

THE WORLD OF
SPECIES™



FOR THREE MILLION YEARS, THE HUMAN
RACE HAS BEEN AT THE TOP OF THE
EVOLUTIONARY LADDER.

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER.

A MASTERBOOK™
GAME

S P E C I E S

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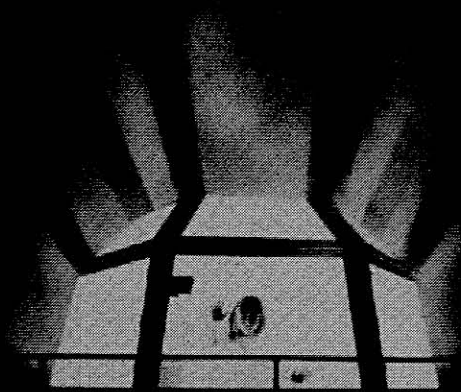
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INTRODUCTION

It was far easier now, Sil realized. Before, she hadn't known the right things to say, the right ways to behave. Before she had been betrayed by her instincts — now she had learned to make use of them to further her goals.

Beneath her, the man shuddered with satisfaction. It was so simple to entice humans into her bed — they were so like the animals they claimed to dominate. The proper combination of signals, the right dress, the inviting manner, and they asked no questions. They just followed.

This one had been no better or worse than any of the others, but he had performed his task adequately. Now she could breed again, her new progeny joining her old in the hunt. That left only one problem to be dealt with ...

He was no longer necessary. He existed now only as a threat to her. And threats had to be eliminated.

She willed herself to shift, drawing on memories deep inside her of a thing that might have been. Her vision blurred, and then she saw multiple images of the human where once there had been one. He was afraid now. She found his fear strangely exhilarating.

She struck swiftly, before he could scream, her newly-formed jaws closing on his throat. With a smooth, practiced motion, she tore his head from his body. His body jerked spasmodically, a grotesque parody of the act he had just performed. Blood sprayed on to the pillows, the sheets, the headboard.

Sil waited until death had claimed him before returning to the face and form he had desired. She was covered in perspiration and a

draft in the room sent a shiver through her. The human body had many advantages, but protection against even the most insignificant forces of nature wasn't one of them.

She reached out and dipped her hands into the hot blood still pouring from her victim. Then she began to rub the blood up and down her body, letting it drive the chill of the night away ...

THE MANY FACES OF FEAR

A mysterious message beamed from space launches a team of government scientists into a deadly experiment: combining an alien DNA strand with that of a human to produce ... what? A deadly predator capable of shifting into virtually any form, constantly adapting to its surroundings, able to kill in a hundred different ways.

When the creature — in the form of a young girl — escapes the lab and begins to hunt, special teams of scientists and intelligence agents are dispatched to bring it down. They know it must be stopped before it can kill again — and before it can breed.

The World of Species is based on the MGM film, *Species*, and introduces players to a world of intrigue, cross and double-cross, incredible suspense ... and sheer terror. They can choose to play scientists dispatched to hunt the creature and its progeny, or the creations of those scientists: humans mutated by a weakened version of the alien DNA into shapeshifters. They may even choose to play the aliens them-

selves, predator as well as prey.

PLAYING THE GAME

The World of Species contains all the source material you need to begin play, including character templates, details on agencies, secret and non-, involved in the hunt, background and statistics for the aliens, tips on running a *Species* campaign and a complete mini-adventure to get you started.

Important: *The World of Species* is a *MasterBook* game, and you will need the *MasterBook* rulebook to play. *MasterBook* is sold separately at book and game stores, and can also be ordered directly from West End. You will also need two ten-sided dice. The *MasterDeck* (also available from West End), is optional.

Ordering information for the *MasterBook* and *MasterDeck* can be found on the last page of this book.





CHAPTER ONE

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

AGHD-RD-D

22 January 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR Xavier Fitch, Director, Omega Project

SUBJECT: Contact

1. Sir, last evening the radio telescopes at Arecibo had confirmed alien contact. Two separate messages, both repeated precisely 27,000 times, were received, beginning at approximately 2100 hours.

2. Efforts to decode the messages are ongoing. At least one message appears to be a huge string of deoxyribonucleic proteins, as well as references to human genetic material.

3. Our technicians are unable to determine a point of origin for the signals. They come from a region of space filled with black holes, which warp the path of the signal and disguise its source. The implications of this contact are of course extraordinary. This could be the most important contact since the Roswell incident.

4. You will be immediately informed of any additional messages, and of the success of the decoding efforts. If you have any questions or concerns, your point of contact for this action is the undersigned at (804) 555-9087/6538.

ROBERT D. LINDSAY
Colonel, MC
Director, Research Division

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

AGSD-HG-R

January 29, 1993

MEMORANDUM THRU The Honorable James F. McKeenan, Assistant Secretary of the Army for External Affairs, (ATTN: Mr. J. West), Building 2-1133, Suite 500(c), Alexandria, Virginia 25436-0003

FOR Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, (ATTN: MAJ Griffin), Building 2-1133, Suite 201, Alexandria, Virginia 25436-0003

SUBJECT: The Omega Project

1. Purpose. To obtain your recommendation in support of the proposed genetic research project expanding the mission of the Omega Project.

2. Background.

a. On 22 Jan 93, the radio telescopes assigned to the Omega project intercepted two separate messages apparently sent by extraterrestrial sources.

b. Analysis of these messages is ongoing, but one message recommends the cross of human genetic material with One Hundred and Forty Million (140,000,000) base pairs of deoxyribonucleic proteins. The codes for these proteins were included in the message.

c. Per my telephonic briefing to you and the CINC, the potential benefits of this project in terms of expanded genetic research and increased knowledge of the human DNA code are extraordinary. In addition, this project has the potential to discover biological means to enhance the mission-effectiveness of our government's military and civilian assets.

d. The Omega Project has the expertise required to conduct these experiments. The existing secured location and previously-cleared staff also offer significant savings in cost, training, and start-up time.

3. Recommendation. Therefore, I recommend that you approve this request and authorize the Omega Project to initiate genetic research into codes transmitted in the message of 22 January 1993

Xavier Fitch
Director, Omega Project

SPECIES

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

AGSD-HG-R

2 April 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR Colonel (Dr.) Robert D. Lindsay, Director,
Research Branch, Project Omega

SUBJECT: Research Project - Approval

1. This memorandum is to inform you that the proposed expansion to the mission of the Omega Project has been approved. The research project has been named Operation Proteus.

2. Construction of the new laboratory facilities will begin immediately, under your personal supervision. I need not remind you of the need for absolute secrecy as well as speed.

3. The nature of the facility and its intended contents require caution. There must be mechanisms to protect the personnel. At a minimum, each individual laboratory will be compartmentalized. They will also be sealed, requiring airlock entry. To minimize the risk of contamination, all personnel will wear full chemical gear - MOPP Level Four equivalent - while working with the experimental material.

4. Complete blueprints of the laboratory follow under separate cover. The target date for completion of the laboratory is the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Xavier Fitch
Director, Omega Project

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

Official Minutes - Weekly Staff Meeting For the Research Division,
Transom Laboratory - June 7, 1994 (Excerpts)

Director (D): ... Thank God, Bill. Are you telling me we're finally through synthesizing and purifying that damn DNA required in the experiment? After all the delays, first with construction and then with testing ...

Dr. Boone (B): Sir, I still don't think we've done enough tests on this project. After all, we've never -

Dr. Hathaway (H): Yes sir, we've finished separating and isolating the DNA required for the tests. Soon, we'll be in position to observe its interaction first with animal DNA ... and then with human samples. Testing upon individual human volunteers, of course, is not envisioned until Phase III.

(D): Dr. Boone, I understand your concerns. However, I think Dr. Hathaway and his staff are more than capable of deciding how many tests are needed. We've got to take the plunge some time on this baby - so I trust you all brought along your bathing suits?

(Laughter)

(D): Now, Dr. Boone, are the anthropological and behavioral teams operational?

(B): Yes, sir ... We are prepared to analyze the psychology, attitudes, and actions of whatever comes out of Dr Hathaway's test tubes. Which brings me to my next question: what exactly are we building out here?

Dr. Kilday (K): No one can answer that question now, Jethra. The mix of genetic material that will go into the creature is out of this world, if you'll pardon the pun, and the end product is quite frankly anyone's guess. It's a damn volatile mix.

(B): But that's just what concerns me on this one! We don't know what we're getting here. We could be building some sort of living time bomb, something highly virulent ... or worse!

(H): With all of that DNA at its disposal, the potential powers and abilities of this creature [will] be undoubtedly astounding. However, you can be assured we have taken every precaution to safeguard the Lab, our personnel, and this country, should the creature prove uncontrollable. The tests we are prepared to conduct on its neural system alone should keep a whole team of specialists happy as my grandad in the crapper for several years!

(D): Okay folks, this is getting far afield. Let's wrap it up for now. Same time and place next week, and I want weekly reports on my desk by 0800 tomorrow. Let's keep the wires open - and secure - on this one.

ORIGIN OF SPECIES

July 12, 1994

Personal Notes

So far the project's gone very slowly. Dr Hathaway is cursing everyone from the aliens to God on this one. The initial experiments failed abysmally - some problem with the ratio of the DNA proteins to nutrients. Not my field ... still the tension and frustration around the Project has us all feeling fried.

I've got my team ready to go. But there's still one question gnawing at me: "What if this creature is sentient?" After all, its DNA is half human, so it seems likely there's a reasonable chance it will be at least as bright as we are.

What then? How can we justify holding, prodding, poking, and studying another "human being?" Am I to cooperate, keep moving along and say nothing? "Be a team player," as Herr Dictator would put it? I suppose I'd better wait to make any final decisions until I see what develops, but I can at least take a few precautions while Dr Hathaway concocts another batch of primordial soup.

- Dr. Jethra Boone

Personal Notes

August 15, 1994:

Well, they've done it. Today Dr Hathaway's team successfully implanted the alien DNA mix in a human cell in the lab. The cell immediately grew like wildfire! Within only hours it was visible to the naked eye, and Dr. Hathaway said that at this rate, it will take approximately three weeks before the creature is a fully-grown "woman?" Incredible. This rate of growth suggests a very high metabolism, with all of the activity and aggression which that normally entails. Of course, higher metabolisms often mean shorter lifespans. I wonder if that axiom will hold true here as well.

So Project Omega is finally out of the starting gate. It really is exciting. I swear every Project member's face I've seen today looks somehow more ... godlike. Even my own. The exhilaration, the sense of power I feel today ... these things - our faces - frighten me more perhaps than any test tube alien.

The Bible says that God created Man and Woman. Now we play the roles of both God and Man, in our own little Creation drama. But the question remains ... where will the Serpent rear its head? And can we survive its venom?

- Dr. Jethra Boone

August 17, 1994:

Personal Notes

The creature keeps growing - faster than any test tube or incubator can handle. Dr Meade's EKG machines and other gizmos can barely record the creature's readings.

The alien is almost the size of a human baby now, however it's infinitely prettier than any newborn I've ever seen! Yet, the baby is already showing its alien heritage in more direct ways. It is a shape-shifter, capable of trading its physical form for another quite regularly. These often startling and dramatic changes of form seem instinctual to the baby. What an extraordinarily valuable protection device for a youngster!

The nurses have to be very careful when handling the baby - many of its forms have natural weapons which it uses when frustrated. Several nurses have been badly injured already, and Dr Meade's team is considering going to armored attendants, or perhaps using a robotic arm as a caretaker.

Mentally and emotionally, the baby seems "normal" so far, if one can make such judgments about an alien! Its primary concerns are food and attention. Its sleep-wake cycles also conform to human norm for a baby of the alien's apparent physical age.

- Dr. Jethra Boone

August 23, 1994: Personal Notes

The longer this project continues, the more disturbed I become. First, there are my fellow scientists. I hear some of the lab personnel (Dr Hathaway's voice being loudest among them), and some of the higher-ups in the Agency, talking about "harnessing" and "controlling" the powers of this "mutant creature." However, at this juncture it is clear that she is fully sentient, and is "human" in terms of intellectual capacity, even though her actions and reactions - her relationship with her environment - still seem driven entirely by Instinct. (More of that in a minute!) In some ways she reminds me of a feral child, brought into civilization after growing up devoid of contact with her own species.

I am also more and more disturbed by the experiment itself. As I watch this young creature moving back and forth in its isolation cell, growing visibly each day, I am convinced that we have crossed the line. This type of genetic tampering - man "playing God" to create wholly new forms of life - it's the nightmare world that the neo-Luddites keep preaching about. I'm afraid that they are right, at least in this case, because we most certainly are playing a game for which we know no rules ... and we may be staking the future of humanity on its outcome!

The alien itself is maturing each day. She now has the appearance of a slender, young girl. She also holds that form now, changing her shape only when she chooses. She still sees our world through

the eyes of a newborn though; she operates on instinct, and is obviously struggling to learn the rules of our society – aping the mannerisms of the people she sees in the lab.

The alien (or Honey, as I call her after her honey-colored hair) is isolated in part due to her speed and her strength – both of which are already superhuman. As an example, she broke the director's arm yesterday just by slapping him. Violence seems to be her instinctive response to any sort of desire or frustration. She is very much like a wild animal in that sense, never restraining her impulses. Unfortunately, unlike the feral children she resembles, Honey has had ample contact with humans, affording her the opportunity to bond with one or more of us. To date, I see no evidence that she has done so.

This problem is becoming more and more pronounced each day as Honey grows more confident and more assertive in her desires. While she is likely to develop more restraint with maturity, an animal's instincts (including the human animal) change only so much over time. She is a predator. That fundamental truth will not change.

Honey is almost too much for this lab to handle now, even though we are equipped with every safety precaution money and the government can provide. And she is just a child. Some of us wanted this so badly, but now that we have her, what do we do? I've heard talk about "terminating this phase of the project." But how can we create a life and then kill it because it is what we have made it?

I need to get away from this! I am taking some leave time starting tomorrow, and it will do me good. Most of our team's work is done. Vivianne can handle the rest. Perhaps in two weeks I'll have more answers for myself. Or perhaps I will only come back to an empty lab and more questions.

– Dr. Jethra Boone

Albuquerque Tribune

August 25, 1994

GAS LEAK FELLS TEN

ROSWELL — A gas leak is being blamed for the deaths of ten workers at a government lab located just outside of Roswell.

The incident occurred late last night at Transom Labs, when cyanide gas being used as part of a "routine experiment" leaked from its canister, felling a lab full of people. Officials were able to seal the lab off before the gas spread anywhere else in the complex. The names of those killed are being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Lab officials insist that there is no danger of the deadly gas having reached the atmosphere and no cause for alarm in local communities.

CONTACT

On January 21, 1993, the huge radio telescopes at Arecibo, Puerto Rico and the Parks Observatory in Australia detected incoming signals that were clearly extraterrestrial in origin, and clearly created by intelligent life. The U.S. government, in the person of the inter-agency task force on extraterrestrial investigation known only as the Agency, operates the Arecibo telescopes 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This hardware is a key part of the Agency's "Operation Eavesdropper," which passively monitors the electromagnetic spectrum in a constant search for signs of intelligent extraterrestrial life.

The Agency's commanders were not initially excited by the messages. Most of these men were veterans of alien contacts at Roswell, Denver, Platte, and a dozen other incidents swept under the rug with stories of balloons and gliders. The Agency had by now recorded more than 200 confirmed alien transmissions.

Yet the format and contents of the messages excited certain Agency scientists a great deal, in particular Dr William Hathaway. The first of the two messages, both of which were repeated exactly 27,000 times, proved to be a chemical catalyst for the inexpensive production of methane. The second message presented one hundred and forty million base pairs of

DNA proteins, along with detailed instructions on how to combine these proteins with human genetic material.

The Agency's researchers, consumed with scientific fervor and goaded on by their superiors' desire to be the first government arm to decipher and utilize such information, plunged into Project Omega. Unfortunately, in the Agency's haste to discover the information hidden in the genetic codes, little concern was given to why these unknown aliens might have sent the message to Earth, or to the consequences of creating an unknown life form.

Motivated by the desire to create, to control, and to study alien life, the Agency obtained permission to conduct Project Omega. After more than two years of delay, due primarily to difficulties in coding and splicing one hundred and forty million pairs of DNA proteins, the scientists finally perfected the combinations and the first member of a new species was born. This was the first alien created by the "Arecibo process," the term coined for the alien technology used to manipulate the DNA strands, and it was soon apparent that the Agency's reach had exceeded its grasp. From the outset of the experiment, the creature grew at a highly accelerated rate. Once fertilized with its alien/human DNA package, the egg grew to the size of a three-week old embryo in only three hours. Scientists estimated that within three weeks



the alien would reach full maturity.

The researchers soon discovered that their alien baby was extraordinarily adaptable — and a born killer. A natural predator armed with incredible strength, speed and natural weaponry, the alien responded violently whenever she felt threatened, or angry, or even inconvenienced. Her weaponry and defenses were legion, for she was created with the genetic ability to tap into any of the millions of genetic possibilities housed in her DNA. It soon became obvious that the young alien could use this ability to change physical forms with incredible ease and variety. The alien seemed capable of accessing at will any combination of physical characteristics found in her genetic potentials. The results of such shapechanges were often truly frightening, and several Project workers were severely injured or killed while tending to their young charge.

The Agency kept the alien in deep isolation at "Transom Labs" (actually Visitor Base One) in New Mexico, trying to decide how best to use her and the genetic knowledge the aliens had given them. Finally, a decision was reached: terminate the project and the alien, now codenamed "Sil." When workers attempted to hook up cyanide gas canisters to the life support system of the isolation booth, Sil battered her way through the protective glass. The resulting gas leak killed all the workers in the lab, and in the confusion, Sil escaped. Officials rapidly launched a hunt for the creature, believing she posed a danger to society.

The Agency's fears were confirmed when blood and tissue scrapings containing alien DNA turned up under the nails of a homicide victim found on a train in Los Angeles shortly after the lab incident. Hours later, a second hideously mutilated victim was discovered. The Agency had loosed a predatory member of an alien species into the midst of humanity, and it had begun to hunt.

THE SEARCH

Upon learning of the alien's escape, the Agency immediately assembled a Command Group, a crack team of investigators drawn from the military and all walks of civilian scientific life. Their task was to track down and destroy the alien.

The Command Group visited the scene of the



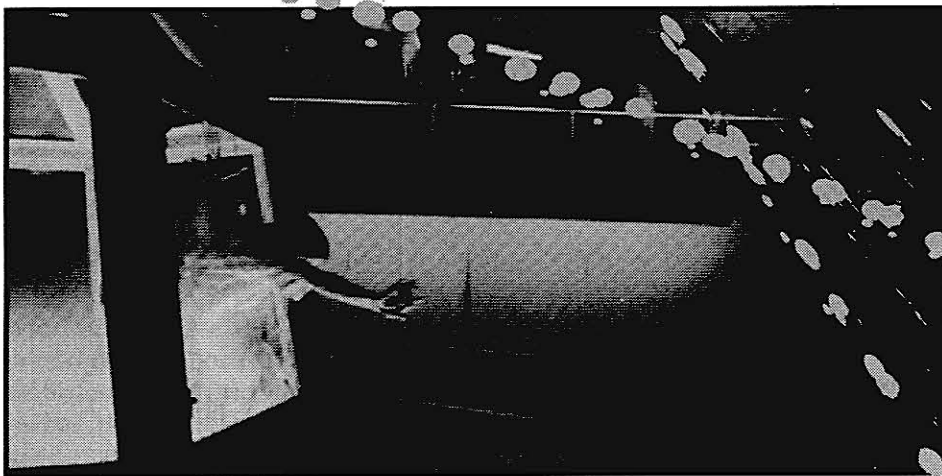
alien's first two murders, discovering the remnants of a huge chrysalis in the bathroom of a passenger car. Command Group One concluded that the alien had entered the chrysalis, utilizing it to speed her maturation to full, adult form. They feared also that the alien was preparing to mate — the motivation which determines the timing of many animals' use of chrysalis. Members of the Command Group also hypothesized that the alien's mixed genetic background might well allow her to mate with the human animal.

After several hurried, top-secret meetings, the Agency's analysts agreed that the unleashed alien was acting upon the two overriding genetic drives found in every living creature: predation and procreation. The consequences of allowing the creature to spawn in an unsecured, urban environment could well be catastrophic.

After a short, but brutal, hunt the teams were apparently successful in their mission, tracking down and destroying the alien. However, a number of the ten Command Group members lost their lives in the process. Com-

mand Group One tracked the alien by successfully predicting her mating behavior. Although she was able to mate and give birth to a male of her species, both were believed to have been destroyed in a fire.

Despite the casualties suffered by the Command Group, the Agency was satisfied with the results of their mission. They appeared to have destroyed the alien and her progeny, and thereby prevented this deadly predator from establishing a foothold in our eco-system. The mission completed and its secrets apparently safe, the Agency hierarchy began to consider other possible applications of the alien technology.



But two weeks later, a report in the FBI's National Crime Information and Control Computer shattered the Agency's illusions. Unidentified DNA samples had been found at a murder scene at the Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina airport, and the biological imprint matched that of the alien! Faced with this latest horrifying evidence of their overconfidence, the Agency realized that Sil had survived the battle, or that she had somehow managed to reproduce again, or both.

The highest ranking members of the Agency met once more to decide on a course of action. Faced with a threat of deadly magnitude, in unknown numbers and locations, the Agency soon concluded that normal, human operatives would be unable to meet the challenge as silently or as effectively as the situation — and the government — required.

PROJECT PROTEUS: PHASE TWO

The Agency immediately responded to the alien threat by setting up the Lab, a sophisticated research facility located in the heart of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command Complex at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Secreted amidst the base's heavily guarded pine forests, the Lab's researchers worked feverishly on Phase Two of the Omega Project, now renamed Project Proteus. Creating teams of agents specially trained and, in many cases, *designed* to hunt down the aliens the researchers

on Phase One had released on a still unsuspecting populace.

Phase Two scientists, building on the data and findings of their (mostly deceased) Phase One predecessors, discovered a means of introducing the alien genetic codes into adult humans. These genetically engineered alien-human agent prototypes retained their essential humanity (at least the "successes" did), how-

ever their access to their own genetic codes was much more limited than that of the first alien. Although the new crossbreed prototypes could shapechange, they could not do so with the extraordinary flexibility of the initial alien. In addition, the vast majority of the successes were those subjects who were under the age of 25, owing to the fact that their mental and physical development was not yet complete.

Of course, not all members of Phase Two considered the lessened shapechanging ability, strength, and speed negatives. Although the new agent prototypes were less powerful than the aliens they were designed to hunt down, they were also somewhat more controllable.

However, after the Phase One debacle many members of Project Proteus were adamantly opposed to creating such agents at all. Yet mandates from far up the Agency's chain of

command insisted on following through with Phase Two of the project. Despite these mandates, the nay-sayers continued to argue over the inherent dangers of continuing to blindly utilize alien information. In fact, the schism in the Agency grew so great that worries about possible leaks to the public became paramount.

The Director of Project Proteus finally called a meeting of all key members of the project along with a number of Agency representatives. At this three-day meeting, a compromise was finally achieved. Researchers were instructed to find a means of physically controlling the agents, should certain behavioral or psychological problems arise. Although this delayed by several months the start-up date for the full-scale operation of Phase Two, the researchers managed to introduce a critical flaw into the alien DNA strands. Agents not receiving monthly doses of an undisclosed chemical compound would be unable to survive for more than a month or so.

With this internal safeguard in place, and an agreement to destroy all prototype, or "first wave," agents, the Agency finally gave the go-ahead to the director of Phase Two.

Project Proteus was reborn.

A CHOICE OF GUISES

Players in *The World of Species* have a number of roles open to them. They might be human agents assigned to track down and destroy the aliens before the general populace becomes aware of their existence, much like Command Group One in the film. They might be the shapeshifting alien-human cross-breeds created by the government to fulfill much the same mission. Or, if you want an unusual twist on your campaign, the players might even be the predatory aliens themselves — both hunters and hunted. (More details on the latter option will be given in Chapter Four.)

As far as the human-alien agents go, Agency scientists developed a system to enhance the human body by carefully applying controlled amounts of the alien

DNA. By manipulating the original bonding process, the Agency has created a process capable of altering the bodies of living humans, or creating new agents in test tubes.

The original alien received all the DNA strands recommended in the extraterrestrial message. However, the newly created player character agents have smaller percentages of



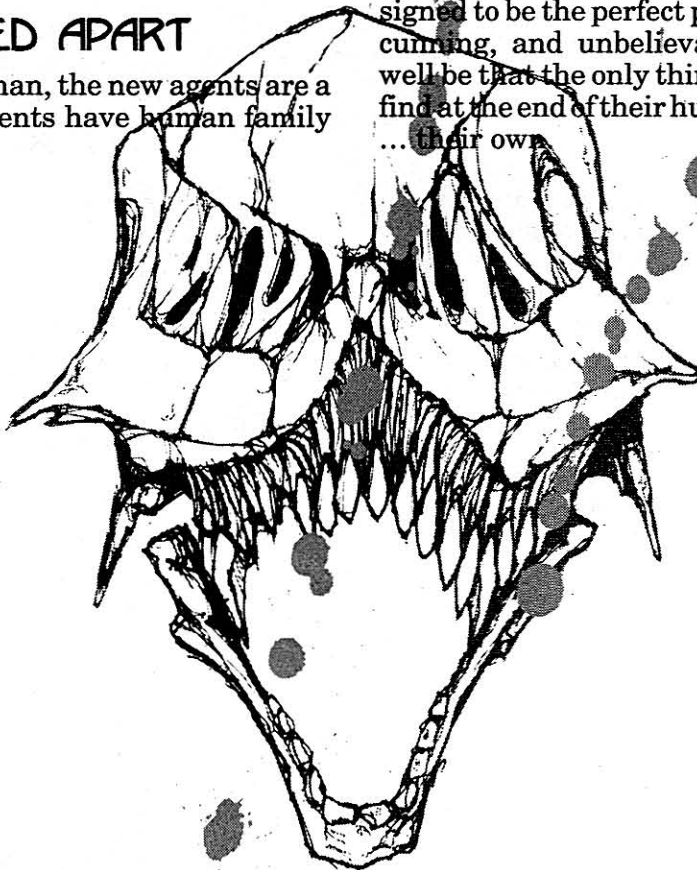
alien DNA. The Lab's researchers are still experimenting with this process, and the amount of alien DNA introduced into individual agents varies greatly. A character with a higher percentage of alien DNA has more power and shapechanging ability, but is also fundamentally less human, and thus more likely to succumb to the instinctual drives inside him. Such agents are more likely to lose control to the alien parts of their nature, and instinctively react to stress as a predator. Characters with lower levels of alien DNA are not as powerful, but are less likely to experience psychological problems, and more able to control their drive to kill.

A BREED APART

Both alien and human, the new agents are a breed apart. Most agents have human family

and friends, but how would they react to the character now that he is no longer quite human? The characters work for the Agency, receive good salaries and spacious accommodations. Yet, the same Agency trusts them so little that they have been "bred" to be chemically dependent. Worse, the first alien was created by the Agency — when she became a liability, the characters were assigned to track down and kill her and any of her progeny. But what will happen if they should succeed in their mission? With no aliens to slay, won't the Agency see the characters as liabilities too?

And this assumes the characters will even be successful against a creature genetically designed to be the perfect predator — intelligent, cunning, and unbelievably deadly. It might well be that the only things the characters will find at the end of their hunt are blood and death ... their own.





CHAPTER TWO

PREDATORS AND PREY

The seal dives, its sleek brown body flashing through the air. It cuts into the icy water like a knife, looping and spiralling, first on its back and then on its belly, then back again. Exulting in the feel of the water, the seal quivers with excitement, knowing that soon it will feast. Scanning the rocky crevices for the sweet, sweet oysters, far from the safety of the shallows, the animal abandons caution in its hunger.

Shifting a whisker, sensing a change in the water, the seal suddenly flees, twisting and dodging desperately as fear fills its sleek frame. Slashing up from the deep, the grey silhouette of the shark moves in, gaining on its prey. Row upon row of gleaming teeth fold outward as its jaws reach hungrily for the seal. Slamming shut upon the frantic beast, the shark's jaws tear huge gobbets of flesh from the dying seal as the great predator whips its head to and fro ...

A herd of gazelle move gracefully across the plains, sampling the many grasses swaying in the wind. The delicate creatures chew softly, reassured by the familiar smells of the herd and the grassland. Downwind, a stand of bushes explodes in a fury of fur and motion. As the herd scatters, the lioness leaps forward. Powerful muscles bunching and contracting with each stride, she isolates a male slowed by age, and bears in for the kill. The aging gazelle twists on the run, desperately slashing its horns across the lioness' flank. She leaps, and bears the gazelle to the ground, her weight snapping its neck ...

So it is in our world — the natural cycle requires death to sustain life. Each creature hunts or is hunted; each is driven to kill to

survive. Predation is the first great theme of Nature.

In a grassy clearing high up on the slopes of the mountain, the sounds of combat ring through the still air. Two magnificent elk crash together, slamming their heads and locking horns. The males twist and strain, sweat streaking their flanks, each working to overcome the other. The objects of their contest, a small herd of does entering their season, await the victor.

The smaller male, flanks heaving, uses leverage and powerful legs to drive its rival back. Slipping and stumbling, eyes rolling back in its head, the older buck bellows with rage as it falls. Scrambling to its feet, dancing away from the slashing hooves and horns of its rival, the defeated buck slips into the forest. He will not mate this year ...

In a corner of the garden behind sun-dappled rocks, the calls of birds and insects are muted. Leaves shift slightly in the breeze as the two thin creatures move slowly towards each other. Their stick-like forms, all angles and lines, merge together in the morning light. Driven together by chemicals wafting on the air, the male mounts the larger female, and the mating begins.

As the coupling reaches its height, the female mantis lashes out. Biting the head from her mate, she uses the nourishment from his body to fuel her fire. The act accomplished, there is no further purpose to his existence. Still, the headless, dying body of the mantis pumps on, moving in the natural rhythm ...

So it is in our world — the preeminent drive is to survive. Every creature strives to pass on its genes, to preserve the species. They will live

on in future generations, or they will pass silently into the night — leaving no sign that they ever had been. *Procreation* is the second great theme of Nature.

THE HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED

Predation and *Procreation*, the two great natural drives, are the predominant themes of *Species* as well. Since the rise of civilization and the development of technology, mankind as a group has faced no predators save ourselves. As the ultimate predator in our ecosystem, humanity has conquered all other life and now rules the globe. Only men hunt men.

Although few yet realize it, Project Proteus has changed that. By first using the data in the strange message to create the alien, and then

allowing her to escape, the Agency introduced another predator into our world ... and these aliens are deadly predators indeed, with natural instincts and abilities far superior to those of man. Unlike humankind's historical opponents, these aliens possess powerful intellects as well as fearsome natural abilities. If these aliens successfully establish a foothold on Earth, they threaten the very survival of the human species. Mankind, at least as we now know it, could all too quickly live on only in memory.

Each side of this contest, alien and human, are both predators and prey — hunters and hunted. Each battles for nothing less than the survival of their species. The ultimate irony may be that by mutating their human agents to hunt the aliens, the Agency has passed along the alien DNA proteins — the alien gene pool. By doing so, has it ensured the survival of that species at the expense of our own?

Project Proteus: Operations Manual

Introduction

Statement of Purpose: This manual has been compiled by the Operations Branch to serve as a training aid for the agents of Phase II — Project Proteus. Its purpose is to enhance the mission-readiness and performance of the new agents, by providing them with an introduction and reference guide to the behavior and abilities of the enemy — the rogue variants of Phase I of this project. Each individual section of this manual describing traits of the target has been written by an expert in that field, with their work edited for brevity and clarity to best suit the operational needs of the Project. Comments on the Manual and suggestions for future editions should be addressed through internal correspondence to Major Tate, Operations Branch, Project Proteus, ATTN: PGO-PB-C.

Note: The alien will be referred to by the codename "Sil" throughout this publication.

Instinct: The Driving Force

by Dr. Jethra Boone, PhD, Professor, Georgetown University

Instinct can best be defined as unlearned behavior, responses to specific conditions or events that are ingrained in a creature to fulfill a vital need of the organism. Like any animal, including the human animal, Sil is a creature of instinct. It will behave instinctively to some extent during its fighting, escape, courtship, and hunting activities. Therefore, it is critical to understand its instincts in order to accurately predict and counter the alien's behavior.

From all reports, Sil may be the ultimate expression of the ferocity of nature. It takes what it pleases, and reacts violently if threatened. This will be especially true early in the creature's life, when instinct, untempered by experience, drives its reactions. Despite its intellectual capacities, the young alien will act very directly, interpreting societal stimuli as an animal would. For example, it might interpret a large, toothy grin as a threat - a display of teeth designed to cow an adversary. A direct gaze might be seen as a challenge (as it often is in human society), perhaps provoking a violent response. During this stage of the creature's development, do not expect logical behavior. Rather, attempt to anticipate and counter its instinctive responses as you would were you hunting a large, very dangerous animal.

In Sil, as with all higher animals, instinct is modified over time by past experience. The experience of Command Group One with the creature showed that as the alien matured, it attempted to adapt to our society - to learn the rules required to thrive and to survive. Though the creature will still engage in contests of dominance and submission while hunting for food or for a mate, it will not always slay in each encounter. As a predator, however, it will insist on being dominant in its relations with our species.

At this point, as the alien reaches maturity, the very intelligent and adaptable creature becomes far more dangerous both to agents and to humanity as a whole. As it learns to blend with human members of our society, the alien may well stop leaving a trail of bodies in its wake. Recall that all of the observations of the Phase I scientists and Command Group members covered a span of less than one month in length. Over time, the creature will undoubtedly learn more about our world, and will better blend into our society, thus becoming much more difficult to track.

Even once this assimilation process is completed, however, instinct should still motivate the creature to a far greater extent than it does a human. In human behavior, our instinctive responses are highly modified by our individual intelligence and our early socialization. In the alien, only its intelligence and innate adaptability affect its interactions, for there is absolutely no evidence that the alien has, or will, become truly socialized.

The alien is very much an outsider, a breed apart. Therefore, the creature will always attempt to camouflage its true nature, to at least some extent, when moving among humans. Rather than responding naturally, it will mask its instinctual responses and provide whatever seemingly human reaction best suits its purpose. These unnatural, forced responses will not always be appropriate, though, and may provide valuable clues to the creature's presence ...

DNA, The Source of Power

By Dr. David Kolman, PhD.

... The deadly abilities of this creature center around the mixture of human and alien genetic material (DNA) in its cells. DNA is the principal building blocks of our chromosomes. These are the structures in human and animal cells which transmit hereditary characteristics, and contain the codes that determine the nature and abilities of each living creature. The vast majority of these codes are dormant, for human and animal phenotypes (outward forms) only represent a tiny fragment of all the possibilities housed within their genotypes (genetic makeup).

Sil, however, has the ability to "reach down" into its genetic code, and consciously activate or deactivate parts of that code at will (as, apparently, can certain agents of Phase II of this project.) While the precise source of this power is not yet known, researchers are certain that it is triggered by the alien proteins inserted into the cells. In fact, it may be the sole purpose of these as yet poorly understood proteins to make the other portions of the genetic code fully accessible to the creature. Accessing these codes instinctively, the creature seems able to use these powers at any time, allowing it to respond exceedingly well to any situation or assault.

Activating certain genetic codes allows the creature to change its shape, either its entire form or individual parts of its body. This grants the creature literally millions of possible attacks, defenses, and powers. The creature has access to all possible genetic outcomes – not only to what is and what has been, but what might be or might have been.

This versatility and infinite adaptability make the creature a particularly deadly foe. Charles Darwin once stated that adaptability is the key to victory in each species' struggle for survival. Its ability to alter its form so spectacularly to suit its environment gives the alien a huge advantage over humankind. When facing this new predatory threat, our only advantages lie in our numbers ...

Observed Powers

By Col. M.A. Peters

... The powers of this creature are legion. As discussed earlier in this manual, its ability to shift into a variety of human and animal forms also grants the alien the capacity to use all of the powers of these forms. While according to this theory the possible permutations of its powers may be infinite, in this section I discuss the powers thus far observed in Sil. This discussion will at least give agents a rudimentary understanding of the power of your foe. If these powers do represent preferences or predisposi-

tions of the alien, this information may even prepare agents to retaliate against some of its more common combat techniques.

Offensive Powers

Even in what is apparently its natural form, the creature has tremendously impressive natural offensive capabilities. The alien has superhuman strength. While still an immature youth (less than one week old), the creature broke the arm of an Agency employee with a mere slap. Sil also has the documented ability to break through walls with its fists, and to throw adult humans through the air with ease.

This superhuman strength is complemented by amazing speed and coordination. In the original confrontations between the alien and Command Group One, Sil repeatedly surprised and outmaneuvered the agents, nearly always attacking first. The creature also runs much faster and reacts far more quickly than humans, and has exceptional natural athletic ability.

Sil's favorite method of attack is sharp claws, with which, powered by its strength, the alien can tear out a human throat or sever a human spine with a single blow. Yet agents must expect the alien to make use of other natural attack forms found in the animal kingdom. Sil has displayed the power to shift and use teeth in a biting attack; and it may use clawed tentacles, reminiscent of certain sea-creatures, to give itself a powerful ranged attack. In addition, many snakes and lizards spit acids or poisons through sacs located in their jaws; the alien has attacked in the form of a giant slug-like creature, spitting acid.

The examples outlined above are merely some of the more common attack forms which agents must expect the creatures to use. Keep in mind, however, that the alien(s) undoubtedly have access to hundreds of other attack forms and abilities, unknown to mankind, which we cannot anticipate.

Defensive Powers

The alien also exhibits a wide variety of defensive abilities. For the sake of this essay, its observed defensive powers will be grouped into powers designed to help it escape detection, and those designed to aid it in battle. This list of powers is undoubtedly incomplete, but it is impossible to provide a complete categorization of all the alien's potential defenses. This account is thus designed to give agents some idea of how the creature uses its defenses in battle.

All agents who have faced the alien have noted its tremendous stealth. Like a jungle predator, Sil moves swiftly and silently, appearing and then disappearing again with little, if any, warning. Presumably the alien can access its genes to gain the full panoply of coordination, balance, and control that enables the jungle cats to move and strike without a sound. In addition to its stealth, Sil

sometimes appears capable of fading into its background. This power, in which the creature may become almost invisible while remaining in plain view, seems directly related to the chameleon's camouflage skills. Thus, the alien can hide "in plain sight." The creature also eluded agents by quickly digging and concealing a den or burrow.

Aside from the natural speed discussed above, the creature's primary defensive ability is its ability to heal exceptionally rapidly. Sil directly displayed this power to disbelieving agents as its flesh literally flowed back together, regenerating damage from multiple bullet wounds. In addition, surviving members of Command Group One noted that the creature showed no signs of a severe injury it had sustained in another battle earlier that same evening. At times the creature has also warped its body into a bulletproof form!

General Powers

The creature exhibits other abilities not directly related to attack or defense, specifically, abilities designed to help it grow and reproduce. The alien may presumably tap into the potentials of its genes to mature or reproduce in any way that it desires. Sil, however, spun a huge chrysalis and metamorphosized from juvenile to adult in less than two days. In preparation for this effort, the creature consumed vast quantities of food, apparently building up the energy required to create the chrysalis and power its metamorphosis. Agency researchers speculate that the alien chose to utilize the chrysalis because it was fastest way to mature.

Tactics: Fighting an Unpredictable Foe

By Col. M.A. Peters

... Any discussion of tactics to use when fighting these aliens must be largely theoretical, for there have only been two battles between aliens and members of the Agency. What makes such a discussion even more difficult is that these two battles can hardly be characterized as having been successfully resolved.

Knowledge of the enemy is the key to success against any foe, but, at first glance, our knowledge of Sil may seem of little use. We know that the creature can take a seemingly limitless number of forms, with seemingly innumerable powers. Our enemy would thus seem completely unpredictable and unstoppable. However, our study of the creature has also given us the ability to predict and track certain of its activities. Projecting from what information we have collected thus far, Agency tactical officers have put together a series of suggested tactics agents may use in the field.

Recalling the urges which drive Sil's behavior - the urge to feed and the urge to mate - it is almost certain that the alien will prefer

to remain near human civilization. The creature is able to appear fully human; and humans are both its preferred prey and preferred mates. The statisticians in the Research Branch have developed a technique designed to track and measure slight increases in suspicious disappearances or deaths in specific areas of the United States using the FBI's Missing Person's Report and the database of the National Crime Information Center. This index will be one of the first warning signs we have to track the potential presence and activities of an alien.

Once out in the field, agents should seek signs of the creature's presence. Investigate the scenes of murders and areas of disappearances, looking particularly for individuals who seem isolated from the community - those who seem somewhat at odds with their environment. An alien who has not fully assimilated human habits and customs may well have difficulty completely blending in with normal humans.

In battle with an alien, teamwork is essential. The alien is certainly more physically powerful than any one agent, so it will be necessary to carefully coordinate attacks. Much of the combat burden will inevitably fall on our genetically-enhanced agents. While human agents no doubt have useful skills to enhance the mission, only the shape-shifting powers of these Phase II agents are likely to swing the balance of power in the Agency's favor. Their noble sacrifice will enable us to defeat Sil and her progeny ...

For their own protection, each agent should always wear their Agency-issued body armor when on a mission. The light-weight armor deflects many of the creature's natural attacks. Agents are also issued high powered, ranged weapons specifically designed to injure the creature while the agents remain out of its grasp. Normal human agents must take particular pains to stay out of direct combat with an alien, since they lack the physical attributes necessary to succeed in hand to hand combat with this foe ...

Each team of agents must also carry and utilize a supply of either fire or acid to ultimately destroy the creature. The observations of Command Group One indicate that the aliens are vulnerable to these attack forms, and that they do not regenerate the damage that fire and corrosives cause. Once the alien is down, even for a moment, use flame and acid to destroy its remains, and use the DNA detectors which you will be issued to search out even the smallest physical remnants of the beast. Based on our observations to this point, there is no way to know how small a portion of the creature might be able to survive on its own and regrow. If an alien, or any portion of an alien, survives at the end of a mission, that mission is a complete failure!

And we cannot afford failure.



CHAPTER THREE

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

As employees of the Agency, the characters are caught in the center of a network of factions, at work in an underground world of danger, intrigue, and betrayal. The Agency has so far managed to keep Project Proteus and the existence of the aliens secret from the public at large. However, the Agency could not prevent other governments, possessing sufficient technology, from receiving the alien broadcast. Nor could the Agency conceal all of its activities from other observers, both inside and outside the government.

Word of Project Proteus has spread slowly but surely in certain quarters, and some organizations have learned something of the nature and results of it. Some groups also know that the Agency is conducting genetic experiments on a number of its agents. And certain of these groups are not above using this information to blackmail characters and/or the Agency, while others merely wish to destroy aliens and mutated characters alike.

The organizations, individuals, and agencies currently aware of Project Proteus and the aliens it has released are discussed below. These groups may hunt the aliens, or the characters, seek to steal the Project Proteus technology, or offer the characters a helping hand. The characters may well interact with a number of other individuals and organizations who glimpse the truth, but at least for the moment, the following factions know far more about Sil, her progeny and Project Proteus than the rest of the world. These groups join the characters and aliens in the realm of intrigue and horror that is *The World of Species*.

The description of each group includes a

short introduction by one of its members, followed by a discussion of its background, including the group's origin and goals. The "Organization" section discusses the leadership and structure of the group, as well as its headquarters and resources, while the "Activities" section presents the group's perspective and ongoing activities. Finally, in the "Who's Who" section, key members of each group are presented in detail, as well as (when appropriate) a standard example of the faction's membership.

THE AGENCY

Project Proteus, huh? Yep, the Agency's taken a lot of heat on that one. Some say we never should have started it, that the aliens played us for fools. Well, if that's true then it's the government, the good old U. S. of A., that was fooled. The Agency doesn't make those decisions — we just carry out the missions and take the heat because we're the ones sticking it out in the kitchen.

We put ourselves on the line in every way. I've seen and done horrible things, things that would send most of you "urban guerillas" running for your mamas, and I've done it all for my country. In war, you call in the Marines. If it's aliens and nasties like that, you call in the Agency.

That's something that all those whackos out there will never understand. Those leftist nutsos who scream about conspiracies and cover-ups, they look on from a safe distance, secure in their ignorance. If they really saw what they were screaming about — what's really out there — they'd beg to have the blindfolds back.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES



SPECIES

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1953 in response to the growing number of suspicious contacts reported by both commercial and Army Air Force pilots, the Agency is the U.S. government's lead organization in the area of extraterrestrial research. This top secret interagency task force, with both military and civilian assets at its disposal, was chartered to investigate and respond to all reported incidents of extraterrestrial contact in the United States. Over the years, their province has been widened to include all sorts of unexplained phenomena.

The Agency has fulfilled its duties with admirable zeal, determined to investigate, contain, and, if possible, study any alien visitors. The Agency's research division studies alien technologies, seeking applications useful to our national defense. Over the years, Agency researchers have made particularly noteworthy contributions in the fields of computer science and biotech. Also charged with keeping the existence of extraterrestrials secret in order to avoid "panicking the civilian populace," Agency operatives are the source of most of the rumors concerning the ominous "Men in Black."

ORGANIZATION

Headquartered in a separate section of the National Security Agency compound at Fort Meade, Maryland, the Agency has many thousands of employees, hundreds of agents, and the resources of the federal government at its disposal. Agency complexes are scattered throughout the country, normally on military reservations. Notable examples include the Laboratory — the headquarters of Project Proteus, Phase II — located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

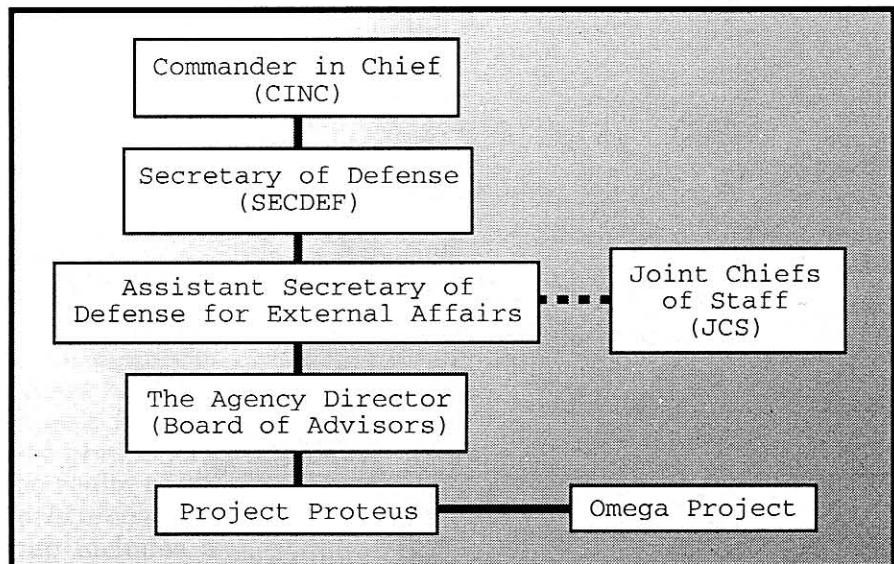
The Agency is headed by a Director, who regularly consults the Agency's Advisory Board on important or unusual issues. The members of this board include the Agency's division chiefs as well as representatives of other interested govern-

ment agencies (for example, the intelligence services, the State Department, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)). The Agency's chain of command runs through the armed forces, and then back to civilian control through the JCS and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for External Affairs. The very existence of this position is top secret; for security reasons, its occupants are not confirmed by the Senate. The Director of the Agency is a member of the National Security Council, and briefs the President regularly on relevant issues.

ACTIVITIES

Since the government first received the message at Arecibo in 1993, the Agency's priorities and the focus of its activities have changed dramatically. Although the Agency's researchers continue to explore a variety of projects, and its operations division still investigates all incidents connected to the extraterrestrial or unexplained, the Agency's main efforts are now focused on Project Omega and its offshoot, Project Proteus. This is particularly true since the failure of Phase I of Project Proteus, the alien's escape. The Agency's Director and Board of Advisors believe that the importance of the genetic research, and the deadly threat posed by Sil, fully justify this reallocation of resources.

These events have greatly increased the influence and prestige of Brigadier General (BG) Donald Transom, the new head of Project Proteus and a member of the Agency's Board of Advisors. A junior division chief before Project



Proteus, BG Transom first pushed for phase II of the project and secured it for his division following the death of former head Xavier Fitch. He directs the continuing genetic research of Project Proteus as well as the search for the aliens. Transom's increasing prominence has caused dissension at the Agency, particularly among those older hands who questioned the wisdom of the project from the beginning. They marvel at Transom's seeming ability to "dive headfirst into a pile of shit and come up with a hundred dollar bill in his mouth."

The Director and the rest of the Agency's leadership agree on their organization's role. They view the Agency as the guardian of American society and human civilization as we know it. The Agency mans the front lines against alien incursions, protecting and serving the people. The section's leaders also believe that this mission requires the Agency itself to decide what is best for the country. After all, the experience and knowledge of its personnel make them uniquely suited for this task. A key part of the Agency's mission is to protect the population from a truth that it doesn't want to know and isn't prepared to handle.

The Agency firmly believes that it must destroy the alien created in Phase I of Project Proteus, and any offspring it might produce, in order to preserve the human race. There is no choice, for the aliens are deadly predators, hunters of men. The Director grudgingly acknowledges that *perhaps* the Agency should never have created the alien, but that issue is no longer relevant. The Agency will quite literally use whatever means it believes necessary to accomplish its current mission.

AGENTS

In their quest to destroy the aliens, the Agency is again using the alien proteins to create a force of physically gifted, shapeshifting agents. These agents are in fact a new species, informally dubbed *homo sapiens mutatis* by Agency researchers. The Agency has experi-

mented with many combinations of human and alien genetic material, attempting to create agents with varying levels of power tailored for specific missions.

The scientists have thus far identified four stable genetic combinations which allow agents to survive the transformation process. These genetic combinations are known as Proteus-Alpha, -Beta, -Gamma, and -Delta. Agents who



receive the higher concentrations of alien genetic material are more powerful, but are also more greatly affected psychologically by their transformation. These agents lose some ability to emotionally connect to the people around them, and the Agency fears that they will be more difficult to control, perhaps requiring extensive resocialization.

The transformation process is always extremely painful for the subjects. Failed transformations almost always result in death. Unfortunately, the Agency's success rate is so far only seventy-four percent, and this rate was even lower during the initial experimentation process. However, agents do occasionally survive a failed transformation. The resulting "Mules" lack shapeshifting powers, but their physical abilities surpass even those of their fellow agents. The Agency permits these Mules to survive, if they pass the psychological screening, because their great physical prowess makes such Mules excellent mercenaries.

The Agency also carefully considers the composition of each command group it creates, balancing the powers and psychological profiles of the agents as it builds the teams. For

example, the leader of the team is *always* a human, often a veteran Agency operative. The Agency also tries to place a psychic human in each command group, particularly recruiting and training empaths and telepaths. Project Proteus instructs these psychics to monitor the emotional condition and/or surface thoughts of genetically altered agents, and to alert the team leader and other command group members to growing instability in one of their fellows. Finally, while Mules are generally highly regarded only for their physical prowess, it is now Agency policy to ensure that a Mule be included in any team containing an Alpha agent.

In response to a tragic "training accident" at the Laboratory early in the program (see the mini-adventure at the end of this book), the Agency will *never* allow more than one Alpha agent

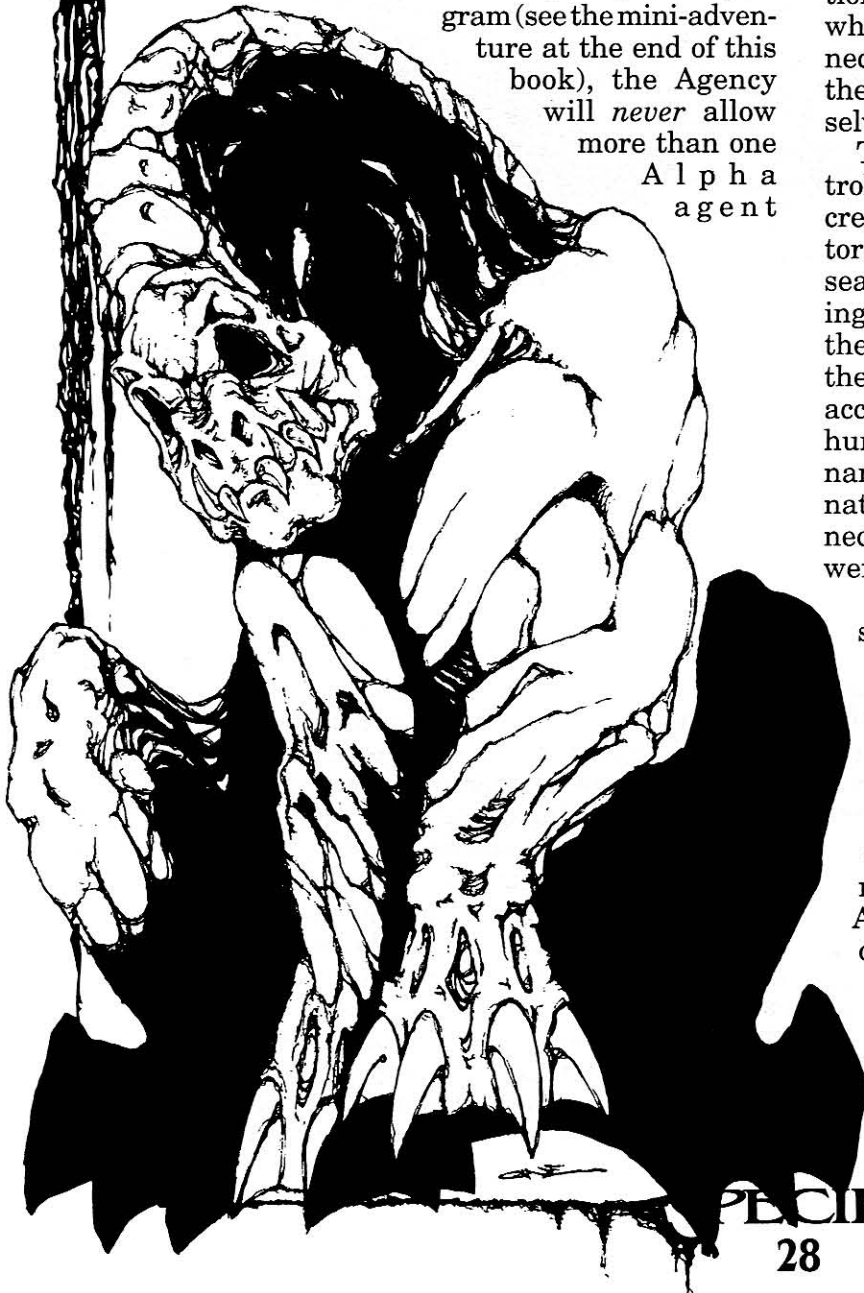
in the same command group. The director of Project Proteus learned the hard way that two rogue Alphas together are too much for other agents to handle. As an additional precaution against rogue agents, Project Proteus now issues powerful sedative darts, similar to those used on elephants and rhinoceri, to the leader and medic of each command group. These sedatives are for use on genetically altered agents who go rogue, or temporarily succumb to their alien instincts.

CONTROLS

The Agency recognizes the dangers inherent in continuing to spread the alien genetic code, and there was — and is — significant opposition to the creation of these agents. On the whole, the Agency views its altered agents as a necessary evil — absolutely required to battle the alien, but still potential enemies themselves.

The Agency has instituted a number of control measures designed to manage the risk created by these agents, and carefully monitors their activity at *all* times. Agency researchers altered the creation process, limiting the levels of alien proteins introduced into the agents. These limits reduce the powers of the agents and the ease with which they can access their powers, but also ensure that their human nature and instincts remained dominant. Some earlier, more potent genetic combinations were unsuccessful in maintaining the necessary level of humanity, but those assets were quickly terminated.

The second control measure Agency researchers have incorporated into their program is the introduction of a fatal flaw engineered into the DNA of the altered agents (including Mules). The genetic weakness creates a chronic, deadly disease which lies dormant in the agents' cells. The agents depend on monthly doses of the chemical antidote synthesized by the researchers, and available only from the Agency, to ensure that the disease remains dormant. If an agent misses a scheduled dose, she will become ill within a month, and die of complete neural collapse approximately one to three months later. The agents are all acutely aware of this dependency.



Finally, the Agency has implanted a minute, passive tracking device in the skull of each of its agents, human and altered alike. Most agents are not aware of this device, which emits signals only in response to a particular frequency of high beam radio waves. This tracker has a range of approximately 160 kiloemters, and may be used to search for captured, deceased, or rogue agents. The Agency may also track agents with the DNA detectors the Project's researchers developed to track aliens so long as the settings are properly adjusted.

While these measures might appear harsh, the Director defends them as necessary to ensure that the Agency maintains control over the alien DNA, ensuring the agents do not go rogue and further endanger the human race. To that end, every altered agent is sterilized during the transformation process.

ENEMIES

The Agency is aware of some of the enmity which its recent activities have engendered even within other sections of the government, and it works to counter the influence of its enemies both within and outside of the government. In particular, the Agency knows of the existence and purpose of A.W.A.R.E., the Iron Triangle, and the Sacred Fire (see below), and attempts to closely monitor their activities. The Agency is perfectly willing to fight back, even using preemptive measures, if the use of such measures will not bring the Agency's activities into the public eye.

The Agency is also working to develop more effective means to track down their main enemy, the aliens. Scientists are employing a statistical index derived from the FBI's Missing Persons Report to track unusual murders and disappearances, but at this stage the Agency must too often still rely on specific, DNA "fingerprints" the alien(s) leave behind. As noted above, scientists have developed devices to detect the presence of alien DNA, but these are only effective within approximately 25 meters. For now, the Agency must rely on the old-fashioned field work of its agents. The Director is keenly aware that every day the alien, and any of its offspring, continue to exist, is another day closer to the general public's learning of the threat unleashed by Project Proteus.

WHO'S WHO

BRIGADIER GENERAL DONALD H. TRANSON

The Director of Project Proteus, Brigadier General Transom is a hard-charging, career-oriented officer who desires to build his position into a political power base which will guarantee him four stars one day. Transom is convinced that once he has achieved this pinnacle of military achievement it will be a simple thing to extend his power to the general public — and the Presidency. For this reason, Transom is particularly anxious to triumph over the aliens, erasing any blame which might attach to him for his role in the decision to create the creatures.

Transom is prejudiced against all aliens, including his altered agents. He is already considering a number of options on how to deal with the threat posed by the agents once the alien menace has been defeated.

BRIGADIER GENERAL DONALD H. TRANSON

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, melee combat 12, stealth 10, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 13, heavy weapons 11, missile weapons 11, thrown weapons 12, vehicle piloting: wheeled 11

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 8

Resist shock 11

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 11

Camouflage 14, computer ops 14, demolitions 14, first aid 14, perception 16

MIND 10

Language: Spanish 13, language: Japanese 11

CONFIDENCE 11

Intimidation 18, willpower 17

CHARISMA 10

Charm 12, persuasion 17

Life Points: 10

Equipment: Colt .45 ACP, damage value 19, ammo 6; IBM laptop computer; access to resources of Army and Agency.

DOCTOR COL. ROBERT LINDSAY

Dr. Lindsay is a relatively honest, harried scientist who would much rather be conducting research in his own quiet laboratory than administering Project Proteus. However, the Agency will not let someone of Lindsay's seniority, stature, and skill retire at such a time of crisis. Despite his reluctance, Dr. Lindsay works very hard at his job, giving it his entire attention both night and day. However, he does not particularly excel at managing people, and his leadership has done nothing to ease the tensions brewing among a number of the members of his project.

Dr. Lindsay feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Agency and to his job. Although he is troubled by the ethical ramifications of his genetic projects, he is convinced that they ultimately serve mankind. He is united with the Director in the firm conviction that Sil and any progeny must be destroyed.

Lindsay is a very poor liar owing to a quirk which causes his left eye to twitch when he is telling a falsehood.

DOCTOR COL. ROBERT LINDSAY

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 9, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

STRENGTH 7

ENDURANCE 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 11

Computer ops 17, perception 18, science: biology 15, science: genetics 19, teaching: biology 17

MIND 12

Research 18

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 10, willpower 12

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 16

Life Points: 8

Equipment: Glasses; computer; various textbooks; lab equipment

DOCTOR WILLIAM HATHAWAY

Dr. Hathaway is a brilliant researcher and geneticist who has done groundbreaking work on Project Proteus. He is also, arrogant, abrasive, unforgiving, and intolerant.

Dr. Hathaway is employed by the Agency, but feels no particular loyalty to that institution or any other. He seeks to promote his own work and reputation, dreaming of a Nobel Prize or two in his future. To this point, his greatest projects have suffered some fatal flaw or catastrophe that prevents Hathaway's receiving the recognition he feels he deserves so richly. However, Dr. Hathaway knows that when he is finally surrounded by a truly competent staff, and the Agency gives him clearance to publish, his brilliance will shine through unadulterated by other's incompetence.

During Phase I of the Project, Dr. Hathaway developed a strong dislike for one of his colleagues, Dr. Boone, who he feels is weak, sentimental, and unscientific. He also developed a strong prejudice against aliens. This prejudice carries over to the altered agents. He privately feels that all humans injected with the alien DNA (at this stage of the technology) will require termination, and accepts this as one of the prices of scientific advancement.

DOCTOR WILLIAM HATHAWAY

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 12

Computer ops 16, perception 16, science: biology 17, science: chemistry 17, science: genetics 18

MIND 12

Research 17

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 15

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 15

Life Points: 8

Equipment: Computer; various textbooks; lab equipment.

DOCTOR JETHRA BOONE

Dr. Boone is a brilliant psychologist, and a committed and caring student of humanity. Recently hired by the Agency on a contract basis, she had no Agency experience prior to Project Proteus. Dr. Boone is unfamiliar with,

and ill at ease in, the Project's environment, which is dominated by military and intelligence professionals. Therefore she often comes across as awkward or cool, masking her naturally outgoing nature.

Dr. Boone is by no means a traitor to the Project, but she feels no particular loyalty to the Agency either. She has been very disturbed by what she has seen while working on Project Proteus, and by the readiness of her colleagues to "cut their losses" and move on. Dr. Boone is aware of the prejudice in the Agency against the genetically altered agents, and is very sympathetic towards them. She is willing to aid agents as much as possible, giving them information or other assistance, and may even go so far as to give agents access to information they are not officially allowed to have. Dr Boone would certainly warn an agent if she knew they were being unnecessarily endangered or targeted for termination.



DOCTOR JETHRA BOONE

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 11, dodge 10, swimming 11

DEXTERITY 8

Vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 7

ENDURANCE 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 13

Computer ops 17, perception 17

MIND 11

Research 15, scholar: anthropology 16, scholar: psychology 18, scholar: sociology 17

CONFIDENCE 10

Intimidation 14, willpower 15

CHARISMA 9

Charm 12, persuasion 14

Life Points: 7

Equipment: Computer; various textbooks on psychology and sociology; lab equipment.

STANDARD AGENCY OPERATIVE

This is a profile of the Standard Agency operative, the common agents who populate the Project and the Agency. These men and women are fairly talented, well-trained, and loyal to the Agency, and they will generally follow orders without question. Their personalities and interests run across the spectrum of conventional American political thought and culture.

STANDARD AGENCY OPERATIVE

AGILITY 9

Dodge 12, maneuver 11, melee combat 12, stealth 11 unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 13, lock picking 10, vehicle piloting: wheeled 11

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 10

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 11, demolitions 11, perception 12, tracking 11

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 2-6

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19; Beretta 9mm, damage value 17, ammo 14; 5.56 Commando submachinegun, damage value 21, ammo 30. Other equipment as assigned.

STANDARD AGENCY RESEARCHER

This is a profile of the standard agency researcher, a well-educated, well-trained scientist who spends the vast majority of his or her life quietly working away in a lab. Most researchers usually feel loyalty to the Agency, although such scientists are more likely to disagree with some of the Agency's policies than are other operatives. Researchers' opinions and interests range across the spectrum of conventional thought.

Standard researchers will generally regard the characters warily, at first, both because they are "operators," and because they are genetically altered.

STANDARD AGENCY RESEARCHER

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9

DEXTERITY 8

Vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

STRENGTH 7

ENDURANCE 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

Perception 10, science: any 12

MIND 8

Research: any 12

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Computer; laboratory equipment; notebooks; reference texts.

A.W.A.R.E.

We came together as A.W.A.R.E. to fight against the war, and to fight for our land and our air. We had to keep the bloodsucking corporations from killing our future, and the Big Green Machine from slaughtering innocents across the world. If we didn't, there wouldn't be anything left for the children.

But then we saw them, pouring out of the sky. It was at a camp-out and love-in for peace back in 1973; we were still pretty straight then, the acid hadn't come out yet. The lights were everywhere, and the shapes flashing across the sky. They flew over us, around and around, without a sound. None of us could move, not even Trina who never stopped moving! Suddenly, I felt a cold wave of... something crawling through my brain. When it ended, it seemed as if no time had passed, but it happened to us all — we all remembered.

We lay in the grass a while, holding each other and talking about the lights, when a bunch of pigs swooped down on us, along with some government stiffs in coats and ties. They looked around a lot, asked us a bunch of questions about the lights, but then told us that we were crazy — a bunch of hippies freaked out on drugs. None of it had happened, it had all been in our minds. One pig even told us to give it up, because no one would believe us. But man, they were taking measurements like crazy with equipment I'd only seen before in sci-fi movies. It was another cover-up, but this one was taking place right under our noses, not in some far off jungle across the ocean! And this cover-up... this one was even bigger than the war, it was the granddaddy of cover-ups and we knew just what to do about it.

We started studying UFOs. A lot of us got straight and got degrees; and the more we learned, the clearer it was that the government had been covering this up for at least fifty years. This is big, survival-of-the-human-race big! We know that the truth is out there. Aliens exist, and one day we will have enough concrete proof to go to the media and blow our "benevolent" government's little game out of the shadows and into every American's living room!

BACKGROUND

The group A.W.A.R.E., Americans Working Against Repression on Earth, was founded in

1967 by a small group of students at the University of California-Berkeley. Their original purpose was to promote environmental awareness and to protest the Vietnam War. No more radical than the average student group of the time, A.W.A.R.E. engaged in no really serious illegal activity. Few of their members were ever arrested for anything more serious than protesting the war or use of marijuana.

Yet the focus of the group changed radically in mid-1973. The war in Vietnam was drawing to a close, and the Environmental Protection Agency had been formed. A.W.A.R.E. decided to sponsor a retreat and "love-in" in the mountains of northern California to refresh their spirits and map out the group's strategy for the coming year.

Then the aliens came.

The members of A.W.A.R.E. who were on the retreat insisted that late on the first night they had been visited by several mysterious flying crafts. These strange visitors immobilized and scanned the students with beams of bright light, and then departed. The police and federal agents who responded to the scene dismissed the report as the ravings of drug-crazed hippies. Yet some of the students noticed that the police had arrived at the campground even though no one from their group had called them; and that a number of uncommunicative men in dark suits continued to take photographs, statements, and scientific readings with bizarre instruments. No account of the story appeared in the local paper, and the authorities continued to deny that anything unusual had happened.

The strategy of the group did indeed change after that retreat. The trauma of the experience and the lack of official response convinced the students that their encounter was real, and that the government was intentionally covering it up. From that day on, A.W.A.R.E. has been devoted to learning the truth about the alien threat, preparing to survive a possible alien invasion, and working to expose the government conspiracy.

ORGANIZATION

As might be expected, A.W.A.R.E. is a loosely knit, non-hierarchical organization. The group has a network of several thousand contributing members, and an inner circle of roughly two

hundred activists. It holds elections at its bi-annual convention, which is held on the property of whatever member volunteered to host it at the last convention.

The members elect a board of officers, headed by the "Anti-President," in a raucous open session that often lasts the entire night. The current Anti-President is a salesman named Rafe Johnson. The board of officers meets more regularly to plan A.W.A.R.E.'s activities, but most often stays in touch through the group's own (heavily encrypted) computer bulletin board.

ACTIVITIES

A.W.A.R.E. publishes a newsletter and sponsors a variety of programs and activities each year which are designed to raise the public's consciousness about extraterrestrials. This has earned them the reputation among the public at large as a friendly, harmless group of crackpots. Essentially "hiding in plain sight," these activities and A.W.A.R.E.'s reputation help conceal the group's true focus: investigating incidents of possible extraterrestrial activity, and spying on the activities of the government groups that they believe do the same.

PERSPECTIVE

All of the "hard-core" members of A.W.A.R.E. have trained themselves to be computer-literate outdoorsmen and survivalists. Members of the inner circle live at the very fringes of American society, often in physically remote areas, linked together only by their computers. A.W.A.R.E. is firmly convinced that the government is orchestrating a massive cover-up concerning the existence of aliens and their presence among us. The organization is determined to "blow the lid off" of the entire operation, and inform the public of the true nature of the alien threat.

Traumatized by their experiences that night more than twenty years ago, the senior members of the group, who have grown more and more conservative over the years, fear a possible alien invasion. They are prepared to survive and resist. A sizable portion of the group's funds go into creating and maintaining "safehouses" throughout the country to facilitate the group's operations in case of invasion. A.W.A.R.E. also purchases communal survival

supplies, and funds operations to spy on the Agency and the FBI.

This core group is also increasingly concerned about double agents within their group's ranks, sent by the government to infiltrate. Although the majority of the membership favors simply turning such people out when they are discovered, an increasingly vocal cadre which advocates violent action has called for killing any government plants.

AGENTS

Agency characters may encounter members of A.W.A.R.E. on one of their missions, or while investigating the same reports of alien activity. A.W.A.R.E. does possess the technology and expertise to gather much of the same information as does the Agency (although they could not intercept the aliens' original message). Most A.W.A.R.E. members would pose no threat to the characters, at least individually, and may even help them against an alien. A.W.A.R.E. is not a violent group (for the most part), although members do often carry weapons to protect themselves against both aliens and government agents (who have fired upon them on a few occasions). AWARE-ists may well come into conflict with Agency characters because their purpose is to expose the aliens, while the characters must work to preserve the secret of their existence. (If A.W.A.R.E. learns of the agents' alien natures, the group may well turn against them as traitors to humanity.)

The two Agency spies inside A.W.A.R.E. keep the Agency well-informed of the group's activities. A.W.A.R.E. knows that the government intercepted an extraterrestrial message in 1993, and that a genetic research project known as Project Proteus began soon afterwards. They do not yet know of the existence of Sil, or the mutation of the agents. However, the group is actively investigating the project. A.W.A.R.E. just may force the Agency's hand enough to require them to actively oppose the group. How much force would be deemed necessary in such a situation is unknown.

WHO'S WHO

RAFE JOHNSON

Rafe Johnson is the current "Anti-President" of A.W.A.R.E. One of the original mem-

bers of the group, he is a politically aware, intelligent, smooth operator who intends to uncover what the Agency is hiding. Although he is an "old hippie," Rafe has not slowed down one bit mentally or physically.

Rafe plans to bring A.W.A.R.E. out of the 1970s and into the 1990s by fostering connections with certain sympathetic parties in the government and the private sector. He is currently carefully watching the activities of his contacts in the F.B.I., who are investigating a string of seemingly unrelated murders. The case has something to do with unusual DNA and Rafe wonders if getting some samples of this strange DNA might be the break A.W.A.R.E. has been waiting for.

RAFE JOHNSON

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, stealth 10 unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, lock picking 10, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 13, computer ops 14, demolitions 13, perception 15, tracking 12

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 16, survival: desert 12, survival: forest 12, willpower 16

CHARISMA 10

Persuasion 16

Life Points: 10

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19; Glock 17, damage value 17, ammo 17; bulletproof vest TOU+7/17, torso; 1992 Winnebago equipped with computer system, radio & shortwave receivers & transmitters, GPS technology

STANDARD A.W.A.R.E. ACTIVIST

The average, active member of A.W.A.R.E. tends to be an intelligent, aware person who lost his faith in "the system" long ago. The AWARE-ist is now loyal to his family, his fellows, and A.W.A.R.E.'s version of the "truth."

Most members of A.W.A.R.E. are not violent, but they tend to dislike and mistrust any gov-

ernment agents. In a pinch, however, they would help government agents in an attempt to destroy an alien presence.

STANDARD A.W.A.R.E. ACTIVIST

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, melee combat 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10, lock picking 10, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 10, computer ops 11, demolitions 11, perception 12, tracking 11

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 8

Intimidation 10, survival: desert 10, survival: forest 10

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 1-4

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19; Beretta 9mm, damage value 17, ammo 12; bulletproof vest, TOU+7/17; .30-.30 lever-action rifle, damage 21, ammo 6; access to a high-tech computer system.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS BRANCH

I joined the Bureau in 1984 — it was a dream come true. I'd always wanted to be a cop, and the FBI is the finest, most effective law enforcement agency in the world. It's a fact ... That said, the Bureau certainly has its fair share of imbeciles.

Don't get me wrong, we do good work. It's just that the bureaucratic mindset of the bosses, and rigid procedures, sometimes stifle creativity and original thought. Everyone wants things to fit neatly into a little slot. Complications or unanswered questions make the Big Boys sweat. Some cases just won't fit that mold, though, so they give them to us in the S.I.B.

We handle all sort of bizarre cases, mostly involving "unexplained phenomena." Of course

most of these phenomena are perfectly explainable, if people were willing to hear the answers. There truly are many, many things out there that we just don't understand.

What's that, UFOs? ... Yes, we handle some cases involving what appear to be extraterrestrial incidents. A series of murders involving previously unknown DNA specimens? You know that I can't confirm or deny the existence of any particular investigation. No comment.

BACKGROUND

The government created the Special Investigations Branch of the FBI, or SIB, in 1932 to handle its investigation into the kidnapping and murder of the son of renowned aviator Charles Lindbergh. Initially, the SIB handled any particularly important or difficult cases the President or FBI Director felt warranted its attention, but its role changed over the course of time. As the FBI grew more specialized, with different branches designed to combat various types of crime, the SIB naturally became the branch which handled the odd cases, those that just didn't fit under the auspices of any of the other FBI branches.

These cases have included many incidents involving apparently inexplicable supernatural phenomena or bizarre mutations of humans, plants, or animals. These cases also, on occasion, involve extraterrestrials.

ORGANIZATION

The SIB is a branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. As such, it is subject to strict guidelines concerning its jurisdiction, policies, and procedures. Individual agents may sometimes violate these procedures, but they do so at the risk of their careers. Although SIB sometimes unofficially condones such ventures, it will never openly stand behind agents violating the law. Culled from a number of highly qualified applicants after a very demanding selection process, FBI agents are highly intelligent, well-trained, and very professional. Most agents follow the ingrained discipline of the Bureau, and play strictly "by the book." Those who do not, and survive, tend to end up in places like the SIB.

The FBI's primary law enforcement mission is to enforce federal laws, and to investigate and solve crimes committed in violation of that

law. It has jurisdiction over these crimes anywhere in the United States. The FBI may also assist local law enforcement agencies upon request, providing technical expertise and resources that a state or city cannot hope to match. The SIB gets most of its cases through such requests.

The Chief of the SIB, the division's senior agent, reports directly to the Deputy Director for General Crimes. She has four agents working under her, and a caseload that could keep ten times that number busy for a year. While the FBI is a mammoth organization with extraordinary resources of technology, knowledge, and manpower, only a very tiny fragment of those resources are devoted to the SIB. Therefore, while these agents have full access to the resources of the Bureau while on a case, their small numbers limit the cases that they can accept. Lack of time and resources may also cause them to prematurely "pull the plug" on a less-promising case.

ACTIVITIES

The SIB takes cases which are referred to it by local law enforcement authorities, or by another branch inside the Bureau. On occasion, an agent may learn of a case on his own, and convince his superiors to allow an investigation. The SIB's activities are often hampered by skepticism and impatience at the highest levels of the Bureau. (The Agency may also be encouraging this reticence.)

The SIB is currently investigating a series of murders apparently committed by the same killer in California and North Carolina. Their investigation has revealed that in each case, DNA samples of unknown, possibly extraterrestrial origin, were recovered from the scene. The agents have noticed the extraordinary interest that both the military and other civilian agencies are paying to their handling of this case.

The SIB is officially interested only in solving cases. However, individual agents tend to be particularly interested in learning the *real* truth about the bizarre events they investigate. Already convinced that aliens do exist, the agents of the SIB believe that they are on the trail of an extraterrestrial killer. They also are determined not to allow other parties in the government to interfere with *this* case or to

cover up the truth until SIB can lay the matter to rest to its own satisfaction.

WHO'S WHO

STANDARD SIB AGENT

SIB agents are highly trained and highly motivated law enforcement professionals. These agents may investigate the same incidents as the Agency characters, and might even attempt to arrest such characters for obstructing justice should they interfere with SIB's efforts. At the least, this would prove embarrassing to the Agency and destroy the agents' current cover. The FBI has law enforcement powers, which the Agency does not, and this gives SIB agents some advantage over Agency representatives in the field.

The SIB agents' weaknesses are their predictability and their rigid hierarchy. This predictability may allow the characters to counter their efforts, or to avoid them altogether.

STANDARD SIB AGENT

AGILITY 11

Dodge 13, maneuver 13, melee combat 13, stealth 12 unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 13, lock picking 11, thrown weapons 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 11

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 11, computer ops 11, deduction 13, first aid 11, perception 12, science: (any) 11

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Weapons and equipment as needed.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

Hello friend! Yes, it's good to see you again too. I'm glad that you have arrived, I was

beginning to wonder if you would keep our appointment. No, no apologies! I understand... It is always best to be careful.

Now, do you have possession of the items that we discussed on our last visit? Excellent! Now here's what you must do: at precisely 3:00 p.m. on the 24th, telephone ...

... and then you circle the park until you see the red brick wall with a bench in front of it. There will be a gentleman in a tan trenchcoat and a bowler hat seated there, with a black leather briefcase by his feet. The briefcase will be five centimeters thick with brass fittings, yours must be the same. Sit beside the man on the bench and read the Times, slowly. Say nothing to the other man except a polite greeting.

At some point, the man will leave with a briefcase. Wait at least five minutes after that, then feel free to leave with the other. What you are looking for will be inside!

No need to thank me, my friend. I'm merely a businessman from the old country, doing what I can to make everyone happy! But you've barely touched your salmon! Eat up, the food here is truly excellent.

Waiter ... a bottle of wine!

BACKGROUND

The end of the Cold War greatly reduced the tension between our nation and those of the former Warsaw Pact. However, the reduction in military forces around the world since the late 1980's has certainly not led to a corresponding reduction in the intelligence services. In fact, once bipolar tensions were reduced, nations which had been (and in theory were still) staunch allies felt much more free to direct certain intelligence assets towards each other.

Technology and ideas are now the hottest commodities on the market, and industrial espionage is more common now than ever. The computer industry, and firms engaged in such burgeoning scientific fields as pharmaceutical production, microbiology, and genetics have been particular targets for agents of other corporations and foreign governments.

Nor are the targets of industrial espionage limited to private industry. Many governments, particularly those which have an official industrial policy and work closely with their private

sector, actively seek to obtain information on the research and development efforts of other nations. The United States has the largest economy in the world, as well as arguably the most advanced technology. Its open borders and democratic traditions make it a prime target for industrial espionage. In fact, there are currently active espionage campaigns directed against the Agency itself by certain well-connected and efficient foreign intelligence agencies.

The intelligence services of France, China, Israel, Japan, and North Korea have all learned something of Project Proteus, and wish to know more. These nations are all particularly interested in genetic engineering and biotechnology, and are aware that the U.S. government has been conducting research into human genetics through the Agency.

Russia's intelligence service, on the other hand, has been curiously absent from this field. While the turmoil in the former Soviet Union may explain this apparent lapse by its intelligence-gathering apparatus, there are other possible explanations as well. For example, radio telescopes both in Russia and Kazakhstan were certainly capable of receiving the alien broadcast in January, 1993. Moreover, the biotechnology and genetics industries in the former Soviet Union were sufficiently advanced to attempt an effort similar to Project Proteus. It is possible that Russia is making such an attempt. If so, the results are as yet unknown to American operatives.

ORGANIZATION

The intelligence services of foreign nations are organized and operated through the nation's embassy in the United States. While the agents receive their orders from abroad, the embassies in Washington, D.C., and New York (the United Nations) provide them with headquarters and havens. These embassies are considered a part of foreign soil, and protocol demands that those on embassy grounds are immune to search or seizure. Consulates in other large cities throughout the nation may also provide resources and communication.

In addition to agents operating directly from positions on the embassy staff, there are "sleeper agents" who live and work in our country. These agents gather intelligence independently,

or according to previously-arranged schedules, and report to their employers only infrequently.

As employees of foreign governments, these agents may have the resources of their government at their disposal for a particular mission. While these resources may vary widely according to the priority of the mission and the wealth of the nation, agents will generally have access to good information and sophisticated technology.

ACTIVITIES

The intelligence agencies of the nations listed above are all engaged in industrial espionage in this country against the Agency and Project Proteus. As yet, they know very few of the details of the project. Given the nature of the security around the Agency facilities, it is very unlikely that one of these nations would attempt to learn more about the Project through "direct action," in the form of a raid or reconnaissance mission. It is far more likely that they will attempt to acquire information by inserting agents into the Project.

These nations may attempt to recruit individuals with the skills and background to work as an operative or a researcher for the Agency, and then send them in search of employment. This method, however, is more time-consuming than attempting to recruit a person who is already employed by the Agency. It is also less likely to succeed, for as a practical matter the entry-level background checks, screening process, and polygraph tests are often far more thorough than those administered to current employees.

When selecting a person to approach, a foreign agent may look for a person with a natural sympathy for the agent's country (shared ethnic or religious background) or with reasons to be disaffected with her nation or employers. However, people with debts, or with personal habits that leave them open to blackmail, are often even better targets. Several Agency employees have reported (as required) attempted contacts by foreign agents within the past year.

While the FBI bears the primary responsibility for domestic counter-intelligence, the Agency does have its own security and counter-intelligence apparatus. The characters may become involved in this effort, temporarily assigned to that division due to their "specialized

skills." Foreign agents may also attempt to recruit the characters, or may investigate the characters' activities to learn more of the Agency's plans. Many of these nations might even attempt to capture one of the aliens for study should they learn the true extent of Project Proteus, and of the alien's escape.

WHO'S WHO

STANDARD FOREIGN AGENT

While the normal image of a foreign spy is a cool, collected, highly trained professional, note that some foreign agents could just as easily be ordinary folk, citizens of America or another nation who spy for a foreign power. While these agents may have considerable resources to oppose the Agency's operatives, they are even more hampered than the characters by their need for secrecy. Professional agents are very unlikely to attempt to kill the characters. They will only do so if ordered to, or if it is absolutely necessary to accomplish their mission. Murders and disappearances attract unwanted attention, and many agents still prefer to operate in the old style, allowing each other to live to fight another day.

STANDARD FOREIGN AGENT

AGILITY 10

Climbing 11, dodge 12, martial arts: karate 11, melee combat 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 11, lock picking 10, thrown weapons 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 8

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

Camouflage 10, computer ops 10, espionage 14, perception 11

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 9

Con 11, intimidation 11

CHARISMA 7

Disguise 8, persuasion 8

Life Points: 2-5

Equipment: Beretta 9mm, damage value 17, ammo 14; currency; false identification; false passports; lock picks, camera, attache case, wire cutters, eavesdropping devices.

THE IRON TRIANGLE

I had to sit there today and listen to that damn idiot Transom for an hour! On and on he blathered, pumping himself up for the Proteus project, describing their progress in tracking the aliens. It's as if no one cares that it's his damn-fool fault that the things exist in the first place, and that we're all closer than we've ever been to judgment day. He's a cowboy! An idiot! An amateur! A fool.

All right, that feels better. God almighty, that man stirs my blood! I honestly can't see why the Director protects him. He's had the Agency tied into knots ever since Arecibo, and now he's made more of the creatures! I know, he claims they're controllable, but how can we afford the risk? The bottom line is that if we applied enough men and firepower we could solve this alien problem, without creating more monsters that we'll just have to deal with someday. (At least Transom talks sense about that!)

Well, thank God there are still some of us in this business who know our asses from our elbows and can get things done. We'll deal with the aliens, and we'll keep an eye on that fool and his mutant monkeys. One day they'll get what they need. I just hope they don't take the Agency and all the rest of us down with them in the meantime.

BACKGROUND

Organized some two years ago by a member of the Agency's Board of Advisors, the Iron Triangle is a small, secret organization of government employees drawn from all of the fields related to Project Proteus. They have come together because of their opposition to the Project and everything associated with it. The group takes its name from the three pillars from which it draws its membership: the conventional military, the special operations community, and the intelligence agencies.

The Iron Triangle evolved from a small group of concerned friends who discussed the flaws of the Proteus proposal long before the first batch of alien DNA was mixed. The men were convinced that the consequences of the project's failure were so great that they outweighed any possible benefit to the nation. With the growth of genetic technology, the nation would soon reach whatever point that alien message could

take us to without help from a suspicious source with unknown motivations. Eventually, as the group saw that the government would implement the Project despite their concerns, they grew determined to stop the project at any cost, before it destroyed the nation.

ORGANIZATION

Aside from the original group of six members — the Inner Circle — the Iron Triangle is set up in the same manner as a modern terrorist group. Each original member recruited and indoctrinated two new members, and each new member was instructed to do the same. The members were chosen for their influence and experience, and for their hatred of Project Proteus.

The Iron Triangle is an organization of men who are often leaders in their own organizations, but who subordinate themselves to the orders of others in dedication to this cause. The group observes very strict discipline concerning contact between members, so that each member knows only his superior, and the two members that he has recruited. This policy ensures that the capture of one member will not destroy the entire organization. The group maintains similarly strict discipline concerning its operations, obeying orders from above. All orders, missions, and targets come directly from the Inner Circle.

The Iron Triangle is a small, relatively new organization. It is powerful only because of the influence of its members — all professionals in the intelligence and military communities. The individual members may often rely on the resources of their agencies during a mission, which is fortunate, because the Iron Triangle has, as of yet, accumulated few resources of its own. The leadership could, and undoubtedly will, change this practice when the need arises.

ACTIVITIES

The Iron Triangle is dedicated to destroying Project Proteus, and anyone or anything associated with it. They firmly believe that the Agency has been incredibly reckless to use the alien DNA, and that it is committing an act of genocide by injecting the whole mess back into the human race through the forced mutation of Agency operatives. The Iron Triangle believes that the only way to save the Agency and the

human race is to utterly destroy Project Proteus.

To this end, the Iron Triangle monitors the progress of the Agency's campaign against the aliens. They will not attack the agents while they are hunting an alien, for the Iron Triangle is perfectly willing to allow one enemy to slay another. The group will, however, carefully track each of the agents and the other assets of Project Proteus, marking their location and defenses against another day, when it is time to strike. This process is simplified because the shadowy founder of the Iron Triangle is actually a member of the Agency's Board of Advisors.

The Iron Triangle works actively to thwart the efforts of Project Proteus in every area except the hunt for the alien. It does so primarily by having its members coordinate the efforts of their respective organizations to compete for funding and resources, disrupt carefully-laid plans by "coincidence," or even use their positions to issue bogus "orders" to Agency personnel. Through careful manipulation, a specialty of the Inner Council, the Iron Triangle has often managed to cause projects and missions to fail, without either party recognizing their influence.

WHO'S WHO

STANDARD IRON TRIANGLE MEMBER

Iron Triangle agents are unique as a group because of their relative ages and level of experience. They are all older professionals, who have been, or are, leaders in their own agencies. Although they are competent warriors, their skills lean heavily toward leadership and tactical areas. Now these men work together in a disciplined machine designed to destroy Project Proteus and its mutated, "freak" agents.

STANDARD IRON TRIANGLE MEMBER

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, melee combat 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 10, lock picking 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 10

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 11

Computer ops 11, deduction 13, perception 12, trick 12

MIND 10

Business 12

CONFIDENCE 10

Interrogation 11, intimidation 12, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9

Life Points: 1-5

Equipment: None standard. Almost any available if needed and anticipated beforehand.

SACRED FIRE, INC.

Oh yes ... I have seen her! Moving with the night, one with the dark. I have seen her! Her form moving and flowing, twisting and turning ... Long claws rising as she tears at your flesh, I have seen her! She flows with the power of the ancients, with the power of life itself ... She is life, and death, joy and terror! Exultant in her beauty, triumphant over all, I have seen her! I worship her form, her beauty, her life, her death, her primal killing ecstasy!

Tearing and slashing, moving and twisting, beauty and horror, sex and lust, and love and hate ... I have seen her! And I will have her! We will build a shrine the likes of which the world has never seen, so that all might come to gaze in awe and prostrate themselves before she who is all that is. I will have her ... we will find her. Then shall we bring her home to us.

Oh, no, thank you James. I really don't need anything more at the moment. Could you put in a call to my broker for me, and why don't we head for home now?

BACKGROUND

Mr. Harold Devine is a reclusive multi-billionaire who spends most of his time either in Los Angeles, where he owns a palatial estate, or in his heavily-guarded 5,000-acre compound (named Euphoria) in the rugged mountains of western Montana. The son of an oil tycoon, Devine inherited a fortune in his youth, and has since vastly increased his wealth. Managing business empires is the only occupation for which Devine has a talent.

In his late twenties, Devine began to suffer

from a degenerative disease of the nervous system which left him quite mad. His condition is now stable, and he does not exhibit any anti-social behavior. He simply has a very tenuous grasp on reality. This combination of madness, vast wealth, and power has made Devine somewhat of a legend in the eyes of the public, and has put tremendous strain on his administrative assistants and publicists.

Several months ago, Devine learned of Sil's existence through government contacts. He immediately became enamored of the alien in what amounts to a quasi-religious, quasi-sexual fascination. Devine is determined to capture the alien and make her the crown jewel of his menagerie (see below).

ORGANIZATION

Devine has a tendency to throw himself into his latest project, and he has already committed much of his vast resources to building an organization which will enable him to capture, study, and hold an alien. He knows very little of the true nature of the creature, or of Project Proteus, but is devoting considerable effort towards learning more about both. Devine founded a new corporation, ostensibly aimed at facilitating environmental cleanups, preservation, etc., to organize his efforts to capture the alien. Sacred Fire, Inc. was officially launched nine months ago. (When asked why, Devine murmured something about T-shirt sales and licensing.)

The president of this corporation is Devine's very competent administrative assistant, Ms. Helga Winningham. While she is empowered to make almost any decision in Devine's absence, all important questions of policy and tactics must go through Devine personally. The corporation has resources which equal or exceed those of many small governments.

ACTIVITIES

Devine is a collector. He has established a large, illegal private zoo and nature preserve on his Montana ranch, which is stocked with a wide variety of exotic animals, including many endangered species (there are rumors, as well, that he has extraterrestrials as part of his menagerie as well). Both Euphoria's size and the expertise of its staff rivals that of many of the finest zoos in the world. Devine now desires



to add another alien to his collection, and is assembling a team of the best mercenary scientists and operators that money can buy to ensure that he can realize his dream.

Sacred Fire is in the process of building the information-gathering network required to track the aliens, and has been able to identify certain facilities and assets of Project Proteus. The company has also established research laboratories and an operations division to facilitate the capture and storage of an alien.

WHO'S WHO

HAROLD DEVINE

Devine is a very, very strange man. Most of his pertinent character traits are discussed above, for he is the founder and guiding spirit of Sacred Fire, Inc. Devine isn't an evil man, but he is quite mad and used to having his own way. Devine will not tolerate any interference with his efforts, and can be ruthless when those interests that currently have his attention are threatened. He did not build a multi-billion dollar empire while in his twenties by being kind or gentle.

HAROLD DEVINE

AGILITY 9

Beast riding: horse 11, swimming 10

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: wheeled 9

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 7

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 10

Computer ops 14, deduction 17, language: French 15, language: Japanese 15, perception 16, trick 16

MIND 10

Business 19

CONFIDENCE 12

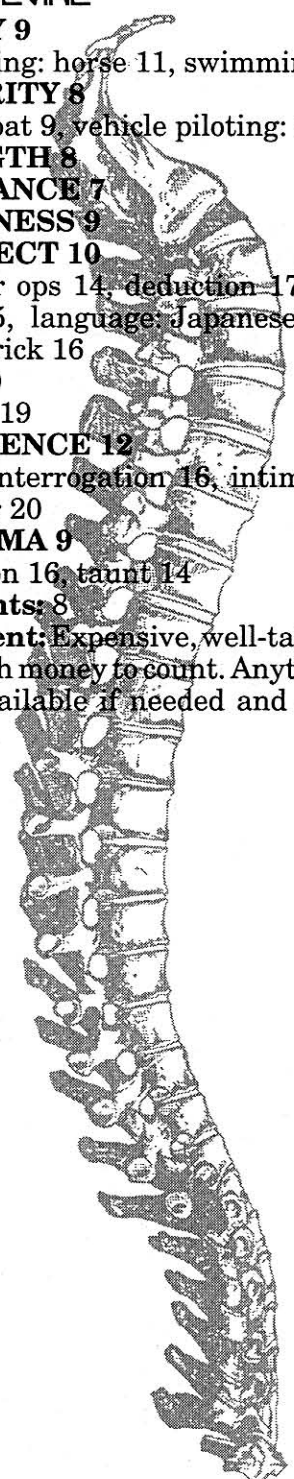
Con 18, interrogation 16, intimidation 17, willpower 20

CHARISMA 9

Persuasion 16, taunt 14

Life Points: 8

Equipment: Expensive, well-tailored clothing; too much money to count. Anything else he wants is available if needed and anticipated beforehand.





CHAPTER FOUR

AGENTS AND ALIENS

This section goes into detail on the abilities of Sil, her progeny, and the agents whose jobs it is to hunt the aliens down. Also included here is information on the aliens behind the Arcibo message and word of another nation about to create its own version of Sil. **Warning:** If you are going to be a player in the game, you may wish to refrain from reading this chapter, as it may spoil some surprises for you.

THE AGENTS

The Agency has created four different classes of agent, separated by the amount of alien DNA introduced into their system. They range from the Alphas, who are the most powerful, to the Deltas, who are the least powerful but more stable.

ALPHA AGENTS

Human volunteers who receive the highest concentration of alien proteins in their cellular structure (roughly one-quarter of the potency given to Sil), a dosage known as Proteus-Alpha, become Alpha Agents. These agents are extremely powerful shapeshifters, with greatly enhanced physical abilities. However, they are also extremely unstable psychologically. The alien proteins which give them their vast powers also greatly "dilute" their human nature. These agents have tremendous problems in relating to humans and human society, and their personalities are often fundamentally changed following their genetic alteration.

Alphas must constantly battle their alien

instincts — the predatory urges to rend, maim, and kill in response to stressful situations. It is debatable whether such agents are more alien than human, and if they still lean more toward human personality and demeanor, it is not by a wide margin. Alphas are relatively rare precisely because of this mental instability. The Agency does not create many Alphas, and even at this early stage of the project two Alphas have "gone rogue," requiring termination. Yet the Agency still considers the Alphas critical to the success of the Project, because the scientists project that agents of this power are needed to defeat the aliens — particularly Sil.

STANDARD ALPHA AGENT

AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 13
TOUGHNESS 12
INTELLECT 8
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 7
CHARISMA 7
Life Points: 3–8

BETA AGENTS

These agents receive a less powerful concentration of alien proteins than Alpha agents (roughly one-half that given to the Alphas). This mixture was named Proteus-Beta, and its recipients are known as Beta Agents. The shapeshifting powers of the Betas are not quite as flexible or powerful as the Alphas', and they

BACKGROUND NOTES: ALPHA AGENTS

Advantages/Compensations

1CI, 2CIII, 1CIV

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CIV): Alpha

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote); Advantage Flaw (CIV): Alpha; Quirk (CIV): Alien Instinct

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

Alpha Agents should rarely have Advantages based on interaction, such as "Contacts."

are not as physically powerful.

Still, the Betas are powerful shapeshifters, and are much more mentally stable than their Alpha brethren. While they possess strong alien instincts, Betas are recognizably "human." Many Agency scientists believe that the Betas provide the optimum mix of power and control in the battle against the alien.

STANDARD BETA AGENT

AGILITY 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 7

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 3-8

GAMMA AGENTS

The Delta agents receive the third highest level of alien proteins, the Proteus-Gamma mixture (roughly one-half that given to the Beta Agents). Gamma agents are noticeably less powerful than their Beta counterparts. Yet their powers are still flexible, and the Gammas are quite stable mentally. They can control their alien instincts, with only some difficulty, and can blend normally into human society.

STANDARD GAMMA AGENT

AGILITY 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 9

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 3-8

DELTA AGENTS

Delta agents receive the least powerful dose of alien proteins that still manage to successfully trigger the transformation process. Delta agents have very limited shapeshifting abilities, and only moderate physical advantages. In return, they are, mentally and emotionally, basically human. While Deltas feel the call of the alien side of their nature, these urges are "tugs" and not overwhelming desires.

STANDARD DELTA AGENTS

AGILITY 8

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 9

INTELLECT 9

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 9

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 2-8

MULES

Mules are living reminders of the dangers of the genetic transformation process. These agents were among the 24 percent of volun-

teers whose bodies failed to successfully make the transformation into *homo sapiens mutatis*. Most such agents die an excruciating death, but some two percent of these agents still manage to survive the alteration process. While Mules possess no apparent shapeshifting powers, their physical abilities are extraordinary. Mules are physically more powerful than even the Alpha agents, and some researchers speculate that their physical prowess may even approach that of Sil.

Hybrids of *homo sapiens sapien* and *homo sapiens mutatis*, Mules are all permanently sterile (hence their slightly derogative "title"). In addition, the Mules' physical proportions appear vaguely "odd" to human observers, although most such observers find the strangeness difficult to articulate. This handicap makes social interaction more difficult for Mules, particularly interaction with humans the Mules find attractive.

In a final, cruel genetic twist, the genetic flaw which the Agency researchers engineered into the alien proteins *does* make the transition into the bodies of the Mules. Therefore, Mule agents are still dependent on the Agency's chemical antidote to survive, even though they do not receive the shapechanging benefits of the genetic alteration process.

STANDARD MULE

AGILITY 10
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 10
STRENGTH 14*
TOUGHNESS
INTELLECT 7

MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 6
CHARISMA 6

*With Additional Attribute Point
Life Points: 3-8

PSYCHICS

Psychics are those rare individuals who have a true gift — the potential to open and explore the powers of their minds. With training, psychics may use these mental gifts to explore far-off places, or to affect the physical world around them. With their mental abilities, such psychics can make extremely useful warriors and scouts in the battle against the awesome physical powers of Sil and her progeny.

Psychics are uncommon in the *World of Species*, and they are rarely "just plain folks." Every gift comes with a price, and every psychic in the *World of Species* seems to have some physical or mental handicap, quirk, or vulnerability to compensate for their powers. Despite such eccentricities, the Agency is constantly looking for psychics to recruit for its divisions — particularly Project Proteus. For example, one of the original members of Command Group One was an empath.

STANDARD PSYCHIC

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 9
MIND 10
CONFIDENCE 11

BACKGROUND NOTES: BETA AGENTS

Advantages/Compensations

2CI, 1CII, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CIII): Beta

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Beta; Quirk (CIII): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

BACKGROUND NOTES: GAMMA AGENTS

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CII): Gamma

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CII): Gamma ; Quirk (CII): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

CHARISMA 8

Life Points: 2-5

Note: Psychic characters should be fully human, with 3CI, 1CII, and 2CIII Background Options. They must choose the Advantage "Special Effects (CIII)," and "Handicap" or "Quirk" Compensations are recommended as well.

THE ALIENS

The so-called "final" battle in Los Angeles between Sil and Command Group One was actually only the first conflict in a long war. Despite the Agency's initial euphoric hopes, the alien's final survival mechanism succeeded, allowing her to escape death and preserve her species.

ESCAPE

During the final confrontation with Command Group One, Sil's progeny was destroyed, but she herself escaped. It's theorized that, although wounded in the battle, she was then able to morph into a creature that could survive beneath the surface of the burning oil. Eventually, after her enemies departed, she emerged and departed the cavern.

At that point, Agency officials believe she went into hiding and for several days subsisted on animals. Now aware that there were powers actively attempting to stop her reproducing, Sil decided to leave those hunting her far behind. Calling on her limited knowledge of human culture, gathered from a steady diet of television, Sil decided that an airplane would be the most efficient means of travel. Stealing garments from a clothesline, Sil headed for LAX.

It's doubtful she had any particular destination in mind. But airport security would later find the dead body of a woman of approximately Sil's height and weight in a dumpster, minus her luggage and ticket. These Sil took with her as she boarded a plane to Raleigh-Durham, NC.

At this point, Sil made her first mistake. Having decided to change her appearance once again, the alien entered an unoccupied bathroom and began to cut and mold her face into one similar to the woman on the cover of the latest *Cosmopolitan*. Unfortunately, Sil forgot to lock the bathroom door, and a woman walked in on her, surprising her as she stood appraising her final handiwork with the keen eyes of a sculptor.

The woman's shock at the sight of the alien's claws and the blood splattered in and around the sink signed her death warrant. Sil lashed out, slaying the woman before she could scream. Hastily washing away her own blood, she quickly left the bathroom, making certain to lock the door behind her before moving on. However, in her haste, Sil left her genetic calling card in the bathroom in the form of several drops of blood on the floor under the mirror. After a query from the local police to the FBI requesting assistance in identifying the strange blood found at the scene, the Agency learned that at least one alien was still alive. Command Group One had failed after all.

Sil left the airport that night and disappeared into human society. Although the Agency does not know it, she currently lives on the fringes of that society among the large, student populations at the University of North

BACKGROUND NOTES: DELTA AGENTS

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 3CII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CI): Delta

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employment (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CI): Delta; Quirk (CI): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

Carolina at Chapel Hill, and nearby Duke University. Surviving by theft and murder, Sil has learned much more subtlety, going to great lengths to conceal her crimes. She also hunts much less frequently, although she must occasionally battle her instincts to keep from making a too obvious kill. Content with her current situation, the alien plans to remain in the area for the time being. She remains alert, however, and is always ready to move on if she senses that more Agency operatives are in the area. (Sil has no idea that she has inadvertently settled less than 160 kilometers from one of Project Proteus' centers in Fort Bragg.)

PROCREATION

Once established in the area, Sil once again found a suitable mate. Carefully choosing the finest combination of mental and physical at-

tributes available to her, she spent a night of intense passion with a young linebacker majoring in computer science. After he left the next morning (deaths close to the nest attract unwelcome attention), Sil gave birth to two males.

In a matter of weeks, they were old enough to form their own chrysalis and metamorphose. She taught them what she had learned about human society and then sent them away, instructing them to blend in with humanity ... and survive. They left then, going their separate ways, imprinted with the need to ensure both their own survival and that of their species.

SIL AND HER PROGENY

The following are standard statistical entries for the original alien in her natural form, and examples of common forms which she

BACKGROUND NOTES: MULES

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point (CIII) (applied to Strength)

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employment (CII), the Agency; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: Any that restrict the ability to interact with others

Restricted A/C

Advantages that provide bonuses to interaction

Note: Mules are allowed to choose two Special Abilities from the "Gamma-Delta" chart in Chapter Five, preferably ones that increase Strength or Toughness



might assume to battle or elude the characters. In addition, the following section also lists standard statistical entries for several generations of alien offspring. Note that the third through sixth generation of alien offspring are roughly equivalent in power to the Alpha through Delta levels of player characters. Beyond the sixth generation, the "Shapeshifting" Advantage becomes dormant. These individuals are, for all intents and purposes, human. However, they do carry the alien genetic potential and it is possible that two such humans could produce an alien of the "sixth generation."

The "generation" of the alien refers to the level of dilution of its alien genetic material. For example, Sil (or another "original" alien) mating with a human would produce "second generation" offspring, each with roughly fifty percent of the level of alien DNA possessed by their mother. A second generation alien mating with a human would likewise produce a third generation alien, with its percentage of alien genetic material again reduced by one half. However, the joining of two second generation aliens would produce second generation offspring. (As far as is known, the aliens reproduce by live birth, although it's possible that in their natural form, they are egg-layers.)

The aliens become progressively "more human" as their generational connection to the human race increases. As seen below, humanity is not in much more immediate danger from fourth through sixth generation aliens than it is from many humans loose in society today. This realization should provide moral dilemmas for the characters, given the policies of the Agency towards such individuals ("fire at will"). After all, such aliens are no less human than the genetically altered agents themselves ...

SIL. HUMANOID FORM

AGILITY 16

Dodge 20, maneuver 18, melee combat 19, stealth 22, unarmed combat 23

DEXTERITY 12

Fire combat 13, vehicle piloting: wheeled 13

STRENGTH 17

Lifting 18

ENDURANCE 16

Resist shock 21

TOUGHNESS 16

INTELLECT 11

Perception 17, tracking 17, trick 16

MIND 10

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22, survival: urban 15, will-power 20

ALLEN BIOLOGY

The aliens introduced to Earth by Project Proteus are fundamentally solitary creatures, except when driven to mate. A female of the species will attempt to select the finest, strongest mate possible, in the hopes of improving her offsprings' chance of survival. While the aliens can certainly mate with humans, they recognize the genetic "superiority" of their own species. Aliens therefore prefer to mate with those of their own species, or a "mixed breed" such as the Projects' altered agents, *homo sapiens mutatis*, given the opportunity.

The genetically altered characters are in fact a new species. They are no longer human, although not fully alien, which is why the Agency sterilizes them and forbids procreation (though there are fears such sterilization may not be fully effective). The Agency is well aware that the agents may well transmit their alien DNA to their children, creating future generations of genetically altered humanoids.

As the Agency fears, these future generations of mixed alien/human ancestry will, in fact, possess shapechanging powers. The alien proteins introduced into the agents' bodies alters them on a fundamental level. In addition to their shapechanging abilities and enhanced physical prowess, the genetically altered agents feel strong, instinctual, biological urges (as expressed in their new Background Compensation, "Quirk: Alien Instincts"). The agents may well feel strongly attracted to a beautiful alien, and have to battle their desires to fulfill their biological imperatives. This struggle of duty vs. instinct, their humanity vs. their alien nature, is a constant theme resonating in all genetically altered characters — even those with stable relationships with human partners.

CHARISMA 13 (6)

Charm 17 (10), disguise 16 (9), persuasion 17 (10), shapeshifting 21

Life Points: 10

Note: Parenthetical values refer to Sil in humanoid, as opposed to fully human, form.

Skill Notes: The alien has learned some skills in the several months since her creation, although many of the skills listed above are offshoots of her natural abilities. She will tend to focus on skills that help her to blend into human society or otherwise help her to survive.

Background Notes: Sil should be considered to have the Advantage "Shapeshifting (CVI)." She has access to any "Special Ability" listed in Chapter Five, and can have an unlimited number operating simultaneously. Those she uses most often are: *accelerated healing, chameleon, combat sense, enhance senses, fast reactions, natural armor, natural weaponry (hand to hand), regeneration, silence and speed.*

She should be considered to have the Compensations "Prejudice (CII)," Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII)," "Enemy (CIII)," "Infamy (CIII)," "Quirk (CV): Alien Instinct" and "Advantage Flaw (CV): Alien." Advantage Flaws would include "Alien Outlook," "Alien Understanding," "Cultural 'Allergy' II," and "Metabolic Difference."

Sil also has a unique ability which only she and other "first generation" aliens possess. It is the ability of her body parts to exist independently of one another and retain her consciousness and the ability to shapeshift. Although she did not demonstrate this in her struggle with Command Group One, it is conceivable that she could have severed parts of her body and had them attack on their own. Note, however, that each piece would be limited by the mass value restrictions attached to shapeshifting (see Chapter Six) and that the regeneration and consumption of mass would be required to regain her fully grown form.

Keep in mind that progeny **do not** have this ability.

One aspect of Sil's *chameleon* ability is that she can slice her flesh and mold it into another shape, making use of her *disguise* skill. She does suffer damage as a result of this and cannot change her hair color, having to rely on dyes. She can only do this when in fully human form.

Natural Tools: The myriad possibilities of

natural tools available to the alien are far beyond the scope of this book. However, a few common examples follow: wings, speed value 12; claws, damage value STR+4/21; barbed tongue, damage value STR+5/22; tentacles, damage value STR+5/22; hide, armor value TOU+6/22; teeth, damage value STR+5/22.

In addition to the forms listed below, she may take any natural or enhanced animal form, as well as any other monstrous form which ever was or will be possible. In all of these forms, she retains her own consciousness, and her Intellect, Mind, and Confidence statistics are unchanged.

SIL. "SCORPION" FORM

AGILITY 13

Climbing 16, dodge 23, long jumping 17, maneuver 16, running 17, stealth 20, unarmed combat 17

DEXTERITY 9

ENDURANCE 10

Resist shock 12

STRENGTH 9

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT*

MIND*

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22

CHARISMA 4

Shapeshifting 21, Survival: urban 15 willpower 20

* Mental attributes and skills are identical to stats given above.

Description: The Agency believes this to be Sil's natural form, roughly half a meter long with claws, sharp teeth, a vicious barbed tail and a vaguely bat-like face.

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+4/13; claws, damage value STR+4/13; barbed tail, damage value STR+5/14

SIL. SLUG FORM

AGILITY 6

Dodge 7, stealth 10, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 15

TOUGHNESS 14

INTELLECT*

MIND*

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22, survival: urban 15, willpower 20

CHARISMA 4

Shapeshifting 21

* Mental attributes and skills are identical to stats given above.

Description: In this form, Sil is a grotesque, albino creature up to four meters in length. It sees by sensing the movements of its prey through vibrations in the air. The slug is very slow moving, and takes a extra wound level of damage from successful fire-based attacks.

It defends itself by spraying acid produced in sacs within its body from its mouth. Use Dexterity value for such attacks.

Natural Tools: Carapace, armor value $\text{TOU}+6/20$; acid attack, damage value 21, range 0-3/10/20/30

SIL. TENTACLED BEAST FORM

AGILITY 12

Dodge 13, maneuver 13, unarmed combat 16, melee parry 16

DEXTERITY 12

STRENGTH 13

ENDURANCE 14

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT *

MIND *

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22

CHARISMA 4

Shapeshifting 21, Survival: urban 15, willpower 20

* Mental attributes and skills are identical to stats given above.

Description: In this form, Sil is approximately 2.1 meters tall and 1.2 meters in diameter, with eight tentacles, each ending in a razor-sharp claw. Her multi-faceted eyes make it impossible to surprise her when in this shape. She will attempt to slash her prey with multiple attacks per round, entangle them in her tentacles, and draw prey into the toothy maw at the center of her mass.

Natural Tools: Tentacles, damage value $\text{STR}+4/17$; teeth, damage value $\text{STR}+2/15$; can make up to four attacks per round without

incurring a multi-action penalty; combat sense; never completely surprised.

SIL. MULTI-HEADED WORM FORM

AGILITY 12

Dodge 13, stealth 15, unarmed combat 17

DEXTERITY 7

STRENGTH 18

ENDURANCE 20

TOUGHNESS 19 (23)

INTELLECT *

MIND *

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22, Survival: urban 15, willpower 20

CHARISMA 3

* Mental attributes and skills are identical to stats given above.

Description: This creature is approximately four meters long and two meters in diameter, with a very tough, segmented body which appears similar to that of a coal-black worm. In addition to its main trunk, the creature has four necks which shoot away from the main body. These necks are each an additional two



meters in length, and are topped by miniature versions of its head — primarily a toothy maw with two eyes above and to the sides of the mouth.

This heavily armored form is also very difficult to surprise, due to its many heads and eyes. In this form the alien will attempt multiple attacks on its prey.

Natural Tools: Natural armor, TOU+4/23; teeth, damage value STR+4/22; can make up to three attacks per round without incurring a multi-action penalty; never completely surprised.

SIL, "SHARK" FORM

AGILITY 12

Swimming 15, unarmed combat 17

DEXTERITY 3

ENDURANCE 15

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 13 (12)

INTELLECT *

MIND *

CONFIDENCE 12

Intimidation 22, Survival: urban 15, will-power 20

CHARISMA 3

Shapeshifting 21

* Mental attributes and skills are identical to stats given above.

Description: It was in this form that Sil killed Project Proteus' original director, Xavier Fitch. She resembles a long, sleek aquatic animal with a large mouth, filled with rows of shark-like teeth. Sil makes use of the *water-breathing* special ability when in this shape.

Natural Tools: Leathery hide, armor value TOU+1/13; teeth, damage value STR+4/18

THE CHILDREN OF SIL

It is unknown just how many of Sil's progeny are currently loose, and/or whether other nations may have produced Sils of their own and now be facing a similarly devastating alien population explosion.

SECOND GENERATION PROGENY

This entry describes the "typical" second-generation alien. Although still very bizarre, they are significantly more "human" than at least one of their parents. Therefore, they are ultimately more likely to learn the skills required to assimilate more closely into human society. Still, their fundamentally alien nature and instincts prevent them from connecting and bonding with the humans around them. Second generation aliens tend to be cold, calculating, and amoral — at least towards humans. They may also have "borderline personality" disorders, or be sociopathic by human stan-

dards. These aliens also orient their skills solely towards survival and propagation.

SECOND GENERATION PROGENY

HUMANOID FORM

AGILITY 12

DEXTERITY 9

STRENGTH 14

ENDURANCE 10

TOUGHNESS 13

INTELLECT 9

MIND 9

CONFIDENCE 9

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 5-10

Background Notes: Second generation aliens possess the "Shapeshifting (CV): Alien" Advantage and must take the "Advantage Flaw (CV): Alien" Compensation. Second generation aliens may have no more than five special abilities operating simultaneously. Recommended Compensations include those which curtail the ability to interact with others.

It is **not** recommended that players be allowed to roleplay anything more powerful than a third generation progeny. Gamemasters who allows this should be aware that it has the potential to unbalance their campaign.

Natural Tools: The natural tools available to this alien mirror those of the first generation alien (see above). Note that this alien retains its own consciousness in any form, and its Intellect and Mind scores are unchanged.

THIRD GENERATION PROGENY

"Typical" third generation aliens are significantly more "human" than previous generations, suffering from only (CII) "Cultural Unfamiliarity." They may be able to pass for lengthy periods of time as a basically normal (though very awkward) human, and are likely to attempt to find jobs and live intermittently as

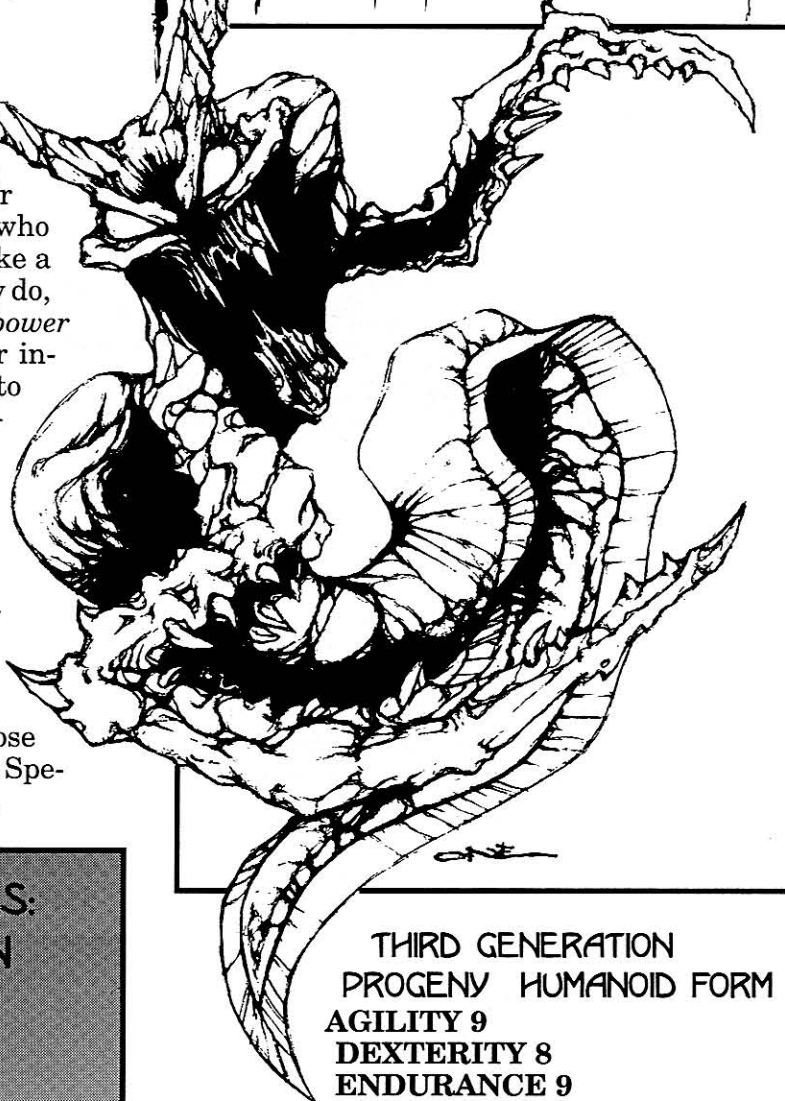
GENERATIONS TO COME

Note that standard third generation progeny and below are given only 68 attribute points in their write-ups, as they are potential player characters. Gamemasters should feel free to increase their stats when using them as non-player characters.

functioning members of society. Their alien nature and instincts still make it more difficult for them to bond with the humans around them, and if they ever wish to act counter to their instincts (e.g. not slaughter someone who pushes them around) they must make a successful *willpower* total of 16. They do, however, tend to purchase the *willpower* skill and work hard to control their instincts. The aliens are smart enough to know that in human society this tactic will ultimately enhance their prospects for survival.

Third generation aliens still tend to have cold and very distant personalities, but have a lower incidence of what in humans is considered "borderline personality" disorder than do their second-generation counterparts.

Third generation aliens must choose their special abilities from the "Alpha Special Abilities" chart in Chapter Five.



THIRD GENERATION
PROGENY HUMANOID FORM
AGILITY 9
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 9
STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 12
INTELLECT 8
MIND 7
CONFIDENCE 7
CHARISMA 7
Life Points: 5-10

FOURTH GENERATION PROGENY

A "typical" fourth generation alien (i.e. a creature with one-eighth of the alien genetic material of the original alien). These creatures may actually be more "human" than alien, suffering from only (CI) "Cultural Unfamiliarity." They may pass for a normal human, so long as they successfully conceal their alien instincts and remain in human form. After leaving the nest/home, these aliens will almost certainly attempt to live as functioning mem-

BACKGROUND NOTES: THIRD GENERATION PROGENY

Advantages/Compensations

1CI, 2CIII, 1CIV

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CIV); Alpha

Compensations: Cultural Unfamiliarity (CII); Enemy (CIII); Advantage Flaw (CIV); Alpha; Quirk (CIV); Alien Instinct

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: No more required.

Restricted A/C

Third generation progeny should rarely have Advantages based on interaction, such as "Contacts."

Natural Tools: The natural tools available to this alien mirror those of the other aliens. Note that this alien retains its own consciousness in any form, and its Intellect and Mind scores are unchanged.

BACKGROUND NOTES: FOURTH GENERATION PROGENY

Advantages/Compensations

2CI, 1CII, 2CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CIII); Beta

Compensations: Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI); Advantage Flaw (CIII); Beta; Enemy (CIII); Quirk (CIII); Alien Instinct

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

Natural Tools: The natural tools available to this alien mirror those of the other aliens. Note that this alien retains its own consciousness in any form, and its Intellect and Mind scores are unchanged.

bers of society. However, they still possess alien, predatory instincts, and may appear violent to those around them. When they attempt to control their instincts, these aliens must make a successful *willpower* roll of 12. Almost all such aliens purchase the *willpower* skill, and work hard to control their instincts.

Fourth generation aliens still tend to be distant, but have an incidence of "borderline personality" disorders or so-called sociopathic behavior barely above that found in normal human society.

Fourth generation aliens must choose their special abilities from the "Beta Special Abilities" chart in Chapter Five.

STANDARD FOURTH GENERATION PROGENY HUMANOID FORM

AGILITY 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

MIND 8

CONFIDENCE 7

CHARISMA 7

Life Points: 5-10

FIFTH GENERATION PROGENY

The "typical" fifth generation alien (i.e. a creature with one-sixteenth of the alien genetic material of the original alien) is more "human" than alien, suffering from only (CI) "Cultural Unfamiliarity." They require almost as long as humans to mature, and may appear to be no more than "precocious" and exceptionally gifted children. They have much better control over their alien instincts, and may attempt to control these instincts with a successful *willpower* total of 8. Almost all such people purchase the *willpower* skill, and work hard to control their instincts. These individuals usually appear to be nothing more than slightly odd to their neighbors.

Fifth generation progeny may choose only those special abilities listed on the "Gamma Special Abilities" chart in Chapter Five.

STANDARD FIFTH GENERATION PROGENY HUMANOID FORM

AGILITY 9

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 10

TOUGHNESS 11

BACKGROUND NOTES: FIFTH GENERATION PROGENY

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 2CII, 1CIII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CII); Gamma

Compensations: Cultural Unfamiliarity (CI); Advantage Flaw (CII); Gamma; Quirk (CII); Alien Instinct; Enemy (CIII)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Additional Attribute Point

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

Natural Tools: The natural tools available to this alien mirror those of the other aliens. Note that this alien retains its own consciousness in any form, and its Intellect and Mind scores are unchanged.

INTELLECT 9
MIND 8
CONFIDENCE 8
CHARISMA 7
Life Points: 3-8

SIXTH GENERATION PROGENY

The "typical" sixth generation alien (i.e. a creature with one-thirty-second of the alien genetic material of the original alien) is the last generation at which the alien powers remain active. These creatures are very similar to their fifth-generation parents, save for the further dilution of their powers.

These individuals require as long as humans to mature, but appear to be exceptionally "precocious" and gifted children. They are at ease in human society, bonding and forming relationships with almost complete normality. They still have predatory instincts, but may control these instincts with a successful *willpower* total of 5.

These characters must choose their special abilities from the "Delta Special Abilities" chart in Chapter Five.

STANDARD SIXTH GENERATION PROGENY AND HUMANOID FORM

AGILITY 8
DEXTERITY 8
ENDURANCE 8
STRENGTH 9
TOUGHNESS 9
INTELLECT 9
MIND 9
CONFIDENCE 9
CHARISMA 8
Life Points: 2-7

THE EXTRATERRESTRIALS

Hmmmm ... most interesting. I must admit that I am surprised that they took the bait so readily; I had expected more of them. It's times like this when I wonder if Aleffi isn't right. Perhaps we should abandon them to their fate. Their primitive, fearful responses to accidental contact are to be expected, but rushing into genetic manipulation on that scale? Amazing.

Still, dear, we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged! After all, they've made it through

a few dicey times before, haven't they? Yes, that Black Plague had me really worried for a while! Do you remember talking me out of going down there and teaching sanitation to those Europeans? Now I'm glad I didn't violate the experimental protocol, and you were right that they'd probably have tried to burn me. In the end, the humans may well handle this crisis within satisfactory parameters.

Aleffi and his people worry me, though. I don't like the way that they are exulting over that Proteus project. Sometimes I wouldn't put it past them to violate the ... You're right, dear, I shouldn't say that without proof. It's just that when you spend 3000 years at the same observation post, it's only natural that you start to care a bit about your subjects.

In their zeal for America to be the first country to unlock the secrets of the alien message, the Agency began Project Proteus without carefully considering the ramifications of the extraterrestrial origin of the Arecibo message. Few members of the Agency hierarchy even suggested considering whether the aliens who sent the message were alive or dead, or why they might have wanted to "help" the galaxy with messages concerning inexpensive energy production and genetic manipulation.

BACKGROUND NOTES: SIXTH GENERATION PROGENY

Advantages/Compensations

3CI, 3CII

Mandatory A/C

Advantages: Shapeshifting (CI); Delta

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI);

Delta; Quirk (CI); Alien Instinct; Enemy (CIII)

Recommended A/C

Advantages: Any

Compensations: Any

Restricted A/C

None

Natural Tools: The natural tools available to this alien mirror those of the other aliens. Note that this alien retains its own consciousness in any form, and its Intellect and Mind scores are unchanged.

In the minds of the dissenters, the fact that this message could not be traced to a point of origin was even more worrisome — and their concerns were well-founded.

A race of particularly long-lived, technologically advanced aliens sent the Arecibo message. This species is engaged in a research project to study the natures of the life forms of the several inhabited planets in this sector, and they sent the message as one of their series of experiments on human behavior. Headquartered on a large asteroid at the edge of our solar system, with smaller outposts in the asteroid belt, this project has now lasted for more than 4000 years. While these aliens are certainly not the only space-farers in our galaxy, the sector containing the Earth is in their sphere of influence. This alien race is therefore the source of almost all of the actual extraterrestrial contacts with humanity.

ORGANIZATION

The extraterrestrial researchers in our solar system are members of the aliens' quasi-military space exploration force. Led by the rough equivalent of an Army Colonel, nearly 400 aliens make up the usual complement scattered over several space stations. The exact number of aliens in Earth's orbit varies somewhat with the occasional influxes of high-ranking observers, or crew from supply ships.

With the exception of the small security

detail, most of the aliens involved in the project are scientists, administrators, and support staff. While *very* long-lived, these aliens are not genetically "superhuman" in the manner of the aliens created by Project Proteus. The research project is governed by the equivalent of the alien's military, and a detailed manual of rules and regulations entitled "The Experimental Protocol." This protocol strictly forbids any intentional contact with the humans save for specific experimental purposes, and also bars the individual aliens from interfering with human culture or the development of human society (save for sound, experimental reasons).

ACTIVITIES

These extraterrestrials are currently evaluating humanity's response to the stimuli provided by the Arecibo message. (To this point, humanity has received low marks.) The human response to the temptation of the message, and their handling of the alien threat, will play a large part in the conclusions of the long-standing study. Having decided that humans are finally advanced enough to be judged by the standards of sapient life forms, the aliens wish to decide whether to permit human evolution to continue, or to move now to seize the resources of a defective species.

Most of the aliens involved in the project remain neutral observers, but there are some who chose sides long ago. A scientist named Aleffi leads the small faction who advocate terminating the study immediately and declaring humans a failed species. This group points to the Agency's ill-conceived rush into the Arecibo project as proof that humans are not to be entrusted with more power, that such "vermin" would only endanger truly sapient species. Certain members of this group now mutter about violating the Protocol, and hastening the already certain conclusion of the project. It is pos-



sible for the characters to encounter these aliens or their agents while responding to extraterrestrial contacts for the Agency.

Another faction, led by Xillian, one of the most senior members of the project, actively supports humanity. Xillian and his supporters fear that Aleffi may have already violated the Protocol. They themselves have so far remained above the fray, but might aid humanity if they had proof that other members of their project were interfering. In that case, they would only be righting the balance.

WHO'S WHO

The standard extraterrestrial scientist is a well-educated, well-trained alien who spends the vast majority of its life hard at work on its projects. This individual will usually feel loyalty to the organization, and will obey the Experimental Protocol. These beings in general have no particular preferred outcome for the current experiment they are conducting on humanity.

Physically, the aliens appear child-like, with large hairless heads and luminous eyes. Their limbs are thin and elongated, while their bodies are slightly rounded. The aliens are short by human standards, most barely reaching 1.5 meters in height. The aliens' skin color ranges from a light greenish-yellow to a fairly deep green.

STANDARD EXTRATERRESTRIAL SCIENTIST

AGILITY 8

Dodge 8, unarmed combat 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: space 9

STRENGTH 8

ENDURANCE 10

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 13

Perception 14, science: (any) 18, super-science: (any) 12

MIND 9

Research: (any super-science) 11

CONFIDENCE 8

CHARISMA 7 (5 to humans)

Life Points: 3-6

Equipment: Very advanced computers; laboratory equipment; notebooks; reference texts, etc.

THE RUSSIANS

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has recently learned that the Russian government did intercept the extraterrestrial message in January, 1993. Since then, the Russians have been developing a Project Proteus-style research effort despite the strain on their already stretched resources. They continue with the project in part due to their fear that the United States will use the results of their project to gain a further advantage over the beleaguered Russian military.

The Russian security services have steered clear of the Agency and Project Proteus in an attempt to avoid drawing attention to their own activity. They have received enough information through a highly-placed mole in the CIA to be aware of the general nature of Project Proteus and of its failure. They also know that the Agency has genetically enhanced its agents to hunt the aliens.

While this information has caused some concern among the Russians overseeing their project, they have decided to press ahead with their efforts to build, control, and study an alien. Their concern over U.S. intentions have grown since learning of the enhanced agents. They are currently nearing the completion of Phase I of the project, the creation of an alien. (The extraterrestrials watch in utter amazement.)

Although most of the Russian project's researchers do not realize it, their project is not sanctioned by the official Russian hierarchy. Instead, the project and its funding are hidden in the midst of a number of other projects controlled by Russia's far right. It is these radical members of the Russian government that are controlling and directing the project. How they choose to utilize the results of the genetic experiment is as yet unknown, but they are undoubtedly aiming to solidify their power in the new Russia.

Player characters could become involved with the Russians either by defending the Agency against Russian espionage, or by being sent on an espionage mission against the Russian equivalent of Project Proteus. It is also possible that, if the Russians lose control of their alien(s), they may call on the Agency for assistance.





CHAPTER FIVE

CHARACTER CREATION

In order to begin play in *The World of Species*, you first have to design a character. This chapter discusses how to create characters for a *Species* campaign, with special emphasis on generating genetically altered agents — alien hunters. As stated in the introduction, this is a *MasterBook* game, and the *MasterBook* rulebook is also required in order to create player characters for *The World of Species*.

Before attempting to design a character, players should first look through the chapters on “Character Creation” and “Background Generation” in the *MasterBook* rules.

CHARACTER CONCEPT

When creating a character, you must first develop a character concept. Think about who your character is, what he does for a living, what he cares about, how he grew up, and what types of skills he might have. When considering these issues, keep in mind that you will want a character who is both interesting to roleplay, and who fits into the world and the game the gamemaster is developing. Before setting your sights on a certain type of character, check with your gamemaster, to see if your vision of the character fits in with the campaign he is designing. No one has much fun playing a character who can’t do anything in the game because his skills are unnecessary or worse.

When creating a character, look beyond the numbers in the creation process; ensure that your character has a purpose. Think about the problems your character will face from day to day, and what skills he might develop to deal

with these problems.

Much of this chapter on character creation assumes that the player characters are Agency employees — at least at the beginning of the campaign. However, it is possible to have a player character who is not an agent, and the principles here apply to those characters as well. (It’s also possible to have player character aliens, much like Sil in the *Species* film — there will be more on this at the end of the chapter and in Chapter Eight, “Designing and Running Adventures”)

As you continue to develop your character concept, remember to keep the gamemaster in mind. Talk with the gamemaster about the type of character you’re developing. The gamemaster’s input can be very valuable in developing your character’s history, personality, and relationships; and it will also, in turn, help the gamemaster develop the type of campaign that most appeals to you.

ATTRIBUTES

After you’ve developed your character concept, you must then choose your character’s attributes. There are eight character attributes (and one derived attribute), which measure the physical, mental and social abilities of the character. Player characters in *The World of Species* begin with 68 attribute points, and the normal human range for each attribute is from 5 to 13.

In addition to his attribute points, each player character receives five Life Points.

For more information on attributes and Life Points, see Chapter One of *MasterBook*.

CHARACTER PACKAGES

Players in the *World of Species* have a variety of options when it comes to choosing what type of character they would like to play. Players may select a "normal" human character from almost any profession — scientists, mercenaries, detectives, etc. — employed by the Agency and trained to hunt aliens. These characters use the standard rules for character creation in this chapter, and in the *MasterBook* rules.

Players may also choose to play a supranormal character, either a psychic with extraordinary powers of the mind, or a "genetically altered agent," one of the young human volunteers who survived the transformation process and became *homo sapiens mutatis* to battle the escaped alien and her brood. These psychic characters and altered agents must be built using one of the character packages described in Chapter Four. These character packages contain mandatory Background Advantages and Compensations for these special categories of agents.

Finally, player characters might choose to play Sil's progeny. Though this can make gamemastering a bit more difficult (see Chapter Eight), it is a viable option and is discussed later in this chapter.

Remember that the gamemaster will, in all probability, carefully enforce the Compensations in these packages, both to enhance role-playing and to preserve game balance. These packages are necessary because these characters possess extremely powerful abilities; to preserve the balance of the game these characters must have significant restrictions as well. This is particularly true in the case of genetically altered agents. The transformation process that changed the agents' bodies has drastically altered their minds and personalities as well. All of the genetically altered agents feel at least somewhat "disconnected" from human society and the people around them. Most of them have very few surviving links to their lives before the change, or the loved ones in those lives — the hunt for the aliens without and the battle against the alien within is now the focus of their existences. Not that they have forgotten their old lives, far from it, and this separation can add to the confusion and dis-

tance such agents feel. They truly are a new species, and may have sacrificed their "humanity" on the Agency's behalf.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

Before starting this section, read Chapter Two of *MasterBook*, "Background Generation." It will give you some of the basics of choosing Advantages and Compensations for your character. Advantages and Compensations listed below are *in addition* to those listed in *MasterBook*, unless otherwise noted.

Normal human characters begin with three Column I, two Column II, and one Column III Advantages and a matching number of Compensations. The rules for selecting Advantages and Compensations are listed in Chapter Two of *MasterBook*.

As noted above, many characters will have some or all of their Background Options determined in their character package.

The "Species Advantage List" and "Species Compensation List" found later in this chapter show which Advantages and Compensations may be selected by player characters in the *World of Species*.

BACKGROUND ADVANTAGES

The following are new Background Advantages available in the *World of Species*. Note that many of the entries below refer to the Charisma-based *shapeshifting* skill. For details on this and other new skills, see Chapter Six.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN I

Law Enforcement (CI): The "Law Enforcement" Advantage gives characters some measure of abilities associated with being a deputized agent of the law. The character may carry a firearm and has limited authority to enforce the law. Private detectives, bounty hunters, etc. would qualify for this Advantage.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN II

Law Enforcement (CII): The character is a police officer and is allowed to make full arrests and reasonable search and seizures.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN III

Law Enforcement (CIII): The character is a federal agent and has authority over local police for the purpose of investigations.

Shapeshifting: (CIII): Delta : A character with this Advantage has been infused with a minimal amount of alien DNA. She is able to access both human and alien genetic code — thus, she can transform into *one* animal form and may choose one special ability from the list below (see page 70 for an explanation of special abilities and their uses). The player must choose the animal form and special ability prior to the start of play, and may not change them afterwards. The player receives one add in the *shapeshifting* skill with this Advantage.

This Advantage may only be chosen by Delta agents, sixth generation progeny or other characters with similar amounts of alien DNA mingled with their own.

Delta Special Abilities

Armor-Defeating Attack*

Atmospheric Tolerance

Enhanced Senses

Environmental Tolerance

Omnivorousness

Silence

Speed

Up Condition

Water Breathing

* Requires *shapeshifting* skill check.

Shapeshifting (CIII): Gamma : A character with this Advantage has been infused with a moderate amount of alien DNA. He is able to access both human and alien genetic code, and so can transform into *two* animal forms and may choose two special abilities from the list below. The player must choose the animal forms and special abilities prior to the start of play, and may not change them afterwards. The player receives one add in the *shapeshifting* skill with this Advantage.

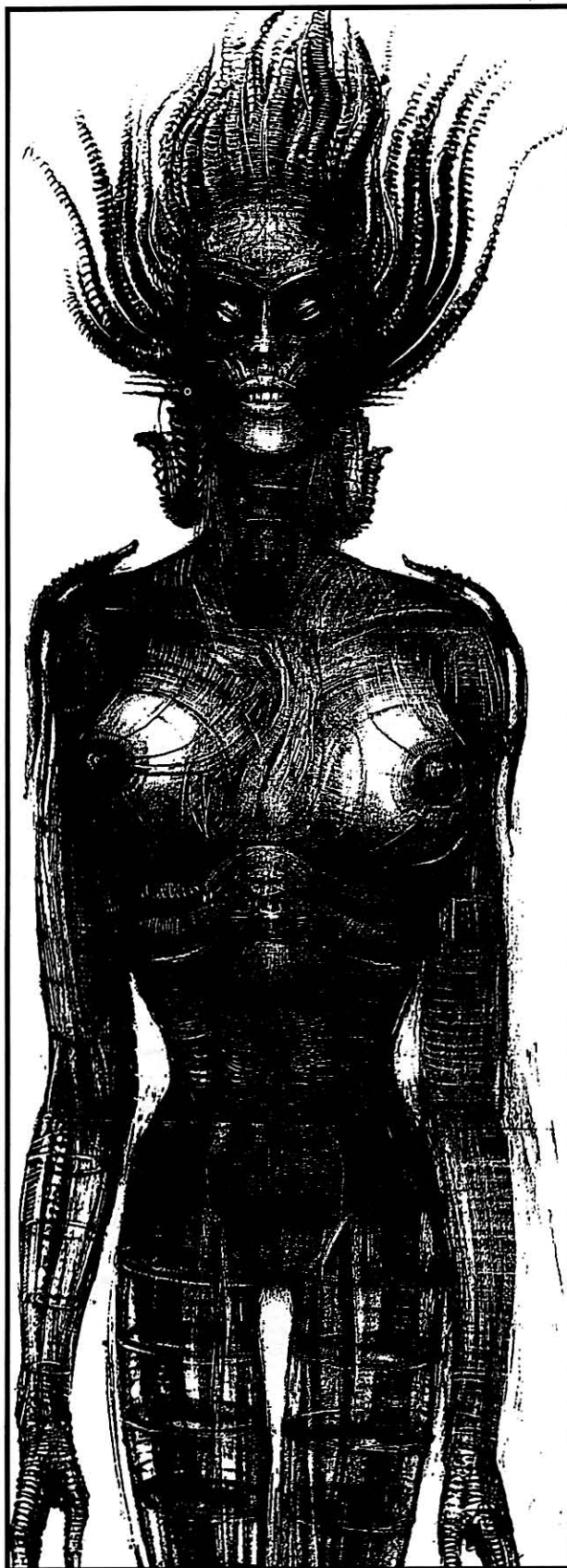
This Advantage may only be chosen by Gamma agents, fifth generation progeny or other characters with similar amounts of alien DNA mingled with their own.

Gamma Special Abilities

Armor-Defeating Attack*

Atmospheric Tolerance

Attribute Increase I



Blur
 Combat Sense
 Enhance Senses
 Environmental Tolerance
 Glider Wings*
 Hardiness I
 Infravision/Ultravision
 Omnivorousness
 Silence
 Speed
 Toughened Skin
 Up Condition
 Water Breathing

* Requires *shapeshifting* skill check.

Special Effects (CIII): In the *World of Species* game setting, this applies to those characters with some psychic potential. The "Special Effects" Advantage allows the character to choose one *psychic* skill at one add, and to learn others at the normal cost. Characters without the "Special Effects" Advantage may not learn *psychic* skills.

These skills are explained in Chapter Six.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN IV

Shapeshifting (CIV): Beta: A character with this Advantage has been infused with a significant amount of alien DNA. She is able to access human and alien genetic code and so can transform into *three* animal forms and may choose *three* special abilities from the list below. The player must choose the animal forms and special abilities prior to the start of play, and may not change them afterwards. The

character may use two special abilities simultaneously. The character receives one add in the *shapeshifting* skill with this Advantage.

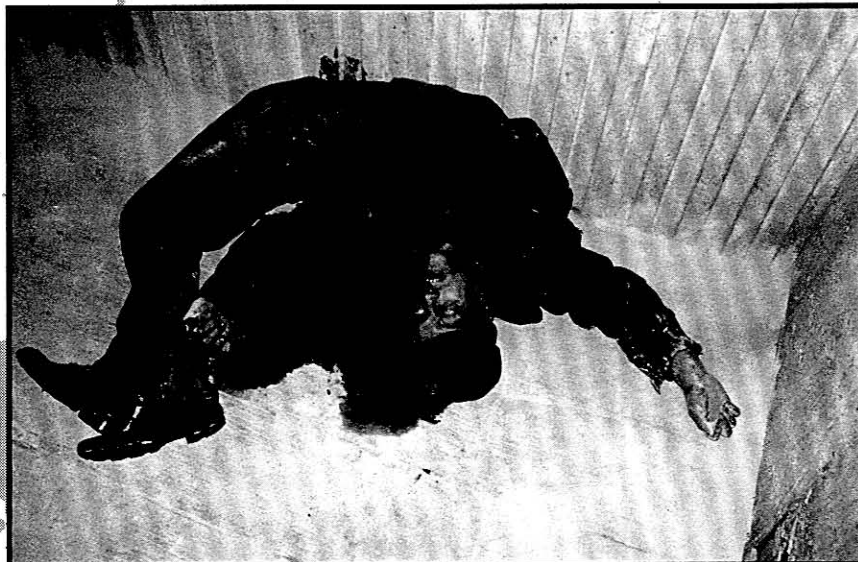
This Advantage may only be chosen by Beta agents, fourth generation progeny or other characters with similar amounts of alien DNA mingled with their own.

Beta Special Abilities

Accelerated Healing
 Armor-Defeating Attack*
 Atmospheric Tolerance
 Attack Form Resistance (Environmental)
 Attack Form Resistance (Physical)
 Attribute Increase I
 Attribute Increase II
 Blur
 Combat Sense
 Enhance Senses
 Environmental Tolerance
 Fast Reactions
 Flight
 Glider Wings*
 Hardiness I
 Hardiness II
 Infravision/Ultravision
 Natural Armor*
 Natural Weaponry (Hand to Hand)*
 Natural Weaponry (Ranged)*
 Omnivorousness
 Silence
 Speed
 Toughened Skin
 Up Condition
 Water Breathing

* Requires *shapeshifting* skill check.

Shapeshifting (CIV): Alpha: A character with this Advantage has been infused with the largest amount of alien DNA. She is able to access human and alien genetic code and so can transform into *four* animal forms and may choose *four* special abilities from the list below. The player must choose the animal forms and special abilities prior to the start of play, and may not change them afterwards. Up to three special abilities may be used simultaneously. The



player receives one add in the *shapeshifting* skill with this Advantage.

This Advantage may only be chosen by Alpha agents, third generation progeny or other characters with similar amounts of alien DNA mingled with their own.

Alpha Special Abilities

Accelerated Healing
 Armor-Defeating Attack*
 Atmospheric Tolerance
 Attack Form Resistance (Environmental)
 Attack Form Resistance (Physical)
 Attribute Increase I
 Attribute Increase II
 Blur
 Chameleon
 Combat Sense
 Enhance Senses
 Elasticity*
 Environmental Tolerance
 Fast Reactions
 Flight
 Glider Wings*
 Hardiness I
 Hardiness II
 Infravision/Ultravision
 Natural Armor*
 Natural Weaponry (Hand to Hand)*
 Natural Weaponry (Ranged)*
 Omnivorousness
 Regeneration
 Silence
 Speed
 Toughened Skin
 Up Condition
 Water Breathing

* Requires *shapeshifting* skill check.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN V

Shapeshifting (CV): Alien: This Advantage may be taken only by Sil's second generation progeny. These characters are hybrids of human and pure alien DNA, and share the alien's predatory instincts and alien sensibilities.

Characters with this Advantage may choose seven animal forms and 10 special abilities from the Alpha list. These must be chosen prior to the start of play and cannot be changed afterwards. Up to five special abilities may be used simultaneously. They receive two adds in the *shapeshifting* skill.

Gamemasters should be aware that allowing players to roleplay second generation progeny may unbalance their campaign. It's recommended that players stick to third generation progeny or below.

ADVANTAGES: COLUMN VI

Shapeshifting (CVI): Alien: Available only to Sil and other first generation aliens, this Advantage allows the character to shapeshift into an unlimited number of forms and make use of all special abilities. There is no limit on the number of special abilities which may be used simultaneously. The character receives three adds in *shapeshifting*.

Note: It is not recommended that players be allowed to roleplay Sil or other first generation aliens.

SPECIAL ABILITIES RESTRICTIONS

For the most part, we recommend letting the players choose the special abilities their characters will possess. It is also suggested that you not let the players "stack" their special abilities — a Beta character should not be allowed to choose more than one "Attribute Increase," for example.

You will notice that some special abilities are marked with an asterisk, signifying that a *shapeshifting* skill check is required for their use. These are the abilities that involve some morphing of the physical form (such as elasticity), as opposed to those abilities that are always in effect (such as combat sense) but which do not involve any outward change in physical appearance.

Note that there is one special ability possessed only by Sil and not her progeny, the ability of parts of her body to function independently of each other (i.e., in the event of dismemberment). This ability is explained in more detail in Chapter Four.

BACKGROUND COMPENSATIONS

The following are new Background Compensations available in the *World of Species*. Many of these are connected to the circumstance of

being a genetically-enhanced being — side-effects of the transformation process — and are included in the character packages listed below.

COMPENSATIONS: COLUMN I

Advantage Flaw: Delta (CI): Characters with Delta-levels of alien DNA in their systems must choose one of the Advantage Flaws from the "Advantage Flaws: Gamma-Delta" list below (these flaws are defined on pages 72-73). Note that Advantage Flaw Compensations may be stacked.

Advantage Flaw (CI): Psychic Surge: Characters with the *psychic* skill and a focus of *astral projection* or *telekinesis* may choose this Advantage Flaw. When a character with this flaw is under great stress, the character's psychic power may manifest involuntarily, acting outside the character's control. For example, objects may begin to fly through the air in the vicinity of a telekinetic character, while a character with astral projection may involuntarily slip out of his body.

The gamemaster should adjudicate when a character with this flaw faces enough stress to trigger a potential episode. At such a time, the character must make a *willpower* check to avoid involuntarily activating his powers. At this level, the difficulty of the check is 8.

Once the power has activated, the character may roll once per round to bring his psychic power back under control (difficulty number 12).

Advantage Flaw (CI): Psychic Hypersensitivity: Characters who possess the *psychic* skill and the *clairvoyance*, *telepathy* or *empathy* foci may choose this Advantage Flaw. This flaw refers to the fact that the character's psychic abilities are always "on," functioning unconsciously, normally at a level below the character's awareness. Unwanted sensory impressions — foreign thoughts, images, and emotions are often sensed. This unwanted psychic "noise" can sometimes overwhelm the character during periods of great stress

or when the level of psychic interference is especially high.

This Advantage Flaw operates at the gamemaster's discretion, as he is the final judge of what situations are very stressful, or when the thoughts and emotions in a given area are particularly strong (for example at a riot, or in an hospital emergency room). At these times, the character begins to involuntarily sense the press of emotions, thoughts, sounds, or flashes of events pounding against his brain. The character must make a *willpower* roll to remain in control and functional in the face of this sensory overload. At this level, the difficulty of the task is an 8.

A character who maintains control over his hypersensitive reaction is still very distracted, and suffers +2 to the difficulty of all actions until he gets away from the stressful situation, or away from the powerful emotions bothering him. Characters who fail to maintain control are forced to either leave the area immediately, or do little but clutch at their heads in pain and confusion (consider them *setback* for the remainder of the time they are in the situation).

Occasionally, psychic agents have temporarily gone berserk during particularly traumatic episodes of hypersensitive feedback. However, this is an exceedingly rare phenomenon.

Quirk (CI): Alien Instinct — This Compensation affects only genetically altered characters or others whose DNA is mingled with that of the alien. For those humans transformed by the Agency, it manifests itself in the war between their own thoughts and the behavior patterns programmed into their new DNA.

Characters who have undergone genetic alter-

ation are no longer fully human, and have fundamentally different natures than before their transformation. They all must contend, to one degree or another, with the predatory instincts of the alien inside them. If the characters do not control these instincts, they may experience outbursts which are at best embarrassing, and at worst lethal to others in their vicinity. The instincts of the alien always drives the characters, urging them to react as a predator, to transform life into a giant hunt, and all interactions into contests of dominance and submission.

For those gamemasters reluctant to arbitrarily declare that a character is feeling conflicted, feel free to tie "Quirks" to being *setback* or *stymied*. Feel free to modify *willpower* difficulty numbers (used to resist the alien instinctual responses) as needed, based on the situation.

Delta agents have this Compensation at CI. They are able to lead fairly normal lives despite their condition, but may seem moody and sensitive. They will occasionally feel an urge to react to a perceived threat with violence, but can control themselves on a *willpower* total of 8.

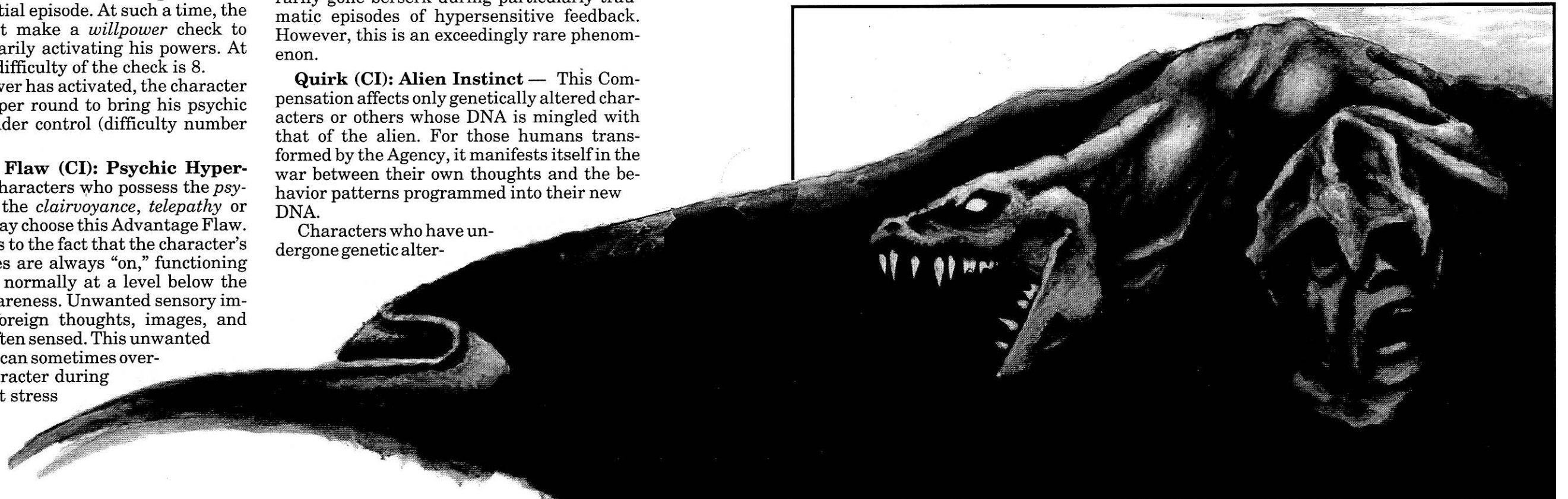
Sense of Duty (CI): The character feels compelled to take certain actions out of a love of code or perceived duty to something else. The character may, at times, do things he finds morally questionable in order to achieve a greater good. At this level, the character's beliefs do not come into play very often.

COMPENSATIONS: COLUMN II

Advantage Flaw (CII): Gamma — Characters with Gamma levels of alien DNA in their systems must choose two Advantage Flaws from the "Advantage Flaw: Gamma-Delta" list below.

Advantage Flaws: Gamma-Delta

- Ability Loss I
- Ability Loss II
- Alien Outlook
- Allergy I
- Atmospheric Incompatibility
- Cultural "Allergy" I
- Environmental Incompatibility
- Metabolic Difference
- Nutritional Requirements
- Reduced Attribute I



Reduced Attribute II
Vulnerable

Advantage Flaw (CII): Psychic Hypersensitivity: Identical in effect to the Column I version, save that the *willpower* difficulty to resist is now 12.

Advantage Flaw (CII): Psychic Surge: Identical in effect to the Column I version, save that the *willpower* difficulty to resist is now 12.

Quirk (CII): Alien Instinct — At this level (suffered by Gamma agents), alien thoughts and feelings make themselves known more often and outbursts may be more violent. A *willpower* total of 10 is required to maintain control.

Sense of Duty (CII): The character with this Compensation believes very strongly in something and will attempt to persuade others of the correctness of his beliefs. His patriotism or loyalty to an ideal plays a role in his day-to-day life.

COMPENSATIONS: COLUMN III

Advantage Flaw (CIII): Beta — Characters with Beta levels of alien DNA in their systems must choose three Advantage Flaws from the "Advantage Flaw: Alpha-Beta" list below.

Quirk (CIII): Alien Instinct — At this level, the alien drives are a constant presence and a driving force in the character's life. Beta agents suffer at this level and need a *willpower* total of 12 to prevent themselves from losing their humanity.

Quirk (CIII): Workaholic — This "Quirk" is fairly common among Agency researchers. Their jobs are the central focuses of their lives, and they will often work through lunches, miss appointments or dates, and *never* take vacations. Their diet, health and social life will almost certainly suffer. In severe cases, even a character's personal hygiene might take a back seat to their zeal to complete a project.

Sense of Duty (CIII): A character whose belief in a cause is so strong that it motivates almost all his actions would have this Compensation. The character would be willing to die for his beliefs.

COMPENSATIONS: COLUMN IV

Advantage Flaw (CIV): Alpha — Characters with Alpha levels of alien DNA must choose four Advantage Flaws from the "Advantage Flaws: Alpha-Beta" list below.

Advantage Flaws: Alpha-Beta

Ability Loss I
Ability Loss II
Ability Loss III
Ability Loss IV
Alien Outlook
Alien Understanding
Allergy I
Allergy II
Atmospheric Incompatibility
Cultural "Allergy" I
Cultural "Allergy" II
Environmental Incompatibility
Lethal Vulnerability
Major Atmospheric Incompatibility
Major Vulnerability
Metabolic Difference
Nutritional Requirements
Reduced Attribute I
Reduced Attribute II
Reduced Attribute III
Reduced Attribute IV
Vulnerable

Quirk (CIV): Alien Instinct — At this level, this Compensation is nearly overwhelming. The character is constantly in danger of being pushed over the precipice and succumbing to the torrent of instincts and desires inside. These characters absolutely cannot live normal lives, unless they have incredible *willpower*, and should probably avoid people not part of Project Proteus as much as possible. Resisting these drives requires a *willpower* total of 15. Alpha agents have this Compensation at this level.

COMPENSATIONS: COLUMN V

Advantage Flaw (CV): Alien — This Compensation may only be chosen by Sil and her progeny, and requires the character to choose six Advantage Flaws from the "Alpha-Beta" list above.

Quirk (CV): Alien Instinct — At this level, suffered only by Sil and her progeny, the instincts of a predator thoroughly dominates behavior. Resistance requires a successful *will-*

power total of 18. A character with this Compensation will feel driven to hunt and to avoid capture at all costs. During Command Group One's initial pursuit of Sil, for example, it's known that she killed for food, to ensure that she would remain undetected, and even out of more human emotions such as jealousy. Characters with this Compensation will have an extremely hard time not acting out of reflex in stressful situations.

CREATING BACKGROUND OPTIONS

The Advantages and Compensations included in this chapter are by no means an exhaustive list. Gamemasters and players are encouraged to create their own, but should remember that it's best not to make any one Background Option too powerful, or the complete focus of the character. This task may be

especially difficult in the *World of Species*, where there are extremely powerful new Advantages that would greatly unbalance most other games. Remember that in *Species*, these abilities are among the cornerstones of the campaign. It is essential that they be present.

CREATION CONTINUES

Now that you have determined your characters' Background Advantages and Compensations, you are ready to decide on his or her skills. After that, it is merely a matter of choosing what equipment the character is carrying, and you are ready to begin adventuring. Remember that, if you wish, you may use one of the five pregenerated characters in the back of this book.

Finally, begin thinking about what your character is like as a person. The Advantages and Compensations are a good starting point, and you should have your character concept in mind as you begin choosing skills.

SPECIES BACKGROUND ADVANTAGE LIST

COLUMN I

Additional Skill Adds (CI)	One general skill or focus add or two specialization adds
Contacts (CI)	Character has a friend or friends who provide minor assistance.
Cultures (CI)	Character gains knowledge of a foreign culture.
Equipment (CI)	Character gains unusual equipment (shift one Availability code)
Fame (CI)	Character has minor notoriety.
Law Enforcement (CI)*	Character may carry a gun and has limited authority to enforce the law.
Skill Bonus (CI)	+1 to a group of three related skills (modifiers to bonus number only)
Wealth (CI)	Character is upper middle class.

COLUMN IV

Additional Skill Adds (CII)	Increase one general skill or focus skill by two adds, or one specialization by three adds
Contacts (CII)	As Contacts (CI), but the friend is more influential.
Cultures (CII)	The knowledge is more extensive than Cultures (CI) or more in-depth.
Equipment (CII)	The item is more valuable than Equipment (CI)
Fame (CII)	The character is better known than Fame (CI)
Law Enforcement (CII)*	Character is a police officer and can make arrests.
Luck (CII)	The character can use certain card deck enhancements once per adventure.

CHARACTER CREATION

Skill Bonus (CII) +1	to the bonus of five related skills
Trademark Specialization (CII)	The character gains +3 to the bonus number of any specialization, plus he is moderately famous for it as if he had Fame (CI)
Wealth (CII)	The character is from the upper class.

COLUMN III

Additional Attribute Point (CIII)	Increase one Attribute by one point
Additional Skill Adds (CIII)	Increase one general skill by three adds, or one specialization by four adds
Contacts (CIII)	The "friends" are extremely unusual and effective
Cultures (CIII)	The character has "native knowledge" and interactive abilities in the culture
Equipment (CIII)	The equipment is artifactual in nature
Fame (CIII)	The character is almost always recognized as famous
Law Enforcement (CIII)*	Character is a federal agent.
Learning Curve Positive (CIII)	The character can improve skills at a cost of one skill point <i>less</i> after adventuring.
Luck (CIII)	The character can choose from other card deck options use during an adventure.
Shapeshifting (CIII): Gamma	Character receives one add in <i>shapeshifting</i> , two special abilities, and can shapeshift into two animal forms

Shapeshifting (CIII): Delta

Character receives one add in *shapeshifting*, one special ability, and can shapeshift into one animal form

Skill Bonus (CIII)

+2 to the bonus number of three related skills or gain macroskill bonus (+1 to all skills in macroskill)

Special Effects (CIII)

Gain the ability to use one *psychic* skill and learn others

Supranormal Knowledge (CIII)

The character can do something no one else can do (+3 bonus is common)

Wealth (CIII)

The character is incredibly rich

COLUMN IV

Contacts (CIV)	The contacts are extremely highly-placed and effective
Cultures (CIV)	The character understands a completely alien culture
Equipment (CIV)	The character gains a powerful artifact of some sort
Luck (CIV)	The character gains more use of his card deck enhancements
Shapeshifting (CIII): Alpha	Character receives one add in <i>shapeshifting</i> , four special abilities, and can shapeshift into four animal forms
Shapeshifting (CIII): Beta	Character receives one add in <i>shapeshifting</i> , three special abilities, and can shapeshift into three animal forms
Skill Minimum (CIV)	Character always gains +0 bonus number or better on three related skills

COLUMN V

**Shapeshifting
(CV): Alien**

Character receives three adds in *shapeshifting*, 10 special abilities and can shapeshift into seven animal forms

**SPECIES BACKGROUND
COMPENSATION LIST**

COLUMN I

**Advantage
Flaw (CI)**

There is a limitation or drawback to one of the character's Advantages

**Advantage
Flaw (CI):
Delta**

Characters with Delta-levels of DNA in their systems must choose one from the "Gamma-Delta" Advantage Flaw list

Age (CI)

The character is older or younger than his prime

Bad Luck (CI)

The character is unlucky; usually when the character rolls a die total of "2," something bad happens

Bigotry (CI)

The character is a minor bigot in some way

**Cultural
Unfamiliarity
(CI)**

Character is "out of his element"

Debt (CI)

Character owes a small debt to someone

Employed (CI)

Character has a job that takes away some of his freedom of choice

Enemy (CI)

The character has a minor enemy

Handicap (CI)

The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that adds +2 to the DN of five or more related skills

Infamy (CI)

The character is a minor "villain"

Prejudice (CI)

The character suffers as an object of minor prejudice

Poverty (CI)

The character begins the game as poor, with substandard and limited equipment

Price (CI)

There is a "price" to a character's Advantage

Quirk (CI)

The character suffers from a personality or physical quirk that makes his life a little more difficult (see "Alien Instinct" in text)

**Sense of
Duty (CI)**

Character occasionally feels compelled to act out of a perceived duty.

COLUMN II

**Advantage
Flaw (CII)**

There is a significant limitation to one of the character's Advantages

**Advantage
Flaw (CII):
Gamma**

Character must choose two Advantage Flaws from the "Gamma-Delta" list

Age (CII)

The character is very old or very young (see text)

Bad Luck (CII)

The character is even more unlucky than "I" (see text)

Bigotry (CII)

The character is a serious bigot

**Cultural
Unfamiliarity
(CII)**

The character is from an alien culture and is significantly limited in cultural knowledge

Debt (CII)

The character owes a large debt to someone under dangerous circumstances

Employed (CII)

The character's "freedom" is virtually nonexistent because of his job

CHARACTER CREATION

Enemy (CII)	The enemy is very powerful or always around	Burn-out (CIII)	Under certain circumstances, a particular Advantage goes away permanently
Handicap (CII)	The character has one physical or two mental attributes and add +3 to the DN of all skill checks, except in very special circumstances (see text)	Bad Luck (CIII)	The character will suffer from <i>at least</i> a setback periodically
Infamy (CII)	The character is, most likely, a criminal or thought of as an enemy of society	Cultural Unfamiliarity (CIII)	The character is a complete alien
Language (CII)	The character does not understand the language of the area he is in	Debt (CIII)	The character can gain no material goods — all must be turned over to a "lender" at the end of an adventure
Learning Curve (Negative) (CII)	The costs for learning skills are doubled	Employed (CIII)	Character is, essentially, a slave
Prejudice (CII)	The character is the subject of fairly serious prejudice	Enemy (CIII)	The enemy wants to kill the character and is very powerful
Price (CII)	There is a much higher price to be paid (physical damage as an example) for using an Advantage	Handicap (CIII)	The character cannot perform many normal activities
Quirk (CII)	The character has a much more often occurring or serious "personality flaw" (see "Alien Instinct" in text)	Infamy (CIII)	The character will almost always be attacked or pursued
Sense of Duty (CII)	Character believes strongly in something will attempt to persuade others to his beliefs	Quirk (CIII)	The character has a severe personality disorder (see "Alien Instinct" and "Work aholic" in text)
		Sense of Duty (CIII)	Character is willing to die for his beliefs

COLUMN III

Achilles' Heel (CIII)	The character has a vulnerability
Advantage Flaw (CIII)	The flaw interferes with the use of the Advantage and provides an additional disadvantage
Advantage Flaw (CIII): Beta	Character must choose three Advantage Flaws from "Alpha-Beta" list

COLUMN IV

Advantage Flaw (CIV)	Flaw interferes with or completely negates Advantage, in addition to several negative effects
Advantage Flaw (CIV): Alpha	Character must choose four Advantage Flaws from the "Alpha-Beta" list
Quirk (CIV)	Disorder is overwhelming (see "Alien Instinct" in the text)

SPECIAL ABILITIES CHART

Accelerated Healing

Character heals as if afflicted by one wound level less than he actually is. Shock and other wound effects last half the normal (minimum 10 seconds).

Armor-Defeating Attack

Character's attack negates opponent's armor adds, up to +10

Atmospheric Tolerance

Character can breathe one form of atmosphere that would be lethal to most characters

Attack Form Resistance (Environmental)

Character enjoys TOU+10 against attacks involving extremes of heat or cold

Attack Form Resistance (Physical)

Character enjoys TOU+10 against physical attacks

Attribute Increase I

Character gains +1 to Attribute of his choice

Attribute Increase II

Character gains +2 to one Attribute or +1 to two

Blur

Character is indistinct to naked eye; +3 to character's *dodge*

Chameleon

Character can blend in with surroundings; +5 to *stealth*

Combat Sense

Character is never *completely surprised*, and *partial surprise* is negated

Enhanced Senses

One sense if raised to abnormal levels; +3 to relevant skills

Elasticity

Character can stretch, compress or elongate his body; +3 to *maneuver* or *prestidigitation*

Environmental Tolerance

Character can survive comfortably at one environmental extreme

Fast Reactions

+3 to Agility or Confidence for determining initiative, or can take a *haste* action three times during adventure

Flight

Character is able to fly; movement rate is equal to MRG+1

Glider Wings

Characters can fly by drifting on air currents; *flight* skill required

Hardiness I

Character suffers damage effects as if he had taken one wound level less than he has

Hardiness II

Character gets an extra wound level — six wounds causes coma, seven wounds death

Infravision/ Ultravision

Character can see in the dark; +2 to *perception* totals in darkness

Natural Armor

Character's skin is very tough; add up to +6 to TOU

Natural Weaponry (HTH)

Character has a natural weapon, which adds up to +3 to Strength

Natural Weaponry (Ranged)

Character has a ranged weapon; Dexterity to fire, range equal to value of character's Endurance

Omnivorousness

Character can gain nourishment from any substance

Regeneration

Characters heals all shock and KO after one minute; heals wounds as if two levels less wounded

Silence

Character can move in complete silence; +5 to *stealth*



Speed

Character is extremely fast; add +1 to one movement rate

Toughened Skin

Character has some natural armor, adding +3 to his TOU

Up Condition

Character operates as if *up* under certain conditions (see *MasterBook*, page 128)

Water Breathing

Character can breathe water and is immune to drowning; +2 to *swimming*

Ability Loss II

condition that caused loss is removed.

Same as above, but character must undergo some sort of simple procedure to regain ability or use of skill

Ability Loss III

Character temporarily loses two special abilities or the use of multiple skills until whatever condition caused this is removed.

Ability Loss IV

Same as III, save that character must go through a serious procedure to get abilities/skills back

Alien Outlook

Character's psychology prevents him from interacting in certain ways (i.e., no sense of humor, can't understand love or friendship, etc.)

**ADVANTAGE FLAW
CHART**

Ability Loss I

Character temporarily loses one or more of his special abilities, or the use of a common skill, at a regular interval, and regains them when

CHARACTER CREATION

Alien Understanding

Character misunderstands common situations, mistaking one type of interaction for another (*persuasion* for *taunting*, etc.)

Allergy I

Character has a minor allergy to a fairly common substance; character is *stymied* until the condition is removed

Allergy II

Same as above, except character is *setback* when exposed to condition

Atmospheric Incompatibility

Character must shield himself from something in the atmosphere; failure to do so means taking one shock point per minute until unconscious, and then one wound per 10 minutes until dead

Cultural "Allergy" I

Some social situation (exposure to nudity, sight of cops, etc.) causes character to be *stymied*

Cultural "Allergy" II

Same as above, but character is *setback* if exposed to condition

Environmental Incompatibility

Character is sensitive to something in the environment; failure to shield himself results in damage effects identical to those of "Atmospheric Incompatibility"

Lethal Vulnerability

Character has violent reaction to fairly

Major Atmospheric Incompatibility

uncommon substance; character suffers four wounds every round he is exposed to it

Major Vulnerability

Character requires special life support to breathe at all

Character is injured if exposed to a substance — one wound suffered per round exposed

Metabolic

Character needs more life support (i.e., food) than normal and will take shock, then wounds after hours of malnutrition

Nutritional Requirements

The character must ingest an element not commonly consumed by Humans to survive

Reduced Attribute I

One Attribute is permanently reduced by -1

Reduced Attribute II

One Attribute is permanently reduced by -2, or two by -1

Reduced Attribute III

Three points (in any combination) are removed from the character's Attributes (i.e., -2 from one, -1 from another; -3 from one, etc.)

Reduced Attribute IV

Same as above, only four points are removed in some combination

Vulnerable

Character has a weakness to one type of attack, suffering additional damage from it

CHAPTER SIX

NEW SKILLS

This chapter describes new skills for use in *The World of Species*, in addition to those listed in the *MasterBook*. The Species Skill List on page 83 lists *all* skills available to *Species* characters, including those skills found in the *MasterBook* rules.

Those *MasterBook* skills not listed are not normally available to characters in *The World of Species* (unless the gamemaster chooses to make them available). The skills marked with an asterisk (*) are explained in this chapter. All other skills listed are described in Chapter Four of the *MasterBook* rules, "Skills and Skill Use."

AGILITY SKILLS

ESCAPE ARTIST

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Types of restraints (ropes, chains, locks, etc.)

This skill allows a character to escape from otherwise secure bonds by twisting, contorting, and writhing her body into a variety of "impossible positions." A character with this skill may attempt to escape from almost any sort of confinement which physically restrains his body, so long as the character is not completely immobilized.

The chart below contains sample difficulty numbers for escaping from various kinds of restraints. These difficulty numbers may be modified by the gamemaster according to his opinion of the circumstances of the escape. (For example, the speed required, the conditions the agent works under, or specially de-

signed restraints.)

Note that this skill does not substitute for the *lockpicking* skill when opening doors, unlocking chests of jewels, picking handcuffs, or breaking out of jail. With this skill, the agent may be able to pull his arms over his head to use his hands, but he may well not be able to slip out of the handcuffs unless they are improperly secured.

INTELLECT SKILLS

COMPUTER HACKING

Use: Cannot be used *untrained*; requires *computer ops* as a prerequisite skill.

Sample Specializations: Types of software, network designs.

The *computer ops* skill allows a character to operate a computer, do basic programming, and access information. That skill, however, does *not* grant the character the abilities required to attempt to gain unauthorized access to other computer programs and systems.

This skill is used to penetrate and operate within other computer systems. It reflects the skill and experience of the character not only in general computer operations, but with the

ESCAPE ARTIST CHART

Sample Restraints	Difficulty
Ropes	10
Wires	12
Handcuffs	13
Straitjacket	15

techniques required to decode passwords, defeat security programming, and access and manipulate information from outside the home system.

The gamemaster determines the difficulty numbers for each *computer hacking* attempt. Since computer systems vary so widely, gamemasters should determine the difficulty using the "Arbitrary DN Scale" in Chapter Three of MasterBook. Possible modifiers might include the sophistication of the character's computer system, the comparative sophistication of the target system, the quality of the target software, and the level of security on the target computer or system. The player character must roll separate actions to penetrate the system, to read/download a file, and to escape detection. If the system is being actively monitored for intrusion, the character may have to roll repeatedly to avoid detection.

COUNTERFEITING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Engraving; printing; coins

Counterfeiting is the ability to produce duplicate, fraudulent legal tender. The most common technique used in counterfeiting is to produce an exact replica of official government printing plates, and then combine these plates with a printing press to produce duplicates of the currency engraved on those plates. The proper paper is also required for such an operation (and is not always easily found).

Duplicating a coin involves creating a mold resembling the original coin, and then casting and striking metal into the mold. Counterfeiting is a federal crime in the United States.

The base difficulty for *counterfeiting* currency is 12. The total *counterfeiting* roll generated is

also the *perception* DN for anyone inspecting the currency. Note that this base DN assumes that the characters have good copies of the original plates or molds, the correct paper and ink, etc. For each required element missing, increase the DN of the roll by up to +5. Characters with this skill have no special ability to find or make the paper, ink, etc. required in *counterfeiting*.



It is extremely difficult to make a good counterfeit bill without the proper materials. *Counterfeiting* is also becoming ever more difficult as the government begins to introduce plastic threads into bills, along with a number of other high technology, anti-counterfeiting devices.

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

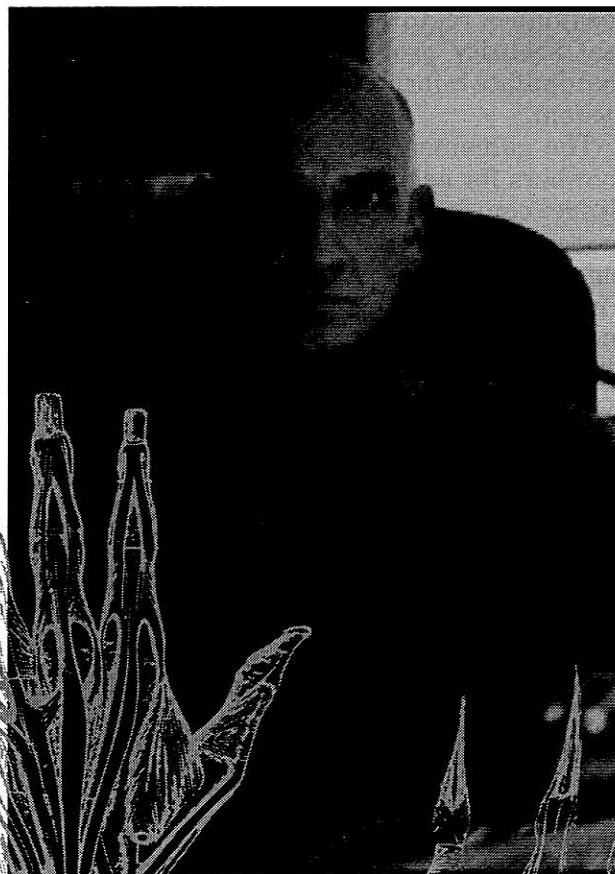
Specializations: Particular security services or terrorist groups; industrial counter-intelligence.

This skill grants the character two types of abilities. First, a character with this skill has the knowledge and experience to assess an organization or facility to identify weaknesses which leave them open to *espionage*. This preventative analysis has a base difficulty number of 13, with a +2 modifier to the DN for each previous analysis of the organization in the past three years. A successful *counter-intelligence* roll by the character means that he designs a plan to enhance the target's security, adding a +2 modifier to the DN of any *espionage* roll directed against it.

The benefits of this skill last for three years, and they *can* be stacked. For example, if one character conducted a successful *counter-intelligence* analysis of the Laboratory for the Agency in 1992, and a second conducted another successful analysis in 1994, any *espionage* attempts against the Laboratory in 1995 would add a +4 to the DN of the roll.

The character may also attempt to detect, ferret out, and foil ongoing espionage efforts—catching enemy spies in the act. To detect espionage activity, the agent must investigate the situation, gather information, and analyze events to determine (a) whether espionage is occurring, and (b) the likely culprits. These two inquiries require separate rolls. The difficulty number for this *counter-intelligence* roll is the *espionage* total generated by the opposing party. If the character is forced to operate hurriedly, or is missing key pieces of information, the gamemaster should assess a penalty ranging from +1 to +5 to the DN of the roll.

Note that it is far more enjoyable for the gamemaster to have the character discover specific clues using this ability, than to merely tell the character, "Oh, it looks to you like Mr X is spying on this company." Instead, the



gamemaster should tell the character that he finds a certain grey, gritty powder near several telephone link-ups, that several computer files have turned up corrupted recently," etc. The character should then have the opportunity to piece these clues together to come up with possible solutions to whether espionage is occurring and who might be responsible.

DATA ANALYSIS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Weather analysis, intelligence, crime, etc.

This ability is similar to the *deduction* skill, except that this skill allows the character to slowly assimilate massive quantities of information in order to attempt to determine causes for, and correlations between, the events reported. This ability also grants the character the means to attempt to project likely future occurrences/outcomes resulting based on the proffered data. This ability is based on mathematics and statistical analysis, and allows a character to decipher information that most

people couldn't begin to understand.

Data analysis can be very useful in, for example, analyzing police reports to detect a pattern of murders typical of a serial killer (or alien), or in analyzing intelligence data on the activities of a foreign nation. While the gamemaster must set the difficulty level for each roll (because the difficulty varies greatly from one situation to the next), the type of success generated should determine the amount and quality of information that the character receives.

As an example, it might be Very Easy (DN 3) for a trained analyst to detect a pattern in three reports of similar murders occurring within one hundred kilometers of each other in a six month period. It might be Difficult (DN 12), however, to detect that pattern in the same murders three years and two thousand kilometers apart.

ESPIONAGE

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Electronic surveillance, electronic detection, counter-surveillance, etc.

This is the catch-all spying skill. Every member of a national or international law enforcement agency, and every government agent, should have at least minimal training in this skill. *Espionage* covers all of the basic spying techniques, including electronic eavesdropping, foiling such eavesdropping, detecting listening devices, surveillance, sending coded mes-

sages, etc. This also includes training in the increasingly complicated technical devices which are used in the modern era.

Note that *espionage* does not replace other typical spy skills, such as *stealth* or *demolitions*. Nor does it replace the *scholar: cryptography* skill. Spies send messages using codes provided for them, and they normally cannot write complex codes themselves.

RADIO OPS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Military, shortwave, satellite transmission, HAM radios, AM/FM, etc.

The radio has been a fixture of daily life since the 1930s, and it is a vital means of communication for many organizations. These include military units, intelligence services, and all those operating in remote areas. Radio ops is the ability to monitor radio transmissions and to transmit messages across the airwaves. This skill also covers the technical operation of all the equipment necessary to send and receive radio broadcasts.

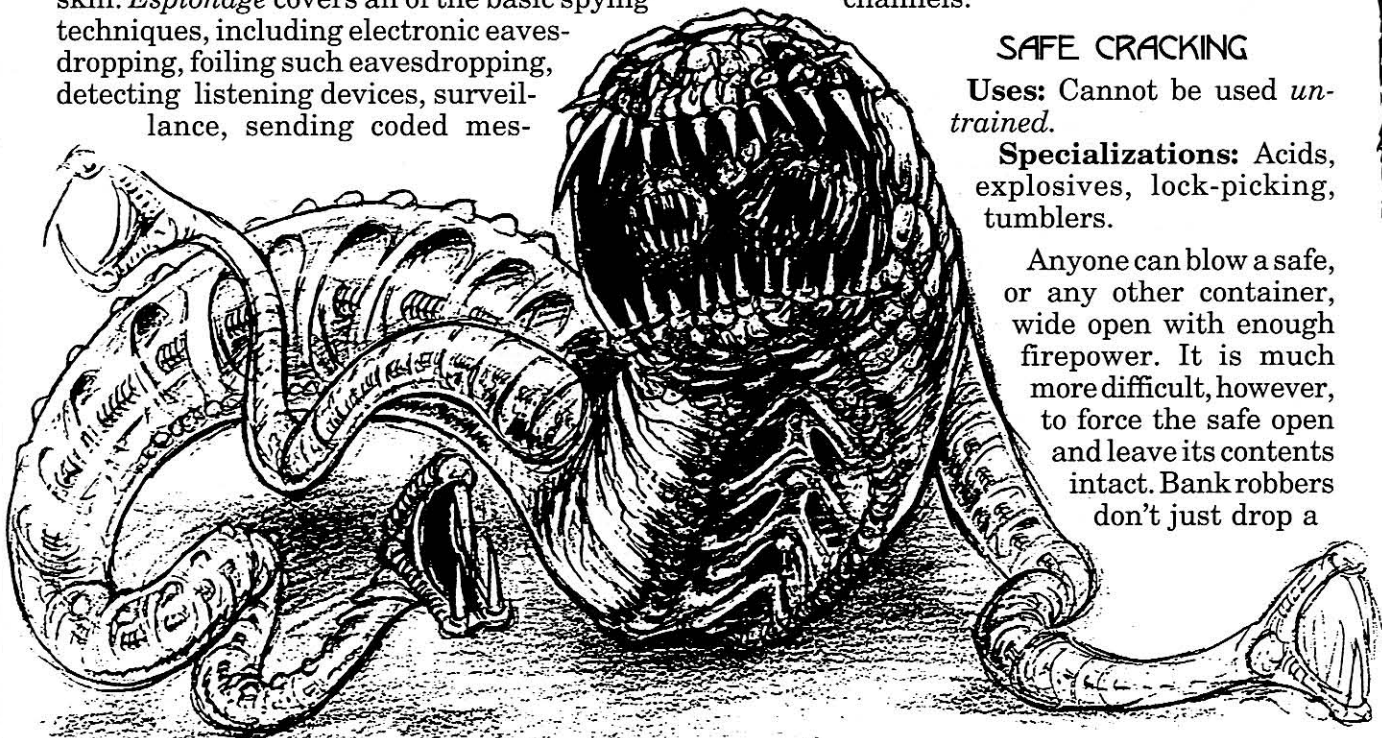
Characters can use the *radio ops* skill to tune in to simple transmissions, or to pick specific, faint signals out of the crowded ether. This skill may be used in conjunction with *espionage* to intercept transmissions along restricted-access channels.

SAFE CRACKING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Acids, explosives, lock-picking, tumblers.

Anyone can blow a safe, or any other container, wide open with enough firepower. It is much more difficult, however, to force the safe open and leave its contents intact. Bank robbers don't just drop a



500 pound bomb on a vault, because burnt fragments of money are no good to them. That's where the *safe-cracking* skill comes in.

The specializations of this skill cover the most common means used to break into safes. Characters with this skill may also attempt to break into other types of vaults or strongboxes with complicated locking mecha-

nisms. *Safe-cracking* cannot be used in place of *demolitions* or *lockpicking* in other situations.

VEHICLE MECHANIC

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: By specific vehicles within a foci, or by specific type of repair.

This skill is used to diagnose and repair the

THE SCIENCES

Science is the skill of knowing how things work. The following is a list of some of the science foci that would be of extra significance in *Species*:

SCIENCE: GENETICS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Various species of animals; plants; microorganisms; aliens

Genetics is the scientific study of heredity — the means by which the composite of traits which make up every creature are passed from generation to generation. This science arose around the turn of the century, and focuses on the gene — the unit which physically transmits the inherited characteristics.

Each species has a different set of genes, which are arrayed along the chromosome in the nucleus of each cell. Individual traits are coded into the genes through slight chemical differences. The genes direct all the life processes of the cell by directing the production of proteins in the cell, and mutations occur when the structures of the genes or chromosomes change. The mutations in *Species* occurred (and occur) as a result of the introduction of alien proteins into the cells of the body, which vastly altered the genetic structure.

A character with this skill would be capable of examining a being's cells and determining the extent of any mutation and, if alien, which generation it is. He might also be able to predict the path future mutations will take, based on the past pattern.

SCIENCE: GENETIC ENGINEERING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*; requires *science: genetics* as a prerequisite skill.

Specializations: Types of organisms, particular proteins and genes.

This science consists of the development and practice of certain techniques designed to manipulate the genetic material (DNA) in cells. This skill covers a variety of complex techniques including cell fusion and gene-splicing, in which genes from one species (portions of DNA molecules) are removed from a donor, and then injected into a virus. The virus is then injected into a bacteria, where large quantities of the viral and foreign genetic material are produced and can be studied. This allows study of the structure and regulation of the gene, but also creates the possibility that the genetic material could pass from human control. (The bacteria may escape, or could be injected into some other organism.)

The science of genetic engineering has allowed mankind to study and begin to understand portions of the genetic code. However, this science is still very much in its infancy; there are many, many areas of genetics still completely unexplored (or even as yet undreamed of). If our level of scientific understanding was more advanced, the genetic engineers at the Agency may have been able to predict the likely outcome of Project Proteus, or at least have been more prepared to deal with the consequences of their actions.

A character with this skill would be better qualified to determine what various types of DNA went into forming a genetically engineered creature. In addition, they could monitor and treat genetically enhanced agents. Scientific advisers in Command Groups are often genengineers.

mechanical problems of motorized vehicles. This skill can accomplish a variety of tasks, from simple fixes to a large project like overhauling an engine. While the gamemaster must set the difficulty number for each task, factors including the complexity of the vehicle and the tools available can all modify the difficulty number.

If the mechanic fails his roll, he may have failed to make the repair, or may have only made a temporary fix. The gamemaster can decide whether the repair fails altogether, or whether it works for a time, only to fail later (possibly at an inopportune moment) if too much stress is applied to the machine.

This skill may also be used to sabotage a vehicle. A skilled mechanic will understand how the target vehicle works, and may cause a vehicle to malfunction completely, or set up a subtle flaw that will cause a catastrophic failure at some later time. Of course, the subtler the sabotage the higher the difficulty number required to succeed at the task.

MIND SKILLS

PSYCHIC ABILITIES

Like the *science* and *scholar* skills, *psychic* is a macroskill, a skill which requires a particular focus. These skills are available only to characters with the Background Advantage "Special Effects (CIII)." Note that, for the purposes of *Species*, this macroskill is acting in place of the *MasterBook* *psionic manipulation* skill. The reason for this is that psychic abilities in *Species* are meant to be of significantly lesser power than the sort usually governed by *psionic manipulation*.

Characters who choose the "Special Effects" Advantage receive one add in a *psychic* skill with a particular focus (e.g., *psychic: telepathy*). They also receive the ability to learn other psychic disciplines at the same cost as other skills. Characters who do not choose this Advantage may not learn any *psychic* skill.

A list of foci — individual psychic skills — is provided below for psychic characters. While many psychics have only one strong psychic talent, and most will have no more than a few such talents, a character may select and develop as many of these foci as their skill points,



and the gamemaster, will allow. Remember that the list below is not all-inclusive. Gamemasters should feel free to develop other psychic skills for use in their campaign.

PSYCHIC: ASTRAL PROJECTION

Uses: Cannot be used untrained.

Specializations: None.

Psychics with astral projection may leave their bodies behind, wandering the world in spirit form — travelling far more rapidly than is possible while confined within their bodies. Psychic characters may sense the physical world with any of their normal senses, but they cannot affect the physical world while in astral form. However, while in astral form they may use any other psychic skills they possess. The strain of using two such skills at once adds +2 to the DN of any actions taken with the second skill.

Psychic: astral projection is not a simple skill to use. Successfully leaving one's body requires a skill total of 10. For every hour beyond the first the character wishes to remain outside of his body, he must make an additional roll at

DN+2 (i.e, the second hour is a difficulty of 12, the third a 14, etc.) Failure means the character's spirit is automatically drawn back into his body.

Note that the body is an empty vessel while the spirit is traveling, and will need to be protected. If the body is moved, the spirit will have to search for it. If the body is killed, the spirit will have no place to return to — eventually, he'll fail a skill roll and his spirit will dissolve.

The distance that an individual may travel, and the time they may remain out of body, may vary with each out of body experience. The gamemaster must assign difficulty numbers to any task attempted in astral form. The chart below gives some examples of various tasks, with sample difficulty numbers.

PSYCHIC: CLAIRVOYANCE

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

PSYCHIC: ASTRAL PROJECTION DIFFICULTY CHART

Activity	Difficulty Number
Entering astral form	10
Travelling for up to one minute per point of Endurance, up to one kilometer from body	5
Travelling for up to ten minutes per point of Endurance, up to ten kilometers from body	8
Travelling up to 1,000 kilometers away, up to one hour per point of Endurance, May manifest visually to observers	12
Travel up to 4,000 kilometers away. All senses except touch now function. Appear solid to observers when manifesting	15
Travel anywhere in the world. May speak in a whisper when physically manifest	18

This ability allows the psychic character to use her senses at a range not normally possible, to hear or see what is happening in distant places. A skill total of 8 is required to activate the skill; and a +3 is added to the DN of all actions unless a focus for the effort — such as someone known to the character — is present at the targeted location.

As with astral projection, the character may not notice things happening at his body's location while sensing clairvoyantly. Clairvoyance does not allow the character to affect events that he witnesses using this skill. The character is merely an observer.

PSYCHIC: MEDIUM

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This skill allows the psychic to attempt to call up and contact the spirits of the dead. This skill is not easy to use, for the dead do not enjoy being disturbed. Characters must make a successful skill roll of 12 to contact the spirit in question.

The level of success achieved on the roll determines how long the two may remain in communication. For each level of success

PSYCHIC: CLAIRVOYANCE DIFFICULTY CHART

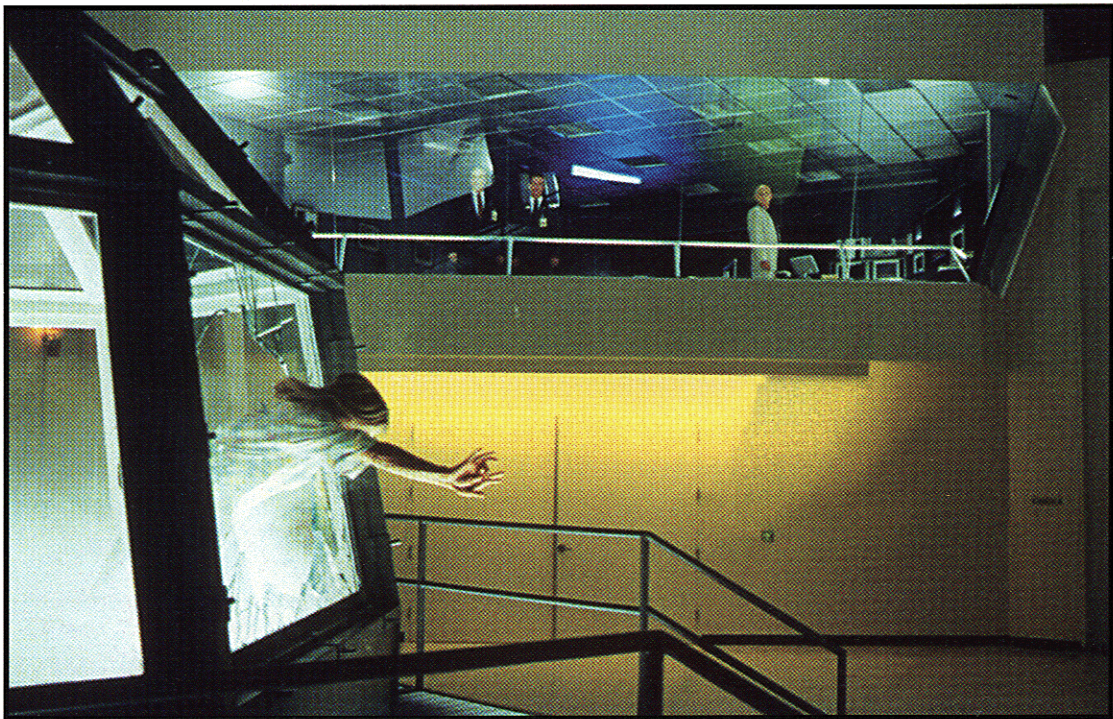
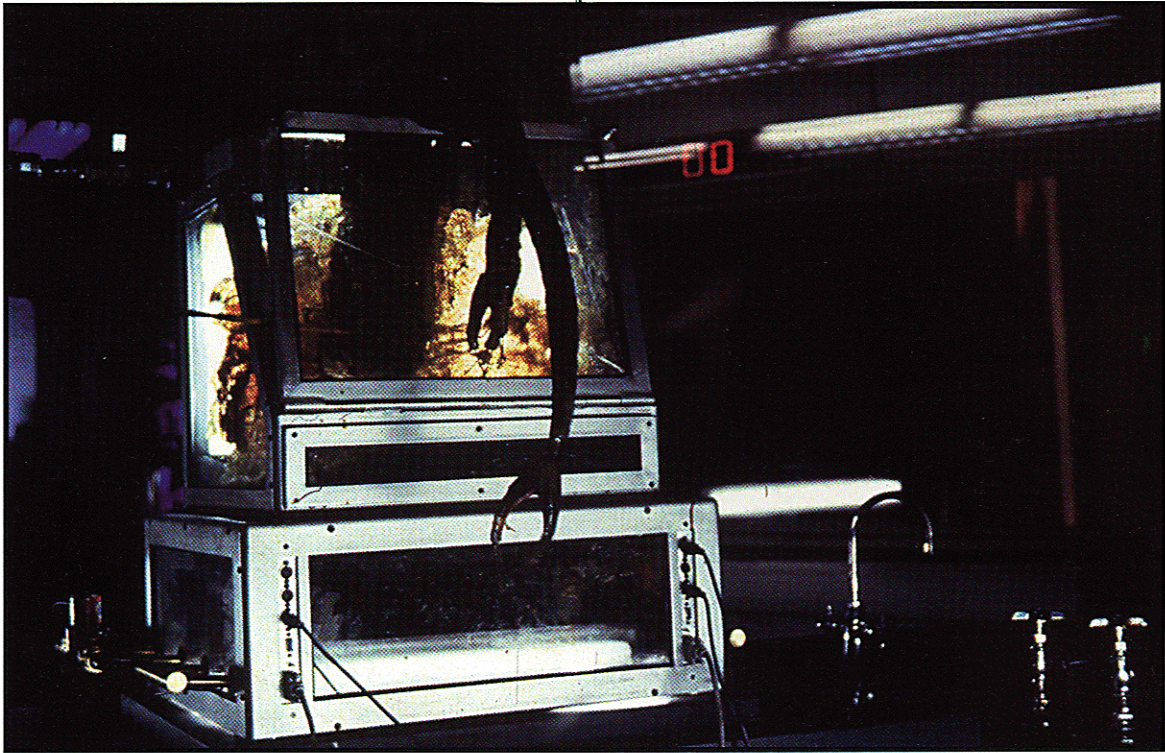
Activity	Difficulty
Activating clairvoyance	8
Seeing fuzzy visions of other rooms inside same building	5
Seeing location in the same town, hearing also functions on a Good success roll or better	8
Can see and hear things anywhere within 250 kilometer; touch functions on a Good success roll or better, although objects feel peculiar	12
Can see, hear, and touch anything within 1,000 kilometers	15
Can use all five senses on any object anywhere in the world	18



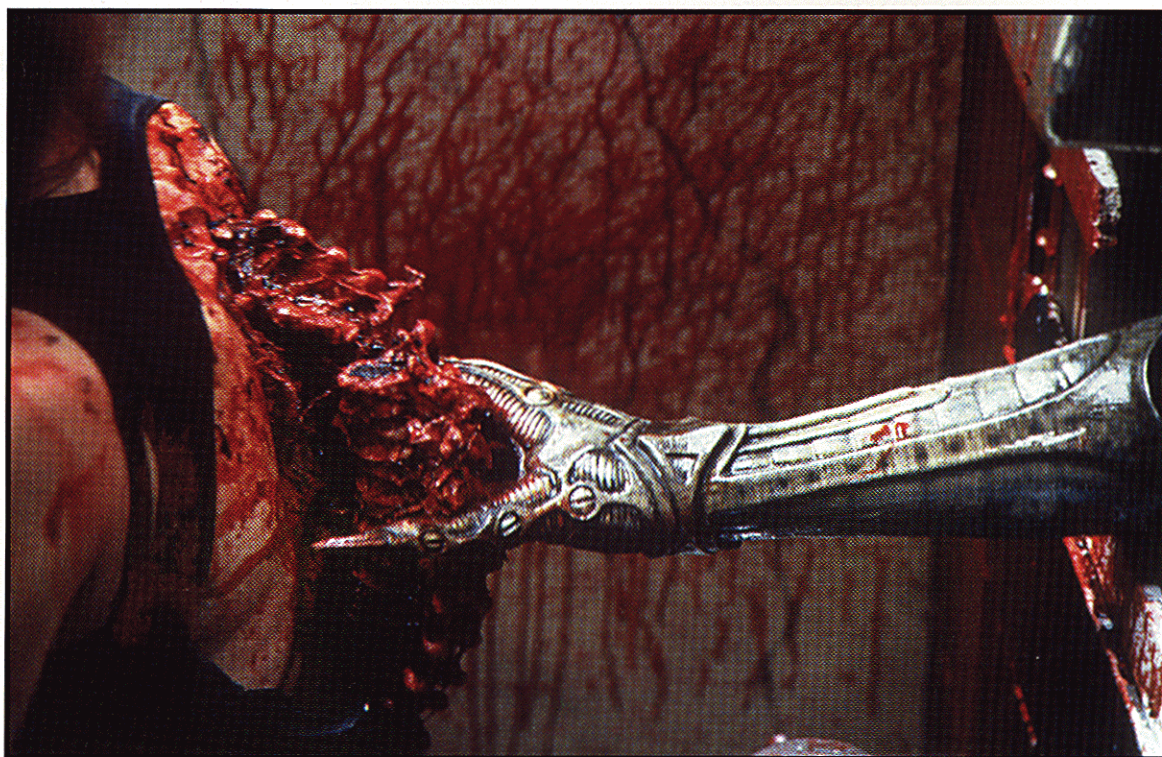
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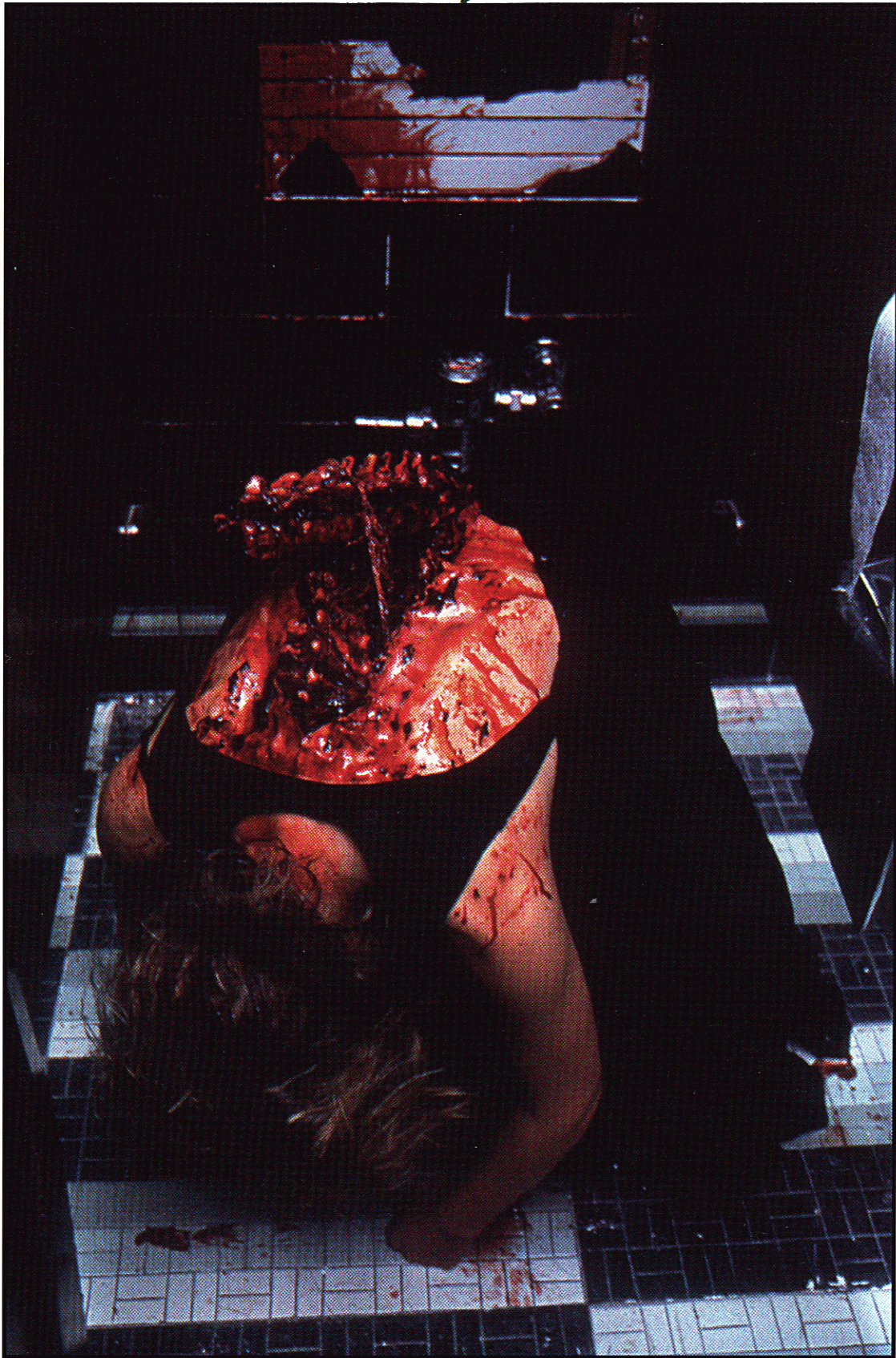
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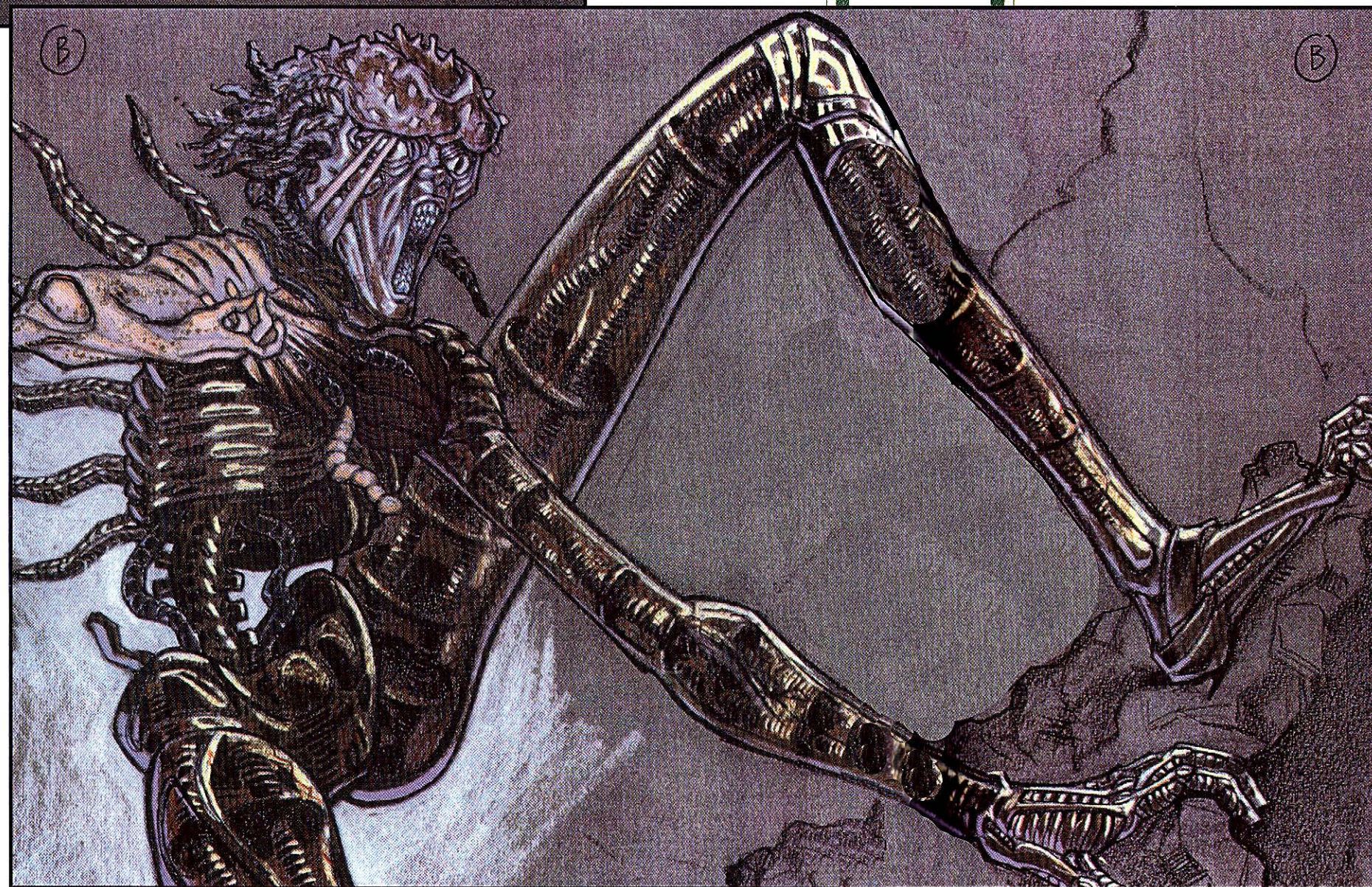
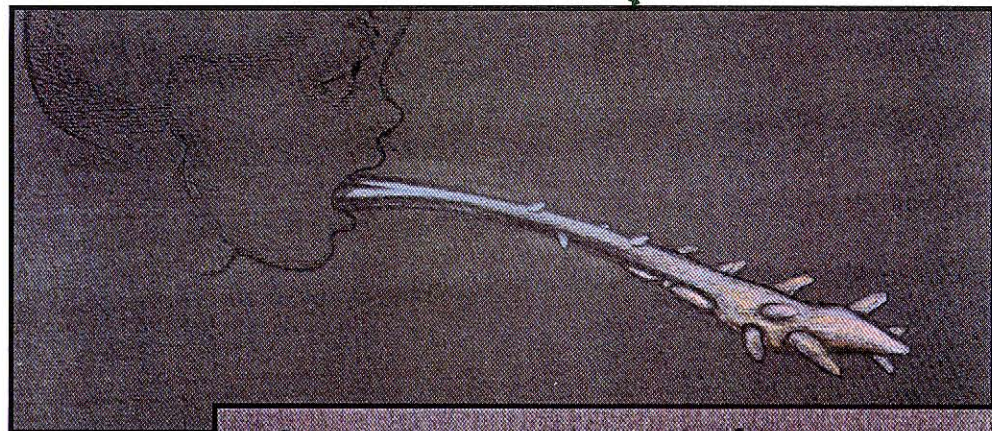
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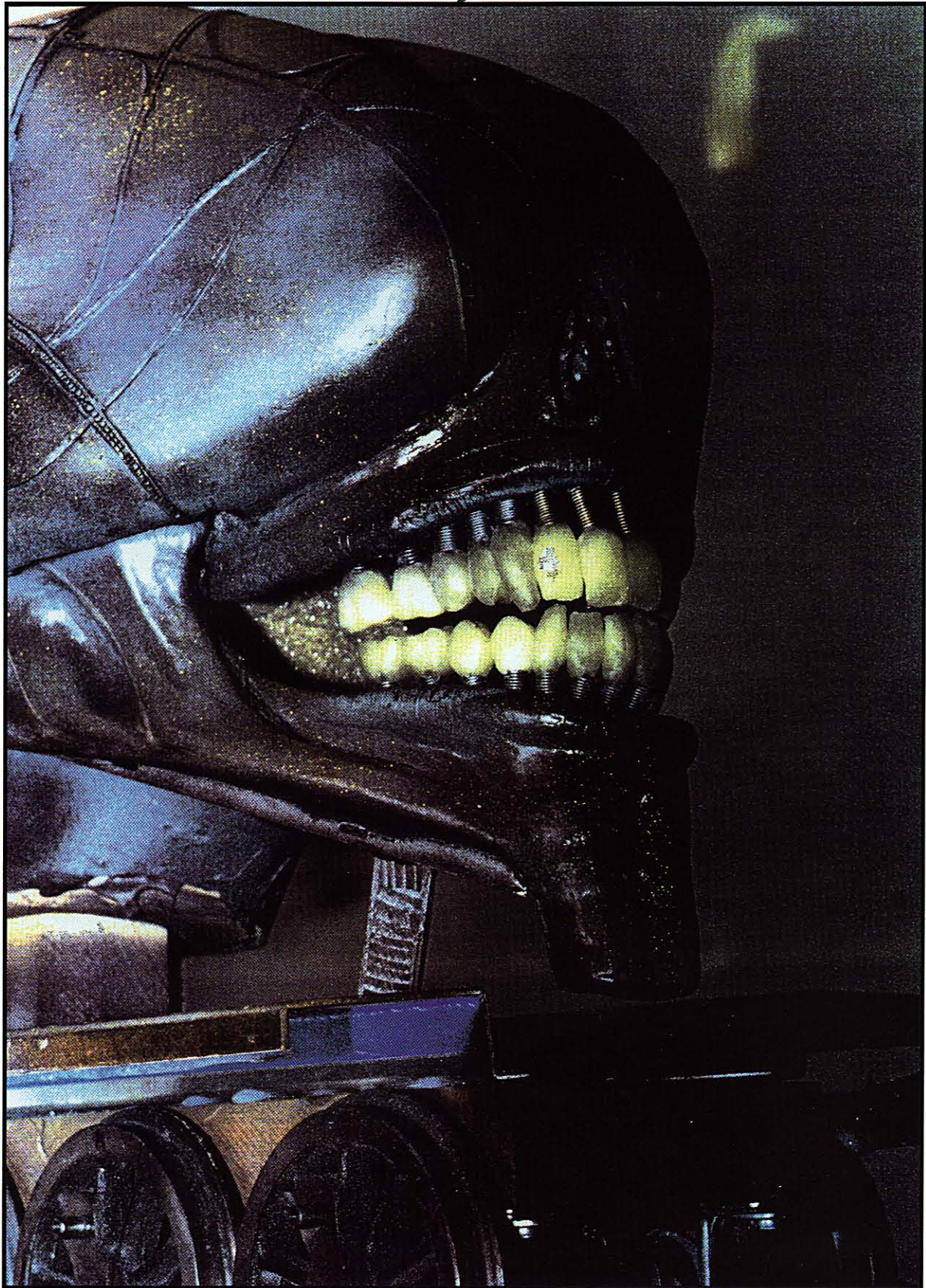


SPECIES

SPECIES



SPECIES



SPECIES

achieved by the psychic, the character may speak for one minute. The psychic may double this time limit by generating a successful total of 15. The chart below lists sample modifiers to the difficulty rolls of the psychic character. Difficulty modifiers can be cumulative.

PSYCHIC: EMPATH

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This psychic skill allows the empathic character to sense the emotional state of those around him, to catalogue and identify strong emotions. This skill can be very useful in negotiation, but can also be used to detect the presence of an alien. Aliens have very different emotional "patterns" than humans do, and the emotional patterns of *homo sapiens mutatis* are different from either. In fact, alien emotions are often very disturbing or frightening to an empath sensing them, both because of their sheer intensity and because of their often threatening nature.

This skill is easier to access than many psychic skills. Empaths require only a successful skill roll of 5 to begin receiving emotions. This ability functions to a maximum range of approximately 50 meters.

Characters may also use this skill in an attempt to sense strong emotions even days after the person or alien experiencing the emotion has left the area. Strong emotions sometimes leave psychic echoes and a skilled empath

may pick up on these. This requires a skill total of 12 with the difficulty number increasing by +1 for every day that passes following the emotional release.

There are many conditions which modify the difficulty of tracking and identifying the emotions of a specific individual, especially when attempting to sense the emotions of one individual in the midst of a crowd. The chart below provides some sample DN modifiers.

PSYCHIC: PSYCHOMETRY

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This ability allows the character to sense information about a person, place, or event by handling an object connected to that person or place. This skill can be a very useful tool in investigations, particularly investigations of alien-related homicides — or sweeps of former alien lairs. This skill requires a successful skill total of 8 to initiate. After initiating the skill, the psychic must handle the object, and concentrate on the desired location, event, or individual. The chart below shows sample results for various skill totals.

PSYCHIC: TELEKINESIS

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

PSYCHIC: MEDIUM DIFFICULTY MODIFIER CHART

Condition	Modifier
Psychic at location of former home of spirit, or place of death	+2
Psychic has a possession of the spirits'	-1
Psychic knows spirit's name	-1
Spirit dead less than one year	-1
Spirit was murdered	+1
Spirit has been contacted previously (per contact)	+1
Spirit dead more than five years	+1
Spirit dead more than ten years	+2

PSYCHIC: EMPATH DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS TABLE

Condition	Modifier
Target experiencing very intense emotions	-1 to -3
Target alone	-1
Target unaware of empath's presence	-1
For every five people within 15 meters of target	+1
For every five people within 15 meters of empath	+1
Target attempting to conceal emotions	+2
Empath experiencing intense emotion	+1 to +5

This ability allows the character to move things with her mind simply by concentrating. This skill requires a total of 8 to initiate, and the psychic then rolls again to attempt to move the desired object. The object must be in the psychic's line of sight for the psychic to pick it up, but need not remain in the line of sight afterwards.

The gamemaster should assign difficulty numbers to all prospective *psychic: telekinesis* rolls. The chart below provides some sample results.

PSYCHIC: TELEPATHY

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

This skill grants the psychic the ability to read people's minds. The psychic can read alien

minds as well. Unfortunately, more than a fleeting brush with alien thought processes may unbalance the psychic, or even drive him insane. The results of such an encounter will vary with the intensity, purpose, and duration of the contact. Such a prolonged contact (a minute or more) might, for example, result in the character acquiring a new "Quirk" (CII) or (CIII).

To initiate contact with the target's mind, the psychic must first make a successful *psychic: telepathy* roll with a DN equal to the target's Confidence attribute + any *willpower* adds. Once contact is initiated, the psychic rolls again. The chart below provides sample results, and difficulty numbers for desired results. The target is normally unaware of the telepathic contact, unless the character rolls a 2 on his skill roll. If the character wishes to convey information to his subject through telepathy, he must make another roll (DN 12) to do so.

RESEARCH

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Library, files, newspapers, public records

This skill allows the character to gather

PSYCHIC: PSYCHOMETRY DIFFICULTY CHART

Result	Difficulty
Character receives vague, dreamlike impressions of recent activities involving strong emotions	8
In addition to above, psychic receives a snapshot quality image of the person most closely associated with object	10
Can register the gist of an event and the number of people involved. If concentrating on person, can learn general information on subject, like age, emotional state, personality, etc.	12
Can clearly visualize event, or the actions of the individual for the last twenty four hours	15
Psychic understands the context of all interactions at the event, or into the plans and motives of the person when last in possession of the object. Also receives vague impression of owner's whereabouts.	18

PSYCHIC: TELEKINESIS DIFFICULTY CHART

Action	Difficulty
Levitate small items off a table	5
Bend spoons, flip switches, otherwise affect small objects	
Pick up object up to 15 meters away and throw it around.	8
Object can weigh one-half of the weight value the psychic can "lift" with his Intellect.	10
Can lift objects requiring full Intellect, within 200 feet.	
Can pick up multiple objects.	12
Can lift object weighing as much as INT+2 could lift. Range is line of sight. Can manipulate number of items equal to Dexterity.	15

information from second-hand sources. Characters with the *research* skill may attempt to discover information from a variety of sources. Most often, the source will be a library or reference book, but *research* also includes the ability to sift through almost any type of printed material or even other forms of media. *Research* differs from the *scholar* skill primarily in that it focuses on the study of broad subjects. This skill is best used for short projects with a definite conclusion. The chart below provides guidelines for the difficulty level of particular research projects.

CONFIDENCE SKILLS

BRIBERY

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Favors, goods, money

Bribery describes the character's skill at convincing another individual to ignore his duty, look the other way, divulge secret information, or otherwise behave dishonorably for personal gain. *Bribery* totals are modified by the value of the money or information offered, the extent of favors received, or the item proffered. The difficulty number of the *bribery* attempt is the target's modified Confidence or *willpower*.

The Bribe: To determine the modifier for the amount of the bribe, find the value of the amount offered on the *MasterBook* Value Chart and divide it by two. Add this number to the character's *bribery* skill total. For example, Gamma agent Wilson offers a clerk \$100.00 to pull him off of the duty roster for the weekend, so that he can have a hot time with Delta agent Jeffries. The value of \$100 is 10, so +5 is added to Wilson's *bribery* total.

The Target: To determine the difficulty of the bribe, note the target's Confidence or *willpower* value. Then, determine the target's attitude towards the bribe. The chart below, indicates the level of success needed to bribe the target (see the "Success Chart" in Chapter Three of *MasterBook*). Characters may also use *charm* or *persuasion* to win the target's trust or willingness, and characters who just flatly offer a bribe may be automatically rejected (i.e. the target's attitude becomes more suspicious than ever).

Bribery depends a great deal upon the target. People who are loyal, wealthy, or greatly fear being caught, are less likely to take a bribe. The gamemaster should always feel free to modify the difficulty number of a *bribery* roll depending on the individual circumstances involved.

CHARISMA SKILLS

SHAPESHIFTING

Uses: Cannot be used *untrained*.

Specializations: None.

PSYCHIC: TELEPATHY DIFFICULTY CHART

Action	Difficulty
Can feel basic emotions of target in line of sight	8
Read surface thoughts of target in line of sight	10
Read recent memories, or plans for near future, of target in line of sight	12
Read deep thoughts and future plans. Level of success achieved determines amount of information.	15
May read people within 15 meters without seeing them	
Read multiple minds at once, or discover deep secrets	18

RESEARCH DIFFICULTY CHART

Condition	Difficulty
Information in any encyclopedia	7
Information available in old secondary sources	10
Information available from only a very well-stocked university library, or equivalent	12
Information available from rare volumes, or is extremely obscure	15

NEW SCHOLAR FOCI

The *scholar* skill deals with things you have learned about a particular area of knowledge, even through experience or through "book-learning." A focus is required to use this skill and some new ones are listed below:

SCHOLAR: CRYPTOGRAPHY

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Various types of codes or methods of encryption.

This skill allows the character to attempt to make and break codes. Protecting the security of information is vital in this era, and most vital information is encoded in some manner. This skill covers encryption and decryption from the simplest pen and paper code, to the most complicated computer file encryption programs or signals traffic.

When a character attempts to encode information using this skill, she must make a roll. There is no success or failure target — rather, the *scholar: cryptography* total generated is the DN of any efforts to decipher the code. When a character attempts to decipher a code, they must roll against the *scholar: cryptography* total generated by the person who created the code.

The gamemaster should assess a penalty of from +1 to +5 to the DN of the roll if the character has only a small sample of the code to work with. A similar penalty should be deducted from the *scholar: cryptography* roll of a character who is rushed while attempting to encode information.

Note that while this skill can be used *untrained*, the technology of codes and codebreaking have advanced to the point that an *untrained* character should receive incredible penalties when trying to defeat a sophisticated encryption system.

SCHOLAR: EXTRATERRESTRIALS

Uses: Can be used *untrained*.

Specializations: Types of sightings, regions, conspiracy theories, The Men in Black, government activity.

This new focus of the *scholar* skill is particularly vital in *Species*. This skill grants the character access to a great deal of knowledge concerning historical UFO sightings, modern-era extraterrestrial encounters, etc. A character who receives a particularly good result using this skill could develop information suggesting patterns of alien activity, as well as governmental actions involving extraterrestrials.

A.W.A.R.E. has made excellent use of this skill, in combination with data analysis and a very good computer system, to produce reports which appear to demonstrate a pattern of extraterrestrial monitoring of our planet. They have also identified the Agency as the United States' key organization in this field. A.W.A.R.E. is still seeking confirmation of this analysis in a more user-friendly, publishable format.

Shapeshifting allows a character to change his form. If a character is capable of turning into one animal form, he must have two sets of statistics — one for his "natural" form and one for the animal form. If a character is able to transform into multiple things, he may have multiple sets of statistics.

The Basics: *Shapeshifting* differs in *Species* from some other games, however. Characters who shapeshift retain their Intellect and

Mind attribute and skill values at the level of their natural form, though their other statistics may vary widely from form to form. Their *shapeshifting* skill value must also remain the same in all incarnations.

Shapeshifting may be triggered by environmental factors, stress or done at will. Only in the latter case is a skill check necessary. If shifting voluntarily, the character must generate a *shapeshifting* total of 9 to bring about the

BRIBERY CHART

Target's Attitude	Success Level Needed
Agreeable	Minimal
Neutral	Solid
Suspicious/Unfriendly	Good
Wary/Hostile	Superior
Unwilling/Very Hostile	Spectacular
Absolutely Adverse	Spectacular +

change, and a second total to turn back again. Failure at the check means the transformation does not occur, and the character cannot try again for at least an hour.

Growing and Shrinking: First-generation aliens can sever parts of themselves and have them function independently, shapeshifting on their own into creatures of the same mass value as they are. However, no other characters may do this — they may not shapeshift into something whose mass value is less than their starting one (i.e., a character with a mass value of 10 may not shapeshift into an animal with a mass value of 8). If a character wishes to do this, he must reduce his starting mass value naturally.

No character may transform into something whose mass value is greater than his starting value +1. If a character with a mass value of say, 10, wishes to transform into something with a mass value of 11, he must first consume 50 kilos of nourishment. He may take no other physical actions during their period. His body will store the calories, thanks to the alien DNA in his system, and he may then transform.

When transforming back from that form to his natural one, his hybrid metabolism will automatically burn up the extra mass. His natural form will thus look "normal" to others.

Attribute Points: With the exception of first-generation aliens (like Sil), characters may not transform into anything whose total attribute points are

more than +10 or less than -10 his starting total. Remember that Toughness is not counted in this total, as it is a derived attribute. Remember also that Intellect and Mind values must remain the same.

Shapeshifting and Skill Points: There are a few rules regarding skill adds that shapeshifting characters will need to be aware of:

1) A character's total number of skill adds must remain the same in all forms. Note that this rule does not apply to Sil or other first-generation aliens, but does apply to all progeny.

2) When a character shapeshifts, he may reallocate his skill points among existing skills or even drop old skills in favor of new ones, if necessary. For example, a character who transforms into a flying creature might not have the flight skill in his human form, but must have it in his winged form.

The exception to this is skills based on the Intellect and Mind Attributes, whose values cannot be changed when shifting forms. These skills stay constant in all shapes.

3) The *shapeshifting* skill value must remain the same in all forms. Thus, if a character's Charisma drops by -3 when he shifts into a particular shape, he will have to shift three skill adds to *shapeshifting* to keep it at the same value as before.

Shapeshifting and Special Abilities: Some special abilities require *shapeshifting*



totals to activate (such as natural weaponry or natural armor). If this is the case, the character need only make a successful *shapeshifting* total to use the ability, and a second to make it go away. As it does not change the entire form of the character, he need not worry about a second set of statistics, etc.

Example: Miranda is playing a Delta agent with the following stats:

AGILITY 8

Climbing 11, dodge 9, stealth 9

DEXTERITY 8

Fire combat 9

ENDURANCE 8**STRENGTH 9****TOUGHNESS 9****INTELLECT 9**

Computer ops 10, perception 12, science: biology 10

MIND 9

Medicine 12

CONFIDENCE 9

Survival: mountains 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 10, shapeshifting 11

Miranda chooses "Enhanced Senses" as her one special ability, and a panther-like creature as her animal shape. She sits down to figure out the statistics for her animal form. The first things she notes are that her total attribute points cannot exceed her starting +10; her Intellect and Mind attribute levels must remain the same; and her total number of skill adds must remain the same, along with her *shapeshifting* skill value.

She decides to increase her Agility to 11, reduce her Dexterity to 6, and increase her Endurance and Strength by +3. Her new Toughness is 11. She leaves her Confidence at 9, and reduces Charisma by -2. Her new attributes look like this:

AGILITY 11**DEXTERITY 6****ENDURANCE 11****STRENGTH 12****TOUGHNESS 11****INTELLECT 9****MIND 9****CONFIDENCE 9****CHARISMA 6**

Now she must decide on skills. She has a total of 20 skill adds to redistribute, but cannot touch her *shapeshifting* skill or her Intellect or Mind-based skills. She decides that in her panther form, she does not need her *fire combat* skill, so she has that add to put into another skill — she decides to put it into *unarmed combat*.

Her Charisma attribute is now 6, meaning that to keep *shapeshifting* at 11, she has to have five adds in it instead of three. That means she needs to cut two adds from someplace else — she decides to drop her *persuasion* skill completely in this form. So her final template now looks like this:

AGILITY 11

Climbing 14, dodge 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 6**ENDURANCE 11****STRENGTH 12****TOUGHNESS 11****INTELLECT 9**

Computer ops 10, perception 12, science: biology 10

MIND 9

Medicine 12

CONFIDENCE 9

Survival: mountains 10, willpower 11

CHARISMA 6

Shapeshifting 11

Finally, Miranda must make note of any natural tools she will gain in this form. She knows she will get claws (damage value STR+3/15), teeth (damage value STR+2/14) and a hide of fur (TOU+1/12). And now her template is finished.

SPECIES SKILL LIST**AGILITY**

Acrobatics

Beast Riding*

Climbing

Dodge

Escape Artist†

Flight*

Long Jumping

Maneuver

NEW SKILLS

Martial Arts*

Melee Combat
Melee Parry
Running
Stealth
Swimming
Unarmed Combat
Unarmed Parry

DEXTERITY

Fire Combat
Gunnery*
Heavy Weapons*
Lock Picking
Missile Weapons*
Thrown Weapons
Vehicle Piloting*

ENDURANCE

Resist Shock

STRENGTH

Lifting

INTELLECT

Camouflage
Computer Hacking†
Computer Ops
Counterfeiting†
Counter-Intelligence†
Data Analysis†
Deduction
Demolitions
Espionage†
Forgery
First Aid
Linguistics
Navigation
Perception

Radio Ops†

Safe Cracking†

Science*

Teaching*

Tracking

Trick

Vehicle Mechanic†

MIND

Artist*

Business

Hypnotism

Language*

Medicine

Psychic†

Research†

Scholar*

CONFIDENCE

Bribery†

Con

Faith*

Interrogation

Intimidation

Streetwise

Survival*

Willpower

CHARISMA

Charm

Disguise

Persuasion

Shapeshifting†

Taunt

*Macroskill; must select focus

† Skill new with *Species*

Boldface: Skill cannot be used untrained.



CHAPTER SEVEN

EQUIPMENT

The equipment lists in this chapter concentrate on the armor, weapons, vehicles, and other equipment characters in *Species* may consider essential. Of course, this chapter by no means contains a complete listing of all the items characters may need or desire in the course of a *Species* campaign.

Except for the snazzy genetic techniques and a few high tech, top-secret items, the world of *Species* is essentially our own, and thus the items available to characters are generally the same as those available to people in the modern Western world. In general, equipment is what it is, and costs approximately what it costs in today's society.

If the gamemaster desires additional information on the characteristics or availability of a certain type of equipment, any number of readily-available catalogues covering such topics as guns, outfitters, clothing, computers, etc. can be valuable resources. Gamemasters should of course feel free to develop supplemental equipment lists and charts based on the ones found below, should they wish to expand upon the equipment (and game statistics) available to either player or gamemaster characters.

Equipment prices given are all in 1990s U.S. dollars. These prices may vary slightly with the location or the legality of some of the items. As always, the gamemaster is the final arbiter of the nature and availability of equipment in his campaign.

ARMOR

Armor is an essential component of the wardrobe of any well-dressed agent, espe-

cially when going forth to battle an enemy as powerful as Sil or her brood. In addition to the general rules on armor found in the *MasterBook*, the following section discusses those types of armor most common in *Species*. Of course, this is the 1990s, and there are darn few people still running around in chain mail so characters are unlikely to wear the older forms of armor (unless they belong to a medievalist society!).

Soft Leather: At the very least, this type of armor can be worn as a stylish addition to any characters' wardrobe. While these garments of tanned and treated animal hide don't grant excellent protection, they are perhaps the most common types of "armor" worn in *Species*. Soft leather can be worn almost anywhere, in any save the warmest environment, without causing discomfort.

Padded Leather: This type of armor usually involves stiffer leather cushioning made up of two or more layers of cloth fabric. Examples include the "bomber jackets," and the other heavy, ornate leather jackets which are so common today. This armor is of no use against bullets, but does provide some protection against blades and blunt objects.

Bulletproof Vest (Kevlar): This armor, standard issue for most law enforcement agencies today, consists of a vest made of the bullet-resistant fiber known as kevlar (or an equivalent fiber). This vest normally covers the torso, and occasionally extending to offer some protection to the neck and groin regions. Bulletproof vests are not uncommon, and may be purchased by catalogue or at many surplus stores.

Kevlar Body Armor (Light):

This armor consists of a full body suit of the bullet-resistant fiber known as kevlar. This relatively lightweight material provides excellent protection against attack, while not significantly restricting the character's mobility. This type of armor is rare and is usually only issued to Agency agents or private guards on a mission by mission basis.

Flak Jacket:

Consisting of durable nylon coats lined with steel, aluminum, or fiberglass plates, these armored vests are made with slightly older technology than that used in kevlar armor. Flak jackets are strong but quite heavy, reducing the character's Agility totals (except *dodge*) by -1. Flak jackets are relatively common items.

Kevlar Body Armor (Heavy): This armor is identical to the light body suit described above, save that it is thicker and heavier. It provides enhanced protection at the price of greater weight and restricted mobility (-2 to all Agility totals save *dodge*). This item is restricted military hardware.

Ceramic Body Armor: This lightweight, incredibly tough body armor is an agent's dream come true. This armor is a full body suit made of ceramic, or of advanced, composite fibers derived from the latest generation of space technology. This armor is much less bulky than the wearer would expect (-1 to Agility totals, except for *dodge*). Ceramic armor is normally available only to certain top-secret government agencies, and then is issued only for restricted use.

NON LETHAL WEAPONS

For campaigns using the optional "non-lethal weapons" rules from the *Masterbook*, this chart describes which *Species* weapons are considered "lethal" and which are not. The following table also contains special "notes" for each weapon listed, which apply only when using the non-lethal rules.

Weapon	Lethal/Non-Lethal	Notes
Blackjack	Non-Lethal	+1 to damage value; use "Knock-Out" rules also
Brass Knuckles	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value, may be built into knife hilt
Club/Baton	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value
Knife/Dagger	Lethal	May bash as non-lethal, damage value STR+2/16
Manrikigusari	Non-Lethal	+3 to damage value, use Entangle attacks
Nunchaku	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value
Sai	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value
Tonfa	Non-Lethal	+2 to damage value

MELEE WEAPONS

These hand-held weapons, used in close combat, are generally made of steel. Some weapons may be used to inflict non-lethal damage against an adversary, if the wielder so chooses.

Swords: This broad category refers to a vast spectrum of metal weapons with blades ranging from 0.6 meters (short sword) to 1.8 meters in length (two-handed sword). Most swords are double-edged, although certain cutlasses and sabers are single-edged. If there is a "standard" model of sword in the Western world, it is the long sword — a double-edged sword with a blade roughly 0.9 meters in length, usually weighing approximately 2.3 kilograms.

In the modern era, swords are most commonly used in certain forms of the martial arts, particularly kendo. The katana, a Japanese weapon of extraordinary balance, speed and sharpness, is a popular weapon among martial arts enthusiasts.

Blackjack: A blackjack, or "sap," is usually a small, mesh bag containing steel shot or other weights. This small, heavy weapon can do a great deal of damage, and is useful for striking

opponents unconscious when used in attacking from behind and/or by surprise.

Brass Knuckles: These weapons consist of linked metal rings, or a bar with holes in it, worn on the hand. Brass knuckles are easily concealable and easy to use in a fight, adding to the damage caused in a brawl.

Club/Baton: These are lengths of molded steel (usually encased in rubber) used to strike opponents. Batons tend to be shorter, lighter, and more easily concealed than a club, (e.g. police nightsticks).

Knife/Dagger: These single or double-edged fighting blades can range from 15 centimeters to almost 0.6 meters in total length. The average weapon in this category is assumed to be a fighting knife with a blade from 15 to 30 centimeters in length.

MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS

There are many, many weapons which have evolved over the years as a part of various fighting traditions. These weapons require some training to use effectively, but do not necessarily require the skill *martial arts*. A few examples of these weapons are given below.

Manrikigusari: This bizarre-looking weapon is a chain, measuring roughly 2.5 centimeters in diameter and 1.8 to 2.4 meters in length, with a fist-sized steel weight at each end. The weapon may be used either to strike or entangle an opponent, and may easily go around or through most efforts to block it.

Nunchaku: A pair of nunchaku is made of two short batons (30 to 45 centimeters each) of wood or steel, which are linked by a short cord or chain. These batons are twirled rapidly, and used to strike an opponent.

Sai: These steel weapons have three stylized tines, and usually are approximately 45 centimeters in length. They may be used in pairs, and serve primarily to block attacks, and to disarm opponents using bladed weapons in melee. They may also strike as batons.

The wielder of a sai may choose to attack to disarm his foe, or to block a melee attack. The difficulty of the action equals his opponent's Agility. If the wielder of the sai achieves a success level equal to or greater than his adversary's, he may block the attack. If the wielder achieves at least a Good success level

on an attack to disarm, he disarms the opponent.

Tonfa: These weapons are basically L-shaped batons, with the long side of the L roughly 45 centimeters in length, and the other prong approximately 15 centimeters in length. These weapons may be used to strike, block (by lying along the forearm), or to hook an opponent's weapon. Many police forces now use tonfa in place of traditional batons.

MISSILE WEAPONS

Crossbow: A crossbow consists of a heavy, short bow attached sideways to a stock. This allows the weapon to be cocked with little effort by the firer. Modern crossbows are mechanically bent, allowing for much greater power than the previous, "hand-cranked" models.

Throwing Dagger: These light daggers are specially balanced so that they may be thrown accurately. These weapons are slim and easily concealed, and often have no hilt.

Throwing Star/Spikes: Traditional martial arts weapons, the throwing stars (shuriken) are very light six to eight-pointed stars with razor-sharp edges. Throwing spikes are just that, metal spikes about seven centimeters in length. Both of these weapons are especially efficient when their outer surfaces are coated with poison (to compensate for their low damage).

GRENADES

These weapons are generally fist size explosive devices, activated by removing a firing pin, and hurled through the air in high arc towards an enemy or other target. Grenades are most effective against soft targets, and their damage decreases over distance. Several varieties of grenades are listed below. Note that most grenades have a blast radius (rules for this are on page 162 of *MasterBook*.)

Concussion: A concussion grenade creates a powerful shock wave when it explodes, designed to stun its targets. Concussion grenades use the **non-lethal** damage rules. The base damage value is 23, with the first two wounds taken read as three shock apiece.

Fragmentation: A fragmentation grenade explodes and hurls shrapnel or pellets in an

arc. The base damage value is 23.

Gas/Smoke: Tear gas and smoke grenades do not explode. Rather, they release their contents through holes in the canister. The cloud created by such a grenade will quickly fill an area of eight square meters. Armor is not taken into account when computing damage from a gas attack.

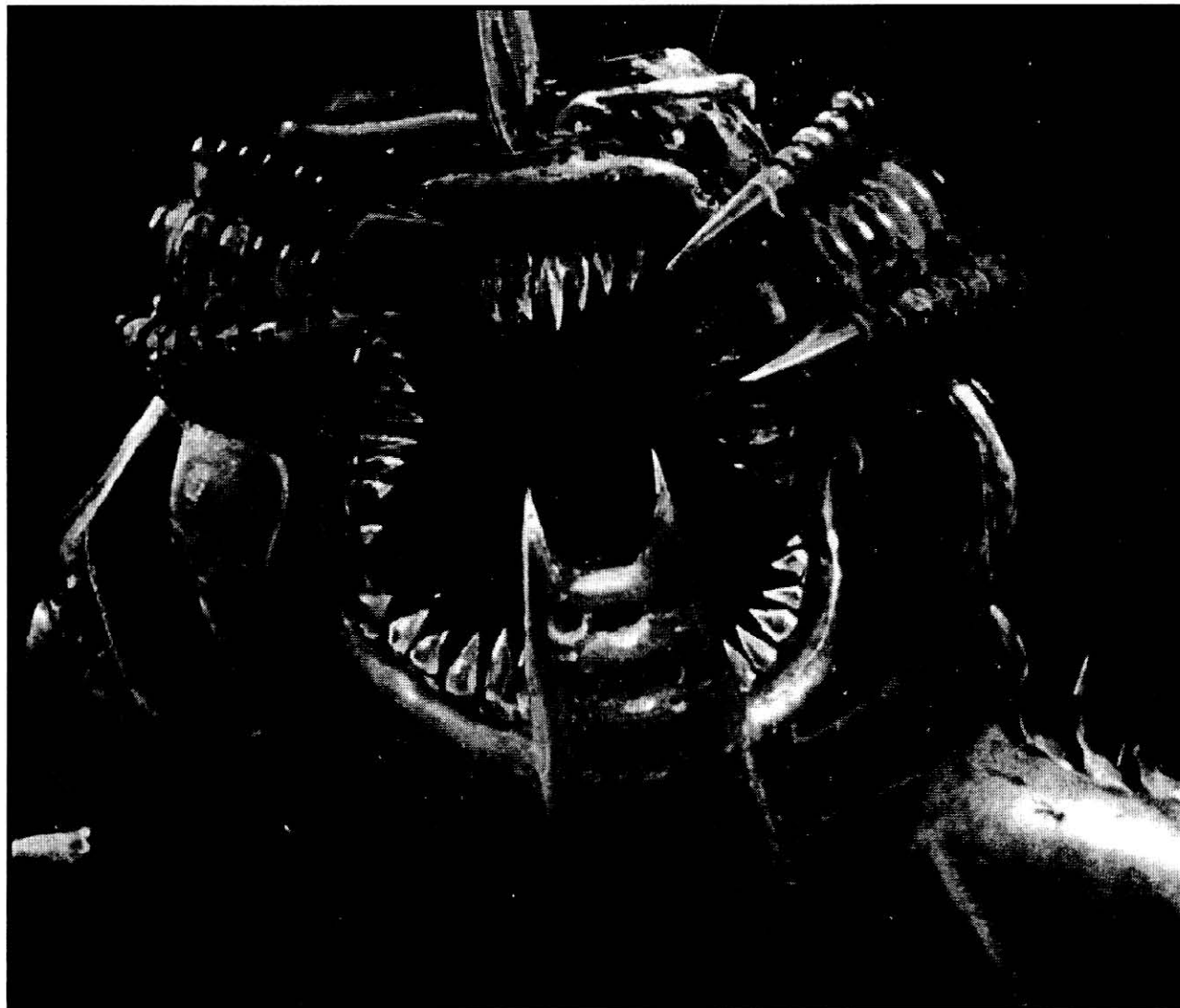
White Phosphorus: White phosphorus grenades generate intense heat when they explode. They do damage as a fragmentation grenade, and also ignite all flammable material in the area of effect. The base damage value is 25, plus damage value 19 for each round the phosphorus continues burning.

"Flash-Bang": A "flash-bang" is a grenade designed to stun rather than kill. When it

detonates, two events occur in sequence, separated by approximately half a second. There is a blinding flash of light, and then a loud explosion, intended to leave the targets effectively blind and deaf. "Flash-bangs" make use of **non-lethal** rules, with the first three wounds taken being read as three shock apiece.

FIREARMS

There are many, many types, brands, and models of firearms available in *Species*. Listed below are categories of firearms, which are available as specializations of the *fire combat* skill. The Firearms Chart lists examples of specific weapons with their game statistics — usually standard statistics for that caliber weapon (the cost in parentheses is the cost of 50



SPECIAL AMMUNITION

In addition to the very wide variety of regular ammunition available, there are several types of special ammunition which characters can use to increase the effectiveness of their firearms attack. The two most common types of special ammunition are described below.

Armor-Piercing: These rounds are called armor-piercing because their special coating (Teflon, tungsten carbide, etc.) enables them to slice through the light armor and protective vests worn by many law enforcement officers. However, these rounds do less damage to soft targets than a standard round, because they tend to slice straight through the target, without bouncing and spinning inside the body.

When these rounds are used, reduce the Toughness of the opposing armor by TOU-4. Reduce the damage value of the attack by -2.

High-Impact: The opposite of an armor-piercing bullet, the high-impact rounds are slower and softer than regular rounds. They also flatten and expand when they strike their target. Armor is much more effective against these rounds (double the Toughness bonus from armor), but they do much greater damage to unarmored targets (damage value +3).

rounds of ammunition). Of course, this list is not complete, and players and gamemasters should feel free to create game statistics for other firearms they wish to use in a *Species* campaign.

Pistols: These weapons are either revolvers, or clip-fed semi-automatic handguns. Pistols typically hold between six (revolvers) and seventeen rounds. Most pistols are easily concealable.

Rifles: These weapons have an extended barrel (rifled bore), which allows for much greater range and power than that of the shorter barreled pistols. Rifles generally have stocks which rest against the firer's shoulder for stability. Rifles can be bolt-action, lever-action, or pump-fed.

A sub-category of the rifle is the assault rifle. These rifles are clip-fed weapons (up to 30 round clips), which can fire either in single-shot or fully-automatic mode.

Shotguns: These weapons often (though not always) have extended barrels. However, the barrels are not rifled, and the range and accuracy are therefore greatly reduced. However, unlike rifles, shotguns may fire much larger slugs, or exploding, scattered shot ammunition.

Sub-Machine Guns/Machine Pistols: These hand-held weapons commonly have much shorter barrels and higher rates of fire than rifles or assault rifles. They can normally be fired on a single-shot, burst fire (3 rounds), or

fully automatic setting.

Machine Guns: These weapons come in various sizes and calibers, but are basically much larger and more stable, mounted versions of the sub-machinegun. Machine guns are normally used on burst fire or automatic setting, although they may fire single shots as well.

Heavy Weapons: Heavy weapons include such non-slugthrowing modern weaponry as artillery, rockets, flamethrowers, anti-tank weapons, mines, etc.

Flamethrowers consist of backpack tanks filled with a napalm variant. It's fired through a hose and bursts into a jet of flame on contact with air. The downside of a flamethrower is that an enemy can target the tanks, causing them to explode.

Coldthrowers work on the same principle as flamethrowers, but make use of liquid nitrogen to freeze a target.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Chemical and biological weapons are believed to be of great use against the aliens. These can include everything from acids, poisons, and viruses to Mace and pepper spray. A few samples are given below:

Mace: This spray fires a blinding, burning mist which can effectively cripple an attacker. The spray does damage value 16 (non-lethal damage only) and the target is considered to be *setback* for six rounds after taking a blast. In

addition, add +10 to the difficulty of any sight-based actions for nine rounds after taking the spray. The downside of Mace is that the range of most sprays is limited.

Acid Spray: These come in many varieties — this particular spray contains hydrofluoric acid and does damage value 25. As with flame and coldthrowers, users must be careful not to be damaged by their own weapon.

VEHICLES

This section provides examples of (and game statistics for) a number of different types of vehicles that move over land, sea, and air. These lists are by no means all-inclusive, however the gamemaster can use the information given as a template for any other vehicles he wishes to use in his campaign.

LAND VEHICLES

Bicycle: Hey, they're energy efficient and environmentally friendly! Besides, you never know what sort of transportation you'll need in a pinch.

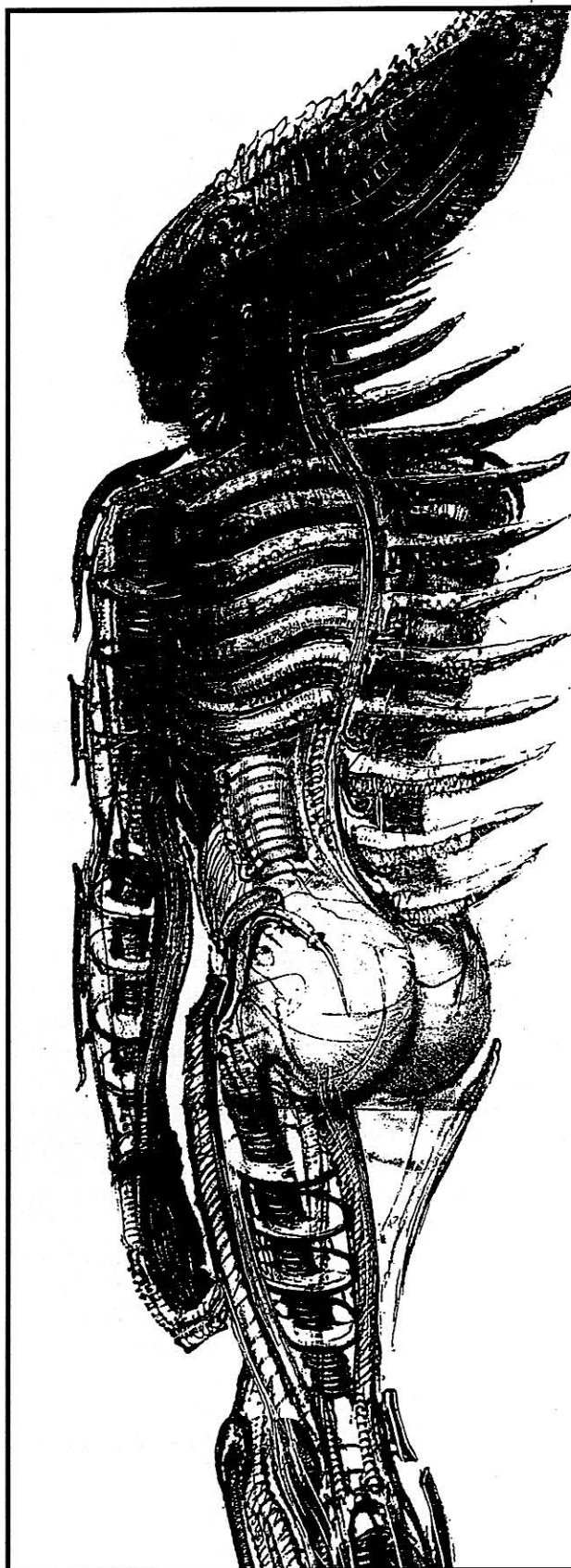
Motorcycle: These two-wheeled vehicles are very fast, but can be difficult to control in bad weather or on rough terrain. Also, the rider is terribly exposed to damage in the event of an accident. Add +2 to the difficulty of all *vehicle piloting* rolls on anything but clean, dry roadway.

Compact Cars: Small, fuel efficient models, these cars often have two doors (and possibly a hatchback). Examples of compact cars include a Ford Escort, a Dodge Neon, or a Toyota Tercel.

Mid-Size Cars: These cars represent the mid-range of vehicles in terms of both price and size. This category includes four door sedans and station wagons such as the Ford Taurus, Toyota Corolla, and Nissan Sentra.

Large Cars: This category includes luxury vehicles, vans, pick-up trucks, sport utility vehicles etc. Examples include: the Lexus, Jeep Grand Cherokee, and Plymouth Voyager.

Sports Cars: The vehicle of choice for glamorous agents. This category includes sports cars, convertibles, and serious muscle cars. Examples include: the Corvette, Mazda Miata, and Lamborghini.



Small Trucks: This category covers vehicles that make local deliveries, moving vans, etc.

Large Trucks: This category includes tractor-trailers, demis, and the other vehicles that haul cargo all across our country.

Water Vehicles: A variety of craft, from canoes through luxury liners and aircraft carriers, traverse our waterways and criss-cross our oceans. Game statistics for a range of these vehicles are given on pages 133-134.

Air Vehicles: There are any number of aircraft and helicopters flying today's skies. The chart on pages 133-134 gives game statistics for a range of these aircraft.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

This section describe some items of equipment which are particularly important to characters in *Species*. Surveillance and counter-surveillance are important parts of many Agency assignments, whether the characters are monitoring suspected spies or searching for an alien stalking the streets of Manhattan. While some of the equipment is very common, some special equipment required is quite rare and difficult to obtain.

The chart on page 134 provides very basic statistics and cost information for this equipment. The prices and powers listed are for the standard versions of the equipment -- which provide no modifiers to the user's *espionage* roll. It may be possible to obtain higher-quality equipment from sources specializing in a particular product, while cheaper and less effective versions of many of these items are available from catalogs or security stores. The relative quality of this "non-standard" equipment may raise or lower the character's chance of success while using it.

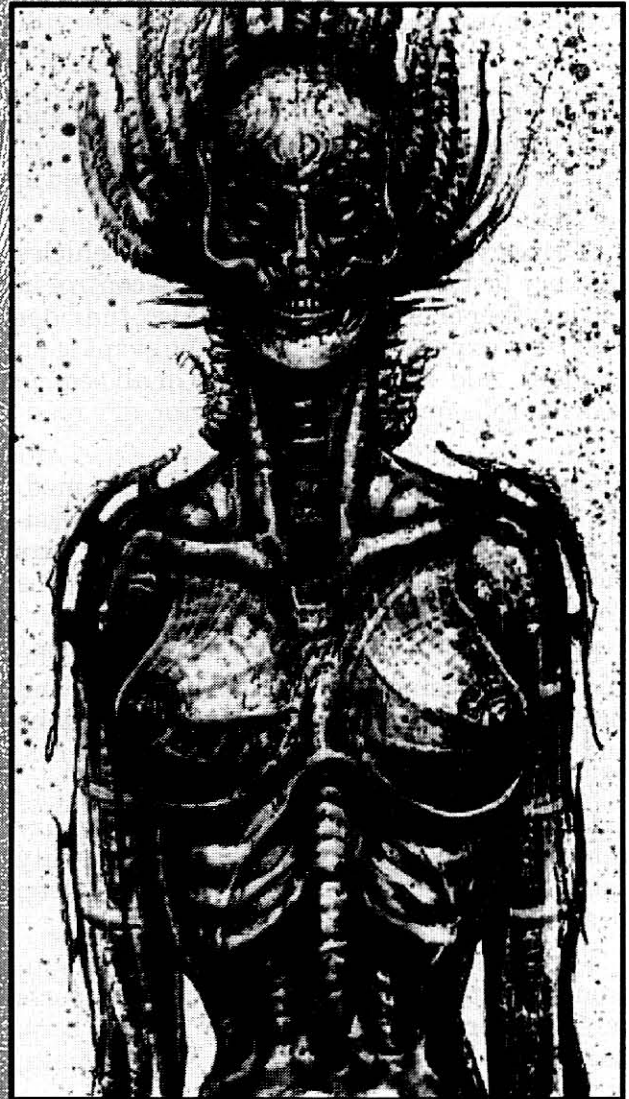
As a general rule, higher-quality equipment may add from +1 to +3 to the character's *espionage* total, with the price rising by 50% for each additional plus in quality. (For example, a bug detector +0 costs \$10,000. A non-standard bug detector +2 would cost \$22,500.) The gamemaster will determine any changes in the availability code for this non-standard equipment. Lower-quality versions of the standard equipment may adjust the character's *espionage* total from -1 to -3 while still functioning

more or less as desired. The price of this equipment is reduced by 15% for each one point reduction in efficiency. (For example, a bug detector -2 would cost \$7,225.) At the gamemaster's discretion, these items may be more widely available than the standard versions.

SURVEILLANCE GEAR

AUDIO AND ELECTRONIC

DNA Detector: This device is a recent invention created by Agency scientists. It is still experimental, and highly classified. This device can detect the weak chemical emissions from the extraterrestrial genetic material in the body of the aliens. However, this device is only



accurate to a range of approximately 25 meters.

To use the device, the character must make an *espionage* or *science: electronics* skill roll with a base difficulty number of 15. At the gamemaster's discretion, the conditions of the scan (number of other life forms present, ambient temperature, humidity, etc.) may modify the difficulty of the roll. Unknown to most characters, these devices can be fairly easily reset to detect the genetic code of *homo sapiens mutatis* as well.

Microphones: These devices pick up sounds within their range, amplifying these sounds and passing them on to whatever device (amplifier, recorder, transmitter, etc.) to which they are connected. Basic microphones are common and widely available, but the more specialized models are much rarer (and consequently much more expensive). Types of mikes include:

Laser Mike: A laser microphone can pick up sound over great distances. It is commonly used against targets inside another building, or those near a large frame of glass or plastic. The laser microphone emits a beam which is aimed at the window of the room, restaurant, bus stop, etc. nearest the target. The beam reads and transmits the audio vibrations in the glass, allowing the receiver to record otherwise inaudible conversations.

Miniature: Many microphones have been miniaturized to the point where they can easily be concealed, or disguised as part of a common item. These "bugs" normally have sufficient range to pick up conversations inside a space the size of an average room.

Parabolic: Parabolic microphones enhance and pick up sounds over distance. Also called "shotgun" microphones, these are literally pointed at the target conversation. For obvious reasons, they are used outdoors. Noise occurring between the microphone and the target can interfere with reception.

Receiver: This item receives and (normally) records incoming signals from transmitting devices (radios, bugs, audio recorders, microphones, camcorders, etc.). A receiver (or receivers) of some type is usually the centerpiece of any surveillance operation. Some of the more expensive receivers have integral transmitters as well.

While simple receivers (e.g. portable radios) are very common, and short-wave or "ham" radio receivers are not uncommon, other receivers have a much more restricted distribution. This category includes signal locators, which monitor the signals of tracking devices, and normally come with some sort of map display.

Recorder: This device picks up and records sound onto audio tapes, laser discs, or other media. A basic audio tape recorder is relatively inexpensive, and is widely available. Miniaturized versions of these recorders also exist, used for their portability and for surreptitious recordings.

"Taps": These devices break into transmissions of sound or data over secure land-lines. They are normally physically wired into the transmitter or the line itself. This allows the information flow to be monitored, and even recorded if the tap is connected to a recording device. Audio taps work on phone lines, while a separate form of data tap is used to intercept computer or fax transmissions.

Tracking Devices: These items are miniature transmitters, placed on people, vehicles, or objects so that they can be electronically located over a distance. There are two basic varieties of these devices, *active* and *passive*. Tracking devices range greatly in availability and cost.

Active: Active tracking devices constantly emit a signal over a particular frequency. These devices vary greatly in range, from a 100 meters to many kilometers detection range. Tracking devices linked to Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology will respond to signals and pinpoint a location anywhere on the globe.

Passive: Passive tracking devices do not constantly emit a signal. Rather, they normally lie dormant, and emit a brief signal burst only when they receive a signal from an outside transmitter. This intermittent signal emission makes the tracking device (and tracker) far more difficult to detect, (except by visual inspection). The downside of using such devices is that the characters need a transmitter as well as a simple receiver to follow the device, and if the device passes outside of their transmitter's range, it is at least temporarily lost to them.

Transmitter: These devices send signals out over the airwaves. They range from short-wave or standard radio transmitters or “walkie-talkies” to military radios, transmitters in bugs or tracking devices, or satellite uplinks. Transmitters vary widely in range of detection, from a hundred meters to thousands of kilometers. The price of such transmitters varies with their sophistication and range.

VISUAL

Binoculars: These vision aids add +3 to vision-based *perception* rolls. Certain binoculars are equipped to allow sight in low-light conditions or into the infrared spectrum. These binoculars cancel negative modifiers to *perception* rolls just like the special ability, “Infravision/Ultravision.” Note that characters using night-vision binoculars, particularly below-standard binoculars of this type can be temporarily blinded by a sudden burst of bright light (character takes a *fatigue* result and is considered *setback* for that round). Specialized binoculars are much more expensive, and less readily available than standard binoculars.

Cameras: Many models of cameras are available to record still images of people or places under surveillance. Basic camera models are widely available, including models with telephoto lenses, or lenses that allow night-time use.

Miniature models are also available, many specially designed for espionage use. These include still cameras that fit into the palm of the hand, models built into common items, or models so small that they can be disguised as pens.

Goggles: Characters may also use goggles to enhance their vision. As with binoculars, these may come in magnifying, infrared, and night-vision varieties. While certain relatively inexpensive versions of these goggles are available on the open market, the standard and higher quality versions of these are military-issue. The primary advantage of goggles is that they leave the character’s hands free, while still allowing sight. Note that, as with night-vision binoculars, characters using night-vision goggles, particularly below-standard goggles can be temporarily blinded by a sudden burst of bright light (see “Binoculars.”)

Video Recorders: These items record images within their visual range, either storing the images on tape for later use (tapes commonly have a two to six hour capacity), and/or playing the images on a connected television monitor. Some models of video recorders are miniaturized (see “Cameras” above), and certain mini-camcorders can also transmit their recordings over some distance to a receiver not physically connected to the recorder.



COUNTER-SURVEILLANCE GEAR

Bug Detector: Bug detectors can scan rooms or people for the presence of electronic listening devices. These devices work by detecting the presence of nearby electronic activity or transmissions. Bug detectors vary widely in quality, with a base espionage rating (for the purpose of detecting bugs) equal to the *science: electronics* total achieved by the manufacturer.

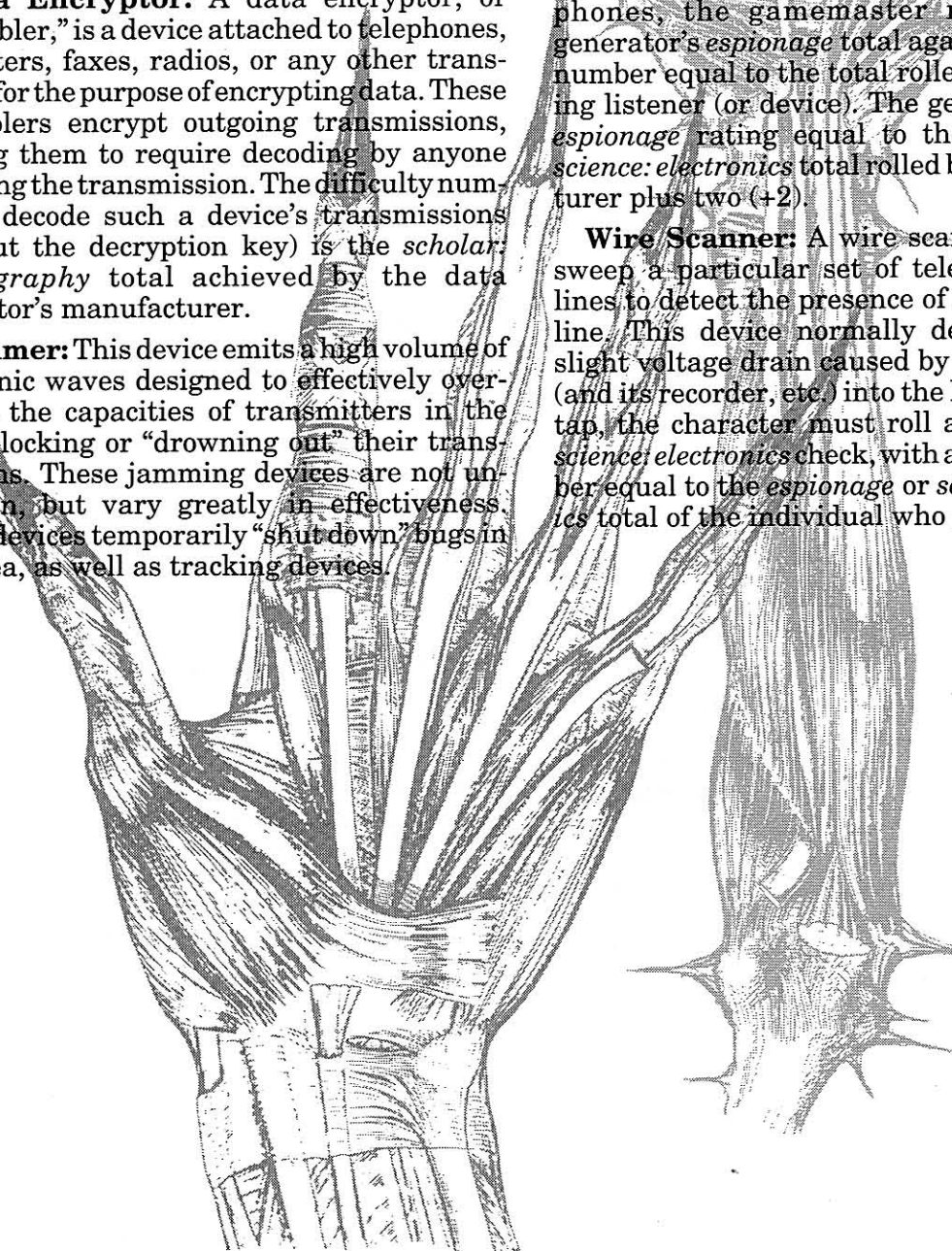
Data Encryptor: A data encryptor, or "scrambler," is a device attached to telephones, computers, faxes, radios, or any other transmitter for the purpose of encrypting data. These scramblers encrypt outgoing transmissions, causing them to require decoding by anyone receiving the transmission. The difficulty number to decode such a device's transmissions (without the decryption key) is the *scholar: cryptography* total achieved by the data encryptor's manufacturer.

Jammer: This device emits a high volume of electronic waves designed to effectively overwhelm the capacities of transmitters in the area, blocking or "drowning out" their transmissions. These jamming devices are not uncommon, but vary greatly in effectiveness. These devices temporarily "shut down" bugs in the area, as well as tracking devices.

If a character attempts to jam a transmission, or is being jammed, the jammer needs to make an espionage or *science: electronics* roll with a difficulty equal to the espionage or *radio ops* roll of the transmitter whose transmission he is attempting to jam.

White Noise Generator: This device generates "white noise," electronic static which prevents conversations within the area affected by the device (approximately nine square meters) from being monitored. To block attempts to listen in with bugs or outside microphones, the gamemaster must roll the generator's *espionage* total against a difficulty number equal to the total rolled by the opposing listener (or device). The generator has an *espionage* rating equal to the espionage or *science: electronics* total rolled by the manufacturer plus two (+2).

Wire Scanner: A wire scanner is used to sweep a particular set of telephone or data lines to detect the presence of any taps in the line. This device normally detects the very slight voltage drain caused by linking the tap (and its recorder, etc.) into the line. To detect a tap, the character must roll an *espionage* or *science: electronics* check, with a difficulty number equal to the *espionage* or *science: electronics* total of the individual who placed it.



CHAPTER EIGHT

DESIGNING AND RUNNING ADVENTURES

Designing an adventure or campaign is similar to scripting a movie or writing a good story. The players are the main characters, and unlike when writing a story the gamemaster doesn't have full control of his protagonists! However, it is still imperative that the protagonists have engaging settings, characters, and missions with which they can interact. The work that the gamemaster puts into crafting the action around a tight plot with interesting characters, fostering the right mood, and weaving in strong themes, can ensure an exciting, entertaining adventure for all concerned. The following information can help the gamemaster design and run an exciting *Species* campaign.

ONE. PICK A THEME

There are many possible kinds of *Species* adventures, from action to intrigue, from romance to horror. Certain elements and themes, however, are most important to the world of *Species*. The gamemaster must select a theme, and understand the theme(s) that he wishes to convey throughout the adventure. This theme will help the gamemaster determine the motives and actions of the people the player characters will encounter in the course of the adventure.

In a successful adventure, the gamemaster will select one or two central themes and weave these in throughout the action. While procreation and predation are the overall themes of the game, a variety of secondary themes serve to set the theme for individual adventures. The following themes, or types of

adventures, are particularly important and useful in *Species*.

MYSTERY

A sense of mystery is critical to *Species*. The characters know very little about the aliens, and even less about the other forces which they may encounter. They will sometimes feel like they are very much alone on the front lines, small fish cast adrift in a sea full of sharks. It may seem that no truth they learn is ever whole or exact. The gamemaster should encourage this feeling. Parcel information out to the players slowly, making the characters work for each revelation.

The hunt for the alien, and many other adventures, will often unfold much like the plot of a mystery novel. The characters will have to unravel clues, solve puzzles, and avoid traps — emphasizing deduction and mental skills — in order to achieve their goals. Whether they seek to find an alien or to discover which group raided the databanks of the Agency, the players should usually begin the adventure in the dark. The slow process of discovery, teasing the necessary information out of the story, should often test the players to their limits.

HORROR

The theme of horror should recur frequently in a *Species* campaign. The concept of a predator who preys on man is a staple of the horror genre (think of movies such as *Species*, *Alien*, and *Predator*). The gamemaster should emphasize elements of horror in the adventure, ranging from the hideous shapeshifting pow-



ers of the aliens to the strings of gruesome murders, the constant tension of being both the hunter and the hunted, or the bland, ruthless amorality of a superior in the Agency who orders the characters to kill everyone, "just to be sure."

These plot devices will bring home to the characters a sense of constant danger, anticipating the blow without knowing when it will fall. This uncertainty in the face of the unknown is the key to a successful horror adventure.

Gamemasters may also want to explore the more intimate horror found in the hubris that

permeates the world of *Species*. As Dr. Frankenstein played at God, only to find that he could not take care of — or take responsibility for — his child, so too do the scientists fail as gods. The genetically altered agents are just as much "Frankenstein's monsters," but it remains to be seen if the Agency will reject their latest creations as well.

ESPIONAGE AND INTRIGUE

These twin themes are important elements of many *Species* adventures. The player characters work as agents for the government, supposedly dedicated to tracking and slaying extraterrestrials. However, Project Proteus is ripe for intrigue and espionage: the agents are caught between competing factions within their own Agency. The agents of other powers seek to steal their technology, or to capture the aliens the characters seek to destroy. Other factions within our government want the characters dead, and the characters are being monitored and manipulated in ways that they cannot understand. These elements embody intrigue, and are all standard conditions in *Species*.

These themes will often appear within mystery adventures, as the characters try to unravel the knots which bind them, and try to sense the patterns behind events and shadowy forces they can barely perceive. The characters will often know that they have not been told the whole truth, and that things are not as they seem. The gamemaster should emphasize this uncertainty, and force the characters to decide who to trust, or what to believe. Of course, the wrong decision could prove deadly.



ACTION

The focus of the characters' existences, literally their reason for being, is to destroy the alien created by Project Proteus, and any of her progeny. While there will be few adventures in *Species* which concentrate on action alone, the battles with the aliens will undoubtedly be action-packed. There are also many other action elements that can come into play during adventures. The characters do not hunt aliens all the time. Exploring other phenomena, foiling the efforts of foreign spies, coming under attack by the Iron Triangle, or battling an Alpha agent "gone bad" can keep the characters constantly on the move.

Adventures solely oriented around action are often combat-oriented, and relatively lacking in meaningful interaction with gamemaster characters. In order to make such battles more meaningful, the gamemaster should try to add other themes to the adventure. Or, the gamemaster should make certain to keep the action moving, using swift pacing to build tension and excitement in players and characters alike.

In designing these adventures, be particularly careful to match the level of the encounters to the power level of the group. Nothing frustrates players more than being forced to fight an unwinnable battle, and if this ever happens, it should be for a very good reason. Using different generations of aliens, or carefully choosing the number of thugs the player characters run into, are ways to tailor the power level of an adventure to the specific characters involved.

ROMANCE

Even in *Species*, all is not darkness and despair. Romance is a central theme in many adventure stories, and may come into play in *Species* as characters fall in love or seek the warmth of a passionate embrace to shield themselves from the loneliness and alienation that

make up the majority of their lives. Love interests are also very useful tools for the gamemaster, as he can use them to exert leverage over a character. Romance themes can also tie in well with action or mystery themes. Many adventure stories center around the



protagonist's rush to save endangered loved ones, or efforts to solve the riddle of their disappearance.

One special complication in *Species* is the Agency's strict prohibition against procreation. This certainly will add tension to the genetically altered agents' relationships. Also, what of the strong, instinctual attraction between these agents and the aliens? A character who falls in love with a man or woman only to discover that they are mortal enemies is in a terrible quandary. The conflict between duty and happiness can form the basis for exciting and emotional adventures.

CRAFTING THE PLOT

Once the gamemaster has selected the theme(s) for the adventure, it is time to create the story itself. There are several key issues to consider when crafting the plot of an adventure.

First, every adventure needs a "hook," some twist to attract the characters' attention and bring them into the storyline — whether it be protecting innocents from attack, hunting down

a murderous alien, or recovering information vital to national security from a foreign spy. Assuming that the characters are all employees of the Agency, it is simple enough to ensure that they have a reason to participate in the adventure. However, even when the characters are simply ordered out on the mission, the gamemaster should attempt to make the premise interesting enough that the characters *want* to go on that mission.

To do this, consider the nature and motivations of the characters. Why are they agents? Are they motivated by love, revenge, honor, a sense of duty? Were they blackmailed into genetic alteration? Select adventure hooks that appeal to these motivations, and consider all of these angles when developing the hook as well as the theme of the adventure. This will help motivate the characters to succeed, and will increase their enjoyment of the adventure.

Once the characters are hooked, reel them slowly through the adventure. Create a series of *likely* encounters, planning for several possible outcomes. When developing each encounter, ensure that it has a purpose in the storyline, and promotes the adventure's theme. Move the characters steadily towards the goal, but try to avoid a simple, linear plot that forces the characters along one line of action. Building flexibility into an adventure is critical, for the characters may decide to take an alternate path — one the gamemaster hadn't even thought of when designing his plot! What appears obvious to the gamemaster may not to the players (and vice-versa); but no player enjoys being led around by the nose. The characters should feel that their actions make a difference, not that they are mere observers to events that they cannot change.

PROMOTING THE MOOD

When the players sit down at the table, the action begins. When actually roleplaying a *World of Species* adventure, the gamemaster should work to establish the proper mood for the story — putting the players in the right frame of mind to play their characters. Just as spectators pick up cues from foreshadowing in movies and books, so too do players take cues from the gamemaster when it comes to roleplaying a particular scene. Here again, you can use these elements to reinforce the theme of

the adventure.

Props such as low lighting, partial costumes, or eerie background music can help create the mood for the adventure. The way that the gamemaster interacts with the characters, though, is far more important. First, describe the background — the setting for the scene — in vivid detail. Take the time to describe the people, the background noise, the smells, and other details of the encounter. With a few quick sentences, it's possible to paint a picture for the players which is so much more evocative than mere words on a page.

Secondly, use pacing and emotion when you play the gamemaster characters. If a person is frightened and speaking hurriedly, use gestures and a tone of voice that mimic that fear, making it real for the characters. If the person becomes angry, raise your voice. Do not make a habit of saying: "He looks angry." Instead, try to describe the character's physical appearance, mimic his expression, and use an angry tone. The gamemaster must roleplay at least as much as the players! This roleplaying does

READY FOR TROUBLE

No gamemaster can correctly anticipate the player characters' actions at all times. As discussed above, it is critical to be flexible with the players, and not dictate a particular outcome to each encounter. For example, if you present the players with false clues, prepare for them to be fooled. Have a plan which allows the characters to follow those clues to some dead end before returning to the storyline. Also, identify points in each encounter where the players are likely to go out on their own, and plan some techniques to draw them back to the main plot. If you are surprised, take a few minutes to think about what to do, then return to the action. On rare occasions it may be acceptable to give the players no better reason than: "Because I say so," but use that veto power sparingly. If you consistently force the players down a certain path, the adventure is no longer an interactive game — it becomes no more than you telling a story to the players.



not require an acting degree to succeed. Any effort is better than none at all, and will make the adventure more enjoyable for everyone involved.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following story ideas are very brief plot synopses which suggest adventures which may work well in *Species*. (The primary themes of the adventure are noted as well.) The gamemaster should feel free to add to, subtract from, or alter these story ideas to build adventures that best suit his campaign.

1. Action: A.W.A.R.E. has struck again, and this time they have what they are looking for. Agency surveillance cameras have spotted a small party of A.W.A.R.E. operatives fleeing an Agency "recovery site." An extraterrestrial vehicle and several bodies were located at the remote site of this crash, and A.W.A.R.E. may have it all on film! The Agency is jamming transmissions from their vehicles, but the activists are racing away, no doubt to the nearest satellite groundlink or BBS connection.

As the team closest to the area, the characters are scrambled and ordered to stop those marauders and recover any hard evidence that they possess, by "whatever means necessary." The characters must keep the secrets of the Agency (i.e. no blatant displays of mutant powers) if they allow the activists to live. They are also faced with an uncomfortable choice of tactics. Do they really plan to terminate a group of conscientious, committed civilians (who may even be morally correct) with extreme prejudice? (The gamemaster may want to discourage this.) If not, how do they recover the information? What's more, they really do have to hurry, before the Agency and the extraterrestrials make the evening news.

2. Action: The characters, overly confident in their powers and made sloppy by this false confidence, are captured by the enemy. (Perhaps agents of the Iron Triangle, a foreign intelligence service, or an alien.) The characters are held prisoner, and see their doom approaching. However, the Agency mounts a rescue!

Yet as the cavalry comes crashing in, the rescuers fall into the trap. The players were no more than the bait — the means used to draw

the more cautious (operative/Agency superior) into the hands of the enemy. The characters manage to escape in the chaos, but are now faced with the task of regrouping, reevaluating the situation, and returning to mount a rescue attempt of their own against an enemy powerful enough to have easily held them captive. They had also better do it quickly, for time (and torture) wait for no man!

3. Action: Over the past several months, there has been a string of horrible murders in a small town outside of Tuscon, Arizona. The Agency suspects alien involvement, and sends the characters to investigate. From the moment the characters arrive in the desolate area, their lives are at risk. However, the characters have few suspects, for everyone in the town has known each other for years! A second generation alien has slain one of the townsfolk and taken his place. Now, the alien plans to enjoy the delicious process of slowly stalking and killing every single person in that town. As the body count rises, the characters' hunt for the alien takes on increasing urgency. At the climax of the adventure, the characters stalk the creature to its lair, and engage in a truly epic confrontation with this deadly foe.

4. Horror/Action: A character is captured, either by the Sacred Fire, the Iron Triangle, or by a nefarious foreign intelligence service. The captors wish to study the character to determine the secret of her powers. They also wish to extract other information concerning the Agency and its activities. The other characters must track down the kidnappers and rescue their friend, all the while receiving clues concerning her tremendous suffering — which they are powerless to stop.

Even if the characters rescue their friend, they may have been too late (more horror!). She may have already been driven insane by the evil of her captors and the torment she endured. The characters may have to embark on yet another quest, a journey of healing, before they can truly bring their friend home.

5. Horror/Mystery: The characters are sent to investigate the suspicious activities of a civilian laboratory (heavily guarded) which appears to be involved in genetic research that may be somewhat similar to that of Project Proteus. The characters find that their best way to learn what they need to know is to

develop some ruse to infiltrate the organization.

As the characters continue, they learn that the corporation is owned by Sacred Fire. Moreover, the corporation has learned the basics of Project Proteus, and are even now attempting to duplicate the experiment (with perhaps a few flaws to make the alien even worse)! The characters seemingly have barely enough time to react to stop the experiment, but as they struggle towards the lab, they are delayed again and again! The urgency of the mission adds to the mounting horror, and the characters finally arrive to find the facility in ruins. The characters have failed, and the creature is loose in the world. But what type of creature? And how do they find it and stop it for good?

6. Intrigue/Mystery:

The long-simmering frustrations within the Agency have erupted into open conflict. Apparently, certain key figures within Project Proteus stand accused of treason — revealing top secret information and experimental data to the enemy. These figures include one or two more senior people who had been mentors to the characters, and they swear that they have been framed. The characters will find their loyalty tested — personal loyalty and loyalty to the Agency — in this adventure. If they are to help their friends, the characters must delve into the subterranean world of intrigue which bubbles just below the unified front of the Agency. Who has accused them? What are their motives? What is the evidence? Where lies the truth? Unraveling this mystery could call on all of the characters' mental and diplomatic resources. After all, it's wise not to burn bridges you may need to cross one day!



7. Intrigue/Mystery:

Someone has penetrated the very halls of the Laboratory, the top secret Agency facility located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. They escaped with encrypted documents revealing the codes for the genetic material used to create the aliens! The players are assigned to unearth the culprit(s), and to recover the data before it can be decoded, and fall permanently in the wrong hands.

The characters must negotiate their way through the web of intrigue surrounding the project, following clues while working frantically against the clock. Was it an inside job? What Agency employees may have been involved in the crime? Which groups are interested in that data? More importantly, which

groups, if any, had the ability and resources to break into the Lab and seize it? Once the characters identify who stole the data, they must retrieve it, and bring the spies to justice. That certainly will not be simple, for the stakes involved in the world of international intrigue are often life and death. Winner take all.

8. Mystery/Action: A military convoy, carrying top secret Agency experimental data and test subjects, is attacked by the enemy. The characters, assigned to accompany the convoy in case of just such a contingency, are stretched to the very limit of their resources to drive off the attack.

Yet in the aftermath of the battle, it becomes clear that they had been attacked by a bizarre combination of foes! It appears that agents of the Iron Triangle worked in conjunction with unknown shapeshifters (aliens?!) during the assault. The characters must delve into this mystery, and work to uncover the secret behind this strange, "unholy" alliance before it strikes again. What has caused this seeming alliance between some of the Agency's deadliest foes?

9. Romance: Sometimes love can bloom in the most unlikely places! In this story, particularly suitable for beginning characters, one or more characters are smitten at the sight of beautiful young women (or men) that they see in passing on the street. Suitably encouraged by the gamemaster, the characters' pursuit of these women may prove worthy of the ancient bards! Yet, how does an agent, particularly an altered agent, handle the process of intimacy and revelation with someone "on the outside?"

How does a character bring a young normal

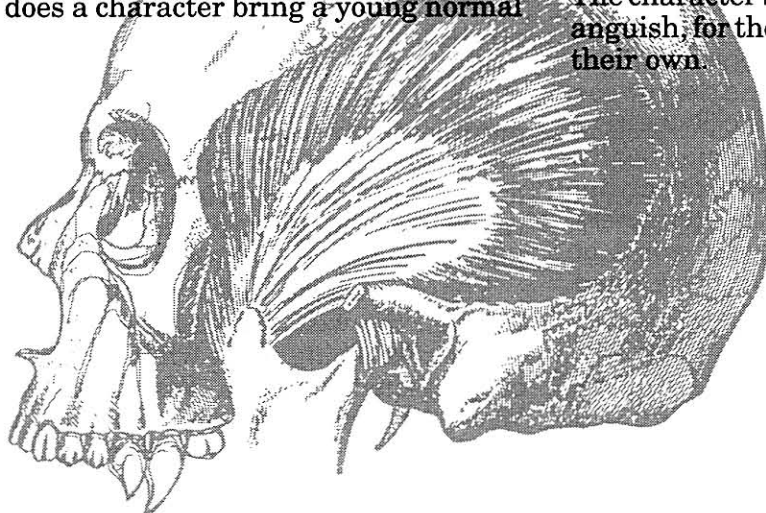
into her life without revealing the secrets of the Agency or her special abilities? And what of the character's alien instincts — these may come to the fore under the stress of a relationship crisis! This adventure can reveal to the players the full extent of their separateness — the ways in which they are alien and isolated from the rest of the world.

A twist on this story, or a harsher introduction to the character's reality, has the love interest captured by the character's enemies. The kidnapping and subsequent rescue by the character and his companions will certainly affect the relationship.

10. Romance: An Agency operative, particularly a character who is isolated and lonely, finds the love of his or her life: a beautiful, intelligent, and happy soul who seems the answer to anyone's prayers. This will be particularly effective if the individual is introduced gradually, over the course of several adventures, and the relationship is allowed to develop. Eventually the two stop fighting the truth, and declare their love for each other.

However, they are tragically divided, for it becomes clear that the character's love interest is an alien! A fourth generation alien (who may have intentionally attempted to get close to the character), the being pleads intelligently, forcefully and honestly for her life. She describes herself as no particular danger to anyone (certainly no more than the character), and passionately proclaims her right to live!

The character must choose between love and duty, and may have to decide for the first time how they feel about the Agency's alien policy. The character's friends may watch his growing anguish, for they also have to make decisions of their own.





MINI-ADVENTURE

BLOOD AND DESIRE

This is a brief mini-adventure which is particularly suited to begin a *Species* campaign. The adventure is designed specifically for new agents (or perhaps a new command group unit). Although the brevity of the adventure necessarily makes it rather linear, "Blood and Desire" provides an excellent introduction to the dark world of *Species*. It also previews the competing desires and moral dilemmas which grip genetically altered agents from without and within. In "Blood and Desire" the player characters must pursue two rogue Alpha agents, who slaughtered their companions literally before the characters' eyes, and then escaped into the wilderness surrounding Project Proteus.

"Blood and Desire" begins at the Laboratory, the top-secret Agency training facility hidden in the pine forests of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It then takes the characters to the small city of Chapel Hill, North Carolina — a university town located near North Carolina's "Research Triangle," approximately two hours northeast of the installation. The adventure may well conclude in Chapel Hill, but more than likely the characters' true adventures are just beginning.

The gamemaster should read this entire adventure before actually running it for your players. There are seven character templates in the back of this book from which the players may choose starting characters if they wish to start the adventure immediately. The players can, of course, also generate their own characters, using the rules in this book and in the *MasterBook* to create new agents. If the players create new characters, the gamemaster

should enforce the Agency's policies on the composition of its Command Groups. Those rules exist for a reason, and the adventure is designed for use with a "normal" Agency command group. Regardless, there should be no more than one Alpha agent in the command group.

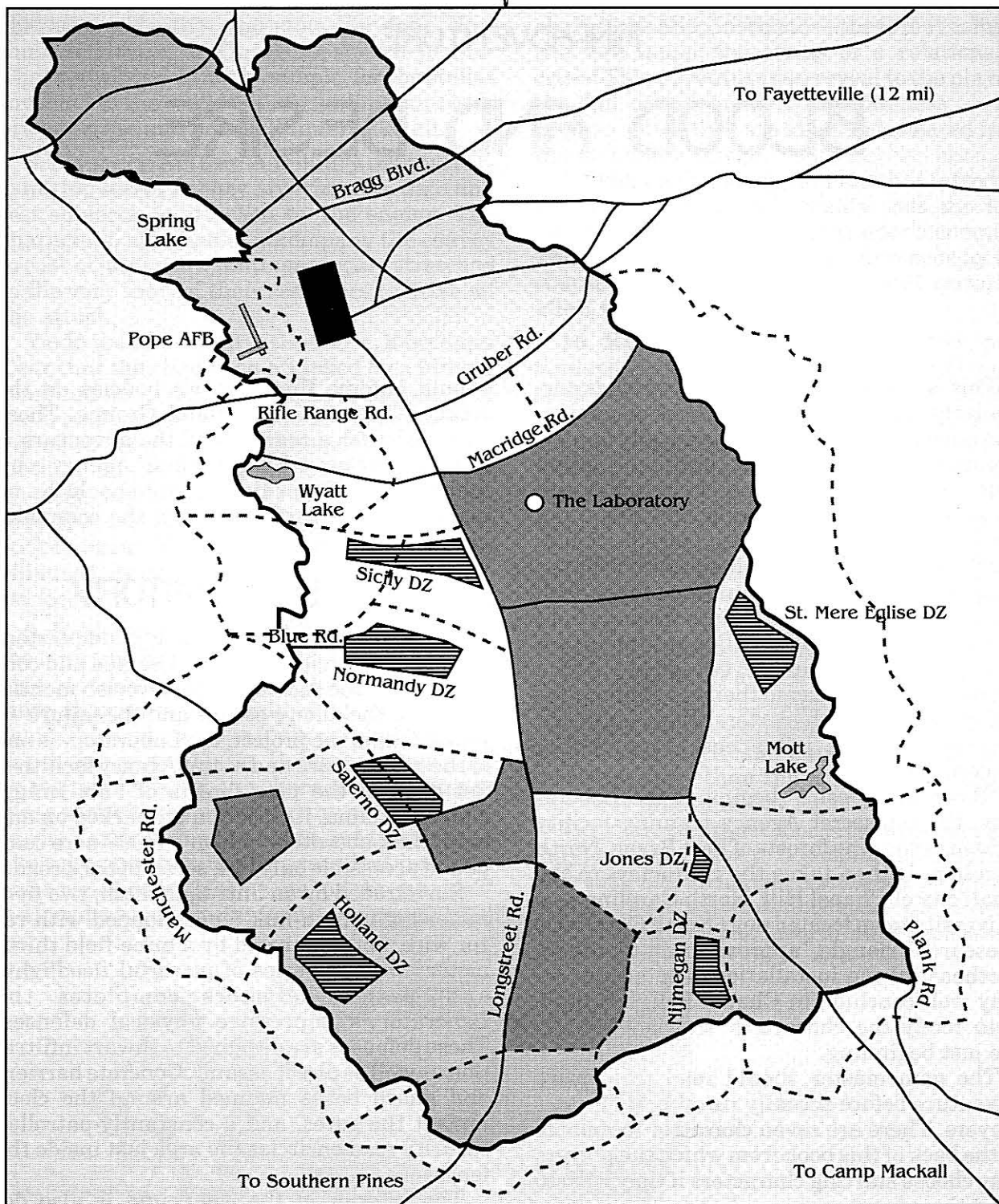
THE LABORATORY

The Laboratory is the new headquarters complex for Project Proteus. Created and constructed by the Agency in the feverish months following the alien's escape and the failure of Phase One of the project, the Laboratory is one of the most secure and secret Agency facilities. Set deep in the pine forests of Fort Bragg, North Carolina, its location unmarked on any map, the Laboratory sits on a 5,000-acre compound accessible only by a series of back roads.

Surrounded by an anti-tank ditch, two five-meter-high chain-link fences topped with razor wire, and separated by a mine-field thirty meters wide, a series of powerful floodlights and motion detectors completes the Laboratory's impressive physical defenses. These defenses are designed to thwart infiltration as well as direct assault. Concrete barriers and guard boxes manned around the clock protect the gates, and a constantly-patrolled security road encircles the area just inside the fences.

The interior of the compound is also designed with security in mind. There are three distinct clusters of facilities located inside the sprawling complex (see the map of the Laboratory on page 110). Nearest the gates are the

FORT BRAGG



KEY

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
|  Main Post Area |  Off-Limits Training Impact Area |  Drop Zones |  Area Boundaries |
|--|---|--|---|

administrative buildings — housing the offices, conference rooms, supply and support facilities, and bureaucracy of Project Proteus. The next cluster of buildings consists of dormitories, cafeterias, physical fitness centers, and classrooms. The new agents live and work in this area during their training, once they complete the initial screening process. Veteran agents also stay in the dormitories during refresher training.

The last group of buildings — set far apart from the others in another, smaller compound — consists of Project Proteus' hospital and laboratories. These are the site of the project's genetic experiments and other research. The many floors of laboratories, storage areas, and confinement facilities of the compound extend deep into the ground. It is here that many would-be agents undergo the Proteus process, and all new agents (genetically altered or not) go through a lengthy regimen of physical, psychological, and personality testing here before they begin their training. Training areas and firing ranges take up most of the area "inside the wire."

There are two distinct training cycles for Project Proteus agents. After the initial physical and mental screening, each agent is assigned to a particular trainer. These veteran Agency operators and instructors put the trainees through a grueling cycle of instruction in armed and unarmed combat, survival, stealth, espionage techniques, and other crucial skills. During this cycle — Phase Two of their training — the instructors intentionally keep new agents isolated, and under intense pressure.

The purpose of this process is both to provide as maximum training efficiency, and to test the agent's ability to stand the strain of weeks of pressure without a support network readily available. The Agency believes this stage is particularly vital for the altered agents, who will constantly have to fight solitary battles against their alien natures.

The third training cycle — Phase Three — consists of group training and renewed socialization. The Agency carefully selects the members of each new command group, comparing training records, powers charts, and psychological records to build a strong, and (hopefully) cohesive unit. The command groups train together, in the classroom and in the field, as the Agency challenges their skills to the ut-

most to build their confidence in themselves and their teammates. The characters are about to embark on Phase Three of their training.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After learning that Sil — the original product of Project Proteus — had escaped Command Group One's final assault, the Agency began a crash program to build a force of agents to track down and destroy her and her progeny, and to defend Project Proteus from all enemies, foreign and domestic. The Agency established the new project headquarters at the Laboratory — a secure facility on the Fort Bragg Military Reservation. For the past several months, the Agency has been genetically altering agents and then training both these, genetically normal, and psychic agents at the Laboratory. As "Blood and Desire" begins, one command group is already in the field, and two others are only just being formed. The player characters have just been placed together in one of these new command groups: Command Group Five.

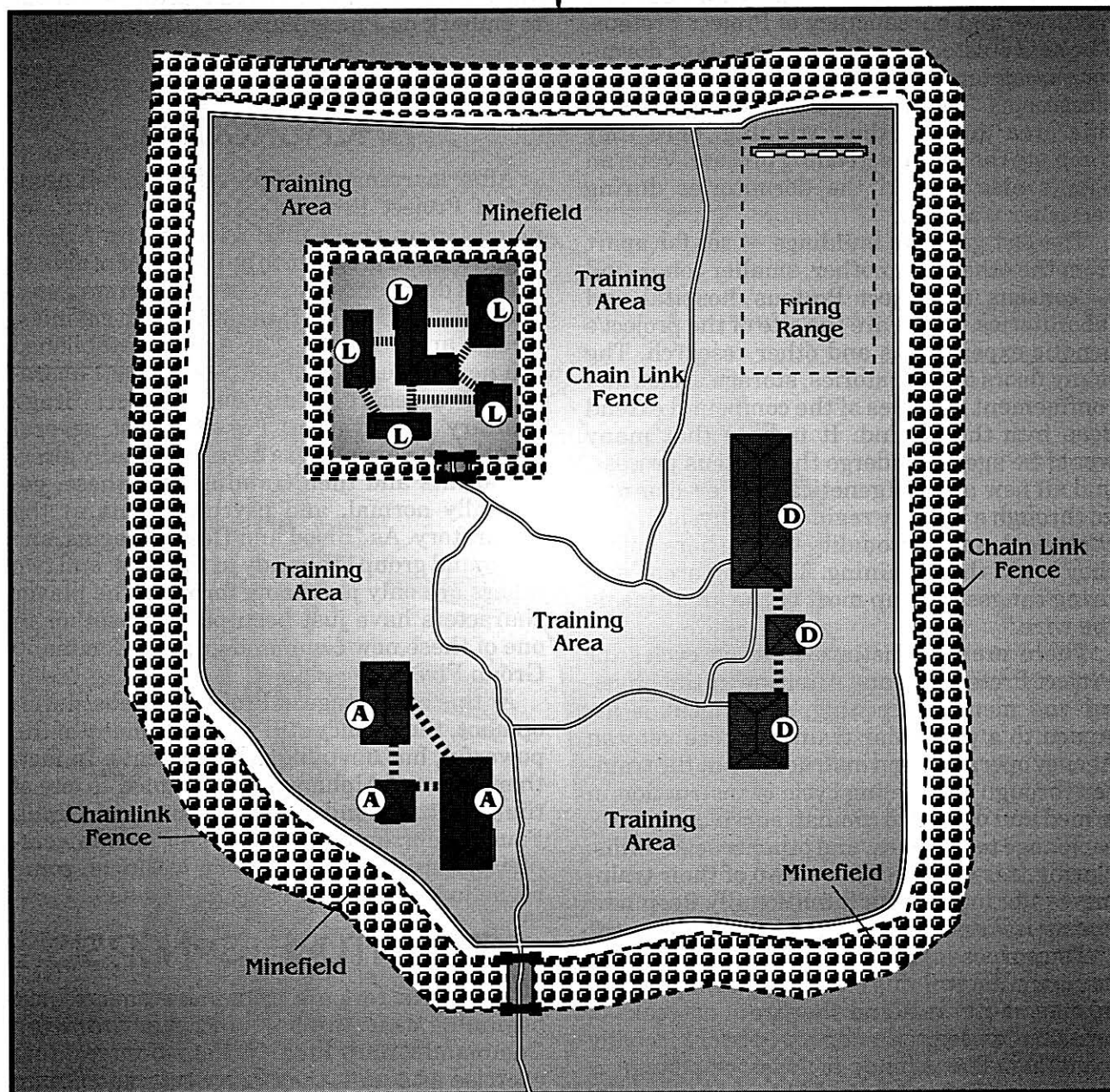
At this early stage of Project Proteus' development, the Agency still produces many of the powerful, but unstable, Alpha agents. In fact, there are two Alpha agents assigned to one of the new command groups: Command Group Four. Unfortunately, these two agents completely succumb to their alien instincts, going rogue just after the adventure begins.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters are brand-new agents, just beginning their training together as the future Command Group Five. In their first training exercise as a unit, they face Command Group Four in a war game conducted in one of the Agency training areas on Fort Bragg. During the exercise, the Alphas assigned to Command Group Four go rogue, slaying their team members literally before the characters' eyes, and managing to escape from the compound.

Although the characters are woefully inexperienced and ill-prepared, they are the only agents available for a quick response to this disaster. The Alphas' trail leads to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where the rogue agents seek to

THE LABORATORY



KEY

ⓓ Agent Dormitory ⓐ Administration Building Ⓛ Lab Tunnel

procreate and perhaps even find, and join with, Sil. Aware that the player characters are undoubtedly on their trail, the Alphas easily spot the group. The rogue agents approach the most powerful — most “alien” — characters (probably Alpha and Beta agents), seeking allies

against the “common foe,” *homo sapiens sapiens*. The Alphas attempt to sway these genetically altered characters with the twin lures of reasoned logic and appeal to their instinctual — and powerful — sexual drives.

If unsuccessful in their recruiting efforts

(the most likely scenario), the Alphas reluctantly attack. The rogues will fight to destroy the player characters, who are a tremendous threat to their safety. However, their primary goal is to survive, and they will attempt to flee if it becomes clear that they are losing the battle.

SCENE ONE: BABES IN THE WOODS

THE SITUATION

Standard. The player characters are all Agency agents-in-training. They have come to the end of Phase Two of their training program, a six week period of intense individual training in armed and unarmed combat, survival, espionage, and other skills designed to equip them to survive in the field. The instructors are now moving them into Phase Three of the program, group training designed to forge a team — a command group — out of an assembly of individuals.

After the briefing, the newly-minted Command Group Five arrives at Training Area J for their first group training exercise. Within a few minutes from the time they infiltrate the training zone, as they are just beginning to move out from their flag and attempt to scout the area, they hear terrible screams and gunfire from the north. As the characters move to investigate, they see the last moments of the combat between the rogue Alphas and the shell-shocked remainder of Command Group Four.

The player characters arrive too late to save the other agents or to stop the rogues from escaping (hampered by the fact that they are armed with only rubber bullets). None of the characters are seriously injured in the fray. The instructors arrive on the scene moments later, ordering the characters to go to the Situation Room in the Administrative complex. Within the hour, the ill-prepared characters are given the mission to locate and terminate the rogue agents.

As this scene begins, the characters each received a message instructing them to report for a briefing. As each person arrives (hopefully a little early), they find the other characters assembling as well.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"You got the message in your box last night: 'Report to Building 2-2134, Classroom B, at 0630 hours for a mandatory training brief.' You wisely made a point of adjusting your schedule, and as you arrived at the classroom, you saw that you're not alone. Sliding into a cushioned chair, you see a number of other agents scattered about the room — a motley looking crew indeed. You recognize their faces from the training cycle— but you were kept so isolated and so busy during Phase Two that you know little more than each others' names.

"Yet you have little chance for chatter, for after you've barely managed to exchange bleary-eyed nods a man strides crisply into the room at precisely 6:30 a.m. You all recognize the lean, muscular man as one of the senior instructors — known to you only as 'Jack.'

"With no introduction or small-talk, Jack begins to speak: 'Congratulations, ladies and gentlemen. You have all survived and graduated from Phase Two of the training cycle. Today you begin Phase Three — group training. Look around you ... you will soon know each other better than you've ever known anyone in your lives. You will live for each other, and you may die for each other. By the time you have completed your Phase Three training — a projected ninety day cycle — you will comprise a smoothly integrated, deadly combat and espionage unit. You are Command Group Five.

"Your first group exercise begins in one hour people, so listen up! You will engage another team of trainees — Command Group Four — in a game of 'capture the flag.' Sound simple? It won't be.' Jack places a map upon an easel at the front of the room, and continues.

"Command Group Four is now receiving an identical briefing in another building. The game box is 2.5 square kilometers. You will enter training area J from the south, while they enter from the north. Each team will place their flag within 500 meters of their starting point, and will reconnoiter to meet and defeat the en-

emy. The object is to capture the enemy flag and return it to your starting point before they can do the same to you. You should be evenly matched in strength, so stealth and strategy will be at least as important as muscle during this exercise. I suggest that you spend the next thirty minutes learning each other's capabilities and developing a coherent plan of action.

"In thirty minutes you will move out to the assembly area, where weapons, ammunition and armor will be issued. Note that this exercise is non-lethal! While each agent will be armed with their weapons of choice, ammunition will consist of rubber bullets. Also, agents with supranormal powers are absolutely prohibited from using lethal force during this training exercise. I hope that I have made myself clear. Are there any questions?"

One of the characters will hopefully ask something about their rivals — Command Group Four. Jack will briefly describe the group as consisting of two Alpha agents, one Mule, one psychic, and a "standard model" human operative. He will divulge no further information, saying simply that the characters "will find out soon enough."

Also, before leaving, Jack will designate one character the FAC — "Field Agent In Charge" — of Command Group Five. This choice is based on the Agency's observations of the characters in training, a careful evaluation of their past experience and psychological profiles, and the Agency's policies. In other words, the Agency will make every effort to select a human FAC for each command group. If no human characters (or players) are suitable for the position, as determined by the Agency (in the person of the gamemaster), the Agency will appoint a Mule to lead the group. If a *homo sapiens mutatis* is the only choice, the "least alien" agent will be appointed FAC. However, it is almost inconceivable that the Agency would form such a command group in any but the direst emergency.

The player characters now have up to thirty minutes real time to introduce themselves to each other, briefly describe their abilities, skills, etc., and to plan their strategy. Use the attached map of Training Area J (page 113) for

this scene. The gamemaster may want to allow characters only thirty minutes of "real time" to talk to each other and form a plan of action. The gamemaster should hurry this section along if the action drags, but there should be too little time, rather than too much, given the predilections of players to talk amongst themselves. Enforce the thirty minute limit even if the characters are not ready. This exercise and this scene are meant to teach the characters to work under stressful conditions and time constraints. The characters should feel uneasy and ill-prepared, as they are for the most part rookie agents in training. Encouraging these feelings in the players adds to the realism of the scene.

WILLIAM R. "JACK" JACKSON.
SENIOR AGENCY INSTRUCTOR

AGILITY 10

Dodge 13, maneuver 12, melee combat 14, stealth 12 unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 10

Fire combat 15, lock picking 11, vehicle piloting: wheeled 14

STRENGTH 9

ENDURANCE 10

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 9

Camouflage 12, demolitions 13, perception 14, teaching: tactics 14, tracking 12

MIND 8

Artist: musician 9 (saxophone 10)

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 15, survival: forest 12, will-power 13

CHARISMA 9

Life Points: 7

Equipment: Knife, damage value STR+4/19; Beretta 9mm damage value 17, ammo 14; 5.56 Commando submachinegun, damage value 21, ammo 30; light kevlar body armor, armor value TOU+7/17; other equipment as necessary.

Description: William R. Jackson is a senior Agency operative, one of the chief instructors at the Laboratory. He is a talented and dedicated man who has given his life to government service. He is serious and all-business during duty hours, projecting a fearsome image to the young trainees. He genuinely cares about the welfare of his students, although he is first and

foremost loyal to the Agency. Jack has spent most of his adult life on one government assignment or another, and therefore has few interests outside of his work. His primary form of recreation is playing the saxophone moderately well.

THE ACTION

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"By 7:25 a.m., you arrive at the southern border of Training Area J, ready to begin your first training exercise as a team. You have a map of the game box area, and you have all trained in this area before, so the terrain is somewhat familiar. Jack is present, along with three other instructors who will be monitoring and evaluating the exercise. You note that two teams of medics are also parked to one side of the starting point. After receiving final

"FIELD AGENT IN CHARGE"

Due to the quasi-military nature of the Agency, and the nature of the command groups and their mission, each command group must have a FAC. While the Agency is not the Army, and disobedience is not a crime, the FAC does have significant authority and responsibility. The FAC can be the deciding voice in major decisions, and the Agency will back her up.

However, the FAC hardly has dictatorial power, and both the efficiency of the command group and the dictates of the roleplaying game strongly suggest that most decisions be made by consensus. The gamemaster should take care to appoint as FAC a player mature enough to handle the "responsibility" wisely, without throwing her weight around improperly in the game. Take care to avoid player resentment — an FAC who abuses her agents will quickly be pushing papers in the Laboratory supply room. If absolutely necessary, the gamemaster may wish to consider creating a gamemaster character to serve as the FAC for the command group. This, however, is definitely an option of last resort.

instructions and orienting your group (north is that way), at precisely 0730 you head into the game box. The exercise has begun."

The characters are equipped according to their preference, with whatever armor and small arms they desire for the exercise. They are, however, all armed with rubber bullets. The gamemaster should allow the characters to begin to infiltrate the training area, roleplaying together and (hopefully) executing their operations plan, before you move on to the next phase of the adventure. Ideally, the characters will have just placed their flag and begun to move out to search for the "enemy" when the next segment of the scene begins. A wide-ranging, shapechanged scout may be able to spot the action in the northern part of the training area a few moments earlier, but in no event will the group, as a whole, receive enough warning to stop the Alphas from successfully going rogue.

When the characters begin to move out, cut to "Bloody Betrayal."

BLOODY BETRAYAL

The Alpha agents in Command Group Four have succumbed to their alien instincts, and are determined to escape the Agency and live as free beings. They have chosen this training exercise as their first opportunity to make their escape, and have come prepared with smuggled live ammunition and a plan of action. At the beginning of the exercise, the Alphas engage their companions in a passionate discussion, urging them to join them in their bid for freedom. However, the other team members are horrified at the prospect (as the Alphas had rather suspected that the shortsighted humans and "lesser-altered" would be). As the other agents move to sound the alarm, the Alphas attack.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"After just a few moments of moving through the thick underbrush and the forest's tall pine trees, you hear gunfire from the north. A long burst, then a shorter staccato burst. You hear a faint scream. (If the characters have separated say: "None of the enemy could possibly be in contact with your group yet.") Unless this is a clever ploy to sucker you all in, it seems as if someone

has digressed from the training schedule."

At this point the player characters should move out towards the northern section of training area J at a high rate of speed. They may call for the instructors on the way (each team is equipped with hand-held radios), but the cadre are already aware of the problem. They have aborted the exercise, and are heading for the combat scenes with considerable firepower. (Should the characters not head towards the sounds of gunplay, Jack will contact them by radio, ordering them towards the spot.) Regardless, the instructors arrive too late to try to stop the Alphas, but in time to come to the rescue if the characters are in trouble.

If the player characters have stayed together, they can come upon each of these scenes in succession. The gamemaster may, of course, place these encounters wherever they conveniently fit within the game box area. If the characters separated the command group, each cluster/character should come upon a separate combat scene. Ideally, these scenes are ending in the demise of the loyal agents and the escape of the rogues just as the characters enter viewing range. If the players manage to roleplay the scenes very creatively, allow their characters to attempt to intervene in the carnage. Their encounter with the Alphas should be limited to a brief exchange of gunfire, however, for the Alphas care most about escaping the compound, and they have the means to do so.

Remember not to allow the characters to get seriously hurt here, unless they are absolutely suicidally foolish. Any serious injury at this time could sideline a character for the rest of the adventure.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"As you come up over the rise, you hear a man scream, 'Jason, no! You could —' Seconds later, a horrifying tableau appears before you in a small clearing perhaps 100 meters down the valley. A human form lies still, face down in the grassy area. A large pool of blood spreads out from under the torso of the corpse. The unmoving form holds a radio in one hand, and a pistol clenched tightly in the other.

"Two figures still move in the clearing. Nearest to you, a man in light armor stands rigid, with fists clenched, in a posture of

intense concentration. Perhaps ten meters away, a small woman flies backwards through the air, hurled into a tree by some terrible force. You can hear her cry of pain, as she smashes into the tree and slides to the ground. However, even as she hits the forest floor, she strikes back.

"The woman's body seems to shift in the sun, and her arms grow impossibly long. As they reach out for the man in the armor, the arms transform into veiny, purplish, pulsating tentacles, their serrated edges gleaming in the morning light. The man throws his arms up in terror, but the tentacles easily avoid his feeble defense. They wrap firmly around the neck of the man, and with a single twist, tear through his throat, severing his head from his body.

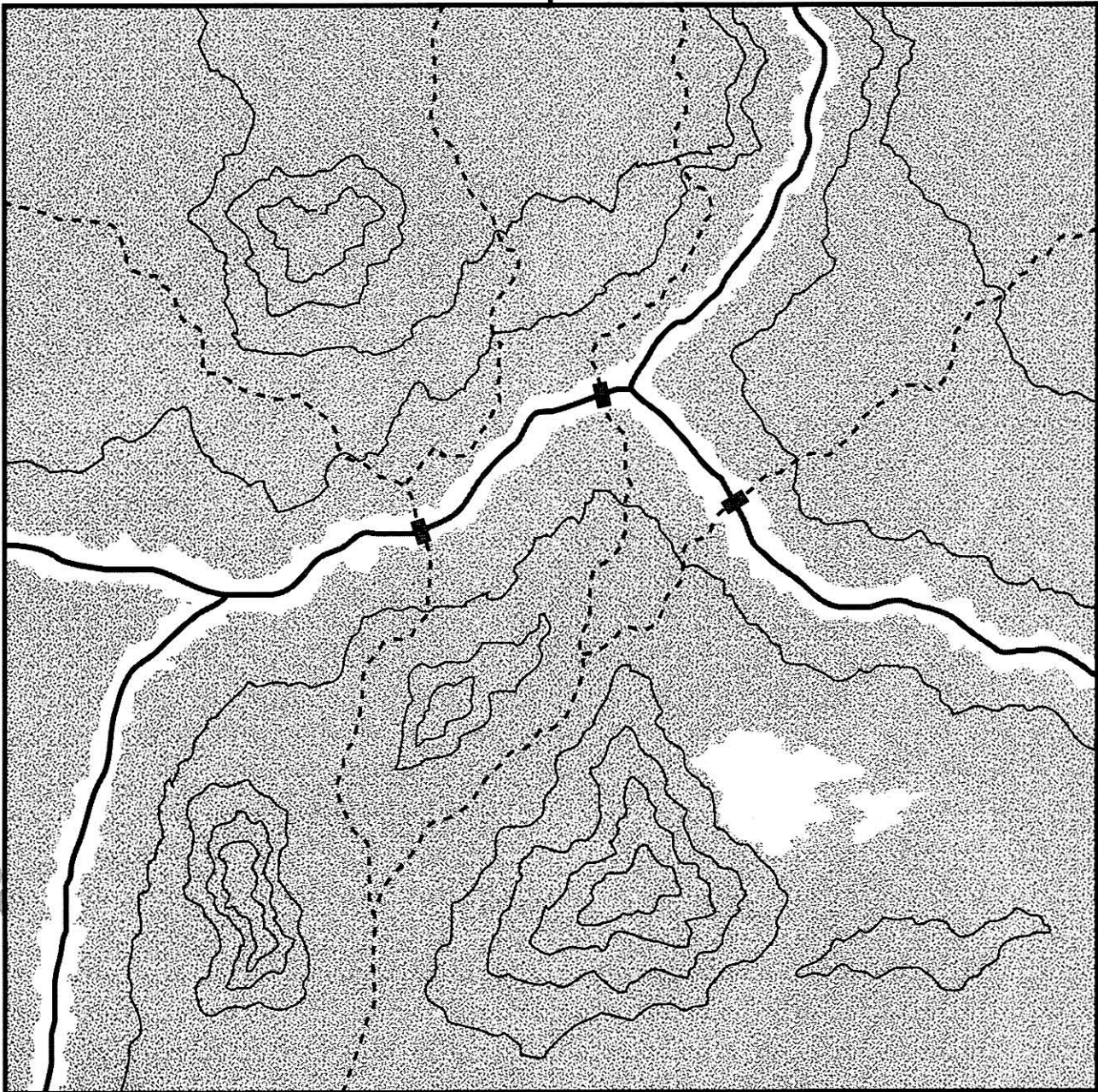
"The man's screams are cut short in gouting showers of blood, as the woman shrieks an almost inhuman cry of rage and triumph. Her bloody tentacles, glistening with blood, contract rapidly towards her body. No more than five seconds must have passed since you crested the ridge, yet it is an eternity for the newly dead below."

At this point, all player characters without either combat experience or experience in another high-stress, bloody situation (e.g. working in a hospital emergency room) must make a Confidence or *willpower* check against a DN of 10. Those who fail the check are *stymied* for one full round (they are untrained, after all). The other characters may move to attack the Alpha if they wish. The first corpse is the shredded body of Jason Synka, the FAC of Command Group Four. The other man was Robert Bergstrom, the psychic assigned to that command group.

The Alpha, Connie Moore, is currently rising to her feet and preparing to escape. At this point, she has no desire to battle Command Group Five. She knows the Agency's response teams are scrambling, and she believes that some members of this other command group are likely *homo sapiens mutatis* who would be sympathetic to her cause. Connie will use her *chameleon* ability to fade into the background and flee into the woods.

At this distance, there is relatively little that

TRAINING AREA J



KEY



Trees



Contour Lines
10' Intervals



River or
Stream



Trail



Bridge

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the characters can do to stop her, although the gamemaster should certainly allow the characters to try if they like. Reward any particularly creative efforts with a successful hit or another appropriate success. The Alpha will not stay to fight unless she is trapped. If the characters do trap Connie, they may be in real trouble. The instructors should either help bail the characters out (in which case two instructors die during the battle), distract them and allow the Alpha to escape, or both. During this scene, the characters hear gunfire from another section of the training area as well.

When the characters respond to that gunfire (or, if they are divided, when the other group of characters reaches that scene), read or paraphrase the following:

"You hear the sound of gunfire, automatic weapons fire, from ahead. As you move through the trees, you see glimpses of a Mule in ceramic body armor emptying his submachinegun into a ... living blur moving towards him. The bullets tear into the snarling form — all jaws, claws, and teeth — but the creature leaps back up in an instant and springs at the Mule once more.

"As the beast's claws tear into his armor, the Mule draws two large knives and begins to counterattack — cutting, slashing, and kicking with incredible skill and speed. The Alpha staggers under this onslaught, but continues to tear at the Mule as well. Blood and armor fly everywhere, and in only a few seconds the Mule falls.

"For a split second a misshapen beast, covered in blood, stands staring down at its victim, before moving rapidly off into the woods."

As the characters approach this scene, the thick trees partially block their vision, and prevent them from getting many good shots off. Those characters inexperienced in combat should make a Confidence or *willpower* check as indicated above. This combat does take slightly longer than the first one described, so there is more chance that the characters can engage this Alpha. However, like Connie, he wants to flee, and will almost certainly be able to escape. The characters may, however, be able to save the fallen agent if they render prompt emergency medical care to the Mule.

The dying Mule did badly wound the Alpha, who has activated his *regeneration* ability to begin to repair the damage. A large trail of blood leads into the woods for perhaps fifty meters, and then disappears. This Alpha is using the same strategy as his partner, taking refuge in *chameleon* form. Characters searching the area may notice a scattered trail of blood spots (*tracking* difficulty 18) several hundred meters away, where the Alpha stopped, and transformed into a wounded flying creature to flee the training area.

As the player characters survey the carnage in stunned silence, cut to "Aftermath."

CONNIE MOORE

AGILITY 9

Climbing 10, dodge 11, maneuver 10, stealth 11, unarmed combat 10

DEXTERITY 7

Fire combat 8

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 8

Computer ops 9, perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 8, willpower 8

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, shapeshifting 10

Life Points: 5

Special Abilities: Chameleon; Natural Weaponry (HTH) (tentacles); Natural Weaponry (HTH) (claws); Regeneration; up to three of these abilities may be used simultaneously

Natural Tools: Tentacles, damage value STR+4/16 — may make up to two attacks without suffering a multi-action penalty; claws, damage value STR+4/16

Animal Forms: A flying creature; a burrowing animal, something like a mole; a reptilian creature; an insectoid creature. All of these are roughly the same size and mass as Connie. Note that numbers of Life Points and total number of skill adds remains the same regardless of animal forms, although numbers of adds in a skill may be shifted around. The exception to this is *shapeshifting* — see Chapter Five.

Description: Connie Moore was an idealistic young DEA agent, dedicated to fighting the

scourge of drug crimes on our streets. However, Connie cut her DEA career short when she was approached by members of Project Proteus. Connie received the highest dosage of alien genetic material available, becoming an Alpha agent. She was determined to pass the training and become an even more efficient government agent.

Yet during training Connie became more and more uncertain of her calling, and of her new identity. She found her thoughts turning towards alien dreams, and found it harder to concentrate on her training. She began to ponder the nature of the aliens, her assignment, and her own changed nature. Ultimately, she could find no difference between Sil and herself — and believed she knew what Project Proteus' plans would be for both. At that point Connie succumbed to her alien nature, practicing her human restraint only to fool the Project's trainers ... until she saw her chance to escape.

Connie approached James Wilden, a fellow Alpha agent, and cautiously began to discuss her new philosophy with him. Over a few long nights together, Connie and James found their feelings on Project Proteus increasingly similar.

By far the stronger of the two personalities, Connie keeps Wilden "wrapped around her little finger," and used him to help execute her escape. Both Moore and Wilden smuggled live ammunition into the first group training exercise, and are armed with firearms as well as their considerable shapechanging abilities.

Equipment: Glock 22 pistol, 50 rounds AP ammunition; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/19; hand-held radio.

CONNIE MOORE. FLYING CREATURE FORM

AGILITY 11

Dodge 13, flight 13, maneuver 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 8

STRENGTH 12

TOUGHNESS 10

INTELLECT 8

Computer ops 9, perception 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 8, willpower 8

CHARISMA 8

Charm 9, persuasion 9, shapeshifting 10

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 7

CONNIE MOORE. BURROWING CREATURE FORM

AGILITY 10

Dodge 11, maneuver 11, stealth 12, unarmed combat 12

DEXTERITY 5

ENDURANCE 11

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

Computer ops 9, perception 9, tracking 10, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 10, willpower 8

CHARISMA 8

Persuasion 9, shapeshifting 10

Natural Tools: Claws, damage value STR+4/17

CONNIE MOORE. REPTILIAN FORM

AGILITY 10

Dodge 11, maneuver 11, stealth 13, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 12 (11)

INTELLECT 8

Computer ops 9, perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 10, willpower 8

CHARISMA 7

Persuasion 8, shapeshifting 10

Natural Tools: Fangs, damage value STR+2/13; hide, armor value TOU+1/12

CONNIE MOORE. INSECTOID FORM

AGILITY 12

Climbing 15, dodge 13, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 9

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 8

Computer ops 9, perception 9, tracking 9, trick 9

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 10, willpower 8

CHARISMA 5

Shapeshifting 10

Natural Tools: Multi-faceted eyes, cannot be completely surprised — partial surprise treated as no surprise at all; mandibles, damage value STR+4/15

JAMES WILDEN. HUMAN FORM

AGILITY 10

Dodge 11, maneuver 11, melee combat 11, stealth 11, swimming 11, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 9

Fire combat 12, heavy weapons 10

ENDURANCE 9

Resist shock 10

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 12

INTELLECT 7

Perception 9

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 9

CHARISMA 7

Shapeshifting 8

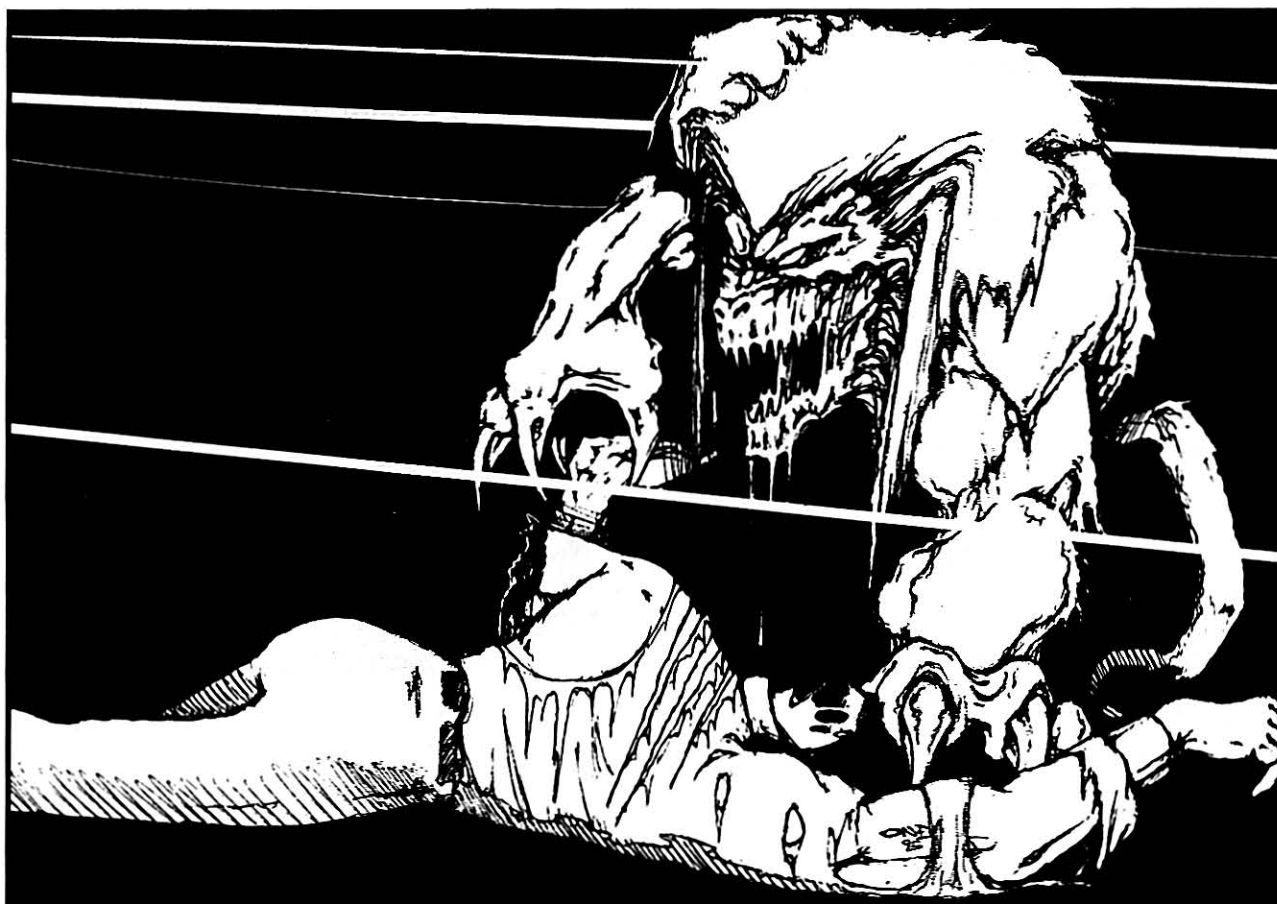
Life Points: 5

Special Abilities: Chameleon; Natural Weaponry (HTH) (claws); Natural Weaponry (HTH) (teeth); Blur; up to three of these abilities may be used simultaneously

Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+3/16; claws, damage value STR+4/17

Animal Forms: A humanoid lion-like creature; a flying creature; a worm creature; a squid creature. All of these are roughly the same size and mass as James. Note that numbers of Life Points and total number of skill adds remains the same regardless of animal forms, although numbers of adds in a skill may be shifted around. The exception to this is *shapeshifting* — see Chapter Five.

Description: James Wilden is a former Marine who transferred to the Agency in re-



sponse to their recruiting efforts. Unfortunately, James was not a particularly good choice to become an Alpha; his average intelligence and below average mental strength made it almost certain that he would succumb to his alien instincts. (Hopefully, the Agency will learn from such early mistakes.)

Wilden is definitely the junior partner in the relationship with Moore. He normally follows her lead, although his greater physical power and his instincts sometimes cause him to resent her orders. Wilden is thoroughly enamored of Connie Moore — emotions that are almost the only residue of his former humanity — although this attraction may fade as he leaves his former life farther and farther behind.

Equipment: Mossberg M500 Shotgun, sawed off, with a pistol grip; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/19; hand-held radio

JAMES WILDEN. LION FORM

AGILITY 11

Dodge 12, maneuver 12, stealth 12, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 12

STRENGTH 14

TOUGHNESS 13 (12)

INTELLECT 7

Perception 9, tracking 9

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 10

CHARISMA 6

Shapeshifting 8

Natural Tools: Hide, armor value TOU+1/13; claws, damage value STR+4/18; teeth, damage value STR+3/17

JAMES WILDEN. WINGED CREATURE FORM

AGILITY 11

Dodge 13, flight 12, maneuver 13, stealth 13, unarmed combat 13

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 7

Perception 9, tracking 9

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 8

CHARISMA 6

Shapeshifting 8

Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 7

JAMES WILDEN. WORM FORM

AGILITY 8

Dodge 9, unarmed combat 11

DEXTERITY 1

ENDURANCE 12

Resist shock 14

STRENGTH 17

TOUGHNESS 14

INTELLECT 7

MIND 6

Perception 9, tracking 9

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 11

CHARISMA 5

Shapeshifting 8

Natural Tools: Crushing attack, damage value STR+1/18

JAMES WILDEN. SQUID FORM

AGILITY 11

Dodge 12, stealth 12, swimming 12, unarmed combat 14

DEXTERITY 7

ENDURANCE 11

Resist shock 12

STRENGTH 13

TOUGHNESS 13 (12)

INTELLECT 7

Perception 9, tracking 9

MIND 6

CONFIDENCE 7

Intimidation 11

CHARISMA 5

Shapeshifting 8

Natural Tools: Tentacles (8), can do up to five attacks in a round with incurring a multi-action penalty

AFTERMATH

As noted above, moments after the Alphas escape, or while the characters are locked in a running battle, several teams of instructors arrive. Riding in three HMMVs (Humvees — wide, heavy, jeep-like military vehicles) with machine guns mounted in the rear, "Jack" and

a half dozen instructors armed with assault weapons and grenade launchers arrive. The medics are also scrambling to respond, and their field ambulances are only moments behind. If the Alphas are still present, several well-aimed grenades will drive them away (and may force the characters to take cover).

After quickly inspecting the characters for any obvious signs of injury, and dispatching the medics to the wounded agents — including Command Group Four's Mule if the characters stopped to provide him with medical attention — Jack orders the characters to get away from the scene and await further instructions. Read or paraphrase the following:

“Roaring up to the scene in his Humvee, Jack shouts some commands into a radio. Dressed in a black camouflage uniform, your instructor wears a knit cap and carries an M-16 assault rifle with an M-79 grenade launcher slung under the barrel. He quickly dispatches the medics to check on the wounded and dying, and sends the other Humvees and instructors in various directions at a high rate of speed. He leaps back onto his Humvee, and only then turns to address you.

“Alright people, the Quick Reaction Team has scrambled and security is alerted. We've got to try and stop the Alphas before they breach the perimeter. You (to the team leader) take your people back to Situation Room Charlie in the administration complex and stay there. Go nowhere else without further instructions.” Jack then barks a command to his obviously terrified driver, and the vehicle moves rapidly off into the woods.

If the characters are wise, they will do precisely as they have been ordered. In the (likely) event that one protests, and desires to join the

hunt, Jack will respond with harsh sarcasm and tightly controlled anger before driving off:

“Goddamn you, what part of my sentence did you fail to understand? Is there something wrong with my diction? I don't have time for this foolishness. Incompre-



hensible as it may seem, you are a valuable asset to this Agency, and we cannot afford to risk you unnecessarily, especially now and especially with a woods full of nervous guards hunting alien agents. Do I make myself clear?! Or would you care to have a conference on the matter right here in this damn clearing?”

At this point, the characters will probably do as they are told. As they know after their weeks of training, if anyone disobeys, they will at the very least be severely disciplined for disobeying the orders of a senior instructor in a combat situation. *Homo sapiens mutatis* who roam the woods during this hunt do run the risk that a team of guards may mistake them for one of the fleeing Alphas.

When the characters arrive at the situation room, they will have to wait for roughly three hours. (Anyone who attempts to leave to check on what is happening, finds the situation room door locked.) At approximately 11:00 a.m., Jack enters the room, accompanied by a tall man wearing very expensive, impeccably tailored clothing.

CUT TO...

At this point, cut to Scene Two, "The Race is On."

SCENE TWO: THE RACE IS ON THE SITUATION

Standard. After witnessing the massacre of the loyal agents of Command Group Four by two rogue Alpha agents, the characters have been awaiting further instructions in one of the Laboratory's situation rooms for the last three hours. The characters are ordered to proceed to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the city to which the aliens have fled, to pursue and destroy the rogue Alpha agents.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"You've been cooling your heels in Situation Room Charlie for almost three hours, and most of you are ready to explode with sheer nervous tension. The scenes from the training area are slow to fade from your mind — images of torn, shattered bodies slain by their comrades still burn inside you. You have a feeling that their bodies will turn to dust long before their images fade from your memory. It is a grim reminder of the harsh realities of your new life and your new work.

"Your reverie is cut short when the door opens, and two men stride into the room. The first is Jack, still in his field gear, and the second is a slender, dapper, grey-haired man in a very expensive suit. As Jack stands to one side, the "suit" strides to the podium, clears his throat softly, and begins to speak:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I understand that all of you witnessed the unfortunate incident in the training area this morning. I regret to inform you that the two agents, er, aliens involved escaped the compound, and are currently at large.

"Your mission is to track these two aliens, and to kill them. Time is of course of the essence, for we must preserve civilian lives and prevent this pair from reproducing or joining others of their kind. You

must, of course, also take strict care to preserve operational security and the secrecy of the Project.

"The aliens are currently in Chapel Hill, roughly 128 kilometers northwest of this installation. They seem to have gone to ground for the time being, so we must move quickly. Mr. Jackson will brief you on the specifics of the mission. Thank you for your time."

"With a final nod in your direction, the mysterious man turns and strides from the room."

The rogue agents have indeed escaped, first avoiding the security patrols around the compound, and then fleeing in a government sedan stolen from a parking lot on post. The Agency has tracked the aliens' (the Agency will never refer to the rogue agents as anything other than "aliens") location by activating the miniature tracking devices secretly implanted in their skulls. These signals indicate that the agents have travelled to Chapel Hill, and the Agency plans to send the characters to the college town to track them down. The Agency hierarchy will never admit to the characters that these tracking devices exist; even many senior Agency officials are unaware of this "safety precaution." Instead, the Agency will devise other plausible excuses to point the characters towards the aliens.

In the hours since the aliens' escape, Agency officials have created a cover story for the characters and their mission. The senior instructor now moves into the mission briefing.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"Jack strides to the podium. He touches a switch which dims the lights, and another which lowers a screen and turns on a projector. Two faces appear on the screen, a man and a woman. The woman is pretty, dark and small-boned; while the man has a sullen face, with dirty-blond hair and bland features like those of a million other Midwestern farm kids. You recognize these faces — you saw them snarling atop shifting, twisting bodies in the training area only hours ago. As you stare at their all too human features, Jack begins to speak.

"Your targets are Connie Moore and James Wilden. As you know, these aliens,

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former members of Command Group Four, murdered their fellow agents before escaping. Both aliens received the Proteus-Alpha mixture, so their shapechanging powers are very potent. In addition, they both have law enforcement or military backgrounds, and have gone through Phase One and Two of our training program. That makes them half-trained, but knowing just enough to be dangerous. A lot like you, actually.'

Jack smiles a little to himself as he passes out a thin folder to each agent. "Here are the relevant portions of their personnel files, describing their background and abilities. Read them at your leisure." His face grows serious as he heads back to the podium.

"Seriously, I shouldn't have to tell you that one Alpha is extremely dangerous, and two Alphas working together is a nightmare. These two killed three fellow agents and escaped quite easily. Be very, very careful! I certainly would have preferred that you complete your training before your first mission, but we have no alternative. As you know, Command Group One is disbanded, Command Groups Two and Four are destroyed, and Command Group Three is on another mission. None of the other agents training here will reach even your level of training for several weeks. So, we're left with you."

Jack goes on to explain that the characters' cover will be as agents of the FBI. They'll be issued credentials and the appropriate equipment, and their cover will allow them to work with the local police. Their story is to be that two Special Ops soldiers flipped out and murdered three people on the post. They are a hastily formed "FBI Task Force" dispatched to hunt the soldiers down. The names given to the characters match those of actual FBI agents.

The police have already agreed to cooperate and to impose a blackout on media coverage. How much the characters choose to work with the authorities is up to them.

The vehicle stolen by the aliens was found abandoned on the outskirts of Chapel Hill. The local police found blood and fiber samples in the car. The characters are to secure custody of this evidence and deliver it to the Agency or destroy it.

Jack will answer any of the character's questions to the best of his ability (he does not know of the tracking devices), and he will provide the characters with dossiers containing a brief synopsis of the skills and background information listed in the rogue characters' stats. For this mission, the characters may take any standard equipment they desire, as well as bulletproof vests, sidearms, shotguns, or rifles. The characters may not take heavier armor, heavy weapons or explosives. These items would not fit their covers, or be suitable for use among the civilian population of Chapel Hill.

Jack will also issue the characters one of the Agency's prototype "DNA detectors" — this device detects the minute chemical emissions from the cells containing alien genetic material. This device works to detect aliens within 25 meters, and the sensitivity has been increased to detect the DNA levels in the rogue Alphas (difficulty number 8). The device will also register a positive reading in the presence of any Alpha agent player character, so the user must make another *science: electronics* or *perception* skill roll to determine whether there are multiple signals (difficulty number 12).

Unfortunately, because the device is only a prototype, it does not function perfectly. On a roll of 2 or 3 by the user, the device breaks; and on a roll of 4 or 5, it registers a false positive reading. A character with the *science: electronics* skill can attempt to fix the device (difficulty number 15), and the *science: electronics* skill will grant the user a +1 to their skill roll to use the device.

The Project also issues the characters slightly souped-up versions of official government sedans (statistics as a Large Car), for their trip to Chapel Hill.

GOIN' TO THE CHAPEL

Chapel Hill is a small city — population approximately 38,000 — in north-central North Carolina. Located roughly 32 kilometers west of Raleigh, the state capitol, much of the life of this city is focused around its centerpiece — the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It is also the western-most leg of the "Research Triangle," just a few kilometers northwest of Research Triangle Park — the home of many high technology industries. The diverse intellectual and social atmosphere fostered by the

University makes Chapel Hill an island of "liberal" thought and multi-ethnic culture in the conservative state. Many social and cultural events normally found only in much larger cities are found in Chapel Hill.

Yet despite its intellectual sophistication, Chapel Hill is in many ways still a small town — a very quiet university town which is deeply shocked and galvanized into action by its relatively infrequent violent crimes. The gamemaster should impress these simple facts on the player characters, so that they are warned of the nature of the environment they are entering. Any public display of weapons will draw a lot of attention. The public display of heavy weapons or body armor, or any combat, will cause a tremendous commotion which may well lead to unwanted publicity. Because secrecy is an important part of the characters' success on this mission, they must maintain a low profile. While this does limit their freedom of action, it is important to remember that the aliens also wish to remain unnoticed. (Of course, it's much easier for the rogues to just slip away without being seen!)

WORKING WITH THE POLICE

The characters need to decide how closely they will work with the Chapel Hill Police Department on this mission. While small, this department is well-equipped with modern tech-

nology, and could provide the characters with assistance in locating the aliens. In practical terms, enlisting the aid of the police department will make it much easier for the characters to track the aliens to the Spiked Collar — a club in the University district (see Scene Three, "Fight for Your Right to Party"). With the aid of the police, the players may roll a *perception* or *espionage* check each hour beginning at 7:00 p.m. that evening (when the aliens come out of hiding. A roll of 10 means that the characters receive a firm report of a very recent sighting of the aliens, and can arrive at the scene prepared for trouble.

The characters will have to coordinate with the police at least enough to recover the evidence from the stolen car, and to avoid raising the suspicions of the officers — who will naturally expect to work closely with the federal government in the pursuit of dangerous fugitives within its jurisdiction. The Chief of the Violent Crimes Bureau and the head of the Quick Reaction Team have been appointed as official liaisons to the "federal task force," and have been given the characters' beeper number as a point of contact. Thus far, they have agreed to allow the "FBI" to lead the investigation, and to maintain a press blackout of the incident to avoid alerting the fugitives to the close pursuit. Yet any sort of unprofessional or uncharacteristic behavior may well arouse their suspi-

A PLAN OF ATTACK

Although Chapel Hill is a small city, it is large enough that the player characters won't be able to find their targets by wandering aimlessly or asking the first person they see. The gamemaster should reward careful planning with bonuses to their efforts to track the alien. Proceeding without a plan should add two (+2) to the difficulty number of the search.

If the players brainstorm for ideas on how to find the aliens, the gamemaster can nudge them in the right direction with a few careful answers to their inevitable questions. The behavior of the very first alien, Sil, is part of the agent's standard training, and a *deduction* or *Intellect* roll (difficulty 10) should lead the characters to realize that these aliens will probably behave similarly (if the characters don't think of this themselves). The Alphas desire to mate, and will prowl the modern equivalent of the jungle as predators in search of prey. Of course, the characters would make the choicest prey of all (see Scene Four, "A Punishing Kiss").

In response to players' questions, the gamemaster can inform them that the bulk of the nightlife is in the University district, particularly in a series of bars and restaurants near the university's fraternity row. If the characters concentrate their search in this area, they should receive a plus two (+2) to their skill roll. Regardless of success or failure, later that night the characters will find the Spiked Collar, and may find the aliens as well.

cions, or incite a phone call to the player characters' FBI "superiors."

Such a call would certainly have disastrous results. The characters' FBI credentials are excellent forgeries (difficulty number 16 to detect); yet the FBI has never heard of this case, and the agents matching the false names are nowhere near Chapel Hill. If the actual FBI district field office in Raleigh learned of this case, their inquiries would quickly reveal that the agents are impostors. The constant threat of FBI involvement only emphasizes the need for speed and secrecy.

The player characters will have to carry off a difficult balancing act, for too much police involvement could also be fatal to the mission. Not only will the agents have a chance to spot police surveillance, but if policemen see the aliens "in action" the entire mission could be ruined.

If the characters decline police aid in the search, it becomes that much more difficult to locate their quarry. In that case, the players roll their *perception* or *espionage* skill every two hours of searching (beginning at 7:00 p.m.), with a difficulty number of 12. With a success, some bartender, desk clerk, or restaurant employee provides a tip that leads the players to the Spiked Collar.

CUT TO...

Once the characters track the aliens to the Spiked Collar, or eventually enter it through dumb luck, cut to Scene Three, "Fight for Your Right to Party."

SCENE THREE: FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO PARTY

THE SITUATION

Standard. The characters' search for the aliens takes them to the Spiked Collar, an alternative bar and dance club in the heart of the university district. This is a Chapel Hill institution, though a mobile one. It opens in one location, loses money despite its popularity (due to inefficient management and strident non-commercialism), closes for a time, and springs up again somewhere else.

In this scene, the player characters encounter a slightly different kind of threat and get at least a glimpse of their quarry. The characters' main challenge here is to keep their cover and maintain



control. This scene emphasizes roleplaying, and a building sense of urgency.

Read or paraphrase the following:

"After you pay the five dollar cover charge and enter the Spiked Collar, a wave of lights and sound assaults you. The band to your right — "Banging Cans," according to the posters — pours out powerful, wailing rock from the speakers located around the bar. Flashing strobes cut through the darkness, and colored lights bounce crazily from a retro-Seventies disco ball.

"The flashing lights caress the crowd — a crush of college students jammed around and between the tables so tightly that it's impossible to move without wading through a sea of people. The "dance" floor is a packed mass of undulating humanity. Your targets may be somewhere in this living sea.

THE ACTION

The rogue Alphas are indeed in the Spiked Collar, hunting for likely mates. They are sitting together at a table in the back near the dance floor, and have already picked up pro-

spective dates. The aliens are very difficult for the characters to spot, due to the crush of patrons and their efforts to disguise their appearance. The player characters will need to make an *Intellect* or *perception* roll of 15 to locate their quarry visually. The primary cues are the way this pair move, react, and scan the crowd. They have a hard look — the look of warriors — not shared by the rest of the patrons. It may be possible for a character to find a quiet spot to use the DNA detector — the most likely location is a stall in one of the bathrooms.

Of course, the aliens are also alert for any sign of pursuit, and should find it a little easier to spot the characters than vice-versa (difficulty number 12) unless the characters have also disguised their appearance. Neither the rogues nor the player characters should desire a battle in this public setting (although the characters have much more to lose). The Alphas will therefore attempt to evade the characters, and should almost certainly succeed.

The gamemaster should build drama in this scene, with the two sides stalking each other through the crowd, catching sight of each other only in flashes of light. The gamemaster should also have psychic characters with the Advantage Flaws "Psychic Hypersensitivity" or "Psy-



chic Surge" roll regularly to maintain control in this chaotic, tense atmosphere. This type of pressure-packed environment, loaded with stimuli, can be a sensitive character's worst nightmare.

The bar is full of students in various stages of inebriation. One particularly obnoxious group consisting of eight football players — fraternity brothers out for a night on the town — now intercepts the player characters. The precise spark that ignites the conflict is up to the gamemaster's discretion. It is very possible that a few of that group would approach the female player characters in a very rude and suggestive (possibly even violent) manner; or that a collision between a character and a student spills beer all over one of the football players. It is even possible that a drunken football player will angrily accuse a male character(s) of ogling or stealing "his woman." In any event, these jokers are spoiling for a fight, and the player characters are their chosen targets.

FOOTBALL PLAYERS

AGILITY 9

Dodge 10, maneuver 10, running 10, unarmed combat 10, unarmed parry

DEXTERITY 8

ENDURANCE 10

STRENGTH 10

Lifting 11

TOUGHNESS 11

INTELLECT 7

Perception 8

MIND 7

CONFIDENCE 9

Intimidation 11, willpower 10

CHARISMA 8

Taunt 10

Life Points: 1

Equipment: None

While the characters could undoubtedly wipe up the floor with the college students, they should certainly try to avoid a brawl. The battle would distract them from their primary goal, attract a lot of attention, and probably even bring in the police. Note that FBI agents very rarely engage in barroom brawls while on duty. (The bar's bouncers will leap into any fray, pummeling anyone throwing punches — use football player stats for bouncers. There are

two on duty.) The characters should try to avoid a fight (perhaps by showing their badges); and if they have to fight they had better make it very quick and very convincing. The sheer number of opponents makes such a quick victory unlikely. Even if some of the characters pursue the aliens, this encounter should allow the rogues to slip away into the darkness.

CUT TO...

After the characters have chased the aliens and lost sight of them, inside or outside of the club, they will not be able to find them again that night. The characters will have to sleep sometime, and when they do the aliens come to them. Cut to Scene Four, "A Punishing Kiss."

SCENE FOUR: A PUNISHING KISS

THE SITUATION

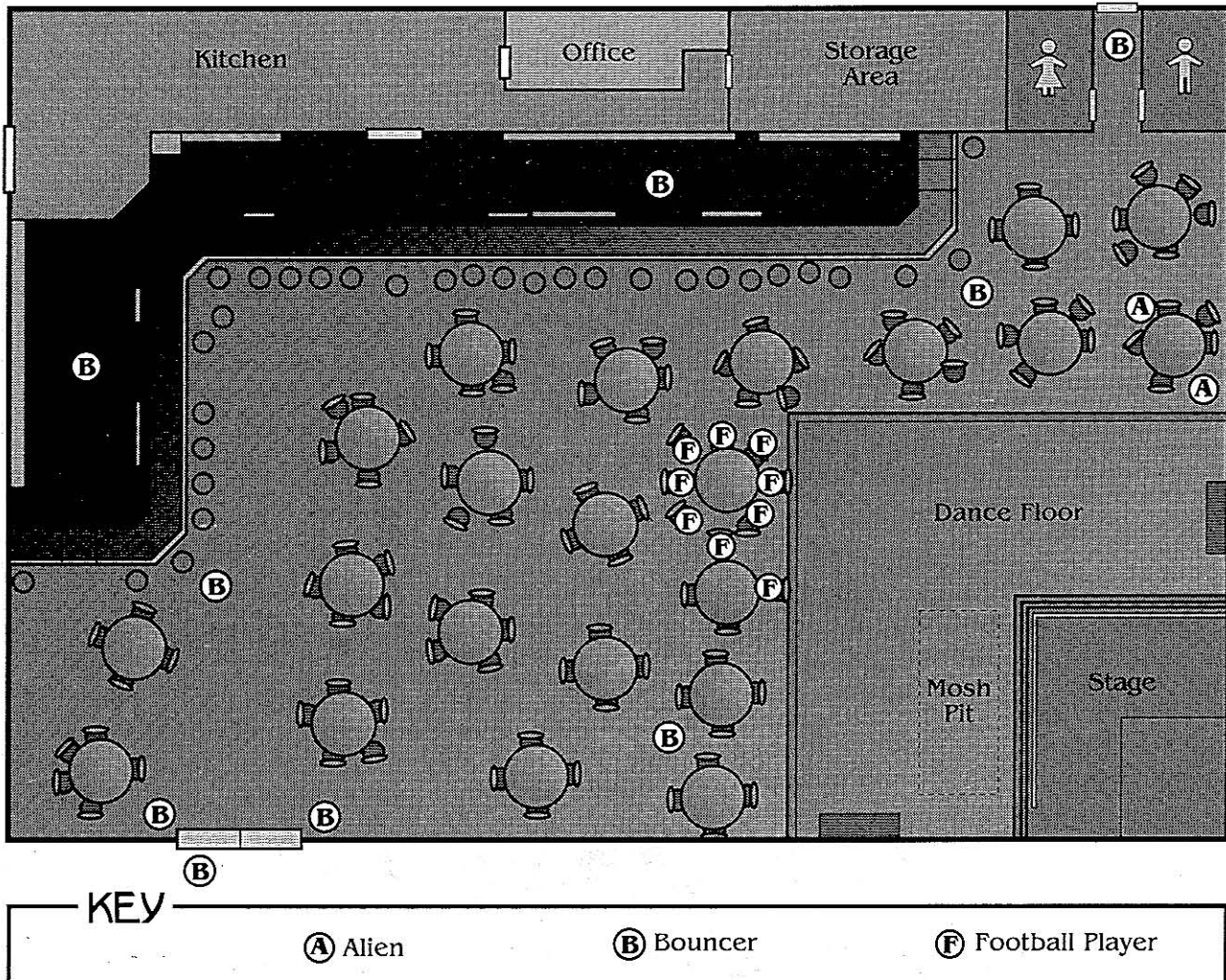
Dramatic. Unable to locate the hiding aliens after the encounter in the Spiked Collar, the player characters will have to catch some sleep later that night or the next day. When they do, the aliens come to them! Connie Moore has convinced Wilden that some of the altered player characters would make ideal mates, and that they should also try to enlist those characters to their cause.

The pair will approach the most powerful (i.e. most alien) player characters, although Connie may make an exception to this rule for characters who are particularly mentally and socially gifted. James will just go for the prettiest "alien" female. Ideally, the player characters will be sleeping in several different rooms, but the rogues will adapt to whatever arrangements the characters have made. Allow the player characters to take whatever precautions they wish, for the aliens should easily be able to avoid sentries.

Read or paraphrase the following (to suit the situation):

"You have had a frustrating night, coming so close to your quarry at the Spiked Collar, and then losing them completely. Eventually, you collapse out of sheer exhaustion, slipping into a fitful sleep. Sud-

THE SPIKED COLLAR

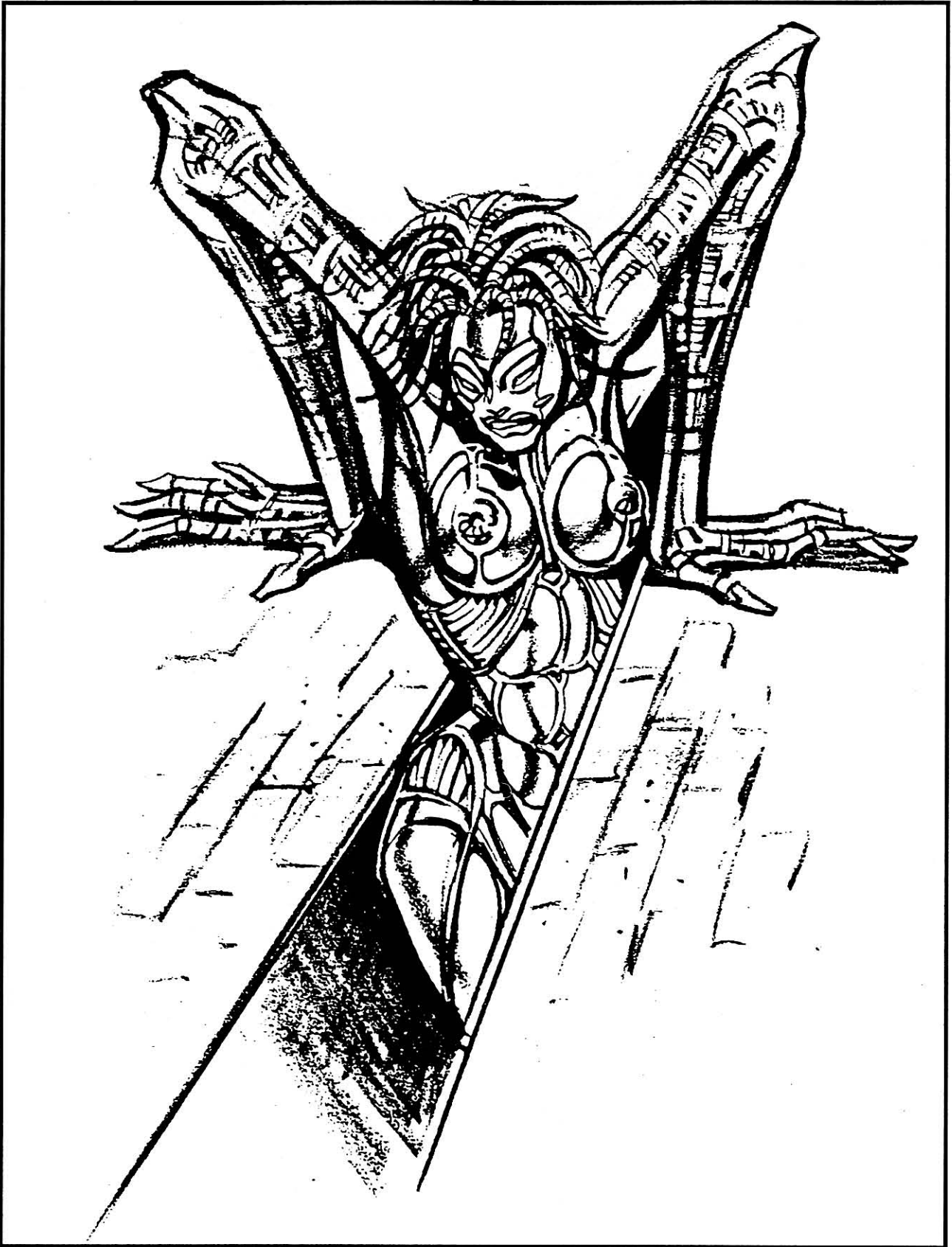


denly, so deep in the night that you know you're the only person in town stirring, you sense another presence near you. Simultaneously, you hear the soft pressure of a razor-sharp talon on your throat, and a softly-whispered command to open your eyes."

"You see (Wilden/Moore) crouching above you, with (his/her) hand on your throat. With a throaty whisper, the rogue orders you not to move, speak, or make a sound. "I will not harm you," (she/he) says. "Just listen to me for a time." Strange scents waft on the air, and you feel something stirring deep within you — powerful new sensations that have little to do with combat or your mission."

The character is already partially sexually aroused, involuntarily, by the pheromones the alien is now releasing into the air. As with everything alien, once activated, the sex drive is far more intense than that of humans. The aliens are caught up in states of high arousal — a predatory sexuality. At this point, the player character must roll against his "Alien Instincts" Quirk. If he successfully control his instincts, he feels the sexual charisma of his counterpart, but can control himself despite the awakening of the drive.

If one of the characters fail their roll (a likely result, particularly with Alpha characters), they respond fully to the alien mating pheromones and become very powerfully aroused. This condition makes it more difficult



to resist their instincts in other areas (+2 to the difficulty number of *willpower* rolls for the remainder of this scene).

At this point, the alien entices the character to mate. She/he urges the character to join her/him in bliss, with strong and enticing sexual advances. Both aliens are very physically attractive, and both are very obviously sexually aroused. The aliens move sensually, display their bodies, and attempt to caress and excite the characters with a mating dance of exceptional grace and beauty.

If a character allows the mating dance to reach this point, he must again roll against his "Alien Instincts" to fight an overwhelming wave of desire. If the character fails this roll, he will mate with the alien. If not, he may of course still choose to mate.

After the mating, or instead of mating if the character refuses to cooperate, the alien will begin a passionate, forceful discussion. She/he tries to convince the character to abandon the Agency. The aliens will raise a number of points arguing for their right to survive. Their arguments should be particularly convincing because they combine human and alien sensibilities. In no particular order, the "aliens" may argue that:

- *Homo sapiens mutatis* are all aliens;
- The characters have been sent to kill their own kind;
- The aliens, and the altered agents, cannot and should not deny their fundamental nature;
- The aliens are sapient beings, at least equal to humans, and superior in many ways;
- Therefore, they have just as much right to live as do humans (morally, ethically, etc);
- What right has the Agency to say who may live and who may die?;
- The characters are serving as tools of the oppressors;
- Humans made many species extinct, and routinely kill for food or sport. How is it different if we kill some of them?
- The Agency doesn't trust you; it considers you alien.
- They will not allow you to procreate. What will they do to you when they are through using you, and we are all gone?

GAMEMASTER TIPS

If this scene works out well for the aliens, not all the characters will be around for the action. It is essential to keep these players from being bored. One method to make this scene more entertaining for the spectators and those involved is to separate the two encounters with the aliens, running them one after another.

For example, place the player character Wilden approaches in another room, and run the encounter with Connie Moore to its end (just before any combat). Then bring the second player out and run this scene. This technique will keep the second player from anticipating what will happen and practicing her reactions, and should make the scene more fun for all concerned. Keep the encounters relatively brief, and move the pace along if spectators are getting restless; hopefully they will enjoy seeing their fellow players react and roleplay. One appropriate way to involve human characters in this scene is for psychic characters, particularly those with empathy or telepathy, to suffer terrible nightmares. The dreams may warn them of what is happening and allow them to get help for their fellow agents.

Technically, the characters should have to make another "Alien Instincts" roll to resist these arguments, but this course of action is not recommended. These issues are too important, too pivotal to the campaign, to leave to chance. The aliens will remain firm in their responses to the characters' questions or counter-arguments. They will tell the characters that they only killed their fellow agents of Command Group Four in self-defense — after they reported the escape attempt and attacked (true). Connie Moore will also say that she has stolen a supply of the chemical antidote to the flawed DNA, and can have more synthesized (also true). If the characters refuse to listen to the aliens, or force immediate combat, the aliens will shout out these points during the battle.

The results of this scene depends on the players. It is very unlikely that they will abandon the

Agency, but if the characters mate with the aliens, Moore and Wilden will leave quietly, if allowed to. In fact, if the characters reject the aliens but do not force combat, the aliens may still leave quietly (gamemaster's discretion). The aliens feel no particular need to kill these characters, not even the normal humans. Remember that the aliens' primary goal is survival, and they do not wish to battle in a public place. If the characters attack the aliens, or shout at the beginning of the scene, immediate combat ensues.

If the combat occurs in a hotel (a fairly public arena), the police will arrive in five minutes. If they are in a more private location, the gamemaster should determine the timing of the authorities' arrival. The rogue Alphas will try to escape if they believe they are losing the battle. The player characters may force them into a final battle here with brilliant strategy or roleplaying. However, the rogues will oblige their need for a more private battle if the characters allow them to flee. The aliens will leave Chapel Hill, heading west/southwest to flee towards the mountains. There are many isolated areas there in which the characters could stop the rogues after an appropriate car chase.

It is likely that the characters and the rogues will fight it out in that final scene. Indeed, how

can the characters explain themselves if they do not? The results of the battle are not at all certain, for the Alphas may have isolated certain of the characters. In any event, do not give the aliens free attacks on the characters. They automatically surprised the characters at the beginning of this scene for roleplaying purposes only.

AFTERMATH

Whether publicly or privately, the characters will have to battle the aliens or answer to the Agency. Remember that to the rogues, survival is the key. They are perfectly willing to flee, and live to fight another day. Nor is it a tragedy for the campaign if one or more of the characters escape. They can be recurring adversaries, ones that may cause conflicting feelings in and among the characters.

AWARDS

Award the characters two skill points apiece for successfully completing this adventure (i.e., keeping the secrets of the Agency and roleplaying well). Each character can also be awarded from 2-4 Life Points each, depending upon how tough the adventure was for them.

SPECIES EQUIPMENT CHARTS

ARMOR

Armor Type	TOU+/MAX	Fatigue?	Price
Soft Leather	+2/17	No	\$50
Padded Leather	+3/18	No	\$200
Bulletproof Vest*	+7/22	No	\$600
Flak Jacket*	+8/23	Yes	\$450
Light Kevlar	+7/22	Yes	\$1,500
Heavy Kevlar	+9/24	Yes	\$3,000
Ceramic Armor	+10/25	Yes	\$10,000

*Covers only the Torso.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon Type	Damage Value	Price
Longsword	STR+7/22	\$300+
Katana	STR+9/24	\$500+
Two-Handed Sword	STR+10/25	\$600
Blackjack	STR+3/18	\$15
Brass Knuckles	STR+4/19	\$25
Club/Baton	STR+5/20	\$15
Knife/Dagger	STR+4/19	\$20-\$600
Manrikigusari	STR+5/20	\$125
Nunchaku	STR+4/19	\$20
Sai	STR+4/19	\$25
Tonfa	STR+5/20	\$25 (pair)

MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage Value	Range				Price
		Short	Med	Long	Ext.	
Crossbow	STR+9/24	3-10	100	200	300	\$300
Knife	STR+2/17	3-5	10	15	30	\$30
Stars/ Spikes	STR+2/17	3-5	10	15	30	\$10

FIREARMS

Weapon	Damage	Ammo	Range				Cost
			Short	Med	Long	Ext.	
PISTOLS							
Colt Anaconda							
.44 Magnum	20	6	3-12	17	44	150	\$600 (\$40)
Colt .45							
Peacemaker	19	6	3-10	15	40	140	\$300 (\$20)
Colt M1911							

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	Damage	Ammo	Range				Cost
			Short	Med	Long	Ext	
.45 ACP	18	8	3-10	15	40	140	\$300 (\$25)
Glock 17 9mm	17	17	3-8	13	35	130	\$500 (\$35)
Glock 22 .40S&W	18	15	3-10	15	40	140	\$600 (\$35)
Heckler & Koch P7M13 9mm	17	13	3-8	13	35	130	\$500 (\$35)
S&W .357 Magnum	19	6	3-10	25	50	150	\$350 (\$35)
S&W .38	17	6	3-10	25	40	140	\$200 (\$20)
RIFLES							
AK-47 7.62 Assault Rifle	22	30	5-20	50	150	300	\$1500 (\$35)
M-16 .223 Assault Rifle	23	30	5-20	50	200	300	\$2000 (\$35)
Remington .30-30	21	7	5-30	90	200	300	\$700 (\$40)
Remington M700 (.30-06)	22	5	5-20	75	200	300	\$400 (\$30)
Winchester .45-70	22	5	5-20	75	200	300	\$450 (\$35)
SHOTGUNS							
Remington M31 (20 gauge)	22	5	5-20	30	75	150	\$600 (\$30)
Mossberg M500 (12 gauge)	21	5	5-10	20	40	100	\$450 (\$35)
Fiorelli S23 (semi-auto)	21	10/20	5-10	20	40	100	\$700 (\$35)
SUB-MACHINE GUNS							
Commando SMG 5.56	21	30	5-10	25	60	85	\$900 (\$35)
Ingram SMG 9mm	18	30	5-10	20	50	75	\$500 (\$35)
Uzi SMG 9mm	19	32	5-10	25	60	85	\$400 (\$35)
MACHINE GUNS							
7.62 HK21 Machine Gun	24	100	5-15	75	150	500	\$1000 (\$40)
7.62 Maremont M60	25	100	5-15	75	150	500	\$950 (\$40)
.50 Caliber Machine Gun	26	200	5-30	150	300	1000	\$1100 (\$40)

SPECIES

EQUIPMENT

HEAVY WEAPONS AND GRENADES

Weapon	Damage	Range				Price
		Short	Med	Long	Ext	
105mm Gun(A)	30	400-1000	4,000	12,000	14,000	\$400k
155mm Gun(A)	30	1000-6000	25,000	200,000	250,000	\$500k
Flamethrower	25	5-10	30	60	80	\$30k
LAW(T)	27	10-50	100	200	400	\$50k
M-19 Grenade Launcher (G)	23	50-200	400	600	800	\$40k
M-79 Grenade Launcher (G)	23	30-100	250	400	500	\$30k
TOW (T)	29	20-500	1500	2500	3000	\$36k
Thrown Grenade (G)	23	STR-4	STR-3	STR-2	STR-1	\$50

Explosive Burst Radius

(G) Grenade	0-3 (+2)	8 (+0)	15 (-5)	30 (-10)
(T) Tank Shell	0-4	10	25	40
(A) Artillery	0-5	15	40	50

VEHICLES

Vehicle Type	Safe/Max Speed	Pass	Tough	Maneuver*	Price
LAND VEHICLES					
Bicycle	STR/3xSTR	1-2	8	+2	\$200
Motorcycle	75/150	1-2	13	+3	\$10,000
Motorcycle (Large)	90/170	1-2	14	+2	\$15,000
Compact Car	70/90	3-4	15	+2	\$11,000
Mid-size Car	70/120	5-6	16	+1	\$16,000
Large Car	70/110	6-8	17	+1	\$25,000
Sports Car	100/190	2-4	15	+3	\$35,000+
Small Trucks	70/110	3 (cab)	19	+0	\$40,000+
Large Trucks	70/110	3 (cab)	20	-1	\$65,000+

WATER VEHICLES

Canoe	STR/STRx2	1-4	8	+0	\$500-\$2,000
Rowboat	STR+3/STRx3	1-8	13	+3	\$1000
Sailboat (Small)	Wind Speed/Wind+ vehicle piloting total	1-8	16	+2	\$75k
Sailboat (Large)	Windx2/Wind+ vehicle piloting totalx2	6-18	20	+1	\$200k
Powerboat	30/50	4	16	+1	\$20,000

Air Vehicles

Helicopter — Chinook	150/240	30	23	+3	\$600k
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SPECIES

EQUIPMENT

Vehicle Type	Safe/Max Speed	Pass	Tough	Maneuver*	Price
Helicopter — Attack	120/180	3	24	+5	\$12m
Prop Plane (Small)	110/170	4	17	+1	\$150k
Prop Plane (Medium)	180/230	6-20	21	+0	\$250k
Small Jet	400/550	8-20	21	+0	\$1.5m

SURVEILLANCE DEVICES

Item	Weight	Availability Code	Cost
Binoculars	1kg	0	\$70+
Low-Light		1	\$500
Thermographic		2	\$750
Goggles	1kg	1	\$250+
Low-light		2	\$2,500
Thermographic		2-3	\$5,000+
DNA Detector	1kg	3	Classified
Microphone			
Laser	1kg	2	\$3,000
Miniature	0.2kg	1	\$500+
Parabolic	4kg	2	\$1,000
Receiver			
Radios	1kg	0	\$50-\$2,000+
Shortwave	9kg	1	\$500+
Military	5-10kg	2	\$750+
Signal Locator	2kg	2	\$3,000
Recorder (Audio)			
Tape	1-3kg	0	\$50-\$200
Mini	0.5kg	1	\$100+
Recorder (Video)	3-5kg	1	\$300
Mini	0.1-0.5kg	2	\$500+
Tap	0.1kg	2	\$10,000+
Tracking Device	0.1kg	1-3	\$500+
Transmitter			
Walkie-Talkie	0.5kg	1	\$200+
Military	5-10kg	2	\$500+
Mini	0.1kg	2	\$1,500+
Satellite Uplink	3kg	2	\$10,000+

COUNTER-SURVEILLANCE DEVICES

Bug Detector	1kg	2	\$1,000
Data Encryptor	5kg	2-3	\$2,000+
Jammer	6kg	1-3	\$2,000+
White Noise Generator	2kg	2	\$3,000+
Wire Scanner	5kg	1-2	\$500+

SPECIES

ALPHA AGENT

HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX		
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 9 Dodge 10, long jumping 10, melee combat 11, stealth 11, unarmed combat 12 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 10, heavy weapons 10 ENDURANCE 9 Resist shock 11 STRENGTH 14 INTELLECT 8 Camouflage 9, tracking 9 MIND 7 CONFIDENCE 7 Willpower 9 CHARISMA 7 Shapeshifting 8				DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>12</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>19</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>8</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>5</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX		K O
				WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i>		MODIFIERS no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text		
				LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS		
				SHOCK CAPACITY		SHOCK TAKEN		

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to bonus of *dodge*, *long jumping* and *stealth*; Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to STR; Learning Curve (Positive) (CIII); Shapeshifting (CIV): Alpha (choose four animal forms and four special abilities)

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote); Advantage Flaw (CIV): Alpha; Quirk (CIV): Alien Instinct

Animal Forms:

1. 3.
2. 4.

Special Abilities:

1. 3.
2. 4.

DESCRIPTION

You were fresh out of the Agency's basic training course when a Dr. Hathaway approached you and told you that you had done exceedingly well on both your physical and psychological evaluations. He then asked if you would like to participate in a revolutionary, and highly dangerous, experiment that would forever alter your life, but might save your country from extremely dangerous invaders. You accepted, and now you think you *are* one of the alien "invaders" you are assigned to kill. The only thing separating you from your enemies is your fundamental humanity. Unfortunately, you are no longer certain where your humanity ends, and where your alien instincts begin.

EQUIPMENT

Glock 22 pistol, 50 rounds AP ammunition; Mossberg M500 shotgun, sawed off, with pistol grip; bulletproof vest (armor value TOU+7/22); hand-held radio.



"People change, friend. Some more than others."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

SPECIES

BETA AGENT

HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX			
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 10 Acrobatics 13, dodge 12, martial arts: kendo 12, stealth 11 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, vehicle piloting: air 10 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 12 INTELLECT 8 Deduction 10, perception 10, vehicle mechanic (helicopter) 9 MIND 8 CONFIDENCE 7 Willpower 8 CHARISMA 7 Shapeshifting 9				DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>18</div> TOUGHNESS <small>(w/armor)</small> </div> <div> <div>7</div> MRG <small>(Movement Rate, Ground)</small> </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRS <small>(Movement Rate, Swimming)</small> </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC <small>(Movement Rate, Climbing)</small> </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ <small>(Movement Rate, Jumping)</small> </div>		COMBAT BOX		K O	
				<div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> </div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div>no modifier</div> <div>-2 to physical skills</div> <div>-4 physical & -2 all other skills</div> <div>-8 to all skills</div> <div>automatic KO; see text</div> </div>					
		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY			
						SHOCK TAKEN			

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *shapeshifting*; Wealth (CI); Luck (CII); Additional Attribute Point (CIII), +1 to Agility; Shapeshifting (CIII): Beta (choose three animal forms and three special abilities)

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CIII): Beta; Quirk (CIII): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Animal Forms:

1. 2. 3.

Special Abilities:

1. 2. 3.

DESCRIPTION

You came from a large, loving family, and perhaps that is why you always sought out activities which you could practice alone — in silence. As a young teenager you became interested in Kendo, and you soon flourished at it. Two years ago you received your pilot's licenses, and you love the silence of the skies. A few months ago an older man approached you and offered you a job with the Agency.

After signing up, you found out about Project Proteus. The idea of going through such a profound change seemed the perfect way to challenge yourself, and thus you underwent genetic alteration. Now, although your martial arts training helps you keep control of your new instincts, you have found that you are not as strong as you would like. Since the change you have promised yourself that you will find a way to remain in control at all times!

EQUIPMENT

Commando Submachinegun; Glock 17 pistol; Kendo swords (2); bulletproof vest (armor value TOU+7/18); book on meditation techniques; hand-held radio.



"I always keep my head, but you might lose yours."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+1

SPECIES

GAMMA AGENT

HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 9 Dodge 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9, lock picking 9 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 10 INTELLECT 9 Computer ops 12, data analysis 11, espionage 11, perception 10, science: electronics 10 MIND 8 Language: Russian 9, scholar: Russian history 9 CONFIDENCE 8 Willpower 9 CHARISMA 7 Disguise 10, shapeshifting 8				DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>18</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> Light <input type="radio"/> Moderate <input type="radio"/> Heavy <input type="radio"/> Incapacitated <input type="radio"/> Mortal </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </div> </div>	
		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *espionage*; Cultures (CI), Russia; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonuses of *computers ops*, *data analysis*, and *espionage*; Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *disguise*; Luck (CII); Shapeshifting (CII): Gamma (choose two animal forms and two special abilities)

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employed (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CII): Gamma; Quirk (CII): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Animal Forms:

1. 2.

Special Abilities:

1. 2.

DESCRIPTION

After several years with the CIA, you requested a transfer to the "other Agency." You had heard that they were hiring analysts for a big new project (Project Proteus), and were pleased to make the switch. You were both fascinated and (somewhat) horrified by the subject of the experiment, and your analysis of the test results clearly showed that the Agency would lose control of the alien. After the failure of the project and the decision to create altered agents, you volunteered for the Proteus-Gamma process. (Your analysis indicates that this level of genetic alteration leaves the best chance for a fulfilling outside life to complement your new physical abilities.) You are spending more time in the field than you're used to, but you love the thrill of directly using your skills to hunt such a dangerous foe!

EQUIPMENT

XS250 Notebook computer, fax modem, full software package, 1 gigabyte detachable memory; Smith & Wesson .38 revolver; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/18; hand-held radio; DNA detector.



"We should study that thing - after we kill it, that is."

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

SPECIES

DELTA AGENT

HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Climbing 11, dodge 9, stealth 9 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9 ENDURANCE 8 STRENGTH 9 INTELLECT 9 Computer ops 10, perception 12, science: biology 10 MIND 9 Medicine 12 CONFIDENCE 9 Survival: mountains 10, willpower 11 CHARISMA 8 Persuasion 10, shapeshifting 10				DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>11</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>18</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>6</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>4</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </div> </div>	
		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Adds (CI), +1 to *shapeshifting*; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of *dodge*, *stealth* and *fire combat*; Shapeshifting (CI): Delta (choose one animal form and one special ability); Additional Skill Adds (CII), +2 to *perception*; Luck (CII); Wealth (CII)

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Sterilization; Employment (CII), the Agency; Advantage Flaw (CI): Delta; Quirk (CI): Alien Instinct; Quirk (CIII): Dependency (Major — Chemical Antidote)

Animal Form:

1.

Special Ability:

1.

DESCRIPTION

Ever since you were a small, shy little boy hidden behind piles of adventure books in the public library, you have wanted to be an FBI agent. Stories of Elliot Ness and the Untouchables, and J. Edgar Hoover's G-men filled your head with thoughts of heroism and glory. Later in life, you fell in love with medicine, and decided to become a doctor. Fortunately, your two dreams were not mutually exclusive, for the FBI hired many doctors, and other agents with post-graduate degrees.

You were accepted by the FBI, but were almost immediately contacted by a recruiter from the Agency. The recruiter told you about Project Proteus — a fascinating program combining standard investigatory work with wildly new technology. You at first contracted to work for the Project as a researcher; but after Sil's escape you volunteered to receive the Proteus-Delta mixture. You now serve as the doctor and life scientist for an Agency command group.



"The claws? They're field issue."

EQUIPMENT

Medical kit, Glock 17 Pistol (2); bullet-proof vest, armor value TOU+7/18; hand-held radio.

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

SPECIES

PSYCHIC

HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX	
ATTRIBUTES AGILITY 8 Dodge 10, unarmed combat 9 DEXTERITY 8 Fire combat 9 ENDURANCE 9 STRENGTH 7 INTELLECT 10 Computer hacking 14, computer ops 13, perception 12 MIND 10 Psychic: astral projection 12, psychic: empathy 13, psychic: telekinesis 12 CONFIDENCE 8 Willpower 9 CHARISMA 8				DERIVED ATTRIBUTES <div> <div>9</div> TOUGHNESS </div> <div> <div>16</div> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) </div> <div> <div>5</div> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) </div> <div> <div>3</div> MRS (Movement Rate, Swimming) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) </div> <div> <div>2</div> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping) </div>		COMBAT BOX <div> <div>WOUND LEVEL</div> <div> <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> </div> </div> <div> <div>MODIFIERS</div> <div> no modifier -2 to physical skills -4 physical & -2 all other skills -8 to all skills automatic KO; see text </div> </div>	
		LIFE POINTS 5		SKILL POINTS		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN	

BACKGROUND

Advantages: Additional Skill Add (CI), +1 to *computer hacking*; Contacts (CI), you are friends with a few minor hackers; Skill Bonus (CI), +1 to the bonus of all three *psychic* skills; Fame (CII), you are known in some circles as a talented hacker; Sense of Duty (CII), you believe in the job you are doing; Special Effects (CIII), psychic potential

Compensations: Advantage Flaw (CI), Psychic Hypersensitivity; Age (CI), youth; Employed (CII), Agency; Quirk (CII), you rely on the possession of a rabbit's foot to keep yourself calm; Bad Luck (CIII)

DESCRIPTION

You've always been really connected to people and situations around you. It's not that you're weird, or anything, but you have always cared about all sorts of people, and it really bothered you if anyone was upset. That's part of the reason you turned to computers as a hobby, one which soon became a devotion: no emotion, and no pain. In no time you became quite adept at manipulating your extensive (and expensive) home system, and you used to hack around the Internet just for fun.

Then, a few years ago, some strange things started happening to you. You began to have these dreams where you were floating around out of your body — and then you discovered they weren't dreams. You eventually wound up here — at the Agency.

The doctor here told you that you were a psychic. He taught you how to use your old rabbit's foot to calm yourself down. Agency specialists gave you training in how to use your psychic abilities, and on how to explore the extent of your psychic potential.



“Never mind how I know – I just do.”

EQUIPMENT

XS500 Notebook Computer, complete communications and software package, virus disks, carrying case for personal software; rabbit's foot; Colt Anaconda, .44 Magnum Revolver; bulletproof vest, armor value TOU+7/16; hand-held radio.

BONUS CHART

DIE ROLL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	26	31	36	41
BONUS #	-10	-8	-7	-6	-5	-3	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	+5

SPECIES

CHARACTER SHEET

CHARACTER NAME				PLAYER NAME					
HEIGHT		MASS		AGE		SEX			
ATTRIBUTES				COMBAT BOX		K O			
<input type="checkbox"/> AGILITY <input type="checkbox"/> INTELLECT <input type="checkbox"/> DEXTERITY <input type="checkbox"/> MIND <input type="checkbox"/> ENDURANCE <input type="checkbox"/> CONFIDENCE <input type="checkbox"/> STRENGTH <input type="checkbox"/> CHARISMA				WOUND LEVEL <input type="radio"/> <i>Light</i> no modifier <input type="radio"/> <i>Moderate</i> -2 to physical skills <input type="radio"/> <i>Heavy</i> -4 physical & -2 all other skills <input type="radio"/> <i>Incapacitated</i> -8 to all skills <input type="radio"/> <i>Mortal</i> automatic KO; see text		SHOCK CAPACITY SHOCK TAKEN			
DERIVED ATTRIBUTES				LIFE POINTS				SKILL POINTS	
<input type="checkbox"/> TOUGHNESS <input type="checkbox"/> TOUGHNESS (w/armor) <input type="checkbox"/> MRG (Movement Rate, Ground) <input type="checkbox"/> MRC (Movement Rate, Climbing) <input type="checkbox"/> MRW (Movement Rate, Swimming) <input type="checkbox"/> MRJ (Movement Rate, Jumping)									

SKILLS					
NAME	ATTRIBUTE VALUE	SKILL ADDS	SPECIALIZATION ADDS	MODIFIERS	SKILL VALUE

ANIMAL FORMS	SPECIAL ABILITIES

ADVANTAGES	COMPENSATIONS																												
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 5px;">Column</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Name (game effect)</th> </tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>	Column	Name (game effect)													<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 5px;">Column</th> <th style="padding: 5px;">Name (game effect)</th> </tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>	Column	Name (game effect)												
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SPECIES

CHARACTER SHEET		
	EQUIPMENT	
	Item	Game Effect Notes (ranges, etc.)
		BASIC CHARACTER CONCEPT
PERSONALITY		
BACKGROUND STORY		
NOTES		
SPECIES		

[illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

SPECIES

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MasterBook is a universal roleplaying game rules system — this means it is flexible enough to be used with virtually *any* game setting you can imagine! You might be a scout ship pilot exploring the outer reaches of space; a two-fisted adventurer battling angry natives to recover a lost treasure; a psychic battling demons from another dimension; or any one of a thousand other roles! You need the *MasterBook* to adventure in *The World of Species*, as well as these other worlds, also available from West End:

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by Teeuwynn Woodruff

**They thought the danger was over.
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