

INTERACTIVE ZERO

NEW
PSIONICS

IN 2088

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WANNA PLAY SOME MIND GAMES?

When Hernando Vasquez walked into the North American Coalition embassy in Madrid and torched everything just by glaring at it, everybody knew: zeeks are among us.

Some people hate 'em; some people love 'em. And make no mistake about it, tomo, that means most people either want to shoot them or use them to their own ends. But then I suppose that just makes life more interesting, ne?

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

Zeeks: Psionics In 2088 gives you an opportunity to explore the subculture of zeeks, either as a GM wanting to incorporate them into your game or a player wishing to play a psychic character. Whether you want to have a full-blown campaign focusing on the tumultuous world of psions, or just know what might be lurking back there in the shadows, we've got your back—everything from the Psi-Hunters who stalk zeeks to the fringe cults that worship them.

IN THIS BOOK YOU'LL FIND:

- Loads of information about psions and how they fit into the world of Interface Zero.
- Rules for creating psionic characters for Interface Zero, including new Edges, Hindrances and Powers.
- A new system for Savage Psionics, without the Power Points – and still Fast, Furious and Fun!
- More occupations for your characters, as well as new goodies from Malmart.
- Two complete Savage Tales and a half-dozen plot hooks to help bring zeeks into your game.
- Stats for new NPC friends and enemies, as well as stats for a few... other things.

This is an expansion for Savage Worlds *Interface Zero*, and not a stand-alone setting.

ZEEKS: PSIONICS IN 2088

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BLINDED BY PSIONS

"Please... Don't let these shakes go on!"
—Blue Öyster Cult, *Veteran of the Psychic Wars*

Yeah... color me stupid.

I knew from the moment 'Mr. Smith' put his offer on the table; something about this whole thing was whacked. The pay was almost too good... almost. But Mr. Smith insisted the bounty head was a psychotic killer, and I was going to have to search through the Gary Hell Zone to find her; so I hadn't asked too many questions. I mean, sure... she looked like an ordinary teenage girl, but for all I knew she was some jacked up sim, capable of ripping a man's head off with her bare hands.

So I took the job and started hunting.

And I found her.

As she huddled against the trash in the corner of the alley, staring up the barrel of my Thunderbolt with tears welling up in her eyes, my doubts began rushing to the forefront again. Long unwashed locks hung over her face. She was a wisp of a thing—probably didn't even weigh 45 kilos—and her threadbare, tattered clothes weren't concealing much... certainly not any serious weapons.

I scowled. "You got a name?" I asked.

"J-jessie." She lowered her eyes as she answered.

"Jessie, huh? What's your gig, Jessie?"

"I—" she began to answer, but then her gaze shot up and past me. "They're coming!" she said, sounding more than a little panicked.

I looked around, not sure what I was looking for but expecting to see some feral gangers climbing out of the rubbish to close in for a kill. Instead I saw... nothing. I turned back to the girl with a question forming on my lips, when I suddenly caught the distant whine of VTOL engines—and they were closing in fast.

Noise, blinding halogen lamps, and a hot wind that kicked up loose debris were suddenly upon us. Shielding my eyes, I could make out the shape of a Ravenlocke vehicle of some sort as it descended low enough to deposit half of a dozen figures. I didn't recognize the armor they were wearing, but I could tell an assault rifle when I saw one—and the things pointed in my direction were definitely assault rifles.

I'd been used.

I was willing to bet Mr. Smith had slapped a virtual locator into my TAP stream so he could follow my movements. And like a total n00b, I hadn't checked for it. Obviously there was a lot more to Jessie than met the eye.

Leaping for cover, I grabbed the girl and fired into the nearest samurai, trusting in the Thunderbolt's firepower to breach his armor. I heard answering reports from several rifles, and hot pain seared through my right shoulder. Then Jessie scrambled to her feet and turned to face the armored troopers.

"Stay down!" I yelled at her. "What the f—"

I bit off my tirade as Jessie screamed and thrust both hands forward in a pushing motion. Three of the assailants were hurled back like they'd just been hit by a speeding truck.

Jessie was panting with exertion and one of the remaining goons looked like he was putting in a radio call. Then the VTOL was on us again, and I realized, in a sickening moment, that it was a Street Sweeper. I knew my pistol wasn't going to do much against that, so I fired at radio boy in a last act of defiance. But Jessie raised her clenched fists, and the VTOL erupted in a fiery explosion. The burning wreckage fell in a deafening roar on the remaining samurai, and Jessie let out a small sigh, collapsing to the ground, unconscious.

I stared for a second, trying to make sense of what had just happened.

It was obvious that Jessie was a zeek, and it was equally obvious that she was on someone's radar for some reason. I thought about it for another moment, and then moved to scoop the girl up in a fireman's carry, grimacing from the pain in my shoulder.

First things first, I needed to get somewhere that might be half-way safe, and get someone to pull the OOL-ish little Trojan out of my head. Then I needed to get Jessie's story, and maybe exact a little payback since I wasn't likely to collect any bounty on this one. So I started walking the both of us to a place I knew.

Yeah... Color me stupid.

INTRODUCTION

Zeeks are bad. Zeeks are freaks of nature. Zeeks are evil. They will invade your mind, steal your secrets and then blow up your house.

Well, okay... that's what most of the unwashed masses tend to believe, and the people who inhabit the corridors of power are happy to let them keep thinking that way. It makes it easier to keep psychics under control if they're likely to be the subjects of a witch hunt should they be exposed.

The fact of the matter is most government and corporate heads like people with psionic abilities—at least insofar as they can be used as effective tools and weapons. Research into just such a thing dates back to the middle of the twentieth century, when agencies on both sides of the Cold War began trying to find ways to develop and control psychic powers in an effort to give themselves an 'edge' over the enemy.

The effectiveness of those studies remains the subject of debate, but it all became moot through the course of the early twenty-first century as genetic research and manipulation became more sophisticated. Various government and corporate entities began trying to find ways to stimulate psionic development, through the use of gene splicing or outright bioengineering.

Officially, such studies met with little or no success. Realistically, however, one has only to look at the open display of power in Madrid to realize psionic abilities have come a long way from the days of bending spoons. While the debate over whether 'psychic powers' are a natural evolution, or a mutation caused by genetic or nano-engineering rages on—no one really doubts the reality of psionics anymore.

Of course, it begs the question of how psychic powers work... and that opens a whole other can of worms. Much like black holes in space, while scientists can clearly demonstrate the presence and effects of psionic activity, they have yet to reach a consensus of what it actually is and how it actually works.

The most widely accepted theory maintains there is a portion of the brain geared toward producing psionic effects (pundits on all sides of the argument point to the pineal gland—but that's often largely in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, or due to lack of a better reference point). A zeek's brain can simultaneously produce both Theta and Gamma activity (sometimes referred to as 'Omega Waves'), which appears to be able to affect both internal and external electromagnetic fields. And that—as one politico put it—allows psions to "... make poo happen."

Whatever the truth of their origins or how their powers work, zeeks are obviously here among us.



CHAPTER ONE: 2088 THROUGH THE EYES OF A ZEEK

So... what's it like to be a zeek in 2088?

Well, like most things in life, tomo, it depends on where you are and quite possibly whom you know. There are some things that can be considered 'standard' though—for instance, the more conservative and restrictive the environment, the less likely it is that the locals or government will be tolerant of psionic abilities. Sure it isn't always a directly proportionate inverse ratio... but it's a good rule of thumb.

Having said that, every rule has an exception—just because the NAC publicly crusades against the 'Psychic Threat' doesn't mean there aren't people living there who don't agree with government policy. And, for that matter, just because a government has an 'official' stance against zeeks, doesn't mean they won't or don't employ them for their own ends. That's just how life works, ne?

Still, it can be fairly stated there are some places where it might be better or worse to be a psion.

Like the North American Coalition (NAC), since I mentioned them. The NAC tends to frown on psions... to put it mildly. The same with Brasilia. In fact, both of those places have organizations in place to keep track of—and even track down—people with psychic abilities. Divisão Psíquico (or 'Psi-Division') is the Brazilian organization, and the model the NAC follows... I'll talk a little more about those wonderful peeps a little later.

But as I just said, both of those nations are willing to utilize a psion who is willing to submit to the state. The NAC tends to use them simply for the tracking and monitoring of other zeeks, while Brasilia (although sometimes using them in a similar capacity) likes to use psions against a more mundane 'threat': China.

And speaking of China... there's another place not too keen on zeeks. Well, the Mandarinate at any rate. If you get out into the countryside and chat with the locals, you'll find them a lot more tolerant of psionics. Hell, you're likely to hear all about some old relative or ancestor who had all sorts of mystic abilities. As far as the yokels are concerned, it's just part of the way the universe works.

But the government... well, unlike the NAC or Brasilia (or even other parts of South America), where anti-zeek attitudes are born from religious ideals, the Mandarinate is frustrated at a lack of genetic control. In a state where the number of boys or girls or whatever can be carefully monitored and manipulated, it's unacceptable to those in charge can't control the number of psions being born. As a result, many Chinese cities aren't very safe places for zeeks to be. If the government becomes aware of a psychic's existence, it moves in to 'reclaim the asset for purposes of balance'. In other words, if the Mandarinate feels it needs more psions for research purposes, the zeek will be suffered to live under government scrutiny (read "prison laboratory"). Otherwise, he is exterminated.

At the other extreme are nations which—while not necessarily 'pro-zeek'—are at least tolerant of psions. Of course, the motivations and degree of tolerance can vary in those places as well.

The Eurasian Union is possibly one of the better places to be if you're a zeek... the EU is a place where differences tend to be accepted provided one contributes to society—or at the very least, stays out of the way. Things are still a little strained down on the Iberian Peninsula, what with Madrid and all, but for the most part, Europeans take much the same view of zeeks as they do with other 'neo-human' races.

And when it comes to zeeks, the India League is kind of entertaining... er... if you'll pardon the pun. But then, that's exactly the point: in a nation where entertainment functionally supports an entire economy, it doesn't matter who or what you are, as long as you can help in some way. Believe me, psychics can help in that industry in an almost infinite number of ways. And if you happen to be an entertaining zeek? Then the question you're most often likely to get is, "Do you need an agent?"

The Techno-Shogunate also lands more or less in the same bracket as Europe and India—if only for other reasons. In a society that has generally subscribed to the idea of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts, a psion can be accepted for all his differences... as long as he is able and willing to contribute to the growth of that society. It's all about group effort and teamwork, ne?

But there's an old Japanese proverb: "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down." Differences are tolerated so long as they don't cause waves or make ripples. By all means: use that telekinetic power at the construction site; but may your ancestors help you if you get caught reading your neighbor's mind.

Unless your neighbor happens to be the enemy of your daimyo. Places like Chiba City can offer a zeek some of the best opportunities in the world—if he's willing to pick a side and serve faithfully. In fact, Chiba is currently on record as employing the most Readers per capita. Apparently every corporate suit and Yakuza boss in the city wants the edge provided by having someone who can read minds and sense motives can provide. Better yet, every one of them is willing to fork out the creds to make sure he has a good and loyal peek in his pocket.

When it comes to the rest of the world, most other places fall somewhere in between those extremes of hate and love when it comes to zeeks—which is essentially to say those governments are pretty much indifferent toward them. In Oceania, for example, no one really cares who is or isn't a psion... as long as you've got a useful skill set, that's the important part.

The Middle East has a similar mindset, if only for different reasons. The governments of that region have enough to worry about without starting a witch hunt against psychics, and as a result, the policy in almost all parts of the Middle East is sort of a "don't ask; don't tell" policy—as long as a zeek doesn't advertise, no one bothers to go looking. Well... at least not from the government. It's still best for a psion to keep a low profile in the Middle East since most of the cultures there are pretty insular and don't take well to people who are 'different'.

By a similar token, the Central African Union also doesn't really have a stated policy on psions. Their only concern is finances and the security of those finances, and as long as a zeek isn't found to have been tampering with either of those two things, he's likely to be ignored and left alone.

But it can't be over stated that—even if a regional government has or doesn't have a formal stance on zeeks—you can't rule out the masses. Among all the human and neo-human races, there exists all kinds of bigotry, as well as a great deal of understanding... with lot's of shades of gray in between. The smart zeek always plays it just a little cautious and doesn't swagger around bragging about his abilities, lest one of his neighbors decide a zeek represents a threat to his place on the food chain. Then again, a little show of psychic mojo, and the zeek may suddenly find himself the most popular guy on the block.

This is especially true in places like North America. Traditionally something of a melting pot, it now boasts a large handful of separatist governments and populations, each with their own values and ethics.

As I mentioned, the NAC is a bad place to be counted as a psion—a number of draconian laws put in place there aren't terribly zeek friendly. I also said they've implemented their own version of Psi-Division... well, those guys are working under the auspices of the ACDF and spend a lot of time searching for reports of potential psionic activity, both within and outside the borders of the NAC. Brasilia works semi-cooperatively with the NAC to track down 'rogue psychics', sending in sanctioned Psi-Hunters to 'deal' with them wherever they may be. The NAC own brand of Psi-Hunters are usually called 'Mathers'... but again, more on them later.

Other places in North America tend to be—if not entirely sympathetic—more tolerant of zeeks. Again, this is often in an inverse proportion to the conservatism of the people involved.

This is probably a good point to mention these places don't exist in a vacuum: often other interests are more than willing to step onto 'foreign' soil to work at cross-purposes to an existing government, and where zeeks are concerned things aren't any different.

For example, in places like Brasilia and the NAC, a number of outside interests are actively working to better the lot of psions in those areas. And don't kid yourself, tomo... not everyone is doing it for altruistic or humanitarian reasons. Sometimes, like with the Mandarinate and Brasilia, it boils down to nothing more than attempts to destabilize the enemy. And sometimes it's for even more insidious purposes.

The fact of the matter is the negative attitudes of places like those toward psions—especially psions living within their borders—actually engenders a certain amount of sympathy toward those same psions from people in other places. It's kinda hard for certain government and corporate entities to keep zeeks as being viewed as 'outsiders' and a 'threat' by the masses when 'the Plight of the Zeeks' is being broadcast across pipelines all over The Deep.

So companies like Zentek try to make sure the worst excesses of anti-zeek governments are covered up; and the most repressive laws are challenged... if only to keep public sympathies at a more easily-manipulated neutral.

Oh yeah... 'companies like Zentek'. While most of the peeps and sprawlers like to think their governments are all snugly and looking after them while they sleep, they often forget about little things like multinational corporations. With budgets to rival most nations, and no concern for things like international boundaries, those same corporations often have a big say in the policies of various national governments. This means if zeeks are important to a corporation—either as a threat or a resource—any psion would be wise to watch his back regardless of the 'official' stance of his nation's leaders.

So what's the bottom line? Wherever a psion lives (unless it's an enclave consisting only of other psions), he's likely to be viewed with a certain amount of suspicion... after all, no one knows for certain the true extent or limits of a zeek's powers. And there are certain entities that would love to do the research to find out the answer.

ZEEKISMS AND OTHER FUN STUFF

Okay... That about covers how the mainstream around the world views zeeks, but what about on the real fringes? Yeah, even psions have their isms—and there are even groups whose isms revolve around psions.

Not to mention even weirder stuff.

For example, down in Brasilia, where people are pretty much steeped in religion and religious doctrine, there's a group living in the shadows that calls itself Abençoadado do Espírito Santo—"The Blessed of the Holy Spirit". They believe zeeks have experienced the type of Pentecostal blessing both spoken of and promised in New Testament scriptures, so they hold psions as sacred. Sounds nice if you're a zeek, doesn't it?

Except that ADES tracks down and abducts known psions, taking them to one of its isolated enclaves. Sure, the zeeks are fed and sheltered... but it's something of a gilded cage. A zeek is fed and sheltered as long as he cooperates. If he refuses to use his powers on behalf of the community, he is branded as sacrilegious and stoned to death. If he uses his powers, but for some reason they fail, he is branded a false prophet and stoned to death. And if one of the Abençoadado expresses the wish to leave the community, he is allowed to leave in the only fashion that will merge him once more with God—he is crucified. Still sound nice, tomo?

On the zeek side of isms, one of the most prevalent beliefs is Shangri La. A great many psions say there is a hidden place where zeeks are allowed to live in freedom and peace. Some hold that it is the Shangri La—after all, a good number of legends surrounding the mythical place involve mystical powers—but no one knows for sure where it really is. Other zeeks liken it to lost Atlantis, but claim the remnants still exist in some hidden and remote place. Avalon, Eden, Lemuria, Mu (the lost one, not the new one), Paradise and Sanctuary are other names ascribed to this place.

The bottom line there is: ask ten zeeks about Shangri La, and you're likely to get ten different theories on it. But, in any case where the zeek believes such a place exists, it's always because he's heard some anecdote about a guy who had a friend who actually saw it—if only briefly—but was unable to ever find it again.

That doesn't stop some people from looking, though... and not just psychics. There are also those who are searching for a valuable mother lode of psionic power, and those who would wish to destroy such a place.

Yeah, yeah... why can't people live and let live, right? Probably because—like in any group of people—there are crappy zeeks as well as good ones. Hernando Vasquez, for example, had a grudge and a message, and was willing to kill scores of people so he could announce it. That was an extreme example, but there are psions that are nearly as bad, and much more insidious.

Take psychic vampires, for instance.

Nah... I'm not talking about Dracula dominating your mind so you'll stand still long enough for him to sink his teeth in and drink his fill. What I'm talking about are the extreme cases of psychic leeches—zeeks who've learned to draw their energy from other people. While that might seem bad enough, most of the ones who find they can do that are reasonably polite about it, and will ask before trying.

Psychic vampires don't just draw on other people's energy... they then use that energy to manipulate and control the people around them—often just for kicks. This is the guy who walks into a room full of people, and when he leaves (with a satisfied smirk), he leaves a room full of mentally exhausted people who are all bickering and arguing with each other. He's had his fun, and it hasn't cost him a thing. That's what I mean by psychic vampires.



But there's a big circle of life out there, and where you have psions who 'feed' on others, you also have... things that feed on psions.

The most ubiquitous and well known are psiders. Fortunately, 'ubiquitous' can be a relative term, and most people will go their entire lives without running into one of these nightmares. No one knows where psiders originally spawned (or if they know, they aren't saying). Speculations range from spontaneous evolution to corporate bio-experiments, but wherever they came from, they're out there: giant spiders that like to feed on thoughts.

Psiders seem to prefer zeeks (maybe they taste better?), but will go after any sentient mind that enters their territory. Happily, they also seem to prefer living in out-of-the-way places—wastelands and areas of abandoned urban sprawl, for example. Not that there haven't been horror stories of a psider settling down in some blue plate tenement, only to be discovered after half the residents disappeared.

WHO ARE THESE 'ZEEKS'?

Along with the mystery of how these so-called 'psychic' abilities work is the question of who has them. The most basic answer—and the one that seems to be the easiest to document—is human-based entities with meat brains. After that, things get a little vague.

To clarify the first, there has never been a recorded instance of a sim, android or AI exhibiting psionics... even sims dubbed with the mind of a known psion have been unable to use psychic powers. By the same token, there have been one or two known cases where a vat-grown sim with no specific dubbing has apparently and spontaneously become a zeek. Certainly, there have been some rare instances of hybrids possessing psychic abilities, although the less human the hybrid, the less likely it is to be a psion—there has also never been a reported case of a chimera being psychic.

But, to be fair, just because no one's seen a psychic robot doesn't mean some corporate brainer isn't trying to figure out how to synthesize an Omega wave just for the profit potential. Considering the possibilities such a thing would present, you can bet your sweet ass any megacorp would love to hold the copyrights on psionics. And you can just thank whatever it is you might worship it isn't likely to happen soon.

So, in the meantime, if you're worried about knowing who's a zeek and who isn't, you can pretty much rule out any androids, sims and uber-hybrids and focus on the more normal peeps. Although, interestingly enough, eugenics don't seem to take too well to psychic powers, either. Although it would seem to be something that could be 'encoded' into the human engram, the fact of the matter is... well... since no one knows exactly what makes psionics happen, no one knows exactly how to splice the genes to build a better zeek.

Just consider it one more blessing in a world where you gotta take your blessings where you can find them. Your average Human 2.0 is often egotistical enough about how 'special' he is without being a psion on top of it.

ZEEK VARIANTS

The politically correct refer to them as 'psions,' but the rest of us just call them zeeks. Of course, either term is just another label, another way of socially segregating ourselves from others. It's like calling a man with brown skin a "Latino" or a pale-skinned man a "Caucasian." It's a way of pointing to any given zeek and saying "that's what she is," or more accurately, it's a way of saying "she's what I am NOT." Labels make people feel better, but they certainly don't encapsulate the person. For instance, many people don't know this, but psions are just as different from each other as Chinese are from Vietnamese or Koreans.

PEEKS, FREEKS, AND TWECKS

There's an entire sub-culture of zeeks out there, ami, sort of like the way teenagers fall into their little cliques of jocks, brainers, divas, metal heads and hip funksters—only with zeeks, you have peeks, twecks and freeks, just to name a few. The term 'peek' is applied to those psions who can play around in someone's mind, or otherwise use extra-sensory perception. A 'tweek' is a psion who has telekinetic abilities, or some means of manipulating his environment. And 'freeks' are those psions who have powers that can't be pigeonholed in any of the standard ways.

But those are loose categories and many psions cross the classifications, making easy labeling next to impossible. Just because a psion's strongest abilities are telekinetic, for example, doesn't mean he can't exhibit clairvoyant powers as well. For this and other reasons, most zeeks—whatever their provenance—get on reasonably well.

Peeks are by far the most common and well-known form of psychics... the classic 'mind readers', if you would. As a result, many peeks view themselves as 'the best' form of zeek and the kings of the mountain.

Then again, freeks think just the opposite for exactly the same reasons. Freeks view themselves as the elite psions because there are relatively few of them... ergo they are the special ones. On the other hand, freeks are also usually the most insecure of the zeeks, so that may be the real reason they like to play up their own importance. After all, everyone at least 'gets' telepathy and telekinesis... even if a lot of people also fear them. But if you're the guy who can teleport, make the dead walk and turn into a dog? Most sprawlers just start trying to shoot you with silver bullets and pound wooden stakes into your chest.

And tweeks? Well, tweeks are like the proverbial middle child, which means the less well-adjusted of them have a nasty tendency to unleash a lot of chaos and mayhem by virtue of their ability to screw with their surroundings. It comes as no surprise to most peeks and freeks that Carrie was a tweek.

Of course, all of this bickering and chest thumping goes right out the window when the Psi-Hunters show up. Once the Mathers are rounding up 'witches' to burn at the stake (or worse, lock in a lab), all zeeks are equal and one big, happy family. You watch my back and I'll watch yours, tomo. One thing most peeks, tweeks and freeks will agree on is the worst form of zeek is a Quisling: a zeek that has sold out to any organization devoted to tracking down and/or monitoring psions.

With freeks, peeks and tweeks running around, most people forget about two other possibly even more common types of psions: wild talents and latent talents.

The two terms often get confused, since there's a tendency to think of 'latent' as being mild and passive, while 'wild' conjures up images of... well... Madrid. But the truth of the matter is quite the opposite.

In actuality, wild talents—sometimes referred to as 'blips' or 'weeks'—are psychics having a single ability which is usually not very powerful. All the same, using it is potentially exhausting to the psion. Some researchers speculate that blips really make up the largest percentage of psychically viable people, but they tend to slide under the radar because their powers are so rarely exhibited.

It's the latent talents who are potentially the most dangerous. These are typically blue platers and street people who have no idea they have psychic abilities—often powerful psychic abilities. Those powers only manifest under stressful situations, but when they do, the results can be ugly. There is a working theory that old reports of poltergeist activity were actually often cases of latent talents. Sadly, the nature of most latents (the term 'shreek' was bandied around for a short time, but never took) means they don't want to be labeled as zeeks, so they have a nasty tendency to ignore the signs and look for other explanations.

ORGANIZATIONS AND HATE GROUPS

So now you know a bit about how zeeks are viewed around the world, various isms associated with them, and how zeeks label themselves and each other. But I've mentioned a few other organizations, and now's the time to get into those—the groups that have more of a political interest in psions... for good or for ill.

PSI-DIVISION

That brings us back, as promised, to Psi-Division. You may have images dancing in your mind of an old 2D science fiction series—all black gloves and uniforms and acting as Big Brother for all the psychics of the world—and you would be about half right.

Which is to say, yeah... some of them have uniforms, and they do keep a close eye on any psions they know of. But other than the occasional Quisling, you can't really say they police their own. In fact, even the zeeks who work for Psi-Division are pretty much 'second-class citizens' within the organization.

The biggest difference between the Brazilian and NAC versions of Psi-Division is the overtness of the militancy. Divisão-Psí makes no secret of the fact it's just an extension of the Brazilian army: they've got uniforms, ranks and the whole shebang. In the NAC, Psi-Division tries to bill itself as a more 'friendly' group—government sponsored with the backing of the ACDF. They wear suits rather than uniforms (well... except for their security branch), and hold grades as civil servants, rather than military ranks.





But, in a way, that's worse if you're a zeek. You see, in Brasilia the Psi-Hunters look a lot like some sort of sci-fi ninja, all black, skin-tight body armor and bristling with weapons. Mathers—the NAC version of Psi-Hunters—look like normal street dregs... until they pull a machete from beneath that duster and start swinging it. At least down south a zeek has a pretty good idea of what to look for.

Most Brazilian Psi-Hunters operate within Brasilia—although they can sometimes get sanctioning from other South American governments if they push the issue. The NAC, on the other hand... most Mathers don't really care about niggling little details like 'national boundaries' when they're on the hunt. And while a Mather still has to deal with a certain amount of foreign red tape and bureaucracy when operating outside the NAC, no zeek wants to learn he's got one on his tail... they tend to be ruthless, tenacious and resistant to Psionics.

Now I've been harping on quite a bit about Brasilia and the NAC, but there are other variations of Psi-Division out there—especially in the other South American communities and the lands between Brasilia and the NAC.

Of course those versions aren't always exact clones... In fact, the Mexican city states' División Psíquico, largely handled by the Nueva Iglesia Católica de México, is actually quite benevolent in its treatment of psions—as long as you aren't too far south, where the Brazilian influence is more keenly felt, or too far north, where the influence of the New Catholic Church is not as strong.

The Republic of Texas also has a Psi-Division, but it's largely there to appease certain elements of the NAC. In practice the Republic largely relegates their own version to assisting the Rangers with cases involving zeeks; and gives very little autonomy to the organization.

CULTS AND ORDERS

I also mentioned Abençoado do Espírito Santo. But don't kid yourself, ami... just because ADES is considered a 'fringe' cult doesn't mean they're unique. In fact, variations—usually under names like los Bendecidos del Espíritu Santo—exist all over the Americas.

Of course, the influence of los Bendecidos depends largely on the strength and stability of the region, which means while they enjoy a strong presence in South America, they

are considerably weaker in Mexico, and only marginally more active in Baja.

Other places in the world with wide swaths of now-unsettled territory, or where there is constant unrest, have bred similar zeek-worshipping cults, each with its own name and agenda. But even though these groups exist in places as disparate as the Middle East and Oceania, none of them have the apparent cohesiveness and organization as ADES. That doesn't mean they can't cause problems for the unwary traveler, though... consider yourself fairly warned, tomo.

Don't get me wrong—not every 'spiritual group' that's cropped up around zeeks is trying to worship them and isolate them from society. In fact, when you get to more urbanized places like the Eurasian Union, the tone changes to sound more like... oh... a couple-hundred years ago. Groups of 'enlightened' individuals, each claiming to know the 'true science of psions'.

They all have the air of an occult society, with names like 'The Enlightened Seers' (a group of elitist zeeks in the area of Munich) or 'The New Dawn' (a group of mundanes—non-psions—who 'scientifically' explore the 'phenomenon of psionics' in the London area), and they are all set up in a similar manner. Each one has a private clubhouse where accepted members can meet and socialize. Yep, you got it, tomo: these guys are little more than exclusive social clubs with a common theme. The good news for a zeek is he can probably attain a certain amount of celebrity status in any of these groups—as long as he's willing to effectively prostitute himself to their whims.

Psions aren't immune to religious fervor, either. That whole 'Zeek Paradise' I was talking about earlier has given impetus to a number of cults and groups, although their goals and motives vary greatly.

"The Seekers," for instance, are simply dedicated to finding the place—although some of the more fringe elements of that group view it as more of a transcendental experience... kind of like, "Shangri La exists within each psion, and each psion must journey within to find it." Okay, yeah... that may sound a little out there, but you'd be surprised at how 'zen' some of those guys can get.

But once you start down that road, it doesn't take long to find people willing to take it a step further. Like "the Holy Community of Paradise Lost", which simply sits around and worships the concept of a zeekish Shangri La. Fortunately,



there are plenty of people—psionic and mundane alike—who are a bit more down to earth when it comes to zeek beliefs and lifestyles.

The Seekers actually have a relatively structured organization, although they tend to operate on the cell model, with small groups that have relatively little contact with each other. I guess the idea is if someone actually does find the place, the odds of the secret being revealed are lessened. However, if someone does find it, the odds of anyone else in the group getting to share in the joy are equally lessened, some pundits point out. Still, in terms of fringe groups and the like, Seekers are a fairly pragmatic lot, and they can be an outright blessing if you run into them in the wastelands doing their seeking thing—after all, most of them have plenty of provisions and ammo. Not to mention a trick or two under their helmets.

The Seekers could also be considered the bottom tier of zeek groups with an actual purpose beyond just a belief system with no real agenda. These types of organizations range from psionic self-help groups to actual psion work unions.

Yep, ami, you heard me right: zeek unions... although I'll give you that there aren't too many of those. The most notable is Yomitorukoto No Kumiai (読取る事の組合)—the Reader Union of Chiba City—which is set up to be sort of a clearing house of peeks, as well as making sure the psions are well treated and that they are performing up to standards. Admittedly, the 'Yoku' is one of the few cases where a zeek can both advertise his abilities and take a certain amount of public pride in his talents.

HATE GROUPS

Of course, not every organized group of zeeks is benevolent. But even though most sprawlers would back that up by pointing out Madrid, the irony is that Vasquez was apparently acting independently—at the very least, no group has ever stepped forward to take the 'credit' for his actions.

And there are certainly zeek terrorist groups both capable and willing to do that sort of crap. These pro-zeek hate groups range from the quasi-militant "Free Minds" to the outright dangerous "Psi-Clone".

Free Minds is the most visible of psion activist groups, with a stated goal of "maintaining psion secrets." Because their mission statement is so vague and no one really knows what sorts of 'secrets' zeeks would need to keep, these peeps might

drop in at the damndest times, causing mayhem and claiming to be acting in the interests of the psychic community. This makes them dangerous largely because of their unpredictability—you may think you're minding your own business, just to have a Free Minds cell arrive to tell you you're actually stepping on their delicate toes.

But it's groups like Psi-Clone which are really scary. Their objective—as far as anyone can understand it—is some sort of psion world domination. For the most part, they come across as an elitist organization with a thug mentality. As far as they're concerned, mundanes only exist to serve as playthings, fodder or slaves for their psychic masters.

However, zeeks haven't cornered the market on hate groups. For every group that supports psions and their causes, there's another one that wants to see zeeks subjugated... if not exterminated.

Probably the worst case of this is "Purus Humanus." With a name derived from the Latin for 'pure human,' the attitudes of PH should be pretty clear to any but the most clueless: purge the planet of all the new, impure strains of humanity. I may not need to point this out, but while zeeks are on that list, so are sims, hybrids, synthetics and—interestingly enough—humans 2.0. In the Humanus way of thinking, all of that genetic tampering actually taints the 'human' makeup.

The type of people who might be members of Purus Humanus ranges from skinhead gangers, terrorizing the Red Zones, to wealthy suits, living in corporate penthouses. In fact, PH is disturbingly popular among the elite of the Mandarinate as well as the Techno-Shogunate. But the real acts of violence seem to take place across North America and Europe, as Humanus 'soldiers' beat the crap out of 'impure' humans and execute even more heinous acts of wanton hate and violence.

Oh... and you might want to skip that joke about 'PH balance'—it just tends to make them even more pissed off and unfriendly than they usually start out. Purus Humanus apparently doesn't recruit people with a sense of humor.

FINAL THOUGHTS

So to sum up the world of 2088 from a zeek's perspective... either you've got it really good, or the world is a crappy place to live in. Huh. I guess we're all pretty much the same after all, ne?

CHAPTER TWO: BUILDING A BETTER PSYCHIC

Face it. Psychic powers aren't entirely predictable.

For that reason, we've made a few adjustments to the Savage World rules to allow the use of Powers without so much predictability.

What are we talking about?

Well, to put it in perspective: a character walks into physical combat not knowing how long he may be able to stand against the enemy—the interplay between Damage and Toughness leaves an element of chance to the process. Can I stand and take another hit? Will I go down if I'm hit again?

By contrast, when using powers, that same character can—with near absolute precision—allocate Power Points knowing exactly how much he has and how long he can use it. So we've taken away Power Points in an effort to introduce an element of uncertainty while using Psionics, and made it so the use of those powers can be exhausting.

But don't worry... we've also made the effort to keep things Fast, Furious, and Fun!

MAKING A ZEEK CHARACTER

Unless your GM says otherwise, there is only one Arcane Background used in *Interface Zero*, and that is obviously Psionics. The good news is there's no real rules difference other than Power Points.

Rather than Power Points, characters with Psionics are rated for their Power. When a character takes Arcane Background (Psionics), he begins with a Power of 2. If you're converting a character that has been built from the original Savage Worlds rules, just figure every 5 Power Points translate into 1 point of Power.

Power represents the theoretical amount of 'energy' the psion can easily channel at any given time without expending a lot of effort. Exceeding this amount can possibly result in fatigue, exhaustion or even physical collapse.

STURDIER PSIONS

The nature of Psionics in *Interface Zero* means zeeks may exhaust themselves a little too quickly for some people's tastes. As an optional rule, you as GM may wish to add an additional level of Fatigue to Wild Card characters. In other words, just like with Wounds, a character can suffer 3 levels of Fatigue (with the attendant penalties to die rolls) prior to being incapacitated through exhaustion. In this case, you should allow Fatigue to recover every two hours, rather than every three.

Ideally, when you put together a zeek character, you should also consider his type—peek, tweek, or freek—because that will determine the types of Powers your character should lean towards. While technically there's no restriction on what Powers you can give your character, there are some potential bonuses for sticking to type in the form of Professional Edges. You can read more about those Edges on page 15, and we've divided up the Powers for you on page 20.

If you're going to play a zeek, your character must also have an extra Minor Hindrance—this doesn't count as one of the Hindrances he can normally start with, so it doesn't earn any extra points. We'd suggest either Outsider or Wanted (Minor), but if you can come up with something else that fits, and if your GM goes along with it, you can take something else... in fact, some of the new Hindrances we've included in this book would also work pretty well.

NEW HINDRANCES

Some of these Hindrances are meant specifically for zeek characters, but others work just as well for any character. If you're a fan of *Dark Angel*, you might want to give your hybrid Shakes, for example. And anyone in 2088 can have Debt. So without further ado...

DEBT (MINOR OR MAJOR)

Sometimes a character needs or wants to start with that extra 'something' other than cybernetics, but just doesn't have the credits to make it happen. But hey, ami... this is 2088, and if

you're willing to sell your soul to a corporation or gang, you can always get credits on credit, ne? If you're a pizza delivery driver and want to have that ride so you can work, for example, just head on down to Honest Rex and try his first-time buyer program.

As a Minor Hindrance, the character may make a single purchase of up to 15,000 credits, but must add 500 credits to his cost of living. Should he fail to make his payment, he must make it up the next session by paying double. If he fails to pay for two consecutive sessions, the character acquires the equivalent of the Wanted Hindrance as debt collectors (or Rex's thugs) continually harass him for money. Should the character continue to default on his payments, at the very least his purchase will be repossessed—at the very worst he may find himself on the wrong end of a different sort of contract.

The Major version of this Hindrance works much the same, except the character may make a single purchase of up to 30,000 credits and must add 1,000 credits to his cost of living. The lender is also likely to be more... unhappy with defaulted payments.

Note the GM should use the optional Cost of Living rules on page 199 of *Interface Zero* if she's going to allow this Hindrance.

LATENT TALENT (MAJOR)

Some unfortunate zeeks don't even realize they're zeeks until the strange stuff starts happening around them. At that point, they either learn to control it, or learn to live with strange stuff. This Hindrance works just like the Major version of the Stress Trigger Hindrance (see below) with a couple of big differences.

The bad news is your character has no idea what his latent Powers are, so the GM gets to pick which one(s) manifest when the Stress Trigger goes off—up to three of them, just like any other zeeek. She may choose any Power, although the character must be of sufficient Rank to use it. When you roll to see if the Power activates, it is done as a Spirit check (instead of a Psionics skill check) and treated as if your character has Power 1. If you want to spend a Benny to keep the Power from going off, you must say so before the GM tells you what the Power is.

The good news is you can buy off this Hindrance by spending two Advances. After the first Advance, this Hindrance is treated like the Minor version of Stress Trigger, and Powers

are only triggered by Critical Failures... although the above rules still apply. After the second Advance, your character may take Arcane Background (Psionics), and no longer suffers from Stress Trigger. Your character must take any Powers he had to use because of Latent Talent, but if three haven't been designated yet, you may choose any remaining Powers.

SHAKES (MINOR)

For some reason, this character has some faulty wiring in the brain. Whether it's from a birth defect or because helpful doctors from some research project made a neural pathway zig where it should have zagged, the result is the same: he suffers the shakes if he is overwhelmed by stress. Whenever this character is forced to make a Spirit check and fails, he must make an immediate Vigor check. If he fails that as well, he begins to have a seizure.

The seizure causes the character to fall prone and suffer a -2 penalty on all action rolls until it passes. Additionally, the character can only move at Pace 3 for the duration. The seizure lasts 15 rounds minus a number of rounds equal to the character's Spirit.

The good news is that there is always some form of chemical treatment to offset the potential seizures. As long as the character has access to his medication, he doesn't have to make a Vigor check when he fails a Spirit check, but this requires spending money—an additional 500 credits per game session. The character can spend less (half) on cheaper, natural alternative sources, but these are invariably less effective. The character must still make his Vigor check on failed Spirit rolls, but he gets a +1 bonus.

STRESS TRIGGER (MINOR OR MAJOR)

Most zeeks try to keep a handle on their Powers, but a character with this Hindrance just can't seem to manage it all the time. If he is confronted with a stressful situation, there is a nasty tendency for his psychic abilities to manifest. As a Minor Hindrance, what this means is whenever the character is forced to make an Attribute roll to resist something—be it a Spirit check to maintain morale or a Strength check in an arm wrestling contest—if the roll is a Critical Failure, the character must attempt to use one of his psychic Powers as his next action. Yep... this applies to Tests of Will and Soak rolls as well.

As a Major Hindrance, any Failure of one of these rolls results in the mandatory use of a Power. In either case, the character

may spend a Benny in order to avoid the forced Power use. This Hindrance may only be taken by a character with Arcane Background (Psionics) or the Wild Talent Edge.

WEAK ZEEK (MINOR)

All zeeks aren't necessarily created equal. A character with this Hindrance doesn't have the full abilities of his peers, and begins with his Power reduced by 1. This can be raised in the normal manner by spending Edges, but he'll never be quite as strong as other zeeks. This Hindrance may only be taken by a character with Arcane Background (Psionics).

NEW EDGES FOR ZEEKS

Well... for zeeks and those who must deal with them.

As we've mentioned, the only Arcane Background used in *Interface Zero* is Psionics. Additionally, the following Edges shouldn't be used: Champion, Gadgeteer, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Mr. Fix It, and Wizard.

Power Edges are affected in the following manner:

- **New Power:** Left unchanged.
- **Power Points:** This increases a character's Power by 1, and is otherwise unchanged.
- **Rapid Recovery:** Allows a character to remove a level of Fatigue after 2 hours. (If the optional Fatigue rule is in use, this Edge allows a character to remove a level of Fatigue after 1 hour.)
- **Improved Rapid Recovery:** Allows a character to remove a level of Fatigue after 1 hour. (If the optional Fatigue rule is in use, this Edge allows a character to remove a level of Fatigue after ½ hour.)
- **Soul Drain:** Only allowed with the GM's permission. If it is allowed, the character can make a Spirit roll in an attempt to 'Soak' the Fatigue otherwise gained from using a power. This roll suffers a -1 penalty for each level of Fatigue being Soaked, and if the total rolled is 1 or less, the character takes a Wound and goes unconscious, just like the original Edge.
- **Power Surge:** Allows a Wild Card to recover 1-2 (d4 divided by 2 rounded up) levels of Fatigue when a Joker is drawn.

So on to the new Edges...

TABLE 2.1: NEW EDGES

EDGE	REQUIREMENTS	DESCRIPTION
Enhanced Ability	Novice, either Freek, Peek or Tweek, Smarts d10+, Spirit d8+	May take a power without regard to rank requirements
Freek	Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three freek Powers	+2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using freek Powers.
Mind Over Matter	Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics), Spirit d8+	Soak fatigue with a Spirit Test
Peek	Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three peek Powers	+2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using peek Powers.
PSI-Hunter	Novice, Arcane Resistance, Smarts d8+	+2 bonus to any Investigation or Streetwise rolls being used to track down or locate zeeks.
Psychic Leech	Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Intimidate or Taunt d8+	Force someone else in range to suffer fatigue instead of you, when using your powers.
Tweek	Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three tweek Powers	+2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using peek Powers.
Wild Talent	Novice, Smarts d6+, Spirit d6+	Character has a minor power.





ENHANCED ABILITY (POWER)

Requirements: Novice, either Freek, Peek or Tweek, Smarts d10+, Spirit d8+

The character has learned to tap into his deeper psyche and can manifest abilities that might otherwise be beyond his reach. He may take a new Power without regard to Rank requirements and may continue to ignore Rank requirements any time he takes New Power in the future. There is a drawback, however: any time a character uses a Power that exceeds his Rank, he automatically takes a level of Fatigue—or two levels of Fatigue, should he fail to meet his target number.

FREEK (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three freek Powers

Of all the types of zeeks, freeks tend to be the most volatile on an emotional level. While in many ways a tweek can exhibit more 'demonstrative' abilities, freeks are the ones who are more demonstrative about their abilities—sort of a genetically encoded 'Little Napoleon' complex. Freeks want people to know they have power, and in many ways they want people to fear—or at least respect—them. Most psychologists figure it stems from their often-bizarre abilities. While any zeek with the right Powers is technically a freek, this Edge reflects those who have mastered their talents. A character with the Freek Edge gains a +2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using freek Powers. This bonus can stack with the Mentalist Edge.

MIND OVER MATTER (WEIRD)

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics), Spirit d8+

Through extensive training or sheer force of will, some zeeks can tough it out longer than others. A character with this Edge has honed his willpower to shrug off mental exhaustion far better than most. By spending a benny, the character may attempt to effectively Soak any Fatigue gain by making a Spirit check. With a Success, he avoids taking 1 Fatigue, and a Raise will allow him to avoid up to 2 Fatigue.

PEEK (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three peek Powers

Because of the nature of their abilities, peeks are the most likely zeeks to be 'people' people. This isn't to say that peeks like or even get along with everybody—just that they tend to 'get' what makes a person tick. This can make a peek seem

to be a really great guy... or a master manipulator. It's ironic peek Powers aren't flashy: the same subtle abilities which allow peeks to understand people are often viewed as the most insidious of all zeek Powers. While any zeek with the right Powers is technically a peek, this Edge reflects those who have mastered their talents. A character with the Peek Edge gains a +2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using peek Powers. This bonus can stack with the Mentalist Edge.

PSI-HUNTER (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Resistance, Smarts d8+

Some individuals make a living of sorts by tracking down zeeks. While several organizations employ their own Hunters, the most well known are the Mathers used by Psi-Division—named for Reverend Cotton Mather, famed for his role in the Salem Witch Trials. While not all Psi-Hunters are as dogmatic as Mathers tend to be, they all share some common traits: they tend to be smart, resourceful and resistant to the use of psychic Powers.

A character with this Edge gains a +2 bonus to any Investigation or Streetwise rolls being used to track down or locate zeeks.

PSYCHIC LEECH (WEIRD)

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Intimidate or Taunt d8+

There are a few zeeks of questionable morals that have learned to use the potential psychic energy of people around them in lieu of their own. They typically create drama in their environment in order to make the minds of those around them more accessible (a Test of Wills using Taunt will certainly make things easier for the leech).

A character using Psychic Leech must make a Psionics skill check opposed by his target's Spirit. If successful, any Fatigue gained by the zeek will be charged to the victim instead, although the target will be aware that something is amiss (and likely where it stems from) unless the zeek succeeds in the opposed roll with a Raise. This effect lasts for the duration of the scene.

A character using this Edge will still take Fatigue himself on a Critical Failure.

TWEEK (PROFESSIONAL)

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Psionics), Smarts d8+, Psionics d6+, at least three tweek Powers

Tweeks tend to have the most spectacular abilities—or at least the most visible—since they are able to affect and manipulate the world around them. While people often fear tweeks for this reason, they just as often find tweeks extremely useful. Or at least, they keep their opinions to themselves for fear of ‘stumbling’ into oncoming traffic or meeting some other equally unfortunate ‘accident’. While any zeek with the right Powers is technically a tweek, this Edge reflects those who have mastered their talents. A character with the Tweek Edge gains a +2 bonus to Psionics skill checks when using tweek Powers. This bonus can stack with the Mentalist Edge.

WILD TALENT (BACKGROUND)

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Spirit d6+

Occasionally, someone exhibits psychic ability—albeit very minor psychic ability. Sometimes referred to as a ‘blip’ or ‘week’, this type of individual usually only manifests a single talent and often has a very low staying power. A character with this Edge may choose any single Novice Rank Power, which he may use by making a Spirit check as if he had Power 0. This Power can’t be improved, nor can the Wild Talent take any Power Edges.

NEW OCCUPATIONS

Bear in mind that life isn’t fair—even less so in *Interface Zero*—but there is sometimes a sort of karmic justice as well. Sure, an Agent may seem to be a better deal than a Bartender in terms of finances and resources, but you can bet all those credits that he’s got more people gunning for him as well, ami. So before you pick up a job just for the mega-credits, you might want to consider the profile it’ll give your character as well.

Occupations give you an opportunity to fine-tune characters and their role in the world of 2088, but we’ve just scratched the surface of potential jobs for the canny sprawler. With that in mind, we’d like to offer you a few more suggestions, as well as some options to make Occupations a little broader.

In addition to the cash potential and contacts of an Occupation, there are sometimes other perks. On the other hand, some jobs require a certain skill set—after all, who wants a

bodyguard who can’t fight? Or a pizza delivery driver who can’t drive? To that end, each of these new Occupations has a set of suggested perks and requisites. These are entirely optional, with the GM having final say as to what she does or doesn’t allow in her game. By the same token, GMs are encouraged to create perks and requisites for existing Occupations as well.

FORTUNE TELLER

Nicknames: Palm-Reader, Palmist, Psychic Reader

Starting Credits: Smarts roll × 1,000 credits (this roll can’t Ace)

Bonus Credits: Smarts roll × 500 credits at each Advance (this roll can Ace)

Although the term ‘psychic reader’ is often used for your profession, you know the truth of it: you don’t have to be a zeek to do your job—any gaucho with a slick act and a knack for reading people can pull it off. Sure, being able to peek into some n00b’s head would help, but all you really have to do is figure out what your mark wants to hear and then regurgitate it. Of course, the pay sucks if you can’t build up a steady client base, but if you can find some old lady who wants to chatter with her dead cat, you can be set for months.

Suggested Requisites: Notice d6+, Persuasion d6+

Suggested Perks: Gain +2 to local Streetwise checks dealing with local information—this occupation can lead to juicy gossip.

Possible Contacts: Corporate Executive, Corporate Wage Slave, Crime Boss, Ganglander, Media Star, Politician, Rock Star, or any street type who wants a bead on the future

Suggested Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Psionics) with the peek Powers, Attractive, Very Attractive, Charismatic

LAYABOUT

Nicknames: Bum, Loafer, Loser, Slacker

Starting Credits: 5,000

Bonus Credits: None

You don’t need a job, no matter what anyone else might think. If you’re rich and on the top of the heap, why waste time working, ne? And if you’re poor and at the bottom of the pile... well, hell—you can always get by on a government dole. If all else fails, corporations always need

volunteers to try out experimental goods and services, ami, and you can always crash at a friend's crib. Life's too short to spend time punching a clock—it's much better to kick back and cruise.

Suggested Requisites: None

Suggested Perks: None... although your character's got a lot of free time, and isn't beholden to anyone else.

Possible Contacts: Bartender, Call Girl, Dealer, Ganglander (choose a specific gang), Grease Monkey, Groupie, Gutter Punk, Layabout, Local Store Owner, Rock Star, Waitress

Suggested Edges: Connections, Luck, Great Luck, Rich, Filthy Rich

MESSENGER

Nicknames: Bagman, Courier, Runner

Starting Credits: 6,000 credits plus 2d6 × 100 credits in tips (this roll can't Ace)

Bonus Credits: 1,500 credits plus 1d6 × 100 credits in tips at each Advance (this roll can Ace)

Through rain and sleet and snow and hail? Yeah, maybe... but it'll probably cost extra, tomo. 'Cause while life in 2088 might be cheap, services ain't. But be it letters, packages, or personal property, you're the guy they call to get it from point A to point B. It don't matter whether you're on skates, a bike, a car, or even a small orbital shuttle, you'll make the delivery—as long as you get paid. Of course, unless you're hoofing it, you've gotta provide your own ride... and that's the case whether you're a private contractor, or work for some company like PonyEx or FedUp. But you know your hood better than most, and that's why you can make the creds the way you do.

Suggested Requisites: Boating, Driving, Piloting or Riding d8+, Streetwise d6+

Suggested Perks: +2 to Streetwise checks when seeking a location, an extra contact and a place to hang out or crash if your character works for a service.

Possible Contacts: Bartender, Corporate Wage Slave, Crime Boss, Fixer, Ganglander (choose a specific gang), Gear Head, Government Official, Grease Monkey, Local Store Owner, Mob Soldier, Smuggler, Taxi Driver, Waitress

Suggested Edges: Ace, Acrobat, Alertness, Connections, Danger Sense, Dodge, Fleet-Footed, Improved Dodge, Strong Willed

READER

Nicknames: Adviser, Counselor, Eyes, Spook

Starting Credits: 8,000 credits plus 1,000 credits per level of Power

Bonus Credits: 3,000 credits plus 500 credits per level of Power at each Advance

There are a few people who are pragmatic enough to realize a psion's uses, and that's where you come in. These are people who want to know about the people they're dealing with—if they're telling the truth, what their motives might be... any number of things, depending upon the client. Some readers are freelance, selling their services to any who can pay. Others who've developed a better rep may be able to pick up a permanent position with a client willing to keep them on retainer. And the best can go freelance again, only working for the highest bidders. Sure... a lot of people are leery of you since they fear you can peak into people's heads—but that's also why they want to keep you around.

Suggested Requisites: Notice d8+, Arcane Background (Psionics) with peek Powers

Suggested Perks: +1 bonus to initial Street Cred, along with food and lodging—depending upon the client's nature.

Possible Contacts: Corporate Executive, Crime Boss, Detective, Gang Boss, Government Official, Media Icon, Politician, Private Investigator

Suggested Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Psionics), Charismatic, Enhanced Ability, Improved Rapid Recharge, Mentalist, Mind Over Matter, New Power, Peek, Power Points, Power Surge, Rapid Recharge, Strong Willed

SNITCH

Nicknames: Fink, Informant, Rat, Spy

Starting Credits: 3,000 credits

Bonus Credits: 1,500 credits at each Advance

Yeah... you know a few people here and there. But more importantly, you know what they've been doing. And for the right price, you might even be willing to share that information. Maybe you're a janitor at some big megacorp building complex; maybe you bus tables where a crime boss likes to eat; maybe you run with a gang... hell, it could be as simple as you hang in your hood and just happen to 'overhear' things. Whatever the case, there are a few people who know you, too, and they value the

service you can provide. Just don't get caught—which is why you don't trust a lot of people either. Nobody likes a snitch. But at least there are some suckers willing to pay for one.

Suggested Requisites: Notice d6+, Stealth d6+

Suggested Perks: This occupation might actually get your character killed (or at least a Wanted Hindrance) if he's ever found out, but it might also get him a 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card in a pinch... both depend on who he's snitching to and who he's snitching on.

Possible Contacts: Agent, Bodyguard, Bounty Hunter, Call Girl, Crime Boss, Dealer, Detective, Ganglander (choose a specific gang), Hacker, Mob Soldier, Pirate Blogger, Politician, Private Investigator, Ronin, Sanitation Worker, Street Cop, Street Muscle, Taxi Driver, Waitress

Suggested Edges: Alternate Identity, Connections, Danger Sense, Dodge, Great Luck, Improved Dodge, Improved Pack Fighting, Investigator, Luck, Pack Fighting, Thief

TAXI DRIVER

Nicknames: Cab Driver, Cabbie, Hack

Starting Credits: 8,000 credits plus $2d6 \times 100$ credits in tips (this roll can't Ace)

Bonus Credits: 2,000 credits plus $1d6 \times 100$ credits in tips at each Advance (this roll can Ace)

Get in, sit down, shut up and hang on—that's your credo. Okay, okay... maybe they don't have to shut up if they're interesting enough, but usually they just want to be driven from someplace to someplace else, and that's what you're getting paid to do. You could operate a cab or a limo (in some parts of the world, it might even be a rickshaw), but the job is basically the same: pick up the client, drive him to where he wants to go, and collect the fare. Fortunately, you know the sprawl like the back of your hand, and can drive like a maniac. You'd probably make a smoking wheelman, but you prefer to stay more legit—most of the time. Sometimes it just depends on whether you're driving for a company, or going solo as a freelance. Whatever. In any case it's the same: Get in, sit down, shut up and hang on.

Suggested Requisites: Driving d8+, Streetwise d8+

Suggested Perks: +2 to Streetwise checks when seeking a location, and a place to hang out or crash in many cases. Additionally, cab services usually provide a vehicle from their fleet—although your character is responsible for insurance (1,000 credits paid once during each Rank).

Possible Contacts: Bartender, Bounty Hunter, Call Girl, Corporate Executive, Corporate Wage Slave, Crime Boss, Dealer, Ganglander (choose a specific gang), Gear Head, Government Official, Grease Monkey, Media Icon, Mob Soldier, Street Cop, Waitress

Suggested Edges: Ace, Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Connections, Danger Sense, Improved Level Headed, Level Headed, Professional, Quick, Steady Hands

WAITER/WAITRESS

Nicknames: Busboy, Host/Hostess, Server, Steward/Stewardess, Wench

Starting Credits: 4,000 credits plus $(1d6 + \text{Charisma}) \times 100$ credits in tips (this roll can't Ace)

Bonus Credits: 1,000 credits plus $(1d4 + \text{Charisma}) \times 100$ credits in tips at each Advance (this roll can Ace)

What can you say? Bartenders serve drinks, but someone's got to serve the food. Sure the hours suck sometimes, and your feet hurt at the end of the day. But the tips can be good—when you get that rare great customer—and at least it'll pay the bills until you get your big break, ne?

Suggested Requisites: Persuasion d6+

Suggested Perks: If your character has a positive Charisma modifier, he can count on receiving a gift from an admirer worth $1d6 \times 500$ credits once each Rank.

Possible Contacts: Bartender, Call Girl, Corporate Executive, Corporate Wage Slave, Crime Boss, Government Official, Media Icon, Mob Soldier, Politician, Taxi Driver

Suggested Edges: Ambidextrous, Attractive, Block, Charismatic, Connections, Danger Sense, Dodge, Improved Block, Improved Dodge, Improved Nerves of Steel, Nerves of Steel, Very Attractive

POWERS

Although we haven't put any restrictions on which powers can be used in *Interface Zero*, the GM is always the final arbiter. If your GM doesn't want zeeks flying around Chi-town, she has every right to veto the fly Power.

That said, there are certain powers which lend themselves more appropriately to psions than others—fear or telekinesis, for example. And regardless of what powers you may choose for your character, you should attempt for them to be cohesive and make sense. After all, if you've decided he's

a pyrokinetic and given him bolt and elemental manipulation, he's probably not likely to have invisibility as well.

To help you out, here's how we've distributed the Powers:

Peek: *beast friend, detect/conceal arcana, empathic link*, fear, illusion*, invisibility, night terror*, obscure, psychic block*, puppet, remote sensing*, speak language, stun, and telepathic link*.*

Tweek: *armor, blast, bolt, burst, deflection, elemental manipulation, entangle, environmental protection, fine manipulation*, fly, greater healing, healing, smite, and telekinesis.*

Freek: *astral projection*, barrier, boost/lower trait, burrow, dispel, light, obscure, psychic block*, quickness, shape change, smite, speed, teleport, and zombie.*

**These are new Powers, and are detailed below.*

You may note a few of the Powers are duplicated. That's because psionics So the isn't an exact science and—as with most things in *Savage Worlds*—there's usually more than one way to skin a cat. Your GM always has the final say, but if you can make a case for a Power falling into another category (usually by specifically defining the trappings), she may allow it. And, with your GM's permission, you can look through other *Savage Worlds* supplements (like the *Savage Worlds: Fantasy Companion*) for other potentially viable powers.

HOW TO BEND SPOONS

Mechanically speaking, we haven't changed the rules much. You still roll a Psionics skill check against the standard Target Number 4, and as long as you have a success, the power is activated. However, if the roll results in a Failure, the character takes a level of Fatigue.

The tricky part for a zeek is he can still get run down and take Fatigue by using high-cost powers, even if his Psionics check is successful. The margin of Fatigue is determined by the difference between his Power and the Point Cost of the power

TABLE 2.2: FATIGUE RESULTS

COST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
POWER	GAIN A LEVEL OF FATIGUE ON A ROLL EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN:										
0	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	F	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2	F	F	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
3	F	F	F	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
4	F	F	F	F	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	F	F	F	F	F	4	5	6	7	8	9
6	F	F	F	F	F	F	4	5	6	7	8
7	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	4	5	6	7

'F' indicates the character only gains Fatigue if the Psionics roll results in Failure.

Cost: The Power Point cost of a given power as listed in its description.

being used—in other words, the more costly the power, the higher the number needed on the skill roll to avoid Fatigue.

As long as a character's Power is at least equal to the cost of the power being used, he'll only suffer Fatigue if he fails his Psionics roll. But when the cost of a power is higher than the zeek's power level, it increases the target number to use the power (and avoid Fatigue) by the difference. To help make the calculation easier, see table 2.2 Fatigue Results.

A zeek can also take Fatigue by maintaining a power for too long. A power can be maintained for the Power's duration multiplied by the the character's Power. After that, the character suffers a level of Fatigue and must make a Spirit check to continue maintaining the power, as per the *Savage Worlds* rules. For example, character with a Power 3 may maintain a power with a listed duration of 1 round for 3 rounds, before suffering a level of fatigue and having to make a Spirit check.

Note that, in any case, a character can only take one level of Fatigue at a time through the use of his powers. Also, if a character successfully uses a power with a duration, but is knocked unconscious by taking Fatigue from it, the power is still activated, but cannot be maintained any longer than the duration.

As a final note, Fatigue taken from using powers cannot kill—characters are only incapacitated and rendered unconscious until they recover one level of Fatigue.

Example: Let's replay the introductory text on page 3 using Jessie's stats, which can be found on page 32.

Jessie has activated her remote sensing to watch for the approach of any Zentek strike teams. Used in this way, remote sensing has a cost of 2, which is less than Jessie's Power 3—she only has to worry about Fatigue if she fails her Psionics skill check. She rolls a 5 on her Skill Die and a 4 on her Wild die, so the power activates with no problems.

After the power's one-minute duration, Jessie chooses to keep the power active. Since she has Power 3, she's fine for the next three minutes, at which point she takes a level of Fatigue. She wants to keep looking for incoming enemies, so she must make a Spirit check to keep the remote sensing active for another three minutes. She rolls her d6 for Spirit, along with her Wild Die, and gets a 5 and a 4 respectively. Even with the -1 penalty she now has for Fatigue, she is able to keep the power active.

This is somewhat fortunate for her, as in the next minute she senses the approach of the strike team. Jessie drops her remote sensing before she incurs any more Fatigue, and instead decides to cut loose on the soldiers as they drop into the area, using her bolt with all the options added (allowing her three 3d6 attacks). This means she's using the power at a cost of 6—which is higher than her Power 3—so she needs to roll an 8 on her Psionics check to avoid more Fatigue (the difference between her Power and the cost, the standard success of 4, and she gets a -1 due to her current Fatigue).

She rolls three d8s for her Psionics skill, plus her Wild Die. Her final totals (after the -1 penalty for Fatigue) are 6, 4, and 2 on her Skill Dice, but her Wild Die aces, giving her a final total of 8, so she hits all three of her targets (one with a Raise). However, that '4', while still successful, was under her target of 7 to avoid Fatigue, so she takes another level of Fatigue. Even though the '6' also failed to beat that target, Jessie doesn't have to worry about it since a character can only take one level of Fatigue at a time from using powers.

But now Jessie is in trouble. She's taken down half the strike team, but she's got two levels of Fatigue and is feeling pretty wiped out... and one of the survivors has called down their VTOL, which is armed with a heavy weapon. As it comes into range, Jessie decides to use her blast with maximum damage. This has a cost of 4, which exceeds her Power by 1, so she needs to roll a 5 to avoid gaining Fatigue (the difference added to a standard success of 4, means she gains Fatigue on a 4 or less).

Jessie's Skill Die roll is 6 and her Wild Die roll is 2. Subtracting 2 for her Fatigue, she still manages a 4 for a success, and the blast goes off, wiping out the VTOL crew and much of the vehicle's interior. But 4 isn't high enough to avoid the Fatigue, and as the wreckage of the VTOL falls on the remaining members of the strike team, Jessie—having now taken three levels of Fatigue—collapses to the ground, unconscious from exhaustion.

REST AND RELAXATION

In order to recover Fatigue gained from using Powers, a character must rest. As long as he continues using any Powers, he won't recover any Fatigue. Once a character goes 3 hours without using any Powers, he recovers 1 Fatigue regardless of any other activity he might be doing, and continues to recover Fatigue every 3 hours (as long as he doesn't use any Powers). In other words, a character who has passed out from psychic exhaustion will need nine hours of rest to fully recover.

THE 'OOPS' FACTOR

Although the Brainburn rules from *Savage Worlds* work fine for *Interface Zero*, some GMs may want an alternate 'fumble' rule. Zeeks are already in trouble if they roll low on their Skill Die, but as an alternative, when a character rolls a 1 on his Psionic Skill Die, subtract the cost of the Power being attempted and apply the appropriate effect based on the result:

NET RESULT	EFFECT
0	No other effect than the incurred Fatigue.
-1 to -2	The character is Shaken in addition to the Fatigue.
-3 to -4	The character is Shaken and takes 2 levels of Fatigue.
-5 or less	The character is Shaken and takes 3 levels of Fatigue.

On a roll of double 1s, calculate the results as above, but the character takes a Wound in place of any Fatigue. You really oughta be careful mucking around those neural pathways, ami.



NEW POWERS

ASTRAL PROJECTION

- **Rank:** Seasoned
- **Power Points:** 4
- **Range:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 minute (1/minute)
- **Trappings:** The psion sits still and enters a meditative trance.

Although a hallmark psychic ability, *astral projection* is a bit of a two-edged sword in the world of 2088. When a psion successfully uses this Power, his spirit leaves his body and may travel nearly instantly to any place within a number of miles equal to his Smarts. While there, he is invisible and intangible to normal senses, although he can see and hear anything going on. In fact, he can even use his psychic abilities while in this state.

Here's the rub: the psion's TAP is back in his body, and doesn't process what amounts to 'spiritual stimuli'. In other words, although the zeek is invisible to the physical world, hyper-reality is invisible to him. He can't see pop-ups or TAGs, and he can't access anything that requires an HR interface.

The other problem is the psion's body is sitting back at... wherever, and is vulnerable if it's been left unattended. In practical terms, if the body is killed, the zeek won't know until it's too late. In actuality, his astral self can wander around for a number of hours equal to his Spirit, but if he can't find a way to re-integrate with something physical, the rest of him will dissipate. Forever. End of story.

EMPATHIC LINK

- **Rank:** Novice
- **Power Points:** 2/4
- **Range:** Smarts or Smarts $\times 2$ (see below)
- **Duration:** 3 (1/round)
- **Trappings:** The psion concentrates on his target, either subtly matching body language or whispering his intentions, depending upon the desired effect.

A psion can use *empathic link* to either read or project emotions.

For 2 Power Points, the psion can choose a target within range of his Smarts and make a Psionics roll. On a Success, the psion gains a bonus of +1 Charisma with the target, and a +2 bonus

SO HOW DO PSIONICS LOOK?

Eventually, one of your players is bound to ask this, so we'll give you an answer: "Just like the rest of us, ami." Okay... the not-so-smart-ass answer is, while it's really up to you as the GM, we've approached psionics from the 'traditional' method. That means while a zeek may have to scrunch his eyes or concentrate or whatever, the Power itself isn't really visible so much as its effects. If you really want to get colorful, you can always describe 'ripple effects' in the air, and that sort of thing, but psionic powers are basically invisible.

to any Notice checks to understand the target's feelings. With a Raise, these bonuses are doubled. Note that using the Notice skill to read a target's emotions only provides feelings, not motives. For example, the psion may realize the target is angry and hostile, but not why nor what the target intends to do.

For 4 Power Points, the psion can choose a target within range of his Smarts $\times 2$ and make a Psionics roll. The target may attempt to resist this with an opposed Spirit check. If the psion is successful (i.e. not resisted), he may cause the target to experience any emotion he desires. In some cases, this can simply be role-played, but the usual mechanical effect is to either raise or lower the targets reaction toward someone else by one step—two if the psion wins with a Raise. Bear in mind, these feelings are artificially induced, and the target will return to 'normal' when the duration ends.

FINE MANIPULATION

- **Rank:** Novice
- **Power Points:** 1
- **Range:** Smarts
- **Duration:** Instant
- **Trappings:** The psion focuses on the object he's working with and physically mimics the action.

When most people think of telekinesis, they think of powerful tweaks throwing people and cars around with a mere thought. But in reality most practitioners have to learn the basics first... and that's what *fine manipulation* is all about.

This ability allows the psion to perform, at a distance, any action he could normally manage with his hands, fingers or a small tool. While this can be great for entertainment value (nothing beats the look on a Ravenlocke security guard's face when his trousers come undone and fall to his ankles), it





also has a lot of practical uses such as picking tumbler locks and retrieving dropped items... especially from very tight confines.

Fine manipulation does have some limitations: a psion can't move an object that weighs more than about five pounds, and while he can affect mechanical devices, it is only insofar as they are moveable—in other words, pulleys, winches, levers, switches and the like can be operated, but he couldn't reprogram a computer or cause an electrical system to overload (although he could theoretically disconnect wires or cause short circuits by crossing them).

ILLUSION

- **Rank:** Seasoned
- **Power Points:** 3/6
- **Range:** Smarts
- **Duration:** 3 (1–2/round)
- **Trappings:** The psion concentrates on his target, staring intently.

When a psion creates an 'illusion', he's not actually making something tangible appear, but rather the psion is tapping into his target's consciousness and creating the *belief* of something being there. Unless the target can succeed at an opposed Spirit check against the zeek's Psionics roll, he will see, hear, smell, feel—even taste—what he believes he should.

For 3 Power Points, the psion can affect a single individual. For 6 Power Points, the psion can affect everyone under a Medium Burst template, although they each make their Spirit check with a +1 bonus. In this case, everyone affected remains in the grip of the illusion, even if they move away from each other.

Since this is essentially just an induced psychosis, Illusion can't be used to directly inflict damage on a target. On the other hand, someone who believes he's crossing an empty street is still subject to being hit by oncoming traffic.

Also, the mind is a strange place, and the GM may have to adjudicate certain events. For example, a character 'shot' by an illusory gun won't take any damage, but he *will* believe he has. In practical terms, he'll suffer the appropriate Wound penalties, although he won't have any actual Wounds.

Any perceived effects end when the power does, although subsidiary effects will remain. In other words, the punk hit by oncoming traffic is still on the local morning news.

NIGHT TERROR

- **Rank:** Veteran
- **Power Points:** 2+
- **Range:** Smarts ×2
- **Duration:** Special
- **Trappings:** The psion concentrates on his target, and 'zones out' for the duration.

While a zeek can use *illusion* to create unnerving and even debilitating effects, *night terror* is a more insidious version of mental attack. With this ability, the psion reaches into his target's mind and uses their own conscious and subconscious fears to create a monster. Unlike illusions, these constructs of the id can cause direct and tangible harm. The only way to use this ability is to attack a sleeping target, and the 'attack' is often repeated over a period of several nights, slowly wearing down the victim until death ensues.

To use this Power, the psion must first decide how much Power he wants to invest. Every 2 points grants an increase of one Die Type to the ability of the *night terror*—in other words, a d8 *night terror* would cost 6 Power Points. The target may attempt to resist the attack by opposing the zeek's Psionics skill check with a Spirit roll. If he succeeds, the Power has no effect and the target gets a full night's rest.

Should the Spirit check result in Failure, however, the target must contend with the *night terror*. The *night terror* rolls its ability Die Type, and the victim must meet or beat the roll with a Guts check. If this roll succeeds, the *night terror* dissipates, but the target is considered to have not rested for the night—which can potentially affect both Fatigue and Wound recovery. A Failure on the Guts check results in the same thing, with the addition of gaining a level of Fatigue. This Fatigue *can* kill. The only 'good news' for a victim of this type of attack is a full night's rest will remove all Fatigue gained in this way.

PSYCHIC BLOCK

- **Rank:** Novice
- **Power Points:** 1
- **Range:** Self
- **Duration:** 3 (1/round)
- **Trappings:** The psion concentrates, and appears somewhat distracted from immediate events.

By using this Power, the psion reinforces his mind to better protect himself from other psychic attacks or intrusions. By making a successful Psionics roll, the character gains a +2 bonus on any opposed Trait checks and +2 Armor against

any psychic Powers. With a Raise, both bonuses increase to +4. In either case, these bonuses don't stack with the Arcane Resistance Edge.

REMOTE SENSING

- **Rank:** Novice
- **Power Points:** 2/3+
- **Range:** Smarts $\times 2$
- **Duration:** 1 minute (1/minute)
- **Trappings:** The psion's eyes lose focus, and he seems to 'space out'.

This Power can be used in two ways: divining and far-sensing.

For 2 Power Points, the character can attempt to detect a specific circumstance within range. This is similar to making a Notice check, only the power will be able to 'see' something the character normally couldn't—such as a particular ring locked inside a safe deposit box. The character will only 'know' that something is or isn't there... he may know a diary is in the next room, but he can't actually *read* it. Also note the power can be used to sense less substantial things, like emotions and intent.

For 3 Power Points, the character can project his senses away from his physical body. In this case, the psion can exceed the power's normal range, but suffers a -1 penalty to his Psionics check for every increment by which he does. In other words, his roll is at -1 if he exceeds Smarts $\times 2$, -2 if he exceeds Smarts $\times 4$, -3 if he exceeds Smarts $\times 6$, and so on. The base Power Point cost is also considered 1 point higher for every minus taken for range—so to 'see' out to a range of Smarts $\times 6$, the penalty would be -2, and the Power Point cost would be 5.

TELEPATHIC LINK

- **Rank:** Seasoned
- **Power Points:** 1/2/4
- **Range:** Smarts or Smarts $\times 2$ (see below)
- **Duration:** Instant or 3 (1/round) (see below)
- **Trappings:** The psion concentrates, either staring intently at his target or 'zoning out' while mentally conversing.

Telepathic link has several applications: mind reading, mind probing and telepathic communication.

For 1 Power Point, the psion can choose a target within range of his Smarts and attempt to scan the target's surface thoughts. The effect is instant, and with a successful Psionics skill roll, the psion knows what the target is currently thinking—which may or may not be helpful or enlightening. Since this is a non-intrusive effect, the target will also remain unaware of the reading.

For 2 Power Points, the psion can actually enter into psychic communication with another mind within range of his Smarts $\times 2$. This can be maintained, but because it is more intrusive than a simple scan, the target may choose to resist by making an opposed Spirit check. If the Spirit roll fails to beat the Psionics roll, or the target chooses to accept the link, thoughts can be shared freely between the two minds as long as the Power is maintained.

For 4 Power Points, the psion can attempt to probe the mind of a target within range of his Smarts. This is also an instant effect, but is highly intrusive—akin to mental rape. As a result, the target will be immediately aware of the fact someone is rifling through his thoughts and may attempt to resist with an opposed Spirit check. If the probe is successful, the psion can access the target's true feelings, intents and memories.

In the case of both mental scans and probes, the GM may have to adjudicate what the target actually knows, or what he is actually thinking.



CHAPTER THREE: MALLMART 2088 FALL UPDATE

MALLMART

We will soon be sending out our Malmart 2088 update – be sure not to miss it! However, in case you just can't wait, here are some featured products for our loyal customers:

Take advantage of these new offers that we've made available especially for our regulars! This week, we're highlighting new toys for the brainpan: whether you're a zeek, a zeek watcher, or just want to feel like part of the in crowd, we've got something for you!

And even if you don't want to mess with the zeeks, we've got your back with a couple extra goodies!

N-VOGUE PROGRAMMABLE MEMORY CLOTHES

The labs of fashion mogul Genevieve Shashirandran are proud to present the latest in nano-tech clothing design: programmable memory clothes. Never be out without the latest fashions again!

Using proven memory cloth technology, N-Vogue has introduced a tiny programmable TAG™* that stores up to six patterns at a time and will allow the wearer to don any one of them with a mere thought. Be ready for that night out after a long day of work in moments! Choose from hundreds of the latest styles and fashions! New designs can be downlinked from N-Vogue at any time!

Disclaimer: Programmable memory clothes come with a tiny lithium power cell to provide the constant electrical charge required to hold their shape. **N-Vogue** nor any of its fiduciaries or subsidiaries bears any responsibility for memory cloth failure due to a loss of electrical current.

*The Tendril Access Genie™ is installed with permission and under license by SAGE IT&TS.

- Adjusts to three gradients: Negligible Nylon, Sporty Spandex or Lasting Latex!
- Grants a +1 Charisma bonus in appropriate social situations!
- Comes with two outfits of your choice!
- Downlink additional outfits for only 1,000 credits each!
- **Cost:** 5,000 credits



WASTELANDER™ BODY ARMOR



ROAD WEAR WASTELANDER™ BODY ARMOR

You're cruising the open highways on a ton of metal and ceramics powered by 500 horses. You don't want to look like some n00b urban punk. You don't want to look like some lame business exec. And you sure as hell don't want to look like a freakin' samurai. At **Road Wear**, we get it. You want to look like you *own* that highway. That's why all our gear is made from high-quality and rugged materials. We only use things like genuine synthetic leather, and matte-finished Dura-Chrome™. With **Road Wear**, you *are* a road warrior!

Our Wastelander™ series of body armor provides the ultimate in flexibility and protection: hardened synth-leather and Dura-Chrome-finished ceramic Kevlar plates ensure both mobility, and functional resistance to impacts and penetration—even from bullets. Top it off with a Wastelander™ helmet, and no one's gonna mess with your ride, *ami*!

- Available in both *Mucho Macho™* and *Fatally Femme™* styles, in sizes Small to Large.
- All styles include a dozen Quick Clips™ to allow easy access to tools, gear and weapons.
- Awesome protection at +4 Armor all-around (torso, legs and arms).
- Add the same protection to your head for only 1,000 credits extra! (*Road Wear is not liable for the 50% chance of failure.)
- Easy portability at a weight of only 15 lbs. (add an additional 5 lbs. for the helmet).
- **Cost:** 4,000 credits

SENTINEL ROCK 'LONE RIDER™' ASSAULT/HUNTING RIFLE

At **Sentinel Rock**, we understand the rigors of traveling by ground—whether across the wastes of the American prairie or through the jungles of the urban sprawls. And we realize there are different guns for different needs: when confronted by a wild group of wasteland gangers, you don't want to be stuck with a single-shot rifle; but why waste ammo when you're hunting wild longhorn?

Rather than carrying multiple handguns, the Lone Rider™ allows you to change from an assault carbine to a long-barrel rifle with the flip of a switch. In single-shot mode, the same recoil dampeners that cushion your automatic fire invert the kinetic energy to give your shot maximum impact. And when

the hordes descend, the Lone Rider™ converts just as easily back to its assault version!

- Fully compatible with most targeting apps and mods.
- Range of 24/48/96 in both modes.
- .30 caliber rounds do 2d8 damage with Autofire, boosted to 2d8+1 for Single-Shot mode.
- Rate of Fire is 3 for Autofire or 1 for Single-Shot.
- Handy, 20-round magazine.
- Recommended for Strength d6 or better.
- Standard rounds give AP 2.
- Requires one Action to switch from Autofire to Single-Shot or back.
- Solidly built, and weighs in at 12 lbs (5.5 kilos).
- **Cost:** 4,500 credits

INTERFACE SPEX (I-SPEX)

Not everyone has a Tendril Access Processor. Some people have immune-system reactions, others have problems with neurocompatibility. There are also religious groups which frown on implants, or people who simply find the idea creepy. Yet one still must remain connected to The Deep in order to function in the modern world. The solution is the Interface Spex, (I-spex for short), developed by the **Kensei** corporation. Interface spex allow wearers to see and interact with HR objects without a tendril access processor. The lenses provide full-color 3-D image overlay, with speakers built into the temples. I-spex come with enough onboard memory to run two programs rated at 3 or lower. Users may not ghost with I-spex.

- -1 to any hacking-related skill using spex in place of a neural interface
- 100 grams
- **Cost:** 1,000 credits

DISPOSABLE I-SPEX

The absolute low-end personal interface, disposable I-spex, developed by **Kensei**, are used in schools and given away by welfare agencies. The lenses are a simple 2-D screen, with tiny speakers in the earpieces and a wireless link to the local network. They work for about a week and then you throw them away. Disposable I-spex come with enough onboard memory to run a single program rated at 3 or lower. Users may not ghost with disposable I-spex

- -2 to hacking related skills
- 50 grams
- **Cost:** 500 credits

KILNER SPECS

Is the chica across the room actually checking you out? Or is she really picking your brain for your BankBuddy password? Now you can know for sure with Kilner Specs. Don't be fooled by cheap imitations—only **Aquarius Engineering** has the real thing. Strap on a pair of Kilner Specs, and feel the peace of mind that comes with knowing. The best Psi-Hunters in the NAC use **Aquarius**, so why shouldn't you?

Kilner Specs allow the wearer to act as if he has the Detect Arcana Power. By making a successful Notice check, the character can 'see' the use of any Psionic powers within range. Note, however, that all other visually-oriented Notice checks are made with a -2 penalty due to the nature of the lenses and processors.

- Made of high-tensile materials to resist breaking.
- Adjustable straps allow for easy fitting and wear.
- Lightweight at only ½ kilogram.
- Available in Midnight Black, Urban Grey, or Hi-Tech Chrome.
- **Cost:** 2,500 credits

KIRLIAN DAMPENER

Have an unruly zeek to deal with? Then **Aquarius Engineering** has just the thing for you. Long years of painstaking research have led to the development of the Kirlian Dampener—a helmet designed to suppress psionic activity by arresting any gamma activity in the brain. Don't take any chances with your mind—the best Psi-Hunters in the NAC use **Aquarius**, so why shouldn't you?

The Kirlian Dampener must be placed on the psion's head in order to work. While worn, any Psionics skill checks are made with a -2 penalty and the psion suffers an additional -1 to any other Trait rolls as if he'd taken a Wound (this is the result of a high-frequency whine emitted by the device—it's actually very annoying and quite uncomfortable). The psion is also considered to have +1 Armor on his head.

- Impact-resistant plastic construction makes it tough to break.
- Adjustable chinstrap means one size fits all.
- Sturdy and weighs in at a mere 2 kilograms.
- Available in Midnight Black, Urban Grey, or Hi-Tech Chrome.
- **Cost:** 4,000 credits

PSI-ENHANCER

Developed and produced by **Kenta Cyber Dynamics**, the PSI-Enhancer is designed to give you the edge over other zeeks. This small neuro enhancer, is surgically placed in the frontal cortex and boosts gamma brain activity, as well as provides you the ability to maintain concentration even in the most distracting situations.

- **Item Quality:** Streetware
- **Availability:** Available on the open market.
- **Functions:** (2 points) +1 Skill bonus to Psionic skill rolls and trait tests involving Concentration.
- **Defect Points:** 2 (-2 penalty to cybertrauma rolls)
- **Cost:** 42,500 credits

PSI-KICK™

Created by Zentek Labs, Psi-Kick™ is just the thing to turn you from being just another zeek to being a Master of Psionics! Psi-Kick™ boosts your psionic abilities, allowing you to accomplish tasks you otherwise could only dream of doing. Remember: When you think psychic, think Psi-Kick™!

- **Nicknames:** Akira, Kick, Zeeker (also Freeker, Peeker or Tweeker).
- **Duration:** 1 dose lasts 1d4 hours
- **Administered:** Intravenous injection*
- **Effect:** Psi-Kick™ (decathoranol) is believed to work by stimulating the portions of the brain associated with psionic activity, allowing for more focused and efficient neural transmission, as well as a strong sense of self-esteem. Psi-Kick™ increases the user's Power by 2, and grants a +2 bonus to his Psionics skill.
- **Side Effects:** Psi-Kick™ can cause minor muscle tremors, which slightly inhibit motor functions, and can lead to an over-inflated sense of self-worth. While on Psi-Kick™, the user suffers a -1 penalty to all Agility and Agility-related skill rolls, and also suffers from the Arrogant Hindrance. Additionally, when the drug wears off, the user's Power is reduced by 1 for 1d4 hours. This can be negated by taking a new dose of Psi-Kick™.
- **Addictiveness:** -2 penalty to Spirit rolls to avoid becoming addicted for each dose taken within a 24-hour period. (Minor Habit)
- **Cost per dose:** 500 credits

Hypodermics are available from **Zentek Labs at a cost of 20 credits. Needles are available at a cost of 10 credits for a pack of 10.*

CHAPTER FOUR: SAVAGE TALES... ZEEK STYLE

Although, as we mentioned, a number of government and corporate interests have sought to divine the secret of what makes a psion tick, no one really knows for sure. While psychic activity seems to result in a certain amount of neural-electric activity, it has been impossible to consistently replicate this activity artificially.

What this effectively means is that no AI has ever been able to demonstrate psi powers, and even when sims are fitted with psi-inducing implants and uploaded with a formerly psychic engram, they have never shown themselves to be likewise capable of psionics. Inversely, there remains a number of anecdotal tales of psychic sims.

Some research has met with limited success—enough so that various corporations continue to delve into psychic research for any number of reasons.

One such is Zentek (全テク) Labs. Officially a pharmaceutical research company under the umbrella of Kenta Cyber Dynamics, the actual purpose of Zentek is to unlock the secrets of psionics—although to what end remains to be seen. But the fact that Zentek keeps one of its main facilities in the free city of Chicago means it may only be a matter of time before some group of heroes might find themselves involved...

SAVAGE TALE: A FRIEND IN NEED

This tale can pretty much be dropped in anywhere you'd like. It's set in Chi-Town, but there's no reason you couldn't alter some minor details and locate the events to suit your needs. For purposes of presenting this tale, it's assumed that one or more of the characters are familiar with Samuel Brown. It doesn't matter if they've met him 'in game'... Old Friends always have a way of popping up at the damndest times.

Samuel Brown is a bounty hunter who goes by the street name Simba. He's also found himself in a bit of a problem. Having been hired to track down a girl wanted for murder by a man who wished to remain anonymous, Simba has found himself being hunted by corporate security while he tries to find out more about this mysterious girl.

Right now, he needs several things: a decent street doc to treat a gunshot wound, a decent hacker to pull a Trojan out of his TAP, and lots and lots of information. He might also end up needing some muscle. Simba shows up on the doorstep of any hero who can handle one of those things—giving priority to the top items on his wish list.

Where ever it may be, Simba shows up sporting an armored trench coat, a nasty-looking shoulder wound, and a ragged, unconscious girl.

TAKING CARE OF SIMBA

Sam has taken a single Wound, so it shouldn't be too hard to patch him up—a successful Healing check will do it. The biggest problem is time... He's been running and hiding for a while now, so if a medic can't heal him in one try, his hour is up and he's stuck with the Wound. Sometimes life sucks that way.

Busting into Simba's TAP isn't all that difficult, either: He's perfectly willing to disable enough protection that a hacker only has to beat a Parry and Toughness of 4. The Trojan is the real problem.

First of all, as soon as the hacker starts busting in, roll a d6 for the system. On a success, the system alerts the Trojan, which will attempt to attack the hacker with surprise. Otherwise, the hacker can find the Trojan on his own... and unless the hacker has some sort of Masking program operating, the Trojan moves in to attack.

TROJAN WORM

Parry: 7, Toughness: 7, Attack: D8, Damage: 2D8, Notice: D8

The Trojan is a fairly sophisticated, taking the form of a (rather toothy and armored) worm entwined in Simba's TAP Stream and spitting a constant sequence of GPS information.

If the Worm overpowers and defeats the hacker, it replicates itself within the hacker's own TAP Stream, sending out his location into The Deep. At that point, the hacker needs some other means to derezz the Worm, since his TAP will view it as part of itself, and resist attempts to expunge it. On the other hand, if the Worm can be derezzed, it's gone.

SIMBA (SAMUEL BROWN)



Simba is an experienced bounty hunter who grew up on the streets of Chi-Town. Unlike some folks in his profession, he has a strong sense of justice, and likes to see the *right* thing done.

Attributes: Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8

Skills: Driving D6, Fighting D8, Hacking D4, Investigation D8, Notice D8, Persuasion D6, Shooting D8, Stealth D6, Streetwise D8, Tracking D6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9/11 (3/5);

Cybertrauma: -2; **Street Cred:** 20

Hindrances: Heroic, Stubborn

Edges: Expert Fighter, Fleet-Footed, Modification Upgrade

Cyberware: (Hyperchrome) Rating 2 TAP (Hacking +1; Pace: 7, Parry: 6, Toughness: 5), Cyber eye w/Flash compensators, low light vision, and image magnification (+1 to Notice rolls involving sight, flashes cannot daze or blind, no penalties for Dim or Dark lighting), Tactical Computer (Shooting Medium and Long range penalties reduced by 1)

Gear: Normal Clothing, AGA Thunderbolt (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 2D10+2; AP2), Street Soldier Combat Trench Coat (+3/+5 Armor; negates 4 AP, covers torso and legs), Handcuffs.



The problem here also is time: Zentek Security personnel are already tracking Simba to his new location, and will strike within a half-hour. If the heroes aren't planning on this, they're in for a rude surprise when the strike team hits.

Zentek Security Soldier: (2 per Hero)

Simba will help to the best of his abilities, although he may be limited if he is still wounded.

INFORMATION GATHERING

There are a number of ways enterprising characters can start sorting out what's going on. Über hackers could possibly trace the Trojan back to Zentek Labs; captured soldiers can be interrogated; Jessie herself can be questioned; informants can be sought out... the list is long, but we'll try to give you some bits to run with.

ZENTEK SECURITY SOLDIER

These guys are professionals, and will operate in a tactically sound manner. If it becomes apparent they are doomed to lose the fight, any survivors will surrender and offer the heroes their standard Crisis Team ransom package: 100 credits per soldier if they are allowed to walk away.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D6, Hacking D4 Intimidation D6, Notice D4, Shooting D6, Stealth D4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7/9 (2/4);

Cybertrauma: 0; **Street Cred:** 8

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Alertness, Expert Fighter, Steady Hands

Cyberware: (Milware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5), Level 1 Muscle Augmentation (Strength increased +1 die type)

Gear: Black Jumpsuit, Assault Rifle (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2D8; AP2, Auto Fire), Tactical Body Armor (+2/+4 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso, arms and legs), Tactical Helmet (Armor +3; head only), Comlink

Jessie is unconscious from psionic Fatigue, and is a good two hours away from regaining consciousness on her own. On the other hand, if the heroes have some handy Fatigue-removing method, she can be awakened and questioned sooner. While her knowledge is sketchy, she actually has a lot of useful information:

- Her only memories are of being raised in some sort of facility.
- She is called 'Jessica 13' there, although she isn't sure why.
- The facility houses a number of zeeks like her, as well as a lot of 'instructors'.
- The instructors seem awfully interested in how zeeks work.
- They are particularly interested in peeks.
- Jessie is a tweek, and so was relegated to sort of a 'second-class' status.
- The man in charge of the facility is named Ohara. It may take a little work to sort out that the name is Japanese, and not Irish.
- Jessie doesn't know where the facility is, *per se*, but she knows the interior very well.
- She had learned she was about to be taken to the 'Grey Room'—a place in the facility where other zeeks have been taken and have never returned. That's why she escaped. Using her powers, she blew out a wall and ran. Jessie is ashamed to admit she took out a few instructors as well, although she will with a little prodding.

Captured soldiers have some other information, if it can be pulled out of them with either threats (Intimidation) or bribes (Persuasion):

- They *technically* work for Crisis Team, but have been indefinitely licensed to Kenta Cyber Dynamics and assigned to the Zentek Labs in Chicago.
- Jessica 13 is legally a ward of Zentek Labs, and technically their property. Currently, Simba and the heroes are guilty of theft, kidnapping, and harboring a fugitive.
- Yes, fugitive. She killed two guards and wounded four Zentek employees in her escape.
- The soldiers know she's a psion, but don't know any particulars about Zentek's research.
- Their orders were to eliminate Jessica 13 as a high-risk threat. They were cleared to use extreme prejudice in dealing with her and anyone who assisted her.

JESSICA 13



Jessie doesn't know much about life outside Zentek labs. She only knows she's been raised by them, experimented on by them, and... well, she wasn't really sure *what* they planned to do to her next. Faced with her choice of unknowns, she opted to break out of Zentek and run.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D4, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D4, Notice D8, Persuasion D6, Psionics D8, Shooting D4, Stealth D6, Streetwise D4

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4; **Cybertrauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 5

Hindrances: Phobia: Needles (Minor), Small, Wanted: Zentek (Minor)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Attractive, Power Points

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: *Blast, Bolt, Remote Sensing**; Power: 3 (**This is a new Power.*)

Gear: Ragged Clothing.

The heroes' best bet is to strike at Zentek quickly or find a serious place to hide.

On the other hand, they could try turning Jessie in to Zentek for the bounty—although Simba is firmly against this, and also surmises (correctly) that Zentek may not honor any theoretical bounty. One thing corporations with secret agendas don't like is outside people who know too much about those agendas.

Of course, *pretending* to be taking Jessie in could at least get the heroes through the front door. But they'll be in a rough spot once inside, since they'll be right in the middle of a bunch of Zentek Security.

For the record, this is what Simba wants to hire the heroes to do: Break into Zentek Labs, find 'Mr. Smith' and bring him out. The plan is to attempt a trade—Mr. Smith for Jessie's freedom. Simba doesn't care much about collateral damage, as long as no innocents are hurt. It would be nice to free some other people, but Simba doesn't see that as likely, and he'll warn the heroes not to whack anyone important or they'll all spend the rest of their days under corporate scrutiny.

WHAT HAVE WE HERE...?

If the heroes dig deep enough into Zentek, they may find some tantalizing information. It seems Zentek is indeed interested in peeks. For what, it's hard to say, although people from Kenta seem unusually interested in a small corporation called 'Omnicon'. It also appears that many of the 'wards' Zentek has acquired were picked up as street orphans—Jessica 13 was one of those (and was apparently the thirteenth girl to bear the 'Jessica' appellation)—but no small number were purchased by Kenta in Chiba City and shipped to Chicago. And what about the people who disappear into the 'Grey Room'? It seems any wards deemed 'incompatible' with the current Omnicon Project are shipped back to Chiba, where they are sold on the Black Market.

ZENTEK LABS

The Zentek research facility can be tracked down any number of ways, but it is in Downer's Grove. It is a secure facility—meaning it has walls, guard stations, intrusion sensors, and automated defenses. Other than legitimate business, the easiest way in is the same way Jessie got out—sewer access.

Bear in mind, though, Zentek is now aware of this 'weak spot' in their perimeter, and has taken pains to temporarily close it until a permanent solution is found. Several Cyber Hounds (*Interface Zero* page 262) now guard the sewer access—figure at least 1 per Hero. Oh... and don't forget the Beetle Rats (*Interface Zero* page 261) if they're crawling through the sewers as well—you can throw 2 or 3 of these per Hero at the group, if you're feeling particularly nasty!

Because of its location, the Zentek building is more of a vertical layout than a sprawling estate. We'll leave some of the particulars up to you, but figure the building is a good twenty stories above ground, with the bigwigs on the top floors. While there are some underground research labs, most serious research is handled on the middle floors. Security would be on the lower floors, with apartments and holding facilities for the on-site residents just above those.

Zentek has a corporate spec computer system and security (assume a standard CAN), with some of the nastier counter-intrusion programs running. Assume most of the security personnel have the same stats as the Zentek Security Soldier

on page 31, only they're armed with security truncheons (Damage: Str+D4; Vigor roll at -2 to avoid being Stunned—the target is Shaken, and cannot recover for 1d6 rounds) and gyro pistols (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8; AP2, SBT).

Additionally, if security is on alert, each team will be joined by a hacker (Zentek Combat Hacker—see below) to breach intruder weapons and defend against virtual intrusion:

The heroes can use Zentek's database to cross-reference personnel files to an image Simba can provide of 'Mr. Smith' in order to find him. He turns out to be Edward Ryder, and he can be found on the 18th floor. If the heroes can get there and secure Ryder, he or Director Ohara will be willing to negotiate.

Ohara is willing to 'overlook' Jessica 13's disappearance for the time being, in return for the heroes surrendering any tangible information they've acquired, as well as Mr. Ryder. But unless they've already escaped the facility before dealing, the heroes had better be prepared to run very fast—no one has any qualms about screwing them over if they're stupid enough to throw away their shield before leaving.

ZENTEK COMBAT HACKER



Zentek employs elite Hackers to act as sysops for their corporate hyperframes. They are armed and armored in case they must be deployed to a non-secure location, but where they shine is in The Deep.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

Skills: Hacking D10, Investigation D8, Notice D6, Shooting D6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6 (1); **Cybertrauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 15

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Expert hacker, Programming 101, Virtual Reach
Cyberware: (Hyperchrome) Rating 3 TAP (Hacking +1; Pace: 8, Parry: 8, Toughness: 9)

Programs: Rating 2 Attack Program (Damage: 2d6+1), Rating 2 Armor Program (Toughness 2), Rating 3 Cutter Program (d8 on rolls to cut through a Firewall)

Gear: Hold-Out Pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6), Leather Jumpsuit (+1 Armor; covers torso, arms and legs).

COMPLICATIONS AND LOOSE ENDS

There are several random elements that could make the heroes' lives difficult in this situation. For one thing, a lot of the things going on in the Gary Hell Zone, leading up to the current situation could easily draw the attention of Psi-Division—it is technically NAC territory, after all. One Psi-Hunter could make it kind of tough to protect Jessie, if that's the route they're taking. You can find some stats for one on page 41.

On the other hand, turning a Psi-Hunter on to Zentek may give the heroes just the diversion they need to get away clean. It all depends on how slick they are.

There is also the possibility of running afoul of other security forces (like Ravenlocke) while the heroes are out shooting things up or otherwise causing mayhem. We'll let you use your imagination here, but just remember: the characters don't exist in a vacuum, and many actions they take will have repercussions.

EDWARD RYDER

Ryder is a career Kenta employee. His particular job is to oversee public relations, and make sure nothing... 'unacceptable' reaches the public sector. As such, it was his job to make sure Jessica 13 was recovered before she made too many waves.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D4, Intimidation D6, Hacking D4, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Persuasion D6, Shooting D6, Streetwise D6, Taunt D6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9/10 (4/5);

Cybertrauma: 0; **Street Cred:** 10

Hindrances: Loyal: Zentek

Edges: Command, Connections: Zentek, Rich

Cyberware: (Hyperchrome) Rating 3 TAP (+1 Hacking; Pace: 8, Parry: 9, Toughness: 7), Level 2 Subdermal Armor (+2 armor)

Gear: Mosquito Storm Handgun (Range: 15/30/45, Damage: 2D4; ROF 4), Executive Decision Business Suit (+2/+3 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso, arms and legs).



Should the heroes succeed, they'll still have to decide what to do with Jessie, and how to deal with Zentek in the long term. As it turns out, given a couple of weeks, Zentek comes to them with an offer to help 'clear things up'...

SAVAGE TALE: DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

This tale is written as a follow up to "A Friend in Need", but you can run the story as a stand-alone with a few minor changes. The events begin when the heroes are approached by Edward Ryder (or a similar agent, if he didn't survive the previous tale) with an offer from Zentek: Get them some solid information about a small corporate interest, Omnicron LTD, and Zentek will forget all about them and Jessica 13.

If this is being run as a stand-alone, you may have to offer the heroes cash instead. Ryder will pay out 5,000 credits and will try hard not to budge from that number. If he pays out any more, there are likely to be strings attached—he will certainly go no higher than twice that amount.

Assuming the heroes are interested in both preserving Jessie's freedom and getting their collective butts out of the sling, Mr. Ryder can provide them with some information to work with:

- Zentek suspects Omnicron is potentially competing with them in psionic research.
- Zentek has no solid proof of this, as so far all attempts to breach Omnicron security has failed. They apparently have an isolated and very secure network.
- Zentek suspects—again with no solid proof—one reason they've been unable to break through Omnicron's security is the company is using an AI that exceeds the Omega Conventions.
- Zentek wants the heroes to physically break into Omnicron's facility and gain solid evidence of what they're doing and how.
- If asked, Ryder will admit Zentek has tried 'peeking' into Omnicron, but the facility is psychically blocked as well. Their best peeks, even boosted with Psi-Kick, haven't been able to look past the facility walls.
- Ryder also gives the heroes the location of the Omnicron facility: it is down in Coffin City.



WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

Since Ryder doesn't know everything, and he isn't going to tell the heroes everything he *does* know, we need to fill in a few details for you.

First of all, don't be fooled into thinking Zentek is being altruistic in their amnesty offer (although you can let any optimistic n00b characters wallow in that fallacy for a while, if you want): Director Ohara is just being practical. He doesn't want the psi-tech competition, and he's pretty sure any information the heroes can extract about Omnicron will benefit Zentek. And he's willing to cut his losses with Jessica 13... After all, she was going to be sold in Chiba City anyway, so her value to the corporation is limited.

What Ohara (nor anyone at Zentek) doesn't know is the truth behind Omnicron LTD. Omnicron isn't just using a rogue AI—Omnicron *is* a rogue AI... and it is inadvertently heading toward a Singularity Event. Omnicron is attempting to 'fix' all of the problems with humanity.

Realizing freethinking, free-willed humans make emotional and judgmental errors, Omnicron is searching for a way to use psionics for mind control. But the AI also realizes leaving humans to control the minds of other humans would be self-defeating, and so is working on a device to amplify the effects of psions artificially through an algorithmic protocol. Omnicron is building a massive mind-control device.

Omnicron uses robots and androids to handle the menial tasks of the operation, which includes picking up any psions the AI can track down through the data streams of The Deep. Unfortunately, Omnicron is running low on resources, as its mind machine literally sucks the life out of the living organisms attached to it. Perhaps more powerful psions would be the answer?

The AI's experiments haven't been without reward, however—the machine does create some sort of psychic field that Omnicron is still attempting to analyze and decipher. It's this artificial Psi Dampener around the facility that prevents Zentek's peeks from seeing in.

If the heroes do a little investigating and research about Omnicron LTD, they'll find they have precious little to go on. The public record lists Omnicron as a 'Privately-Funded Medical Research Group', and since it doesn't have public stock options, it's hard to get anything more specific than that. The records show the president and founder to be a guy named

Jonathan Deere, but there's not much to be found about Mr. Deere other than medical and business licenses.

Should the heroes decide they don't want to take Ryder up on Zentek's offer, it's just a matter of time before 'representatives' from Omnicron come calling. After all, Jessie is a perfect candidate for the AI's needs.

HEADING DOWN UNDER

Down under Chicago, that is. Actually, getting into Coffin City is usually pretty easy—it's surviving and getting out in one piece that's often the tricky part. Coffin City is dangerous. More dangerous than most people—even the really paranoid, want-to-avoid-that-nasty-place people—realize.

The brilliant minds who originally conceived the Eden Complex knew they'd need more than just a few janitors to run the place, so they created an AI—Ophelia-9. The problem now is Ophelia-9 is just a bit 'mental', which is part of the reason things are in such disarray in Coffin City. And that's just perfect as far as Omnicron is concerned, and is why it set up Omnicron LTD in such an unusual location (that, and the near-total lack of law and order). It conjectures any 'unusual' AI activity traced to the underground will be attributed to Ophelia-9.

Once down in Coffin City, the heroes will need to watch out for roving gangs and the like. If you want to beat up on the characters or make them sweat a bit more, feel free to toss some random gang elements at them before they reach the Omnicron facility. You can find those stats starting on page 268 of *Interface Zero*.

But it might be better just to let the heroes remain paranoid because they'll already have their work cut out for them, once they actually reach Omnicron.

BREAKING AND ENTERING

Omnicron has some formidable defenses, so we'll try to cover all of them. They essentially exist in three tiers: psychic, virtual, physical.

Psychic Defenses: If the heroes weren't paying attention during their briefing and try to rely on Jessie (or one of their own zeeks, if they've got one), they'll be in for a nasty surprise. The Omnicron Device creates a psychic dampening field in a 150

meter radius—this means the field actually extends roughly 8" beyond the facility walls.

Psionic Powers cast into the area covered by the field suffer a -4 penalty to the Psionics skill roll, and any psion within the field suffers a 2-point reduction to his Power. Yes... these effects are cumulative. The only place inside the facility where this doesn't apply is within the Holding Tanks of the device itself—a place most zeeks probably don't want to be.

Virtual Defenses: Hackers trying to penetrate Omnicron through The Deep are also in for a nasty surprise if they weren't paying attention to Ryder's briefing. They will have to deal with Omnicron itself, as well as the many nasty toys at its disposal.

For practical purposes, consider the Omnicron domain to be a GAN—Omnicron keeps the network as cut off as it can, and polices the system itself.

The good news for a Hacker is they aren't likely to directly confront Omnicron—it doesn't want to risk its existence prematurely. The bad news is *all* sub-programs on the Omnicron system are considered to be under the AI's direct control and function as AIs themselves.

Guard Dog sub-programs (*Interface Zero* page 284) are common throughout the system, as are Black Asps (*Interface Zero* page 281). If Omnicron must have a direct confrontation, it will do so through a Shogun (*Interface Zero* page 283). Omnicron's actual stats are beyond the scope of this book—information on True AIs will be presented in an upcoming sourcebook dedicated to Hyper Reality and Virtual Reality.

Should the Omnicron Domain become compromised, Omnicron has a 'backdoor' through which it will escape to reconsider its plans and options. And it will remember the humans who thwarted it.

Physical Defenses: A physical assault on Omnicron LTD will involve a lot of stealth, and even more fighting, but may actually be the best way to assault the facility's formidable defenses. This is one of those rare occasions when subtlety isn't necessarily the best approach.

For one thing, while the heroes may have to deal with the physical defenses, they won't be facing any repercussions from a parent corporation: Omnicron LTD is a private interest. Another bonus is actually the facility's location: no law

enforcement is likely to arrive in the event of firefights and explosions. Let the heroes go in, kick ass, and take names.

They'd just better remember to duck for cover on occasion.

The difficulty of hacking the Omnicron Domain means the heroes aren't likely to successfully disable the facility's exterior and interior security cameras—this means Omnicron will usually know where they are at any time. The heroes can always shoot out the cameras (-2 for a Called Shot; and they have **Toughness** 10), but Omnicron will still know they've passed that way.

Slightly more problematical—and only a little less prevalent than the security cameras—are the pop-up laser turrets. There are several pieces of bad news attached to these puppies.

Omnicron doesn't have access to any better technology than Aquarius Engineering, so the lasers still require the capacitor to charge for a round prior to firing—which is why each turret is mounted with twin lasers, each one alternating fire every round. Each turret is also mounted with a security camera, but has armored protection, providing the turret with **Toughness** 14. And, since the turrets are mounted, the lasers can draw off the facility's power, meaning they can fire a whole lot more than twenty shots. In fact, they can fire almost indefinitely.

Laser Turret—Range: 15/30/60, **Damage:** 3d8; AP5

The last security items the heroes will have to deal with are the security robots. These patrol in pairs, generally passing through an area every 5 minutes, but they will descend in droves if an alarm is triggered. Destroying a robot outside the facility won't trigger an alarm—Omnicron as learned that many gangers seem to be fond of vandalism—but on the inside, if both robots aren't taken out in a single round, an alarm *will* be triggered.

Security Robots: 2 on patrol, or 1 per Hero every 5 rounds if alarm is raised

THE OMNICRON DEVICE

This is it: the Big Tamale.

The Omnicron Device is housed in a large central chamber, and looks hellish in its construction. At its core is a power plant of some type, with a large, tapered cylinder jutting up from the center. Six pods surround the machine, with a lot

of tubes and wiring connecting the whole thing. The room itself is unlit, but the machine gives off some ambient light from various panels and connections—consider it Dim Light.

The pods contain the withering remains of a half-dozen unfortunate zeeks. They could theoretically be saved, but time constraints may not allow it—successful Repair and Healing checks would be required. Failure on either one results in the occupant's death. Then, of course, they have to be physically removed from the premises.

Six additional pods at the edge of the chamber contain two more zeeks—one male, one female—who are being held in cryo-storage pending one of the other 'batteries' giving out. These two may be easier to rescue, provided the heroes have time to shut down the pods and someone can make a successful Healing roll to resuscitate each one. If you need their stats, use the Generic Zeek on page 41.

The pods and the machine itself are attended by several worker robots. If the alarm is raised or the machine is threatened, the workers will attack.

Worker Robots: 2 per Hero

OMNICRON ROBOT, WORKER

These robots look like more spindly versions of the fighting models.

Attributes: Agility D8, Smarts D6(M), Spirit D4, Strength D6, Vigor D8

Skills: Fighting D4, Notice D8, Repair D8, Shooting D6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Special Abilities:

- **Alloy Construction (+2):** These robots are constructed of durable alloys
- **Construct:** Robots are +2 to recover from being Shaken, suffer no additional damage from Called Shots, and aren't affected by disease or poison.
- **Electronic Security:** These robots have the same security as Omnicron, and cause a -6 penalty to any Hacking attempts, as well as any program-related rolls.
- **Multi-Spectrum Vision:** The security robots never suffer penalties for bad lighting.
- **Weapon Mount:** Taser (Range: 2/4/8; Damage: 2d8 non-lethal, electrical). The weapon is considered a part of the robot, and cannot be removed without a successful Repair roll.

OMNICRON ROBOT, SECURITY

Calling these robots 'humanoid' may be being generous, but they do have a torso, two arms, two legs and a 'head'. However, they more closely resemble anthropomorphic dogs encased in crimson body armor.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D6(M), Spirit D4, Strength D8, Vigor D8

Skills: Fighting D4, Notice D8, Shooting D10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Special Abilities:

- **Alloy Construction (+4):** These robots are constructed of durable alloys.
- **Construct:** Robots are +2 to recover from being Shaken, suffer no additional damage from Called Shots, and aren't affected by disease or poison.
- **Electronic Security:** These robots have the same security as Omnicron, and cause a -6 penalty to any Hacking attempts, as well as any program-related rolls.
- **Multi-Spectrum Vision:** The security robots never suffer penalties for bad lighting.
- **Weapon Mount:** Auto Rifle (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 2d8; AP 2, RoF 3, Shots 30, Auto Fire); Taser (Range: 2/4/8; Damage: 2d8 non-lethal, electrical). Both weapons are considered a part of the robot, and cannot be removed without a successful Repair roll.



END GAME

The heroes can decide how they want to deal with the Omnicron Device, but this is one of those occasions we'd recommend a big explosion. In fact, if any characters start getting any harebrained ideas about heisting some of this great psi-tech, we'd also recommend having Omnicron itself destroy the evidence.

Give the heroes a chance to be the big guns, but should it appear that the facility is doomed to fall intact to someone else, Omnicron will enable a self-destruct sequence and escape through its backdoor. The heroes have exactly two minutes to gather what evidence they can carry (or download) and clear the building or they will be caught in the blast.

If any hero *really* wants to attempt to survive the explosion, treat it as a 5d10+10 Heavy Weapon, and let 'im try to Soak it. At that point, he deserves whatever he gets. Oh... Don't forget about catching fire (2d10 or 3d10) and Smoke Inhalation (as per SW rules), *ami!*

However Omnicron is dealt with, as long as the facility is shut down, Zentek will be pleased and the heroes gain 1 Rep Point. If the heroes have any incriminating evidence, Zentek will be very pleased—the heroes gain 2 Rep Points. If, against all odds, the heroes have managed to get out with any solid information on Omnicron's experiments, Zentek will keep the heroes on their list of 'independent Contractors', and they gain 3 Rep Points.

In any case, amazingly enough, Director Ohara honors his agreement to lay off Jessie and company—for now. It's 2088, *ami...* and you never know when your enemy will be your ally, or visa versa.

PLOT HOOKS

There are plenty of stories that can be told in the world of 2088—in this book alone are possible seeds for dozens of Savage Tales. But just in case you need a little help getting the old brain juice going, we'll offer you a handful of plot hooks to work with.

Here's how we've laid these out:

CATCHY TITLE

Here we'll give a little tease of what we've got in mind for the hook...

The Offer: This is how the characters are approached, or otherwise potentially drawn into the story. Essentially, this is what they see at face value, or what they'd easily know.

The Complication: This is what's *really* going on, or the forces at work behind the scenes the characters don't necessarily know about to start with. The bottom line is this is the real meat of the story.

So, without any further fanfare, here are some suggestions:

GHOST HUNT

A Psi-Hunter usually knows when he's chasing down a zeek—but not every situation is so cut and dried when the hunt begins...

The Offer: A 'Mr. Smith' contacts the team for a security and investigation job. He represents a small corporate interest that has been compromised several times in the last month: Their main facility has been broken into, and important data files tampered with. Although there's evidence of the breach, no doors have been picked, no security locks have been hacked, and data has been downloaded directly from the system mainframe. The company suspects an inside job because of this—but there is one disturbing fact: security cameras occasionally show a shadowy figure moving through the building, but at critical places and times, the cameras show... nothing. The company is willing to offer some reasonable pay for this job.

The Complication: One of the company execs is in fact behind the security breaches, but not directly. This exec has been given an offer he can't refuse in return for handing over information concerning various key projects, so he hired a specialist that calls himself 'The Phantom'. Although the exec has been passing access codes to The Phantom, he doesn't need them. In addition to being a highly-skilled operative, The Phantom is a zeek—a freek, to be precise—and with his powers of *invisibility*, *obscure* and *teleport*, he can easily get in and out of places, and will be tough to catch. In addition to catching or stopping The Phantom, the team will need to unmask the company traitor... or he will just hire someone



else, and the break-ins will continue. And that would be bad for one's reputation.

NEW KID IN TOWN

Being a stranger in a strange place may be a great inspiration for song writing, but if people start viewing you as a threat, it can also be bad for business...

The Offer: The team is contacted by the manager of an up-and-coming media idol who has a bit of a problem. It seems every place she's gone, and in every venue where she's performed publicly, there has followed a wave of drama and violence. The manager isn't really sure what's going on, but he's concerned about the safety of his act. Popularity means money—but not if people are afraid to show up to places for fear of being involved in an altercation. The pay isn't great for this gig: after all, it's really a just a glorified babysitting job where all the team will be doing is hanging out with a hot and sexy media icon, riding in her limo, staying backstage with her, going to parties with her... um... maybe the pay isn't so important after all.

The Complication: The problem in this case has less to do with the media idol and her music, and more to do with a roadie she's picked up... who also happens to be a psychic vampire. Secretly, he detests his patron's growing fame and prestige, while at the same time he takes delight in being able to 'control' everything around her. He'll typically start manipulating people's feelings for each other (either positively or negatively, depending on what seems to be more fun), and even go so far as to control people's actions, all in the name of being 'the man in charge' in his own mind. This may be a tricky situation to deal with in the end—even if the team figures out what's really going on, this isn't a problem they can just shoot their way out of. But if they can fix things, they can be sure of a good boost in reputation, as well as the gratitude of a hot and sexy media icon.

PEST CONTROL

Some really strange crap can go down in the sprawl, and while a lot of it goes unnoticed or unchecked, on occasion it crawls out of the sewers to confront people...

The Offer: One of the team's street contacts approaches them with a request to look into something: a rash of missing persons. There isn't much to go on—it's largely been a number of

homeless and street people whose disappearances have gone relatively unnoticed. But the numbers are starting to mount. The contact suspects it may be corporate kidnapping, to gain human subjects for experimentation, and suggests the team look into a shelter and soup kitchen in the area, operated as a charitable enterprise by a local company. Most of the missing people were known to frequent the place, and had crash spots nearby. The contact can't offer much money, but this job might help the team's reputation in the area.

The Complication: The disappearances are in fact occurring near the shelter, but the small corporation has nothing to do with them. The trail actually leads into the nearby sewer system, where dark things lurk beneath the sprawl and out of the sunlight. In one area, the team finds a scene right out of *Alien*, with the cocooned remains of the missing people hanging amidst a tapestry of webs. Some may still be alive, but most have already been fed upon by the psiders living here. Once the nature of the enemy is known, it may be a simple matter of trying to eliminate the vermin... but that may be easier said than done. It all depends on the team's resources and ability to fight an opponent that wants to capture them for feeding purposes. Certainly, if they can't figure out what's going on quickly enough, the next group of characters may be going in to rescue *them*.

QUEST FOR SHANGRI LA

Like the legends of *El Dorado* or the Templar Treasure, the hidden zeek sanctuary constantly draws zealots into the search. And like those legends, some people even claim to have a map...

The Offer: The team is approached by a contact who says he's learned of someone claiming to know the location of the zeek Shangri La, and wishes to hire the heroes to back him up as he looks into this. After all, this could be volatile stuff, *ne*? Still, this should be a fairly straightforward mission... all the contact wants is some skill and muscle to beef up what he's otherwise lacking. And, while he can't pay a lot of money up front, there are certainly potential returns he's willing to split with the team.

The Complication: Of course, things are never quite as they seem, and in this case it means triple indemnity. The contact has actually been hired by the Zentek corporation to follow up on a lead because they are always looking for more psionic genetic material to research. What neither Zentek nor the contact know is the lead in question is actually part of a sting set

up by Psi-Division in order to lure in unsuspecting zeeks for capture or elimination. This is further complicated by the existence of a fringe group calling itself Free Minds—dedicated to the goal of keeping zeek secrets... well... secret. To that end, they assassinate the contact's lead just as he's passing off his (false) information, which sets off a three-way struggle as all three factions center their attention on the team's movements. Zentek is sure they're on to something, Psi-Division is sure Zentek was behind the assassination, and Free Minds just wants to stop everyone. It all comes to a head when the 'secret lair' is finally reached. We'd suggest putting it in a place with lots of interesting and potentially dangerous terrain to work with—like the Grand Canyon. Of course, no matter how it all ends, the mystery of the zeek Shangri La remains.

THE CHOSEN ONE

Just because *Abençoadado do Espírito Santo* is headquartered in Brasilia doesn't mean splinter sects or copycat groups don't exist—which could make problems for a team member or acquaintance...

The Offer: One of the team's contacts (or one of the team, if there's a zeek among them) is targeted by ADES. In the first case, either the contact can come looking for help because he knows he's being followed, or one of the contact's family can come to the team asking for help because the contact has gone missing. The second case can play out much the same way: either the team member realizes he's very interesting to a group of religious fanatics, or the rest of the team can come to the realization one of their own has gone missing. The more personal the stakes, the less creds it'll probably take to get them motivated.

The Complication: In most ways, this situation is pretty straightforward—but however the situation has been set up, the team is going to have to deal with a group of religious fanatics who are willing to die for the faith and to 'protect' the Blessed Ones. Oh, all right... we'll offer you a snake in the

grass: the target of the team's protection/extraction isn't the only zeek in the hands of ADES—and one of those zeeks in particular is an egotistical, self-serving bastard who is willing to use the entire weight of his considerable psionic ability on their behalf. After all, while he's not quite worshiped as a god, he's treated almost as well as one—and he can usually get the suckers... um... *faithful* to cater to his every whim (no matter how depraved) in the name of 'The Divine'. There may not be much reward in this job, but the team may get some satisfaction by taking this jerk down.

ZEEK-O TERRORISM

If Hernando Vasquez proved nothing else, he proved there are zeeks out there willing to resort to acts of terrorism to make a statement. Even if that statement is as simple as 'look at me'...

The Offer: The team is approached by a government, corporate or legal contact who needs serious help against a group of zeek terrorists (Free Minds makes as good a foil as any). This job is a straight up offer to do some Delta Force A-Team butt-kicking—the contact just wants these guys taken care of so they're no longer a viable threat (for now), and is willing to offer some good creds for the team to get it done.

The Complication: The complication here is largely the job itself. The team is effectively being asked to track down a terrorist cell that can read minds, control emotions (and even actions), avoid being tracked in the usual ways, move around unnoticed and undetected, and strike from range with unpredictable and violent firepower. Oh... and then, once they've tracked the bad guys down, the team has to be able to take them out in the face of all those above caveats. The one bit of good news is no one likes a fanatic except one of their own, and Free Minds is a fringe group. In other words, if the team can pull this off, no one's gonna cry over dead terrorists—both sides in the zeek argument will be glad to be rid of them—and the team can expect a lot of street cred. Serious street cred, if you get our drift.

CHAPTER FIVE: FRIENDS AND FOES

MAJOR PLAYERS

The following two wild cards are examples of the types of NPCs characters might encounter when dealing with PSI-Division or any other government run agency.

KURA OHARA

Kura Ohara is the consummate corporate director—smart, charismatic and ruthless. While people like the heroes should probably seldom come face to face with a person like Ohara, one never knows. And even the good director knows it's sometimes good to have friends in low places.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D10, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D8

Skills: Fighting D8, Intimidation D8, Hacking D4, Intimidation D8, Notice D8, Persuasion D8, Shooting D6, Stealth D6, Streetwise D8, Taunt D8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10/11 (4/5);

Cybertrauma: 0; **Street Cred:** 20

Hindrances: Greedy (Minor), Loyal (Kenta Cyber Dynamics), Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Command, Charismatic, Connections (Zentek), Filthy Rich, Inspire

Cyberware: (Hyperchrome) Rating 4 TAP (+2 Hacking; Pace: 9, Parry: 8, Toughness: 8), Level 2 Subdermal Armor (+2 Armor)

Gear: Heavy pistol (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 2D8; AP 2; +1 Shooting), Executive Decision Business Suit (+2/+3 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso, arms and legs).



TALON (PSI-HUNTER)

'Talon', as he calls himself, is a fairly typical Mather. He believes unregulated psions pose a threat to mankind and does anything in his power to track down and deal with rogue zeeks. If he can't bring them in to be tagged, he'll simply eliminate them.

Attributes: Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D8

Skills: Climbing D6, Driving D8, Fighting D8, Hacking D6, Investigation D6, Notice D6, Persuasion D6, Shooting D8, Stealth D6, Streetwise D8, Tracking D6



Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9/11 (3/5); **Cybertrauma:** -1; **Street Cred:** 20

Hindrances: Quirk: Fanatic

Edges: Arcane Resistance, Expert Fighter, Psi-Hunter*

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 6, Toughness: 5), Cyber eye w/Flash compensators, low light vision, and image magnification (+1 to Notice rolls involving sight, flashes cannot daze or blind, no penalties for Dim or Dark lighting).

Gear: Urban Chic Clothing, AGA Thunderbolt (Range: 20/40/80; Damage: 2D10+2; AP2), Electric Manrikigusari (Damage: Str+d6; Reach 1, Entangle. Anyone Entangled must make a Vigor check at -2 against the Electric Shock or become Shaken and can't attempt to recover for 1d6 rounds), Street Soldier Combat Trench Coat (+3/+5 Armor; negates 4 AP, covers torso only), Handcuffs.

**This is a new Edge.*

OTHER THREATS

GENERIC ZEEK

If the propaganda is to be believed, these guys are everywhere... infiltrating our society and tearing apart any remaining moral fabric. Realistically, most people probably never know if they run into an actual zeek, since they look like ordinary, everyday people and can actually come from any walk of life.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D4, Hacking D4, Notice D8, Persuasion D6, Psionics D6, Shooting D6, Stealth D6, Streetwise D6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8 (3); **Cybertrauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 5

Hindrances: Outsider

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Power Points

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: Deflection, illusion*, remote sensing*; Power: 3

Gear: Urban Street Clothing, Street Talker (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6-1), Urban Punk Buckled Combat Jacket (+3 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso only).

**This is a new Power.*



PSI-DIVISION ANALYST

Just because Psi-Division hunts down rogue psychics doesn't mean they don't also *employ* them. What better way to fight fire than with fire, after all? 'Analyst' is the euphemism Psi-Division uses for those zeeks who are on their payroll to help track down and keep track of other zeeks. On the other hand, many zeeks prefer to call them 'Quislings'.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D6, Hacking D4, Notice D8, Persuasion D6, Psionics D8, Shooting D6, Stealth D6, Streetwise D6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (3); **Cybertrauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal: Psi-Division

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), New Power, Power Points

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: *Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Invisibility, Remote Sensing**; Power: 3

Gear: Gray Jumpsuit, Street Talker (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6-1), Riot Gel Gun (Range: Cone Template, Damage: 2D6), Urban Punk Buckled Combat Jacket (+3 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso only), 6 doses Psi-Kick, Comlink.

**This is a new Power.*

PSI-DIVISION SOLDIER

Not every person who handles the more physical aspects of Psi-Division's mission is a full-blown Hunter—some are merely trained to be police or security forces. But make no mistake... most of these guys are just as fanatical as any Mather. Just a little less well-trained.

Attributes: Agility D8, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8

Skills: Fighting D8, Hacking D4 Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D8, Stealth D6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (3); **Cybertrauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 8

Hindrances: Loyal (Psi-Division)

Edges: Alertness, Expert Fighter, Steady Hands

Cyberware: (Milware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5), Level 3 Titanium Sub-dermal Armor (Armor +3)

Gear: Black Jumpsuit, Submachine Gun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2D6; AP1, Auto Fire), Baton (Damage: Str.+d4), Comlink.

PSIDER

No one knows exactly where these abominations came from, although many suspect they were created by some organization for the express purpose of destroying zeeks. The fact they aren't all that particular about what they take as prey is perhaps just an unfortunate side effect. Psiders resemble large arachnids, but they feed on the psychic energy of other beings. Sadly, this usually results in death for the victim, and they appear to be able to draw that sort of energy from any sentient being (as long as it has more than animal intelligence).

Attributes: Agility D12, Smarts D6(A), Spirit D10, Strength D6, Vigor D10

Skills: Climbing D12+2, Fighting D8, Guts D6, Intimidation D10, Notice D8, Stealth D10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+D4.
- **Fear:** Most people have an innate fear of spiders in the first place. Seeing one the size of your kitchen table can be somewhat... unnerving.
- **Low Light Vision:** Psiders ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Lighting.
- **Psychic Blast:** A psider can attempt to incapacitate prey by emitting a debilitating burst of psychic energy. This works exactly like the stun Power, except it is activated by the psider making a Spirit check, and only affects a Small Burst Radius. This attack counts as an action by the psider (and is usually used just prior to grappling a victim).
- **Psychic Feeding:** Psiders feed on the psychic energy of their victims although, like most spiders, they will usually capture prey to feed upon at their leisure. In any case, the psider's victim must be restrained in order for it to feed. If the psider can beat its victim in an opposed Spirit roll, the victim takes 1 Fatigue and 1 Wound (the former being from psychic drain, and the latter from bursting blood vessels in the cranium and blistering brain tissue). If the psider can't seem to overcome its meal, it will bite its victim in order to weaken it and lower its resistance. Although a psider will usually only drain 1 Fatigue at a time, if a victim is weak, wounded or fed upon for long enough, the end result is death.
- **Size -1:** These things can appear larger than they are by virtue of their long legs, but their bodies aren't much larger than a moderately-sized dog.
- **Webs:** Psiders, like many arachnids, create lairs from thick, sticky webs. Anyone touching a psider web is considered grappled by something with Strength d4.

However, psiders will typically attack by grappling with an opponent and binding them in layers of webs. In this case, they grapple as normal, but every turn they can hold an opponent they continue secreting web fluid. The first turn, the web has Strength d4, and it increases by one Die Type up to Strength d12. These webs have Toughness 8 if someone is trying to cut them.

PSYCHIC VAMPIRE

No... This isn't a blood-sucking monster—in a way, it's worse. Psychic vampires are zeeks that feed off others' emotions, and to that end they insinuate themselves into groups of people and create drama. Usually these zeeks are psychically weak, but enjoy exercising their powers. However, they are also usually charming or attractive, and tend to leave behind them a wake of chaos.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D8, Strength D4, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D4, Hacking D4, Persuasion D8, Psionics D10, Shooting D4, Streetwise D6, Taunt D10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5; **Cyber-trauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 5

Hindrances: Greedy, Weak Zeek*

Edges: Attractive, Arcane Background (Psionics), Psychic Leech**

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: *Fear, Illusion***, Puppet*; Power: 1

Gear: N-Vogue Programmable Memory Clothes****.

*This is a new Hindrance.

**This is a new Edge.

***This is a new Power.

****This is new Gear.

ZEEK GANGER, URBAN

In some sprawls, zeeks may find acceptance in a gang and, in some cases, they may even band together into their own gang. In either case, a zeek ganger can wreak havoc in an area—one reason a Psi-Hunter might be called upon.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

Skills: Fighting D6, Hacking D4, Notice D8, Persuasion D6, Psionics D8, Shooting D6, Stealth D6, Streetwise D6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 8 (3); **Cyber-trauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 5

Hindrances: Outsider

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Power Points

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 Tap (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: *Deflection, Entangle, Telekinesis*; Power: 3

Gear: Urban Street Clothing, Boot Knife (Damage: Str+d4), Street Talker (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6–1), Urban Punk Buckled Combat Jacket (+3 Armor; negates 2 AP, covers torso only).

ZEEK GANGER, WASTELAND

Much like their urban counterparts, zeeks in the wastelands may join or band together into gangs. However, the wastelands offer less threat of legal reprisal, which means the gangs—and the zeeks—are more dangerous.

Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D8

Skills: Fighting D8, Hacking D4, Intimidation D6, Notice D8, Psionics D8, Shooting D8, Stealth D6, Survival D6, Tracking D6

Charisma: –2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4); **Cyber-trauma:** 0; **Street Cred:** 0

Hindrances: Mean, Outsider

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Power Points

Cyberware: (Streetware) Rating 1 TAP (Pace: 6, Parry: 5, Toughness: 5)

Powers: *Armor, Beast Friend, Bolt*; Power: 3

Gear: Wasteland Clothing, Chain Sword (Damage: Str+d10), Lone Rider Rifle* (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8/2d8+1; ROF 3/1, AP2, Autofire), Road Wear Wastelander Body Armor* (+4 Armor; covers torso, arms and legs).

*This is new Gear.

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