO THE RESEARCH . . . (CHUCKLE).>>

THE RITUALS

Ritual: Definition

A ritual is a tool used to guide, strengthen, and specify supernatural manifestations. Patterns can be woven into the Seepage in order to manipulate the supernatural. True belief, honed to an edge unattainable in normal circumstances, is required in order to control the paranormal energies. Properly enacted rituals can summon and command the spirits, divine the future, and other feats of power. Failure can lead to death or the loss of your soul. A warning to those who decide to walk this path, do not tread here without first arming yourself with knowledge. The path is perilous and unforgiving and one wrong step can spell your doom.

Rituals are not experiments. Experiments may be conducted during the research of a particular ritual. But by the time an occultists attempts to actually perform the rite, belief in its success must be absolute. Occultists often spend years studying a single ritual in order to achieve the knowledge and mental conditioning required to perform it. Many theorize that the incantations, physical gestures, and mystic words used in the ceremonies have no significance or power in themselves. Rather they are tokens needed to instill the mindset necessary for a success. Yet knowing the procedure of a ritual is useless without the skill in the arcane arts necessary to execute it correctly.

The site of a ritual is exceptionally important. Even the most perfectly executed ritual will fail if the area in which it is performed does not contain the necessary threshold of power. The threshold of a ritual is the level of supernatural energy required for any chance of success. The location in which a ritual is performed should also be secure. Once the

ritual has begun, interruptions can lead to disastrous and even deadly outcomes. As rituals can take anywhere from minutes to days, the site must be chosen wisely.

A ritual has three types of participants -- a master, the disciples, and neophytes. The master leads the ceremony. He is the ritual's point of convergence, and assuming it is successful, the forces summoned will be under his control. If they fail, of course, he is the one most at risk. He plays the most pivotal role, and should be the most versed in the proper procedures. Rituals often require a total of five disciples. If they are all trained properly in the meditational state of the ritual, they work to increase the Seepage contributed. It might be said that they act as a single powerful Focus. A full five disciples may produce this effect, a greater number will not add anymore power. Learned disciples can help a ritual achieve its threshold, inadequate ones can lead to destruction. For rituals are indeed the sum of all their parts. If any of the disciples waiver in faith or function, the ritual will fail. The final members of a ritual are the neophytes. Their role is minimal, but their timing and duties are still crucial. Neophytes assist the casting -- they chant mantras, light candles, turn spell-book pages, and in general make sure the mood and timing of the ritual is kept consistent. A ritual can certainly be performed without their presence, but well versed neophytes can lessen the threat of failure.

Failure to successfully perform a ritual can lead to terrifying results. In the early stages, the threat is lessened because the supernatural has not been fully summoned. An interruption at this time simply means beginning again. It is when the ritual is approaching the pinnacle that it becomes crucial that the paranormal forces are controlled. Here a mistake can kill. Failed rituals unleash the power they were attempting to harness. Any form of Phenomenon can manifest, independent of any control. The higher the ritual's threshold, the more powerful the manifestations resulting from its failure. Rooms can burst into flame, windows can break, and men can die at the hands of the paranormal outburst.

The unique mental state needed to perform a ritual allows the participants to touch and mold the supernatural to their desires. A failed ritual allows the Seepage to use that same channel to force its dark waters into their souls, corrupting their minds. Normally this corruption only effects the participants, but if an uninvolved Focus is close enough to contribute, even unknowingly, to the ritual the rampaging energies can force themselves upon his unsuspecting mind.

The manifestations and potential for corruption exist in all ritual fiascoes, but if a spirit summoning was attempted, it presents an additional threat. To lose control of a summoned spirit is to give it freedom, leaving those involved at its mercy. The spirit could be macabre and mischievous, or deadly . . . it depends on the spirit summoned. In a failed ritual, the summoned spirit is not always the spirit called. Regardless, the spectre will be saturated with power gained from the ritual's required threshold, and most certainly will resist any attempt at banishing it.

Rituals are magics not to be trifled with. They combine the chance to tame the chaotic forces of man's faith with the fear of simply unleashing that force unrestricted. They are a path only for the dedicated and learned, and even then rituals can result in dire consequences. The attempt of such ceremonies by amateurs or dabblers is at best a waste of their time. At worst, they risk the loss of their soul.

Generally, resolving a ritual attempt is simplicity itself. Any requirements of the specific ritual itself first must be met, such as number of participants or time of year. Second, the Seepage threshold must be met, which is simply a matter of comparing the current number of SP in the area to the number required by the ritual. Finally the ritual itself must be performed correctly, which is simply a test of the Master's skill in the particular rite against the Df of the ritual. If all these conditions are met, the ritual is successful. If they are not met, the ritual fails. The consequences of that are usually dire.

When a ritual fails, for whatever reason, before the requisite threshold of supernatural energy is achieved, the rite simply fails with no further detrimental affects aside from wasted time and effort. If the necessary amount of Seepage was present however, it is a whole different story.

First, the Seepage energy collected and assembled for the purpose of the ritual is released in a churning chaotic mass upon the assembled occultists. The GM must immediately spend a number of SPs equal to the ritual's threshold on immediate supernatural manifestations. It is highly recommended that the results of these manifestations be made as harmful to the ritual participants as possible. The paranormal energy may manifest through Phenomena linked to the location, or randomly as determined by the Focus Invocation Table (see above). If the GM chooses to roll on the Invocation Table, she may roll three results and choose any or all as manifestations, as she wishes.

When the smoke clears from the manifestations, any participants left alive risk corruption. Each individual in the area (including any Foci in the radius of a Pool or Locus), whether an active participant or not, must test their Willpower against the Seepage Level of the area plus 2. Failure means that the individual has been corrupted by the supernatural. Don't feel bad for them, they were warned.

TYPES OF RITUALS

Rituals stem from the occult, traditional beliefs and religious practices from hundreds of cultures. The individual performance, and the details of each is unique as a fingerprint. However, many rituals fall into larger categories which summarize their overall effect. All rituals must be learned on a very specific basis, an occultist can spend a career researching different types of summonings. Although a single summoning does not necessarily call forth only one specific spirit, but it is limited to a single kind of spirit (a shaman summoning ritual to bring forth any number of forest spirits). An incomplete listing follows.

BLESSINGS

Blessings are rituals that alter the luck of the recipient for the better. This is a subtle effect -- in most cases it is hard to pin-point luck to a metaphysical ceremony. Similarly, it is fully possible for someone to simply "get lucky" and believe to be blessed. These rituals includes prayers and generalized protections commonly found as part of religious and mystic traditions around the world. The recipient can be the ritual master, another individual, a building, or an entire army or town. Most blessings have an extended, but not infinite, duration and must be occasionally renewed. Talismans are often used as a physical embodiment of the ritual, and although they are normally just bundles of roots, powders and minerals wrapped in a specially prepared cloth, the blessing may hinge on the talisman's continued existence. Additionally, the blessing must be performed within the proximity of the recipients, which leads to the limitation of meeting the ritual's threshold, especially if the recipients can not be brought to a Seepage Pool.

RITUAL BLESSING

Df2   Threshold 1   Length: 1 minute

Effect: A successful blessing bestows upon one of the participants a bonus to Luck Rolls until the following dusk or dawn, whichever comes first. While the bless is active the character may add the Seepage Level of the area to any Luck tests he needs or chooses to make.

CURSE

Curses have a long-standing mythos surrounding them that can strike doubt into even the most stone-hearted cynic. However, often they are blamed for many things that are not within their power. Oddly, the truth is simple. A curse is essentially the opposite of a blessing -- it alters the luck of the recipient for the worse. For example, a village placed under a curse by a powerful adept may suffer from a fatal epidemic and might believe the disease to be the direct product of the curse. This is not true, a curse cannot cause the disease, but a course of unlikely and "unlucky" events can be set into action that lead to a plague bearer to come to town. In most other respects, curses are identical to blessings.

RITUAL CURSE

Df2   Threshold 1   Length: 1 minute

Effect: The successful curse brings about exactly the opposite results as a successful blessing. Until the next dusk or dawn, the victim of the curse will suffer a penalty equal to the Seepage level of the area to any Luck tests she makes.

DIVINATION

Divination rituals are one of the most common rituals in existence. Hundreds of variations exists in every culture on every continent. These rituals range from astrology, rune casting, and the I-Ching, to reading the cracks on animal bones in a fire or rooting around in pig entrails. Regardless of the actual method used, all these rituals concern themselves with one thing, foretelling the future.

RITUAL DIVINATION

Df2   Threshold 5   Length: 3 hours

Effect: A successful divination grants the occultist a precognitive vision. The occultist may use the Psychic Discipline Greater Precognition with guaranteed success.

SUMMONING

A summoning is a beckoning of sorts, most commonly used to call forth a spirit. The ritual pulls forth a specific entity from the Seepage and bring it to the ritual site. It is important to note that it does not lend any control over the spirit (see Binding), nor can it send it away (banishment). While most rituals must have their recipient present, or in close proximity, summonings can work over long distances. Combined with other rituals, summoning can lead to some powerful and versatile manipulations of supernatural power. The Difficulty and threshold of a summoning is directly proportional to the power of the spirit invoked.

SUMMON SPIRIT OF THE DEAD

Df3   Threshold 7   Length: 3 hours

Effect: The completion of a successful spirit summoning causes the desired spirit to manifest itself in the presence of the assembled occultists. In most cases the spirit will remain incorporeal, but it is likely to make it's presence known in other ways. A typical summoned spirit is usually capable of generating telepathic illusions and often possesses a few other powers. The ritual grants them 7SP of power to manifest these powers with. If the occultists have not already begun a binding ritual, the spirit's reaction to being summoned will depend on it's nature and personality, but is likely to be less than friendly.

SUMMON INFERNAL POWER

Df5   Threshold 15   Length: 8 hours

Effect: This ritual is the life's goal of many a deranged occultist or Adept. The summoning intends to bring for a spirit of extraordinary magnitude, whose powers are far beyond those of "typical" ghosts and spirits. And if successful that is exactly what will manifest, a Spirit of Infernal Power generally has nearly every Incarnate power available to it and 15SP to spend. If a Bind Infernal Power ritual is not already underway, there is likely to be hell to pay, literally.

BINDING

Binding is a powerful ritual used to paranormal bond two or more people together, or to literally bind another intellect to the ritual master's will. Although there are obvious possibilities presented in binding humans, these rituals are more commonly used in order to control spirits. When and if the binding is lifted, the victim will regain control of themselves, possibly with full awareness of their time lost. This can lead to some bitter enemies in both the supernatural and natural worlds.

Spirit binding can be enacted upon a previously summoned spirit, or one already present due to a haunting or Pool. They are used to temporarily enslave a spirit to the ritual master's bidding. Spirits' connection to the Seepage make them excellent manipulators of its power and a bound spirit can perform a wide range of supernatural tasks for its master. Using such power, however, requires performing three rituals successfully -- summoning, binding, and banishment. This multiple task creates a greater chance of error. Bound spirits may seem eager to perform the commands of its master, or they may perform reluctantly. Rest assured, they enjoy having their hand forced as little as any other sentient creature, and given the chance, they will turn the situation to their favor at the expense of the former master.

RITUAL BIND SPIRIT OF THE DEAD

Df3   Threshold 2   Length: 30 minutes

The moment a binding ritual is initiated, and lasting until the ritual is finished the spirit is bound and may not take any action except generating telepathic illusions in an attempt to interfere with the ritual. If the ritual is completed successfully, the occultist performing or leading the ritual has bound the spirit to his will. He may command it to take any action within it's power that he wishes. This control will last until the following dusk or dawn, at which point the spirit regains control of it's actions unless another binding is performed. Once a spirit is free of a binding it is almost definitely going to to everything within it's power to avenge itself on the offending occultists. Note that this ritual is only effective at binding Spirits of the Dead and will be ineffectual against more powerful manifestations such as spirits of Infernal Power.

RITUAL BIND ZOMBIE

Df3   Threshold 6   Length: 4 hours

Effect: The creation of zombies does not involve actually raising the dead, as is believed in common folklore, but in fact is a powerful binding effective against living humans. The rite must be performed on a person present, though not necessarily willing, at the ritual. If successful the individual's

personality and will to the point that he will only respond to the commands of the "zombie master". The state of trance in which a zombie exists increases the difficulty of any Agility tests by one DL and makes it impervious to being Stunned or KO'd, though damage is taken and resolved as a normal human. The zombie ritual is a powerful binding whose effects will last as long as the zombie master lives.

BANISHMENT

Banishment rituals attempt to disperse the supernatural effects of a ritual or spirit. This essentially destroys the pattern or impression that gave the manifestation its long term effect. After the ritual is complete, the banishment takes place instantly (wards offer a long term resistance to the supernatural). A banishment is not guaranteed to work. If the ritual it is trying to disrupt is too strong, it may have no effect at all.

An excorism, or banishment of a spirit, destroys its current manifestation. Regardless how much a demonic spirit might believe it comes from a lower plane, that dimension doesn't exist. Banishing the demon doesn't send it anywhere, it disperses it. This does not prevent that same demon from being summoned again, because the act of performing that summoning redefines that spirit from the Seepage's vague memory, literally recreating the spirit. Banished spirits are effectively "dead", until they are summoned again. Many spirits will flee, if possible, even leaving a high Seepage area for a low one, rather than face extermination by banishment. Binding the spirit will prevent this inconvenient exodus.

BANISH SPIRIT OF THE DEAD

Df3   Threshold 2   Length: 1 hour

Effect: This ritual can be used either to banish a summoned spirit before it becomes unruly or to rid a haunted location or possessed individual of an unwanted spirit (not that many spirits are wanted). If ritual of binding has not be performed to control the targeted spirit it will do everything within it's power to interrupt the banishment. If the ritual is successful, the supernatural energy that empowers and comprises the spirit is dispersed completely.

INFECTION

Infection is one of the few means through which people may become corrupted by the Seepage. Incarnate are often familiar with this ritual and use it to create Forsaken, and occasionally another Incarnate. Predators have versions of this ritual running in the back of their mind, knowing it on an instinctual level. Vampiric blood-letting and the Wendigo flesh-eating rituals are both prime examples.

RITUAL INCARNATE INFECTION

Df2   Threshold 3   Length: 10 minutes

Effect: When one of the Incarnate successfully performs an Infection Ritual, the intended victim of the ritual (who must be present, though not by any means willing) must make a test to avoid corruption. This test is resolved the same as that of an occultist who fails to perform a ritual correctly.
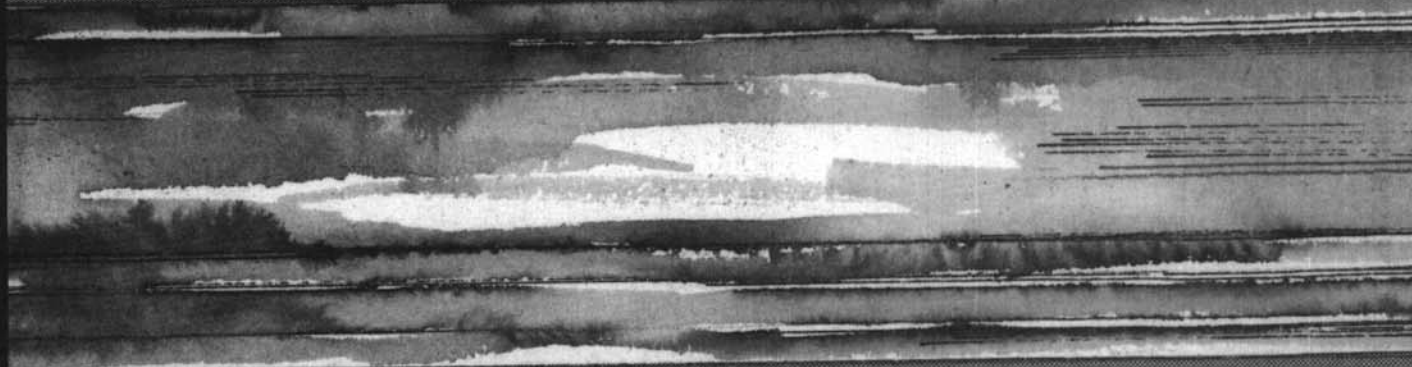
CHAPTER 7
EXTRATERRESTRIALS

"So, are the three of you brothers or something? I mean, you guys look so much alike."

I watched for their reaction, but there was none. I couldn't see the glare that I knew they were giving me from behind their shades. I didn't turn my head to look at the one sitting next me. He was just like the two across from me. There was little human about them, except their appearance.

"So, they didn't teach you guys a sense of humor in the gene vats, eh?"

The one directly across from me (he never told me his name, so I just called him Hans) spoke.

"We aren't clones, but you know that. Dr. Boland, this will be a much nicer trip if you just remain quiet."

I just didn't get it, so many people had died trying to get their hands on the embryos I was carrying, and these creatures were what the embryos became. They were so cold and emotionless. I really couldn't fathom their intentions, but I didn't think the welfare of the human race figured into them. They didn't like us and only disguised themselves to look like us for easy infiltration.

It all reminded me of the experiments back home in Germany during World War Two. The goal was the creation of Die Ubermenschen, the super soldiers. In their human disguises, the three 'men' sharing the cabin with me epitomized the goal of those projects. They were perfect warriors. Perhaps that's what the U.S. military was intending, at least the part of the military that Black Book owned. There was a time when I too would have been impressed by their warlike attitude and awesome fighting ability. But I was all too aware that they were not human, and that their interest in killing humans and ensuring the survival of the embryos had nothing to do with loyalty or nationalism or any of the other human beliefs that motivated my colleagues in the The Black Book, or The Reich for that matter.

I was sure it all has to do with some hidden agenda that Black Book was too blind to see. It was unfortunate that I only recently learned that I really want nothing to do with the whole situation, as I was powerless to do anything about it. The best I could hope for, was that the whole thing went off without a hitch and I got as far away from these things as possible.

I fumbled around for my lighter, my lucky lighter, but I couldn't find it anywhere.

"Boland, what are you doing?"

I was surprised to hear a voice, he must of noticed me getting twitchy from lack of nicotine.

"When I left my office, I must have forgotten my lucky lighter. I'm worried that something will go wrong without it. Besides, I really need to smoke."

I realized as I spoke that they would never understand the concept of a lucky lighter. They just stared at me blankly, offering nothing to the conversation. By this time I was really going crazy.

"Look, I don't care if the three of you come with me, but I've got to smoke. Now I don't have my lighter, so we have to go to the dinning car to get matches. While we're there we can eat too. And that will get us out of this stuffy compartment for a while."

I stood up, believing that I had convinced them. Who was I kidding?

"Sit down Boland, this is not a school trip. You're not going anywhere."

I wished I was three times bigger and 40 years younger. Then, I could've taught the hulking jerk a lesson. But there was little I could do other than use words.

"You three may not need to eat, sleep or suffer from any addictions, and life may be grand on your home planet. But right now you're on Earth and your survival depends on the cooperation of humans. So you better get used to the fact that we eat, drink too much, and go to the bathroom.

"Now, I'm going to go have a smoke, and then I'm going to get something to eat. If you three think differently, go a head and try to stop me. But I warn you, if you try to stop me I'll scream and carry on and draw attention to the three giant brutes accosting a little old man. So if you want this to go smoothly, you'll let me walk out this door."

With that, Hans stood up. It hurt my neck to stare up at him. I was so scared I started shaking.

"Ok old man, but I'm going with you."

"Suit yourself, Hans. Have you ever had a cigarette?"

THE HERMES SYSTEM

HERMES is the Aegis code name for their secure communications network and database system. The system was built on the cutting edge of technology, and through Aegis' exceptional contacts in the defense industry and the resources it can muster, has remained years ahead of consumer and even conventional military capabilities. Primarily developed to aid in the dissemination of information among cells, the system has grown to be a repository of knowledge for Aegis, and includes advanced communications capabilities. In recent years, the system been supplemented by an almost-intelligent database search and retrieval system, allowing agents to quickly scan, cross-reference, and collate information. Through HERMES, agents can access any information on any subject that Aegis has observed or studied. To maintain and expand the database, agents are required by protocol to log any new information they discover.

Accessible only through dedicated hardware terminals, HERMES security has never been breached, and it is theorized that it is impenetrable. Special protocols must be followed to gain access to the network. Until recently, this took the form of computer-like terminals which required retinal and voice scans to activate. These terminals were imbedded with an expert-system that monitored a user's "style" for consistency. These devices were superseded by the newer HERMES-links introduced in the early 90's. Every agent is now issued one of these links, roughly the size and shape of a beeper. They are intentionally designed to appear inconspicuous under normal scrutiny, to operate as a normal beeper when not properly activated, and to self-destruct if tampered with. Instead of retinal scans, the device uses an advanced thermal scan to identify the blood-vessel patterns in the user's hand.

Through the HERMES links, agents can access the HERMES database, send voice and data messages to other agents in their cell, and broadcast information to all of Aegis. When activated, the device shows a high-resolution color display for text or graphics. When entering messages or reports, the link provides chord-style one-hand "keyboard" that is surprisingly easy to learn. Most agents are as proficient with it as a normal computer keyboard. This allows the links to be used in public without attracting undue attention. An artificial intelligence program assembles answers to HERMES queries as they are posed, incorporating whatever text and graphical data the AI considers appropriate, and in many cases links to related topics are suggested. Each time an agent asks a particular question, she may get a different answer, because the system synthesizes its response based upon its continuously updated database and the context of the query. For the die-hards, old-style terminals are also available for installation at the cell's base.

One thing an agent cannot do, directly or indirectly, is contact other Aegis cells, as this would constitute a violation of the cell system. HERMES also will not, under any circumstances, divulge which individual or cell was the ultimate source of any particular data. Finally, HERMES will never report on the nature of its own security. Although everyone indoctrinated into Aegis is taught that the system is absolutely secure, these security measures are not detailed. Somewhere there must exist the actual database, and some highest ranking Aegis directors that can access all of it, but if this is the case, it is one of the few secrets Aegis keeps from its agents. Because of each agents' level of access to this extensive and highly sensitive information, Aegis spares no expense on security. The system has never been compromised -- and must never be compromised.

The HERMES links are the one and only piece of equipment that Aegis provides to its agents. When a new cell is created, new links must be ordered by the founder. These devices arrive inconspicuously by express mail, and until activated, function as normal beepers. The initial activation consists of binding each link to an agent: although any agent can use any link, each link can only go through the

binding procedure once. This procedure requires the presence of both the founder and the new agent. After certain input codes are entered by the founder, the unit records the new agent's thermal scan and other identifying features, and logs him on the system as a valid HERMES user. By the nature of this protocol, there can only be as many valid users as there have been links issued.

Loosing a link is a "bad thing". Lost links should be reported immediately and are shunted to one of the false HERMES networks. These networks appear to provide much of the same information that HERMES does, but data is subtly altered or omitted, making it worthless. The agent will receive a new link in a few weeks. There is much speculation as to the reason for this delay, for as far as anyone can tell, there is no reason for it.

HERMES DOWNLOAD

Over the years, Aegis agents have collected reams of actual and purported information about extraterrestrial visitors to Earth. Among the aliens, three races in particular stand out: The Greys, The Atlanteans and the Saurians. A HERMES summary inquiry reveals the following.

>HERMES QUERY: VISITORS, GREYS

87,405 matches found. <Summary> available.

>SUMMARY

Visitors, Greys. Summary.

// Summary of Aegis knowledge of the extraterrestrial beings known as "the Greys". //

The Greys are a race of extraterrestrial origin that possess extraordinary psychic abilities. The **<first documented appearance of Greys>** is dated 19 May 1937. As their 'language' is entirely psychic, only **<trained psychics>** can communicate directly with them. They can <read> and **<project thoughts>**, which allows them to communicate with non-psychics, though establishing this type of communication is rare and **<hazardous>**. They will avoid confrontation by any means available, but are extremely dangerous when cornered. **<Time loss>** is often indicative of the presence of Greys. Greys appear as 4-5 foot tall humanoid beings with smooth **<gray skin>** and large heads. They have large **<black composite eyes>**, no nose and a slit-like mouth that is used mainly for breathing. They have been observed making dolphin-like whistling and hooting noises when they are in physical pain.

> FIRST DOCUMENTED APPEARANCE OF GREYS

//Aegis Case File: Disappearance of Watch team, extraterrestrial presence.//

Case File: 102.34.244.033.89

Case Date: 19 May 1937   Report Date: 37 June 1944

Case Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

Case Brief: Disappearance of psi-war recruiting team traced to appearance of extraterrestrial sentient creatures.

Case Report: Recent examination of a Watch report dated from 1937 has led Aegis to believe it is the first reported appearance of the Greys. The circumstances of the original team's disappearance and

subsequent recovery is typical of early Grey encounters. The Greys have since become more careful not to attract attention to themselves. Original report text follows:

"A psi-war team was recruiting in New Orleans, LA. HQ reported them missing on 19 May 1937 and sent a retrieval team after them. The retrieval team eventually secured all eight members of the recruiting team. Of these eight, five were dead of exposure to the elements, one had been fatally hit by a train, one had suffered fatal burns and the last was fatally mutilated. During the course of its investigation, the retrieval team of six suffered three casualties and one member is missing."

"Detailed analysis of the [break]

>TIME LOSS, SUMMARY

Time Loss, indexed to Visitors, Greys. Summary.

// Report of time-loss is indicative of Grey presence. //

Individuals experiencing time-loss should suspect the involvement of Greys. Greys have the ability to 'blank' an individual's mind, during which time the subject receives no sensory stimulus and does not notice the passage of time. Persons so affected can be subject to dangerous situations by their condition, such as when operating a vehicle. Greys appear to have little regard for this unintentional but deadly side effect. The duration of the time loss phenomenon can be as little as a few moments, or as much as several hours, depending on the type of situation. Even longer occurrences, up to a week, are more likely in the event of an abduction.

>PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION, SUMMARY

Physical Description of Greys. Summary.

//Summary of 46 individual reports citing Grey physical appearance.//

Average height: 135 cm (4'5")

Average mass: 37 kg (81 lb., Earth gravity)

Appearance: Short humanoid with smooth, thick, gray skin. Eyes are black, revealing composite structure under close examination. Limbs are jointed like a primate, and they walk upright. Hands have five digits including an opposable thumb. Feet have two toes, with ridges that appear to be additional toes under casual observation. Greys do not wear clothing or other adornments, and are rarely in possession of physical objects.

See also: <physiology>, <technology>, <behavior>, <culture>

Bibliography: <referenced reports>

>SEE ALSO

Summary Mode detected. Grey Physiology, Summary.

//Physiology of Greys based on autopsies and on direct contact with the aliens.//

Sensory data

Auditory: Rudimentary. Some sophistication resembling cetacean aural neural systems.

Olfactory: None

Vision: 180 degrees of vision. Sensitive to motion. Color distinction is generally poor, better at the blue end of the spectrum, extending

into the ultraviolet.

The Grey physiology is consistent with that of an aquatic-evolved species. The skeleton is composed of both hard and flexible cartilage, with the "mouth" serving only as a breathing apparatus, and not for feeding. Greys ingest their food, which consists largely of plankton-like animals, through the skin. They secret a dry chemical that dissolves the outer cell membranes of their food, allowing them to ingest the contents more easily. Their cells exhibit a DNA structure which uses the same encoding scheme found in terran life, but with markedly different contents. Their chemistry is compatible with terran ecosystems, and they can digest Earth-grown food. They are remarkably resistant to disease, and do not seem to get ill except under extraordinary circumstances. Their natural life-span and mode of reproduction are unknown, although some evidence points to a form of asexual reproduction. Their relatively poor hearing, underdeveloped vocal chords, observation, and psychic contact point to psychic rather than verbal communication.

Grey Technology, Summary.

//The Greys native technology is based on psychics, though use of human technology is frequent.//

The Greys employ a mix of native and human technology. Exactly why they have an interest in human tech is unknown, but the favored hypothesis is that they are using our tech because it is more efficient for dealing with terran species. Their native technology has not yet been deciphered, and all attempts at reverse-engineering have failed. Their tech appears to contain no moving parts, even down to the atomic scale, and also contains no trace of the psycho-active materials as used in human <psychotrons>. Efforts by psychics to determine the function of Grey technology have met with no success, but it is assumed that their technology is based on psychic power. Examples of Grey technology: their craft, presumed capable of interstellar travel, geological formations found in Grey habitations of unknown function.

The human technology most commonly used by Greys is of medical or mundane use. The medical technology recovered from Grey research areas is often related to genetic engineering. Their subjects range from fish to humans, with no discernible pattern. No documentation of these experiments has ever been found, nor in fact has any documentation at all been recovered, even for the equipment in use. Terran equipment is probably furnished by Black Book, and serial numbers often indicate that the equipment is stolen.

Mundane items such as flashlights, paint, and aerosols have been found in some areas of Grey habitation. The Greys have no apparent use for such items. Speculation is that these items are gathered merely for their novelty. No Grey has ever been observed using these or other mundane items.

Grey Behavior, Summary.

//Observed Grey behavior in terran environments is non-confrontational.//

Greys behavior can best be described as timid. They generally avoid confrontation by inducing time-loss prior to their arrival. This is the usually means for performing abductions, but it is not 100% effective. Some individuals are more resistant to the phenomenon than others from the outset, and others shrug off the effects of the time loss, particularly during prolonged experiences. Greys are never directly violent, although their activity can often generate situations which are dangerous to those unprepared. When dealing with Greys, be aware of the unintentional danger posed by the event of time-loss.

It is inadvisable to chase Greys without the intention of destroying them. Though they never display physical violence, they can be especially dangerous when cornered. Groups of three or more Greys have never been taken alive, and are extremely dangerous. Do not attempt to communicate with Greys, they will not be accommodating, and it will only serve to agitate them. Specially trained psychics have been able to initiate contact, but without prolonged interrogation, little in depth knowledge has been gained.

Grey Culture, Summary.

//Grey culture has little in common with human cultures, although their motivations are similar.//

The Greys as a race, without exception, are non-violent. Perhaps a better term would be a-violent. While they do not attack even when their lives are threatened, they are ambivalent to the fate of humans that attempt to interfere with their activity. There is no evidence to suggest anything other than that they work with unified purpose, and no nationalities, sects or other types of divisions can be found. Grey do tend to work in small groups however, and it is hypothesized that these groups are in fact family units. They are almost always encountered in groups of three or four, and do not separate.

The Grey activity observed on Earth suggests that they are explorers, but with a very little morality concerning their subjects. Their abductions and experiments indicate that they have little knowledge of our types of ecosystems, and theirs is assumed to be equally alien to us. They appear to have had little or no contact with other alien races, but there is definite animosity between Greys and Atlanteans. Why is unknown.

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

>BLACK BOOK, SUMMARY

Grey Association with The Black Book, Summary.

The Black Book has attempted to forge extensive contacts with Greys in an effort to secure knowledge of their technology. Although there is no indication that The Black Book is dissatisfied with their relationship, no evidence indicates that they are making any progress towards understanding Grey technology. The Black Book assists the Greys in abductions, often by locating individuals for them. No standard criterion for abductees has been observed, but it is clear that in any given case they are looking for subjects with specific characteristics. Unlike most of those Grey abductions unassisted by The Black Book, these individuals are rarely returned. The success of the experiments is unknown, and the abductions have continued at a steady rate over the last forty years.

>HERMES QUERY: VISITORS, ATLANTEANS

193 matches found. **<Summary>** available.

>SUMMARY

Visitors, Atlanteans, Summary.

//Summary of Aegis knowledge regarding the individuals known as the "Atlanteans".//

In some ways, the individuals known as Atlanteans are the most mysterious of all the aliens. Though most believe them to be a race of extraterrestrials, some contend that they are a secret society of humans, possibly dating to pre-history. Others claim that they do not exist, and that many similar but disparate reports have been combined into a common myth. These beings are believed to be responsible for civilian accounts referring to Space Brothers, Nordics, and Ancient Astronauts.

In any case, Atlanteans are usually detectable only by the consequences of their actions, and face to face confrontation is rare. Those that have been observed appear as perfectly normal humans, attractive in appearance and in perfect physical shape. They have advanced technology and are supremely confident in their encounters with humans. Although little is known about what they are, or what their motives may be, a great deal is known about their technology. Some of this knowledge is even in the public domain.

>TECH, SUMMARY

Atlantean Technology, Summary.

//Atlantean technology is based on advanced nanotechnology.//

Atlantean <nanotechnology> achieves what to human culture is merely science fiction. Their nano-machines form a variety of advanced tools, including <bio-implants> and generalized assemblers.

Their bio-[break]

>NANOTECH, SUMMARY

Nanotechnology, Summary, Public Domain, Technical.

//Nanotechnology is the construction of machines and materials from single atoms and molecules.//

Nanotechnology, not be confused with micro-technology, is a technology that humans are just beginning to explore at a theoretical level. Although some advances have been made in the placement of single atoms in meaningful patterns and designing proteins with specific shapes, nanotechnology will likely remain a theoretical science for at least fifty years.

Any type of machine that can be constructed with conventional mechanics has a counterpart in nanotechnology, so it is possible to construct gears, cams, axles, flywheels, motors, generators and the like with features and dimensions measured in nanometers (10-9 meters). By comparison, conventional microprocessors have feature sizes measured in microns (10-6 meters), and dimensions measured in millimeters. Nanotech-based devices have theoretical speed advantages similar to their size advantages. Mechanical nano-computers based on "rod-logic" have theoretical cycle rates thousands of times faster than modern semiconductors, and would allow for massive parallelization. In addition to performing traditional operations at higher speeds, nanotechnology opens the door to a variety of new technologies, including self-replicating machines, viral-sized machines to perform biological functions, nanoscopic programmable factories, new and purer material construction, and cleaner and safer industrial processes. Most believe that construction of early nanotech devices will likely require a eutectic environment -- one in which most, if not all, atoms are under strict control, e.g., a pure vacuum. Many believe that nanotech may be assembled in non-eutectic environments, such as "vats" of nanotech assemblers. However, assemblers that can exist outside of a special environment are unlikely due to background radiation, availability of construction materials and a number of other issues.

See also: <Engines of Creation>, <Nanosystems>

>NON-TECHNICAL, SUMMARY

Nanotechnology, Summary. Public Domain, Non-Technical.

//Nanotech machines are extremely small devices capable of manipulating individual atoms or molecules.//

Nanotech is a newly developing technology that involves the construction of machines and materials one atom at a time. This would allow engineers to build incredibly small, complex machines and remove many constraints on construction with rare or difficult-to- manufacture substances, as any material can be created atom by atom if the proper base materials are available. Theoretically, when the methods of Nanotech are mastered it will be possible to build machines capable of being transported through the blood stream to aid with tissue repairs and enhance the human immune system. Also, structures could be build out of pure diamond from vats of raw carbon by Nanotech assemblers. Although researchers are currently able to produce machines capable of limited manipulation on an atomic scale, decades, perhaps centuries, of research will be necessary before such advanced applications are possible.

>RESUME

Atlantean Technology, Summary. Resumed.

[end break]-implants are suspected of performing such advanced functions as cell and organ repair, smart-equipment interface, power generation (used for powering other processes), and immune system

ATLANTEAN BIO-IMPLANT
This photograph reveals the extensive nature of a network of nano-tech in a human nervous system. The individual with this implant was capable of interfacing with and directing Atlantean technology such as the self-replicating materials used in the Aurora.

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural

Extraterrestrials

Game Mastering

enhancements, including protection from foreign nanosystems. Some of these capabilities are known from direct exposure, while others are inferred.

Advanced materials, such as diamond and diamond-composites, have been recovered from areas with suspected Atlantean involvement. These materials appear to be under test for aerospace applications, although no craft utilizing these materials have been recovered. Aegis has also recovered simple assemblers which can be used to produce these and other materials, but nothing more advanced than self-repairing diamond-composite honeycomb.

>ACCESS, SUMMARY

Human Access to Atlantean and Nano Technology, Summary.

//Aegis and Black Book have limited access to nanotechnology.//

If Atlantean nanotech is as advanced as some reports intimate, knowledgeable application of this technology to any process would result in a thousand-fold increase in performance characteristics. It is therefore unlikely that The Black Book has dealings with Atlanteans, as their technology level is consistent with known terrestrial and other alien technologies. There is also no direct evidence of Black Book dealings with Atlanteans, such as equipment recovered from Black Book sites.

Aegis, both from its contacts in the scientific community and through its own investigations of Atlanteans, is believed to have much greater knowledge of this technology than any other organization. Aegis has access to research in this field that is more state-of-the-art than that in the public domain. Some agents are known to have bio-implants of limited functionality, but the origin and reason for this is unclear.

>PHYSIOLOGY, SUMMARY

Atlantean Physiology and Origins, Summary.

//Atlanteans are indistinguishable from humans.//

No one with the extraordinary nanotechnological implants expected of Atlanteans has ever been captured. This is not surprising, considering the abilities such an individual would have. Though such technology would keep Atlanteans from aging or getting ill, lack of direct observation or study leaves this assumption unproven. This lack of direct evidence on nanotechnology has lead some to suspect Atlanteans of being nothing more than humans with access to advanced technology. Their confirmed technological capabilities are not outside the range of conceivable human technology.

>MOTIVATION, SUMMARY

Atlantean Motivation and Modus Operandi, Summary.

//The Atlanteans work as a unified race towards an unknown objective.//

There is no direct evidence pointing to a particular Atlantean master plan. It is the general consensus of Aegis that the Atlanteans do not have such a plan. Atlantean activity does not conform to any pattern, and many incidents appear to be contrary to previous activity.

All reports indicate that when operating in the field, Atlanteans work alone. Their operations often require years or decades of planning to infiltrate an organization, and the operatives disappear suddenly when their work is complete. Because their activity does not usually attract attention until it is complete, they are generally only detected after the fact.

This type of planning and execution is consistent with small dedicated groups of individuals. The variety and inconsistency of some of the groups' activities suggests that various groups' purposes may be in conflict.

>HERMES QUERY: VISITORS, SAURIANS

3549 matches found. <Summary> available.

>SUMMARY

Saurian, Summary.

//Summary of the reports of various green and reptilian bipedal creatures, collectively termed Saurians.//

The term Saurian refers to alien race or group of races that work closely with The Black Book. The exact nature of these creatures is unknown, but first-hand encounters have lead to a detailed description of at least one of the races. Whether other reptilian races exist is an open question, as there are several reports which indicate creatures unlike any other encountered, but the reliability of these accounts is questionable. The one identified race is bipedal with bird-like legs, a lizard-like tail, and reptilian textured skin, from which the term Saurians is derived. No subjects of this race have ever been captured, and when encountered they are very aggressive.

More is known about what Saurians do than who they are. Their work with The Black Book consists of black military programs, few of which ever become public. The "stealth" craft are one such program, while others (such as the TD-121) are not even suspected by citizens.

Saurian bases are scattered and hidden, but the majority of them are in warmer, desolate climates. There is speculation that this is due to the Saurians' preference, though it could simply be because of their low population density.

>BLACK BOOK, SUMMARY

Saurian Association with Black Book, Summary.

//Black Book's dealings with the Saurians have resulted in numerous secret military projects.//

The Black Book is very protective of their relationship with the Saurians. While the Saurians appear to be more than capable of taking care of themselves, Black Book spares no expense to keep others from having contact with them. In particular, no deceased Saurian has ever been found, nor have any been taken alive. All information about the Saurians physical appearance is reported by Aegis cell members who survive encounters with the reptilian race.

The Black Book is working on dozens of military programs with suspected Saurian involvement. While few of these programs reach the public eye, some such as the stealth program and the Black Manta have been sighted or leaked. Many of these projects are military aircraft, but their range is broad and includes ground forces, strategic weapons, and SDI. Often, these developments become incorporated into mainstream US military programs. Use of Saurian technology is evident in a few of the nonpublic programs. Presumably the Saurians are merely aiding in human-designed equipment in these instances.

>GREYS

Grey and Saurian Relations, Summary.

//There are no conspicuous relations between the Grey and Saurian races.//

Although both alien races work with The Black Book, no relationship between the alien races has been uncovered. Black Book projects to date have included both races at the same time. Although it is unlikely that each is unaware of the other, it is possible that Black Book is making an effort to keep them from dealing with each other. It is also possible that the Greys have nothing to offer the Saurians, therefore the reptilians see no reason for interaction, see <motivation>. It is also equally likely that the Greys have no interest in the Saurians, as they have no demonstrated psychic abilities.

>TECHNOLOGY, SUMMARY

Saurian Technology, Summary.

//Saurian technology is based on advanced particle physics and wave mechanics.//

From the few samples of Saurian technology recovered, they appear hundreds of years more advanced in the physical sciences. While the basic principles behind the technology are understandable, their application is far beyond current human understanding. Saurian devices routinely manipulate energy in ways that seem to defy the modern wisdom of physics, and the raw power they harness for common activities exceeds projections of humanities abilities for the foreseeable future. One Black Book site was discovered doing megaton-scale nuclear warhead testing inside an underground bunker. The devastating blasts were contained by a Saurian <containment field>.

Of the items recovered, several are personnel weapons that resemble prosthetics. This suggests that Saurians prefer to use weapons that appear as extensions of their bodies rather than "tools." One such device, covering the arm to the elbow, has earned the name <Plasma claw>. These weapons fire contained plasma bolts roughly under user control, which can melt nearly any material, including most types of vehicle and ship armor. The weapon has no "ammunition", but an energy source of unknown operation is evident. Extensive testing does not appear to have diminished the "charge."

The TD-121 appears to use a Saurian drive mechanism to achieve its neutral buoyancy in the atmosphere. Short term possession of one of these craft revealed numerous advanced alien, although clearly prototype, systems, while the control systems and electronics were of obvious human origin (though also advanced.) The craft is capable of supersonic travel and nearly instantaneous acceleration. It is also designed to be capable of low-Earth-orbit altitudes.

>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, SUMMARY

Saurian Physical Appearance, Summary.

//The one confirmed Saurian race is reptilian in appearance.//

The one confirmed race of Saurian is a bipedal species with a vaguely reptilian appearance. They stand roughly the height of a human adult. Their thick skin is dark and patterned, hairless and unscaled. Their legs are bird-like, with an extended heel that looks like a backwards knee. The head is large, with a small features. Hands are three-fingered with an opposable thumb. A prominent tail, used for balancing their forward leaning stance, reaches roughly 2/3 the length of their legs.

An artists conception constructed from multiple reports appears in <svrce023.gfx>.

>MOTIVATION, SUMMARY

Saurian Motivation, Summary.

//Saurians seem to be directing the development of the US Military Industrial Complex.//

Unlike other extraterrestrial races, the Saurians are reluctant to interact directly with the general population. This is almost certainly due to their desire for secrecy and an inability to easily disguise themselves. However, their practice of working through The Black Book has resulted in more direct effect on human society than any but Aegis realize, and few secret military programs are without some trace of their influence.

The Saurians operations, and the nature of their treaties and deals with

The Black Book, has caused some analysts to speculate that they are directing the growth and development of the US Military Industrial community for some undetermined purpose. Theories as to their goals include: the construction or repair of some advanced technology, the building of an technological infrastructure capable of supporting trade with the Saurians, the creation of a target worth conquering, the development of human skills to make the race useful as skilled slave labor. The least likely of these theories posits that Saurians act merely out of genuine good will and the desire to further human knowledge.

CHAPTER 8
GAME MASTERING

We were in the last car of the train. Earlier, Johnson had flashed his DEA badge and used some story about a drug sting operation, so we had the area to ourselves. When Boland and the Saurian walked out of their compartment, we were the only ones there to greet them.

It all went so fast that it's tough to piece together now. I was standing in the doorway of one of the compartments toward the end of the train. As soon as the Saurian closed the door and took a few steps, Tristan and Kai moved simultaneously. Tristan's huge body enveloped Boland, pulling him out of harm's way. Kai bounced up behind the Saurian and plugged him twice in the head with a silenced pistol. This took him down fast. Kai didn't even flinch when the blood splattered in her face. Somehow the other two Saurians knew there was trouble because they came bounding out, charging up their plasma claws.

"Kai! Look out!" Johnson's voice rang out like a shot as he cut off the Saurian leaping at Kai's back. Johnson slammed him into the wall. He and Kai moved together like clockwork. As Johnson used his momentum to spin the Saurian around, Kai carefully aimed her handgun. Johnson ducked at the exact moment Kai fired. The timing was so beautiful, it seemed rehearsed.

Meanwhile, the third Saurian grabbed the embryos and bolted for the end of the train. I saw Jeanette step in his way and point a gun at him. Before I could move he was on her, slashing her across the chest with his glove. She went down immediately. Vallen materialized from nowhere and tackled the Saurian, trying to get him away from Jeanette. The monster heaved and Vallen flew off him like a cheap rag doll.

Before I knew what I was doing I too tackled the Saurian. Vallen had been thrown clear and it was just me and the alien at the back of the train. I looked in his eyes and knew exactly what he was going to do -- he was going to jump off the train. After everything we had been through, I just couldn't let him get away. From behind I could hear Johnson yell, "Alise, get down!"

It was too late. The Saurian bailed and I took the leap with him. It wasn't bad enough that I had just tackled an alien. Now I was hurtling off a train going about 80 miles an hour. Oh my God, what was I thinking? We hit the ground and flipped one over the other. He took the brunt of the initial landing, but I felt my ribs crack. The sound was bad and so was the pain. My chest heaved and my mouth filled with blood. It was hard to breathe. My shoulder felt wrong, and I knew I must have dislocated it. Jesus, I couldn't believe I was still standing.

The Saurian wasn't in much better shape. He looked beyond me at the train that was steaming away, and then focused his attention back onto me. I knew if he got close enough he would destroy me in close combat. My adrenaline pumped, the pain receded, and I felt I could function again. I pulled my gun from the holster at the same time he leapt at me with his power claw. It was a simultaneous strike, but my bullet to the head won. He went down. I unloaded my pistol into him -- probably excessive, but I was pissed that he just caused me to dive off a train. I sat there for a few minutes with my gun smoking. I noticed the dead Saurian still looked human. I had figured when you kill them, even if they're in disguise, they would ooze green goo or something. Maybe I've just seen too many movies.

Suddenly, the pain returned. I stifled a breath and fought to stay conscious. When my vision cleared, I

dragged myself over to the embryos. They were intact. I thought, I'd been through too much for these stupid things.

A silverish boot appeared in front of me. I craned my neck forever before I found the top of the guy. He appeared to be the most perfect person I'd ever seen. He wore a skin tight silver body suit that concealed nothing. His long blond hair waved in the wind. He reached down and took the embryos from me.

I hissed, "I don't know who you are, but I can't just give you those." It was really bizarre -- I'd never met this guy in my life but I felt he knew me.

"I know you've gone through a lot to obtain these embryos, but you and Aegis aren't ready for this information." His voice was music. "Don't worry Alise, you'll get another chance. For now, be happy that you're still alive. You and your group did just fine tracking down these embryos. Good luck healing, Alise. I know you'll be fine." He smiled, showing perfect white teeth. "You know, there's a little of me in you."

I watched him float up to the craft overhead and was filled with disgust and disappointment. I wanted to know how he knew me and what he meant about tracking down the embryos for him. Where did he get off flying in and taking our hard-fought gains. Just who the hell were we working for? As usual for Aegis, every job is double-cross and back-stab. He was right about one thing though. I was lucky to be alive, and so was everyone else.

The next time we'll be ready for anything.

The next time we will win.

THE ROLE OF THE GAME MASTER

Now that you have gotten together with a few of your friends to play Conspiracy X, you will need a Game Master. "Game Master" is the title of the person who will be leading the playing group and orchestrating the missions that the characters will perform. You need the type of person who will guide the course of play so everyone can enjoy the game.

This leadership is challenging, and learning how to be a good Game Master takes practice. This section details some simple steps to improve your Game Mastering skills. You might have your players read this as well, so that they will get a better understanding of what it takes to GM.

The Game Master creates the plot of a story, designing missions for the fearless player characters to undertake. The Game Master has to mold a world around these characters, giving life to each person and place the agents will encounter. Also, the Game Master needs to know the rules of the game so that any time a question develops, he can answer it in a quick and consistent manner that will allow everyone to get back to gaming. Certainly this seems like a lot of work, but Game Mastering has its own rewards.

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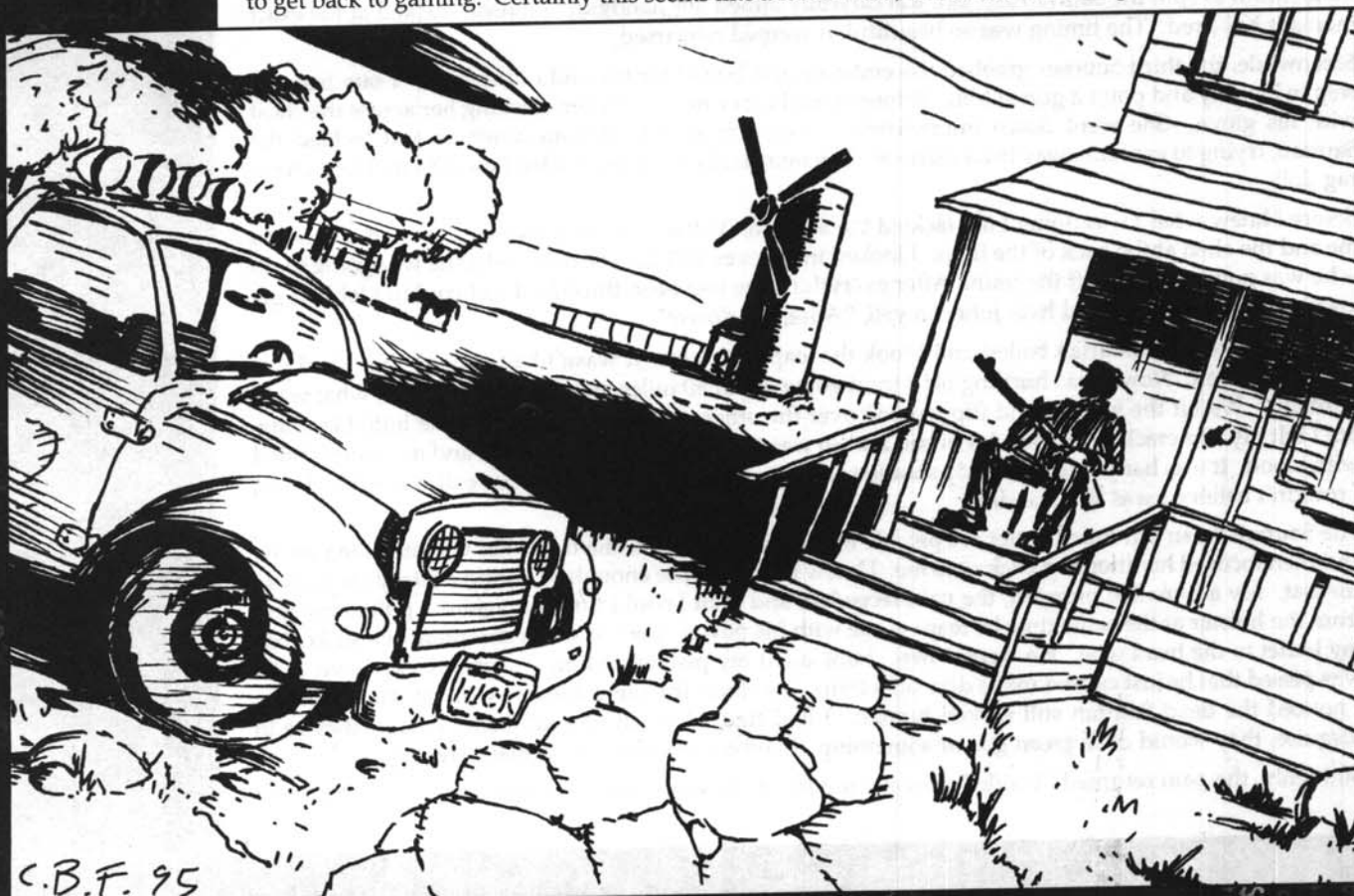
KNOW THE RULES

The Game Master must guide the players' activities through use of the game rules and mechanics. The rules have been created as a framework for running the game. The Game Master must be able to interpret the rules we have laid out, and use them as he sees fit. Remember this is your game. If you don't like a rule, vary or delete it.

The Game Master has final say in any dispute. This means that the GM must try and remain fair and impartial at all times to all players. The Game Master may need to make new rules and shouldn't be afraid to do so, but should realize that situations don't always have to be rigidly structured. Let players roleplay things out as best they can until there is no progress being made, then step in and decide a fair way to determine the outcome. Keep all rule changes handy to ensure consistency in future situations.

SKETCH OUT THE WORLD

Conspiracy X is based in our world at our time, so current geography and place names can be used. The characters can travel to the farthest reaches of the earth to hunt down alien marauders, or escape from Black Book agents. For example, the Game Master will decide the city the characters visit, the name of the hotel the characters stay at, the floor the room is on, and how many beds are in the room. Much of this information can remain fairly vague since the game would be slowed down greatly if every last detail was described. Information that is needed can be jotted down before the session, or made up on the spot. Using a combination of real and created names will personalize the world.

Developing people to inhabit this world is the next step. It helps to make quick generalizations about the type of people that are native to the region involved in play. They might be superstitious, helpful, quiet, etc. The reactions of these people to certain stimuli also have to be considered. How a group of agents in black suits and sunglasses will be received in a small town, for example.

Politics and world events can be shaped by the Game Master in order to create the need for, and desired outcome of, the character's missions. Dark plots could cause national governments to collapse in military coups, for example, and Aegis might have to fight for its continued existence. The goal is to create a world that offers plenty of avenues for game play.

ESTABLISH THE SCENE

A well-described scene brings a roleplay encounter to life. The Game Master must create the scene in which the characters will engage in the greatest detail possible -- the dank smell of the back alley, the color of the alien's skin, the sound of his labored breathing. The goal of a scene is to establish a mood that will interest the characters, as well as enhance the game in general. Consistency is also very important, and details that may seem irrelevant might prove significant to a player and her choice of actions.

Describe a scene with as many senses as possible. Visual descriptions are usually the first thing players question, but when a scene includes sound, smell, or other appropriate senses it will give a more complete image to the players and will add to the drama. Consider the difference in the following :

"You walk into the room and you see your partner tied up against the wall with a bomb at her feet. What do you do?"

"As you walk into the dark room you hear a repetitive ticking sound that is barely audible. You see a faint silhouette of a person standing against the wall. What do you do?"

In the second example the character's next action isn't so obvious. The players will have to decide for themselves what steps to take without a clear idea of what will happen. This creates more drama.

Good players will no doubt ask questions that haven't been settled beforehand. A good Game Master thinks on her toes and answers the unexpected. Indeed, making up the story in part through prompting by the players captures the magic of roleplaying. Beware, these spontaneous diversions may take on a life of their own. In any event, a GM that has thought out some of the details of her scenes will find it easier to ad lib the rest.

CREATING A MISSION

The first few missions are always the hardest to create. Yet it is those beginning trials that will help define the feel of your particular game. They will also reveal what aspects of a game session work, and what needs improvement. A Game Master can use the following steps to build a mission from ground level to completion.

THE PLOT

The characters are all members of a secret agency whose goal is to protect humanity from both supernatural and alien threats. This momentous task is made all the harder because the public must be kept unaware that any danger exists. Although this is a largely thankless job, it is definitely one with plenty of opportunity for adventure.

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To make the game realistic, use as many facts as possible. The players will most likely appreciate researched information, and it may be easier to simply expand upon existing situations. Truth is often stranger than fiction.

Players sometimes miss the obvious. Playing aids such as maps and pictures may address this. Otherwise, a Game Master can help the game progress by giving hints when the characters are stuck in a situation. Nobody likes to sit and spin their wheels.

The players shouldn't be the only ones to roleplay. Simple changes in the Game Master's voice and speech patterns can create believable differences between the various people that the players might encounter and question.

There are endless sources of inspiration out there if getting ideas proves difficult. Tabloid newspapers, television shows, movies, books, and local folklore are great places to look. Another good idea is to create a mission based on a player's or character's background.

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With Aegis' goals in mind, the Game Master has to find a reasonable event which will warrant the attention of the agency. The local news media might report that an alien ship has crashed, a group of campers might report the sighting of a supernatural creature in a national park, psychic Aegis operatives might make contact with a new group of aliens. These are all reasons an Aegis cell might be asked to investigate. They are all good beginnings to a mission.

For the first mission, the Game Master takes a look at the backgrounds of the characters to be played. They are:

Janice Hopkins: School teacher and latent psychic.

Dr. Rusty Gaven: Medical doctor specializing in disease identification and research, currently working for the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Capt. Buster MacArthur: retired US Air Force captain with close contacts in the service.

Of these backgrounds, the Captain's leads to the most obvious plot thread. His connections in the Air Force inform him that an Unidentified Flying Object has been recorded. The Game Master decides to have an alien ship crash near Captain MacArthur's old base. The next step is to decide what kind of UFO it will be, and what type of alien will be flying it. A Grey scouting ship is chosen due to the non-violent nature of the race and the small size of the craft they will be riding in. This limits the number and viciousness of aliens the agents would expect to confront, and increases the chance that the rookie agents will survive their first alien encounter.

The Game Master then reviews the things he will need to know. First thing is to understand the Greys. He makes notes of their general description, the classic "flying saucer" shape of their craft, and their inquisitive nature so that he can use those details as he is building the mission further.

THE HOOK

There are many ways to attract the attention of an Aegis cell and lure the characters into taking an assignment. The most important thing to remember is that the threat must be one which Aegis agents will feel is worth investigating. If the GM develops a very complex paranormal story around the report of rabid dogs, for example, the team will probably decide that it is simply not important enough to investigate. A good idea is to provide enough clues to make the players realize that the event is highly unusual.

One approach would be to give them a personal stake in the outcome. If the mission involves the lives of people they care about, their outlook would be different than if strangers were involved. The characters' backgrounds can be filled with people they would not want to see harmed -- dependents, contacts, mentors, and so on.

Another hook involves letting the players know the consequences if the mission isn't investigated. For example, the protection of a book might not seem important until it is made clear that in the hands of a powerful Foci it could lead to untold destruction.

Capture the players' interest as early as possible. The more that players take the initiative, the more each action will affect the outcome.

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CONSPIRACY X

The Game Master now wants to make sure that the players will decide to investigate the UFO crash that he has plotted. Having the event publicized by several witnessed accounts, plus the information provided by the Captain's connection to the Air Force, should bring the story to the Cell's attention. The Game Master decides that MacArthur's friend will tip him off about the sighting of the Grey's craft, and tell him how an attempt to engage the craft resulted in it being shot down. This will corroborate the rumors of the sighting the agents will first encounter, and should prove to be enough evidence to check over the area.

The Game Master now needs to create the contact's position in the Air Force, as well as his or her relationship to Buster MacArthur. The witnesses must be outlined as well, in case the players wish to question them. Their names, how many there are, what exactly they think they saw, and who they reported such findings to should be adequate.

The Game Master should also try and anticipate the initial actions of the players, and the resources they might desire to use at this point. For example, if anyone has a friend in a media organization, they might decide to contact them and get a little more information.

THE SETTING

Setting is the various descriptions of the locations in which the players will find themselves during the mission. These descriptions include geography as well as the people that inhabit the area. A general layout of the region will help the characters to get a feel for the place. Try to add details if the site will be the setting for something important such as interaction with non-player characters, a battle, or the finding of an important clue.

Every area will have its particular advantages and disadvantages. For example, if Aegis investigated a UFO landing in a major city, chances are the reactions would be different than if the same UFO landed in the middle of a desert.

After a little bit of research, the Game Master decides to set the mission in the Catskill Mountains, near Stuart Air Force Base. The area in which the jets forced the UFO down is sparse enough to allow for plenty of hidden spots for a craft to land without falling onto private property, but populated enough to provide plenty of people who might have witnessed something. Details such as time of year (is there tree cover?), time of day (is it a dark and stormy night?) or accessibility (can the team drive into the site, or will they have to hike?) need to be planned out.

Creating a map to help place the events and their locations will help keep continuity. Mapping out the area where the characters interview the witnesses needs only the quickest sketch, since the Game Master doesn't expect the players to stay around very long. The people, especially the actual witnesses, each need a little detail -- at the very least a name, occupation, appearance, demeanor, and what they claim to have seen. Writing the initial newspaper story that reported the sighting might come in handy as well, since this will give the players some leads to follow, as well as give them the overall mood of the community.

And lastly, the actual site of the crash needs to be fleshed out in great detail, especially since it will be the focus of the investigation. The GM decides to create a couple of maps of the area -- one of the general lay out to give to the players, and the other for himself to mark the specific locations of clues which the players might or might not discover. The craft itself, whatever shape it might be in, and any aliens that might be present need to be located on the GM map, as does the flight path it took.

THE CONFLICT

A balance of types and numbers of conflicts is very important within the game. A Game Master that provides too many mission objectives, or plot threads that will pull the players one way or another, is in danger of having the players at a standstill, arguing between themselves and not proceeding with the mission. Not enough conflict, on the other hand, will make for a dull game with little intrigue. The following are just a few examples of the conflict inherent in Conspiracy X.

Aegis vs. Aegis

Competition is the main reason there is conflict within the agency. Two cells might be put on the same mission due to the power struggles of their superiors, or agents might compete against one another to make a name for themselves.

Aegis vs. The Black Book

These rival organizations often vie for the same information, but their different procedures usually make it impossible for them to cooperate. Both are secret government agencies, therefore they both often use methods above the law and frequent altercations can lead to violent repercussions.

Aegis vs. Aliens

Each alien race has certain motives, but individual aliens may have their own separate agendas. The Game Master can decide to create, for example, an insane Grey that happens to be physically violent. This is just one illustration of the endless possibilities of how Aegis and aliens can conflict.

Game Mastering

Familiar settings might be simpler for the first few missions. A known town or city will help the Game Master to have an already defined people, as well as easily referenced names of newspapers, coffee shops, etc.

Aegis vs. the Supernatural

Seepage is an unexplained force. Aegis has probably the largest grasp of the paranormal, and yet that's not even the tip of the iceberg. Missions can include encounters with psychics, monsters, powerful incarnations of the Seepage, etc. All this can leave agents grasping for their sanity and their lives.

Aegis vs. Zealots

There are civilian groups out there who track possible alien or paranormal activity, trying to "find out what the government is hiding." Aegis will do everything in their power to keep these fanatics from interfering with any of their investigations. Ordinary citizens can cause the greatest conflict due to the fact that Aegis is sworn to save humanity. Yet humanity can never be allowed to realize that Aegis exists.

Aegis vs. the World

Aegis is an organization that operates outside of the government that created it. Other groups, like the FBI, CIA, etc. are unaware that some of their own members may owe allegiance to this agency. A situation like this can lead to mistrust in the best case, and outright sabotage in the worst.

The team decides to investigate the UFO sighting. After following up various leads, the players find out roughly where to look. The Game Master realizes that the search of the mountainous region will take some time, and he marks on the map the area searched each hour. The GM decides that in order to limit the direct danger to the players, all but one of the aliens has died. He will keep track of the remaining Grey on his map so he will know the exact place the agents and alien will meet.

To add a separate conflict, the Game Master decides that a self-proclaimed alien hunter group will be in the area, attracted by the media attention to this UFO sighting. The civilians then are plotted out on the map as well, and careful track of their movements are kept. The Game Master is confidant that, when the players become aware of this other conflict, it will spur them to move quickly to be the first people at the crash site.

THE PLOT TWIST

Plot twists are perhaps the single most difficult aspect of creating a good mission. The purpose is to take what the players anticipate, turn it upside down and force them to react quickly to an unexpected situation. Since players will naturally make presumptions about any given predicament, a good plot twist will force them to rethink such assumptions in the future.

The Game Master likes how his mission is developing, but he knows he has to be ready to give his players something they just weren't expecting. With all of the evidence that the characters have received so far, they roughly know what they expect to find. What would the players do if they find the crash site and obvious signs of a crash, but no craft?

The Game Master decides that the group of alien hunters will have gotten to the site and collected the wandering Grey and whatever pieces of the craft they can. Since they are not professionals, they will most certainly leave clues as to where they can be located. A timeline indicating just how much of the craft the civilians will have been able to collect each hour is created. This way when the players finally arrive, the GM will know just what is left for them to find, and where it is located.

THE ADVERSARY

Creating a believable opponent can be difficult, but the best way is to first develop a motive. A Black Book agent's incentive could be to prosper from the technologies gained from alien contact and negotiations. This could bring him (and his underlings) into conflict with an Aegis Cell trying to curtail the spread of alien technology. Another antagonist could arise from a character's background -- maybe a person who felt wronged by one of the players.

Local law enforcement officials, although not intentionally antagonists, will probably get in the way of a long investigation. Also, the media wants to get a great story which will no doubt interfere with mission and compromise security.

Contrasting goals is what creates the tension and eventual animosity between groups of people. The Game Master should keep in mind that the goals of an opponent can quickly turn to personal enmity if the Aegis agents prove too troublesome. Therefore, the relationship with an established antagonist can slowly progress from simple rivalry to outright hatred.

Pay attention to how players treat the people they encounter. Since aliens are capable of disguising themselves. A character could inadvertently offend one of them.

The civilian group is now in a position to act as an Adversary. The Game Master decides that he wants to give this group a purpose so that they are more than just a collection of friends who happen to stumble on an alien crash site at the wrong time. As a result, the People United for the Protection of Peaceful Extra Terrestrials (or PUPPET) is born. They are a fanatical group that has been searching for aliens because they believe that aliens are inherently peaceful, and will be able to teach the inhabitants of Earth how to work together in loving harmony.

Try to have as much continuity as possible through adventures. If The Black Book discovers the identification of a few Aegis agents, it shouldn't conveniently forget by the next mission. Also, be sure to have a wide variety of conflicts, for while a recurring villain can lead to exciting scenarios, it can also lead to stagnation.

Players may tend to treat local people with disdain. Warn them against that in words or deeds. There is always the chance that the locals could hurt the characters physically. Aside from that, having friends in many places can be benefitial. The incognito agents might need the local police at some point to collaborate on a story. If the officers have been antagonized, there isn't a great possibility that they will help the players out.

The Game Master then develops what the goals of PUPPET will mean to the mission. First, the members of the group have to be named and each needs a small history. Then the location where the alien craft and the Grey will be taken must be specified. It then needs to be determined what the group will do with the alien once they have him.

The plan is for the group to take the alien and the remains of the craft to a nearby garage. There, they will house the Grey, and try and fix his craft to show their friendship. The Game Master predetermines that it will take the better part of three days to gather all the main parts of the craft and bring them to the garage. While this continues, the rest of the group will attempt to communicate with the alien. After the three days, the group will decide to bring their savior's message of peace to the world by making a video tape of themselves and the Grey.

The Game Master realizes that he will need to build upon the setting and include not only the crash site, but the garage and the area in between the two sites. Then he needs to determine what the mood and demeanor of the members of PUPPET will be when the Aegis agents finally catch up with them.

THE RESOLUTION

In the resolution, all goals will draw to a conclusion -- either they have been met successfully, or they are now beyond accomplishment. The consequences of the mission, whether it was a triumph or a failure, should be roughly predetermined by the Game Master.

A successful venture might be more detrimental than a failed one. For example, a mission in which all the goals were satisfied doesn't always constitute a complete victory because incidents, like a combat with hostile aliens that killed two agents and fifteen civilians, might jeopardize Aegis itself.

To help prepare himself, the Game Master creates a series of questions that will need answering.

If the agents get to the crash site while PUPPET is still gathering pieces of the crash, what will happen? Will the agents try and force PUPPET to hand over the wreckage? Will the agents realize that PUPPET has a live alien? What happens if the military arrives at the same time as Aegis? Same time as PUPPET?

What will the lone Grey do? Will he be quiet while he recuperates from his crash and then try and escape? Will he make an honest effort to try to learn to communicate with the humans who captured him? Will he call others of his kind to save him?

What happens to PUPPET now that they have had actual alien contact? Will they continue to preach their message of peace? Will they actually get their video out into the public?

Will anyone else become involved? Might The Black Book discover the existence of the Grey and decide to kidnap him?

Its all up to the Game Master and players.

GM BACKGROUND ON THE BLACK BOOK

WHAT IS THE BLACK BOOK?

Most simply put, The Black Book is Aegis' rival and sworn enemy.

Immediately after the breaking of the Watch, the United States dissolved the military into several divisions, thus creating the Army and the Air Force. The members of what had been Operation Pigeon Shoot found they held more positions and power in the Army. Consequently, Operation Pigeon Shoot buried themselves deep within the Army in an attempt to regroup and create a new organization from the remnants of the Watch. Their main concern was replenishing their intelligence gathering forces -- many of the intelligence agents working for the Watch sided with the emerging Aegis.

After a few months, Operation Pigeon Shoot had a firm grip on the organization they were developing. They had gained the allegiance and support of not only highly placed figures in the Army, but also the Congress. Pigeon Shoot used this support to their benefit when Congress passed the National Security Act. This act created both the CIA and the NSA. It also allowed government agencies to hide information from the public under the guise of national security. Furthermore, the National Security Act provided that a portion of the military budget be allocated to Black Projects. Black Projects are secret military activities of which the public, and the rest of the government, are unaware. This is where Operation Pigeon Shoot received its funding, and hence forth became known as The Black Book.

THE BLACK BOOK'S PHILOSOPHY

In the 1940s, the Watch became acutely aware of the alien presence visiting Earth. Two competing philosophies arose as a result of this information. The Roswell incident brought that competition to the forefront. Those who were to become The Black Book felt the best way to deal with the alien threat was to know as much as possible about them before we established communication. The preparation would be accomplished by shooting down an alien vessel, reverse engineer the technology, and investigate the alien life piloting the ship. The Watch voted to reject this plan, but that was in fact what transpired

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during Roswell. Eventually The Black Book came to realize that its original theory was not going to work, and a new one was needed. Thus it decided to communicate with the aliens and indeed, make deals with them. The idea was to exchange The Book's knowledge of humanity for alien technology. By default, the relationship that would develop between the aliens and the Book would educate The Black Book in the ways of the alien races. The end result, The Black Book theorized, was that it would be clever enough to exploit the aliens for both technology and information before humanity could be sold out.

The Black Book wins over recruits utilizing tactics prevalent during the Red Scare. By nature, people fear what they do not know or understand. The Russians were very different than Americans, with strange philosophies that threatened the American way of life. Some leaders used this fear to create a nation which was for a short time governed by paranoid, ignorant people. As some members of the highest echelon of the military gradually learned of the alien presence, that same fear of the unknown was magnified 1000 times. Once it was accepted that reality included invading alien races, it seemed to make sense that the best way to stop the alien menace was to know the enemy, by any means necessary. This justified the policy of exchange that developed between The Black Book and the alien races.

THE BLACK BOOK AND THE ALIENS

GREYS

As a result of the Roswell incident, the Greys were the first connection The Black Book made with the alien races. The Black Book quickly gained an understanding that the Greys were not a technologically based culture. However, they did have something exceptionally valuable to offer -- the concept of psychic control. The Black Book realized the unparalleled potential in attaining that ability.

So what did The Black Book get from its dealings with the Greys? The Greys introduced The Black Book to some new types of technology, which mainly focused on psychic energy. The Greys also provided The Black Book with access to powerful Psychics, the likes of which they had never seen before. The most valuable commodity the Greys provided The Book was unintended. While the Greys conducted experiments and researched humans, The Book spent a tremendous amount of energy attempting to understand their alien cohorts. This made the Book very knowledgeable about the Greys, which they used as a bargaining tool when dealing with the Saurians.

In order to get from the Greys, The Black Book had to give -- and the concessions The Book made were exactly what gave it the villainous reputation they carry today. When the Greys decided that they wanted to learn about humanity, their approach was through abduction of people. Although these actions were being carried on well before the The Black Book got involved, the Grey's demanded that

The Black Book assist them. With more attention being paid by the public to alien sightings, the Greys were looking for a more discreet way to carry out their business. Consequently, The Book often provides locations for Grey experimentation on humans, or actually abducts the people itself.

As time passed, it became perfectly clear that the path The Black Book was heading down was further distancing them from any sense of right and wrong. What the Greys requested of The Book was not without its moral implications. Somewhere along the way, the Greys pushed The Book beyond the threshold of morality. This loss of morality would effect The Book's relationships with the aliens, Aegis, and all of humanity hence forth. From that point on, The Black Book found itselves more an ally of the aliens than a protector of humanity.

SAURIANS

During the 1950s, The Black Book worked mainly out of White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Having access to radar equipment, some strategically placed members of The Book picked up on strange occurrences happening nearby, and likened them to the Bermuda Triangle phenomena. An unidentified vessel would be tracked to a certain area, and then be lost on radar. This was most disturbing to the The Black Book because it had begun construction on a secret base in that area. The Black Book concluded that the UFO's were most probably Grey activity. It dispatched a troop of soldiers, including a diplomat, to locate the activity and establish communication. The Book discovered not Greys, but Saurians. Relations were shaky at first, but in time The Black Book and the Saurians found a mutually advantageous relationship.

Both the Saurians and the The Black Book had started to build underground bases in relatively close proximity to each other. The Saurians lacked the proper manpower, and The Black Book lacked the proper technology, to construct their ideal base. Thus a pact was made. The Black Book abandoned its construction site and joined the Saurians'. The end result was an extensive underground base located near Dulce, New Mexico. This event illustrated just how tightly woven the connections between The Book and the Saurians have become.

What the Saurians wanted next from The Black Book was knowledge. The Saurians needed to understand humanity so that they could infiltrate it. They were very willing to share technology with The Black Book in exchange for what The Book could teach them. In a sense, the Saurians used The Book for information in the same way The Book used the Greys. The deal was still very profitable for The Black Book because it gained a great deal of technology.

The most significant of the technology gained from the Saurians was two types of aircraft. The first was a ship built from Saurian tech, and modified for human use -- the TD121. The TD121 is a powerful fighter plane. Its major drawback is that The Book is completely reliant on the Saurians to repair the ships. The other ship The Black Book gained was built after the TD121, and was actually reverse engineered from it. The Black Manta is a troop ship built by humans from Saurian tech. It's faster and has a better weapon system than an entirely human built troop ship. Best of all, the Black Manta can be maintained by humans.

Presently, there are Saurians who work as agents for the The Black Book. These Saurians are molecularly altered to appear human. Generally the agents travel in groups of threes and are referred to as "The Men In Black." With the aid of The Black Book, the MIBs are the Saurian's infiltration soldiers. For all practical purposes the Men In Black appear completely human, however they are not very talented at mimicking human emotion. That is not really a major giveaway, however, because the appearance they generally take is that of a hulking, good looking man. Human society generally does not expect someone who looks like a football player to display much emotion. This has greatly aided the assimilation of the Men In Black.

THE BLACK BOOK, THE SUPERNATURAL AND PSYCHICS

In the beginning, The Black Book did not focus on the psychic or supernatural. The elders of The Black Book gained a considerable amount of information during their time with the Watch about psychics and the supernatural. However, when the Watch was dissolved, the members which constituted the The Black Book wanted to travel down a more tangible path. The Book decided to take the information it had and stop there; it felt there was more to be gained by dealing with the aliens. Only recently, after realizing Aegis had a tremendous advantage from its proficiency in occult matters, The Black Book found the need to rebuild some kind an occult force. The Book relies on civilian recruitment for the most part, but it has a favorite trick which is particularly nasty for Aegis. When The Black Book finds an occultist that belongs to Aegis, it extracts him and forces him into servitude to The Book. This not only provides knowledge The Book did not have to spend years to cultivate, but also greatly harms Aegis, for both the security risk and the loss of a valued member of the organization.

From its extensive work with Greys, The Black Book attained insight into psychic phenomena that Aegis just couldn't gather. Consequently, The Black Book knows a great deal about psychic energy, and the Greys as psychics. However, its understanding of human psychics is somewhat lacking compared to

Aegis. The Black Book has few human psychics, which makes each one a valuable commodity. When a need arises to utilize a powerful psychic, The Book turns to the Greys for aid. Given this, the Book has yet to place a great priority on gathering psychic and supernatural information. The Book realizes that as long as it can rely on the Greys to do their psychic bidding for them, resources are better devoted elsewhere.

How The Black Book Operates

The Black Book is composed of many different types of agents. The Book's military recruits range from high ranking armed services personnel to special operatives. Some of these people secretly work at Dulce Base while holding their positions in the Army. Any member of The Black Book who is currently affiliated with the military is careful not to attract too much attention to themselves. Further, if any of these Book agents were observed engaging in questionable activity, they are usually able to cover themselves. There are enough high ranking Army personnel who belong to The Book that, if needed, any information can be deemed a matter of national security and kept from the public. To some extent, this provides The Book with an advantage over Aegis.

There are also civilians who work for the The Black Book. A large number are scientists working out of Dulce. Surprisingly few ordinary civilians conduct The Black Book's field work. These agents take the most the risks, and thus run the greatest risk of being captured or killed. For this reason, these agents invariably have completely reconstructed histories and IDs. Many of these agents are ex-military, trained in a variety of operations, allowing them to be extremely versatile in the field.

Dulce Base is the center of operations for the The Black Book. The base is a labyrinth of levels and tunnels located somewhere under New Mexico. To this day, Aegis does know exactly where the base is. Of course, The Black Book does not work solely out of Dulce. They have strongholds in different military units located all across the country. In areas where there is no strong military presence, The Black Book hides within bogus business fronts.

Like Aegis, The Black Book has agents located in many parts of the United States for easier dispatch when needed. However, a major difference between The Book and Aegis is that The Book has an overall agenda, and its agents are sent to do the bidding of the highest echelon. Aegis cells are responsible for themselves and are fairly autonomous.

Overall, The Black Book is not structured as securely as Aegis. Nonetheless, it remains difficult to track The Black Book and hold it accountable for its actions because it has successfully buried themselves so deeply in the military. Covered by the protection of the National Security Act, it is pretty much unreachable. Its only obstacle is Aegis.

GM BACKGROUND ON THE EXTRATERRESTIALS

Aegis's knowledge of the extraterrestrial is extensive in many areas, but far from complete. In general, their information on the Greys is correct, as is what little they know about the Saurians. Their evaluation of the Atlanteans is woefully inaccurate.

In truth, both the Saurians and Atlanteans are "feeding" technology to Earth. This has resulted in humanity gaining knowledge at an exponential rate -- far faster than would happen naturally. Each of these races act for their own reasons, and few act in the best interests of mankind.

As suspected, the Saurians do have a fleet headed for Earth, and need to establish the technological capabilities here on Earth for its repair. They have yet to decide, however, whether their journey is at its end. The Atlanteans, on the other hand, are the "Ancient Astronauts," and their purposes vary from individual to individual. They are a race of loners who act in whatever manner they choose. Some regard themselves as humanity's protectors, others see Earth as a playground, and men as their playthings.

THE GREYS

INTRODUCTION

The extraterrestrials known as the Greys are the most well-known to Aegis and the rest of humanity. Still, they are an enigma. What Aegis has learned through scientific methods is accurate, and many of their hypotheses are as well. Despite this, they know little of why the Greys are here, or what they gain from their seemingly pointless activity. This is as it should be.

Grey evolution followed a much different path than anything seen on Earth, resulting in a race of intelligent beings that has very little in common with humanity. The ecosystems of their home planet heavily favor those beings with psychic abilities. This means that the Greys are the culmination of billions of years of evolution directed towards perfecting these abilities. Their high level of mastery of the psychic reflects this. It has also resulted in a very different form of competition for survival, one based not on fight or flight, but on mental dominance. As such, the violence that permeates the everyday activities of Earth is incomprehensible to them.

Psychic Abilities

Greys have complete conscious control of their psychic abilities, unlike most of humanity. Further, they have always been in control of their abilities. The phenomenon of Psychic Seepage does not exist on their home planet, nor was it ever a phase of their evolution. On their homeworld, psychic energy is even more abundant than on Earth, but it is also precisely controlled. Even single-celled animals have control over their limited use of psychic power.

Control of these abilities has progressed to the point that Greys can evoke very specific results, combining their talents in intricate ways that appear almost magical. All Greys can utilize any of the Psychic Disciplines at will, in any combination. The one exception being Precognition, which seems to be a twisted result of the Seepage and thus a talent which the Greys do not posses. Due to this unconstrained access to such raw power, the Greys have developed in fundamentally different ways technically as well as culturally. Their evolution, genetic and cultural, has led to a bias towards technology than can be comprehended by a single individual. Thus they can pull metal from ore and shape it to their will, but they can't build an engine with it. In some ways, especially in the areas of information and scientific theory, they are almost primative compared to mankind. In others, where they can directly apply their psychic abilities, they exceed mankind in both capability and vision.

The Greys have another advantage, one that is unique to them even amongst the creatures of their homeworld. Individual members of the race can combine abilities seamlessly, allowing them to harness much more raw power than any single human can muster. It is this competitive advantage that gave them the luxury of evolving sentience, and undertaking such tremendous projects as interstellar travel. Travel is a simple concept that they can firmly grasp. Indeed, they have extended their abilities to the point where they can actually teleport. This is one of their most closely guarded secrets and it has allowed them to travel interstellarly, much to the Atlanteans' vexation. This ability is not a trivial one, however. Successful use requires current knowledge of the destination area (which may be gathered via Clairvoyance) and full concentration. Further, it is not something they can do at will, and some cannot do it at all. It usually takes at least a half-dozen Greys working together to effect the teleport, even with the aid of a lens. For an individual to accomplish a teleport is unusual, but not impossible.

The natural ability of a Grey is not significantly more powerful than that of a human psychic. The majority of their psychic superiority stems from the range and refinement of their abilities. Comparing Telekinetic abilities, for example, the average Grey will be able to manipulate roughly the same mass as a powerful human psychic, e.g. a compact car. The Grey however, could not only lift it ten stories, but also open the trunk and change the flat.

GREY PSYCHIC ABILITIES

All Greys are powerful psychics. Their psychic disciplines seem to function much the same as those developed by human parapsychologists, though they are much more capable. All Greys encountered to date have possessed all the following disciplines: Greater Telepathy, Greater Telekinesis and Greater Bio-PK. Some Greys have been discovered to also possess Clairvoyance and Precognition, though much more infrequently. No Grey has been found to have Empathy in any degree. The major difference between human and Grey psychic powers is the rate at which Psi engery is regained. Grey's recover their Psi Points only one hour after they are spent, rather than one week as humans do.

LENSES

For Greys, the closest native analog to human tools are their lenses. These are structures, usually large, that allow them to concentrate their abilities with even more effect than normal. Their ships are the most likely lens to be encountered on Earth, and are designed to allow them to focus the psychic energy on movement. Other lenses take the appearance of geological or architectural formations, and can serve to aid in any of their abilities. The concept of tools which can operate independently of an active source (i.e., a Grey) is something they have been introduced to only since their arrival at Earth.

Even more important to the Greys than their discovery of human tools, which they utilize only crudely, was the discovery of psychotronic devices, a byproduct of the Seepage. Under the programming of a Grey, a psychotronic device can take on the aspects of a computer, weapon, and communication device simultaneously. Their access to and experience with these devices has been limited, but their potential is great. This is one of the prime motivations for Grey activity on Earth.

Though not as inherently interesting to the Greys, other human technology is desired. Their effort to understand this technology is the chief rationale for abductions. They seek out humans that can act as a bridge between their alien mind and the concepts embodied in human technology. The Black Book often aids in the selection process, pointing them to individuals with particular knowledge in one area or another. This can just as easily mean a housewife as a world-renown scientist.

THE GREY PSYCHIC LENS

The only real technolgy that the Greys seem to have originated is based on Psychic Lenses. These structures and items are able to focus and control Psi power for a specific purpose. Two of the more commonly encountered Lenses are the Amnesia Lens and the Levitation Lens.

The Amnesia Lens (bold) is used to block out abductees memories and also sometimes to replace them with "screen memories" to account for the lost time. If the user spends one Psi or Strong ESP point he can block a portion of the target's mind. To do this he must succeed at a Wil test vs. the victim's Wil. If successful he may block out a specified time from the victim's memory. An additional Psi or ESP point spent at that time will enable the user to create a screen memory to cover the missing time. Unless the Wil test was an automatic success, it is possible that the subject's real memories may begin to return after a few months, though usually only in dreams or flashbacks. A skilled hypnotist might help a victim recover her lost memories.

The Levitation Lens (bold) is much more practical in function. When the user spends one Psi or Strong ESP point, she may levitate herself slowly through the air for up to fifteen minutes. The speeds attainable through this device cannot exceed 10 meters per round, but movement is otherwise unlimited. The levitation can only target the user herself, never another.

Grey Saucer Speed 5 Handling -1Df Crew 4 Size 9

The Grey Saucer is the most commonly spotted UFO. It's saucer shape resembles the external appearance of some of the Atlantean Beamships, but any similarity stops there. Inside the Grey Saucers one will find a strange semi-organic maze of corridors and small rooms. The interior of the ship is often strewn with detrius and items dropped by abductees or stolen by the Greys. Larger rooms filled with Earth technology are interspersed throughout the ship. It is in these large rooms where Grey experiments are conducted, sometimes with the help of human scientists and doctors.

The Grey Saucer is itself a giant Psychic Lens. The Lens is responsible for its propulsion and makes it capable of faster than light travel. The Greys aboard the Saucer pilot it collectively, each contributing Psi Points as neccessary. One Psi Point will allow the craft to maneuver for 30 minutes. Six Psi Points will allow the Greys to teleport the ship and everything within it. The destination of the teleport must be visible to the Greys to be successful, often the destination is envisioned by a Clairvoyant navigator Grey. This function can also be used by the Greys to teleport themselves outside the ship, or back into the saucer from nearby. Again the Greys must be able to see or sense the saucer clairvoyantly. This technique is often used to abduct subjects for Grey experiments.

The Grey Saucer contains no weapons or defensive systems of any kind due to the Greys inability to clearly grasp the concept of violence. This weakness has led to the destruction and crash of several Grey Saucers, as the crew watched a terrestrial warplane approach, oblivious to it's purpose. Most Greys have learned to teleport out of harms way when such aircraft appear. The hull of the typical Saucer is weak, with only an Ar of 4.

RACE RELATIONS

The Greys regard Atlanteans (they can identify them psychically) as creatures to be avoided. They have great difficulty reading, and therefore communicating with, Atlanteans. The history of Atlantean violence towards them is much more intense than anything they endure from humans, and although they have not (yet) learned to comprehend it, they have learned to avoid it.

The Greys are even more fearful of the Saurians than the Atlanteans. They can sense their true nature, and it is a thousand-fold more intense and alien than the Atlanteans'. It is so different that the Greys' fear is motivated less by any actual knowledge the Saurians possess, but simply because the Saurians are, to them, so extreme. Greys will flee in near panic when Saurians are close.

PLAYING THE GREYS

Of all the aliens, the Greys should appear to humanity as the most, well, alien. Their non-use of violence is an absolute. In some cases this may result in little choice but flight. This is not cowardice to them, but merely prudence. Their natural reaction will be to use their abilities to mask their presence and make every attempt to avoid detection. If found, they can utilize any number of means to ensure a safe escape, including the time-loss Phenomenon, distractions such as arrival of their ship, and teleporting. They may even resort to a mental domination command to "stop" which can potentially strike a man dead in his tracks. However, if the human has gotten far enough to warrant this kind of panic reaction, he"s likely a psychic himself, and therefore resistant.

Player psychic communication with Greys should be restricted. It is not only difficult and unpleasant for the Greys to translate most human thoughts, but also uninteresting. Few human psychics will have had the extensive exposure to Greys that would be required for them to send a meaningful message in the Greys' native tongue, so the most they can do is make irritating noises at them. That is, unless the Greys care to listen, which they don't. Not to what any Aegis agent is likely to say, anyway.

THE ATLANTEANS

INTRODUCTION

Imagine mankind forty thousand years from now. Forty thousand years of evolution. Forty thousand years of scientific discovery. Forty thousand years of war. This is who the Atlanteans are.

Over time, the Atlanteans have become a solitary people, shunning their own kind in preference of solitude. Directed evolution has led to each being a perfect specimen, unflawed in body or mind. Their search for the meaning in life, and the secrets of the universe, has resulted in a command of technology just short of miraculous. But their history is a long one, and one they cannot forget. Most of them have witnessed all of it firsthand. Those who choose to can still remember the days when their planet teemed with people as Earth does today, and how their technology destroyed them a race, but not as individuals. Of those who survived and prospered, many equated survival with perfection. They decided that they had become unto gods. Others simply decided that they had no need for companionship, or the concomitant risk of treachery. Whatever their reasons, the majority of Atlantean people became loners, taking with them the technological knowledge of the entire race, and the ability to utilize it.

A typical Grey
Str 2
Siz 2
Agl 3
Ref 3
Per 2
Wil 5
Int 5
Luck 2/12
Skills
Pilot:Saucer 3
Medical 2
Hypnosis 2
Repair/Build:Psychic lens 3

TECHNOLOGY

Not long after they began to master the full power of nanotechnology, Atlantean society fragmented and they became the megalomaniac loners that they are today. Each took with them nanotechnology factories capable of creating anything they could conceive. Most of them chose to remake their own small corner of the universe into their own view of perfection. Those who could not bring themselves to be totally isolated divided up the homeworld and piece by piece rebuilt it into a paradise. Others created whole new worlds within the moons of their system, tailored to their whim. Still others built their worlds on the inhospitable surfaces and interiors of the inner planets, and some even dared build their homes within the atmospheres of the gas giants. A few left the system to seek their fortunes around other stars, or in the cold depths of interstellar space.

Atlantean technology can control normal matter at its most basic level, and allows them access to tremendous raw power. Unlike Saurian technology, which can transmute matter to energy and back again into a different material form, Atlantean technology works by rearranging pre-existing matter like a colossal jigsaw puzzle. To develop this capability, they have learned to understand information theory, computation and matter itself in ways that few races, even the Saurians, can even imagine. While both races can command incomprehensibly vast amounts of raw power, the Atlanteans can also work the intricacies of dust-sized supercomputers and the subtleties of biological processes. The combination of these two aspects, power and subtlety, is the essence of Atlantean technology, and is reflected in the Atlanteans themselves.

Long ago the Atlanteans engineered themselves to be physically perfect and highly intelligent, giving them inherent advantages even without the aid of their technology. Even their abilities have limits, however, and one was reached when they tried to go far beyond their own level of genetic engineering. So, rather than improving the molecular structure of their muscles and bones, for example, they have found it far more reliable to enhance them with implants. Some of these implants go so far as to actually replace most of the original biological parts, but they always leave some part of the original. Individual Atlanteans will all decide for themselves how far they wish to take these implants. They range from supplementing various biological functions for basic safety to turning them into carbon-titanium boned walking nanotech machines. All, however, choose to retain their natural appearance, about which they can be quite vain. Since the Atlanteans are fully capable of building nearly any type weapon into their bodies, and can modify their bodies to heal nearly any wound within seconds, an Atlantean carrying a weapon or wearing armor is likely doing so just to keep up her illusion of being human. When they do carry visible weaponry, such as their particle rifles, they can destroy nearly anything. And when they are fully outfitted for battle, something not likely to be seen on Earth, nothing can stand against them.

Because each Atlantean designs and constructs her own equipment, no two pieces of technology will look, or even operate, the same. While they all draw from a common background, the range of options in the design of even the most basic devices allows for a great deal of variation. They don't necessarily choose to use the most advanced techniques available to them either: some might find it amusing to drive their particle rifle with a turbine chemical laser, requiring it to use a tripod and external power pack to operate properly.

Atlanteans fully comprehend everything they know about Saurian technology, which includes anything that anyone in The Black Book has been exposed to. The more esoteric arts of matter-energy conversion are unknown to them, but something they are completely capable of grasping once they have been exposed to it. Their own technological base includes such capabilities as anti-gravity and most of the energy field related aspects of Saurian technology, but they are much less familiar with deep sub-atomic physics.

Particle Accelerator Rifle:

This Atlantean heavy weapon is very similar in appearance and use to terrestrial rifles. So much so in fact, that they can be fired by anyone with the Small Arms: Rifle skill. Owing to the infrequency of direct Atlantean involvement, these weapons are very rarely seen, and when they are it is often in the hands of an agent rather than the Atlantean herself.

The PA rifle is powered by the Atlantean's Bio-Battery energy system, and as such has no internal power source or ammunition. Power is transferred through conductive grips in the weapon's stock. The large amount of energy required by the weapon make it necessary to charge for three full rounds before firing.

Particle beams are directed energy weapons that fire streams of charged particles at nearly the speed of light. The beams are most effective in space, where there is no atmosphere to degrade and refract the particle stream. To be useful within an atmosphere, the PA rifle first fires a powerful but short laser at the target which creates a thin vacuum tunnel, a microsecond later the particle beam is fired down the tunnel before it collapses. The laser beam itself does only minimal damage (Wn1), but the particle beam that follows is devastating, as it creates a Bl3 tamped explosion.

The particle beam has a useful secondary effect as well. The charged particles cause severe electrical interference, forcing any electronics within five meters of the blast to roll on the Equipment Damage and

CONSPIRACY X

A short-term Repair/build: Electrical research project will allow a character to build an adapter to allow a PA rifle to draw from terrestrial power sources such as generators or batteries. Only large power sources are suitable for this, as a single shot will drain a car battery.

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

Malfunction Table (adding 3 to the result).

PA Rifle Ranges: 10/50/150/200/300

Needler Pistol: This common Atlantean item bears little resemblance to a traditional pistol. The Needler looks like a small disk that can be concealed entirely in the palm of one's hand. The pistol fires hair-thin needle projectiles loaded with nanotech machines and is accurate up to 30 meters. Twenty needles are contained within the unit, each of which can be loaded with millions of nanomachines. Often a needler is loaded with a offensive nanotech designed to kill or incapacitate the target. The needles are usually aimed at an unprotected part of the target's body, as any armor at all will stop a needle from delivering the nanites. The needles can just as easily be loaded with any other nanotech to serve a wide variety of purposes.

The Needler pistol draws energy from the Atlantean's Bio-Battery and is fired using the Small Arms: Needler skill.

Needler Pistol Ranges: 2/5/15/20/30

Atlantean Nanotech Systems: All Atlanteans possess all of the systems described in Chapter 2: Personnel. In Atlanteans, these systems function exactly as they do in humans, but without the detrimental side effects. The Blood Surgeon system, in fact, works much better in Atlanteans than in humans. Not only is there no chance of the system damaging an Atlantean host, but the healing time of any wound is dramatically reduced.

When an Atlantean with an active Blood Surgeon system takes a wound, it immediate begins to heal at an extremely rapid pace. Bruise and Flesh damage heals one DL per round, Thwack and Wound damage heals one DL in 2 rounds, and even Break and Splatter damage heals at a rate of one DL every 3 rounds. If the Atlantean suffers from more than a single Wound Level, one Wound Level is healed at a time, beginning at the most severe and progressing down to least threatening (Bruise).

Atlantean Beamship: Speed 6 Handling -2Df Size 9 Crew 1

The Atlantean Beamships generally conform to the classic "two plates" description of UFOs, though each is as individual as the Atlantean who created and pilots the craft. The Beamships employ a powerful antigravity generator that powers the craft and can also be directed downward to lift objects or people into or out of the ship. The interior of a Beamship reflects the tastes and personality of the Atlantean to whom it belongs. Some are luxurious pleasure yachts, others spartan warships, still others are fully equipped laboratories. All benefit from plenty of space due to the efficiency of Atlantean materials and manufacturing.

The antigravity engine of the Beamship is not as powerful as that of the Saurians, although the Atlantean's cybernetic pilot interface gives them quite an edge in maneuverability. A pilot control system is necessary to control any Atlantean vehicle. The cybernetic interface controls every aspect of the Beamship's functions, from steering and weapons control to sensor systems to opening doors. All functions are controlled by the Atlantean at all times, wherever he is in the ship.

The main weapon system carried aboard most Beamships is a particle accelerator cannon, a larger version of the PA rifle described earlier. The PA cannon can be fired by the pilot in any direction, and creates a Bl5 tamped explosion when it hits. Beamships carry only minor defensive systems, relying on a Ar10 hull and an automated point defense laser that will destroy any incoming missile on a 3 or better on 1D.

RACE RELATIONS

While they are curious to learn what they can from the Saurians, Atlanteans are not anxious to let the Saurians know of their existence. Hence, they are content to take what little they can get from the technology transfer with The Black Book. The Saurians are a known variable -- they can be understood and are therefore not a threat.

If anything can truly be said to frighten an Atlantean, it is the Greys. Atlanteans have absolutely no psychic abilities. All Atlanteans are, without exception, Voids. No Atlantean experiences deja-vu, hunches, or any of the simple psychic phenomenon that humans take for granted. The abilities the Greys possess are completely incomprehensible to the Atlanteans. The fact that psychic phenomena so blatantly contradicts their advanced understanding of physics is something they cannot let be. In particular, the Greys' ability to travel faster-than-light is one the major reasons behind the Atlanteans morbid interest in them. Some have made it their crusade to find a way to emulate or duplicate these powers, while others wish only to destroy the Greys. Many have decided to accept that the Greys are simply a race better left alone, and avoid the Earth entirely.

Usually only when Grey activities threaten to interfere with their plans (usually inadvertently) do Atlanteans directly confront them. Even then, they usually act through human agents. The Atlanteans realize that humans, despite their ignorance of many things, have a way of getting through tough

Needler Nanotech
The most common offensive nanites are disassemblers. When introduced into a host, these viscous machines start ripping apart anything they can find until the host is reduced to a mass of jelly from the inside out. The effects are often similar to those exhibited by victims of the ebola virus. Disassemblers do Wn1 to the host every round until it is dead, at which point they disassemble themselves. Disassemblers are much less effective against hosts with an active Blood Surgeon system. Each round the Blood Surgeons have a 1 in 6 chance of destroying the hostile system.

Tyr-Amon
A "typical" Atlantean

Str 5
Siz 4
Ref 5
Agl 5
Per 5
Wil 5
Int 5
Luck 2/12

Skills

Computer Programming 4
Computer Use 5
Cryptology 4
Engineering: Nanotech 4
Engineering: Electronic 4
Repair/build: Nanotech 4
Repair/build: Electronic 4
Science: Genetic
Engineering 4
Science: Biology 4
Pilot: Beamship 3
Gunnery(Beamship) 3
Small Arms: Rifle 3
Small Arms: Needler 3
Hypnosis 4
Language: All 5
Martial Arts 4
Medical 5
Meditation 5
Occult 4
Parapsychology 4

Traits

Ambidextrous

situations, and their rudimentary psychic powers are often the deciding factor. In direct confrontation with Greys, Atlanteans are much less capable than Saurians. Since Atlantean technology is based on physical objects (albeit microscopic ones), the Greys more easily comprehend and deal with it. Also, the Greys read minds, even if only superficially.

PLAYING THE ATLANTEANS

The Atlanteans are the ultimate Illuminati -- they know everything, wield incomprehensible power, live practically forever, and know it. Their activities on Earth penetrate to the highest levels, and they have little trouble installing themselves into whatever position of power they find convenient. Their misanthropic nature applies only to their own people; humans are not threatening enough to deserve such status. An Atlantean's activities will center on one of two things: playing god, as they have for thousands of years, or trying to control or destroy the Greys through human puppets. As gods, they are vain and whimsical, just as they were in the days of ancient Greece. The only difference today is that they have artificially advanced humanity's development in many ways, and their games have become much more subtle. Their efforts against the Greys range from genetic experimentation to commando psi-teams.

Wherever Atlanteans are involved, they always act behind the scenes, becoming personally active only in rare or critical circumstances. They would likely set up a corporation to do genetic research, for example, and perhaps give them a "competitive edge" by way of some new scientific theories, but they don't get their hands dirty by actually messing around with centrifuges and gene sequences. Any of that sort of activity will take place far in advance in their own, much better equipped, space. But they use humans for a very good reason: humans understand, or at least can grasp, psychics, whereas the Atlanteans cannot.

THE SAURIANS

INTRODUCTION

While Aegis has had extensive second hand exposure to the Saurians through The Black Book, their understanding of the real Saurian threat falls far short of reality. This is The Black Book's most successful cover-up to date, though it really doesn't deserve all the credit. The Saurians themselves are primarily responsible for ruthlessly eliminating evidence of their true nature, for disseminating false information, and for encouraging misperceptions. Even The Black Book knows only what the Saurians want it to, and in with respect to their organization, this is precious little. Thus, despite learning much about the joint work between the Saurians and The Black Book, Aegis has little actual knowledge about the Saurians themselves. Aegis has, however, had far more direct encounters with them than they realize, for the Saurians are also the Men In Black.

The real Saurians are a race of beings distinctly reptilian in appearance. Aegis has, more out of ignorance than any real evidence, grouped many other creatures in with the Saurians. Most of these are

hybrids, mutants, or, in many cases, fabrications. This has served The Black Book and the Saurians well, and they take advantage of this misinformation as best they can. To further complicate matters, the Saurians, while a single race, have many classes. Each class is a variations on the theme, but each is physically distinct. The description in the Aegis computer is that of a technician-warrior class, which, along with the Men In Black, comprise the bulk of the Saurians on the planet.

THE MEN IN BLACK

It is difficult to describe any aspect of the Saurians, even the Men in Black, without referencing their fantastic technology. These "men" are actually Saurians -- not just their minds or personalities, but their actual being. One of their more impressive feats of engineering is the rebuilding of their bodies from the atomic level using their matter-energy conversion technology. This procedure is both challenging for the technicians and taxing on the individual, definitely not something entered into lightly, often, or for brief periods of time. It is, however, their only way of being among humans without fear of detection. They have also found that it helps in their dealings with The Black Book, particularly when working with scientists and engineers. When in this form they eat, breathe, digest, and in most other ways behave as normal humans. Because their main concern is secrecy, they do not enhance their bodies physically much beyond what is normal for a human. Since they mass slightly more for their height than a man, they do have a preference for bulky, brawny physiques. The change is so complete that they could pass a normal physical without raising an eyebrow, and X-rays reveal nothing abnormal. A CAT-scan would definitely get some attention, on the other hand. The main thing to remember about the Men in Black is that buried somewhere in there is a Saurian mind, not a human one.

LIZARD MEN

The Saurians true form, a reptilian, leather-skinned biped, is where their namesake derives. Three-fingered hands, clawed fingers and toes, and lizard-like tails contrast with an expressive face that betrays their intelligence. This basic form is evident in all their classes, and although the variation within a class is slight, members of differing classes are readily distinguished. The principal class found consorting with The Black Book is the warrior-technician, who guide and teach The Black Book scientists and engineers the secrets of their technology. Saurians have their own scientist and engineer types, but the knowledge they impart to humans is so basic to the Saurians that they are unnecessary in this capacity.

In their technical capability, the war-techs are surpassed by few humans. They are intimately familiar with their equipment and technology and are trained for making battlefield repairs under the pressure of combat. They mix intuitive leaps, methodical reasoning and drilled knowledge with lightning quick, almost spastic yet precise movements, making each individual a combination hardware hacker and pit-crew. Their knowledge, training, and availability would make the war-techs ideally suited to training humans. The problem is that they tend to be emotionally high-strung, impatient and prone to violence. The natural communication barriers between the allies are magnified by this, and occasional incidents arise. In general, however, the war-techs are more than adequate for their assigned task. The Black Book certainly is all too willing to learn.

Saurians of a class more genetically disposed towards diplomacy handle higher level communications, and direct the relationship between the races. These beings, and their entourage, take great care of their personal safety, spending the better part of their time far from the reach of mankind. When they do find it necessary to become personally involved, they simply appear without fanfare, conclude their business with expediency, and disappear. Their mode of travel is unknown, but they invariably cause some poor guard a great deal of misery when their comings and goings cannot be explained. These groups can range from an ambassador and personal guard to a small army of negotiators, scientists, warriors, or others. It is in these instances where they show the most about their society. They dress in their native garb, and the caste structure of their society is unmistakable (interestingly, they actually assign ranks to humans and it is clear when they consider themselves to be talking to an equal). Each individual, from ambassador to warrior, is uniquely suited to its task, but they are far from being single-minded drones. Whereas as each individual in a troupe will display a striking panoply of colors, textures, patterns, plates, horns, and feathers of varied shapes and sizes, the differences in their minds can be largely attributed to their self image and training, both of which are rooted in their class. The larger troupes might even be mistaken for a festival, if not for their serious and deadly demeanor.

CULTURE

Saurian society is authoritarian and violent. They keep no ties to their biological parents, instead giving their loyalty to a crèche-like communal family. Families are each ruled by a Lord. Interfamily relations are generally cooperative, but controversy and dissent does exist and can cause them to erupt into a state of all-out war. The Saurians culture is based on these consuming but infrequent conflicts, and all Saurians are genetically wired for combat. Existing in a constant state of tension, relieved only by the outbreak of hostilities, the Saurians are always wary of outsiders, unexpected alliances, treachery and kindness. It is a rare generation that does not experience war. War is not the basis of their life, but it is

Game Mastering

"Typical" Saurian
Man In Black
Str 4
Siz 4
Agl 3
Ref 3
Per 3
Wil 3
Int 3
Luck 2/12
Skills
Engineering: Electronic 3
Engineering: Aerospace 3
Repair/build: Electronic 3
Repair/build: Aerospace 3
Computer Use 3
Computer Programming 4
Pilot: Interceptor 3
Gunnery(Saurian) 3
Plasma Claw 3
Martial Arts 3
Brawling 3
Drive: Car 2
Small Arms: Pistol 2
Small Arms: Rifle 2
Autofire 3
Stealth 3
Shadow 3
Traits
High Pain Threshold
Ambidextrous

Str 4
Siz 4
Agl 4
Ref 3
Per 3
Wil 3
Int 3
Luck 2/12
Skills
Engineering: Electronic 4
Engineering: Aerospace 4
Repair/build: Electronic 4
Repair/build: Aerospace 4
Computer Use 3
Computer Programming 4
Pilot: Interceptor 3
Gunnery(Saurian) 3
Plasma Claw 3
Martial Arts 3
Note: Saurian claws do
Fw2, their raking kicks do
Wn(Str) damage.

nearly inevitable.

Individually, they have much the same aspirations and problems as humans do. They are marked for life, much more so than humans, as belonging to one class or another, and less than a majority that can claim to be content with their position. Although living in a highly structured and stratified society, individuals do partake in another level of society, the clique. Cliques are formed within and among families, and though they are usually formed to escape from the politicking and barely veiled threats of the clans, they can also be the source of unrest and upheaval, like any aspect of their society.

The Saurians on Earth are not present in the right numbers and proportions to sustain their usual social behavior. The predominance of warrior-technicians is due to their function as pilots, as most of the early ships that arrived were single-seat craft designed solely for a quick one-way journey. This is but one indication of the flexibility of their classes. The first-comers had to serve not only as pilots and navigators, but also as emissaries, policymakers, and teachers. Only in recent years have other classes showed themselves on Earth, and even then only to the highest ranks of The Black Book. The long period of isolation gave the war-techs time to adjust to their independence, and the arrival of the others is has been a trial for them all. While they all aim towards the same final purpose, a continual and secret struggle exists to determine who will serve, and who will be master.

TECHNOLOGY

Saurians excel at physics, particularly in the areas of fields and waves. Electromagnetism, gravity, weak and strong nuclear forces, quantum chromo-dynamics -- the most advanced theories of man are but crude approximations of the truths the Saurians know. It is as if they see a universe different from the one humans understand, and their technology is an outgrowth of this unfamiliar perspective. Like the Grey use of psychics, the Saurians' technology is incomprehensible to most humans, and only those with a special gift have the slightest chance of understanding it. Having mastered the smallest constituents of the universe, it is still a rare Saurian that could stand its ground with the top biologists of Earth. Their ability to comprehend the intricacies of life is as impaired as humanity's ability to comprehend matter and energy.

Their technology appears to be organic in nature, but this is a cultural choice rather than a necessity. They think more naturally in terms of extensions of their own bodies rather than separate tools. Thus the "plasma claw" -- a relatively simple and common weapon to the Saurians appears novel to humans because it doesn't fit into their paradigm of tools. Other Saurian technology follows similar patterns, and although their hands are fully as manipulative as human hands, they more likely to attach an instrument to their wrist or hand than to grasp it with their fingers.

In combat they prefer hand-to-hand, as ranged weapons and mass-destruction tend to cause too much collateral damage. When called for, ranged attacks are made under precise control, such as with the claw. Their modern weapons are mostly based on manipulation of sub-atomic fields, as are their defenses. Projectile weapons are not often used because they are too easily defended against, while new beams and shields are constantly being devised. The defensive principle of dispersing high-velocity matter is well understood. But these defenses do not protect against low-velocity attacks such as in hand-to-hand combat or from thrown objects.

Plasma Claw: The Plasma Claw is the chief sidearm of the Saurian race. Though many variations have been found, all function in approximately the same manner and achieve similar results. A standard Plasma Claw consists of a synthetic cloth glove or metallic alloy gauntlet which houses a miniature fusion reactor and powerful magnetic field generator. The reactor superheats gases drawn from the surrounding atmosphere until they reach plasma temperatures. The plasma is contained within a small magnetic bubble shaped and controlled by thin metal projections that extend from the fingers of the glove. The more than passing resemblance that these projections have to claws is responsible for the weapon's name, and in fact they double as bladed weapons should the Saurian be forced into hand-to-hand combat (doing Fw3 damage). Once the plasma ball has been generated, it is launched with a throwing motion and then guided to its target by the attacker's hand movements.

The Plasma Claw has three modes of operation, only one of which can be active at a time. It takes an operator one full combat round to switch from one mode to another. Modes I and II are offensive and mode III is intended to defend against incoming plasma ball attacks. All modes generated powerful magnetic fields that interfere with unshielded electronics (all Saurian tech is shielded, most non-military Earth tech is not) and often cause them to malfunction. Roll on the Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table for any unshielded electronic equipment within 10 meters of a functioning Plasma Claw or a plasma claw projectile.

Mode I fires a slow moving plasma ball that may be controlled by the attacker. One full Combat Round must be spent generating the ball, which will last for three rounds unless it hits something or the controller disperses it. Each round that a mode I plasma ball is active, the controller may attack any one target within 50 meters, but the plasma ball will instantly disperse if it is ever more than 50 meters from

the controller. To hit a target, the attacker must succeed at a Df2 Plasma Claw skill test, taking into account normal ranged attack modifiers for movement, cover, light, etc. Plasma Claws may not be "aimed" nor may they fire snapshots. If a plasma ball hits a living target it does Sp2 damage. If the plasma ball hits a machine or device the owner should make a Equipment Damage and Malfunction Table roll at +6.

Mode II fires a fast moving, straight-line plasma ball for attacking targets at long range. The plasma ball takes one full round to generate, as with mode I, but a mode II plasma ball lasts only a single round and so must be fired immediately on the next round. Mode II plasma balls may be fired at any target within 100 meters and does damage as mode I if it hits. The degree of control exhibited by mode I plasma balls is absent in mode II attacks, making them considerably more difficult. Hitting with a mode II plasma ball requires a Df3 Plasma Claw skill test, adjusted by any applicable ranged attack modifiers. As with mode I, mode II plasma ball may not be aimed, nor used to perform snapshots.

Mode III is the Plasma Claw's defense mode. In mode III, the Claw generates a small but powerful magnetic field that the wearer may use to deflect mode I and mode II plasma attacks. To parry an incoming plasma ball, the wearer first must be aware of the attack, as the Claw will do no good unless directed. The defender must then make an Agility Attribute test versus the attacker's Plasma Claw Skill. If successful, the defender manages to deflect the plasma away, though this does not dissipate the sphere.

The tiny fusion reactor that powers the Plasma Claw is effectively inexhaustible and will provide the weapon with unlimited power.

Field Generator: Although rarely seen outside Saurian bases and aircraft, the Field Generator is a common piece of equipment for war-techs. The Field Generator includes a self-contained power source and controls built into the war-tech's harness-like clothing. Like all Saurian equipment the device's internal power source is capable of providing effectively inexhaustible power. However, there is a limit to the amount of energy that may be drawn from the reactor at once, which prevents the wearer from activating more than one of the Field Generator's three functions at any given time. Two full rounds are required to switch between any of the three modes.

Mode I generates a powerful magnetic shield used for defense against plasma balls, particle beams and other charged-matter weaponry. The strong field extends roughly one meter in all directions from the wearer and will deflect and dissipate any plasma ball or particle beam on a roll of 5 or less on 1D. The field is non-selective and will also prevent the wearer from using any charged-matter weapons.

Mode II projects a similar defensive shield that is effective against small fast-moving projectiles like bullets. The field has no effect on directed energy weapons (e.g., lasers), slow moving projectiles, close combat attacks, or explosions. However it acts as Ar5 against projectile attacks, and if the armor test succeeds the attack is deflected completely.

Mode III creates an anti-gravity field that can negate or even reverse the effects of gravity on the wearer. With this mode the war-tech can levitate vertically up to 50 meters per round, fall at any desired speed or hover in mid air. The anti-grav field does not produce any horizontal movement, but it is often used to reduce the effective weight of the wearer, which complements the Saurians loping run and reduces any Agility movement tests by 1Df. The anti-gravity field is not strong enough to negate more than the weight of the wearer and his equipment.

Power Generator: These miniature fusion reactors, though incredibly powerful by terrestrial standards, are extremely common pieces of Saurian technology. Most Saurian tech is power hungry to a fault and requires huge amounts of energy, which these small toaster-size devices are easily able to supply. Each is capable of matching the output of any full-size terrestrial power plant. Most large equipment employs a variant of these generators, but all war-techs are sure to have a few portable units handy for back-up or supplemental power.

Saurian Interceptor Speed 6 Handling -1Df Size 8 Crew 2

The crescent-shaped Interceptor is the most common of the Saurian spacecraft in operation on Earth. Like the war-techs themselves, the Interceptor is a hybrid intended for both utility and combat. The craft employs the standard Saurian pulse-detonation engine that enables it to skip through the atmosphere like a stone across water. Although the ship is fast and maneuverable like a fighter, it is also capable of carrying over a ton of cargo with no reduction in performance.

The main Interceptor weapon system is a Plasma Generator that fires plasma balls much like those of a Plasma Claw, but on a much larger scale. The plasma balls are treated much the same as terrestrial missiles except that they are guided by the Interceptor's gunner rather than internal guidance systems (and therefore use his Gunnery Skill) and when detonated have an tamped Blast Rating of 10. The Plasma Generator can fire an unlimited number of these projectiles, and is capable of firing to the rear of the craft.

A Field Generator's Mode I mag shield has the same effect on sensitive electronics as the Plasma Claw.

The Saurian Power Generator can be easily adapted to work with terrestrial equipment by a technician familiar with their use and operation (though not necessarily their design). A Repair/build: Electrical 3 test and a few hours is all that is needed. A tech familiar with the Power Generator can also quickly set one to overload, which will cause it to explode with a Bl30 in 12 rounds.

Note: The Aurora's psychic missiles are not affected by the Interceptor's defense systems.

The defensive system of the Interceptor creates defensive fields that act as ECM pods against plasma balls and terrestrial missals alike. The defense fields also cause missiles to detonate away from the hull of the ship, causing them to do damage as untamped explosions. The hull of the Interceptor has an Armor Rating of 6.

THE BLACK BOOK

The Saurians and The Black Book are officially engaged in a technology transfer arrangement, sanctioned by both sides. Each believes itself to have the upper hand. While The Black Book struggles with alien precepts, language, and secrecy, the Saurians have access to more material then they can process.

Nearly all of The Black Book/Saurian technology projects occur on secret military installations scattered throughout the world. Even the smallest bit of technology is oftentimes enough to justify a whole new weapons program since the Saurians are very selective about what they convey. In the vast majority of cases, specific implementations of technology are transferred, rather than a complete understanding of the theory behind it. Thus, The Black Book gains a little at a time, enough to give them an edge, but not so much that they feel they can act brazenly. In the end, this is really all they are capable of processing and utilizing. They would prefer, however, to have their choice of research programs rather than trying to turns each crumb of knowledge into a gem. While The Book is building upon the ideas given to them by the Saurians, they are also building a military-industrial complex that, slowly but steadily, has the capability of incorporating Saurian technology. More than the biological expertise that they presume to trade for, and which is available for the taking from the civilian sector anyway, this is what the Saurians want.

The Saurians take an active role in protecting their secrecy through the Men in Black. Whether they want them or not, The Black Book suffers their presence at every secure installation, and on many covert ops as well. They are never far away, and always ready to "clean up" if things go awry and Saurian interests do, or even could, become compromised. They arrive seemingly in the blink of eye, and wield absolute power in determining the appropriateness and extent of interfering, and they always err on the side of caution.

RACE RELATIONS

The Saurians are basically ignorant of the existence of Atlanteans, and ambivalent about the Greys. Saurians posses no psychic abilities so they would have great difficulty identifying Atlanteans as anything other than human, unless they knew they were looking for something. Unlike the Atlanteans, the Saurians have no interest in the Greys' psychic abilities because they never have had trouble dealing with them. The Saurians easily bypass their psychic abilities with of a mixture of their natural mindset, and the esoteric nature of their technology. If a Grey becomes bothersome, the Saurian simply kills it. As a result, the Greys keep their distance.

PLAYING THE SAURIANS

Saurians are merciless. Their society revolves around warfare, which is to say that war is always a possibility in their minds, not that they are wanton butchers. Due to this constant threat of war, they all train to fight, and they all train to win. They will not kill when it is merely convenient, but they will not hesitate when it is necessary. This mindset carries over into all aspects of their society -- to compromise is to lose. A Saurian would much rather kill and die, than lose.

The Saurians technology is capable of many things, the smallest fraction of which is detailed here. Feel free to invent anything that seems appropriate for the scenario or scene. Within their capabilities are matter-energy conversion (the actual basis of most of their power systems), disintegration (they have great proficiency with sub-atomic fields), beams and fields of all types, and even seeming teleportation (speed of light travel). They have yet to achieve faster-than-light travel, not for lack of trying. They certainly are more likely to discover it than the Atlanteans.

Because they fear humanity's ability in biological warfare, they will never let one of their own fall into human hands, dead or alive. They will take extreme measures to prevent a native from being captured, including suicide and mass destruction. To avoid problems of this nature and to protect the secret of their very existence, very few ever appear in their natural form even in the most secure areas. When they do, it is because their personal attention is needed, either for overseeing or initiating research and projects. They are less reserved about the Men in Black, for except for their minds, they are entirely human anyway.

GM BACKGROUND ON THE SUPERNATURAL

SETTING A MOOD

The world of Conspiracy X is intended to be a dark and twisted look upon reality, and the supernatural is its blackest corner. Most importantly it is supposed to be, well . . . frightening. Work this into your

story-telling. Push the use of details, timing, and the unknown. Candles flame into life as Focus walks into a haunted house. This is most likely just the unusual way Foci react with highly active paranormal locations, but it could be described to suggest a sinister and malevolent intelligence, aware of the player character's presence.

Detail also paces the "feel" of a situation. Don't allow a "tome of black magic" to be found, make it:

A book bound in the leathered hide of an animal, unknown in origin and yet strangely familiar. The etched characters running across its face are uncomfortable to look at, though compelling. The heavy dust upon it suggests that it has not been read in years, perhaps intentionally.

Further information can later extend the feeling of terror and danger surrounding the book. The leather will be identified as human skin, the author insane and burned at the stake by the church of England in 19th century, and its content possessing knowledge of things that would not occur until the early 20th century. With proper treatment of the details, the player character's will come to fear the book itself . . . extending the overall unnerving nature of a paranormal mission.

AEGIS AND THE SEEPAGE

Aegis is well informed on the nature of supernatural energies. They have had the Queens Tome for over a decade and gained an understanding of the mechanics of paranormal activity. Knowledge of the basics often gives Aegis agents an advantage when dealing with supernatural threats, however they still have limited information on the specifics. For example, they understand the concept of a Focus and the additional power she would lend to the performance of a ritual, but very few actual rituals are known.

Direct information of rituals is not to be found on HERMES. Aegis knows they tend to be dangerous and difficult ordeals, and although appropriate warnings or theory can be downloaded, step by step instructions cannot. Agents rely on their own occult skills for performing rituals.

SEEPAGE

The Seepage is the uncontrolled psychic energies that stem from mankind itself. Knowledge of its existence and the history of its actions is difficult to separate from superstitions, although it is believed to have been present for thousands of years.

The first known governmental funded program for the investigation of paranormal activity was the Watch, founded in 1933. This was fourteen years before the Roswell incident (which extended their awareness to the presence extraterrestrial beings). Aegis possibly contains the most accurate research to date on the supernatural.

HOW TO PLAY SEEPAGE

The Seepage is abstract, sentient, and generally unseen. It normally works through manifestations (TI's, phenomenon, and spirits), and humans (foci and Incarnate). The most direct way that Seepage can effect the characters is within high Seepage levels. Inside such paranormal locals, Telepathic Illusions or Phenomenon can occur without focus or Incarnate intervention. Seepage is a sentient energy but horribly dispersed, therefore as the energy pools so does its intellect. Hence the higher the Seepage level the closer it comes to awareness. This is represented by increased (and possibly more directed) paranormal activity. Since supernatural forces are psychic in nature, the apparent mind of the Seepage in particularly potent zones will reflect the beliefs of those contributing to its existence (the local populace and Foci). In a Seepage level 3 (the maximum), the supernatural forces would be fully aware, and exceptionally powerful.

POOLS AND LOCI

These are areas of significant supernatural activity. Any place that may hold superstition can become a pool -- churches, ancient mansions, and other locales of fear and wonder. Only widely believed, and distinctly supernatural settings will become a Locus. All Loci will have distinct and lengthy histories that surround their macabre existence.

FOCI

Picture the strange and unexplainable occurring routinely, and realize that this is the life given to a Focus. The supernatural world is centered upon their being, and where ever they happen to be becomes saturated with arcane forces. Most Foci, while not necessarily loners, are quite odd and somewhat estranged from the people around them. To help simulate life for a player character Focus, be sure to generate bizarre quirks within his environment that let him know that life is different than it is for normal people (these tidbits would do better as background instead of plot related oddities most of the time): a wrong number telephone call, that turns into a date, who turns out to be an ex-girlfriend, who turns out to be a vampire, who explodes into flame on the way over to pick him up. Sure, this an exaggeration, but with Foci it goes with the territory.

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

Indoctrination

Personnel

Ops Center

Tradecraft

Psychics

Supernatural

Extraterrestrials

Game Mastering

Most traits, however unusual, are normally apparent before adulthood is reached. Mutation is a supernaturally induced phenomenon, and it actually alters the body on a genetic level. This allows additional growth in an adult body where the bone caps had previously hardened, the development of claws or fangs, and a variety of other effects.

If there is anything the Foci do in common, it is to avoid themselves. Whether from experience or instinct, too many Foci can generate problems beyond their own ability to handle. Fortunately Foci are rare, and their gathering does not occur often. If the player character's do insist on having multiple Foci, make sure that the negative side of their raw paranormal energies is played up, and where it can be amusing and detrimental, it can also be dangerous or even deadly.

FOCI INVOCATION

Foci can use themselves as a starting point for a supernatural event and when it is successful, they can produce any number of unusual results. Fortunately they can all be categorized into two areas:

Telepathic Illusions are occurrences leaving no physical evidence of their passing, and in fact only happen within the mind(s) of the beholder(s). Basically it's a psychic vision effecting the senses at their source, the human brain.

Phenomenon are occurrences leaving physical evidence of their passing. To some extent they occur in the physical world. This may be as subtle as a dull glow, or as devastating as spontaneous combustion.

There are no limitations on how many times a Focus can use their powers, however if she invokes too often, the Seepage will surely teach her the error of her ways. When a player character Focus uses her power, she is dicing with the GM. The law of probability states that she will have to answer for the blatant use of her abilities.

AURAS

Auras are made of the same energies that create the Seepage. Viewing someone's aura is to witness the psychic energies "seeping" out of them (aura reading and empathy are various ways to "see" an aura). Auras can tell someone who can interpret them various information about that person, as detailed in Chapter 5: Psychics. Although every aura is different, some are much more so than others, for that matter not everyone even has one. Psychics have a dimmer (if that is applicable) aura than normals due to their control over the latent abilities within, lessening their contribution to the Seepage. Foci, on the other hand, have an immensely noticeable aura, radiating meters beyond their body. Voids, Psinks and Incarnate have no aura. Psinks also absorb the aura of all those within their radius (along with the psychic energy it takes to observe their aura in the first place), with the exception of a Focus, who will read as a normal (with extra points spent for using a psychic ability within a Psink's presence).

PLAYING VOIDS AND PSINKS

Voids are outcasts, typically mistrusted and ill reputed by no action of their own. Normal human's basic empathic and ESP abilities pass invisibly over a Void, and without that basic psychic evaluation, doubt blossoms (of course there are exceptions). As a result, Voids are routinely loners, and self-reliant . . . they also have an aptitude for logical and deduction skills. Aegis is fully aware of the value of Voids, especially when dealing with psychics. With Aegis' policies about psychics (recruit them or kill them), Cells containing Voids (or Psinks) are routinely used when dealing with them. All psychic tests are made at a greater difficulty (-1R) against a Void, and they cannot be possessed. The additional difficulty in Rhine tests translates into game play by never allowing a normal human to successfully make an ESP test upon a Void.

Psinks are unexplainable to psychics and parapsychologists alike. For game play, it is important to remember that not only do they gain all the advantages and disadvantages of a Void (including -1R), but the following also hold true: any psychic attempting to use their abilities against a Psink (or simply within her radius of effect) will automatically have one Psi point drained for the attempt alone, needing additional Psi points to guarantee success. All normal people within the influence of a Psink become effective Voids for that duration (no ESP, hunches, or gut feelings [strong ESP would still work at the cost of an additional psi point]). In regards to the supernatural, the Psink presents an equally draining effect, destroying 1SP per hour when inside a Pool or Locus. And any supernatural power attempting to work within the area of effect of a Psink will require an additional 1SP to be spent. For example, a Vampire is attempting to heal a wound in the presence of a Psink, normally regeneration costs 1SP per damage level but when using this power near a Psink it still costs 1SP to regenerate and an additional 1SP gets sucked into the Psink's power.

Psinks and Voids have a tendency to be less aware of the supernatural than most. They can be seen as fearless or deliberately ignoring the supernatural, but the truth is that many of them just don't believe in it. Essentially psychically "blind," they cannot see the most common form of paranormal manifestation: Telepathic Illusion. Most Psinks and Voids never encounter anything that they cannot logically explain (of course, the player characters will most likely be exceptions). There are a few who know the truth. These individuals are the Graymen. They realize the threat of the supernatural, and use their own gifts to combat it. They are the vampire hunters and the wizard slaying heroes of legend.

CORRUPTION

If someone is unfortunate enough to become corrupted it can lead to some interesting (evil, but interesting) events within a campaign. The key to playing corruption is to create a situation where the character feels the forces attempting to destroy his soul. Although a roll against the corruption is only made in appropriate circumstances (one becoming a Predator would have to check against homicidal if a fire-fight broke out), the morbid forces are always present. Present the character with dreams and other dark omens to remind him of this. Fill his mind with voices telling him to perform unspeakable acts . . . use whatever tricks you need to make them aware that their psyche is at war with sinister forces.

When a character who is being corrupted finally snaps, they must make an additional role to see if they become a member of the Incarnate. If they do not, they are left Forsaken -- believing that they are Incarnate, but possessing none of the abilities. Forsaken will distinctly think that they are a werewolf, Rasputin, or the anti-Christ (as the case may be). They are insane but not (necessarily) stupid, and in many ways the Forsaken can be just as entertaining as an Incarnate for game scenarios. They also have a distinct connection to the Seepage, making them slightly more sensitive to the supernatural then normal humans.

MUTATION

For game purposes, the only limits to keep in mind for the mutation of the Incarnate is those posed by the physics of the human form. The range of human height is 22in to roughly 9ft; human weight (for normal height) ranges 50-1500lbs, although an adult female dwarf is on record at 13lbs. Claws, fangs, and fur (body-wide hair) are easily documented. Although the human form can be stretched to almost unrecognizable limits, it will always be human. Man cannot change into a wolf, or a bat. Nor can they gain attributes that cannot be attained by mammals (e.g., feathers and beak), although simulations are common (humans cannot grow scales, but they can attain scale-like skin).

ALIENS AND THE SUPERNATURAL

The aliens who visit our world are aware of the arcane energies that encompass it. To most, it offers an additional source of interest and study. Therefore, what is paranormal is to us, isn't to them. The supernatural activity is just another intrinsic aspect of this world to aliens, even if it seems like a foreign and mysterious force to humans.

THE GREYS(10)

Imagine that your main senses were psychic in nature. Now picture a world (Earth) full of inhabitants who radiate powerful, but chaotic, psychic energy. It's annoying, comparable to continuous random chatter. Grey evolution did not include a period of uncontrolled psychics so this is confusing to them. Also, because psychic energies know no distance, the Seepage of earth is noticeable even on the Grey homeworld. The Greys' first reaction was to dominate us, and make us stop. Unfortunately, they quickly learned that our alien minds make us difficult to control even for short periods, and next to impossible to leave any kind of lasting command (with the possible exception of "Forget", used on many abducties). In the time that followed, the Greys have become increasing interested in the paranormal and devote a great deal of energy to its study.

THE ATLANTEANS

The Atlanteans also show a good deal of interest in the paranormal, but like all Atlantean maneuvers this is done covertly. The individualism of their race and their general involvement in anything

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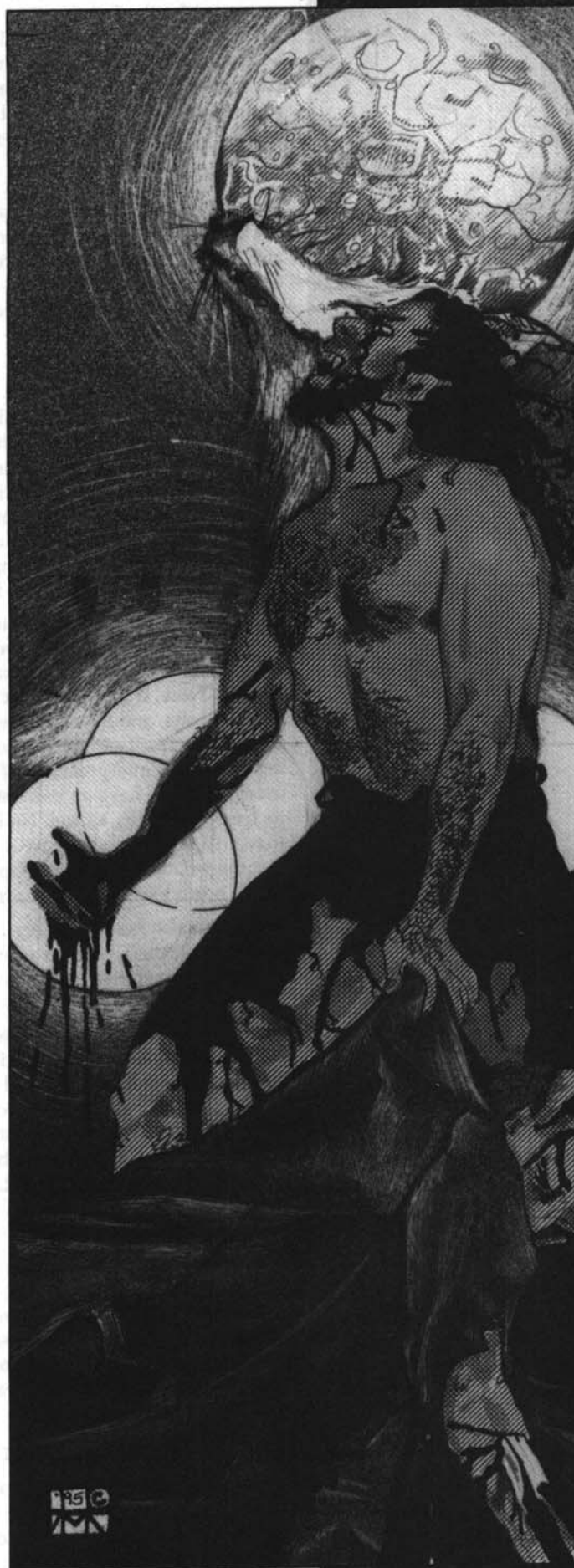
that draws their attention makes it unsurprising that they also have an eye focused about the macabre . . . except for the fact that they are entirely non- psychic themselves. Atlanteans (by our standards) are a race of Voids, and should be less prone to even notice the supernatural. Their exceptional intelligence and connection to various human organizations can explain their knowledge of the occult and other paranormal ventures. Their race-wide wariness of the Greys can constitute their attention to the supernatural, a psychic bi-product. Through study of the Seepage some Atlanteans hope to understand the basis of psychic activity, perhaps even utilize it.

SAURIANS

If the Saurians are aware of paranormal activity differing from any other of earth's oddities, they have yet to show it. The supernatural does not interest them in the slightest. Like the Atlanteans, they are also a race of Voids. Unlike the Atlanteans, they are not too worried about it. They are aware of the Greys and generally consider them to be a nuisance, nothing more. The same can be said for the supernatural and, more specifically, the Incarnate. If one of their kind presents a problem, the Saurian will simply kill it.

SPIRITS

Ghosts and poltergeists are really just two names commonly used for spirits. The titles help to describe what kind of abilities the spirit has exhibited, rather than them being actual separate entities. In the presence of a Focus, or higher Seepage level, a "ghost" could display telekenetic powers normally limited to a "poltergeist". Spirits are in many ways the fourth Incarnate, fully capable of manipulating and controlling supernatural forces much the same way. Unfortunately for them, spirits have no ability to generate or collect Seepage energies, and they must rely on the energies of rituals or that found in Pools and Loci. When creating a spirit for your campaign, assign it mental traits and abilities, and decide what Incarnate abilities it can and cannot manifest.

Spirits are the reflection of a human psyche as discussed in the supernatural chapter, but when they are summoned a new persona is imposed upon the spirit by the conjurer. For example, if someone attempts to summon the spirit of their grandmother and, assuming they are successful, their grandmother would appear. Now, chances are that their grandmother died as she lived: a happy, normal human in a low seepage zone, and never left the powerful impression upon the Seepage required to create a spirit. As a result, the spirit summoned could be anyone/thing, and it is the ritual of summoning that will impose the conjurer's interpretation of their grandmother onto the spirit. During the time that the spirit is invoked, it will have an understanding of being the conjurer's grandmother, but most likely remember its true personality as well (so if the player character loses control of the ritual, its not guaranteed that they will still be dealing with the benevolent grandmother personality). The more times a spirit is summoned, the stronger its impression upon the Seepage becomes. After a spirit is called enough times, it will begin to remember information from its previous summons, even after Banishment.

Spirits are also notorious liars. If summoned and asked for a divination, the spirit will always have an answer regardless whether or not it successfully performed the divination (the mock foretelling will be as good as the spirit's ability to tell stories). In fact, spirits will say or do anything in order to stay in the high Seepage level of a ritual.

Living human minds contribute energy to the Seepage, but spirits are only reflections constructed out of the psychic energies themselves. They cannot produce Seepage energy themselves, and often bond to an area of high supernatural activity or an individual (who becomes haunted); of course this doesn't just happen- it's normally associated with the creation of the spirit. For example: haunting the man that caused its death (to be dramatic). Regardless, don't just have a spirit "decide" to bond to a player character; if this does happen there should be a significant series of events that lead to the haunting and a plausible solution or way out.

INCARNATE

The Incarnate are very unique. It is difficult to describe them as a whole in all but the most general of terms. Each Incarnate should have their own history and personal flair which prevents them from merely becoming Bela Lagosi in a cape. Incarnate (by definition) have twisted minds: M.P.D., paranoia, and phobias are a few insanities that can make them fun, non-player characters. They should present a challenging, frightening, and bizarre change of environment. And when the player characters think they have dealing with conspiracies and aliens down to a science, supernatural villains can give them a whole new world of horror.

HOW TO MAKE INCARNATE

Technically there are no limitations on building an Incarnate, they can be as powerful as you wish (which might be a decent way to balance combat intensive player characters), however you will most likely find that Incarnate are more than powerful enough. You can use their own powers and insanities to create checks and balances. For example, you may create a vampire with the power of frenzy,

regeneration, telekinesis, mesmerism, and animal control (extremely powerful). You can also limit those abilities so that perhaps he can only control canines, or only frenzy after drinking blood. The Incarnate's abilities can work against him too, the same vampire may also have pyrokinesis usable only upon himself as a fear reaction to being exposed to direct sunlight. And where as the mental attributes can be limiting for a player character, it can be even more so for an Incarnate. Many insanities apply to vampires, both mythos and movies . . . your vampire could believe that he was dead during the daytime and fall into a coma-like state, he could have a phobia about crossing running water, and the addition to human blood on a nightly basis can create problems for those trying to keep a low profile.

The Incarnate powers themselves can also be sculpted into unique manifestations. Regeneration, flatly makes the Incarnate who have it incredibly difficult to kill. But how does it work for you? Can your vampire spend 1SP a round, until they are out of SPs, or is she unaware of her regeneration and can only heal one damage level an hour? Does the regeneration repair her flawlessly, or does it leave deep lasting scars? Does she limit herself and subconsciously and refuse to spend SPs on her power during the daylight hours, or after being wounded by silver? Any of these quirks are supported by the rules. You can tweak the powers and make them as personalized as you want.

Incarnate should also have character; make them original. The vampire described in the above paragraph is pretty cliché, and assuming that your player characters have probably seen a good deal of the movies you have, I imagine they'd agree. The character of a villain can make him memorable -- a noble, arrogant, suave vampire in a tux has been done before. What about a dirt-talking, sexist, fat New York cabby who works the late, late shift. Being recently corrupted he still occasionally bites his lower lip with those damn canines that he started growing. Few of his passengers notice that he casts no reflection in the rear view mirror (a TI), and those that do never get to where they were going . One of the best ways to entertain the player characters is to give them something they haven't seen before.

PREDATORS

WENDIGO

The Wendigo are a race of cannibals existing within the Canadian mountains. They are slightly shorter than man due to the curvature of their spines, but they are 30-50 kg heavier in mass. They have simian or Neanderthal features and white hair extending thickly from a large portion of their bodies which serves as both camouflage and protection. They also have disproportionately long limbs, and some have been know to possess tusks.

Wendigo have primitive, near animal level of intelligence. They have a tribal society, and their leaders are mystics and holy men. Primarily introverted, they really only present a threat to those who invade their territory since they rarely go outside of it. Human flesh is a Wendigo delicacy, but they mainly hunt and devour regional animals. They are also fully capable of natural reproduction, although many are added to their culture by ritual transformation.

Indian superstition and fear led to the first of the Wendigo, and now they in turn keep the legends alive. The Wendigo legend has been found in many cultures with various names, including Yeti, Sasquatch, and Bigfoot.

VAMPIRES

Of all the predators, vampires are some of the most varied and powerful. Fortunately they are also exceedingly rare. Vampires are often thought as the walking dead due to a ghastly pallor and the

capability to live through any wound that does not out right kill them. Hunters of the human race, feeding literally on our life blood, they are mutated so that their bodies actually need to ingest blood to survive. Prevented from feeding, a Vampire will starve as if separated from food, lasting three or four days at most. The effects on a vampire without blood are varied, ranging from a weakened state to a blind animal bloodlust.

Like other Incarnate, vampires are not sane as humans would understand it; their insanity results in self-created Achilles heels. Religious symbols, daylight or running water (to be more abstract) cannot actually harm a vampire, but if they believe that these things can, they will. Some vampires will fall into a coma-like state in the waking hours, while others could have a phobia of crosses. The culture from which the vampire is spawned largely determines which traditions/superstitions that the vampire is vulnerable too.

WEREWOLVES

Werewolves originate from many corners of the world, but all fall within certain parameters. A werewolf is a form of lycanthrope, or shape changing creature. As with vampires, the reality of these monsters varies from the fiction. Werewolves normally have three abilities: Regeneration, Frenzy, and Telepathic Illusion. If TI seems odd, think again. Mutation is still limited by the borders of the human form, so a man may take on certain animalistic forms (hair covering the body, claws, fangs, and wiry muscles), but werewolves are often described as being a large wolf. This is due to the TI projected by the Incarnate depicting himself as he believes himself to be. In a low Seepage zone they might just emit a sensation of animal presence, and in a higher level they will distinctly appear as a beast.

When a werewolf is created, the Incarnate personality flows over the human mind slowly, progressing with the mutation. As the wolf makes its presence known on the flesh, its bestial evil merges with the intellect of the human mind. This makes them much more dangerous than the young wolf who is of separate minds, one human and one beast. Young wolves often only become their darker half under a given set of circumstances (full moon, etc.). An old wolf is of one mind, and in much greater control of its abilities.

ADEPTS

Adepts are possibly the easiest and most effective Incarnate to use as a Game Master. This is due to the fact that they can easily already have a developed plot before the story begins. Adepts are wizards and masters of ritual, although the latter will not help them in case of a direct confrontation since a ritual can only make a well placed power play if it is given time to complete. By definition, an Adept is essentially attempting to understand everything. Most of them specialize, becoming obsessed with understanding the line between life and death, life on another plane, the demons of space, or the definitive future.

In all of the cases above, the Adept might very well do an immense amount of research upon the subject, even beyond the realm of known science, but that won't be enough. Nothing will. They will always have to learn more about their field of study by experimenting chaotically. The theories that they obtain through research become the laws of their universe, which have a tendency of clashing with the laws of ours. The fact is, a lot of the results they observe would not happen without their Incarnate power being present. Therefore, a mage could come to believe that by pronouncing certain words and meditating, anyone could summon great rains; when in truth only they can create that effect, and the rain was merely a Telepathic Illusion. Like all the Incarnate, Adepts (although clever) have twisted logic

Their obsession with knowledge is a true obsession and comes before

all else in their life. This can result in a quiet bookworm, but on the other hand an Adept might decide that she could understand death fully if only she could just observe enough people dying. Beyond their "habits" and rituals, Adepts are Incarnate, and the more powerful they are, the more they can have any number of Incarnate powers. Of course, they will most likely put their own twist on these powers; such as believing pyrokinesis to be a flame spell, or thinking that they've summoned a demon and now can give it orders (instead of realizing that the demon is a TI and the demon's "powers" are their own). These abilities, unlike rituals, can be used quickly and without risk.

CONJURERS

Conjurers believe in life on other planes, and have learned to open the door between them. In truth, they summon spirits and raw power to shape into spectacular displays and illusions. Spirits are very deceitful, however. They will gladly let the conjurer believe that the spirit is whatever he summoned, whether it be a demon, ghost, or other dimensional being. Spirits do this to stay on this plane with the influx of power that the ritual created; sometimes the spirit summoned is insane and actually believes itself to be whatever the conjurer names it to be. These Adepts are well versed in the means to summon, banish, or control spirits. Any abilities beyond that will reflect their obsession and belief (a demonologist might be a powerful pyrokinetic, for example).

MAD SCIENTISTS

Mad Scientists are the strangest of the Adept. In some ways, they might be considered the weakest of their kind, but they possess a very unique ability. They are ritual writers. A mad scientist may not believe in deities, or the supernatural, and therefore will search for the answers to his questions in the halls of pure science. In truth, the twisted and chaotic experiments performed by a mad scientist aren't really experiments, but are rituals being unconsciously written by the "good doctor". The machines, potions, and stormy nights only help to achieve the state of mind needed for the ritual to be successful. Previously, the most effective rituals are the ancient ones. These Adepts write their own, and their conclusion redefines the world of science. Outside of this prime ability, a mad scientist possesses no other Incarnate power. Outside of their labs and experiments they can almost seem like normal people, sometimes even blending into normal society.

PROPHETS

Prophets are an embodiment of religion pushed too far. These are some of the most deadly and dangerous of all of the Incarnate -- after all, it would be difficult to claim you're a God without the power to back it up. Fortunately they are rare, and when one does set foot on the earth their presence is hard to conceal. They tend to set forth on a holy causes: destroying rival religions, establishing hell on earth, or begining the Nth coming. Each of their goals can be accomplished by clever, lengthy manipulation and plotting, or direct confrontation (the way that the Vatican moves through world politics versus the holy crusades). Prophets are the truest fanatics in existence, believing themselves to be avatars, high priests, or the gods themselves. They normally present capabilities as depicted within their religious beliefs, but these are wide-spread and can overlap. Also, although they may either know a ritual or research one (similar to Adepts), they rarely perform them. When they do though, the rituals are some the most extensive ever.

MESSIAHS

Messiahs are peaceful prophets, setting foot on the earth to spread the "true" word. They are smooth and charismatic, lending answers and giving hope. They also encourage followers with thrall and "miracles" (e.g. a faith healing). These prophets might sound harmless, but consider their followers. Not only are the worshipers of such false gods doing so at least vaguely against their wills (thrall), but they present other problems. The "flock" cannot always be within range of the shepherd, and while the Messiah is a pacifist, the flock may not be when he is not around. In fact, the newly acquired fanatical beliefs of the devoted tend to anger those who have not "seen the light." For this reason, Messiahs pose a subtle, yet potent, threat.

DEMONS

Demons originate from the fires of darker religions. They are not just simple devils and demons from Christianity. Instead, they include a wider spectrum of beliefs that hold controversial anti-heroes such as: tri-faced goddesses, fallen angels, and murderous tricksters. Generally these Prophets emerge into societies with opposing views and have a difficult time moving throughout them without making their presence known. Their time on the earth is generally a dramatic flash of pain and suffering for all those they use. Demons will reflect the traits of the entity they believe themselves to be, and they will slowly mutate to resemble that entity physically, as well.

VOODOO PRIESTS

Not all religions have a church you can go to on Sundays. A Voodoo priest represents a slice of the other

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faiths. Their life styles can lead them into many practices, but all will use the dead and the spirit world in their quest. They can be great (or secret) leaders within their community, or feared hermits. Rituals that are common practice for the Voodoo priest include bonereading and other divination powers, lesser spirit summoning, and spell like rituals (curse, bless), usually involving a talisman. Of course, their most famous and unique of rituals involve the making of zombies. Voodoo zombies are not actually dead; the ritual merely suppresses their wills and bonds them to the zombie master. Traditionally they are slow and of standard strength with an inability to understand complex orders. Their only advantage is their complete immunity to pain, and the fact that they can only be stopped in death.

INCARNATE POWERS

MASK

Masking is a powerful form of TI that Incarnate use to disguise themselves. It is an illusion limited to the Incarnate's own person. Unlike most other TIs, mask normally has a distinctive clarity about it. Examples include making oneself "dim" (difficult to see or notice but not technically invisible), a werewolf changing his form at the sight of the full moon, and a Prophet glowing with the radiance of the heavens. Incarnates have greater control of the supernatural than Foci, and therefore they can produce manifestations of increased power. Any Mask, once enabled, will last an entire evening (roughly 12 hours, or until the Incarnate dispels it); but the strength of the illusion itself is based on the number of SP spent on it. For example, the Predator werewolf who believes that he turns into a wolf under the full moon cannot physically achieve this change, but a Mask allows the stunning transformation to occur (albeit illusionary). A 1SP illusion creates a form that will be perceived unless a Per3 is made. A 2SP illusion requires a Per4, and a 3SP creates a Per5 illusion. When a Perception check is successful, the player character can see through the illusion to the Incarnate behind it, negating any benefits that the illusion provided. Voids, of course, ignore the effects of illusions entirely.

PHANTASM

A Phantasm is an illusion created by the Incarnate. Dissimilar to a Mask, these visions may incorporate properties of all three of the Foci manifestations: vortex, mirage, and apparition. Some of the Incarnate are capable of fluent control and an infinite variety of images, entirely depending upon their whim. An Adept might generate an illusionary labyrinth inside her mansion to prevent the player characters from interrupting her studies, and as they got closer she could create new twists, turns, and false leads. Others simply have a single illusion that they use with frequency. It could be as subtle as the light dimming in the presence of a Prophet demon, creating nightmare-like lighting. If this is the only

Phantasm they are capable of, perhaps they are unaware that they are even doing it. A 1SP illusion requires a Per3 to see through it, a 2SP needs a Per4, and a 3SP must have a Per5. In all other respects, these illusions are identical to Masks.

PYROKINESIS

With exception to the difference listed below, the Incarnate ability of Pyrokinesis is identical to the Psychic Discipline of the same name. Unlike the psychic skill, supernatural Pyrokinesis is automatically successful and does not require a Rhine test. 1SP invokes Lesser Pyrokinesis, 2SP invokes Greater Pyrokinesis or 1D simultaneous lesser manifestations, 3SP creates 1D Greater Pyrokinesis manifestations or 2D lesser manifestations.

TELEKINESIS

With exception to the difference listed below, the Incarnate ability of Telekinesis is identical to the Psychic Discipline of the same name. Unlike the psychic skill, supernatural Telekinesis is automatically successful and does not require a Rhine test. 1SP invokes lesser Telekinesis for one round, 2SP allows greater TK or 1D round of Lesser Pyrokinesis. 3SP allows 1D rounds of greater TK or 2D rounds of Lesser TK.

FRENZY

Frenzies are supernatural adrenaline rushes common to many Predators. Under the influence of the mind numbing fury, the Incarnate are entirely immune to pain (but not damage), capable of bone-breaking, muscle-tearing feats of strength, and blinding speed (Str5/Agl5/Wil5). Any damage taken by an Incarnate during a Frenzy (short of instant death) is ignored, until after the effects wear off. 1SP gives 2d6 rounds of frenzy, 2SP give 3D6 rounds, and 3SP give 4D6 rounds.

REGENERATION

With Regeneration, any wound that does not kill the Incarnate outright will heal at amazing speeds. In fact almost any wound, or wounds, can be healed in a twenty-four hour period of time. Additionally, any wound that an Incarnate with this power has will stabilize itself without medical attention. Regeneration costs no SP to stabilize a wound, and 1SP for each damage level healed.

THRALL

Thrall is a supernatural emotion control. In many ways it is like empathy in reverse, instead of sensing the emotions and feelings of others, it allows the user to push a particular emotion into the minds of those around him. Incarnate can use this power to create unnatural fear, hatred, lust, or other emotions within his victims, which will threaten to make them lose control of their own actions. Although this ability is very potent, the Incarnate would never rely on this alone to create their intended mood. Vampires are truly terrifying even without a thrall, just as Messiahs are magnetic individuals.

Thrall can also create a field of supernatural charisma; by radiating love and trust, the words spoken by the Incarnate become increasingly hard to ignore. As long as the suggestions given do not begin to sound obnoxious or suicidal, those nearby will soon find it difficult not to simply do whatever the Incarnate says. Only the quick of mind and the strong of self will keep their wits about them.

Although this power could be used to induce nearly any emotion, Incarnate normally are only capable of invoking one particular type (e.g. love, fear, depression, fascination). When this power is activated, it effects everyone who can see (or hear for those player characters who decide to wear a blindfold), and lasts 2D round regardless. A 1SP thrall requires a Wil3 resistance roll, 2SP has Wil4 resistance, and 3SP needs a Wil5.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Animal control is very similar to Thrall, but only works on animals. Creatures within the influence of the power will naturally trust and want to obey the desires of the Incarnate. The animals will also gain an instinctive (and therefore limited) understanding of the user's wishes. In almost all cases the animals controlled are of a specific type: alligators, wolves, rats or vermin in general. An Incarnate can effect any animals within sight, or for those animals that have a habit of hiding out of view roughly 50m radius. 1SP will control the animals for 2D6 rounds, 2SP for 2D6 minutes, and 3SP for 2D6 hours. Animals succumb to this calling without question.

MESMERISM

Mesmerism is a very powerful form of mental domination. When used upon a victim it can totally suppress his or her identity. In all respects the Incarnate becomes the master, unquestionably obeyed by a servant. When effective Mesmerism lasts until dusk or dawn (whichever is appropriate). 1SP requires the victim to make a Wil3 to resist its dark charm, 2SP requires a Wil4, and 3SP needs a Wil5.

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HEALING

Healing is the paranormal repairing of tissue outside of the Incarnate's own body. Faith healing and psychic surgery are common examples. This ability can be used to heal wounds, diseases, and in rare instances long standing, but non-genetic, physical handicaps (blindness). Healing can stabilize a wound for no SP, and reduce a single damage level for each SP spent.

LEVITATION

The Incarnate ability of Levitation allows them to lift themselves into the air and slowly move about for extended periods. It is an ability limited to their person alone, and cannot be used to remotely lift people into the air. 1SP will produce 1D6 minutes of levitation, 2SP yields 1 hour, and 3SP allows until dusk or dawn.

DIVINATION

Divination is an extremely powerful second sight, incorporating the abilities of Clairvoyance, Precognition, and Psychometry. With the exception of the details listed below, these powers work identically to the Psychic Discipline of the same name. Unlike psychic powers, Divination is automatically successful and does not require a Rhine test. The Incarnate cannot divine with a single SP, the minimum is two. 2SP allows the Incarnate 6 questions (a greater psychic power), and 3SP allows the 9 questions (a greater and a lesser psychic power).

TELEPATHY

Telepathy is the ability to pry into the minds of those nearby the Incarnate. With the exception of the details listed below, these powers work identically to the Psychic Discipline of the same name. Unlike the psychic ability, supernatural Telepathy is automatically successful, and does not require a Rhine test. Lesser Telepathy costs no SP to use, Greater Telepathy costs 1SP for 2D rounds of use. Incarnate Mind Probes are treated the same as Divination, for matters of point cost.

POSSESSION

By using Possession, a spirit attempts to project the power of his being into another person's body. The goal is to suppress the victim's identity and allow the spirit to dominate, leaving him literally inside a human's body. When the spirit eventually leaves the body he has possessed, the poor victim pays the price of the supernatural touching their mind. They must see if they become corrupted with a Will test against a random 1D6 difficulty, or they will begin down the path of becoming a Forsaken, or Incarnate. When the spirit possesses a human they must spend SP like an Incarnate: 1SP will leave a Wil3 resistance roll, 2SP will leave a Wil4, and 3SP a Wil5. Spirits do not naturally generate SP like a member of the Incarnate does so they are much more careful with the energy they have. Although their is no set duration that a spirit can possess a human, at every dusk and dawn the victim get a Will test against a random 1D6 to see if they can force the spirit out.

TELEPORTATION

In areas of high paranormal activity, some Incarnate have the ability to teleport. Instead of the Foci invocation of teleportation, Incarnate teleport themselves. The Incarnate will teleport from a unseen location to another such local of his choosing. Note that this power requires an immense amount of supernatural energy, and even then cannot be done often. Of all of the non-ritual supernatural activity, this is the rarest. Teleportation is only capable of occurring with the expenditure of 3SP, the Incarnate can only teleport within the Locus (e.g. level 3 Seepage area can only exist at a Locus).

THE INCARNATE CASES

PREDATOR CASE STUDY: MORTON JEFFRIES

Morton Jeffries finds the past to be a fogged and twisting window. Remembering is often difficult, and sometimes the memories fracture like panes of glass. His only constant is the blood and the sweet song it sings to him. A song so loud and beautiful that it literally hurts him to resist dancing to it. There are moments when it seems the world should be able to hear it, but the contorted and screaming faces tell him that it's for his ear alone. If they could only listen they would certainly follow his step . . . what choice would they have?

The blood song always begins very softly, but it rapidly grows with pounding complexity. Sometimes he remembers resisting the crescendo -- how foolish that feels to him now! The spinning choir is tireless, washing his senses in a red haze of joy.

Eventually the pinnacle fades to silence, but this is long after red fills his mind. When Morton can focus again, he often finds himself in dumpsters covered with drying blood, or with strange wounds that heal quickly. Often the sun plagues him then, hanging menacingly over his head and demanding that he seek shelter from it. Oddly, it is in these moments that he finds the clearest view into his own past, but the memories come on so strange he often doubts their validity.

Sometimes he sees himself surrounded by books . . . musty, dusty, and oh-so quiet. He remembers a life that mimics those tomes. A meek but comfortable living shared with a woman whose face sometimes leaves him curled up on the floor, sobbing -- until the next song begins. On rare occasions he even remembers the activities he filled himself with while in the . . . library? He envisions the books of old magic, and the ritual that called to him. A calling that was only a glimpse of the music to be made, and even that was irresistible. Was that the beginning, or the realization? Regardless, that night was the first song, and the woman his first partner in the dance. Her terror confused him but didn't stop the blood song . . . nothing could.

In the time that followed, his life became difficult to understand, and impossible to live. The books slipped from him, and his dwelling disappeared into the shadows. He had to hide from the law because the dances he performed seemed to break it into pieces. The streets became his home, and he fell into their anonymous embrace. His physical changes seemed as natural as the dance, his gaunt form and the deftly clawed hands that helped him live the music.

Of course, thoughts like these came only rarely. In his world there was only the present -- hiding in the gutters, dodging the intense light of day, and the dancing. Dancing like a knife to music made just for him.

Morton Jeffries is a Predator, and although he might not live up to the expectations of ancient history and folklore he is also a vampire. Jeffries was a librarian in Boston specializing in old and rare books. Like most of the Incarnate he was a Foci by birth, and his natural aptitude for the unusual led to take interest within the volumes over which he was caretaker -- especially those being involved with magic. He eventually experimented with the writings and rituals therein, and in a pinnacle of calamity, Jeffries opened himself to the corruption of the Seepage and arose to one of the Incarnate.

Intellectually he is limited . . . vaguely delusional and removed until he hears the "blood song", at which time he becomes bestial and homicidal. Physically Jeffries is small and wiry, but possessing above average strength. His skin has grown pale and thin, and his hands have grown into claws capable of ripping easily through human flesh. To a quick observation he is very sickly. If resting, he could easily be mistaken for dead. His only truly inhuman feature lies in the abnormal length of his hands. Jeffries does not have extended canines.

As an Incarnate, he possesses the unnatural ability to heal almost any wound, inhuman endurance, and slightly heightened senses (i.e. the years of abuse normal people's eyes get from the sun and other intense light sources has been healed in Jeffries, and no further accumulation can occur . . . likewise for his other senses). His body has also mutated to the point where he must drink blood nourishment, and his body will violently reject anything else. Oddly, it is this condition alone that distinguishes him as a vampire, the other respects of his particular form of predator all point toward a werewolf (other than the fact that he has no delusions of being a beast).

Psychologically Jeffries is unaware that he is a vampire, and therefore he is saddled with none of the phobias coupled with them . . . he does avoid the sun however, due to his sensitive eyes.

ADEPT CASE STUDY: TASMIN ROKAZ

To my brother,

You probably wonder why you receive these occasional rantings which must seem anything but sane. Selfishly, I admit they are for my benefit alone . . . but I assure you that every word contained herein is truth. Partly I write to relieve the weight from my own shoulders, since I know my deepest troubles must ring as fiction in your ears. Partly I write to remind myself of my one good deed, the single noble action that resulted in your continued existence. And partly I write because you are blood to me, and I do love you. I suppose that in some way I have loved all of Mother's children . . . which brings me to the reason I write at this time.

Mother is pregnant again.

I dread the thought, but I know I'm right. She is always certain the moment it happens, and the look of smugness dancing across her face this morning speaks louder than words. After all, Mother is not one for unanswered questions.

Have I told you why? Why she has so many children, why I took you away from her?

Mother is a very powerful woman, she knows things. How the world works, where to find power, and how to use it. She often talks about it to me, not so much for conversation, I think, but just to hear it said aloud. Part of it has to do with this energy that comes from fear, the fears of the whole world. And there are special people around which these energies pool, and properly trained they can tap and control these forces. Mother is one of these people.

People like Mother are exceedingly rare, but if you bring two of them together, they gather a larger pool than either individual alone. Mother has children in hopes to make more like her, and in doing so she creates huge amounts of power. She's fairly successful.

She generally gets one of three outcomes:

Another like herself, who never live past ten or twelve. They spend their lives in the full grasp of her power, never fully having their minds free of her influence. Since they are the children that she constantly strives to produce, they are her favorites and I spend much of my time attending them. I have come to call them "talismans."

Indoctrination
Personnel
Ops Center
Tradecraft
Psychics
Supernatural
Extraterrestrials
Game Mastering

Morton Jeffries
Str 4
Siz 3
Agl 3
Ref 3
Per 4
Wil 3
Int 2
Luck 2/12
Powers
Regeneration
Frenzy
Mutation has turned
Jeffries hands to claws
that do
Fw(Str) damage.
Skills
Brawling 3 (replace
Punch with Claw)
Stealth 3
Tracking 3

Tasmin Rokaz

Str 2
Siz 3
Agl 3
Ref 3
Per 3
Wil 4
Int 4
Luck 3/11

Powers

Mesmerism
Mask

Skills

Occult 4
Ritual: Summon Spirits of
the Dead 3
Ritual: Bind Spirits of the
Dead 3
Ritual: Banish Spirits of
the Dead 3

Mojo Bonereader

Str 3
Siz 3
Agl 3
Ref 3
Per 3
Wil 4
Int 3
Luck 3/11

Powers

Telepathy
Divination
Healing
Mesmerism

Important Skills

Occult 4
Ritual: Curse 3
Ritual: Bind Zombie 4

Sometimes she births a normal child, like myself. I'm afraid that I (and my brethren) are somewhat of a disappointment to her, albeit useful. We take care of the house and the duties that she cannot trouble herself with; attend to bills, purchase supplies, etc. In many ways, we are servants.

Scariest are the "dwellers," and for some reason the more talismans she has, the greater the chance of a "dweller." They are horrible twisted beings, so far removed from normal that it's hard to call them human. When one is born she has me bring it to the basement, where it will spend the rest of its life. They seem to grow strong, and the vile things apparently even have their own form of tribal law governing their actions. Yet it is in their existence that I see something of an emotion within Mother; for surely it would be easier just to kill the poor thing promptly after its birth, but she does not. It is her only acknowledgment of love for her kin.

Of course, you were different. Mother was horribly sick and weak the entire time she was pregnant with you. Labor was long and difficult, and she was in so much pain (Mother never pains through labor). When you were finally born, Mother screamed. To me you looked like a normal baby boy, but to Mother you were her greatest fears come true, you were her opposite. Feeling her power drain away, she was in tears with fright.

She demanded that I kill you.

In her weakened state she couldn't crawl behind my eyes and make me carry through her wishes. She had to trust in my loyalty, but for the first time (for the last time), I defied her. Secretly, but I did defy her. I let you live, and kept you safe. Within the hour I had brought you far away.

My shining moment lies with you and unfortunately, it may be my only one. Mother is pregnant again, and with it marks the time begins of my most foul of duties. Soon, I will have to take care of her mate. Most likely he is drugged, restrained, or both . . . too bad for him, he is no longer needed. I'll most likely bring him to the basement and let the dwellers handle him, the foul little cannibals. It's a shame really, he seemed rather nice. And don't fool yourself thinking that I might have some choice in the events. If I showed a moment's hesitation, Mother would force my hand. As I have said, she's a powerful woman.

I must go now since it is only in secret that I may write these notes, and I can hear Mother finishing her bath. Once again I thank you for sharing my weight, and I continue to ask that you never attempt to find where I am. If Mother knew of your existence it would mean death for us both. I hope you are doing well, and perhaps one day I will be able to contact you with happy news.

With love,

your brother

Tasmin Rokaz is an Adept, obsessed with knowledge and its acquisition. She has gained understanding of what she is, and how her power works. Seeing the advantages of surrounding herself with Foci, she has sought out to do so.

Foci are exceptionally rare, but due to her own origins as Focus she has theorized (correctly) that her own children have an increased chance of being of a similar nature. And thus she has taken to an existence of mating, and disposing of her mates after conception.

Tasmin has the Incarnate ability to induce a trance-like state within others, making them susceptible to her mental dominance. This is her primary ability, but her knowledge of rituals more than makes up for that. In less advanced times she would be known as a witch, for her ritual "magic" is capable of any number of results (primarily used for the summoning, and questioning of spirits, but as diverse as Telepathic Illusions to change her appearance when she searches for a mate).

Tasmin is 53 years old, and has given birth to more than 30 children. She has yet to reach menopause, and it is unlikely that she will soon. She lives in the mansion that her family has occupied for generations, surrounded by her children. The Foci she keeps in lucid trances for her control, the mundanes she uses as servants, and the "dwellers" live in the basement and take care of any unwanted guests. Personally, Tasmin has not left the house in over twenty years.

PROPHET CASE STUDY: MOJO BONEREADER

The big bull 'gator hissed more out of territorial duty rather than threat. Its reptile mind knew it had nothing to fear from the scared and stumbling couple passing by. Of course, that didn't stop them from stifling a yelp and running in a zigzag pattern across the swamp, all the while trying to keep focused on why they were here.

Their little boy is sick, mortally so, and a big city doctor certainly didn't want to come all the way to their little town just for a family with no money. Home remedies and traditional ointments had done nothing, and now with all other avenues tried and failed, they had no choice. They were going to see Mojo Bone-reader.

With his hand-built home in sight they strengthened their resolve for the final step . . . confrontation. Mojo is more of a legend than a man, the stories of him have seemed to whisper throughout the town for decades. "He talks to the spirits," they say. "In league with old Black Tom himself," others warn. And then there are those who won't say a thing, for fear that even at his home, miles deep in the swamp, he'd still hear them. But wherever tales collide, be he a miracle-worker or crazed specter, they all agree that Mojo Bonereader is not a man to be taken lightly.

Even with these warnings running through their thoughts, they still managed to knock on the weathered door. After some time, a white man in a dirty, tattered business suit awkwardly answered the call. He stood there lifeless, his dead eyes unseeing. Without acknowledging them, the zombie shambled away leading them to a central room of some sort before disappearing down an unlit hallway.

The room was sparse. Beyond the organic-looking and misaligned shelves that were loaded with small bottles of colored powders and dried insects, there was only one piece of furniture. This was a chair made out of bones (some of them human), and seated upon it a man lounged comfortably. He was tall and broad with an old, battered, but formal, top hat resting on his bald head. A long coat adorned his body, feathers and other talisman hanging off of it, and the inside lining seemed to be the remnants of an American flag. Something dangerous slid across his eyes but thankfully didn't rest there long. Mojo Bonereader slowly extended a wide, toothy grin and spoke.

"You have been expected for quite a while, my friends . . . Welcome. Now tell me of your little boy"

Mojo Bonereader, voodoo priest, spirit talker, and medicine man is one of the Incarnate . . . a Prophet to be exact. He is a thing of stories, feared and respected. Sought after occasionally by those in need of the impossible, or who desire the unusual and unattainable.

At first meeting, Mojo seems odd and removed (due mostly to his unreadable aura), but with time one might learn to find a jovial and almost pleasant personality under his arcane exterior. A charming disposition that does not hinder him in the slightest from exacting cruel revenge, or killing his enemies outright.

And the power lies within him to do such things if he wishes to use it. Mojo is clairvoyant, and possesses hypnotic powers, as well as a limited form of telepathy (Mojo believes the spirits whisper the thoughts other hold of him). Beyond his capabilities as Incarnate, Mojo is rehearsed in several rituals (and hundreds of traditions) from his people's history, including a faith healing, divination (spirit talking), and a zombie creation ritual.

The zombie ritual does not actually raise people from the dead, nor are the zombies created "undead". The ritual suppresses the will of the victim, and binds them to the zombie master. This leaves them lifeless in appearance, slow, and immune to pain (but not damage). It is a fate that Mojo saves for only the worst of his enemies.

RITUALS

In gameplay, rituals have to be carefully monitored. If allowed frequent use, they can lose the mystical and supernatural presence that is their very nature. Take, for example, a Christian prayer . . . something that is performed on a daily (or perhaps nightly) basis by millions world-wide. Something that is so common it is rarely thought of as the significant religious blessing that it originated from. There are few alive who attain the mental state required to actually perform a prayer, and those who do almost never meet the threshold. It has slipped from the realm of ritual to that of tradition. Remember, rituals are not easy to pull off, they require training, time, and a minimum amount of supernatural energy, any of these factors can be difficult to attain.

Spirits: Summoning, Binding, and Banishing(12)

Summoning and binding spirits is an immensely versatile way to manipulate the Seepage. Spirits are in many ways the fourth member of the Incarnate (the disincarnate), and are capable of invoking numerous Incarnate abilities if they can get an ample power source. When an occultist summons a spirit to do his bidding, she is saving herself the need of learning the additional rituals that would perform the same things a spirit can do inheritantly. Not only can the occultist ask the spirit questions, but they can also command it in using the powers at its disposal. And unless the spirit is commanded to manifest itself, most likely, it will remain invisible. For example, if the occultist summoned a spirit and commanded it to light a building on fire, to all those witnessing the event it would appear that the occultist cast a spell that engulfed the structure in flames (only those gifted with second sight could view the spirit). Of course, no spirit can perform all of the Incarnate powers (a forest spirit summoned by an Indian Shaman probably would not use Pyrokinesis), so it is a matter of summoning the right one. Generally the more powerful spirits have a greater range of manifestation, but they also have more difficult rituals that call them forth, with higher threshold requirements. Even so, if a player character learns a spell for summoning Satan, he will have to travel to Loci at the right time of year in order to meet the threshold (not easy, or common).

While saving the effort of learning additional rituals, commanding the spirits does not come without risk. In order to successfully call, command, and then disperse a spirit, three rituals must be cast in succession, each with a chance of failure and corruption. The occasion sometimes rises that these rituals can be used separately, but this is rare.

The most common spirits summoned are Spirits of the Dead. These spirits are also the least powerful, often only possessing the Incarnate powers of Mask, Phantasm or Telekinesis.
Binding is a process that restrains the spirit from the moment the ritual begins. This prevents the spirit from attacking or otherwise disturbing the ritual until it has been completed being cast, at which time the player character must make their ritual skill test.
A successful performance means binding the spirit to their will, a failure means emancipation, and probable retribution upon its would be master (in addition to the possibility of corruption).

CONSPIRACY X

Agent Name: _____

Player Name: _____

Organization: _____

Height: _____ **Weight:** _____

Age: _____ **Hair:** _____ **Eyes:** _____

Physical Description: _____

_____

Photo

ATTRIBUTES

☐ Strength
☐ Size
☐ Agility
☐ Reflexes
☐ Intelligence
☐ Willpower
☐ Perception
☐ Good Luck
☐ Bad Luck
☐ Influence

Pulling Strings: _____

Skills	Level	CP

Training

Psych Profile   **Medical History**

Talents and Abilities   **Backround & Resources**

Other:

ZENER CARDS

HOW TO USE
THE ZENER CARDS
So...you want to be a
Psychic. First photocopy
the cards and paste
them over regular playing
cards. The GM shuffles
the Zener cards and the
player picks one of the
five symbols shown on
the cards (star, wave,
square, circle, cross).
The GM then draws a
number of cards speci-
fied by the ability being
used (for Lesser Psychic
Disciplines, usually two
cards are drawn). If the
card that the player
picked is among the
cards drawn, the player's
character has managed
to successfully use her
psychic abilities.

On the surface the world looks very much like the one outside your bedroom window.
The same people are walking the same dirty streets, the same animals rummage through the same garbage, and
the same mindless drivel is shown on the same television stations.

Sometimes that world just doesn't seem right.
You wake up in the morning and get the feeling that something isn't as it should be.
Why do certain figures appear out of nowhere and become famous overnight?
Why do the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer?
What is the government really paying for when it shells out 75 bucks for a screwdriver?
Why is it the more questions you ask the less answers you get?
Why is it any answer always leads to another question?

Sometimes you cannot see what defines your world.
This is the nature of conspiracies.
This is the nature of Conspiracy X.

Conspiracy X takes place in a world of dark secrets and hidden agendas where the only certainty is nothing is
what it seems. The president might not be human, and the sign carrying paranoid on the street corner ranting
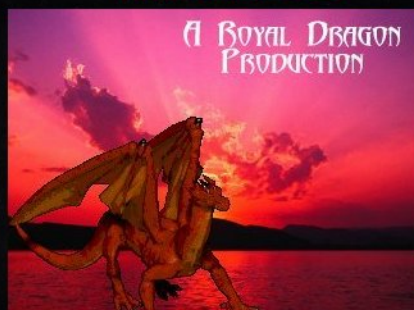about CIA mind control satellites may very well be right.

In other words, a world just like yours, if you could see beyond the lies...

CONSPIRACY X

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