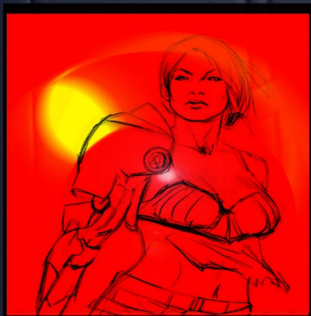


Expanded Occupations

Tube-Grown Super Heroes

Chris A. Field



OTERVERSE
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OGL

3.5 SYSTEM COMPATIBLE



Expanded Occupations: Tube-Grown Super Heroes

A Micro-Sourcebook for the Psi-Watch Campaign Setting

Written by Chris A. Field

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“Reality is that which, when you stop
believing in it, doesn’t go away.”
— Philip K. Dick

Requires the Use of the
D20 Modern Core Rulebook,
Published by Wizards of the Coast

More On The Tube-Grown Starting Occupation

The Tube-Grown starting occupation owes a big debt to *John Byrne’s Next Men*, a comic which was contemporaneous with the Image Comics that formed the biggest part of Psi-Watch’s inspiration. Despite radical differences in tone, scope and art style, JBNM fits well as inspiration for the campaign.

This micro-sourcebook dramatically expands the Tube-Grown starting occupation from *Forging Heroes: The Starting Occupations of Otherverse Games*. With just a little bit of work, you can turn a single starting occupation into the dramatic hook for an entire campaign.

Tube-Grown

Setting: Any Sci-Fi or Cyberpunk

The character is a recently decanted clone soldier. He or she was grown to physical maturity and educated via memory implants, virtual reality and psionic methods while gestating. The character might only be a few days old when the campaign begins, but is as knowledgeable as any other teenager.

Of course, no VR training program can be as comprehensive as real experience, so the Tube-Grown hero probably is missing a few pieces of information, which may be comic or tragic. Many Tube-Grown struggle with the strange memories implanted in them during their often surreal training scenarios.

Starting Role: Any

Prerequisites: Age 14+ (apparent physical age)

Bonus Skills: Choose two (2) from: Climb, Computers, Demolitions, Disable Device, Drive, Knowledge (history, tactics), Hide, Move Silently, Pilot

Bonus Feat: Choose one (1) from: Assault Clone, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Power Attack, Run, Toughness. Alternatively, the character may select any Psionic Precursor he meets the prerequisites for.

Weapon Proficiencies: Personal Firearms Proficiency and Advanced Firearms Proficiency

Armor Proficiencies: Light and Medium Armor Proficiency

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

Reputation Bonus: -1

If you're playing a Tube-Grown hero, you might want to emphasize the strangeness of their origin, emphasizing the inhumanity of growing teenaged soldiers in some surreal, often hellish VR scenario, and the radical culture shock these heroes experience when interacting with the real world for the first time.

Do you have Tube-Grown characters in your campaign, but haven't really fleshed out who built their VR sim and why? A few random rolls will imply TONS about the Tube-Reality's purpose and its builders, all by putting the focus squarely on the effects growing up in this simulated reality had on your heroes.

Each Tube-Reality offers some benefits to the heroes, but also offers a few quirks and deficiencies- programming glitches or intentionally censored information that leave out important facts about the real world.

Tube Growth Benefits

The Tube-Grown hero receives 1d4+1 bonus ranks in one randomly selected skill on the starting occupation's bonus skill list. These extra ranks can raise the skill above the usual level cap. Roll D10 to determine what skill is enhanced. Players from the same Tube-Reality might all receive the same bonus,

or each player may roll randomly, implying that this bonus is some kind of pre-selected profession or caste, chosen for the player by the Tube-Reality's programmer or controlling AI.

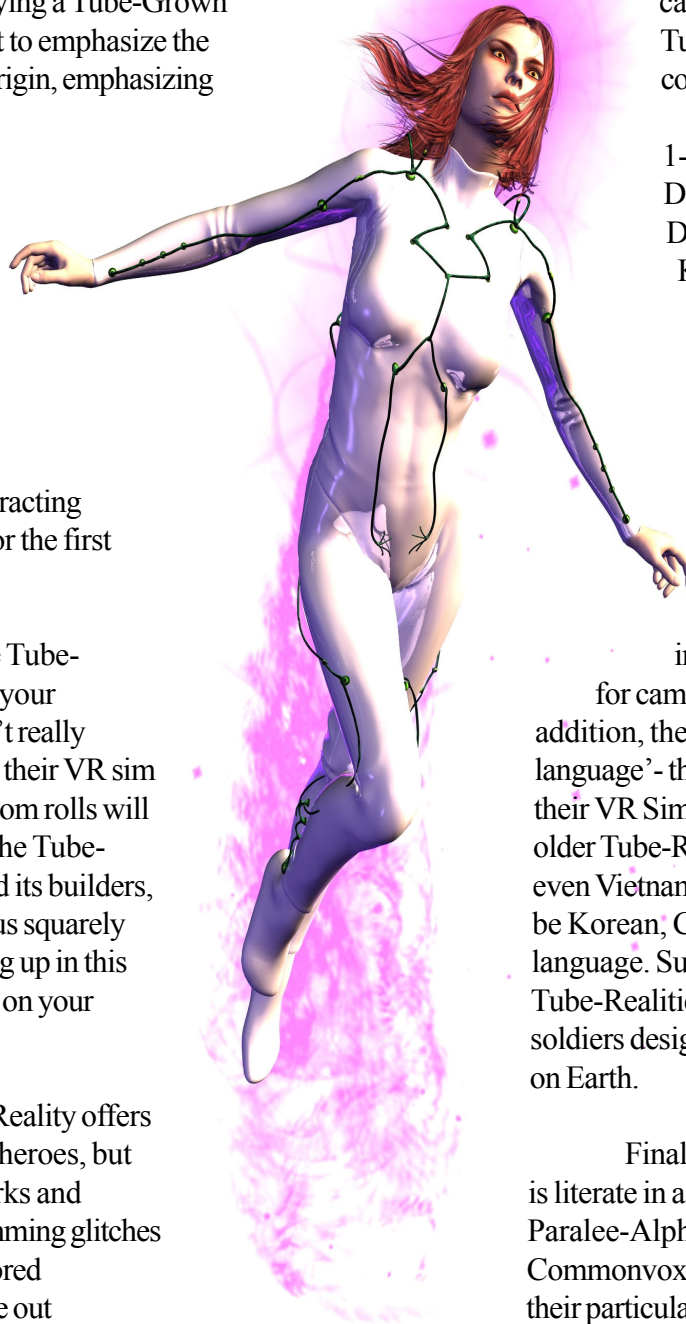
1-Climb, 2-Computers, 3-Demolitions, 4-Disable Device, 5-Drive, 6-Knowledge (history), 7-Knowledge (tactics), 8-Hide, 9-Move Silently, 10-Pilot.

Each Tube-Grown character gains a few bonus languages. Usually, once they emerge from their stasis/training pod, the character speaks and is literate in the most common language spoken in the campaign (usually English

for campaigns set in America). In addition, they speak at least one 'threat language' - the language of whatever culture their VR Sim was training them to fight. For older Tube-Realities, this is likely Russian (or even Vietnamese), but for newer Sims it might be Korean, Chinese, Farsi, Arabic, or an alien language. Supposedly, Puzzle Ops has a few Tube-Realities of its own, that turn out clone soldiers designed to hunt and kill Culture spies on Earth.

Finally, the character likely speaks and is literate in a coined language (such as Paralee-Alpha and -Beta, Greek Bias VII, Commonvox, and many others) used only in their particular native reality. These languages have virtually no application outside the Tube.

They are included mostly to give Tube-Grown characters a bit of flavor, and maybe give Tube-siblings a secret code that might occasionally give them an advantage, if they play smart.



Tube Growth Drawbacks

The game master can roll 1d4 times on the following chart, to see what kind of information is missing from the Tube-Reality simulation. What will these high-tech child soldiers enter the real world not understanding? By looking at what information is left out of a particular Tube-Reality, the gamemaster can pick up some hints as to who programmed the reality.

Some missing information may be comedic; other missing information may be tragic. If running an Out of the Tube campaign, the game master should include one or two NPC ‘siblings’ from the same Tube-Reality. The only purpose of these extra Tube-Grown characters is to get killed, horribly and messily, due to the bad information they got in VR. (Each drawback has a suggested ‘horrific death’ listing, suggesting how an associated NPC from one of these Tube-Realities might die due to ignorance or psychological trauma.)

The player characters will blunder through their first interactions with reality, but they’ll probably survive. But a friend from the Tube-Reality, one dumb enough to volunteer to be killed so they can scout ahead as a ‘ghost’, not understanding that humans don’t ‘respawn’ in reality.... That’s the kind of loss that will give our Tube-Grown heroes the impetus to find out who put them into a stasis pod and get a measure of revenge.

1. Anti-Historical
2. Bodies Vanish
3. Capped Effort
4. Completely Technological
5. False Honesty
6. Missing Races
7. No Bodily Needs
8. No Permanent Death
9. No Sex
10. Phobic Triggers
11. Simplified Machines
12. Weapon Summoning

Anti-Historical

The Sim took place in a stylized world with its own history- likely written by the participants as they progressed through the training scenario- and geography unlike anything on Earth. Our world is an alien place to awakened Tube-Grown.

Game Play Effect

Until she gains 1d4+1 levels, the Tube-Grown character automatically fails Knowledge (history, popular culture, streetwise), and Navigate checks she is called upon to make, regardless of how many ranks she has in those skills.

Horrible Death

Not much *direct* chance of horrible death here, but there’s nothing saying the Tube-Grown won’t trust the wrong people for the wrong reason. A naïve Tube-Grown hero might ally herself with Al Queda or a drug cartel, not understanding what they really are, just that they’re nice to her.

Bodies Vanish

Combat is bloodless and sterile in your Tube-Reality, though genocidal wars were a daily occurrence. The virtual bodies of the slain vanish as soon as they fall, removed permanently from the program.

Game Play Effect

The Tube-Grown character is disturbed by the gore and horror of real world combat, and wonder why the dead don’t vanish like they should. Until the Tube-Grown character reaches 2nd level, she is considered *nauseated* any time she can perceive a corpse, and for 1 minute after the corpse is removed from her presence.

Horrible Deaths

Seeing the result of warfare for the first time, the newly awakened Tube-Grown NPC puts his gun to his head and pulls the trigger. Suddenly, there’s another body on the floor, stubbornly not vanishing.

Capped Effort

Your Tube-Reality’s body is incapable of adrenaline surges or extra effort- you could push it no farther than you could push a video game avatar. The



real world, with its sweat and hormone surges, is alien and wondrous to you.

Game Play Effect

You do not gain action points at first level, and cannot spend action points until you reach 2nd level.

Horrible Death

Rather than spending action points (pushing her body past its presumptive limits) to dodge out of the way of a speeding Humvee, the Tube-Grown hero becomes bloody roadkill. After all, she knows there's no way she could move fast enough to dodge something like that. . . .

Completely Technological

The Tube-Reality was a single endless mega-structure, a steel and plastic bunker the size of a small solar system. You never experienced grass, or blue sky, or the feel of a dog's fur under your finger tips until you woke into reality.

Game Play Effects

Until the Tube-Grown character gains 1d4 levels, she automatically fails all Handle Animal, Ride or Survival checks she is called upon to make, regardless of how many ranks she has in the skills.

Horrible Death

The newly awakened Tube-Grown hero might be mauled by a lion or pack of guard dogs, without even knowing what the hell they are. Alternatively, he might try to forage in the wild, not realizing the difference between poisonous and safe fruits, or might die painfully from a snake's venom.

False Honesty

Deception is unknown in your Tube-Reality, and you have been programmed to unquestioningly trust authority figures.

Game Play Effects

Until the Tube-Grown character gains 1d6 levels, she automatically fails all Sense Motive checks

she is called upon to make, regardless of how many ranks she has in the skill.

Horrible Death

The character isn't at direct risk of death, but might not be savvy enough to see a mastermind's lies for what they are. The NPC might end up a mass murdering villain, all because he trusted the wrong authority figure.

Missing Races

Your Tube Reality was racially exclusive; until you awakened into the real world, you had never seen a dark skinned human (or even worse, never saw a dark skinned human as anything beyond a viscous subhuman target). You view non-Caucasian humans with mingled curiosity and repulsion, at least until you realize the limits of your VR training.

Game Play Effects

Until the character gains 1d4 levels, he automatically fails Bluff and Diplomacy checks made against non-Caucasian humans. Alternatively, the player or GM could select some other race to be missing or demonized in the Tube-Reality.

Horrible Death

The NPC might open fire on a group of dark skinned civilians, not able to distinguish between ordinary people and threats, and get gunned down by law enforcement. Or, seeing 'enemies' everywhere, the NPC may suicide in the most violent way possible.

No Bodily Needs

Fed by a nutrient drip, with waste tubes suctioning off urine and feces, your sleeping body and VR-trained mind never experienced hunger, thirst or the need to eliminate waste. The character has no real idea what food is, why he needs to drink, and can't recognize the signs of a full bladder anymore than an infant can. The results can be embarrassing or potentially fatal- not knowing their body needs water, the Tube-Grown hero could die of thirst or starvation if unsupervised.

Game Play Effects

Until you reach 2nd level, you are considered fatigued. Effects that would normally cause fatigue cause you to become exhausted instead.

Horrible Death

The character might die of thirst or malnutrition, with food and water within arms reach before her instincts kick in. The character may also develop eating disorders or psychosis after defecating for the first time, and never again feeling clean.

No Permanent Death

The Tube-Reality doesn't allow 'players' to permanently die. If killed during a combat sim, the Tube-AI merely removes the player's ability to affect the world, turning him or her into an invisible, silent, intangible ghost that 'respawns' without permanent harm when the scenario ends. The Tube-Grown character has no conception of his own mortality, nor any idea that killing an opponent has any lasting consequence beyond winning the current scenario. During their first hours out of the Tube-Reality, these characters are reckless and merciless, and might wrack up triple digit kill-counts before they realize that ordinary humans don't respawn.

Game Play Effect

Tube-Grown heroes from this kind of sim quickly learn to protect themselves, but may die before they even understand that, in this world, they can die. The character fails the first 2d6 saving throws they are called upon to make- they don't even attempt them. The character is considered *flatfooted* until all automatically failed saving throws are done with.

Horrible Death

The NPC might cheerfully sacrifice themselves to bypass some obstacle, confident they'll respawn when the current mission is completed. The number of ways an NPC from this type of Sim can die is limited only by the game master's imagination.

No Sex

Your simulation was kept ignorant of human sexuality and romance. If the children of your Tube-Reality discovered sex independently, it was in spite of your programmers, not because of them. As such, children of your Tube-Reality have difficulty understanding the link between sex and pregnancy.

Game Play Effects

Until the character gains 1d6 levels, any time he or she has sex, a pregnancy will result. If the other

partner is diseased, the Tube-Grown character doesn't even get a FORT save to resist infection. Note that the other partner can take common sense precautions to prevent this. The character suffers a -4 penalty on sexually oriented Bluff and Diplomacy checks for the same period.

Horrible Death

Not much chance for an immediately horrible death here, but an NPC might contract AIDS (or something worse) early in the campaign, or die in childbirth.

Phobic Triggers

In your programmed reality, common things hid unimaginable dangers. Due to a quirk of programming logic, a housecat could kill a dozen men, salt water burned like molecular acid, or deadly aircraft always appeared out of storm-tossed skies. Even once you wake to reality, you cannot shake your terror of seemingly harmless objects.

Game Play Effects

Until the character gains 2 levels, he is extremely phobic of a common object. Choose one fairly common stimulus (dogs, rain, vast open spaces, automobiles, ect). The character is *shaken* when within sight or hearing of the stimulus. If other events cause him to become *shaken*, he becomes *panicked* instead.

Horrible Death

Distracted by phantom fears, the NPC blunders into a real threat and gets cut to pieces.

Simplified Machines

The vehicles of your Tube-Reality had control surfaces laid out as simply as a video game, and had extremely low-resolution, forgiving physics. Real cars and planes are infinitely more complex and much more dangerous.

Game Play Effects

Until the character gains 1d4 levels, she automatically fails any Drive or Pilot check she is called upon to make, regardless of how many ranks she has in the skill.

Horrible Death

Guns jam and explode in the NPC's hand, or a vehicle crash burns several NPCs beyond recognition. Or even worse, an NPC Tube-Grown character tries to defuse a bomb, realizing too late that real bombs are much more complex than the simple training devices back in the Sim.

Weapon Summoning

While in your military Tube-Sim, you could summon any weapon you needed just by thinking about it. Not so much in reality, where you are having to learn the intricacies of holsters, reloading and the problem of encumbrance.

Game Rule Information

Until you gain 2 levels, it is always a full round action for you to draw or reload any weapon, due to your unfamiliarity. If you have the Quick Draw or Quick Reload feats, they are inactive during this time.

Horrible Death

The NPC tries to summon a rocket launcher to take out a group of enemies, bursting from cover to get a clear shot. He's shocked when nothing happens, for all of two seconds, before the bad guys rake him with full autofire.

American VR Simulations

The infrastructure necessary to build and maintain a VR Sim is beyond the reach of most first world nations. However, first world nations (and global conspiracies more powerful than any single nation) still spend the billions necessary to program an entire world. The following are known American VR Sims.

The Ant-Hill

Location: Orbiting satellites. "Children of the Anthill" are deployed to random spots around the planet, using their stasis pod as an orbital drop-ship, once their VR training is nearly complete.

The Ant-Hill is a glitchy, ancient VR Sim, run by a possibly insane AI. The program had its origin in a Korean War-era black project to build supersoldiers. Long forgotten by the government who claimed it, the AI sends robotic agents to kidnap newborn infants or seize genetic material with which to

force grow clones. It does it all to perpetuate a brutal VR war game which between the American-like Blue Forces and the USSR-like Red Force.

Suggested Drawbacks: Anti-Historical, No Permanent Death, Simplified Machines, Weapon Summoning

Grey Hammer

Location: Several crèches have been found in the Appalachian Mountains, or buried in old fallout shelters.

Grey Hammer is a small, extremely brutal VR Sim established during the late 1950s. Grey Hammer's Tube-Grown children are exclusively white, and most of the surviving test subjects are clones or artificially inseminated descendants of the project's original programmers. Grey Hammer troopers were intended for urban pacification- to march into the inner cities and crush the burgeoning civil rights movement by a combination of conventional military might and psi-powers. The program was discontinued, and its head researchers died in prison during the 1960s, though a few Grey Hammer crèches still cling tenaciously to life.

Suggested Drawbacks: Missing Races, No Sex

Hounds of Tindalos

Location: Chicago, IL. Located in secret labs beneath the Sears Tower.

The Hounds of Tindalos program is a VR training program intended only for Genehounds (Project: Genehound, Otherverses Games, 2012). Designed as a massive, crumbling, planet-covering cityscape, the dog mutates trained here endlessly hunt and kill America's most wanted criminals and terrorists.

Suggested Drawbacks: Completely Technological, No Permanent Death

Patriot Global Version 7.2

Location: Atlanta, GA. Located in the highly classified 'Patriot Medical' complex built deep beneath the city.

The largest and best documented VR Sim, Patriot Global V7.2 is the official US military training program for cloned soldiers. Version 1.0 of Patriot Global was initiated in early 1985, and each succeeding version has been more realistic and complex. Using Patriot Global, the US military can

force-grow a trained, disciplined supersoldier from conception to physical adulthood in just under 20 months.

The Patriot Global program is comprised exclusively of humans, Patriot Anvil, Patriot Boxer and Patriot Ivory mutates. Patriot Mechanics are not allowed into the VR Sim, because even as infants, they possess the capability to 'hack' the simulation; Patriot Switchblades see through the VR even as babies, and are even more sociopath and disassociative in the Sim than they are in reality.

Suggested Drawbacks: Bodies Vanish, Capped Effort

Scholarship Nursery

Location: Clarke Island, VA. Hidden in the Puzzle Ops compound somewhere. A backup server and crèche is located on Deimos, one of the Martian moons.

The sadistic techno-telepath known as MOI (Mother of Invention) personally oversees the Nursery. Promising, psi-capable infants and children are stolen from their parents and ensconced in this virtual reality, where they are force-grown to physical maturity in just over two years. Older children are allowed to become 'overseers', leading armies of brainwashed child soldiers in the endless wargames that comprise Nursery culture. Promising overseers are rewarded with love and attention from MOI, who uses a kind of incestuous sexuality to control her most powerful charges.

The facility on Deimos includes the most physically powerful Tube-Grown operatives in Puzzle Ops arsenal, including Shiftsteel Symbiont and even Lifechained children from a parallel reality. By contrast, most of the Tube-Grown children trained at Clarke Island are human or nearly so.

Suggested Drawbacks: Anti-Historical, False Honesty, Phobic Triggers

Testament

Location: An active testing facility built into an abandoned coal mine somewhere in Kentucky

The United States Air Force began the Testament VR Sim, working in conjunction with conservative Christian elements, sometime during the early 1980s. Though officially disavowed, the

Testament Sim continues to function today, drawing almost all its operating budget from private donations and funds siphoned from Southern mega-churches. The programs original intent was to create a generation of psi-capable, Bible-believing super warriors designed to take on the “Evil Empire” of the USSR. Over the years, the program’s goals mutated slightly, and in the wake of the 9-11 Assault and the Four Day War, its Tube-Grown children are tasked with hunting Muslim superhumans.

The Testament Sim takes the form of a post-apocalyptic desert that incorporates cultural elements from the Old Testament-era Middle East. The Sim is a strange mix of late Bronze Age culture and advanced weaponry, and is designed to forge its Tube-Grown into indomitable, canny modern crusaders.

Once decanted, Testament’s Tube-Grown are often assigned to combat platoons comprised of ‘siblings’ from the same training cadre. These ‘families’ are often lead by a Lifer Refugee mercenary. The old televangelists and ex-Cold Warriors running Testament are fascinated by the directions their faith has taken, in the alternate future of Otherverse America. A few of these Tube-Grown are eventually shipped up the dimensional gap to fight on behalf of the Lifer nation- this is the price the Lifer Refugee drill sergeants have exacted for their service to Testament.

Suggested Drawbacks: Anti-Historical, False Honesty, Phobic Triggers

Foreign and Private Tube-Realities

These are the best known non-American VR Sims.

Brilliant Waters

Location: The Sierra Nevada Mountains, New Mexico.

Brilliant Waters is a confusing ‘holographic reality’ designed to train psi-capable killers for the Huxley Emergence. Children who survive this sadistic, trap-laden virtual archipelago quickly learn to trust no one, not even their closest friends or mentors, and to never take anything at face value.

Suggested Drawbacks: Anti-Historical, No Bodily Needs, Phobic Triggers

Brilliant Sands

Location: The Sierra Nevada Mountains, New Mexico

Brilliant Sands is a companion to the Brilliant Waters reality. Where Waters is designed to produce paranoid, sociopathic psi-assassins, Sands is a virtual playground for the elite children of the Huxley Emergence. Only the most intelligent members of the conspiracy are allowed to breed; their offspring are surgically removed from their mothers’ wombs and installed in the VR Sim during the third trimester of pregnancy. Brilliant Sands is a beautiful crystal city somewhere in an endless desert.

The Tube-Grown from this reality are arrogant nobility, tutored by AI guardians and taught that Psions are fundamentally, inescapably superior to the ‘herd’ of baseline humanity. Soon before emerging from their stasis pod (at subjective 22 years of age), young officers are ‘installed’ in the Brilliant Waters reality, and allowed to take command of a small platoon of Tube-Grown soldiers to fight war games.

Suggested Drawbacks: Capped Abilities, No Bodily Needs

The Fields

Location: Klaremount, the capital city of the Republic of Cebary.

The Fields are a comprehensive training program for the genetically engineered Mutant slaves that keep Cebary’s economy running. This program takes the form of endless, pleasant farmland, stretching farther than the eye can see. Children are headquartered in huge communal barracks. During their ‘active periods’ they work the fields, learn specialized skills for their designated function and practice constant military drill. During ‘rest periods’ slaves sleep within their barracks, as emotionless and uncomplaining as a machine with its power cut.

Suggested Drawbacks: False Honesty, No Sex

Redslick

Location: Phung Muk, a major coastal city in the People’s Republic of Mung Thoy Tan

Redslick takes the form of a hellish riverscape, an endless delta soaked in blood red water.

This crude, fairly low resolution VR Sim is based on outdated, 1980s-era tech, and is designed for only one thing: to train killers. Mung Thoy Tan's military decants Tube-Grown clones at subjective 15 years old, by which time they are already accomplished killers thanks to their training in Redslick.

The Redslick Sim is designed to desensitize its candidates to violence and horror. Procedurally created villages are found throughout the Sim, with no purpose other than to serve as targets for the Tube-Grown thugs' aggression. Redslick's children earn 'bonus points', and thus prestige and additional combat skill downloading, for torture, rape and murder. **Suggested Drawbacks:** Anti-Historical, Phobic Triggers

Details of the Conspiracy

The Tube-Grown's virtual reality existence requires massive logistical support. The decisions about who provides this logistical support and how can shape the flavor of any campaign heavily focused on the Tube-Grown. Gamemasters wanting to flesh out these details can roll on a few random charts to generate some interesting details about the Tube-Reality and its creators.

Finally, unless you've already got the villain of your Out of the Tube campaign mapped out, here are some suggested backers for the program. If you want, you can roll 2d20 and either combine the results or use the first result as the apparent mastermind, and the second as the TRUE face of the conspiracy.

In addition, you can roll on this chart to determine the target of the Tube-Reality program. Who were these VR trained supersoldiers designed to destroy, infiltrate or otherwise screw over? Roll D20 and find out.

D10 Result	How does the Tube Reality produce/acquire new children for the program?
1	The children are stolen as infants from civilian hospitals, their parents told they died of SIDS or some other cause, and replaced with inert clones for burial.
2	The conspiracy is kidnapping the children of known superhumans and psionic operatives. This may be a general risk to all superpowered parents, or the conspiracy might focus on the children of a particular unit, such as stealing all the children of the infamous mercenary squad, Team 11.
3	The Tube-Reality has government support, and takes the children of known supervillians and terrorists (up to age 5-6), and places them in a VR Sim to rehabilitate and control them.
4	The Tube-Grown are all the children (or clones) of the scientists or executives who started the program in the first place.
5	The children are produced via in vitro fertilization, grown in an artificial womb, using a vast store of genetic stock.
6	The Tube-Grown are the children of teen parents, who thought they were giving their children up for adoption.
7	The Tube-Grown are children stolen from their slain parents in a foreign warzone, such as Somalia or Bosnia.
8	The Tube-Grown are the children of the world's wealthiest men and women, raised in an idealistic VR Sim and trained to survive some coming apocalypse.
9	The Tube-Grown were kidnapped as infants by a psychotic nano-sculptor and embedded in a strange VR Sim.
10	The Tube-Grown were originally homeless children and pre-teens, placed in the VR Sim by a supposedly charitable organization. They remember their lives before the Sim, at least parts of it.

D10 Result	What is the current status of the conspiracy/backers funding the Tube-Reality?
1	The conspiracy is long dissolved, its aims unachieved, and most of its members dead, insane or in jail. The Tube Reality is maintained by failing machines. Most Tube-Grown from this program either wake up or die, unconscious, in their pods when their life support systems eventually fail.
2	The program is on-going and requires billions of dollars of support annually. Scientists and techs monitor their crèches 24-7 and may work for powerful organizations like Psi-Watch, the Patriot Medical program or Puzzle Ops.
3	The program's budget has been slashed dramatically. Some crèches remain monitored, but other crèches, with less promising candidates, have been abandoned, euthanized or awakened prematurely.
4	The program went public, and media outcry led to police and military trying to find every crèche and re-introduce the sleeping children back into society.
5	The program didn't fail, but it was completely forgotten by chance or design. No records pertaining to the program or its goals survive. Occasionally, a Tube-Grown or small band of them, awakens from a forgotten crèche and tries to figure out what the hell is going on.
6	The player characters are the only surviving members of a VERY old experiment, possibly dating back well before the 1960s. Their failing stasis pods were only discovered accidentally, when a civilian construction crew uncovered an old, dust covered lab.
7	The program only exists in the near future (10-20 years after the events of the campaign), and once awakened, Tube-Grown operatives are sent backwards in time on enigmatic missions.
8	The program is relatively new, it's VR Sim comparatively tiny. The player characters are the first Tube-Grown from this program to be decanted, and their actions will determine whether or not the powers that be will continue the program.
9	The program seems to be some kind of alien experiment, testing how humans react under a wide variety of conditions. The base or starship housing the crèche self destructed soon after the player characters awakened.
10	The program is publicly known, some kind of entertainment for a decadent culture. The Tube-Grown are a combination of gladiator and reality TV idol.

D20 Result	Who Is Behind the Program?	D20 Result	Who Is Behind the Program?
1	Rogue elements within Psi-Watch (probably the Bradbury Poker League)	11	Dead Blue Fish (using the Paint's resources without their knowledge)
2	Puzzle Ops	12	A South American drug cartel
3	One of the Culture's noble houses	13	A major criminal syndicate (the Yakuza, the Mafia, ect)
4	Nazis! (Or less interestingly, modern white supremacist groups.)	14	An abandoned Cold War era Russian program, headquartered in an unmapped 'Science City'
5	Mung Thoy Tan's military	15	A cruel clan of Blooded Ghost eugenicists
6	The Iraqi military (program predates Iraq's nuclear destruction)	16	A vast cosmic empire of Lifechained demi-gods, crossed over from Otherverse America's deep space
7	An ancient conspiracy within the Vatican.	17	A lone Time Crosser terrorist, determined to prevent his or her nightmarish future from coming to pass
8	The Huxley Emergence (separate from their Brilliant Sands/Waters program)	18	An American military program that predates Psi-Watch's formation and dates back to WWII
9	Metamorphosis North	19	Humanity's Sweat (breeding mutant killing super soldiers)
10	A lone billionaire searching for a way to make himself a psionic god	20	A newly emerged artificial intelligence, trying to take over the planet.

Campaign Model: **Out of the Tube**

Low Level (Levels 1-6)

Until just a few days ago, the world made perfect sense. You grew up with a cadre of trusted friends in an ideal world, a beautiful world, a world worth fighting for. Each day, enemy troops would assault your utopia, and each day, using the tactical instincts and training you received from enigmatic mentors, you fought back the attackers. Each day, the struggle got harder, but your skills kept pace.

Then one day, everything went wrong. Reality broke apart like a jig-saw puzzle in front of your terrified eyes, and you woke up naked and sick in some kind of strange bio-mechanical coffin. Ripping the life support tubes, sensors and IV lines out of your body, you crawled to your feet, and saw some of your friends from utopia here with you. But things were different- you looked different, you felt different, and the utopia you grew up in was long gone. Over the next few days, you realized that the world you grew up in was a computer generated lie, and set about discovering the parameters of your new reality.

Character Creation: All (or at least the majority of players) create first level heroes. All the characters have the Tube-Grown occupation, and are all members of the same species. They may be humans (the most likely option), or a nearly human species such as Patriot Mechanics or Patriot Ivories. Alternatively, they may be an exotic species, such as Blooded Ghosts, Neon or Culture, placed in a simulated reality by human scientists in cruel experiments designed to gain vital intelligence about these cultures.

All the characters are from the same Tube Reality, and emerged from their tanks within minutes of one another. They are bound together by desperation; the group itself is the only familiar thing in a shockingly unfamiliar world.

If the initial cadre of Tube-Grown heroes suffer casualties, the player may replace fallen Tube clones with other character concepts, provided their replacement characters have some connection to

either the survivors or whatever conspiracy built the Tube Reality in the first place.

Themes: reality versus illusion, the moral cost of child soldiers, children manipulated by their ‘parents’, parental censorship, discovering the truth despite all odds, conspiracies that constantly mutate and get even deeper

Variant Character Creation: **Clones and Niches**

This character creation method emphasizes that the Tube-Grown are cloned soldiers, production line models that, while highly specialized, may not be as dynamic as free-born human beings.

When creating the Tube-Grown hero, all her ability scores start at 10. Apply racial ability score modifiers (if any) normally. The character receives five (5) points to distribute among her ability scores as desired. Since most game groups use dice rolling methods that result in two or more extraordinary ability scores, this variant character creation method produces slightly less physically powerful heroes, at least initially.

All the players creating Tube-Grown are restricted to one of the six attribute based (Smart Hero, Tough Hero, ect) at first level. If there are less than six Tube-Grown player characters, each player character must choose a different Basic Class for themselves. This basic class becomes the character’s niche within the team. The character receives a +4 ability score increase to the attribute keyed to their particular basic class. Thus, a Tube-Grown Strong Hero would receive +4 STR, while a Smart Hero would receive +4 INT, and so on.

The players may multi-class freely at later levels, but no Tube-Grown hero may have more levels in a specific Basic Hero class than the Tube-Grown PC who has chosen that as his niche. Thus, if Jack-221 picks Strong Hero at first level, he should always have at least one more Strong Hero level than Bethany-Omega-Q, no matter how much she wants to expand into the role of the team’s ‘bruiser’.



Variant Character Creation: **Programming Languages**

Requires the Use of Synthetic Heroes: The Definitive Guide to Robots and Androids, Otherverse Games, 2011

In a slight twist on the Reality Hurts campaign model, noted above, the player characters are all Synthetic or robotic characters of various types. Their onboard AI consciousness were bootstrapped to maturity in a complex computerized training sim. Unlike many other Tube-Grown heroes, Tube-Grown androids are aware that their Sim is not real, merely a test bed for their consciousness before they are installed in an android frame.

Build an assortment of robots and androids using the Synthetic Heroes rules. The VR Sim the heroes were trained in likely has at least one of the following drawbacks: Anti-Historical, Capped Abilities, Completely Technological.

This VR Sim takes the form of an endless, computer generated mega-city that extends in three dimensions, infinitely. Rivers of electricity and data zip past, forming a VR Sim visually similar to the classic cyber-scape imagined by such fictional sources as *Tron* or the neon 'Net' of 80s cyberpunk.

Variant Character Creation: **Reality Hurts**

Requires the Use of Fursona: The Definitive Guide to Creating Anthropomorphic Characters, Otherverse Games, 2011

In a Reality Hurts campaign, players all create human characters, at least initially. They are familiar and comfortable in human forms; their VR Sim was entirely humanocentric. However, once out of the stasis tubes, the Tube-Grown heroes bodies begin changing in unprecedented and painful ways.

At first level, build a human character, but do not assign the usual human ability score bonus (+2 to any one ability). Go ahead and give the character the

human bonus skills and feat, because they'll need them later. However, once the character's transformation is complete, they no longer receive additional bonus skill points at each level for being human.

At 2nd level, choose an Anthro Order from Fursona I-III, subject to game master approval. Your transformation to this order begins at 2nd level; you immediately gain the ability score modifiers and enhanced senses of your Order. Your features begin shifting, becoming more animalistic as you gain levels. When this transformation begins, a Wolf Anthro might look like a feral, sharp featured human; by the time it ends, she looks like a stereotypical werewolf.

At 2nd level, and again at 3rd-5th level, the character gains one (1) Build Point with which to purchase Anthro abilities. The player can spend this point immediately upon leveling up, or save up some or all of their points until the transformation is complete at 5th level. Starting at 2nd level, the Tube-Grown anthro can begin selecting disadvantages, or choose starting talents or feats to get more building points, exactly as a first level Anthro hero normally could.

Alternatively, instead of an Anthro Order, the Tube-Grown hero chooses one of the non-human races found in Psi-Watch. At 2nd level, the character's race changes from human to this other species. This is a shorter, much simpler transformation, but should be no less traumatic for the character.

Plot Twist: End of the Beginning

Shortly after the Tube-Grown heroes reach 4th level, the same 'symptoms' they experienced before their Tube-Reality recur. The game suddenly gets surreal; the player characters face down threats far above their power level, killing world threatening enemies with shocking ease. Friends they've trusted suddenly betray them, and the landscape shifts. At a climactic moment, when the players either win big or die spectacularly, reality breaks again.

All of a sudden, the players' origin repeats itself. The characters (even replacement characters) find themselves naked, wet and exhausted in a VR womb-tank. As they crawl out of the second and final stage of their VR training, they are met by their worst

enemy from the first four levels of the campaign. This nemesis reveals a more benevolent side, and announces the heroes have finally, completed their VR training. Gradually earning their trust, their nemesis/new mentor accompanies them on a few missions and shows the players some new tricks.

Allow all the player characters to select any feat (including Precursors and Psionic Feats) they meet the prerequisites for as a bonus feat. Run enough missions for the player characters to reach 5th or 6th level, before the team's new mentor reveals the true reason the unit was assembled. Whatever NPC the players became closest to during levels 1-4 is, in reality, a massively dangerous terrorist threat. The players must take him or her down hard, and the psychological insight they gained about their target during levels 1-4 should prove useful.

Two questions, though. . . . Is the unit in 'reality' now or are they back in a VR sim? And is their latest mentor telling them the truth, or is it another villainous plan to destroy the unit by subverting its mission?

Plot Twist: Lost Child

Tube-Grown heroes can be grown to physical adulthood in 2 or 3 years. If one of the players has an infant or preteen child, the Tube-Grown starting occupation can become a way to handwave away years of development, and have the child turn up again as a teenager. An enemy could kidnap a child, stick them in a hellish VR world for a few years, and then unleash the cybernetically augmented hunter-killer upon his father. Can the parent find their missing child before the growth enhancement drugs and VR brainwashing turn them into something unrecognizable? Or if the transformation is complete, and their brainwashed son or daughter returns as a Tube-Grown assassin, bent on their destruction, can they undo the damage and be a family again?

Starting Talents for Tube-Grown Heroes

The following talents are exclusive to the Tube-Grown starting occupation. By choosing one or more of these talents, the player defines the VR world they were born into, not just their own capabilities.

Allied and Aligned (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

You were subconsciously programmed to like, trust, and work well with a specific faction. Choose a single, very specific faction common to the campaign (the Free Cebary Militia, the NYPD, Seal Team 6, and so on). You are at your best when working alongside a member of this favored group. You receive a +1 morale bonus on all skills that the member of the favored group has 5 or more ranks in, as long as you remain within 30 ft of the ally.

As this programming is subconscious, you do not need to select the favored group as one of your allegiances, though most Tube-Grown characters with this talent do so anyway.

Building a Life (Metagame)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

In the Sim, you were a warrior, nothing more or less. Now, even though the world is far from what you expect, you have a chance to build a life for yourself. You're still trying to decide what shape your life will take, you've definitely decided you won't merely be a warrior.

Ordinary things give you inordinate pleasure. At each level until 5th, the game master (and/or your fellow players) presents you with a list of 10-15 'bonus objectives' to be completed in game. These bonus objectives are fairly ordinary things, even trivial things: receive your first piece of junk mail, fall in love, watch a horror movie, eat sushi. Each time you complete one of these objectives, you receive 2d6x20 bonus XP. This starting talent automatically terminates after 5th level.

Crèche Map (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

You flash-memorized a map of other 'crèches' holding other Tube-Grown characters from your Sim before emerging into reality. You can sense the distance to and direction of the nearest operational crèche running your Sim, automatically, like a homing pigeon sensing the path home.

How'd I Do That? (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

Nobody, not even you, is really sure what your creators programmed you with. Your head's a black box, filled with god only knows what kind of data, pre-programmed instincts and strange talents.

Once per day, when rolling any skill check you may roll 2d20 and take the better of two results. You must declare the use of this ability before making the check.

Lab Rat (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation, INT 13+

Your Tube-Reality was a scientific or behavioral experiment, and by interacting with the scientists and medics who occasionally visited the VR Sim (albeit in virtual form), you learned quite about science and experimental protocol yourself. You receive a +1 trait bonus on Knowledge (behavioral sciences, earth and life sciences) and Treat Injury checks.

Lethal Prodigy (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube Grown starting occupation, Base Attack Bonus +1

You were programmed for decisive, shocking bursts of speed and violence. Once per day, before making any melee attack, you can declare you are using this ability. For the purpose of this one attack, you are considered to have 10 ft reach (as you leap and contort with deadly grace) and may roll 2d20 and take the better of two die rolls. You must declare the use of this ability prior to making the attack roll.

Programmed to Take the Shot (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation, Base Attack Bonus +1



Your Tube-Reality was intensely combat focused; it's prime goal was to create a generation of remorseless hunter-killers. Once per day, when you score a critical hit with a firearm, in addition to the normal effects of the critical hit, you can make an immediate second attack as a free action. This free attack is made at a -10 penalty, and uses the same modifiers as the initial attack, using the same weapon or power.

Reality Isn't Real (Metagame)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

You remain convinced that your Tube-Reality is actual reality, and that your current experiences are some kind of surreal dream. Once per day, your denial of reality can prove helpful. As a free action, you can deny reality, providing one of two effects. Either you can receive a +5 luck bonus on a single saving throw of your choice, or gain Damage Reduction 5/- against a single attack. You must

declare which use of the power you are using before the attack roll or saving throw is made.

However, for 1 hour after using this power, your disbelief in reality works to your detriment. You automatically fail any Spot or Listen (Perception) checks you are called to make, regardless of how many ranks you have in these skills. You are a strange combination of exhilarated, despondent and distracted.

Survival Plugs (EX)

Prerequisite: Tube-Grown starting occupation

You were implanted with medical stents and other life support equipment soon after you were born and placed into your VR 'training coffin'. The medical augmentations you received make it easier for medics to treat you.

Reduce the DC of all Treat Injury checks made to aid you by -2.

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