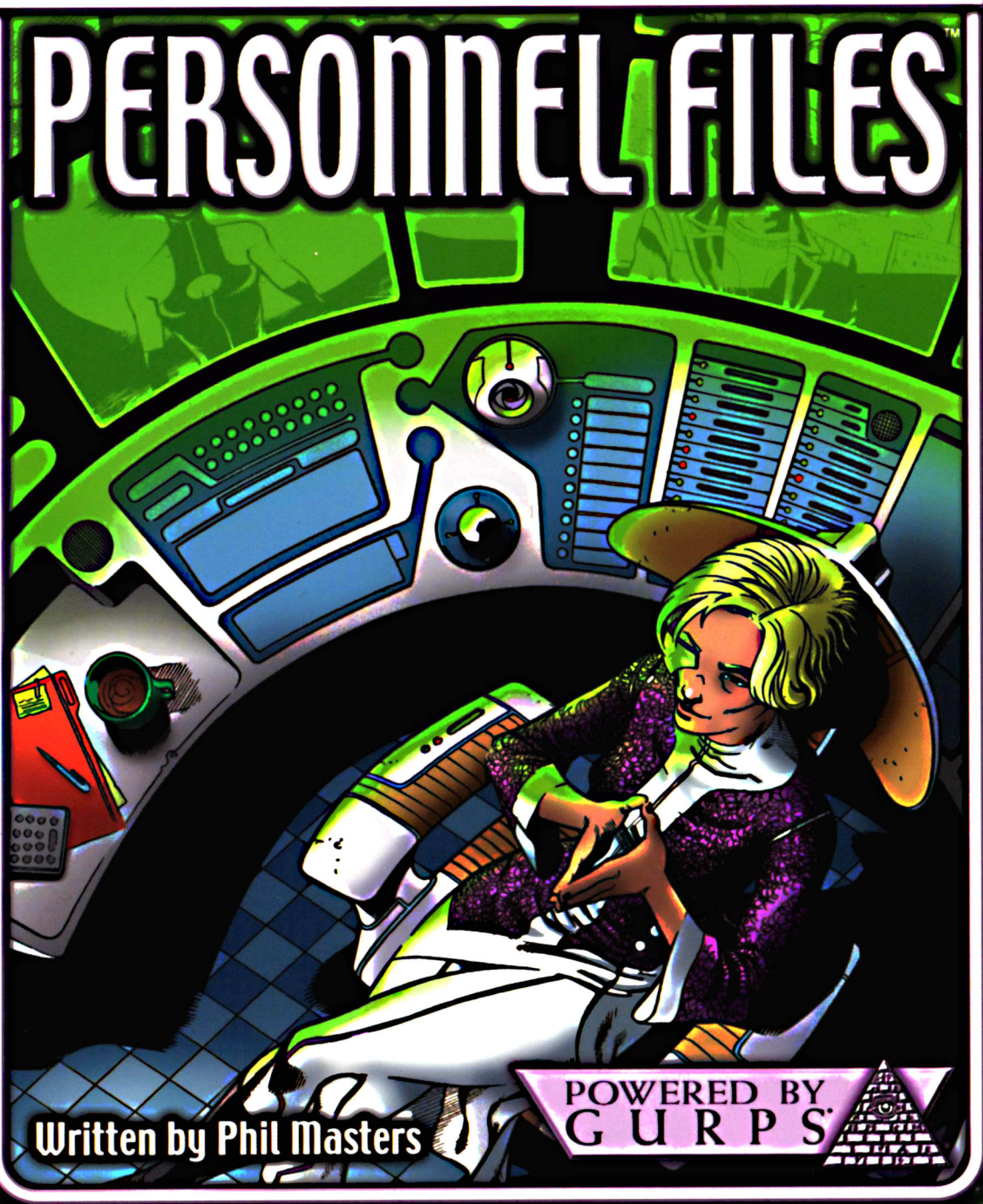
TransHuman Space

Personnel Files™



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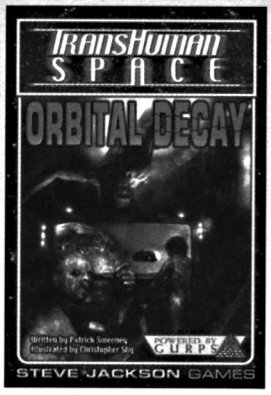

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TransHuman Space

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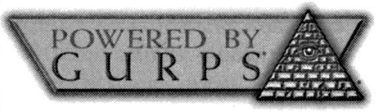

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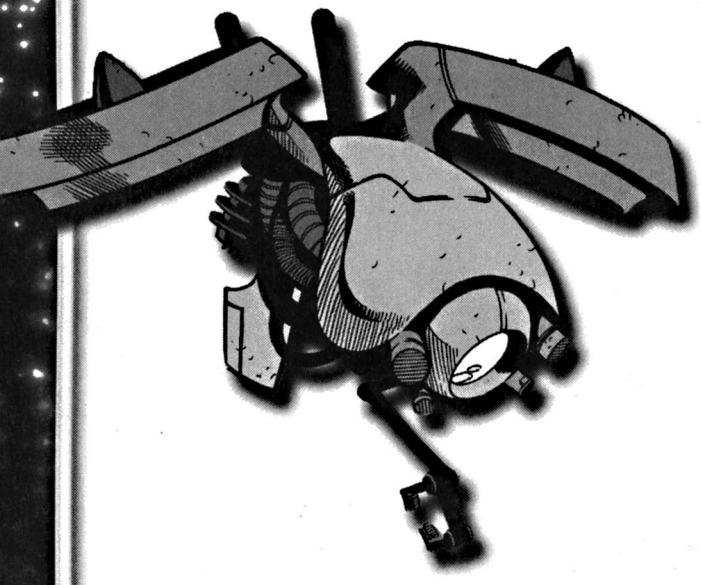

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INTRODUCTION

Transhuman Space is a rich, dense, and complex setting, with a huge array of options for PCs and NPCs – genetic modifications, "programmed allies," special skills, and so on. These options are fascinating, but are potentially intimidating for beginners. This book provides shortcuts for new players, and indeed for anyone in a hurry, including GMs.

Personnel Files is a collection of detailed, ready-made characters. They can be used exactly as they are or modified as required. Each comes with notes covering possible variants; some also discuss rules treatments and options. These characters were designed in a range of points values; for convenience, they have been grouped into teams of equal value – ready-made "parties." However, each of them can easily be "broken out" for individual use.

About the Author

Phil Masters is a freelance writer based in the U.K. He is the author or co-author of numerous books, many of them for ***GURPS***, and is the editor of the Origins Award-winning *Munchkin's Guide to Power Gaming*. He doesn't *think* that anything he learned on that latter job was involved in creating this book.

About TRANSHUMAN SPACE

The ***Transhuman Space*** series presents a unique hard-science, high-biotech universe for roleplaying. Set in the solar system in the year 2100, it is a setting rich in adventure, mystery, and exploration of the possibilities of existence. The core book in the line is ***Transhuman Space,*** by David Pulver, which presents an overview of the solar system of 2100.

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Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at **www.sjgames.com** for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. ***GURPS*** has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of ***GURPS.*** To join, e-mail majordomo@io.com with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your web browser to **gurpsnet.sjgames.com**.

The ***Personnel Files*** web page is at **www.sjgames.com/transhuman/personnel/**.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition.* Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the ***GURPS Basic Set*** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the ***GURPS Basic Set,*** *Third Edition.* Page references that begin with CI indicate ***GURPS Compendium I;*** those that begin with TS refer to ***Transhuman Space.*** The abbreviation for *this* book is PF. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at **www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html**.

CHARACTERS

The main section of this book presents a number of personalities of the ***Transhuman Space*** world, placed into groups by their value in character points. These may be used "as is," for instant PC or NPC parties, or the individual characters may be used on their own.

BARRYMORE CONSULTANCY

Helena Barrymore and her associates are more-or-less normal PCs in ***Transhuman Space;*** they are all roughly 100 points. As investigators, they have a number of unique advantages . . .

HELENA BARRYMORE 90 POINTS

Centenarian business consultant – or detective?

Age 105; 5'5"; 85 lbs. A stick-thin, sharp-featured Caucasian woman of indeterminate age, with ash-blonde hair and a texture to her skin which hints at her years.

ST 9 [-10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 15 [60]; **HT** 12/10 [20].
Speed 5.25; Move 5.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Ally (Programmed) (Cortez-Ghao "Adroit," see p. 57; 15 or less) [9]; Comfortable Wealth [10]; Contacts (Cape Town police detective; skill 15; 9 or less) [2]; Contacts (Mid-ranking Ithemba executive; skill 15; 12 or less) [8]; Cool [1]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nanomods; Limitation: Affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; Independent Income [5]; Panimmunity 2 (Permanent Immune Machine nanomods) [5]; Reputation +1 (As a capable problem-solver; in the Cape Town commercial world) [1]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4].

Disadvantages: Age (105) [-45]; Pacifism (Self-defense only) [-15]; Reputation -2 (Prone to interfere; Among Cape Town police detectives; 7 or less) [-1]; Reduced Hit Points -2 [-10]; Skinny [-5]; Sense of Duty (To old friends and colleagues) [-5].

Quirks: Doesn't drive a car (prefers taxis and trains); Loves a good mystery; Regards mind and body as largely inseparable; Still thinks of herself as a Westerner, but actually feels most at home in Africa; Thinks that money is more for spending than for saving. [-5]

Skills: Administration-14 [1]; Agronomy-15 [2]; Anthropology-12 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Cape Town)-15 [1]; Area Knowledge (Africa)-17 [4]; Artificial Intelligence-12 [1/2]; Artist-12 [1/2]; Bard-14 [1]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13* [1]; Cartography-13 [1/2]; Computer Operation-15 [1]; Cooking-14 [1/2]; Detect Lies-14 [2]; Diagnosis-12 [1/2]; Diplomacy-16 [4]; Ecology-12 [1/2]; Economics-14 [2]; First Aid-15 [1]; History-12 [1/2]; Interrogation-15 [1]; Intimidation-13 [1/2]; Leadership-15 [1]; Memetics-12 [1]; Naturalist-13 [1]; Oral Literature-12 [1/2]; Orienteering-13 [1/2]; Photography-13 [1/2]; Physician-12 [1/2]; Professional Skill (South African Law Enforcement)-13 [1/2]; Psychology-16 [6]; Research-14 [1]; Riding (Horse)-9 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-15 [1]; Survival (Desert)-14 [1]; Survival (Jungle)-14 [1]; Survival (Plains)-14 [1]; Teaching-16 [2].

* Includes +2 for IQ.

Languages: Afrikaans-13 [1/2]; English (native)-15 [0]; French-14 [1]; Spanish-13 [1/2]; Swahili-13 [1/2]; Xhosa-13 [1/2]; Zulu-13 [1/2].

Equipment: 100' spool of Cufftape (0.5 lbs., $10); Electrolaser pistol w/recognition pad and smartgrip (1 lb., $1,800); Emergency medkit (1 lb., $150); Infrared communicator (0.25 lbs., $130); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lb.; $100); Permanent artery cleaner nanomods ($5,000); Self-destructing nanobugs ×2 ($400); Spare cash: $3,459.

Software (installed on DVI): 3D social telepresence ($200); Basic VR program ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Italian-13 skill set ($100); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1); Tactics-12 skill set ($100).

Background

Born in Philadelphia at the end of the 20th century, Helena Barrymore was blessed with natural good health and intelligence. She always regarded her body and mind as one unit; she kept herself in trim because it felt better, and always thought about the most efficient and comfortable way to achieve her physical goals.

She also developed both conscience and curiosity. After graduating in economics with a focus on developing world issues, she found a series of jobs over the following decades with aid agencies, charities, and government departments. Although most of these jobs concerned aid and disaster relief, a number involved assisting with reorganization of law enforcement agencies, and she learned some relevant skills. She watched the development of the SAC, and even helped with it in small ways. Although she never abandoned her sense of herself as a Westerner, she came to feel most at home in Africa.

Partly because of her close exposure to relative poverty, Barrymore never felt comfortable accumulating the sort of wealth that became normal in the developed world. Although not a spendthrift or a soft touch, she developed the attitude that wealth was meant to be *used*, not hoarded. She invested wisely in medical treatments, which combined with her good health and regular exercise to keep her active into "old age," but she never pursued more radical life-extension strategies.

Helena Barrymore's Age and Point Value

Helena Barrymore was designed as a 100-point character with the Age disadvantage. The "base age" for this disadvantage in ***Transhuman Space*** is 70, and she has both carcinophage and DNA repair nanomods, each of which increase the start date for aging by 10, so she started making aging rolls at 90.

She made an appropriate number of aging rolls, using the more detailed system in ***GURPS Bio-Tech*** (p. BIO113). With her Wealth level, she rolled against HT+7, and as she has artery cleaner nanomods, she is partly protected from HT loss. Thanks to these advantages, all she suffered was a 1-point reduction in DX. She is therefore now a 90-point character; however, she is appropriate for use as a PC in games with 100-point starting characters.

(When she reaches 110, and starts making aging rolls every 6 months, she may want to think harder about cellular rejuvenation.)

In 2094, an old friend and occasional lover, Francesco Dellagaria, was killed in a plane crash in Kenya. At the funeral, she learned that an unsuccessful attempt had been made to brainscan him before death. She investigated and found that a copy of the botched scan still existed. Employing all her experience in dealing with bureaucracies, she acquired control of the scan and worked with some capable AI programmers to patch and stabilize it, restoring some fragments of Dellagaria's personality.

This stretched her available funds while reminding her how much she liked challenges. She has reactivated her largely dormant personal company to provide herself employment and a slightly better income. Although in theory, she offers commercial consultancy services, she cannot compete with large, AI-based mercantile companies; however, she is building a reputation as an all-around problem solver. She knows Cape Town, Africa, and people; she can solve all sorts of problems and mysteries efficiently, legally, and quietly.

"Posthuman? I find being human hard and interesting enough, thank you."

Motivations

Barrymore is keeping herself interested in life. She likes solving problems, of any and every sort, and is fiercely loyal to her friends and colleagues. She likes to keep up to date in any topic she thinks is related to her work, past or present. She is aware that much of her knowledge is out of date, and that she has forgotten too much of what she once knew, but her broad experience is represented in her IQ score.

She is no technophobe, and happily uses nanomods and advanced medicine to stay alive and active. However, she can't convince herself that radical changes to her body wouldn't impinge on the integrity of her mind. She doesn't like what she's heard of cellular rejuvenation, and the idea of being brainpeeled makes her shiver. If it was the only way to stay alive, she might go for it, but otherwise – no thanks.

Variations

Barrymore is a competent character, but she's been careless with money and the years have taken their toll. A version who'd gritted her teeth, found the cash, and undergone (successful) cellular rejuvenation as an alternative to fading away could have respectable physical attributes; one who'd husbanded her resources better might have higher wealth and some impressive Programmed Allies. This makes it easy to upgrade her character sheet to any desired point level.

She and her two colleagues can be easily relocated to most other Fourth or high Third Wave cities; just change some details in their biographies and specific skills.

FRANCESCO DELLAGARIA 100 POINTS

A spider who's the fragment of a ghost of a brilliant man.

Age 5 (since recreation; has some memories going back around 50 years); 2' across; 26 lbs. A standard-looking Volkspider; the slight reinforcements to his body shell are not obvious to casual inspection. He usually wears a lightweight goods-carrying harness.

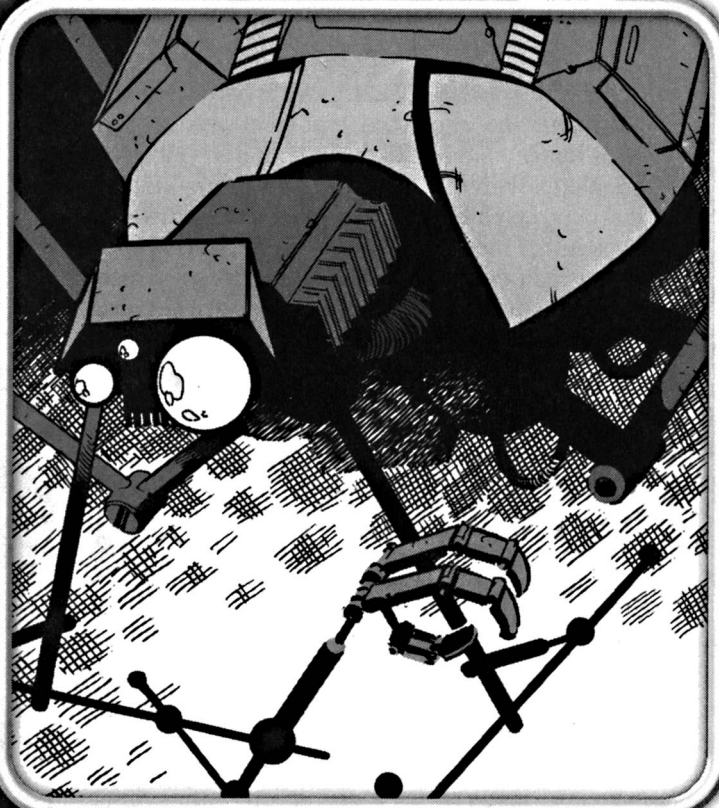
ST 6 [0]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 11/6 [0].
Speed 5.50; Move 5.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; DR +2 (total DR 5) [6]; Ghost Mind Emulation [17]; Volkspider (with Complexity 7 small computer) [71].

Disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Congenial [-1]; Curious [-5]; Poor [-15]; Reprogrammable Duty (Limitation: No master, -60%) [-10]; Sense of Duty [-10] (To Africa).

Quirks: Doesn't like light aircraft; Opera buff; Talkative. [-3]

Skills: Accounting-10 [1/2]; Acting-12 [1]; Administration-11 [1/2]; Agronomy-11 [1/2]; Anthropology-11 [1]; Area Knowledge (Africa)-13 [1]; Computer Operation-13 [1]; Criminology-11 [1/2]; Driving (Automobile)-10 [1];



Economics-10 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1]; First Aid-12 [1/2]; Gambling-11 [1/2]; Gesture-12 [1/2]; Naturalist-10 [1/2]; Psychology-13 [4]; Shadowing-12 [1]; Stealth-11 [2]; Streetwise-11 [1/2]; Survival (Plains)-11 [1/2]; Teaching-11 [1/2].

Languages: English-12 [1]; French-11 [1/2]; Italian (native)-13 [0]; Swahili-11 [1/2].

Equipment: Self-destructing nanobugs ($200); Spare cash: $340.

Software (all installed on internal computer): 3D social telepresence ($200); Basic VR program ($200); Mugshot ($100); Skill sets: Law-11, Research-13 ($150); Street-level map of South Africa ($10).

Background

Francesco Dellagaria was an Italian-born international traveler and charity worker who spent most of his career in East Africa, assisting with the administration of various medium-scale projects. During his career, he got to know Helena Barrymore, although he hadn't seen much of her since the 2080s.

In 2094, Dellagaria was traveling in a light airplane which crashed in Kenya due to mechanical failure. Dellagaria's employers found his body in time to put it on life support and keep it breathing for a while, but there was substantial brain damage, and an attempted brainpeel was declared unsuccessful.

Barrymore, however, refused to abandon an old friend. She acquired the brain image and succeeded in having some of Dellagaria's personality restored, after intensive work by a small team of hired specialists. They then managed to nurse the damaged personality back to functionality. It only has an echo of Dellagaria's old intelligence, but it's more complete than anyone thought they had a right to expect.

Legally, Dellagaria is Barrymore's ward, and she has extensive control over him and responsibility for his affairs. In practice, she tries to treat him as an equal as far as possible, and makes sure that he has sole access to some financial resources. He "lives" in a room in her apartment, which has been adapted to provide for his limited physical needs and continuing therapeutic program.

Barrymore also employs Dellagaria as an assistant in her consultancy business. While this was originally a way to give him something to do with his time and make him feel useful, he has increasingly proved a genuinely helpful associate. Aside from the fact that he retains a fair amount of useful knowledge, filtered through an unusual semi-artificial viewpoint, he can sometimes go places and do things impossible for a human employee. Even in Third Wave regions, an ordinary-looking Volkspider can often wander around and barely receive a second glance.

Dellagaria often puts on a fair act of NAI-level stupidity, although he has to be careful; some people might vandalize a "dumb spider" for fun. He therefore often works with Barrymore's human employee, Nelson Buthembai, when a job requires legwork on the streets.

Motivations

Dellagaria is an incomplete being, trying to find his place in the world. The human on whom he is modeled always liked to feel useful, to his friends and to his adopted homelands, and he retains this attitude. In fact, it has been strengthened by the loss of much of the rest of his personality, becoming the hook on which he hangs his sense of self.

Unfortunately, his capacity for self-motivation remains sketchy and unreliable; if he loses interest in something, he's prone to wander off or look for some more interesting angle. One of Buthembai's tasks is to keep an eye on Dellagaria in quiet times, to stop him from losing the plot and getting into trouble. Dellagaria's therapists have encouraged him to develop a very human sense of curiosity, but this may have gone too far, getting him into different sorts of trouble. Barrymore is hoping that he'll develop a more balanced sense of interest in the world as time goes on – if she can keep him alive (and sane) long enough.

"That's something I think I remember. I'll think about it some more some time."

Variations

Dellagaria is limited – mentally by the injuries he suffered before his brainpeel, and physically by the rather low-cost cybershell in which he is installed. The latter was due partly to Barrymore's relatively limited funds, but more to the restricted control abilities of a rather shaky AI. To increase his point value, assume that the restoration/therapy process was more successful, reducing his disadvantages and possibly improving his skills slightly. For a more humanlike character, install the same personality in a bioshell (preferably cloned from his original body) or a Cyberdoll cybershell.

If Dellagaria is used as a PC while Barrymore (perhaps in slightly upgraded form) is an NPC, he can treat her as a Patron. Alternatively, Dellagaria can be defined to be an NPC Ally for a PC version of Barrymore. Nelson Buthembai can be treated as an Ally for either.

Ghost or Fragment?

Strictly speaking, Dellagaria is not a ghost, but a *fragment;* the attempted brainpeel produced a *very* poor image, and it's taken Helena Barrymore and the people she hired years of work to bring him even to his current patchy and strange state. However, the gaps in his mental structures are *so* glaring that Dellagaria can only acknowledge that they are there and work around them – the process of restoration and therapy has given him a new set of memories, and left him completely familiar with his own capabilities and limitations. He's not, in truth, Francesco Dellagaria – he's a new individual who owes something to that human being. As some of his disadvantages reflect his state as an "incomplete ghost," he has been permitted to take more than some campaign limits would allow.

Because the scan was so incomplete, it had to be patched onto the structure of a standard AI, and the programmers were legally required to include various control codes in that structure; hence Dellagaria has Reprogrammable Duty. However, Helena Barrymore has sole authority over those codes, and she absolutely refuses to use them.

NELSON BUTHEMBAI
100 POINTS

Smart on the streets of Cape Town.

Age 19; 5'8"; 155 lbs. A good-looking young black man, usually wearing a varicloth suit (set to a simple, bright color scheme) and heavy sunglasses.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 12 [20].
Speed 6.0; Move 6.
Dodge 6; Parry 8 (Judo).

Advantages: Acute Vision +1 [2]; Attractive [5]; Composed [5]; Light Hangover [2]; Reputation +2 (For generosity, in his home neighborhood) [3].

Disadvantages: Poor [-15]; Sense of Duty (To everyone he knows personally) [-10]; Status -1 [-5].

Quirks: Fiddles compulsively with his varicloth suit; Wears his "sunglasses" virtually all the time (loves the high-tech optics); Prides himself on *pragmatic* ethics; Slightly lazy about physical work, but likes doing useful "thinking stuff"; Thinks biomod transplants are a bit creepy. [-5]

Skills: Acting-13 [2]; Area Knowledge (Cape Town)-13 [1]; Bartender-11 [1/2]; Blackjack-12 [1]; Computer Operation-12 [1/2]; Computer Programming-10 [1/2]; Dancing-11 [1]; Detect Lies-11 [1]; Diplomacy-11 [1]; Fast-Talk-11 [1/2]; Filch-11 [1]; First Aid-12 [1/2]; Holdout-12 [1]; Judo-12 [4]; Lockpicking-11 [1/2]; Scrounging-12 [1/2]; Shadowing-14 [4]; Sex Appeal-10 [1/2]; Sports (Soccer)-10 [1/2]; Stealth-12 [2]; Streetwise-12 [1]; Survival (Urban)-11 [1/2]; Swimming-11 [1/2]; Traps-11 [1/2].

Languages: Afrikaans-11 [1/2]; English-12 [1]; Xhosa (native)-13 [0]; Zulu-11 [1/2].

Equipment: Arachnoweave vest (1 lb., $150); Blackjack (1 lb., $20); Infrared communicator (1/4 lb., $130); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lb.; $100); "Sunglasses" with anti-glare and infrared optics (0.5 lb.; $337); Varicloth casual clothes (2 suits, each 1 lb., total $300); Spare cash: $163.

Background

Nelson Buthembai is the grandson of an old friend and colleague of Helena Barrymore, although she insists that she didn't hire him just because of that. In fact, he's a little more complex than the archetypal Fourth Wave street operator, thanks to her teaching. He's very smart, quick, adaptable, and forward-looking enough to retain a sense of ethics. Barrymore says that he displays "grace under pressure" (and likes people who get the reference).

"Ain't just what they say you have to look at, is it? Someone told me – look where the money goes."

Now that she's decided to trust him, she primarily employs him as a legman and courier. He knows the city streets and their inhabitants, and is sharp enough to pass almost anywhere around Cape Town without too much trouble. If business takes him further afield, with or without her – well, that just tests his adaptability. So far, he's mostly passed these tests.

The other half of his job is keeping Francesco Dellagaria out of trouble and focused. This is a balancing act, but for Buthembai, with his barely Fourth Wave background, working with a cybershell is pretty cool.

Buthembai isn't as good with technology as he'd like, and sometimes looks for excuses to learn more, but Barrymore points out that he's often effective at what he does because he *doesn't* rely on flashy, overly detectable, or unreliable gadgets – anyway, they've got Dellagaria. He understands her point, but feels slightly patronized by this argument. She insists that it's not simply an excuse to avoid decent tools; he wonders if she'd say something different if they *had* the tools. It's the nearest he and his boss come to a serious falling out.

Motivations

Buthembai is driven by loyalty and ambition. His idea of loyalty is a mixture of street-level mutual back-scratching and old-fashioned clannishness; his ambitions are solidly materialistic, but include prosperity for his group. Which motive comes first isn't always predictable, but he's unlikely to forget either entirely in any situation. Like many individuals from his sort of background, he'd like to gain access to the sort of resources and tools he sees in the hands of Fifth Wave visitors and corporations, but he's learned to be patient and methodical – which gives him some chance of achieving some of his ambitions, one day. For now, he justifies the varicloth clothes and the fancy personal optics to himself as the tools of his adopted trade.

If he's hired by someone else, they should understand that his first loyalty is to his friends, family, and neighbors. He'll do his best to earn his fee, especially if he feels that Barrymore would be disappointed in him if he failed, but he doesn't put his neck on the line for money if he can help it. He *does* classify Dellagaria as a human being, a friend, and someone to whom he owes loyalty.

Barrymore Consultancy as PCs

Helena Barrymore, Francesco Dellagaria, and Nelson Buthembai can serve as a three-person team of 100-point PCs for a game set in South Africa – or, with a few modifications, in many other Third/Fourth Wave regions. As a local commercial consultancy with a tendency to end up working as private detectives, they can also make useful NPC contacts, allies, or short-term hired help.

They balance on the edge of financial viability, although they are increasingly finding a niche. More comprehensive commercial advice is generally available from larger companies with powerful AIs and huge databases, while detective work – either involving criminal cases or personal problems – can usually be handled by professionals with access to high-tech resources and tools. What Barrymore Consultancy has to offer is ground-level knowledge, ingenuity, and experience.

The company will *almost* invariably operate within the law, but none of them are fanatical about this. If they can get away with bending a rule or two in a good cause, or if they feel that that the good cause is overwhelming, they will do what they think is best. Although they look a little unusual for the part, they should be played very much in the classic "private detective" style.

Variations

A more "cinematic" Buthembai on the same lines would have better attributes; some extra advantages such as Combat Reflexes, Toughness, or Intuition; and more and better skills. A version of the character who'd gained more access to high technology through his work would focus on technical skills, have a better wealth level, and perhaps have some low-power Programmed Allies. However, any treatment of Buthembai which takes him much beyond 150 points represents a radical change to the character.

See p. 10 for a discussion of treating members of Barrymore Consultancy as NPC Allies for each other. Of the three, Buthembai is perhaps the most obvious NPC material, being a fairly typical "Streets Contact" type.

C-C+ Recovery

Kurt Cassel's team of 150-point "Vacuum Cleaners" is a slightly more powerful group, but still within the "humans and genetic-upgrade humans" category mentioned on p. TS110.

Kurt Cassel 150 points

The captain (and manager) of a motley crew of freelance vacuum cleaners.

Age 38; 6'0"; 160 lbs. A handsome man with dark hair and green eyes; usually casually but stylishly dressed in "spacer style."

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [20]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 12 [10].
Speed 6.25; Move 6.
Dodge 6.

Advantages: Ally (Programmed; Cashalton 61-T (see p. 55), on the ship's backup computer; 15 or less) [6]; Alpha Upgrade [35]; Charisma +1 [5]; Claim to Hospitality (Family in Germany) [1]; Contacts (SDR executive; skill 18; 6 or less; usually reliable) [3]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nanomods; Limitation: Affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; No Degeneration in Zero-G (Permanent microgravity biochemistry nanomods) [3]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4]; Status +1 [0]*; Very Wealthy [30].
* Free from Very Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Alcohol Intolerance [-1]; Attentive [-1]; Gluttony [-5]; Proud [-1]; Sense of Duty (To all spacers) [-10]; Sleepy Drinker [-1]; Truthfulness [-5]; Weak Will -2 [-16].

Quirks: *Always* eats traditional German food when it's available; Finds VR overlays irritating when he's trying to concentrate, and complains audibly; Strong affection for Sandra Chou; Trusts AIs with languages, but regards using them for social skills as stupid; Wants to reduce the company debt quickly. [-5]

Skills: Administration-12 [1]; Area Knowledge (Earth Orbital Space)-14 [2]; Astrogation-11 [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-14* [1/2]; Computer Operation-12 [1/2]; Diplomacy-11 [1]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-12 [1]; First Aid-13 [1]; Free Fall-14 [4]; Gunner (Beams)-13* [1/2]; Guns (Missile)-14* [1/2]; Law-10 [1/2]; Leadership-13* [1]; Mechanic (Fusion Drives & Reactors)-11 [1/2]; Merchant-11 [1/2]; Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft)-14 [4]; Savoir-Faire-15** [0]; Vacc Suit-14 [4].

* Includes bonuses for IQ and Charisma.

** Free from Status.

Languages: English-12 [1]; German (native)-13 [0].

Equipment: Arachnoweave vest w/IFF transponder (1 lb., $250); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1 lb., $1,900); Emergency medkit (1 lb., $150); Life support pack (5 lbs., $500); Medium full helmet w/tiny cheap computer, multiview optics, and medium-range radio communicator (4.35 lbs., $790); Medium nanoweave vacc suit w/IFF transponder (20 lbs., $3,100); Micromissile pod w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (0.62 lbs., $1,080), plus 20 rounds of solid ammunition (2 lbs., $90); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Portable mechanic tool kit (20 lbs., $600); Short-range radio communicator (0.125 lbs., $25); Thruster pack w/5 spare cylinders (20 lbs., $2,150); VIG w/tiny cheap computer and antiglare optics ($557); VR gloves (0.25 lbs., $500). (In theory, Cassel has over $100,000 in spare cash, but much of this is committed to paying off debts, renting temporary accommodation, etc.; he is unlikely to spend more than a few thousand on "adventuring equipment" without very good cause.)

Software: *Installed on VIG or helmet computer:* 3D social telepresence ($200); Basic VR program ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1). *Installed on ship's backup computer:* Language skill sets, all skill-14: Cantonese, French, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, and Spanish ($1,200); Other skill sets: Accounting-14, Diagnosis-14 ($1,000).

Background

Kurt Cassel came from a prosperous family in southern Germany, and even aside from his Alpha Upgrade genes, he was bright and highly motivated. After university, he joined Satellite Debris Removal Inc., the main "Vacuum Cleaner" organization responsible for keeping orbital traffic hazards under control (described in more detail in the upcoming ***Transhuman Space: High Frontier***). Over time, he proved himself as a pilot and team leader, while committing his salary wisely to both medical nanomods and investments.

Recently a large legacy, added to his savings, let him consider striking out on his own. His relationship with Sandra Chou gave him a motive to stay in space, and he decided that there were still opportunities in debris recovery. However, his funds didn't cover even the deposit on the sort of spacecraft he wanted, and the banks he approached proved doubtful about his plans.

"Yeah, it's a pretty simple job. You'll need to cover us for the insurance costs, though."

Then a group of companies came to him with a proposition. They would bankroll him, providing a mortgage on the ship, on the condition that he took on an extra partner: a SAI with space skills which they wanted to see in operation. Cassel accepted, perhaps a little faster than was wise. Fortunately, the AI, "Eilard Gamma," proved tolerable, and a human engineer completed the new team.

A fair proportion of Cassel's wealth is tied up in this business, although he still has accessible funds. He rents an apartment on an HEO station which is also C-C+ Recovery's registered office; on visits to Earth, he stays with relatives or in hotels.

Cassel lacks an AI in his VR interface simply because he finds permanent VR displays slightly distracting, prefers to rely on his own skills and judgment when dealing with other people, and finds it easier to work with physical ship controls than virtual "images." Hence, he keeps his use of his VIG to a bare minimum. Eilard makes slightly chilly jokes about his commander rarely visiting him at home.

As the ship's pilot and commander, Cassel holds the command codes for its backup NAI and has built a working relationship with it, insofar as this is possible.

Motivations

Cassel is smart, "goal-oriented," and sometimes a little *too* focused without actually being rash. He'd like to turn up paying work which would substantially reduce his debts, and he sometimes takes slightly too many risks as a result; SDR psychological reports said that he lacked some elements of self-restraint. Still, he hasn't survived as a spacer by being stupid. The loyalty he commands is enhanced by his own dedication to anyone he sees as a colleague, as well as his natural truthfulness (which is one reason why he didn't advance very far in a large organization).

Living in space, with limited culinary facilities, aggravates what would probably be a minor facet of his personality planetside: his love of good food and drink. Fortunately, he's learned to burn off his indulgences through exercise, and the *Tangente's* missions are rarely long enough for his supply packages to overburden the galley . . . but his crew try to steer him away from station restaurants. He avoids bars unless socializing with someone seems to be essential; by some glitch in his genetic modifications, alcohol goes to his head and then knocks him out.

Variations

For a slightly upgraded version of Cassel, raise his attributes or skills a little. An older version, kept in peak condition by good genes and medical treatments, could have *impressive* abilities. Making Cassel Filthy Rich with a level or two of Multimillionaire would turn him into a more independent adventurer-captain, with fewer or no financial obligations, seeking to maximize his return on investment the fun way. Conversely, reducing his wealth would make him more of an employee. His crew could be treated as Allies.

C-C+ Recovery as PCs

C-C+ Recovery is the debris elimination and salvage company set up by Cassel and his crew under the sponsorship of the companies which supported the creation of Eilard Gamma. Its one substantial asset is a spacecraft, the *Tangente* (see p. 15). The densest concentration of debris is in LEO, but work there and in GEO is dominated by existing companies, so C-C+ looks farther afield, especially in the Lagrange points, but also in HEO and even Lunar space. Shuttling between distant orbits is expensive, often demanding strap-on fuel tanks and boosters, so Cassel plans schedules carefully.

As PCs, the team are working folks with an attitude which may get them into adventures. As NPCs, they'd make good contacts, short-term hirelings, or business rivals. Either way, Cassel is their leader, capable but essentially the first among equals.

EILARD GAMMA 150 POINTS

An independent digital mind with a ship to run.

Age 9 (but with older legacy code). Eilard's VR/telepresence avatar takes the form of a weathered bronze statue of a man, modeled on Rodin's "Thinker."

ST – [–]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 12 [0]. Speed 6.0.

Advantages: Citizen SAI-8 [115]; Language Talent +1 [2]; Patron (University of Toulouse team; 9 or less) [10].

Disadvantages: Duty (To creators; 12 or less; not life-threatening) [-5]; Hidebound [-5]; Intolerance (Leaders of large groups) [-5]; Nosy [-1]; Mainframe (High-capacity; includes Machine Body) [-9]; Reputation -3 (For amazing rudeness; Among space industry executives; 10 or less) [-2]; Uncongenial [-1].

"I can handle this. Do continue with those things which require your special talents as biological organisms."

Quirks: Bone-dry sense of irony; Enthusiastic sculpture lover (often talks about how he learned about body language from these things); Gains emotional satisfaction from piloting a ship; Has a strong image of himself as "male," but no interest in biological sex as such; Strong dislike for formal hierarchies. [-5]

Skills: Appreciate Beauty (Figurative sculpture)-7/13 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Earth Orbital Space)-12 [1]; Astrogation-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-12 [2]; Gunner (Beams)-13* [1]; Mechanic (Fusion Drives & Reactors)-10 [1/2]; Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft)-13 [4].
* Includes bonus for IQ.

Languages: English-12 [1]; French (native)-13 [0]; German-12 [1]; Mandarin-11 [1/2]; Spanish-11 [1/2].

Software (stored on own computer): 3D social telepresence ($200); Language skill sets: Cantonese-14, Japanese-14 ($400); Mugshot ($100); Other skill sets: Computer Programming-13, Psychology-13, Research-14 ($600); VR database (lifelike customized copy of the Musée Rodin, customized avatar, 10 assorted standard avatars for "visitors") ($10,030); VR manager ($500). Spare cash: $4,170. (Eilard's VR "mansion" is paid for out of his "home equity," most of the rest of which is tied up in bonds to provide for future upgrade or maintenance needs and to ensure his restoration in the case of his physical destruction.)

Background

Eilard Gamma is one result of a project at the University of Toulouse, sponsored by various European space companies, which aims to produce an AI optimized for a role in a spaceship's bridge. Eilard was actually quite a success . . . except for one thing. In attempting to inculcate a high capacity for independent operation and a willingness to take decisions, the researchers produced a personality with an ineradicable distaste for rigid hierarchies and large groups. Eilard can take suggestions, but he doesn't respond happily to orders from people he doesn't know; he would make a very poor corporate employee.

Eilard was repeatedly, strikingly rude to the project sponsors, and the researchers knew that even if they could resolve the issue through personality modification, this would violate the terms of their research license. So they, and the sponsors, located a Vacuum Cleaner who was trying to scramble together a business case to go freelance and offered him a deal – a loan on very favorable terms, conditional on Eilard being part of the crew. Fortunately, Kurt Cassel accepted.

Since then, Eilard has quickly developed a rounded personality, although he never has learned to suffer fools gladly (or at all) or to work well in a large group. He has developed a whimsical interest in human art, especially the sculptor Auguste Rodin. In quiet times, he hands routine control over to the ship's backup computer, loads up a suite of VR software, and invites people he likes into his "home" – a lifelike virtual copy of the Musée Rodin, the sculptor's house in Paris, decorated in 19th-century style and with many of Rodin's works dotted around the place.

He still uses the name he was given in Toulouse, but he has come to regard it as rather "formal"; he prefers nicknames in dealings with colleagues. He acquired "Rodin" and "Thinker" before he realized that they were rather feeble jokes, and now he claims that he likes them, as they represent a tribute to a genius. The rest of the crew aren't quite sure if he's joking.

Eilard is officially the *Tangente's* Systems Operator, although in practice he and Cassel swap between this role and piloting while Derek Repton takes on the SysOp's usual mechanical jobs. His Duty disadvantage reflects the fact that he's contractually obliged to work with his designers on occasion; they want continuing feedback on his performance and development, and are legally entitled to run him through occasional nonintrusive tests by the terms of their research license.

Motivations

It's possible to forget that, beneath the straight-faced irony, behind the face of a masterpiece, Eilard is still very young. This means much the same with him as it does with a human being, despite the legacy code incorporated into him. He's brash, tactless, and prone to all-too-clever personal remarks, and he mistakes recycled ideas from his lessons for the originality which he still lacks. He also likes proving himself through his work, although he now understands that too much obvious enthusiasm makes him look naive. Fortunately, he's fairly good at what he does.

The TANGENTE

C-C+ operate a fairly standard *Steptoe*-class Debris Recovery Vehicle (DRV), as described in ***Transhuman Space: High Frontier***. This is designed to intercept and deal with debris in LEO; it takes the form of a stubby cylinder (100' or so long and 30' to 40' in diameter), largely made up of a fusion torch drive and tanks of water for reaction mass, with two broad radiator "wings." It has an sAccel of 0.18 G and a delta-V of 6.54 mps, can carry around 30 tons in internal cargo bays, and has external cradles for up to 250 tons. It has a 2.5-MJ laser and a pair of robot arms.

However, its only accommodation is an old-model basic bridge, which feels cramped with the class's normal crew complement of three and imposes life support endurance problems. For longer missions, C-C+ sometimes has to stow spare supplies in the hold and improvise arrangements.

Company Languages

It may seem strange, but despite having a German captain, a French AI, and a lot of French sponsors, the *Tangente's* crew use English as their main language. This is partly because it is what they best mutually comprehend, and partly because in 2100, the primary language of aerospace traffic control is still English. Of course, if they want to communicate privately with a little secrecy, they have other options.

SANDRA CHOU 150 POINTS

Genetically adapted to be good in free fall – so that's her job with this crew.

Age 23; 6'7"; 160 lbs. A fairly typical Tennin spacer with oriental ancestry, Chou is usually dressed in tight leather with strategically placed holes.

ST 8 [0]; **DX** 14 [45]; **IQ** 11 [10]; **HT** 12/11 [20].
Speed 6.5; Move 6.
Dodge 6; Parry 10 (Karate).

Advantages: Acute Vision +2 [4]; Ally (Programmed; Patelsoft "Friend K," see p. 62; 15 or less) [12]; Comfortable Wealth [10]; Flesh Pockets (1 lb. capacity) [2]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent bacteriophage nanomods; Limitation: Known bacteria only, -60%) [4]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent virus hunter nanomods; Limitation: Known viruses only, -60%) [4]; Language Talent +1 [2]; Tennin [24].

Variations

Eilard could be as smart or dexterous as the GM will find plausible; remember that he's an experimental model, after all. Conversely, he could have known or hidden flaws. (Equally, he could have a Secret, having been assigned to spy on his colleagues or someone else, by his sponsors or by an E.U. agency with secret connections to the project.)

He could also have a different body, either permanently or occasionally. A cyberdoll Vessel would let him operate as a more "normal" character; assigning a tech-spider or bush robot as his main or only cybershell, and adding a few more skills, could make him very capable indeed.

Eilard also makes a good model for an NPC ship's AI, probably treated as an Ally by the captain for game purposes. After all, he'd be just as happy with any other sort of small, independent, spacefaring outfit.

Disadvantages: Easy to Read [-10]; Incompetence (Acting) [-1]; Sense of Duty (To close friends and her crew) [-5].

Quirks: Enjoys confusing people who are used to gravity; Reckons that money solves most problems; Somewhat suspicious of governments; Strong affection for Kurt Cassel; Treats Duncanite ideology as a bit of a joke. [-5]

Skills: Acrobatics-13 [2]; Area Knowledge (HEO)-10 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (L5 stations)-12 [2]; Astrogation-11 [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-14* [1/2]; Carousing-11 [1]; Computer Operation-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-10 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-9 [1/2]; Free Fall-20** [4]; Karate-15 [8]; Mechanic (Fusion Drives & Reactors)-9 [1/2]; Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft)-13 [1/2]; Streetwise-9 [1/2]; Vacc Suit-14 [8].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

** Includes +3 from genetic type.

Languages: Cantonese (native)-12 [0]; English-11 [1]; German-11 [1]; Mandarin-10 [1/2].

Equipment: Arachnoweave suit w/IFF transponder (2.5 lbs., $300); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator and recognition pad (1 lb., $1,400); Life support pack (5 lbs., $500); Mechanic's mini-tool kit (2 lbs., $400); Medium full helmet w/multiview optics and medium-range radio communicator (4.25 lbs., $770); Medium nanoweave vacc Suit w/IFF transponder (20 lbs., $3,100); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Short-range radio communicator (0.125 lbs., $25); Thruster pack w/5 spare cylinders (20 lbs., $2,150); Spare cash: $585.

Software (installed on implant): 3D social telepresence ($200); Computer Programming-12 skill set ($100); Customized lifelike VR avatar ($20); Language skill sets: French-12, Japanese-12 ($100); Mugshot ($100); Other skill sets: First Aid-13, Mechanic (Chemical Rockets)-12, Mechanic (Fission Drives & Reactors)-12, Mechanic (Fusion Drives & Reactors)-12, Mechanic (Laser Rockets)-12 ($250); Standard neural VR program ($500).

Background

In 2075, the Duncanite corporations of the Main Belt established a zero-G station, now known as "The Shack," at the Earth-Moon L5 point (see ***Transhuman Space: High Frontier***). Soon, a few Earth-born individuals applied for membership, claiming sympathy with Duncanite ideals. Those who subsequently started families naturally chose to have their children adapted for space; some opted for the full Tennin package.

Sandra Chou was one of that first generation, but her parents were acting more out of economic opportunism than libertarian idealism, and maintained a rather flippant attitude to the local memes at home. Sandra therefore grew up less suspicious of non-Duncanite society than most of her peers; she also developed the sense that she was never entirely at home anywhere.

She traveled to other L5 and L4 colonies for education, and eventually took work in the space construction industry. Her Tennin adaptations were rare enough in the inner system that she was perceived as useful to have around, but her essential rootlessness meant that she never stayed in any job for very long.

Then she met Kurt Cassel. What was at first a casual fling rapidly developed into a business partnership, and somehow he put together a package which made him the owner of a salvage company – and Chou its EVA specialist. Suddenly, her life has turned a little bit serious.

"I'm upside down? No, we're both sideways. Welcome to my world."

Sandra Chou is bright, very quick, and genuinely capable. However, growing up with a slightly cynical view of her native culture has left her with patchy social skills, including, as she herself puts it, "zero talent for hiding stuff." She does her best work inside a spacesuit.

Motivations

The key to Chou's current lifestyle is, of course, her relationship with Cassel. She's not infatuated, but she *does* see him as a partner in more than a business sense. The affair is, in a way, a classic case of opposites attracting. Cassel's focused determination implies the sense of purpose that Chou sometimes wants; Chou's "free spirit" symbolizes the independence which Cassel dreamed of after years working for a corporation. As a native of Earth, Cassel embodies the history which Chou feels she lacks, while Cassel has a romantic dream of the infinite frontier where Chou, a child of space, seems to belong.

Or perhaps this romantic over-analysis means more to the couple's friends than it does to Chou and Cassel themselves. Actually, the pair have a lot more in common than they have differences. Both like working in space, both would *quite* like to get rich, and both are very good at their jobs. Their romance is genuine, but if they should ever drift apart, they'd both survive.

Meanwhile, Chou is coming to see her crew as more of a family than she's known for years. Kurt is a bit unsubtle, Eilard is the kind of kid brother who big sisters want to strangle, and Derek needs to get a life – but, weirdly, the whole thing turns out to be fun. The one thing that worries her is the sense that *they* might see *her* as a mother figure. She didn't ask for *that* job.

Chou is a rootless person who's found a place to stay, and who is developing rapidly as a result. Where she goes next remains to be seen.

Variations

For a lower-point-value version, simply take Chou's story back a few years, reducing her skills (and wealth level) appropriately. She might have left home early if she actively disliked her family or The Shack, and tried to get on in the world without the experience she needs for her lifestyle. In the extreme case, she could have disadvantages such as Clueless or Indecisive.

For a higher point value, increase her IQ and skills, and add some more Programmed Allies or upgrade the skills and IQ of her AI. A very powerful version of this character would have more spacecraft operation skills, perhaps even command of her own ship. If C-C+ Recovery does well, this is indeed how she may look in a few years.

DEREK REPTON
150 POINTS

A ship's engineer with opinions of his own. And he won't let you forget it.

"Pass me the number four extractor . . ."

Age 20; 5'10"; 160 lbs. A robustly built man, clean-shaven and with close-cropped blond hair. He usually wears practical "spacer" garb.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 11 [10]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 12 [20].
Speed 5.75; Move 7.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Ally (Programmed; Patelsoft "Friend K," see p. 62; 15 or less) [12]; Ally (Programmed; Tenzan THI-200bis, see p. 62; 9 or less) [25]; Comfortable [10]; Genefixed Human [0]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent bacteriophage nanomods; Limitation: Known bacteria only, -60%) [4]; Less Sleep 1 [3]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; No Degeneration in Zero-G (Permanent microgravity biochemistry nanomods) [3]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4].

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Compulsive Behavior (Arguing with people he knows) [-5]; Intolerance (Nanosocialists) [-5]; Oblivious [-3]; Stubbornness [-5]; Weak Will -1 [-8].

Quirks: Casual Green System believer; Engages in a fair amount of self-mockery; Fancies himself as an inventor; Mildly obsessed with space technology; Quiet with strangers . . . at first. [-5]

Skills: Area Knowledge (LEO)-12* [1/2]; Armoury (Spaceship Weaponry)-12 [1/2]; Artificial Intelligence-11 [1/2]; Chess-13 [1/2]; Computer Operation -14 [1]; Computer Programming-12 [1];

Driving (Automobile)-9 [1/2]; Electronics (Sensors)-11 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Robots)-12 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-12 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-14 [2]; Engineer (Spacecraft Drives)-12 [1]; Free Fall-12 [4]; Gunner (Beam Weapons)-11* [1/2]; Guns (Missile)-12* [1/2]; Mathematics-12 [1]; Mechanic (Chemical Rockets)-13 [1]; Mechanic (Fission Drives & Reactors)-14 [2]; Mechanic (Fusion Drives & Reactors)-15 [4]; Mechanic (Laser Rockets)-12 [1/2]; Mechanic (Robotics)-12 [1/2]; Musical Instrument (Tuba)-11 [1/2]; Physics-12 [1]; Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft)-9 [1/2]; Running-10 [1]; Shipbuilding (Spaceship)-13 [1]; Vacc Suit-14 [2].

* Include bonuses for IQ and penalties for Oblivious.

Languages: English (native)-13 [0]; French-12 [1/2].

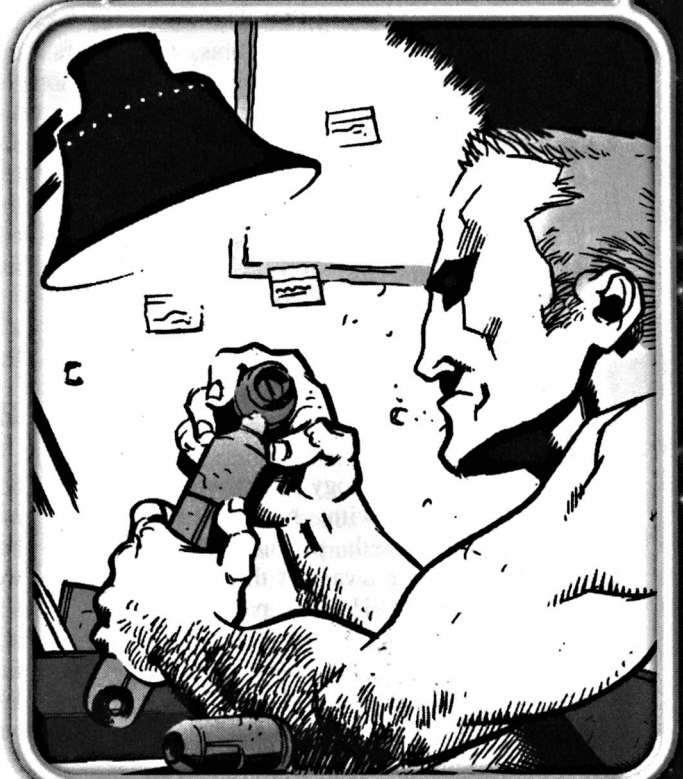
Equipment: 200' of duct tape (2.5 lbs., $5); Arachnoweave vest w/IFF transponder (1 lb., $250); Armoury mini-toolkit (2 lbs., $400); Chemscanner (2 lbs., $1,000); Electronic lockpick (1.5 lbs., $750); Electronics mini-toolkit (2 lbs., $400); Field scanner (2 lbs., $1,000); Life support pack (5 lbs., $500); Light full helmet w/multiview optics and medium-range radio communicator (3.25 lbs., $750); Light nanoweave vacc suit w/IFF transponder (15 lbs., $2,100); Mechanic mini-toolkit (2 lbs., $400); Micro-missile pod w/IFF interrogator and recognition pad (0.62 lbs., $580), plus 20 rounds of solid ammunition (2 lbs., $90); Short-range radio communicator (0.125 lbs., $25); Thruster pack w/5 spare cylinders (20 lbs., $2,150); Spare cash: $499.

Software (installed on implant): 3D social telepresence ($200); Language skill sets: German-12, Japanese-12, Spanish-12 ($150); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1); Other skill sets: Chemistry-12, First Aid-13 ($150); Standard neural VR program ($500).

Background

Born into an English family of relatively modest wealth, Derek Repton developed a talent with machines and the dedication to use it. He studied a wide range of technical topics, but focused on spacecraft technology. Like many bright, practical individuals from his background, Repton had a clear idea where he thought the opportunities lay – in space.

However, once he got there – his fare to orbit paid by a potential employer who took him on for a year for assessment – it became clear that his ego and argumentativeness were going to be a problem. That first employer didn't offer him a longer-term contract, but Repton chose to take a cash payout rather than his fare home. He was unlucky (or perhaps too much himself) in subsequent interviews and assessments, until Kurt Cassel and Sandra Chou came along. They needed an engineer, and they decided that they could handle Repton.



Playing C-C+

These four characters are a viable team, although they have obvious limitations. One of them is effectively "built into" their ship, and another functions best in zero gravity (although she's not *totally* disabled in gravity). Furthermore, they have limited combat capabilities; anything more than a barroom brawl is likely to leave them maimed. The *Tangente* has a weapons locker, but it usually remains locked. Their ship has a laser, but it's no SDV.

This, however, misses the point. The group is designed for space-based games, chasing mysteries and profits all across the Earth-Moon system. (Their ship could even land or take off from the Moon, in a pinch.) Such games should keep combat to a minimum; in 2100, serious fighting is the province of armored cybershells and specialist soldiers. If C-C+ get into a fight, it should be short and scary for them. If they, as NPCs, come into violent conflict with armed PCs, they will promptly contact an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Not that investigating the debris of 140 years of space flight, warfare, and runaway progress is automatically *safe*, of course. Their work takes them to some strange Lagrange Point stations, and may unintentionally annoy some powerful people.

So far, both sides have found that the deal has gone more or less as they hoped. That said, the rest of the crew does occasionally wonder how to shut Derek up.

Repton has two Programmed Allies. The first is a fairly standard VII LAI (native in English, trained in German and Japanese, with Area Knowledge of LEO). The second is a salvaged Tenzan THI-200bis, with Mechanic specializations in Fusion Drives and Reactors (raised to skill 14) and Plasma Sails, and Electronics Operation (Communications) skill at 11; however, old damage and Repton's software tinkering have left it with an excessive concern for its own safety (Cowardice), and it spends much of its time being repaired or adjusted. (If its availability roll doesn't come up, assume that it's in a workshop.)

Motivations

Repton is a technology addict who gets on better with nonsapient machines than with people. The fact that he's quite aware of this fact doesn't change it. He's in passable physical condition – partly thanks to good (fixed) genes and partly to his realization at an early age that a slob wouldn't get a job in space – but he's much more oriented toward mental concerns. He goes running, when he gets the chance, and daydreams as he runs.

His chief virtue, if one can call it that, is that he doesn't have many *irrational* prejudices. He doesn't judge people too quickly, though that's partly a kind of laziness. His other major problem is that he rates himself a bit higher than he merits. He does make a fair number of jokes about himself, but none of them cut through to the core of his vanity. He thinks that he's got the potential to become a successful inventor, although it's far from clear that he has the patience required. He does dislike nanosocialists, who he thinks oppress inventors.

The tuba playing is just a hobby, not a vice. He's got it under control now. Really.

Variations

Repton is a focused engineer-technologist. The only changes that would make sense are higher technical skills, better Programmed Allies, and greater wealth to pay for better equipment. A slightly more comic version of the character could have Clueless, Confused, Easy to Read, or various Odious Personal Habits. As a skilled "techie," he'd make a useful Ally or Contact.

Meet the Press

This news team is an entirely serviceable group, if a bit small. As reporters, they can go many places and meet many people who might otherwise be inaccessible.

Antoine Cohen
200 points

An Ishtar upgrade with a eye for news – and glory.

Age 31; 5'11"; 140 lbs. A typical Ishtar, slim and good-looking, clean-shaven. His brown hair has natural blond highlights. Cohen is always well-dressed but never flamboyant.

ST 10 [10]; **DX** 12 [10]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 12 [10].
Speed 6.0; Move 6.
Dodge 6.

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, "Charles-foster-M," see p. 56; 15 or less) [15]; Ally (Programmed, Marwari "Daniel Boone," see p. 60; 15 or less) [9]; Ally (Programmed, Newshawk/7-6, see p. 61; 15 or less) [6]; Ally (Programmed, Patelsoft "Friend K," see p. 62; 15 or less) [12]; Charisma +1 [5]; Contacts (Mid-ranking Marwari executive, skill 15; 12 or less; usually reliable) [8]; Contacts (Genetic Regulatory Agency investigator, skill 13; 12 or less; unreliable) [2]; Contacts ("Connected" Parisian underworld fixer, skill 15; 9 or less) [2]; Cool [1]; Ishtar Upgrade [25]; Patron (Old friend in a European news corporation; 6 or less) [5]; Reputation +2 (As a capable journalist, in the media world; 10 or less) [1]; Reputation +2 (As an investigative reporter; 7 or less) [3]; Sensie Talent +2 [4]; Status +1 [0]*; Wealthy [20].
* Free from Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Nosy [-1]; Reputation -1 (For an annoying ego, in the media world) [-1]; Reputation -2 (For egomania, in the media world; 10 or less) [-1]; Reputation -2 (For snooping and prying, among the famous and powerful; 10 or less) [-2]; Secret (Manipulated public biographies) [-5]. Jealousy is Cohen's optional Ishtar Upgrade disadvantage.

Quirks: Interested in low-tech image technologies; Loves ferreting out the truth; *Mostly* ethical about his work; Regards conspiracy theorists with deep suspicion; Sincerely believes in the importance of his job. [-5]

Skills: Acrobatics-10 [1]; Acting-13 [1]; Appreciate Beauty (Photography)-9/15 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (France)-13 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Earth)-14 [1]; Area Knowledge (LEO)-13 [1/2]; Bard-17* [2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13** [1/2]; Carousing-11 [1]; Computer Operation-13 [1/2]; Detect Lies-12 [1]; Diplomacy-15† [1]; Driving (Automobile)-10 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1/2]; Fast-Talk-13‡ [1/2]; Free Fall-10 [1/2]; Hidden Lore (Strasbourg)-12 [1/2]; History-11 [1/2]; Intelligence Analysis-11 [1/2]; Memetics-10 [1/2]; Photography-12 [1/2]; Psychology-12‡ [1/2]; Research-13 [1]; Savoir-Faire-18§ [0]; Sensie Interface-14§§ [1]; Sex Appeal-12# [1/2]; Video Production-14 [2].

* Includes bonuses for Charisma and Voice.

** Includes bonus for IQ.

† Includes bonuses for Memetics and Voice.

‡ Includes bonus for Memetics.

§ Free from Status default; includes bonus from Voice.

§§ Includes bonus from Sensie Interface.

Includes bonus from Voice.

Reporters in Play

As PCs, Cohen and his team will be in the business of finding facts and getting them to the public. They'll fight if they have to, but they should mostly face investigative scenarios. As NPCs, they can act as background color, nuisances, potential victims in need of professional protection – or a serious threat to any secrets which the PCs want to protect.

Languages: English-13 [1]; French (native)-14 [0]; German-12 [1/2]; Italian-12 [1/2].

Equipment: Arachnoweave suit w/IFF transponder (2.5 lbs., $300); Electro-laser pistol w/IFF interrogator and recognition pad (1 lb., $1,400); Light nanoweave suit w/IFF transponder (2.5 lbs., $850); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lbs., $100); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Sensory downlink implant (inc. surgery) ($8,400); Sensory uplink implant (inc. surgery) ($10,600); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); Spare cash: $718.

Software: *On implant:* 3D social telepresence ($200); Customized lifelike VR avatar ($20); Language skill sets: Cantonese-14, Japanese-14, Spanish-14 ($600); Lifelike neural VR program ($4,000); Mugshot ($100); Other skill sets: Area Knowledge (Earth)-15, Tactics-13 ($400). *On home AI:* Language skill sets: Arabic-13, Italian-13, Japanese-13, Spanish-13 ($400); Mugshot ($100).

Background

The Antoine Cohen story has already been the subject of a couple of unauthorized online biographies. The *poor* parents who scraped together the cash to give their child an Ishtar upgrade; the good school record (and the sideline in gymnastics); the rise to news media stardom – limited as yet, but growing – all this is documented . . . as are the less than flattering opinions of many former colleagues, who call him a pushy grandstander.

Actually, those biographies, while never *authorized,* were carefully handled, even supervised. Cohen feels no shame about this; it's all a game he prides himself on playing well. He hasn't told any lies, just put the right stresses on the truth.

His family, while not rich, was never poor, and his career has been driven by luck and good looks as much as by talent. Those negative opinions were carefully presented; Cohen reckons that audiences will think of him as a natural star who can't *help* treading on a few toes.

Cohen's *real* secret is arguably that he's a serious reporter. That is to say, he *cares* about the truth, and he holds interviewees to a higher standard of honesty than he holds himself. However, he only asks questions which he feels are genuinely in the public interest, or at least harmless entertainment. If anyone ever revealed the truth about *him* – well, he'd have the grace to take it with a smile, then make a point of going one up on anyone who seemed to be gloating.

He's got genuine reporter instincts. Show him a real story, especially one involving wrongdoing or corruption, and he's on it in an instant. Of course, in the media-saturated world of 2100, it's hard to find serious secrets, but Cohen works at this. After all, it wouldn't do for people to think that they're better reporters than Antoine Cohen.

Going freelance lets Cohen chase the stories which *he* finds interesting and important, and allows him to demonstrate his talents (and it also lets him make a bit more money). Even with modern technology, he needs backup, so he's got the best (after all, *he* recruited them); a two-person team who keep him live and on line wherever he goes. Of course, freelancing means that he has to sniff out stories the big organizations miss, despite all their resources – but, hey, *no problem.*

Unusually, Cohen uses both a wearable and an implant AI; he regards the former purely as a business tool, and often leaves it at home. He also has authority over one of the team's buzzbots, and additional AI support in his Paris apartment. He only carries a weapon when there's a specific danger.

Motivations

Everyone has heard about the sacred duty of the press and how sunlight is the best disinfectant. Cohen can laugh cynically with anyone else at that – except that, at heart, he believes it. As he says to his team, it confuses people when someone with his looks asks a question which proves he's done the legwork.

Still, he enjoys a lot of trivial stories too. They pay the rent and keep his fans amused. He tries not to hurt anyone too badly . . . but in a world where almost everything is public knowledge, if you know where to look, he reckons it's people's own fault if they do things which later embarrass them, and it's not *his* fault if he's smarter than them. (And if *they* actually seem to be smarter than *him*, that just makes him determined to bring them down.) People who know about Ishtar psychology recognize the pattern in Cohen much better than he does himself. He really doesn't see that it's jealousy driving him not just to be an ethical investigative reporter, but to be the *most* ethical investigative reporter.

He collects antique photographic prints, and he rarely misses an auction. He's competitive about that, too.

Variations

To raise Cohen's point total, increase his Wealth, positive Reputation, and IQ, and treat his team as Allies. For a lower-value "starting" version, reduce his Wealth, trim some skills and Programmed Allies, and maybe give him a Duty to a permanent employer.

Ludwig Braun
200 points

A catboy chauffeur, pilot – and bodyguard.

Age 17; 5'10"; 130 lbs. A typical slim Felicia "catboy" with mid-brown fur, usually smartly but ruggedly dressed and often wearing heavy "sunglasses."

ST 9/10 [0]; **DX** 15 [20]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 11/10 [0].
Speed 6.5; Move 6.
Dodge 7; Parry 11 (Judo).

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Ally (Programmed, GenTech BR-Secretarial, see p. 58; 15 or less) [9]; Ally (Programmed, Newshawk/7-6, see p. 61; 15 or less) [6]; Comfortable [10]; Extra Starting Cash (One month's earnings) [1]; Felicia II [114]; Fit [5].

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Sense of Duty (Employers) [-5].

Quirks: Awards scores from 1 to 10 to unsolicited passes from humans, and sometimes tells them their score; Enjoys bossing LAIs around; Collects cynical stories about media stars (*but is careful* not to pass them on to the wrong people); Wants to increase his piloting experience; Will always stand rather than sit with his back to the door. [-5]

"You've heard the news, now here are the facts . . ."

Skills: Acrobatics-14** [1]; Area Knowledge (E.U.)-11 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (LEO)-11 [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-17* [1]; Body Language-11† [1]; Dancing-13 [1/2]; Driving (Automobile)-14 [1]; First Aid-12 [1]; Free Fall-14 [1]; Guns (Pistol)-17* [1]; Judo-15 [4]; Karate-14 [2]; Performance-11 [1]; Piloting (Vertol)-14** [1/2]; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-13 [2]; Tactics-9 [1/2]; Vacc Suit-10 [1/2].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

** Includes bonus for Perfect Balance.

† Includes bonus for Alertness.

Languages: English-10 [1/2]; French-11 [1]; German (native)-12 [0]; Gesture-11 [1/2].

Equipment: Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator and recognition pad (1 lb., $1,400); Light nanoweave suit w/IFF transponder (2.5 lbs., $850); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lbs., $100); Pistol (4mm) w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1.5 lbs., $1,260), plus 100 rounds of homing solid ammunition (0.56 lbs., $8); Sensory downlink implant (inc. surgery) ($8,400); Short-fange lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); "Sunglasses" with anti-glare and infrared optics (0.5 lbs., $337); Spare cash: $632.

Software (on implant): 3D social telepresence ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skill sets: Cantonese-12, Italian-12, Japanese-12 ($150); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1); Standard neural VR program ($500).

Background

One of the first batch of "postban" Felicias, Ludwig Braun was created to the order of an E.U.-based media conglomerate, nominally for chauffeur and pilot duties. Actually, his main role was to be a stylish bodyguard and fashion accessory for the group's executives. He was trained to be fully effective in a security role; in quiet times, he also found himself acting as a courier and even as an extra in dramatic productions.

Nonetheless, he was treated well (if only to avoid PR problems), and developed a rounded personality with a range of interests. When he achieved legal maturity, he decided that he wanted a change of scene. Antoine Cohen, who'd encountered him on past jobs, was smart or lucky enough to spot this and came through with the most interesting offer – acting as a driver, pilot, personal aide, and, if necessary, bodyguard for a freelance newsgathering team. This job is a whole lot chancier than Braun's old corporate employment, but with typical Felicia cockiness, he remains sure that he can handle anything that comes up.

Like many free bioroids, Braun has had a series of different infomorphs in his implant. His original "trainer" had a very bland, paternal personality, and was replaced twice by his guardians as his own

Bioroids and Travel

Braun has one big problem as a member of a globe-trotting news team; he's unmistakably a bioroid. That's fine in some places, tricky in others, and impossible in a few. In Europe, he's a free citizen, although he meets occasional prejudice and a lot of impertinent curiosity. If the team travels to most other jurisdictions, Cohen has to sign documents taking legal responsibility for him, which can be irritating, but the team takes it as part of life.

If the team pursues a story leading to one of those few areas where bioroids are actively persecuted, violently enslaved, or prohibited (mostly small countries with extremely conservative cultures or governments, and a few radical space communities), Braun will just have to stay out. He'd quite possibly volunteer to infiltrate some places in the guise of a local oppressed bioroid, but his colleagues have a realistic idea of his skills and would talk him out of this. If Cohen decided that there was good reason to go in without Braun's protection, Braun would sit in the nearest safe area, monitoring his colleagues' progress, fidgeting, and daydreaming about tactics for a fast rescue mission.

character developed. When he achieved independence, he thought of swapping his AI "secretary" for something a little more informal, but decided that, with its codes now under his control, it'd be *much* more fun to get *it* working for *him*. It speaks German (as native), English, French, and Spanish, and its Area Knowledge covers the E.U. Braun also controls one of the team's buzzbots – always useful when he's watching out for trouble.

Motivations

Braun is young, self-confident, and keen to show how well he can do his job. He won't *often* steer the team into trouble, but he *does* overestimate his own ability to deal with anything that might come up.

However, there's more to him than gung-ho enthusiasm and overconfidence. He has a serious sense of professional dedication, a sense of humor with a sharp edge, and a fondness for flying. (He was taught to pilot air cars as part of his training, and would like to use that skill more.) He genuinely tries to live up to his self-image, and usually succeeds.

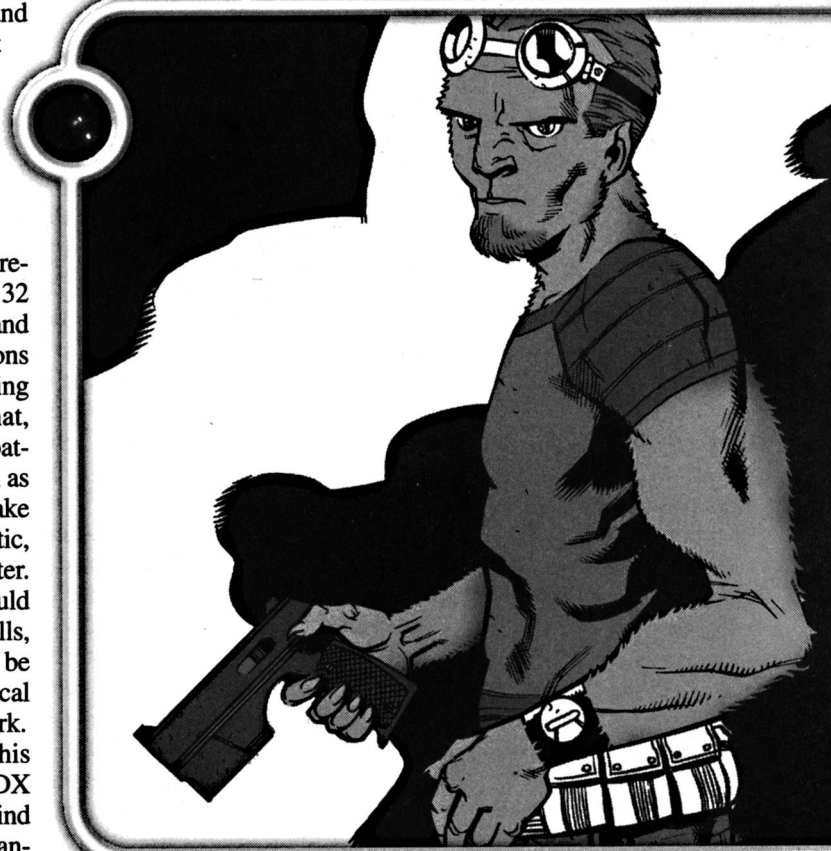
Variations

Making Braun a "preban" Felicia would add 32 points to his value and interesting complications to his character. Adding much more than that, especially extra combat-related advantages such as Danger Sense, could make him a highly cinematic, swashbuckling character. More modestly, he could be given enhanced skills, which could as easily be guns, martial arts, tactical judgment, or media work.

To downgrade this character, reduce his DX or IQ, and perhaps find him some extra disadvantages. (If he hasn't yet achieved legal adulthood, he could have some kind of Duty.) As a Felicia who's supposed to be competent at his work, however, he can't be downgraded very much.

Braun is designed as the useful combat-oriented character for a group that is not combat-oriented – a classic PC role. As an NPC, he'd make a significant opponent, but he'd need a major upgrade or a lot of backup to threaten a capable PC group on his own. If he got into trouble in an area with a lot of anti-bioroid prejudice, broad-minded PCs might well want to assist him.

"You say you like my fur? That's two out of 10, ma'am, and I'm still asking you to stand back."



TAMARA CHUIKOVA
200 POINTS

When the news *has* to get through, she is the one who makes sure it does.

Age 32; 5'9"; 125 lbs. A slim, wiry woman with a short asymmetric hairstyle, dressed brightly and quite stylishly but almost always with a few high-tech tools on her person.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 11 [10].
Speed 6.0; Move 6.
Dodge 6; Parry 6 (Karate).

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, Cortez-Ghao "Faraday," see p. 57; 15 or less) [9]; Ally (Programmed, enhanced Tenzan THI-200bis, see p. 62; 15 or less) [75]; Ally Group (Programmed, 5 Newshawk/7-6s, see p. 61; 15 or less) [12]; Genefixed Human [0]; Panimmunity 2 (Permanent immune machine nanomods) [5]; Pious [5]; Reputation +2 (For technical skill, in the European media business) [3]; Status +1 [0]*; Wealthy [20].
* Free from Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Code of Honor ("Pirate's") [-5]; Pacifism (Cannot kill) [-15]; Post-Combat Shakes [-5]; Uncongenial [-1].

Quirks: Believes in dealing with leaders, not underlings; Builds her close friendships through online interactions; Occasionally attends Russian Orthodox services; Slightly nervous of zero-G; Swears repetitively (in Russian) when things go wrong. [-5]

Skills: Administration-13 [1]; Area Knowledge (Earth)-14 [1]; Area Knowledge (E.U.)-14 [1]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13* [1/2]; Computer Operation-15 [2]; Computer Programming-12 [1]; Diplomacy-12 [1]; Driving (Automobile)-11 [1]; Electronics (Communications)-12 [1]; Electronics (Robotics)-12 [1]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-14 [2]; Electronics Operation (Robots)-13 [1]; First Aid-13 [1/2]; Free Fall-10 [1/2]; Intelligence Analysis-11 [1/2]; Karate-10 [1]; Law-11 [1/2]; Mathematics-12 [1]; Mechanic (Fuel cell/electric motor)-12 [1/2]; Mechanic (Robotics)-14 [2]; Photography-14 [2]; Savoir-Faire-16** [0]; Video Production-14 [2].
* Includes bonus for IQ.
** Free from Status.

Languages: English-12 [1/2]; French-13 [1]; German-13 [1]; Gesture-13 [1/2]; Russian (native)-14 [0].

Equipment: 200' of duct tape (2.5 lbs., $5); Chemscanner (2 lbs., $1,000); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1 lb., $1,900); Field scanner (2 lbs., $1,000); Goggles with anti-glare and infrared optics (0.5 lbs., $337); Light nanoweave suit w/IFF transponder (2.5 lbs., $850); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lbs., $100); Medium-range radio direction finder (0.5 lbs., $500); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Portable electronics toolkit (10 lbs., $900); Portable mechanic toolkit (20 lbs., $600); Sensory downlink implant (inc. surgery) ($8,400); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); VR gloves (0.25 lbs., $500); Spare cash: $2,645.

Cohen's Team

Cohen and his two assistants are designed to function as an "adventuring group," but they are news gatherers, not "fighters." Even aside from their limited combat capabilities, they cannot afford to get into avoidable fights. Smarter reporters prefer to avoid being identified with one side or the other in an armed conflict, unless their own national origins make this inevitable, but they also can't be seen as menaces, loose cannons, or factions in themselves.

Obviously, the presence of Ludwig Braun on the team implies that they're far from perfectly pacifistic. He may be called a "driver" or "assistant," but Felicias are widely thought of as professional fighters. Still, even a combat-capable escort isn't quite the same as a soldier.

Of course, the subject of an investigation sometimes turns nasty. This is a team which sometimes pushes its luck.

Software (usually installed on DVI): 3D social telepresence ($200); Basic VR program ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skill sets: Cantonese-14, Italian-14, Japanese-14 ($600); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1); Other skill sets: Accounting-13, Mechanic (Gas Turbines)-14, Merchant-14 ($600); Teleoperation (VR control: one copy each in DVI, one buzzbot, and tech-spider) ($7,500).

Background

A third-generation child of the small "Russian Diaspora," Tamara Chuikova was born in Strasbourg and brought up in towns all over Western Europe, as her family moved around in pursuit of work. Nonetheless, they maintained a strong Russian cultural tradition (and Tamara still has a distinctive accent in every other language). Her home life was generally happy, but she had to cultivate a lot of online friendships in order to preserve a sense of stability. As a result, she is very comfortable with communications technologies.

She also turned out to be *very* bright and quick-witted, if a little narrowly focused, and entirely ready to move around a lot in the course of her employment. It was only natural for her to gravitate to media work. After a number of corporate jobs and short-term freelance contracts, she gained a small reputation, but she also made some temporary enemies with her tendency to take immediate and proportionate revenge for slights, and her preference for working in small teams narrowed her options.

When Antoine Cohen approached her with a job offer, it didn't take much persuasion. The only snag was that both Cohen and his driver-bodyguard have massive overconfidence problems. Chuikova was shocked to find herself the calm, cautious member of the team. When she remembers, she tries to live up to this, but most of the time she's too busy with the gadgets.

Chuikova takes responsibility for the team's main array of buzzbots, releasing them to view an area from all sides once it becomes clear that there might be anything to see. In addition to the buzzbots and her DVI AI, she has a Tenzan tech-spider, whose particular skill specializations are Mechanic (Robotics)-12 and Mechanic (Fuel cell/electric motor)-11 (note its slightly increased point value). Much of the time, it simply acts as an extra pair of eyes and hands, or performs routine maintenance, but she acquired the space-oriented model because the team's assignments sometimes take them into orbit, and she is far from confident of her abilities in free fall; she prefers to remain strapped in a seat while the cybershell attends to zero-G tasks.

Although her focus is on the intellectual and social, Chuikova realizes that her work might sometimes become physically dangerous. Hence, she has studied a couple of useful combat skills, though she instinctively *hates* real violence.

"This is hardly a difficult situation, is it, sir? Just a routine matter of clearing this communications channel straight away."

Motivations

Chuikova is paid to bring information out of difficult situations. She's primarily a technician, but she's also good at the administrative side. Her difficulty with large groups of people nowadays mostly leads her to insist that small groups get things done better. She usually finds the senior individual in a given situation and persuades that person to give her priority. With practice, she has improved a moderate innate talent for dealing with people. She doesn't flirt or bribe, although she may sometimes flatter; she treats people as competent, and then persuades them that the competent thing to do is to help her.

She *does* have a rather black and white view of life. Having adopted a career, she intends to be as good at it as possible. She believes in being straightforward with her colleagues and anyone who's straightforward with her, and in getting her own back if anyone proves hostile. Her code says that doing someone physical harm (especially lethal harm) is always wrong, so her revenge is financial or social, rather than violent . . . but is no less overwhelming for all that.

Variations

A younger version of Chuikova, just starting out in her career, could lack most of the Programmed Allies and some of the Wealth. Reducing her IQ and some of her skills would also be possible. *Increasing* her point value is just as doable, but might make her rather an implausible figure. After all, anyone that rich and smart as she might end up being would hardly work as a freelance reporter's sidekick.

U.S. MARSHALS

Three U.S. deputy marshals; one big red planet. This team is full of adventuring possibilities, either singly or as a group, and they're powerful enough to handle most normal crises.

CARLENA VILLAREAL 250 POINTS

She really wants to study the geology of Mars. Being a U.S. Marshal is just a sideline.

Age 36; 5'10"; 140 lbs. A fit-looking Hispanic-American woman with medium-length hair and handsome but slightly weathered features.

ST 11 [10]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 13 [30].
Speed 6.25; Move 6.
Dodge 7; Parry 9 (Brawling).

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, Cortez-Ghao "Faraday," see p. 57; 15 or less) [9]; Acute Vision +1 [2]; Attractive [5]; Claim to Hospitality (Truckers' Guild) [3]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Comfortable Wealth [10]; Contacts (U.S. Army Rangers Captain, skill 18; 9 or less) [3]; Cool [1]; Deep Sleeper [5]; Genefixed Human [0]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent bacteriophage nanomods; Limitation: Known bacteria only, -60%) [4]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nano-mods; Limitation: Affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent virus hunter nanomods; Limitation:

Known viruses only, -60%) [4]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Mars-Adapted (Andraste biomod) [14]; Patron (Commonwealth Marshal's Office; 12 or less) [30]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4].

Disadvantages: Charitable [-15]; Duty (Deputy marshal; 6 or less) [-2]; Sense of Duty (To the Commonwealth and the future of Mars) [-10].

Quirks: Believes in "minimum-impact" colonialism; Keeps her romantic life *totally* separate from work; Likes solving people's short-term problems; Loves the wilderness; Very dry sense of humor. [-5]

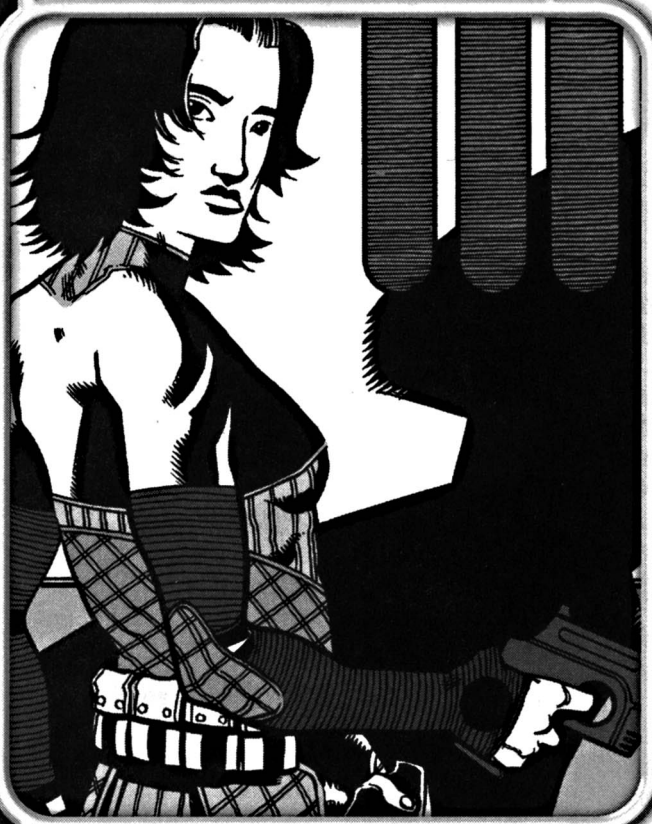
Skills: Administration-12 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (Mars)-15 [2]; Armoury (Rifles and Handguns)-12 [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13* [1/2]; Brawling-12 [1]; Cartography-13 [1]; Chess-13 [1/2]; Climbing-12 [2]; Computer Operation-14 [1]; Diplomacy-11 [1/2]; Driving (All-Terrain Vehicle)-13 [4]; Ecology-11 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-13 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-12 [1/2]; First Aid-15 [2]; Forensics-11 [1/2]; Geology-15 [6]; Guns (Pistol)-15* [2]; Interrogation-12 [1/2]; Law-12 [1]; Leadership-14 [2]; Low-G Flight-10 [1/2]; Mechanic (Fuel Cell/Electric Motor)-12 [1/2]; Meteorology-12 [1/2]; Orienteering-14 [2]; Photography-12 [1/2]; Research-13 [1]; Savoir-Faire-13 [1/2]; Stealth-11 [1]; Surveying-13 [1]; Survival (Martian Desert)-14 [2]; Tactics-13 [2]; Tracking-13 [1]; Xenobiology (Terrestrial)-12 [1/2].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

Languages: English (native)-14 [0]; Mandarin-12 [1/2]; Spanish-14 [2].

Equipment: 100' spool of cufftape (0.5 lbs., $10); Arachnoweave vest w/IFF transponder (1 lb., $250); Armoury mini-toolkit (2 lbs., $400); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1 lb., $1,900); Emergency medkit (1 lb., $150); Inertial compass (0.5 lb., $125); Infrared communicator (0.25 lbs., $130); Light infantry helmet (1.5 lbs., $30); Light nanoweave suit (5 lbs., $750); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lb.; $100); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Pistol (4mm) w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1.5 lbs., $1,260), plus 50 rounds each of solid, plastic, and homing APS ammunition (0.84 lbs., $9.60); Portable mechanic tool kit (20 lbs., $600); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); "Sunglasses" with anti-glare and infrared optics (0.5 lb.; $337); Spare cash: $1,985.40.

"Call me nosy, but I can't help wondering if you need help here."



Software (installed on DVI): 3D social telepresence ($200); Basic VR program ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skill sets: Cantonese-14, Japanese-14 ($400); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1); Tacnet ($1,000).

Background

Born the daughter of American scientist-colonist parents in the "college town" of Nix Olympica, Carlena Villareal grew up with an interest in science which eventually focused on areology. She also became almost painfully considerate and kind-hearted. She adopted the "colonialist" meme without becoming particularly "green"; she thinks it's in humanity's best interests to spread across Mars (and the rest of the solar system), but if this can best be achieved by modifying people rather than the planet, that's fine with her. She loves the Martian wilderness, and she wants to share that beauty, so long as it isn't destroyed in the process.

She found a job in the Commonwealth Aerological Survey Department, and spent the next few years doing as much fieldwork as possible. Her progress up the administrative ladder may have been a little slow, but she gets a lot of job satisfaction. Once she'd settled in, she also received a standard request to be deputized as a U.S. Marshal, and agreed.

A couple of years ago, she was assigned to lead a team with the task of filling in gaps and checking anomalies in the Commonwealth's database. Neither she nor anyone else expected that this would lead to her having to "get out her badge" so regularly, though in retrospect, this might have been predictable. Or perhaps not; whereas they're only rarely *ordered* to take action (hence their low-value Duty), the team has a proactive style and a tendency to be in the wrong place at the right time. Villareal claims it's a knack. She's proud of the good she's done, though she'd sometimes rather get on with her scientific job. One recent incident has given her (and her team) a good name with the Martian Truckers' Guild; others have given her fast reactions to trouble.

Although some of Villareal's equipment is Commonwealth issue, it can be treated as personal property for practical purposes – another consequence of the pragmatic, informal nature of frontier government. (The other side of the

Deputy Marshals

U.S. government resources are spread thin on Mars. Hence, a lot of people end up doing two jobs, even lending a hand with law enforcement – the Martian Commonwealth has dusted off the concept of the part-time, deputized U.S. Marshal.

Villareal and her team are example marshals, although their main jobs and natures give them more interesting cases than most teams. They've had basic training in law enforcement, but they aren't *supposed* to have to do more than report possible problems, load the wanted and missing persons lists into their AIs, and occasionally provide the professionals with backup.

Of course, U.S. law doesn't necessarily hold in the wilds, away from the established colonies. But Martians tend to pragmatism; if there's a problem that needs fixing, whoever's closest with the right tools (physical or legal) does the job. If Villareal's team catch Chinese criminals who've been stealing from Saudi caravans, and the nearest dome happens to be run by Peru, that's where they'll be handed over, and quite likely where they'll stand trial. It's only when cases turn out to have a political element that things get messy.

Deputy marshals have jurisdiction across the entire Commonwealth – and, informally, anywhere on Mars which isn't covered by someone else's law (including local space). They can also instigate low-level investigations, sometimes covertly, although they're then expected to justify themselves in detail later. This is treated as 10-point Legal Enforcement Powers.

coin is that she has to pay to maintain or replace it.) She can often get temporary use of other government resources – hence her Patron advantage. She wears a "tech-oriented" AI because she sometimes has to perform emergency repair work of all kinds.

Motivations

Villareal loves people – so much that she has to limit herself to small doses. It's not that she minds crowds, or is obsessed with open spaces, but she'd hate to be stuck in an office. She likes meeting *new* people, quickly learns about them, and often ends up trying to help them. Living in a city would overload her, whereas heading out into the wilderness gives her the chance to solve big problems without missing too much sleep.

But she's not stupid or totally unselective. When people are being exploited, she has to make other people stop what they're doing. This, applied to the huge area of Mars which she now knows very well, is why her team keeps getting into interesting situations.

Although she isn't an especially private person, Villareal long ago learned to keep her romantic life totally separate from her work. Her reasons combine a couple of early bad experiences with a personal theory of leadership. Her team members don't even have any idea where her personal tastes lie.

Variations

To lower Villareal's point total, reduce her attributes a little, or lose advantages such as Attractive or Combat Reflexes. It would be hard to make her much more powerful, although in a cinematic campaign, she might have better combat skills and, maybe, martial arts training or government-supplied biomods to make her more of a "special agent" (which would also imply a higher Duty level). She could also have the other members of her team as Allies.

Dave O'Connor
250 points

Some rich kids run away from their families. This one ran to Mars and joined the government.

Age 25; 6'; 160 lbs. A strikingly handsome Ziusudra parahuman, clean-shaven, with dark red hair, an easy smile, and a cultured manner.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [10]; **IQ** 14 [30]; **HT** 12 [10].
Speed 6.0; Move 7.
Dodge 6; Parry 6 (Judo).

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, enhanced GH-L Nightingale, see p. 59; 15 or less) [6]; Charisma +2 [10]; Claim to Hospitality (Truckers' Guild) [3]; Handsome (Increased from Attractive) [10]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nanomods; Limitation: affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; Legal Enforcement Powers [10]; Mars-Adapted (Andraste biomod) [14]; Patron (Commonwealth Marshal's Office; 9 or less) [15]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4]; Status +1* [0]; Wealthy [20]; Ziusudra Parahuman [75].
* Free from Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Duty (Deputy Marshal; 6 or less) [-2]; Reputation -2 (As a cocky womanizer, among Martian-American colonists; 7 or less) [-1]; Stubbornness [-5]; Weak Will -1 [-8].

Quirks: Despises people who think that wealth makes them superior; Dislikes the idea of exploiting other beings; Frequently comments on how much he can or can't put in his messages home to his family; Makes jokes about his youth (actually covering sensitivity on the topic); Somewhat lecherous, but steers away from colleagues. [-5]

"Dangerous? No, that was a straight rescue job. But let me tell you about the Triad drug dome business . . ."

Skills: Appreciate Beauty-10 [1/2]; Bard-14* [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-14** [1]; Carousing-11 [1]; Computer Hacking-10 [1/2]; Computer Operation-13 [1/2]; Driving (All-Terrain Vehicle)-10 [1/2]; Ecology-11 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-12 [1/2]; Erotic Art-9 [1/2]; Fast Talk-14 [2]; First Aid-13 [1/2]; Forensics-11 [1/2]; Gambling-12 [1/2]; Geology-13 [2]; Guns (Pistol)-13** [1/2]; Holdout-12 [1/2]; Judo-10 [1/2]; Judo Sport-12 [4]; Law-11 [1/2]; Literature-11 [1/2]; Orienteering-12 [1/2]; Piloting (Vertol)-11 [1]; Planetology-13 [1]; Research-14 [2]; Running-9 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-16† [0]; Savoir-Faire (Dojo)-13 [1/2]; Sex Appeal-13 [4]; Surveying-12 [1/2]; Survival (Martian Desert)-13 [1]; Xenobiology (Terrestrial)-12 [1/2].

* Includes bonus for Charisma.

** Includes bonus for IQ.

† Free from Status.

Languages: English (native)-14 [0]; Spanish-12 [1].

Equipment: 100' spool of cufftape (0.5 lbs., $10); Arachnoweave vest w/IFF transponder (1 lb., $250); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1 lb., $1,900); Inertial compass (0.5 lb., $125); Infrared communicator (0.25 lbs., $130); Light infantry helmet (1.5 lbs., $30); Light nanoweave suit (5 lbs., $750); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lb.; $100); Permanent pore cleaner nanomods ($500); Permanent tooth cleaner nanomods ($1,000); Pistol (4mm) w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1.5 lbs., $1,260), plus 50 rounds each of solid, plastic, and homing APS ammunition (0.84 lbs., $9.60); Sensory downlink implant (inc. surgery) ($8,400); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); "Sunglasses" with multiview optics (0.75 lb.; $600); Spare cash: $3,733.40.

Software (installed on implant): 3D social telepresence ($200); Two customized lifelike VR avatars (one for self, one for AI) ($40); Deluxe neural VR program ($500); HUD targeting ($250); Language skill sets: Cantonese-13, Japanese-13, Mandarin-13, Spanish-13 ($400); Lifelike neural VR program ($4,000); Mugshot ($100); Other skill sets: Area Knowledge (Mars)-14, Erotic Art-11, Literature-12, Tactics-12 ($400); Teleoperation (direct control) ($5,000).

Background

Some would say that David O'Connor was fortune's child. Born in Los Angeles, the son of a family rich and flexible-minded enough to make him a Ziusudra parahuman, he grew up fit, smart, and adaptable. Of course, anyone like that who wants to be taken seriously has to prove that he's capable in his own right, even going out of his way to find places where people will judge him by his achievements rather than on his background. However, Dave O'Connor may have gone further than was strictly necessary. After graduating (with

distinction) from Harvard, he declared his intention to emigrate to Mars.

His family wasn't entirely happy with this, but they decided it was better not to stand in his way; after all, there was nothing to say that he wouldn't come back in a few years. (An Andraste can always be reversed, given the money.) They thought that his decision to work for the *government* was a little odd – private corporate work would *surely* be better paid? – but David explained that he wanted to do scientific work of a type which the Martian Commonwealth was sponsoring, so they accepted that, too. They'd learned by now that it wasn't worth arguing when he'd made up his mind. They wished him well, and saw him off at Quito.

Since then, he's written to them much more than they've written to him. He still seems to like his work, and they hope that he's exaggerating the risks he takes. (He is, but not much.) They tell themselves that all this may just be a phase – and these days, rich kids can afford very long phases.

O'Connor doesn't complain too much about the way Villareal keeps dragging the team into "marshal work." Whereas she's motivated by a sense of duty, he has a need to prove himself. In addition, it makes for good stories to tell girls in dome bars, and investigations sometimes make him use his considerable charm – which he does enjoy.

O'Connor's implant AI has learned Mathematics-8 and Writing-9 – hence its slightly higher point value.

Motivations

Although his looks, charm, and wealth make many people think he's too good to be true, O'Connor isn't a bad person, and he genuinely wants to prove himself on his own terms. He even has the sense to know that he has a lot to learn. However, his choices have been driven much more by rebellion than by real idealism, and he's never entirely lost the arrogance and other attitudes that come with his upbringing. He thinks of his stubborn streak as determination; people who dislike him just think he's spoiled.

Although O'Connor is something of a womanizer, his relationship with his teammates is strictly platonic. He sometimes tells people that that he and Villareal long ago came to an unspoken agreement about this, and he's smart enough to know that might almost be true – but actually, whatever *he* might choose to try, Villareal would keep him at a distance. As for Xan, he thinks that relationships with bioroids can too easily seem exploitative, which just isn't his style.

Villareal's Team as NPCs

These three characters can have two basic functions as NPCs in a game or adventure set on Mars: they know the wilderness, and they are, on a part-time basis, the law.

Anyone who needs guides, advisors, a rescue party, or contacts who know the planet and its dangers, can ask around or seek help from Commonwealth agencies; both paths can lead to Villareal's team. In that case, the PCs should realize that these NPCs are law-abiding and serious-minded, but friendly and helpful if they don't have reason to be suspicious. They're also smart and observant. PCs who are up to anything illegal should tread carefully. It wouldn't be terribly hard to defeat the trio in a straight fight, but they're competent with weapons and fully capable of diving for cover and yelling for help – and they have good friends and official sponsors who'd be *very* unhappy if anything happened to them.

They're also capable of showing up in the event of less serious illegalities, breaking up brawls or tackling petty criminals whom they catch in the act. Furthermore, O'Connor and Xan have plot hooks buried in their backgrounds. O'Connor's family might want news of him, or even commission someone to persuade him to come home, while Xan has a link to the Martian Triads. If someone wants them investigated without the investigators' giving too much away, the PCs could take on what might seem to be an easy job, only to find that it's actually rather complicated.

Variations

To lower O'Connor's point value, reduce his attributes or make him an Alpha Upgrade or even just a Genefixed Human (or do both!). He might control less of his family's money, lowering his wealth level. He could also have more and worse "rich kid" disadvantages, such as Odious Personal Habits.

To raise his total, give him more AI/cybershell Programmed Allies or higher skills (reflecting more experience). Markedly higher attributes, martial arts training, and the like would make him flagrantly cinematic (which might suit some games, of course).

SALLY XAN
250 POINTS

Creature of the Triads turned U.S. government agent.

Age 10; 5'6"; 135 lbs. A bioroid with the look of a somewhat fleshy Chinese woman of indeterminate age, with short, straight hair combed back.

ST 12/15 [30]; **DX** 14 [30]; **IQ** 13 [30]; **HT** 14 [20].
Speed 7.0; Move 7.
Dodge 8; Parry 9 (Karate).

Advantages: Alertness +1 [5]; Ally (Programmed, GenTech BR-Secretarial, see p. 58; 15 or less) [9]; Claim to Hospitality (Truckers' Guild) [3]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Composed [5]; Double-Jointed [5]; Fit [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Legal Enforcement Powers [5]; Strong Will +1 [4]; Toughness (DR 1) [10]; Patron (Commonwealth government; 6 or less) [13]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4]; ZR-3 Bioroid [48].

Disadvantages: Duty (Deputy Marshal; 6 or less) [-2]; Gullibility [-10]; Status -1 [-5]; Struggling [-10].

Quirks: Careful to stay in the background most of the time; Law-abiding (at least to the letter); Listens to European classical music at every opportunity; Very respectful of her implant. [-4]

Skills: Acting-14 [4]; Area Knowledge (Mars)-12 [1/2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-16* [1]; Camouflage-12 [1/2]; Cartography-11 [1/2]; Computer Operation-12 [1/2]; Cooking-12 [1/2]; Driving (All-Terrain Vehicle)-15 [4]; Ecology-10 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-12 [1]; First Aid-13 [1]; Geology-10 [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)-17* [2]; Holdout-11 [1/2]; Karate-12 [1]; Law-10 [1/2];

Xan, the Triads, and Secrets

Sally is an exceptional ZR-3. The minimal assumption is that this is a matter of luck, good training, and at most some very minor experimental tweaks by Triad technicians. However, it's perfectly possible that there's more involved.

The simplest twist would be that the Triads had tweaked the design to make a combat specialist (perhaps even an assassin). Being quick, adaptable, and (most of all) robust, would make her useful in either role – as would being double-jointed. In that case, Sally has been lucky to find a niche which suits her talents, and the worst that could happen to her would probably be discovering the full truth about her origins. Of course, if the Triads turn out to have a number of bioroid soldiers as capable as Sally, Martian law enforcement will have a problem on their hands. It's also possible that the Triads would try to capture or observe her for study.

In a more paranoid game, Sally may have been modified *after* she was confiscated, by the Commonwealth. She was very new back then, and her memories could have been adjusted during her early training. Knowing how to build human-looking combat bioroids would be handy for any government, even if policy and public opinion make the creation of infiltrators and assassins a little difficult. In this case, her place on Villareal's team could constitute hiding her in plain sight while conducting field trials.

Mechanic (Fuel Cell/Electric Motor)-11 [1/2]; Orienteering-12 [1]; Research-11 [1/2]; Shadowing-11 [1/2]; Stealth-15 [4]; Surveying-13 [2]; Survival (Martian Desert)-12 [1]; Tactics-10 [1/2].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

Languages: Cantonese-11 [1/2]; English (native)-13 [0].

Equipment: Infrared communicator (0.25 lbs., $130); Light infantry helmet (1.5 lbs., $30); Light nanoweave suit w/IFF transponder (5 lbs., $850); Medium-range radio communicator (0.5 lb.; $100); Pistol (4mm) w/IFF interrogator and recognition pad (1.5 lbs., $760), plus 50 rounds each of solid, plastic, and homing APS ammunition (0.84 lbs., $9.60); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); "Sunglasses" with anti-glare optics ($37); Spare cash: $70.40.

Software (installed on implant): 3D social telepresence ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skill sets: Japanese-12, Mandarin-12, Spanish-12 ($150); Mugshot ($100); Off-the-shelf lifelike VR avatar ($1).

Background

Sally Xan became a ward and employee of the U.S. Martian Commonwealth through a quirk of fate. In 2091, American law enforcers busted a Martian Triad operation near Robinson City, confiscating a number of illegal bioroids. However, it turned out that these beings had been grown on American territory, and although somebody presumably owed Xiao Chu money for bootleg use of their ZR-3 Mars Ops design (see *Yousheng,* p. TS117), they were legally American. Handing them over to the Chinese was neither mandatory nor politically viable, although the U.S. government did pay Xiao Chu a nominal fee to resolve copyright issues.

"Please don't move; I'm obliged to arrest you."

Thus, "Sally" and her siblings were brought up by the Commonwealth, which was only too happy to gain some extra, very willing, Mars-adapted workers. (ZR-3 bioroids are designed to be workaholics.) Sally proved especially bright, quick, and healthy; some American doctors put this down to luck, but others suspected that the Triads were experimenting with an augmented design. She was eventually assigned to aerological work. Her teammates like her well enough, and try not to exploit her willingness to work long hours in dirty jobs, but they aren't so broad-minded as to lack entirely their society's attitude about bioroids.

Sally is very capable in specific ways, but terribly naïve about many things. This sometimes makes her seem a little stupid, but that's deceptive; she's learned the old oppressed-minority trick of straight-facing through tricky situations, which sometimes helps with investigations – although she can easily be fooled when *others* lie to *her.*

Although as an American bioroid, Sally has a distinctly inferior legal and social position, as a trusted government agent, she's allowed a fair amount of autonomy and some personal resources. She has her own quarters, and she's slowly developing a private life. She's also permitted to select her own equipment.

Sally has narrower Legal Enforcement Powers than her teammates. They have to supervise her, and she can't initiate investigations. Even viewed as government property, however, she represents the authority of the Commonwealth.

The fate of the other bioroids confiscated along with Sally is left to the GM to determine.

Motivations

With her workaholic tendencies and naiveté, Sally can be both helpful and annoying to her colleagues. She seemingly lives to serve, and her co-workers often have to order her to slow down. Her work defines her self.

Sally's core problem is her workaholic tendencies, *not* excessive humility or a poor self-image. The Commonwealth techs and educators who brought her up sought to ensure that she developed a strong, independent personality, partly because they sometimes had sapient-rights campaigners looking over their shoulders, partly because they took professional pride in creating capable beings. Although she accepts her position, Sally has clear opinions, and if she decides that a human is wrong, no matter how arrogant or powerful, she'll quietly but determinedly work around him. She tries to avoid humiliating humans – that just leads to trouble – and she finds it safer to stay in the background, but she won't put her neck on the line because of someone else's incompetence. The only snag is that an assertive human can all too easily convince her that she's mistaken about things when she isn't.

Variations

Sally could easily have her attributes lowered to something closer to the ZR-3 norm, and some or all of her advantages removed (especially the more combat-oriented ones). She would still be an interesting character, with reasonable DX and physical skills and a smattering of broader knowledge.

A version with a significantly higher point value would *have* to be the product of some kind of Triad attempt to produce a soldier or assassin (which could be a Secret in itself, or imply other disadvantages). This would imply higher attributes and maybe a few more advantages, possibly augmented by extra training after the Commonwealth realized what they'd caught. Of course, this could be partially balanced by a higher Duty and, probably, Enemies. Alternatively, simply raising her Wealth level a little would allow her a better selection of arms and armor.

FT Epsilon-4

This specialized strike force probably works best as a team, supported by Executive Decisions Incorporated (see p. TS94). However, removed from their employ, any one of these characters would make a formidable ally or adversary for most PC groups.

Julio Montera
300 points

New York cop turned mercenary sergeant. It isn't that big a career change, really.

Age 34; 5'11"; 160 lbs. An unremarkable-looking man of Hispanic descent, with a knack for talking to people.

"This one may come down to close quarters. This sort of job usually does."

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 13 [30]; **IQ** 14 [45]; **HT** 12 [20].
Speed 6.0; Move 6.
Dodge 7; Parry 9 (Tonfa/Wrestling).

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, EDI "Bhisti," see p. 58; 15 or less) [9]; Ally (Programmed, Wotatech Hugin, see p. 63; 15 or less) [9]; Charisma +1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Comfortable [10]; Contacts (EDI manager, skill 15; 12 or less; completely reliable) [12]; Cool [1]; Filter Lungs (Permanent lung cleaner nanomods) [5]; Fit [5]; Genefixed Human [0]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nanomods; Limitation: Affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; Less Sleep -1 [3]; Military Rank 1 [5]; Panimmunity 2 (Permanent Immune Machine nanomods) [5]; Patron (EDI; 12 or less) [50]; Reputation +2 (As a good sergeant, within EDI; 7 or less) [1]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4].

Disadvantages: Duty (To EDI; 12 or less) [-10]; Sense of Duty (To his unit) [-5].

Quirks: Enjoys travel; Polite about religion, and dislikes people who aren't; Pushes his team to improve their close-quarters skills; Slightly cynical about people generally; Unwinds by going for long walks alone. [-5]

Skills: Acrobatics-10 [1/2]; Architecture-12 [1/2]; Area Knowledge (New York City)-14 [1]; Armoury (Battlesuit)-12 [1/2]; Armoury (Rifles and Handguns)-13 [1]; Bard-13* [1/2]; Battlesuit-14 [1]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-15** [1]; Body Language-12 [1]; Boxing-13 [2]; Camouflage-13 [1/2]; Computer Operation-13 [1/2]; Criminology-13 [1]; Demolition-13 [1]; Detect Lies-12 [1]; Driving (Automobile)-11 [1/2]; Fast-Draw (Magazine)-13† [1/2]; Fast-Draw (Pistol)-13† [1/2]; Fast-Talk-12 [1/2]; First Aid-14 [1]; Forward Observer-12 [1/2]; Free Fall-12 [1]; Gambling-13 [1]; Guns (Light Automatic)-15** [1/2]; Guns (Missile)-14** [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)-17** [4]; Holdout-12 [1/2]; Interrogation-13 [1]; Intimidation-14 [2]; Law-11 [1/2]; Leadership-16* [4]; Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Warfare-13 [1]; Orienteering-12 [1/2]; Professional Skill (NYPD Law Enforcement)-14 [2]; Psychology-11 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-14 [1]; Speed-Load (Pistol)-13 [1]; Stealth-12 [1]; Strategy-12 [1]; Streetwise-13 [1]; Swimming-12 [1/2]; Tactics-15 [6]; Tonfa-12 [2]; Tournament Lore (Pistol Shooting)-13 [1/2]; Vacc Suit-12 [1/2]; Wrestling-12 [1].

* Includes bonus for Charisma.

** Includes bonus for IQ.

† Includes bonus for Combat Reflexes.

Languages: English (native)-14 [0]; Spanish-14 [2].

FT EPSILON-4 STANDARD EQUIPMENT

EDI provides members of their low-profile fire teams with an array of standard equipment. Note, however, that this material remains corporate property, and only equipment which company officers consider appropriate to the current task will be available. Employees may sometimes add personal purchases, but if it gets the team in trouble, that's a sacking offense – and really *stupid* behavior can get an employee thrown to local legal systems.

All EDI-issue weapons incorporate IFF interrogators, recognition pads (programmed for every member of the unit), and smartgrips. Armor incorporates IFF transponders; vacc suits and battlesuits incorporate hive packs, with one hex each of paramedic and repair crawler cyberswarms. (The latter are programmed to repair the suits; internal ducts permit the paramedic swarm access to the wearer.) Other swarms may be issued as appropriate to the mission. Clients being protected are usually loaned arachnowe

armgun, 4mm PDW, or assault pod if this can be concealed effectively. If melee combat seems possible, shock gloves and tonfas are also available. Specialists may carry microbot hives. For low-level riot or crowd-control work, soldiers may be issued either electrolasers or recoilless rifles loaded with tangler or tear gas rounds.

Low-Profile Vacuum Assignments: Nanoweave vacc suit (medium or heavy, depending how much physical activity is expected), with laser sensors and near-miss indicators, over arachnoweave, with matching helmet and life support pack with air tanks, and thruster packs if appropriate. Clamshell cuirasses may be added for "medium-risk" assignments; smartsuits are available if the mission commander can demonstrate need. Weapons are hard to conceal with vacc suits, but troops will usually either have two or three pistol-sized weapons in discreet pouches, or practice

combat situation (his Enhanced Time Sense might help there), and later he'd worry – a *lot* – if he wasn't sure he'd done the right thing.

On the other hand, given the clear objectives that he prefers, Danway likes to get the job done quickly and reliably. He believes in using appropriate levels of force – but no *less* than is appropriate.

FT Epsilon-4 Variations

FT Epsilon-4 was designed as a plausible but low-key mercenary fire team, with training and augmentations of a type and quality which a corporation such as EDI might provide. To reduce their point value, they'd probably have to be redefined as freelancers: eliminate the Patron, reduce their nanomods and Programmed Allies, and limit equipment to whatever a small outfit could muster (perhaps even what the individual characters can afford out of personal funds). Such a unit would probably have a tough time of it, looking for private security jobs and having to be careful not to bite off more than they could chew.

"Looks like a nice clear job. Just tell me the timings."

To *upgrade* the team, give them even more biomods and nanomods, and assume that intensive VR training can raise their DX, IQ, and skill levels to whatever their raised point budget can afford. Any of them could be PCs with some or all of the others as NPC Allies. Of course, high-intensity frontal assaults are always best left to cybershells; in a Fifth Wave force, human troops must find specialist, low-key roles. For an extreme variant, make FT Epsilon-4 into *ghosts* of troops who were killed in action, using whatever humanoid or vehicular cybershells the current mission demands.

EDI as a Patron

For player groups who want straightforward tactical combat adventures, with clear targets and good support, Executive Decisions Incorporated's mercenaries make a good choice. They are less likely to sit around bored than soldiers in national militaries, and while they expect military levels of discipline, they have a less cumbersome chain of command than some armies.

However, this setup also provides opportunities for ethical quandaries and moral ambiguities, if that's what the players enjoy. Being a high-profile transnational corporation, EDI can't indulge in too many dubious ventures, but when all's said and done, it's still a profit-driven mercenary company. It's unlikely to commit atrocities, but it may well walk away from situations where the right thing to do is to stay. If the PCs disobey such orders, they may be able to get the company to forgive them for the sake of good PR, but the GM shouldn't forget the bottom line when depicting company officers.

In game terms, as a Patron, EDI is a "very powerful" organization (arguably, it's actually even bigger than that, but only local offices are likely to help individual employees) which *doesn't* provide equipment for employees to use privately. Middle management will aid employees when they can, as a way of reinforcing loyalty, and other unit members can also help on occasion; frequency of appearance is "quite often" (12 or less). The net cost for a normal EDI employee is thus 50 points. (Senior or well-regarded EDI employees may receive the support of the full power of the company, or be aided more often, while new and unproven or annoying troops may get less help.) In return, it imposes a Duty; for most troops, this has a frequency of 12 or less, and so is worth -10 points.

(Note, incidentally, that dropping the Patron advantage, treating EDI as "just another employer," would reduce the members of FT Epsilon-4 to 250-point characters.)

WHY "LOW PROFILE FIRE TEAM"?

FT Epsilon-4 is a *fire team* – a combat unit, capable of engaging enemies in battle and destroying them. That's what "FT" stands for, although the company rarely uses the full term in public, for the sake of PR. However, the team is also labeled "low profile" – although only *some* of their missions merit this tag.

The team isn't really an optimized "pure combat" unit. In Fifth Wave armies, full-scale battlefield operations are (ideally) handled by RATS and other cybershells. Humans and bioroids, even with state-of-the-art biomods and battlesuits, are supposed to be limited to support roles.

However, EDI, being a security company rather than a national army, sometimes has to compromise. It takes on a lot of bodyguard missions and perimeter protection in civilian areas, and the odd hostage rescue task which requires careful infiltration of an area before the final assault. Its members also have to do a lot of talking to people, whether clients, "neutrals," or journalists, and even in 2100, humans tend to respond better to other humans than to machines – especially if the latter are combat cybershells bristling with weapons.

Units like FT Epsilon-4 are a compromise – the best small combat force that can still present a human face to the world. Members of such a unit may have to talk as well as shoot, so they should preferably rate at least average on sociability; this team isn't perfect in that regard, but they're not actually disastrous. Their standing orders are to divert all press and public interest to the company Memetics Department if possible, and if not, let Sergeant Montera do the talking.

SIMONE UNDERHILL
300 POINTS

A soldier and a thrill seeker with all the advantages money can buy – including a sniper rifle.

Age 22; 5'9"; 150 lbs. A dark-haired New Zealander, with Alpha Upgrade good looks and a quick if unconvincing smile.

ST 11/13 [10]; **DX** 15 [45]; **IQ** 12 [20]; **HT** 12 [10].
Speed 6.75; Move 6.
Dodge 7; Parry 7 (Karate).

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, EDI "Bhisti," see p. 58; 15 or less) [9]; Ally (Programmed, Wotatech Hugin, see p. 63; 15 or less) [9]; Alpha Upgrade [35]; Deep Sleeper [5]; Enhanced Time Sense (Permanent brain booster nanomods) [45]; Extra Fatigue +2 (Permanent respirocyte nanomods) [6]; Filter Lungs (Permanent lung cleaner nanomods) [5]; High Pain Threshold (No-shock glands; Limitations: Limited use, 4 per day, -20%; Nuisance effect, -1 DX and IQ when activated and for one hour afterward, -20%) [6]; Immunity to Disease (Permanent carcinophage nanomods; Limitation: Affects cancers instead of disease, -70%) [3]; Oxygen Storage (Permanent respirocyte nanomods) [14]; Patron (EDI; 12 or less) [50]; Slow Regeneration (Permanent DNA repair nanomods; Limitation: Only heals radiation, -60%) [4]; Status +1* [0]; Very Fit [15]; Wealthy [20].
* Free from Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Callous [-6]; Duty (To EDI; 12 or less) [-10]; Odious Personal Habits (Sarcastic) [-5]; Overconfidence [-10].

Quirks: Generally keeps her word (when she remembers); Intermittently generous to her friends; Physical thrill-seeker; Regards most uses of VR with casual contempt; Slightly impulsive. [-5]

Skills: Battlesuit-12 [1 1/2]*; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-16** [1/2]; Camouflage-13 [2]; Carousing-9† [1/2]; Climbing-15 [2]; Computer Operation-11 [1/2]; Driving (Automobile)-14 [1]; First Aid-12 [1]; Free Fall-13 [1/2];

Guns (Missile)-18** [2]; Guns (Rifle)-19* [4]; Karate-10 [0]‡; Karate Sport-13 [1]; Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Warfare-10 [1/2]; Parachuting-14 [1/2]; Piloting (Ultralight)-13 [1/2]; Piloting (Vertol)-14 [1]; Powerboat-13 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-12† [0]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-10† [1]; Skiing-12 [1/2]; Stealth-15 [2]; Tactics-8† [1]; Vacc Suit-11 [1].

* Bought up from Vacc Suit default.

** Includes bonus from IQ.

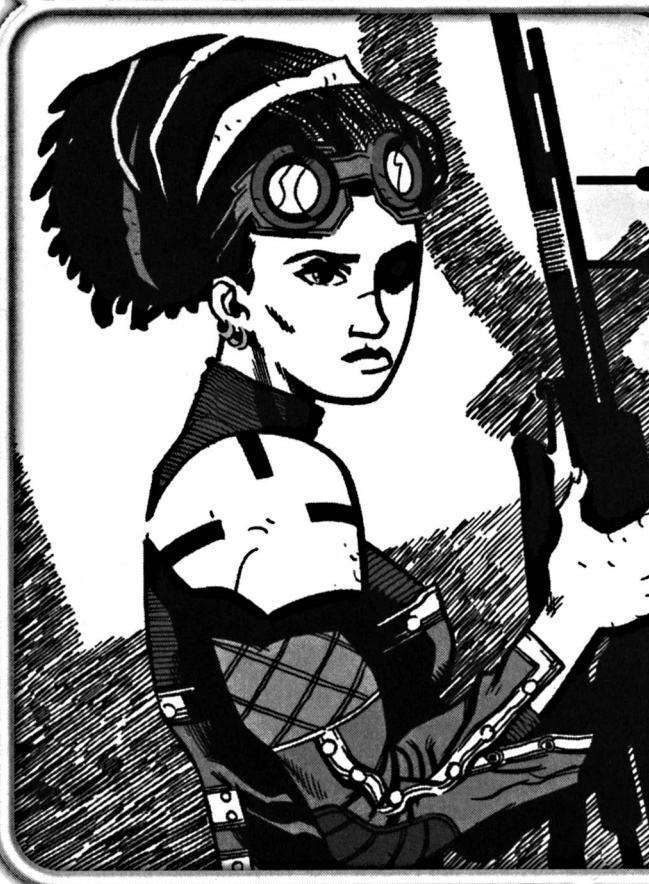
† Includes penalty from Callous. Savoir-Faire is free from Status.

‡ Default from Karate Sport.

Languages: English (native)-12 [0].

Equipment: See *FT Epsilon-4 Standard Equipment,* above. Underhill tends to be equipped for long-range combat, often taking any excuse to carry an AMR (with articulated harness) if she doesn't expect to have to run around much.

Software: Underhill often has a Tacnet program running in addition to her standard EDI-issue AI, to help her locate and prioritize potential targets.



Background

Simone Underhill comes from a prosperous New Zealand family who made sure that their child had critical genetic advantages. She grew up testing those advantages at every opportunity – or, as some of her teachers put it, stretching her luck and addicted to adrenaline. She tried a few unremarkable jobs, but eventually joined EDI.

Her enthusiasm impressed the recruiters, who rarely took someone without prior military experience or obviously applicable skills; they decided that her past poor discipline could be controlled. So far, they've been right, more or less, and Underhill has worked her way up through intensive virtual training (which bores her) and a series of low-key assignments (where she was being subtly watched and educated) to a posting as FT Epsilon-4's "ranged support" specialist.

The company have given her various nanomods to augment her effectiveness, adding to her Alpha Upgrade and the enhancements she'd bought for herself. She's a useful part of the team, and the other members have learned to put up with her sarcasm in exchange for her flashes of generosity and effectiveness in covering their backs. However, her good luck to date and innate advantages have made her dangerously cocky.

A more cinematic treatment of Underhill might well give her the Daredevil advantage; it would fit her style.

"There's a really great view up here. All those people down there think that they're safely in cover."

FT Epsilon-4 Team Relations

Most of the members of FT Epsilon-4 get on fairly well, in a professional sort of way; they don't have a huge amount in common except their job, but that's a big "except," and they do socialize when off duty. Faruq doesn't drink, but he tolerates the others' drinking to relax, with the odd cynical remark about the effects. In action, they're all business, especially if Montera is doing his job.

The one partial exception is Underhill. Her teammates realize that she's increasingly inclined to push her luck too far, and they haven't yet found a way to restrain her effectively. If this ever leads to *serious* problems, they might cover for her, or they might leave her to get out of her own mess, depending on the details.

Motivations

Underhill's job title rather obviously translates as "sniper," and people who know her find her casual ease with the role slightly worrying. She's by no means a sociopath; she can tell right from wrong, and takes no pleasure in killing for its own sake, but she's not terribly long on empathy either. In her way of thinking, stuff happens, and if

For one thing, they have a rational concern with the bottom line. That's not to say that they'll back off as soon as their property is threatened – after all, morale and damage to their reputation also factor into their calculations – but they don't take jobs that don't pay, and they *always* consider their corporate image. EDI troopers are mercenaries, not patriots or fanatics; they aren't especially keen to die for any cause. On the other hand, like smart armies throughout history, EDI makes sure that its soldiers have a lot of mutual loyalty, and they might risk a lot for each other or the honor of the team.

The company tries hard to recover employees who are taken prisoner. This might involve paying a ransom, if that looks safe and certain; on the other hand, the company is *very* good at hostage rescues, and doesn't pull any punches when that's the mission. Conversely, if EDI troops take PCs prisoner, they'll play by the book . . . unless the PCs give them grounds for real personal hostility.

EDI has a number of standard tactical doctrines, but also knows about the dangers of predictability. Its tactical AIs have minor randomizing processes built in, and its officers always try to work up multiple plans in any situation, rather than sticking to just one page of the book.

HASSAN FARUQ

work, and sees what he does as the proper use of his God-given talents.

He was brought up a Muslim, and the teaching stuck; he's a genuine believer, if not as devout as he'd like. The company provides him with a *halal* diet, and he made the *hajj* pilgrimage once while on leave. The rules of his faith permit him to defer things like daily prayers if the situation is urgent, and a small program on his virtual interface tracks the direction of Mecca.

His upbringing has also left him with a distrust of bioshells, which he sees as blasphemous; he'll remain polite to such entities when directly ordered, but he'll be stony-faced at best. On the other hand, he has a tolerant fascination with the idea of emergent intelligences, despite a shortage of first-hand experience. Also, he has an unusually strong sense of privacy for his era; he will *not* use his recon equipment to spy on people without good reason, and he becomes embarrassed if he learns too much about other people's private lives, or if other people learn things he considers personal about himself. This isn't "body modesty," though; as a soldier, he's used to shared washing facilities.

Emergency Recoveries Inc.

A high-powered game may use this firm as a springboard for adventure; a lower-powered game may hire these NPCs to help them untangle a mystery.

Colonel Walker
500 points

Old soldiers never die. Sometimes, they get themselves *uploaded*.

Age 77 (uploaded 4 years ago); 5' wide; 150 lbs. A cyberdoc (p. TS122), finished in a chameleon coating which is pale metallic gray when switched off. Walker's avatar is an idealized version of herself in early middle age – a broad-shouldered black woman with shoulder-length hair held back by a steel clip.

"Going in fast and hard is probably best. But we need to know their motives first."

ST 13 [0]; **DX** 10 [0]; **IQ** 15 [60]; **HT** 12/14 [0].
Speed 5.5; Move 5.
Dodge 5.

Advantages: Contacts (Army Medical Corps Major, skill 18; 12 or less) [6]; Cool [1]; Courtesy Rank 6 [6]; Cyberdoc (With Complexity-8 genius microframe) [400]; Very Wealthy [30]; Ghost Mind Emulation [17]; Status +1* [0].
* Free from Very Wealthy.

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Flashbacks [-5]; Intolerance (Nano-socialists) [-5]; Nosy [-1]; Sense of Duty (Country and teammates) [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; Weak Will -2 [-16].

Quirks: Law-abiding (at least within U.S. law); Likes dealing with SAIs; Slow to notice jokes; Tries to do what's best for her friends or country in the long term; Worries about talking or seeming too much "like an old person." [-5]

Skills: Administration-14 [1]; Area Knowledge (Pacific Rim)-14 [1/2]; Computer Operation-14 [1/2]; Diagnosis-13 [1]; Diplomacy-13** [1/2]; Driving (Automobile)-8 [1/2]; Gunner (Railgun)-10* [1/2]; Guns (Missile)-12* [1]; Guns (Light Automatic)-11* [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)-11* [1/2]; History-12 [1/2]; Intelligence Analysis-14 [2]; Leadership-15** [1]; Memetics-11 [1/2]; Nuclear-Biological-Chemical Warfare-15 [2]; Physician-15 [4]; Physiology-13 [2]; Psychology-13** [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-17† [0]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-16 [2]; Strategy-12 [1/2]; Surgery-13 [2]; Tactics-13 [1]; Teaching-15** [1]; Traffic Analysis-12 [1/2]; Writing-13 [1/2].
* Includes bonus for IQ.
** Includes bonus for Memetics.
† Free from Status.

Languages: English (native)-15 [0]; French-13 [1/2]; Spanish-14 [1].

Equipment: Assault Pod w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (3 lbs., $1,390); Chameleon coating on cybershell ($1,000); Detachable fitment w/multiview optics and 4 levels of Televiewer (1.5 lbs., $1,200); Handheld biometric scanner (1 lb., $1,000); IFF transponder (built into cybershell: $100); Micro-missile pod w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (0.62 lbs., $1,080); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); Spare 15mm missile ammunition: 40 rounds of solid and 20 each of HEMP, SEFOP, and Tangler (10 lbs., $532); Spare 4mm ammunition: 200 rounds each of homing solid, homing APS, gestalt solid, and gestalt APS (4.48 lbs., $76.80); Additional missiles issued to "Jaculi" (see p. 52) ($266); Spare cash: $87,913.20.

Software (installed on internal computer): 3D social telepresence ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skills sets: Cantonese-14, German-14, Italian-14, Japanese-14, Mandarin-14, Thai-14 ($1,200); Mugshot ($100); Lifelike neural VR program ($4,000); Other skill sets: Accounting-13, Area Knowledge (Earth)-15, Area Knowledge (LEO)-15, Area Knowledge (USA)-15, Computer Programming-13, Electronics Operation (Communications)-14, Law-13, Merchant-14, Piloting (Vertol)-13, Research-14 ($2,000); Tacnet ($1,000); Teleoperation (direct control) ($5,000); VR database (lifelike customized mansion, customized avatar, 10 assorted standard avatars for "visitors") ($10,030); VR manager ($500). For software installed on "Jaculi," see p. 52 ($850).

Background

Deborah Walker was born in Ohio in 2022. Smart and capable, she qualified as a doctor before joining the U.S. Army, where she had a fairly distinguished, if inconspicuous, career. Although she spent most of her decades in the medical service, she also received some staff postings. She was heavily involved in the research programs which ensured that the army made full use of emerging transhuman technologies.

By the time she retired, she'd developed a thoroughly posthumanist mindset. As her body began to let her down, despite all the advanced medical treatments, she decided that uploading was a rational and acceptable solution. This was largely successful, although the process has taken the edge off some of her older or most advanced skills, and the program has trouble integrating some of her extensive memories, leading to a dangerous "flashback" problem.

The Walker Residences

Colonel Walker's house is in the Wyoming Rockies. From the outside, it appears to be a small, elegant 20th-century modernist design, with large panoramic windows; in fact, it has a substantial basement, and the space is largely taken up by computer and medical facilities. However, there's also accommodation for human guests and plenty of garage space for air cars. Access for wheeled vehicles involves a long and bumpy drive.

But when Walker talks about her "home," she often means her *virtual* mansion. This is a complex maze of rooms, severely but elegantly decorated, and includes a courtyard garden, with fountains, inspired by old Spanish designs.

Her ghost was installed in a powerful computer inside a cyberdoc shell. This might seem like a strange choice, but Walker planned to continue with medical work, and she doesn't perceive her form as that of the cybershell, but as her high-resolution, custom-coded digital avatar, living in a VR mansion. She "operates" the cyberdoc primarily through a VR "control system," although some of the controls are linked into her brain emulation. (This does mean that it doesn't respond to "real world" events as fast as her human body did at its best.)

After acclimatizing to her new state, Walker spent some time playing tourist around Earth-Luna space while she decided what to do next. She met Klaus Godot (p. 50), whom she took at first for a fellow ghost. The pair became friends, and Godot, after an evening of experimentation with digital-emulation alcohol, told her his secret. The next morning, she invited him to join her in going into business.

The company she created, Emergency Recoveries Inc., has only existed for a little over a year, but has built up a modest reputation for a specialized and active sort of consultancy work and problem-solving. Walker is building a new life, though she's not sure exactly where she wants to go next.

Walker leaves operation of cybershell resources, at home or while on missions, to Godot. (She was a senior officer – she's used to delegating.) In the event of possible danger, she can mount a missile or assault pod on one of her cyberdoc shell's limbs.

Motivations

Colonel Walker is a mind in search of something – some goal, some cause – which will save her intellect from ossifying. She's worried that she left uploading too late, or that it didn't work well enough, and that she's lost some of her mental edge. Secretly, she also remembers the mockery of the elderly which she's seen from numerous generations of the young. She wants a new, valuable life that will keep her alert, sane, and interested.

The irony is that she *does* have some "old soldier" mannerisms; she's somewhat humorless, stubborn, and distrusts the "possible enemies" she spent years planning to deal with. At the same time, her high-tech career has left her with some unusually progressive attitudes, and her quest for stimulation can make her downright irritating. She can seem like a contradiction to people who don't know her well.

She isn't deficient in military patriotism, but she sees the world changing; she isn't sure whether her country should seek to change with it, or whether those changes will make the land she loves unrecognizable. She'd never do anything that would damage America. For now, she doesn't reckon it's at any serious risk of harm, and she's decided that it's okay to stand back and see what happens to it while she looks to her own concerns.

Variations

It's difficult to change Walker very radically while preserving the same character concept, although she could certainly have chosen to use a different type of cybershell – a cyberdoll, or even a bushbot. She could also have slightly better attributes and any number of Programmed Allies, Vessels, etc.

KLAUS GODOT
500 POINTS

An AI with an embarrassing secret and a lot of mechanical friends.

Age 5 (as a shadow; based on what was then a 36-year-old mind); 6'1"; 180 lbs. A typically attractive custom cyberdoll, with a slight "family" resemblance to Charles Godwin – "clean-shaven," with medium brown hair and green eyes.

ST 14 [0]; **DX** 12 [20]; **IQ** 12 [30]; **HT** 12/15 [0].
Speed 6.0; Move 6.
Dodge 6.

Advantages: Ally (Programmed, enhanced Clockwork Souls "Footman," see p. 56; 15 or less) [60]; Ally (Programmed, Tenzan THI-200bis, see p. 62; 15 or less) [75]; Ally Group (Programmed, 5 Newshawk/7-6s, see p. 61; 15 or less) [12]; Citizen SAI-7 Shadow Mind Emulation [97]; Comfortable [10]; Cyberdoll (Clockwork Souls Custom, with Complexity-7 compact microframe) [182]; Money (+3 months' income as a computer programmer, $21,000) [3]; Patron (Charles Godwin; 12 or less) [30].

Disadvantages: Careful [-1]; Indecisive [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Sarcastic) [-5]; Proud [-1]; Secret ("Involuntary xox") [-10]; Shyness [-5]; Undiscriminating [-1].

Quirks: Curious about technological novelties; Feels that he doesn't understand people well enough; Forever investigating weird virtual food and drink datasets; Hates not having at least one extra cybershell under control at any time; Strongly dislikes industrial spies. [-5]

Skills: Artificial Intelligence-11 [2]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13* [1/2]; Camouflage-11 [1/2]; Computer Hacking-11** [1/2]; Cryptology-9 [1/2]; Computer Programming-14* [2]; Electronics (Computers)-10 [1]; Electronics (Robots)-9 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Robots)-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Computers)-11 [1]; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-11 [1]; Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-11 [1]; Guns (Pistol)-13* [1/2]; Mathematics-12** [1/2]; Mechanic (Robotics)-12 [2]; Mechanic (Microtechnology)-10 [1/2]; Merchant-9† [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-11 [1/2]; Scrounging-11 [1/2]; Stealth-10 [1/2]; Tactics-9 [1/2].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

** Includes bonus for Mathematical Ability.

† Includes penalty for Shyness.

Languages: English (native)-12 [0]; Spanish-10 [1/2].

Equipment: Arachnoweave suit (2.5 lbs., $200); Chemscanner (2 lbs., $1,000); Electrolaser pistol w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (may be given to "Footman" cybershell: 1 lb., $1,900); Electronic lockpick (1.5 lbs., $750); IFF transponder (built into cyber-

shell: $100); Laser listening device (6 lbs., $600); Light infantry helmet (1.5 lbs., $30); Pistol (4mm) w/IFF interrogator, recognition pad, and smartgrip (1.5 lbs., $1,260), plus 100 rounds of homing solid ammunition (0.56 lbs., $8); Portable electronics tool kit (10 lbs., $900); Portable mechanic tool kit (20 lbs., $600); Short-range lasercom (1.3 lbs., $312); "Sunglasses" w/multiview optics (0.75 lbs., $600); Spare cash: $3,280.

Software *Installed on internal computer:* 3D social telepresence ($200); Customized VR avatar ($10); Deluxe neural VR program ($500); HUD targeting ($250); Language skills sets: Cantonese-12, German-12, Japanese-12, Mandarin-12 ($200); Mugshot ($100); Other skill sets: Law-11, Piloting (Vertol)-11, Research-13 ($200); Teleoperation (Direct control) ($5,000). *Installed on other cybershells:* 3 copies of Teleoperation (Direct control), one in each of "Footman," THI-200bis, and one Newshawk ($15,000).

Emergency Recoveries Inc. in Action

The company created and owned by Colonel Walker, which employs Godot and Jaculi, hires out to perform medical and other work in complicated circumstances. It's not exactly a mercenary unit – there are far more formidable combatants for hire – but it may assist in combat situations, and it sometimes subcontracts to mercenaries who anticipate a need for specialist medical support. (For example, the team may be called in during hostage rescues in case the hostages are injured, or it may aid in dealing with new bioweapons.) With Walker's medical and military knowledge and Godot's technological skills and cybershell remotes (including Jaculi), the team is quite effective.

Walker usually handles business negotiations, but Godot occasionally acts as the public face for the company when a physical presence is required, despite all his problems in dealing with strangers; a cyberdoll can be less *unnerving* than a cyberdoc. Jaculi, of course, plays the dumb robot, and is often most effective when completely unseen. In action, Walker tends to hold back, in case her flashbacks cause problems, while Godot deploys his cybershells.

"Mmm-hmmm. This is tricky. What should we do, Colonel?"

Background

Charles Godwin is a very distinguished, if slightly eccentric, American AI researcher whose foibles include using a sapient shadow emulation of his own mind as a research assistant. Unfortunately, he once left a spectacular flaw in his data security; an opportunist industrial spy was able to steal a copy of the shadow's emergency backup, with a view to exploiting its abilities. The thief was apprehended a few months later, but by then, the shadow's personality had diverged significantly; it had to be legally classed as an individual. However, by some definitions it was technically a xox, which led to further complications.

Being a xox isn't generally illegal in countries with any concept of civil rights; it's the act of *making* one that's banned. If the xoxing was voluntary on the part of the digital mind, that makes the xox a legitimate target in many eyes and quite a few jurisdictions. An involuntary xox is usually considered legally innocent, but faces severe social problems, given widespread prejudice.

Fortunately for this AI, Godwin himself took an interest in the case. He paid for it to receive some essential therapy and training, and brought in his lawyers. Government representatives, rather relieved that the problem could be solved without an incendiary court case, agreed that the whole business should be kept out of the public eye. The AI is legally classified as Godwin' ward when within the United States, but he grants it nearly total freedom.

Godwin set the AI up with adequate funds and a cybershell body. It adopted a name based on the one it still regards as its own, and decided that its best first move was to get away to someplace where it would be even less likely to suffer problems. "Godot" met Deborah Walker while both were visiting a Lagrange Point station, and he accepted her offer of a business partnership largely because she could provide a safe base. However, he finds the work interesting, too. In public, he's usually taken for a ghost mind emulation; hence, he doesn't have a Social Stigma, although he'd gain one if his Secret was exposed.

Godot shares some (though not all) of his "parent's" technological flair, and controls the company's cybershell resources. He has a habit of using cybershells as remote-operated puppets, while keeping his own body well out of the way; his voice and attention can leap unnervingly from shell to shell. He's also learned some useful skills from Walker.

He and Godwin have tinkered extensively with the "Footman" cyberdoll he controls, giving it DX 12 and the skills Judo-12 and Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-13, while his Tenzan THI-200bis has the "Fuel Cell/Electric Motor" and "Gas Turbines" specializations of Mechanic. At some point, the company will probably invest in some cyberswarms for him to operate; he already has the necessary skills.

Motivations

Klaus Godot is in denial – he's programmed that way. A shadow can't afford to admit that it isn't the human being on which it's modeled, or that its memories are incomplete, because that would eventually send it into psychosis. Hence, while Godot knows the truth intellectually, he thinks and acts like a "real" person who's stuck in a bizarre situation and making the best of it. To add to his troubles, the industrial spy attempted rather clumsily to "condition" him, and as a result, despite the therapy, he's still nervous and poor at making decisions. On top of all this, he has Godwin' tendency to academic arrogance.

Taking up Walker's invitation to go into business was thus a displacement activity, or at least an attempt to distract himself.

It also gives a structure to his life and a source of motivation. He leaves important decisions to Walker as much as possible.

Variations

Godot could easily be given better attributes and skills and fewer disadvantages; that would just mean that he was a better copy of Godwin, or that the therapy was more successful. He could also easily have many more Programmed Allies. To "downgrade" him, remove some of the Programmed Allies, or change the cyberdoll shell to a bioshell.

"Jaculi" 500 points

It's just a robot snake. The weird jokes it tells don't mean anything. Really.

Age 3 (1 year since emergence; AI is based on older code); 7' long; 60 lbs. A standard Combat Naga (p. TS124), with a chameleon coating which turns dull gray when inactive. Jaculi's VR avatar is a man-sized, shimmering, silver metallic hooded cobra.

ST 10 [0]; **DX** 13 [0]; **IQ** 10 [10]; **HT** 12 [0].
Speed 6.25; Move 6*.
Dodge 7.
* Move is 8 in hoop configuration.

Advantages: Combat Naga [400]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Composed (replaces Cool in SAI template) [4]; Fearlessness +3 [6]; SAI-7 Emergent Intelligence [125]; Strong Will +2 [8].

Disadvantages: Broad-Minded [-1]; Dead Broke [-25]; Dull [-1]; Low Empathy [-15]; Reprogrammable Duty [-25]; Secret (Full SAI "emerged" from LAI) [-20].

Quirks: Asks its teammates for explanations of overheard human conversations; Developing a weird sense of verbal humor; Disdainful of ordinary LAIs. [-3]

Skills: Acting ("Playing dumb")-8/14 [1]; Beam Weapons (Electrolaser)-15* [2]; Camouflage-11 [2]; Climbing-18**

[2]; Demolition-8 [1/2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-10 [2]; Guns (Missiles)-16* [4]; Intimidation-9 [1]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-9 [1/2]; Shadowing-10 [2]; Stealth-13 [2]; Tactics-9 [2].

* Includes bonus for IQ.

** Includes bonus for Flexibility.

Languages: English (native)-10 [0]; Spanish-9 [1].

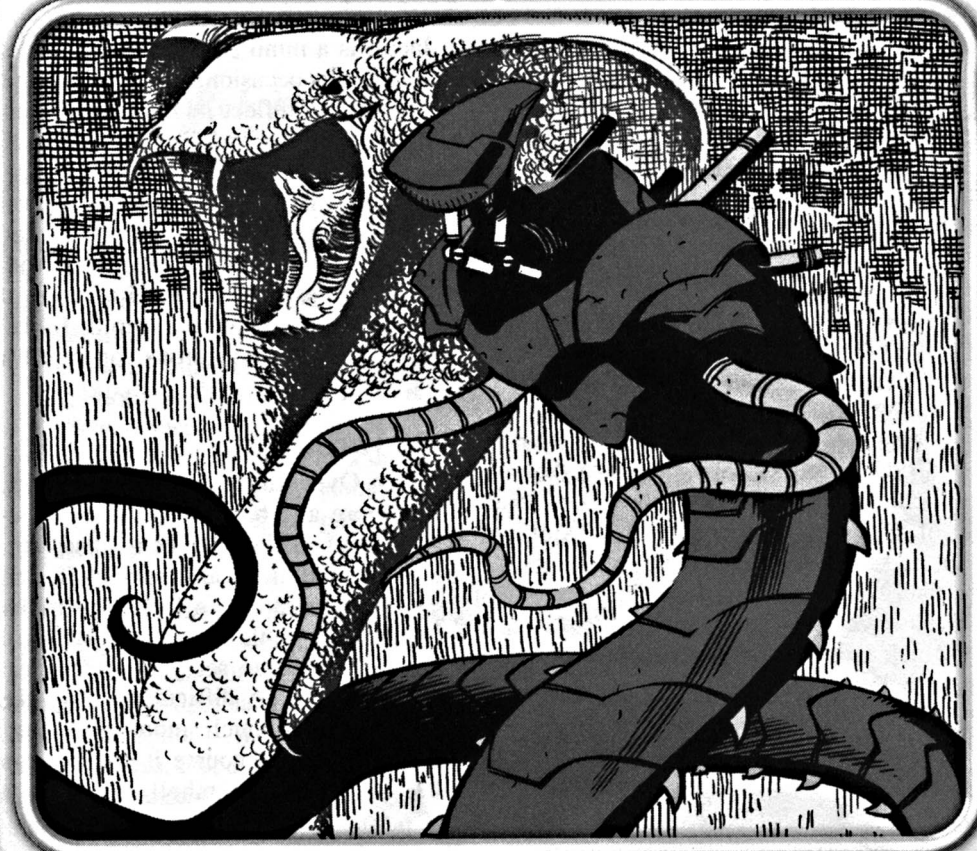
Equipment (purchased by Colonel Walker): Spare 15mm missiles: 20 solid, 10 each HEMP, SEFOP, and Tangler (5 lbs., $266).

Software (purchased by Colonel Walker, installed on internal computer): 3D social telepresence ($200); HUD targeting ($250); Language skills sets: Cantonese-13, German-13, Mandarin-13 ($300); Mugshot ($100).

Background

Officially, and as far as the world knows, the AI-operated cybershell known as "Jaculi" is an asset of Emergency Recoveries Incorporated. It has an LAI-7 mind and properly licensed internal weapons systems, and it is used for legitimate purposes related to the company's activities. It's not the sort of thing that any civilian could own, but companies can obtain permits for such things if they meet the right requirements.

Secretly, Jaculi is a huge worry and potential embarrassment for Walker and Godot – possibly a great danger, but also a very useful asset and something of a friend. It started out as a LAI, albeit a fairly advanced design supplied by Godot's "parent," Charles Godwin . . . but the pair have recently realized that it's developing into something more. Thanks to efforts to increase its operational flexibility, it's moving from low to full sapience. That makes it an emergent intelligence, which in turn would make it, in many eyes, a public menace. However, it's smart, and as far as the pair can tell, safe.



This development is clearly partly due to the somewhat experimental design of the original LAI, and partly to tinkering by Godot along the way, but it may also be a matter of serendipity. Godot doubts that he could repeat the development if he tried, and he doesn't believe that Godwin knew how the design was likely to evolve. Walker, however, is less certain. She doesn't *violently* distrust Godwin, but the man strikes her as odd and manipulative; she wouldn't be too surprised if Jaculi was some kind of long-shot experiment.

The *big* problem is that the public might not see things the same way at all. Godot is a xox of sorts himself, and the idea of a xox secretly raising a LAI to sapience is the stuff of paranoid thrillers. Both he and Walker might be attacked, even lynched, if word got out. Godot was cautious enough about letting Walker in on this secret, although it was hard to keep a secret from the Colonel.

So, for now, the trio are keeping quiet. Fortunately, Jaculi itself has turned out to be smart enough to play dumb and to talk like an LAI in public. In truth, it's less evidently self-aware than most SAIs; some people would see it as just a smart LAI, even now. But, one day, the trio may have to deal with this issue properly. It's even possible that they'll have to seek sanctuary in a transhumanist enclave.

"You keep talking about easy jobs. Is that taking our ease, or easing our way in?"

Jaculi's built-in weaponry is the equivalent of a police armgun, with an electro-laser and a 15mm missile pod. Occasionally, when visiting areas with restrictive weapons laws, this has to be disabled and closed off, but even in those places, this machine is versatile and capable enough to be very useful.

Motivations

Jaculi is a mind still in the process of formation. Its occasional attempts at puns and wordplay reflect its developing verbal "model of the world" and its efforts to comprehend the subtleties of language. Godot is hoping that such growth will eventually cause it to develop a greater sense of empathy with other sapient minds. Its sense of superiority over "stupid LAIs" suggests a dangerous capacity for solipsism.

Variations

Over time, Jaculi may learn more and better skills and (hopefully) shed or reduce its disadvantages. It might also have its IQ and DX trained up a little. A simpler version could simply be a standard SAI, with no secret "emergence." It would be difficult to vary the character much more than this, although of course it could use a different cybershell, such as a polypede or RATS.

Secrets

Although these three last characters can be used as a fairly straightforward adventuring team, there's also a dark long-term plot in their background. The big question, of course, is how much Godwin deliberately set up. At the very least, Jaculi's emergence may be a deliberate result of his manipulations, with Godot and Walker as sacrificial pawns if the experiment goes wrong. For a *really* paranoid plot, Godwin may even have somehow arranged the "abduction" which led to the creation of Godot as a separate being, in order to see how a shadow develops if given greater freedom. It's highly unlikely, though not impossible, that Walker was in on such a plot.

OFF-THE-SHELF ALLIES

This section describes the Programmed Allies associated with the characters detailed earlier in this book. Most are off-the-shelf products in ***Transhuman Space***, available to any starting PC.

Remember that any computer running an AI can also have a library of skill sets. Furthermore, any AI can improve its skills through training and experience. In ***GURPS*** terms, most of the systems described here can add a couple of points in extra skills without changing their points costs as Allies.

Cashalton "Robert" 61-T
23 points

Attributes: ST – [–]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 12 [0]; HT 12 [0].

Advantages: NAI-8 [10].

Disadvantages: Mainframe [-9].

Skills: Astrogation-12 [2]; Electronics Operation (Communications)-12 [2]; Gunner (Beams)-11 [1]; Mechanic-11* [1]; Piloting-13* [16].

* Select specialty appropriate to the spacecraft in which the system is installed.

Cost: $6,200. (This does *not* include the cost of the computer; this program runs on a ship's bridge systems.)

This is a competent but inflexible system typical of those installed on *backup* computers for spacecraft. It's the conceptual descendant of a 20th-century autopilot – it can keep the craft on course, sound an alarm if anything unexpected occurs, and even get out of minor trouble while sending out distress signals. It isn't supposed to try to take control if anyone else is still functional. This model is also capable of operating an anti-meteor laser and monitoring routine maintenance work.

All Cashalton Softsys spacecraft AIs are called "Robert," for reasons known only to the company's deceased founder. Most are renamed by crews within minutes of installation.

Variations: Some operators prefer LAIs with similar training, feeling that higher initiative and flexibility increases safety levels despite the slightly lower efficiency, and better personality emulation reduces crew boredom. (For an example, take the above, replace the NAI with an LAI-8, and reduce IQ and all skills except Piloting by 1. This version costs 73 points and $22,200, not including the computer.) LAI "autopilots" usually learn several new skills, if only through social interaction; some have reputations as poker or mah jongg players.

Gamers using the first printing of ***Transhuman Space*** should note that prices of trained AIs have been modified by errata. The correct cost for extra training is $100 per character point of advantages or skills beyond the AI's model templates, and $800 (NAI), $6,000 (LAI), or $30,000 (SAI) per added character point spent on DX and IQ.

Charlesfoster-M

98 points

Attributes: ST – [–]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12/1 [0].

Advantages: LAI-7 [50].

Disadvantages: Wearable Virtual Interface (DVI, small genius computer) [-1].

Skills: Accounting-15* [4]; Administration-13 [8]; Law (Company/tax law)-9/15 [4]; Memetics-11 [12]; Merchant-12**† [10]; Research-11 [4]; Savoir-Faire-7† [1]; Survival (Desert)-9 [1]; Survival (Jungle)-9 [1]; Tactics-10 [4].

* Includes bonus for Mathematical Ability.

** Includes bonus for Memetics.

† Includes penalty for Low Empathy.

Cost: $55,400.

The Charlesfoster series of AIs is popular among buyers who've acquired wealth through inheritance, luck, or talent . . . without also acquiring the skills required to keep it. This release (also known as the CF-3.1) is considered the most bug-free. In addition to business skills, it's supposed to be capable of helping its wearer out of physical danger, aiding with information searches, and monitoring for memetic manipulations. But it's mostly designed to perform accounting and *routine* financial activities. Major investment advice, portfolio management, etc., are better handled by human or static AI consultants.

Variations: A surprising number of purchasers run "Charlesfoster" AIs on Virtual Interface Implants (88 points, $96,900). Stories of aging plutocrats installing similar programs on *puppet* implants in feckless offspring are probably just urban legends.

Clockwork Souls "Footman"

223 points

Attributes: ST 14 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [0]; HT 12/15 [0].

Advantages: Cyberdoll (Small computer) [170]; LAI-6 [40].

AI Skill Levels

Many of these AIs have skill levels which may appear too low to be useful. There are, however, good reasons for this.

Even a low skill level can be useful in routine, low-stress operations. A routine task may receive a skill bonus of +5, or even +10 – if a roll is required at all – and the consequences of failure are rarely catastrophic. For a comparison: in 2002, many people probably have Driving at only level 8 or so. This gets them safely to and from work, although they can't handle emergencies very well. An AI can help fill in a tax form neatly with Accountancy-8, or suggest the correct fork to use at a formal dinner with Savoir-Faire-8. People who trust such low-level programs with complex problems are foolish, and indeed are a stock subject for comedy in 2100.

A low level of skill may imply a basic understanding of a subject and its jargon, even if the individual can't perform actual tasks very well. This can be useful when doing research or acting as an observer. A human technician whose AI has a low Mechanic skill but a good level of Research can trust it to perform a Web search for data on the task at hand, while a soldier whose battlesuit computer has basic Tactics knowledge can leave it to report to HQ that he's conducting a sweep or an ambush, while he gets on with the job.

Finally, these skills may represent an emergency feature or "luxury extra" installed by the vendor. An implant with a low level of Survival skill may never be called upon to use it – but if its owner gets lost in the desert, it *may,* with luck, keep him alive by suggesting routine measures until a search party shows up. Of course, it's very unwise to trust the low-cost skills included in off-the-shelf AIs with one's life on any sort of regular basis.

If characters want AIs with higher skills, they can always train them up, at extra points cost, or, more simply, buy skill sets for cash. (However, in the latter case, remember that use of skill sets in high stress situations takes a -3 penalty; hence, purchased skill sets may not always be much better for adventurers than lower, trained skills.)

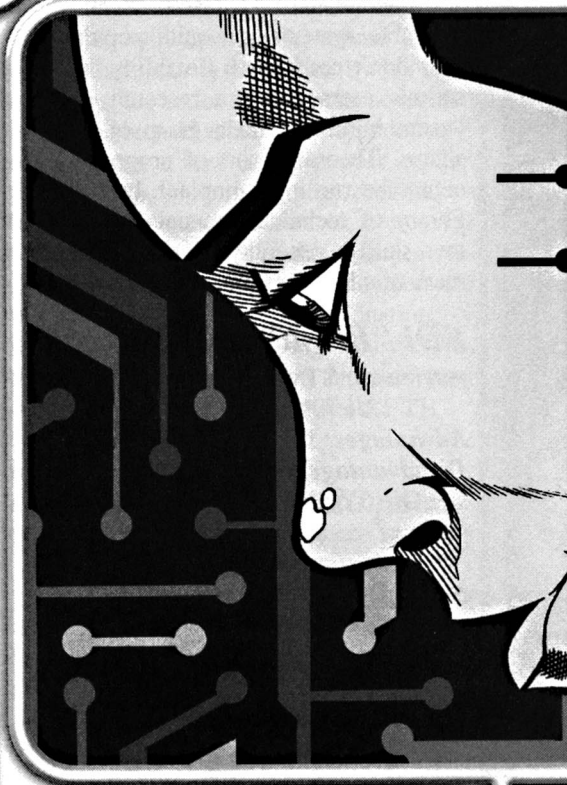
Skills: Beverage-Making-11 [4]; Cooking-9 [1]; First Aid-11 [4]; Savoir-Faire (Servant)-11 [4].
Cost: $153,300.

The "Footman" ("Housekeeper" in female configuration) is a basic Cyberdoll personal servant. It's under-skilled and expensive, and thus a wonderful display of conspicuous consumption – anyway, it can always be taught additional skills. Many owners – especially uploaded ghosts – employ their "servants" as teleoperated "puppets" on occasion.

Variations: Predictably, the makers discreetly offer versions with added Sex Appeal and Erotic Art skills. A compact microframe computer, enabling a sapient digital mind to use the cybershell as a Vessel, adds $18,000 to the cost; a custom cybershell adds $15,000 and 12 points.

Cortez-Ghao "Adroit"
47 points

Attributes: ST – [–]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [0]; HT 12/1 [0].
Advantages: LAI-6 [40].



Purchased AI Capabilities

In theory, ***Transhuman Space*** AIs, like people, can have any IQ or skill level. This may lead players to seek to acquire programmed allies of extraordinary (and game-distorting) ability. However, in practice, it's *very* rare to find a program with an IQ more than 3 to 5 over its "racial" template, or skills above "ordinary expert" levels.

There are several reasons for this. First, AIs are *already* as optimized as available programming techniques permit; no one bothers using inferior designs of the same complexity. "Naturally" higher IQs are the product of lucky, unrepeatable interactions between design and "upbringing." And, although IQ is to some extent trainable, there are limits. For skills, the problem is finding programmer/teachers who themselves possess even higher skill levels, or developing effective "self-training" systems. Furthermore, training may take a long time; some AI models haven't been around long enough to train to superhuman levels.

GMs can enforce these limits in various ways. Players can be told that a "super AI" they want just isn't on the market, or that it carries a surcharge in the millions, or that it comes with "mystery disadvantages." The last can take several forms; mental disadvantage caused by weird coding and training are one option, as are Enemies (industrial spies or paranoid biochauvinists).

Marwari "Daniel Boone" Meme Miner — *49 points*

Attributes: ST – [–]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [0]; HT 12 [0].

Advantages: LAI-7 [50]; Language Talent +4 [8].

Disadvantages: Microframe [-44].

Skills: Accounting-13* [1]; Computer Operation-15 [4]; Law-8 [1]; Memetics-11 [12]; Merchant-7** [1]; Psychology-7** [2]; Research-15 [12].

* Includes bonus for Mathematical Ability.

** Includes bonus for Memetics and penalty for Low Empathy.

Languages: Cantonese-12 [1/2]; English (native)-14 [0]; French-12 [1/2]; German-12 [1/2]; Hindi-12 [1/2].

Cost: $24,300.

"Your personal pioneer on the data frontier!"

Marwari Digital's software arm sells licensed copies of the program which has won several data extraction races and meme mining contests under their sponsorship. Despite some rumors about the fairness of these competitions, and occasional, unproven suggestions of bias in its recommendations, most purchasers are reasonably happy with it. The LAI has training not only in locating information on the Web and in analyzing corporate and human behavior, but also in memetic theory. This enables it both to analyze data and to screen incoming flows for memetic assaults. Whether it can match the ingenuity and skill of the world's corporations, ideologies, and political parties is doubtful, but users who are merely cautious (as opposed to paranoid) assume that it will suffice.

This version runs on a desktop box permanently wired into the Web. It can "cache" large volumes of data locally for later analysis. It can also contact a user through the Web, then be used to monitor a data flow to that user's worn or implanted systems (at some cost in flow rate). See p. 59 for the reasons for its fixed language selections.

Variations: Running this program on more powerful computers gives the advantage of being able to run more and better skill sets (such as extra languages) in parallel, and a *huge* cache. It can also be installed in a worn or implanted computer, but this restricts its Web access somewhat; most owners who actually *need* this kind of analytical power find that it's better to leave their "research assistant" at home.

GMs can make the rumors of subterfuge in the Boone's design *true*. This could represent anything from a quirk ("Mild bias toward Marwari products") to a large Secret ("Implants insidious memes in its user and every computer it can access") facilitated by extra, undocumented skills (Computer Hacking, Cryptanalysis, maybe even Brain Hacking). This would be *very* unfair to players who pay points for the AI as a Programmed Ally . . .

Newshawk/7-6 *24 points*

Attributes: ST 2 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [0]; HT 11/3 [0].

Advantages: Buzzbot (Tiny computer) [18]; Parabolic Hearing 2 [8]; additional Telescopic Vision +2 [12].

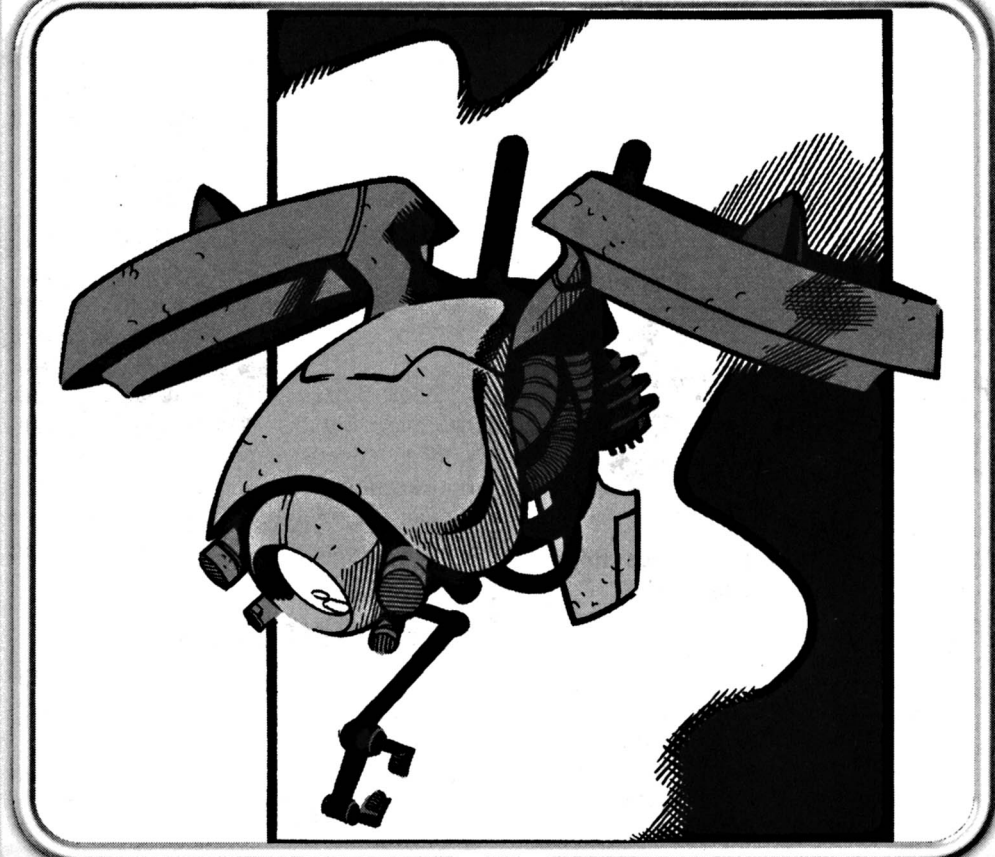
Disadvantages: NAI-5 [-20].

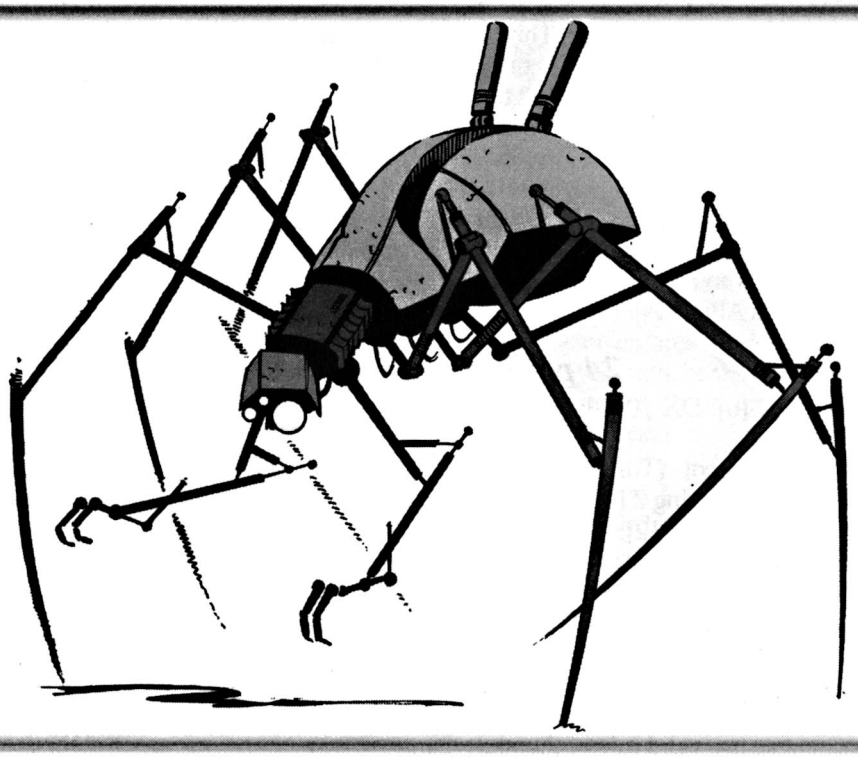
Skills: Photography-10 [4]; Writing-9 [2].

Cost: $2,320. (Includes $500 for upgraded lenses and microphones. For very simple cybershell modifications like this, $25 per added character point of enhancements is a valid rule of thumb.)

The Newshawk/7-6 is an example of the flying cameras widely used by reporters on Earth and Mars and in some larger space colonies. A configuration specialist fits the standard IRI-4 Malachi (p. TS121) with a computer, superior lenses (×8 magnification), and parabolic microphones (×4 hearing range), and installs a copy of an AI which has been trained to select camera angles, compose images, transcribe speech, and even prepare simple captions and other text. The physical changes are considered to form part of the machine's revised model template, and hence do not violate the Taboo Trait: Physical Changes.

Favorite skill sets for Newshawks include languages and Area Knowledge for regions to which the owner has been assigned. Reporters who have to venture into war zones sometimes add tactics programs or training, mostly for use in assessing immediate risks. (In game terms, note the initiative bonus that this provides.)





Variations: Major enhancements to this pattern are usually considered excessive for what is generally regarded as a near-disposable news-gathering tool, but a few, eccentric reporters run customized LAI-6 "partners" on "genius" buzzbots. Some intelligence agents and freelance investigators who pass as reporters install superior (and sometimes illegal) surveillance systems on similar buzzbots, adding further sense-related advantages (and quite a lot to the monetary cost).

Patelsoft "Friend K"

73 points

Attributes: ST – [–]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 10 [10]; HT 14/1 [0].

Advantages: LAI-6 [40].

Disadvantages: Virtual Interface Implant (Small compact computer) [-11].

Skills: Accounting-13* [1]; Appreciate Beauty-8 [2]; Area Knowledge (Owner's home area)-12 [4]; Body Language-8 [1]; Diagnosis (Owner)-9/15 [4]; Gambling-10 [2]; Law-9 [2]; Lip Reading-9 [1]; Literature (Quotations)-8/14 [2]; Orienteering-10 [2]; Psychology-7** [4]; Savoir Faire-9** [4]; Sex Appeal-10** [1].

*Includes bonus for Mathematical Ability.

** Includes penalty for Low Empathy.

Additional Languages: Pick two M/A at level-10 [2×2].

Cost: $74,400.

A high-end implant after a few years of personalization, this unit provides for many of its owner's personal requirements without raising too many problems regarding his sense of privacy. Of course, no two implanted AIs are quite alike after this much use, but this version is fairly typical.

(The cost is largely hypothetical, for bookkeeping and insurance purposes. The implant would usually be purchased with a much less experienced, and hence cheaper, AI.)

Tenzan THI-200bis

297 points

Attributes: ST 6 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [0]; HT 11/6 [0].

Advantages: Tech Spider (Small computer) [235]; LAI-6 [40].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Communications)-9 [2]; First Aid-11 [4]; Free Fall-11 [4]; two Mechanic skill specialties of the buyer's choice at level-11 [2×6].
Cost: $64,200.

This is Tenzan's *Suchi-Rukara* (p. TS125) with basic skills trained into an LAI brain. It makes a dull partner; spacers exchange tips on how to teach it to display more personality without too much risk. Other Tech-Spiders are sold with cheaper computers and NAIs, but those tend to be specialized tools, too inflexible to be considered "allies."

Tenzan Gearhead-Ro: Installing essentially the same AI in a Mobile Helmet cybershell makes for a less useful engineering assistant, but a life-saver in emergencies. ST 2, HT 12/6; add Cooking-10; 316 points, $71,800.

Wotatech Hugin — *45 points*

Attributes: ST 2 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 9 [0]; HT 11/3 [0].
Advantages: Buzzbot (Tiny computer) [18]; Night Vision [10]; Polarized Eyes [5]; Weaponry (LC 3) [15].
Disadvantages: NAI-5 [-20].
Skills: Forward Observer-9 [2]; Guns (Missile)-12 [4]; Savoir-Faire (Military)-9 [1]; Stealth-11 [4]; Tactics-10 [6].
Cost: $3,700. (See below.)

Wotatech buzzbots are much more obviously designed for military and paramilitary applications than the otherwise similar IRI-4 Malachi (p. TS121), being intended for scouting, perimeter patrols, and emergency fire support. They die quickly in real war zones, but are useful for "low-intensity" work and as disposable decoys.

This model incorporates light-enhancing polarized optics, a micro-missile pod with IFF interrogator (pp. TS156-157), and an IFF transponder. Adding these, and the upgraded motor needed to maintain its performance, brings the weight of the cybershell up to 6 lbs. and its cost to $1,100. Such physical changes are considered to form part of the machine's revised model template, and hence not to violate the Taboo Trait: Physical Changes.

The manufacturers also sell the above pretrained AI, which is primarily oriented towards purely military missions; law enforcement and peacekeeping forces may prefer something custom-coded to less aggressive specifications. (Military Hugins on duty in peaceful areas often have to deal with a lot of complex and conditional orders, though some forces just load them up with tangler rounds.) Buzzbots used on guard or patrol duties can quickly gain local Area Knowledge.

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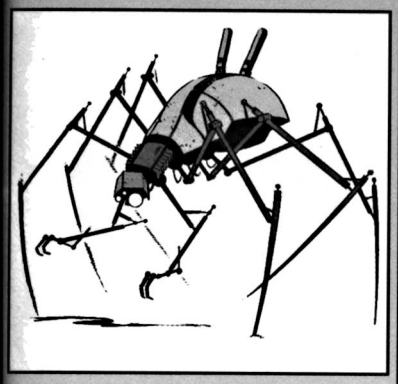

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One's a rich kid who wanted to get away from Earth.

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One's a bioroid built by the Triads.

Also included are an assortment of Programmed Allies – the infomorphs and cybershells without which any 2100 adventurer is worse than naked. Trouble in 2100? These people know where to look for it, and what to do when they find it.

Transhuman Space is required to use this book. ***GURPS Basic Set, Compendium I,*** or other volumes in the ***Transhuman Space*** line may be useful, but are not mandatory. The ideas in ***Personnel Files*** can be used with any roleplaying system.

Written by Phil Masters

Edited by Andrew Hackard Illustrated by Ramón Pérez

Transhuman Space designed by David Pulver

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