TIMEZERO

OPERATIVE'S MANUAL

TIMEZERO: Operative's Manual

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TIMEZERO:
Operative's Manual

GRAMEL

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Saving The Day

Genoa, Italy, 1461. The voices in the market sounded like a symphony to the ears of Marcus Publius. Fishermen from Genoa loudly advertised their wares, silk traders from Venice enticed the passersby and the strong, baritone voice of the Franciscan preacher thundered against the sins of men. From Pisa, Marcus thought, or maybe Florence. He closed his eyes to fully enjoy the delicate lilt of the accents, so different from the Latin of the Diocletian era, his native language.

A sign by Yumiko awoke Marcus from his daydream. Despite her disguise as a blind beggar, the girl's eyes scanned the area looking for their targets.

The woman and the little child arrived at the market at that very moment. Monna Suzanna always liked to visit the market stalls early in the morning, bringing the young boy with her. They weren't rich, so the woman was very careful in her shopping, buying only the necessities: three pears and some peas, today.

The lad looked all around him inquisitively, as if he were imagining the far countries some of the wares came from and, even more, the long voyage required to bring them here, to Genoa.

"A gift for your son, madam." said the tanned fruit seller with an open smile, picking an apple, apparently at random, from the big pile on his stall and handing it to the young boy with a flourish.

"Say thank you, Christopher," the woman said.

"Thank you," said Christopher, receiving the fruit.

"So, this is the moment and the way," Marcus thought.

The beggar suddenly moved her long staff, tripping the boy, and drawing several angry comments from the passersby. Marcus moved to help the young boy stand up, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for a rich merchant to do.

"Are you all right?" he said, helping the lad.

"Yes, Master," Christopher answered, looking with respect at Marcus' rich robe, but his eyes were searching for the apple, which he had lost in the little accident.

"Here is your apple," Marcus said, handing a fruit, identical to the previous one, to the little boy.

"Thank you, Master Merchant," said Monna Suzanna, with a curtsey.

Marcus responded with a smile and left the market, just like any rich man with a very busy agenda.

In the meantime, the fruit seller had disappeared - and Yumiko too. The young Operative was surely on the tracks of the Triad agent. Marcus headed out of the city and into the woods, and arrived at the rendezvous, to wait for his colleague.

Hours later, Yumiko arrived. A disgusted expression was on the Operative's face, under her false scars. "I lost him. He went into an abandoned house in the Carrugi", she said, referring to the labyrinth of narrow streets in the center of Genoa, "and disappeared. He must have had a Time Gate ready there."

"Well, the important thing is that Christopher Columbus is safe." Marcus said.

"Do you have the apple?" Yumiko asked.

"Yes, I swapped it."

"Good. The technicians back at base might get some clues by analyzing the poison."

"Maybe, but don't count on it. The Cousins are clever, and they leave no easy tracks to follow."

"Yeah. But it is worth trying," nodded Yumiko.

During their conversation, the air started to pulse, creating a circular distortion, nine feet wide. The Time Gate.

On the other side, Marcus could see the technicians at the time base working around their extraordinary machines. With a single step, he went through the gate and returned back home, several million years in the past.

Just another day in TimeGuard...

Welcome to TimeZero!

TimeZero is the new, exciting time travel setting from Gramel. In this setting you will play as a trained Operative, a member of TimeGuard, the secret organization that fights time crimes along the continuum.

Time thieves, chronoterrorists and many other incredible dangers await you across the millennia of human history!

You need this book and a copy of the *Savage Worlds* core rules to play this game. It is divided into two parts: the Player's Guide, where you'll find background details and rules for quickly creating time-cop agents, and the Game Master's Guide, containing advice on running a time travel game, how to design your time-travelling adventures and a selection of time travelling opponents.

In the next few months Gramel will publish several *TimeZero* adventures, where you can prove your skills, saving the continuum.

Now synchronize your watches, because time waits for no man!

Player's Guide

A LITTLE FUTURE HISTORY

Time travel was officially discovered in the 45th century. Early time exploration was done without any special precautions, and almost created a cataclysm. Some say that the Triad (see below) came to exist because of these early, uncontrolled attempts at time travel, but this is no more than a rumor.

The same is said about the various alternate timelines that now exist, parallel to our own.

To prevent changes in history and the potential destruction of the continuum, a special agency, TimeGuard, was created to control time travel and prevent crimes along the timeline. The motto of TimeGuard is "If it is written in the history books, so it must be".

But sometimes even history books can change…

TimeZero

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Time travel is neither easy nor simple, so forget pocket time machines or similar gizmos. Creating holes in the continuum and cheating the universe requires enormous resources and huge machines. In truth, only two "official" time machines exist. They are as big as factories and they are located in two time bases, TimeZero and TimeEpsilon, heavily guarded and protected from external attacks.

TimeZero is in prehistory – in the Cretaceous Period, to be precise – but the exact date and time is a heavily-guarded secret. It is there for a practical reason: there is no human history in that period, so it is very difficult to interfere with time to prevent its construction. TimeZero is the operational base of TimeGuard. It is a place to rest in between missions, where recruits are

trained and veterans study to improve their skills, and as the most grizzled Operatives with many missions under their belts say, it is "home".

A copy of "official" recorded history is preserved at TimeZero. All the reports from Watchers stationed throughout the timeline are minutely compared with the official records and, if any differences are found, well, TimeGuard is ready to investigate the cause.

TimeZero Personalities: The Old Man

The actual Commander of TimeZero is affectionately called the Old Man. Not to his face, of course. He is an old Caucasian male of indefinite age with a white beard and hair. Nobody knows his name, although it must be recorded somewhere in the archives. Everybody apart Miss Ellen (see below) calls him "Commander". He is said to have known Macchiavelli, the famous statesman, in the past and to have beaten Sun Tzu at chess. There are rumors that he actually is Macchiavelli, snatched from his era to take charge of TimeGuard. A grumpy, acid man, he would do (and actually has done) anything to save history. Any Operative worthy of the name would rather face a platoon of Triad Enforcers bare-handed than be summoned to his office.

Miss Ellen. The personal assistant of the Old Man, Miss Ellen, nicknamed "the Abbess" by TimeZero personnel, is a skinny, middle-aged, woman, totally devoted to the Commander. She is the only one who calls him by name (Nicolas), and then only in very private situations. Miss Ellen controls the Old Man's diary, and decides who can speak with him and when. This gives her more power than many Office Directors. Everybody tries to be on good terms with her, but that is a difficult task because she is suspicious, bigoted, bad-tempered and very protective of her boss' privacy.

TimeEpsilon

TimeZero's twin base is TimeEpsilon. It is in the 45th century and it is under the direct control of the Priors (see below). Only the Commander of TimeZero and some high-ranking members of the Tactical Office have ever visited TimeEpsilon, and they only had contact with Synth personnel. Operatives are forbidden to go to TimeEpsilon.

TimeEpsilon is protected from time changes by a device called the Temporal Field, which stabilizes its reality despite changes in history. Even if the whole human race were destroyed in the past, TimeEpsilon would continue to exist unharmed. The main task of the TimeEpsilon staff is to collect reports from the agents, check them and, in the event of time alterations, to alert TimeZero, so that Operatives can be sent to fix the problem.

The Priors

TimeGuard was created by a powerful organization in the 45th century, who call themselves the Priors. They command TimeGuard, giving instructions from the future and alerting TimeZero to potential threats to the continuum. The Priors stay at TimeEpsilon and never travel back to TimeZero for any reason. The cause of their behavior is unknown. Maybe they fear their presence in the past might generate a paradox, or maybe they are no longer human, so going back to the past and mixing with *Homo Sapiens* is impossible. The truth is unknown, because no member of TimeGuard, even the highest ranks, has ever met a Prior face to face; even their appearance is a mystery.

OPERATIVES' TIPS: TIMEOMEGA

Officially only two time bases exist: TimeZero and TimeEpsilon, but there are rumors, no more than gossip from the archives, that a third base, TimeOmega, exists in a very late age, potentially at the end of the timeline (scientists still debate if time really has an end). TimeOmega, if you listen to the rumors, is an off-limits area because a serious incident of some sort, something that even the Priors could not solve, happened there.

Asking questions about TimeOmega isn't a good thing to do: Operatives who do are usually assigned to unsavory places in the timeline for long periods of subjective time.

The Triad

A criminal syndicate of the 45th century, named the Triad, opposes the work of the Priors. Very little is known of its origins but it is the evil counterpart of TimeGuard. The Triad sends agents through time to steal precious treasures, to kidnap important personalities and generally to disrupt and change the timeline, following an agenda whose purpose is as yet unknown.

The Triad is very powerful and has resources comparable to, if not bigger than, those of TimeGuard. The only known fact is that this organization, which has hidden influence in almost every age, is led by three mysterious individuals called the Triumvirate, but their identities are the best kept secret of the evil organization.

Triad agents captured by TimeGuard usually say that they were recruited and trained in the time and place of their capture by a Triad enforcer coming from the future.

Triad members are organized in cells to protect the information they are told. In the few cases of high-ranking Triad members being captured, they revealed that they had been trained in a timebase somewhere in the continuum, but without knowing the date and the place, it is almost impossible to locate. Obviously, the Triad must have one or more time machines

concealed in the timeline, and finding and destroying them is one of TimeGuard's goals, probably the most important one.

Operatives know Triad agents very well, as they are their day-to-day enemies. Some sharp-tongued Operative nicknamed them "Cousins", because their methods and techniques, though used for evil purposes, are comparable to those of TimeGuard.

Alternates

This term covers a range, luckily not a very large one, of factions and races coming from other realities. Some of them, such as the reptilian Sakra, are totally alien races, the fruit of a divergent evolutionary process, while others, like the Aryan Alternates, are humans from another universe – in the case of the Aryan Alternates, one where the Nazis won the Second World War. The Alternates know the secret of time travel, but, instead of using it to move in time, they prefer to explore other realities (among them our one), usually for theft, kidnapping and other nefarious activities.

Sometimes Alternates ally with the Triad, and this can be very dangerous.

Free Players and Temporal Anomalies

The Triad and the Alternates are by far the main causes of trouble for TimeGuard, but they aren't the only ones. Rarely, but with a surprising frequency, scientists of various ages discover time travel. These individuals are named "Free Players" and, despite having good intentions in most cases, they can cause serious problems in the continuum, so they must be found and stopped. Some of them agree to be recruited into TimeGuard, while for others… a good dose of Lethe Serum is what they need, sometimes.

The most famous Free Player, luckily caught in time by TimeGuard, is Leonardo da Vinci. He has discovered time travel on three occasions and visions of what he saw in the future appear in many of his codices. Now, the genius is constantly under strict surveillance by a personal Watcher.

Another occasional cause of trouble is the temporal anomaly. TimeGuard specialists have long debated whether temporal anomalies are caused by time travel, which somehow disrupts the existence of the continuum, or whether the opposite is true, that time travel is possible because temporal anomalies exist. Whatever the reason, a temporal anomaly is something to be watched closely; it can be an occasional minor weirdness, like someone claiming to have lived the same day several times (déjà vu), or the sudden appearance of large groups of people coming from parallel universes, whom TimeGuard must quickly find and send somewhere in the continuum where their presence will not change history.

Operatives are an elite group of time cops, familiar with all times but belonging to none. So they often show an odd sense of humor, which they express using their own lingo. Here is a list of their typical expressions, but you can add new ones to spice up your gaming experience.

Abbess, The: Miss Ellen, the personal secretary of the Old Man (see above).

Alternates: See **Neighbors**.

Babysitting: Accompanying a non-Operative time traveler, usually a Field Specialist, on an excursion along the timeline. Not a very popular task.

Bad Weather: An anomaly during time travel, which causes Time Travel Sickness or more severe effects.

Baptism of Time, The: The first time an Operative uses the time machine. It also refers to the time a newly assembled Synth travels to a certain era to become familiar with human society.

Book, The: The **Operative's Manual, 45th Edition**. The only holy book an Operative truly acknowledges. It contains the rules of engagement, operational procedures and any other info an Operative should know. You can consider this manual a condensed version of the Operative's Manual.

Costume Warehouse: The Logistics Office.

Cousins: Members of the Triad.

Daddies: The Priors.

Deal with the Devil: A common means of recruiting Operatives – it involves contacting them shortly before death, and offering them a choice: Join TimeGuard, or die in the timeline..

Free Player: An independent time traveler, usually a scientist who discovers time travel techniques by accident.

Gating: The act of entering a Time Gate.

Home: The TimeZero base.

Junking: The act of polluting the timeline by leaving anachronistic objects behind.

Locals: The dwellers of a specific point in spacetime. Sometimes also referred to as "Natives".

Lost Sheep: A temporal survivor coming from a parallel reality.

Machine, The: The time machine.

Message in a Bottle: The act of leaving advice for your present self through a message sent from the past.

Natives: See Locals.

Neighbors: The time travelers of a race or faction coming from a parallel universe, also called Alternates.

Night with Cleopatra, Spending the: Using the Machine to travel in time for personal interest.

Old Man, The: The Commander of TimeZero.

Sun Tzus: The members of the Tactical Office.

Taking a Nap: The Hypnotraining process.

Torquemadas: The Internal Affairs, a branch of the Tactical Office. They are always breathing down the Operatives' necks.

TimeGuard

TimeGuard is quite a big organization. The Commander of TimeZero, always chosen by the Priors, is the leader of the base. Since TimeGuard was created, there have been several Commanders, most of them human but, in more recent times, at least one of them has been a Synth, an artificial form of life so complex as to be almost indistinguishable from humans.

TimeGuard includes several Offices, each supervised by a Director. The organization tends to be quite bureaucratic, with each Office trying to stand out from the others to get higher funding from the annual budget. Remember that watching the timeline is crucial, and no Commander of TimeZero would allow rivalries among Offices to compromise the duties of TimeGuard.

Technical Office

Maintaining and operating a time machine is not something you can do in a garage. It requires various specialists in several fields of science and temporal physics. These specialists are the time technicians. They rarely travel along the continuum but they are responsible for the welfare of the base and the operation of all the facilities, obviously paying special attention to the time machine. Time technicians are the only ones who fully understand how to use and repair the time machine, so it is in the interests of all Operatives to be on good terms with them.

Logistics Office

Nicknamed the "Costume Warehouse" by some disrespectful Operatives, the Logistics Office is the place where those who find and manage the resources of TimeGuard work. Their main task is to provide Operatives and other occasionally authorized time travelers with the right tools and disguises to safely move along the continuum with minimum risk to them and history. The worst nightmare of the Logistics Office is that someday an archeologist will find a perfectly preserved Greek helm from 1000 BC but made of aluminum, manufactured in TimeZero's factories and lost by some absentminded Operative during a mission, forever changing archeology and human history.

This is why their creations are very accurate. In some cases they even manufacture the equipment using ancient techniques, so that it cannot "pollute" time. The Logistics Office also has the power to limit the technology an Operative can take with him along the timeline. They tend to be rather strict, so having a friend in the Costume Warehouse is always good for an Operative.

The Logistics Office must also find the necessary resources and materials to keep TimeGuard operational, so they are allowed, under strict control, to make the most of resources in various ways, for example mining ore deposits in prehistory or making surprisingly good investments in the modern era. It is no secret that they own shares in many corporations of the 20th-21st century.

Tactical Office

Every mission in time is carefully planned and discussed, because sending people along the continuum has a cost, and a high one too. The Tactical Office organizes the missions, chooses the personnel, and examines and collects the reports. They very rarely travel in time themselves. Operatives tend to have a low opinion of the Tacticians, nicknamed the Sun Tzus, because they tell the men in the field what to do without risking their own necks. A much feared and mistrusted branch of the Tactical Office is the Internal Affairs Committee, affectionately named "the Torquemadas" by the Operatives. Their task is to assess the outcome of missions and punish any deficiencies in how operations are conducted. As you can imagine, being summoned for an interview by the Internal Affairs Committee is never a good thing.

Training Office

As mentioned above, time travelers are restricted in which artifacts and technologies they can take along the timeline. So there is another crucial factor: training. Every Operative undergoes rigorous training in many different fields, and must periodically prove his skills through various

tests. The trainers' task is to keep the Operatives in perfect shape. During the initial training course many would-be Operatives end up hating their instructors, because they usually use ruthless methods to achieve results.

However, after a mission or two, Operatives tend to be grateful for all that toughness, because it helps keep them alive.

Trainers are often retired Operatives who hand their knowledge down to younger ones. They also manage the Hypnotraining (see below), a very important tool in the hands of TimeGuard.

Field Specialists

Watching the timeline means knowing it in minute detail. Experts in every field are required to accomplish the remarkable task of preserving the timeline. They might be experts in prehistoric agriculture, meteorology, or 1920s American fashion, but people with in-depth knowledge of any subject are precious to TimeGuard, which encourages and finances their studies.

You never know when having an expert in Assyrian numerology at hand can be vital to the war against the Triad. Field Specialists usually reside at TimeZero to use the huge research facilities of the base, but they are occasionally sent to specific eras to carry out field studies, always under strict surveillance by an Operative.

Operatives usually hate this type of "babysitting" mission.

Resident Watchers

Watching over the whole of human history is a huge task, far beyond the resources of any organization. The best solution TimeGuard has found is to scatter Watchers in important areas of time, to make sure history follows the right path. For reasons that will be clarified below, all watchers are Synths. When a Watcher notices something strange is happening, he contacts TimeEpsilon or TimeZero, so the process of saving history can start.

Operatives

Operatives are the fellows who sneak through the centuries to save the timeline. All player characters in *TimeZero* are members of this category.

Most of them are humans, but not every human in history is fit to be a TimeGuard Operative, so a few words are necessary about the recruiting process.

First, an Operative must be adaptable and capable of thinking on his feet. The age he comes from is not very important; with the right training, a medieval knight can be sent to 1918 without too many problems. All Operatives tend to be rather cosmopolitan, though almost all of them have their favorite eras.

Second, an Operative must perturb time as little as possible. This means he cannot be an important historical figure. It would be great to send General Patton, Julius Caesar or Elvis Presley to save the continuum, but they would most likely change time in unpredictable ways.

Third, and directly linked to the previous point, an Operative must be removed from her original time without changing history. So, she is usually a very common person or someone recruited at a moment in the life when their going missing will have a very small impact on the continuum. Many operatives are hired at death's door or from among people doomed to die in accidents. The technologies of TimeZero are capable of curing their illnesses, restoring their physical youth or saving them from death. Operatives refer to this type of recruitment as making a "Deal with the Devil".

"You can join us or die. Which do you prefer?" This is the customary question TimeGuard recruiters ask potential Operatives.

You can imagine what the most popular answer is.

As previously stated, humans are the most common Operatives, but a few of them are Synths.

Synths are machines built using very advanced (33rd century and later) technology. They look exactly like humans and can be detected only through a detailed body scan made with advanced medical equipment. Synths are ageless, but many of them are programmed to simulate an external ageing process to blend in with human society.

Normally, Synths are used as Watchers or for very long missions but some of them are used as Operatives. There are several reasons for this.

First, Synths are time resilient. A human Operative has a past. The Triad has enough resources to identify her, find her mother and prevent her birth. It is not a common course of action, but it happens. A Synth, instead, is built in TimeZero's factories, so her origin cannot be changed.

Second, Synths are impervious to time influences. Send a human, even the best trained one, to a particular time for thirty years, and after a while he will become so involved in the everyday life of that period that he will lose his objectivity or, more dangerously but less frequently, turn into a lunatic. A Synth is absolutely devoted to his task and isn't affected by cultural immersion.

Third, time travel missions are sometimes very boring. For example, imagine a project to study the growth process of the great American sequoias. It involves watching a single tree for three hundred years and would require a legion of human botanists, but a single Synth can easily carry out the task.

So, why doesn't TimeGuard use only Synths as Operatives?

Because artificial men are very good, but no machine has the adaptability and inventiveness of a human, so the best groups of Operatives are mixed, with normal humans and Synths working together.

Basic Time Physics

Before venturing in time, the Operatives must know the various dangers they are going to face; meddling with time is one of the most dangerous things mankind has ever done. One mistake and the whole continuum could be wiped out! The following sections are extracts from the *Operative's Manual, 45th Edition*, the handbook of every Operative-in-training.

20 The Machine

Let's start with the basics. As mentioned before, time travel is very expensive and requires a tremendous amount of energy. The "time machine", or simply "the Machine" in the Operatives' slang, is a set of devices so bulky as to occupy several buildings. The Machine creates two distortions, called Time Gates, the first at TimeZero and the second at the specific point in spacetime that Operatives need to travel to. Any being or thing entering one Gate emerges from its twin.

The Gates can be maintained for a variable amount of time. But every second a Gate is kept open costs a lot in terms of energy, so they are usually active for a short while.

Simple and clear.

This also means that time traveling is tightly controlled. No Operative, not even the Commander of TimeZero, would ever use the Machine to have a drink in his favorite bar in Manhattan, 1995. This, at least, is the theory; in actual fact, an Operative with a friend among the Technicians can occasionally make an unregistered trip. These little excursions are called "spending the night with Cleopatra" because one of the first things young, inexperienced Operatives do is not to go back to play the lottery with winning numbers but instead to hook up with the most beautiful girls along the timeline or other frivolous things.

But now let's get back to the Time Gates.

OK, you've gone through a Time Gate and arrived at your destination along the continuum. Now, how do you get back to TimeZero?

The technicians at the base open another two Gates in the same places and at fixed rendezvous times (usually a day or a week or a month later), and the Operatives must be ready to jump in to get back Home.

Usually three rendezvous times are planned. If the Operatives don't come back at the last rendezvous time, a rescue team is sent out.

Is time travel precise to the second? Well, no. There is usually a margin of error of twelve hours, so the times are planned with great care to avoid appearing in the middle of a battle or something like that. Another important element is location. The Machine can send you to very specific coordinates, but you must be sure that they are safe when you arrive. This is why Time Gates created on ships, airplanes or other vehicles should be avoided.

Free Players' Machines

Sometimes a Free Player discovers time travel. How can this be possible if, as was said before, time travel requires a lot of energy and huge machines? Well, there are indeed other ways to travel in time, but they either require so much energy that they cannot be tried in one's basement or they have nasty side effects, like creating temporal anomalies. This is yet another reason to stop Free Players from meddling with time.

Temporal Debt

This is an important fact every Operative must be aware of. In the previous example we said that a gate to return to TimeZero is opened a day, a week or a month after your departure from the base. Well, when you get back Home, you'll discover that TimeZero's clocks have advanced the same amount of time you spent on your mission.

This means that, if a hero makes a jump from TimeZero on June 1st, 2,000,000 BC and spends a week in the Elizabethan age, he will return to TimeZero June on June 8th, 2,000,000 B.C. and he will be a week older.

Time cannot be fooled. Even time travelers must grow old, just like common mortals.

Cross-Time Communication

How can TimeZero communicate with Operatives when they are on a mission? Well, normally this is impossible. An Operative is alone in the field and can count only on himself and his party. But there are one or two Watchers in almost every age. Watchers can communicate with TimeZero in various ways. The most common method is the so-called "message in a bottle". They write a report and leave it in an agreed hiding place. Thousands of years later, the agents of TimeEpsilon find the message and alert TimeZero. It isn't a very reliable system, because in the meantime the whole continuum could be disrupted and the message destroyed, but this doesn't happen as often as you might think. And this method has another great advantage, it is inexpensive.

There is also a system for instant communication, a sort of "radio through time", but these devices are very rare. They are hidden in extremely secure places and are only accessible to a few Watchers. They can be used to send a message directly to TimeZero but they require a lot of energy, and there is a lag of some days between sending the message and receiving an answer.

Changing History

So, imagine a typical situation: the Triad goes to the past and kills Hitler, changing history. TimeGuard intervenes and saves him. So what prevents the Triad from going back and trying to kill the most hated man on the Earth once more, starting an endless spiral of actions and counteractions with TimeGuard?

The reason is simple: time protects itself. Every time a specific moment in history is changed, it becomes less accessible, requiring more and more energy to be reached until it is simply impossible to open a gate to that specific moment (remember, there is a twelve hour margin).

So Hitler can be killed or saved on a particular day of his life only once or twice, after which that specific portion of time is simply not accessible.

Similarly, time doesn't allow paradoxes. A single being cannot exist twice in the same instant. If, for example, an Operative is sent to April 1st, 1918, it means that, in a later mission, he cannot exist at the same moment. Time doesn't like duplication.

And what happens if the clever Operative goes back to March 30th, 1918 and waits until April 1st? Something rather ugly: one of the two Operatives simply ceases to exist in the exact moment when both would have to coexist.

But this isn't a fixed law: on very rare occasions time the two doubles aren't destroyed: they start coexisting autonomously, but one of the two becomes a feared Evil Twin (see page 68).

Alternative Timelines

If history is changed, does the change "immediately" affect the future? In other words, if someone kills Hitler and this prevents your father from being born, are you doomed not to exist?

Luckily no, at least not if TimeGuard is ready to act.

Time changes are very much like throwing rocks into a pool. They create ripples, propagating their effects into the future. When an event is changed, the Watcher of the era – who knows the "official" history – notices the incongruence and contacts the Timebases, which promptly fix the problem. But sometimes the change becomes rooted in time before it is fixed and another, alternative timeline is created. This means real trouble, because time travel becomes more dangerous and a new player is added to the Big Game of Time. There are rumors, in fact, that the Triad is the effect of an alternative timeline created through early, uncontrolled attempts at time travel.

Modus Operandi of TimeGuard

OK, now you think you know all the risks and dangers involved in hopping along the timeline like a mad rabbit.

Do you expect to be sent on mission with your super gadgets to save the timeline, without having to think about anything else?

Wrong, my friend. There are strict procedures to be followed. Very strict, because here at TimeGuard we are professionals, not a band of Free Players!

The typical TimeGuard operation starts like this: a member of the Tactical Office summons a team of Operatives and explains a threat at a specific point of the continuum. During the briefing, the Operatives can ask questions and the Tacticians will answer as best they can, because the only info they have is that given in the reports.

Then, the Tacticians explain the cover identities they have devised for the Operatives. No agent is sent into the timeline as he is, a proper disguise is provided. The Operatives usually accept right away, but a little tweaking is possible to fit the characters' roles.

Then the Operatives have some time, usually a full day, to visit the Trainers and get their Hypnotraining, but first they must fill in the requests for the gadgets and special equipment they want for the mission.

After the Hypnotraining, they collect their equipment from the Costume Warehouse, drink their last beer at Al's Bar (see page 125), and they are ready to go…

Operative's Tips: The Three Rules

Operatives tend to be rather practical and direct. They have a set of simple rules, more effective than any complex lecture the Tacticians and the Logistics Office might give. They are the following:

1) **Avoid killing locals whenever possible.** A good beating or some broken bones are OK, but killing an apparently normal person can change the future, if he is destined to be the father or mother of some important personality.

2) **Don't junk the timeline.** Don't leave anachronistic technology around, because it can change history in unpredictable ways.

3) **No Local must know that time travel exists.** This is a very important rule. If, for whatever reason, a local learns that you and your friends come from another time, well, try to have Lethe Serum handy, otherwise you must take your chances with rule 1 and kill him or bring him to TimeZero so that the problem can be resolved.

The Sunday Files 23

Every week thousands of files are sent from the resident Watchers in the various eras to TimeZero. Each of them is minutely examined, evaluated and given a priority. The most important ones, every Sunday, at 6.00 A.M., TimeZero time, are placed on the desk of the Old Man, who reads them and decides if TimeGuard should intervene. Yes, the Old Man works on weekends. Nobody has ever seen him go on vacation.

Some of these files, divided by era, are summarized below. Don't expect all of them to be accurate or complete: field research and information gathering isn't an exact science even in TimeGuard, but from them the would-be Operatives should have an idea of what awaits them in the alleys of time.

Each entry starts with a list of Characters. They represent iconic persons of the age, who can be used by the players as inspiration for their heroes, as quick-and-dirty cover identities or by the Game Master as NPCs.

GM's Tips: How to use the Sunday Files

The Sunday Files are structured with a very short historical description of the period, from TimeGuard's perspective, and for each era a couple of adventure ideas are given.

What the Sunday Files **aren't**:

A detailed historical guide. Summarizing all human history is outside the scope of this book. For each period specific sourcebooks exist; they are called "history books". If you are really interested in improving your knowledge of an era, we strongly suggest you visit your local library or surf the Internet to find a serious history book (see Historical Research on page 127).

Adherent to Real World History. The history of the TimeZero setting is already messed up. Events and people could be different from real world events, because they are outcomes of intervention both by TimeGuard and their opponents.

Prehistory

Characters: Alternate, Lost Sheep.

Prehistory is an enormous length of time, referring to all the period before recorded history. Scientists divide it into two great eons, respectively the Precambrian (4570 to 542 million years ago), and the Phanerozoic (542 million years ago to date).

Each eon is divided into ages (each of which is divided into smaller periods). For example the Phanerozoic is divided into:

Paleozoic. When the first plants and the vertebrates developed.

Mesozoic. The age of the dinosaurs! Divided into the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous eras.

Neozoic. The era in which we live, in geological time. It includes the Paleocene (first mammals), Neocene (diversification between mammals and birds, appearance of the first Australopithecus, an's ancestor) and Quaternary (start and end of the Ice Age, Neanderthal man and actual day) eras.

TimeGuard has mixed feelings about prehistory. They feel good, especially about the Precambian, because very little happens there: after all it is very difficult trying to prevent the creation of the first unicellular beings, on a planetary scale! They feel bad because it is a really

enormous quantity of time, so looking for something strange in the Precambian really is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Things are slight better in the Phanerozoic, but we are still speaking of 540 million years. Some resident Watchers exist, especially with primitive tribes in the Neozoic, but other eras, for example the Mesozoic, are only visited by scientific expeditions. The only exception is the Cretaceous, because it is the period in which the TimeZero base exists. The exact date is a secret, but frequent scans are made of nearby millennia to be sure nothing interferes.

The Shimmering Domes. A month ago, subjective time of TimeZero a large expedition of Field Specialists was sent to the Triassic to study insect clades. They were under heavy military guard and were meant to establish a permanent research base in that era. Two days ago Assistant Researcher William Choi stumbled back through the Timegate. Wounded and almost dead, he was the only one of the expedition to return to TimeZero. Suffering from some nasty prehistoric jungle fever, he babbled about "shimmering domes" before passing out. What do his words mean? The presence of an unrecorded civilization in prehistory? And more importantly, what happened to the rest of the expedition?

Big Game. There is strange news in the Pennsylvania Inquirer of June 18th, 1937. The local Academy of Natural Sciences, cleaning the bones of Ollie, the T-Rex exposed in the museum, made quite a discovery: a projectile from a big game rifle was found in the occipital bone of the dinosaur! The journalist luckily took a humorous approach to the event, saying that probably it is only a joke by some light-hearted people: but a rather costly one given that the bullet is of a very unusual caliber, probably made for a custom-made rifle.

Stone Age (3.4 million years BC)

Characters: Explorer, Fisherman, Gatherer, Hunter, Shaman, Tribal Chief.

The Stone Age is a long era, ranging starting 3.4 million years ago and ending more or less in 2000 BC. The name isn't perfectly correct: some cultures, for example in Oceania, never really left the Stone Age, and acquired the secrets of metalworking from contact with more advanced societies. Scientists divide the era into the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) and finally Neolithic (New Stone Age), divided by the techniques of stone working used by primitive men to build tools. In particular, the Paleolithic was the era of *Homo Habilis*, while the Mesolithic sees the development of the Neanderthals (*Homo Neanderthalensis*) in Europe. Finally, the Neolithic era was the one when *Homo Sapiens* rose to dominance and the other human races (especially the Neanderthals) disappeared. The Neolithic is also very important for the discovery of pottery, which allowed the storage of food and seeds, and so made possible the Mesopotamian cultures (see below). TimeGuard's approach to the Stone Age is that of good shepherds: a Watcher is usually assigned to the biggest human communities and they assist the tribes in their growth, development, and sadly, extinction. This last part is a heart-breaking task, that after a couple of serious incidents (basically human Field Specialists trying to save clans condemned to extinction), is now only assigned to Synth personnel.

The Slavers. Strange graffiti were recently found in Australia's caverns. They were made by a tribe of *Homo Habilis*, the Tho-Tho, and date to 3 million years ago. Despite their age, they are very clear, and show strange round flying objects swooping down over a band of scared men. The primitives try to fight them with maces and spears, but a second drawing shows them being forced to board the flying object in single file, guarded by unrecognizable black figures. It seems that someone (or something) is capturing people in the Neolithic. Are they slavers? But why would someone with the technology to travel in time need primitive men as slaves?

The Albino Neanderthals. Samir Al Benna, a botanist Field Specialist on a mission studying the evergreens' reactions to the end of a glacial era, reports an encounter he had with a very peculiar tribe of Neanderthals in the central Alps. First, they were well outside their normal range; second, the whole tribe were albinos; and third, they were speaking like *Homo Sapiens*, in a language he didn't recognize: this is the most exceptional fact, because their throat is normally incapable of speaking as we do. Samir tried to follow them from a distance, but the tribe moved over a glacier and he lost their tracks.

Operatives' Tips: The Sakra Alternates

One of the most dangerous threats TimeGuard is fighting at the moment are the Sakra. They are a race of saurian humanoids, originally from another universe where reptilians are the dominant species. Ruthless and subtly cunning, the Sakra have an advanced technology and in particular employ "Flesh Dresses", a sort of soft exoskeleton, which give them the appearance of normal humans. Sakra influence is reported in the American History, Middle Ages and Stone Age periods. They usually kidnap people for unexplained and lethal medical studies, but they aren't afraid of manipulating our history, for reasons as yet undiscovered. Despite their impact on history being less than that of the Triad, they are a force not to be underestimated.

Bronze/Iron Age Mesopotamia (3100 BC – 539 BC)

Characters: Accountant, Astrologer, Farmer, Trader, Soldier, Priest.

Mesopotamia literally means "land between the rivers" and identifies the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, corresponding to modern-day Iraq and to a lesser extent northeastern Syria, southeastern Turkey and smaller parts of southwestern Iran . Mesopotamia included Sumer and the Akkadian, Babylonian and Assyrian empires, all part of modern-day Iraq. In the Iron Age, it was controlled by the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires. The indigenous Sumerians and Akkadians (including Assyrians and Babylonians) dominated Mesopotamia from the beginning of written history (c. 3100 BC) to the fall of Babylon in 539 BC, when it was conquered by the Achaemenid Empire. Mesopotamia represents the first real, full-fledged civilization in recorded history.

Mesopotamia was conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 BC and, after his death, it became part of the Greek Seleucid Empire.

TimeGuard pays particular attention to Mesopotamia because it is the real cradle of human agriculture and the first points in the timeline where a written code of laws was developed. Several attempts of disrupting these sciences are reported in the files of TimeZero and new ones cyclically happen.

The White Famine. As it was a very fertile land, agriculture flourished in Mesopotamia. In particular, under the Sumerians there were great plantations of wild barley (*hordeum vulgare*), and this made possible the transition from small communities to the first cities. There are reports about something interfering with this: a new, paler version of barley is starting to appear in Mesopotamian fields. It produces bigger grains and is far more resistant, so many farmers use it, but it has several nasty effects: after two or three generations the seeds start hosting a nasty, microscopic alkaloid fungus, very similar to ergot, which causes hallucination, dementia and eventually death. As if this were not enough, the ergot quickly spreads among nearby plantations, transforming an already serious threat into a potential catastrophe. This plague is something totally undocumented, and threatens the collapse of the Sumer civilization, if not properly investigated and stopped.

Humbaba and Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh, fifth king of Uruk, mythical ruler of the Sumerians, is the protagonist of the first epic poem of humanity, the Epic of Gilgamesh. Historians place his reign around 2500 BC. According to his epic Gilgamesh performed many great deeds, including his fight against the terrible monster Humbaba, guardian of the Cedar gardens. The chronicles also say he was a long lived king, reigning for 126 years. A team of Field Specialists was sent to investigate these facts, and they reported that a king named Gilgamesh really exists, and also a creature called Humbaba, which seems to be a sort of supernatural advisor of the ruler, and among the many miracles he has performed, he has promised King Gilgamesh eternal life.

Operatives' Tips: The VIP List

Human history spans thousands of years; even with Synth Watchers scattered around in the continuum, controlling every important historical personality is impossible, so what is the strategy of TimeGuard?

The Sun Tzus have devised a mathematical algorithm, based on the relevance of a figure in history, the fluctuations of tachyons (indicating the probability of time travel in the area) and the recent actions of the Triad, which gives them the degree of danger each figure is in at any given moment. Then they are sorted in descending order, in a sort of chart, called the VIP list. The persons in the highest places on the list are under the strictest control.

There are a few exceptions to the algorithm, because certain personalities permanently occupy a high position on the list (for

example Leonardo Da Vinci, Adolf Hitler and Columbus) by order of the Old Man, regardless of the calculations' results.

The algorithm is far from perfect: one of its most blatant failures was when it scored a high index of danger to the 10-year-old Adolf Hitler, in Linz, Germany, during a visit to a public garden. In truth the Operatives surveying the area reported that the target of the Triad's hostile actions was a three year old baby, which eventually became the great-grandparent of American pop star Kurt Kobain (1967-1994)...

Ancient Egypt (3150 BC – 332 BC)

Characters: Architect, Charioteer, Dancer, Priest, Scribe, Slave.

Ancient Egypt developed in Northeastern Africa, along the lower reaches of the Nile River. Egyptian civilization started around 3150 BC with the political unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the first Pharaoh. The history of ancient Egypt was a series of stable Kingdoms, punctuated by periods of relative instability known as Intermediate Periods: the Old Kingdom of the Early Bronze Age, the Middle Kingdom of the Middle Bronze Age and the New Kingdom of the Late Bronze Age. Egypt reached the pinnacle of its power during the New Kingdom, in the Ramesside period, after which it entered a period of slow decline. Egypt was invaded or conquered by a succession of foreign powers (such as Libya, Nubia, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and Greece) in the Third Intermediate Period and Late Period. In the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death, one of his generals, Ptolemy Soter, established himself as the new ruler of Egypt. This Ptolemaic Dynasty ruled Egypt until 30 BC, when it fell to the Roman Empire and became a Roman province.

The greatness of ancient Egyptian civilization came partly from its ability to adapt to the conditions of the Nile River Valley. The predictable flooding and controlled irrigation of the fertile valley produced surplus crops, which fueled social development and culture. The rulers sponsored mining, the early development of an independent writing system, the organization of collective construction and agricultural projects, trade with surrounding regions, and a strong army. Motivating and organizing these activities was a bureaucracy of elite scribes, religious leaders, and administrators under the control of a Pharaoh who ensured the cooperation and unity of the Egyptian people in the context of an elaborate system of religious beliefs.

The many achievements of the ancient Egyptians include the quarrying, surveying and construction techniques that facilitated the building of monumental pyramids, temples, and obelisks; a system of mathematics; a practical and effective system of medicine; irrigation systems and glass technology; new forms of literature; and the earliest known peace treaty (with the Hittites).

Ancient Egypt has always been a dangerous period for time travelers to reach. For some unknown reason, that region of the timeline is always prone to Bad Weather (see page 131).

When travelling to Ancient Egypt, it isn't unusual to be bounced hundreds of miles or dozens of years from the selected destination.

The Pyramid of Yzia. In 2021 French archeologist Pierre Dufaut discovered a new pyramid, twenty miles south of Thebes, in a very peculiar position: it was buried under one hundred yards of sand, and only the use of ground-penetrating radar made the discovery possible. This newfound pyramid is very strange: first, it is made of jet black stone, totally different from the stone used in other pyramids, which is so polished that it seems to have beeng cut by laser. Second, it is absolutely empty, hosting no coffins, inscriptions or other sign of human activity. Third, there is no report of its construction in all recorded Egyptian history.

The Son of Aten. Around 1350 BC, the stability of the realm trembled when Amenhotep IV ascended the throne and instituted a series of radical and chaotic reforms. Changing his name to Akhenaten, he touted the previously obscure sun deity Aten as the supreme deity, suppressed the worship of most other deities and attacked the power of the temples, which had become dominated by the priests of Amun in Thebes, whom he saw as corrupt. Recorded history says that after his death, the cult of Aten was quickly abandoned, and the priests of Amun soon regained power, but this now seems to not have been happened: Akhenaten declared himself

immortal, and it seems that in some manner he managed to achieve this: after two hundred years he is still alive, thus causing a major change in Egyptian history. It is almost certain he has access to some anti-aging technique of the far future, but this modus operandi seems too obvious to be the work of the Triad.

Ancient Greece (700 BC – 300 BC)

Characters: Athlete, Mariner, Merchant, Philosopher, Orator, Soldier.

Magna Graecia, Great Greece, is one of the cradles of human culture. Organized in independent city states, called *polis* (the most important ones being Athens, Sparta and Corinth), it is vitally important in history for its unique achievements in politics and philosophy. The Greeks invented democracy, on which the government forms of the next two millennia are based, and in philosophy they identified the principles of logic, from which the modern scientific method derives. They also did amazing things in the fields of medicine (Hippocrates basically invented medicine) and art (Phidias invented the Golden Ratio). Greek independence was menaced by the Persians, with whom they fought savage wars, and ended by their conquest by Alexander the Great. This political conquest allowed the Greek culture to spread throughout the Macedonian empire, giving birth to Hellenism.

Ancient Greece is a very stressful period for TimeGuard. The reason is simple: there are too many VIPs to be watched. The Three Greats (the philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle), for example, must be attentively guarded because any change in their lives, even a minor one, can divert them from the path of science and cause tremendous damage to future history.

Another thing to be carefully watched in Greek history is mythology. Too often, wild tales of gods, monsters and heroes spread through the city states. Many of them are simple stories or myths, but others can hide the intervention of time travelers, either Triad Agents or Alternates.

Plato and Atlantis. In the famous dialogue *Timaeus* and *Critias*, written in 360 BC, Plato speaks of Atlantis, a foreign naval power which, after failing to invade Athens, sank into the sea in a single day. Historians make different suppositions about what Atlantis really is: some say it refers to Egypt, others that it is an echo of the Trojan War, there is even a hypothesis that he is speaking of Crete. Plato is always close-mouthed about the subject, but a report says that in the 348 BC, few months before his death, he spoke in his sleep about "Atlantis returning and impending doom." These words could be the ravings of an old man, but given their importance they must be checked and if there is a grain of truth in them, they must be fully investigated.

Jason and the Argonauts. The myth of Jason and the Argonauts, a band of heroes looking for the Golden Fleece, is one of the best-known episodes of Greek mythology. The historical existence of Jason is yet to be demonstrated, but there are wild stories about his ship, the Argo, appearing around the coasts of Greece. The ship has a prow which "can speak and make prophecies", "can strike enemies with Hera's rage" and, most important "it flies", this last thing not being mentioned in any version of the myth.

In 1871 German archeologist Shliemann uncovered the ruins of a city in northern Anatolia (Turkey), which he claimed was Homer's Troy. Probably he was wrong, because the city of Troy was built and destroyed many times and the ruins he found were actually Roman ones. The important thing is that a TimeGuard agent was with him when he made the discovery and reported a strange fact: Troy is literally flooded by tachyons, meaning that somewhere in the timeline, this place was frequently visited by time travelers, or possibly that it hosts a temporal anomaly of some type.

Both hypotheses could be true, but what's important is that travelling to the era of the Trojan War, 1260-1240 BC, is almost impossible (serious time anomalies make the trip very dangerous) and that the few agents sent to the era "when gods and heroes walked on Earth" failed to return.

Ancient Rome (753 BC – 300 AD)

Characters: Engineer, Gladiator, Legionnaire, Politician, Slave.

There are two legends about Rome's foundation (753 AC): the first one tells that Rome was founded by two legendary twins, Romulus and Remus, raised by a she-wolf. The two princes founded Rome, but Romulus killed Remus, becoming first king of the Eternal City.

The second one tells that Aeneas, a Trojan hero, arriving with his old father Anchises and some survivors of the Trojan War, landed on the shores of the River Tiber. Not long after they landed, the men wanted to take to the sea again, but their women did not want to leave. One of them, named Roma, suggested that the women burn the ships to prevent the men from leaving. At first, the men were angry with Roma, but they soon realized that they were in the ideal place to settle. They named the settlement after her.

TimeGuard has never investigated the origins of Rome: they are always too busy preventing hostile powers from messing up the Punic Wars, fought by the Romans against Carthage (264-149 BC), with Caesar's rise to power (53-44 BC) and with Augustus (27 BC -14 AD) and the birth of the Roman Empire. Rome is one of the focal points of Western history: a single, minor change, and the Empire will never happen, and Europe as written in history books will never be.

I am Spartacus! During the Third Servile War (73-71 BC), a major slave uprising, Spartacus, a Thracian gladiator, became famous, leading the rebellion (also called the Gladiators' War). Official history says that Spartacus was killed in an epic battle against Roman legions near the River Sele in 71 BC, and that his body was never found. But in 69 BC, Spartacus seems to have reappeared in Sicily and is raising slaves against Rome. This man, this Spartacus, is gifted with an incredible, almost inhuman charisma and if he isn't stopped soon, Rome will face a Fourth Servile War.

The Secrets of the Black Forest. The Forest of Teutoburg was the site of one of the biggest Roman defeats: three legions, led by General Publius Quintilius Varus, were ambushed and totally destroyed by an alliance of German tribes. At least, this is what official history says. The reality seems to be quite different: the Germans alone didn't have the forces to defeat the Romans, but they aren't the only dwellers in these woods. Strange, alien things live among the trees: people who speak an incomprehensible language, creatures which don't seem human, and even weirder things. The Germans always respected and venerated these "Strangers," as they call them, and they only lured the legions into the depths of the forest, where the Strangers dwell. What exactly happened to the Roman legionaries is still unknown, but should be investigated sooner or later, because the Forest of Teutoburg is growing larger year by year…

Feudal Japan (710 BC – 1860 AD)

Characters: Ashigaru, Feudal Lord, Geisha, Haiku Poet, Monk, Ronin, Serf.

The islands of the Japanese archipelago have an age-long history. The first signs of human presence, pottery, date from 12000 BC, the Japanese prehistory period, up to 300 BC, called the Jomon period.

TimeGuard usually control a narrower era, starting with the foundation of the first capital, Nara, in 710 BC, and the beginning of the Empire. Traditionally, the Japanese Emperor had great prestige but little power. This is particularly true after 1550 AD, when a strong feudal system emerged, with local rulers (daimyos) each with personal military forces (samurai). In 1600 the Tokugawa era began, with the rise of a military government and the movement of the capital from Nara to Edo (modern-day Tokyo). It was a peaceful period, but one of strong isolationism, when all connections with foreign lands, including Christian missionaries, were severed. It is a particularly delicate moment in Japanese history, because the isolation has made possible large scale interventions by the Triad, which is known to have at least one secret base and a source of low-ranking agents in this era. In 1860 the Meji Restoration (aided on many occasions by TimeGuard agents) began, and Japan quickly left feudalism behind, becoming a Western-style state.

The Lights of Mount Fuji. Buddhist monk Ashigage Kiro, who lived around 750 AD, left an interesting scroll, only found by TimeGuard in recent times. Concealed by poetic metaphors and a convoluted style, the monk reports a series of strange happenings between the autumn of 732 and the winter of 734. In that period, people and beasts mysteriously disappeared in the region around Mount Fuji, strange people were seen, speaking in a totally unknown language, and a storm of tremendous intensity happened. Even more unusual, all these events were heralded by strange lights appearing on the top of Mount Fuji.

The Green Daggers. In 1590 AD Hideyoshi, Tokugawa's heir, attacked the last independent daimyo in Japan, Hojo Ujimasa. Written history says that Hideyoshi submitted to the powerful daimyo after being besieged for six months in the castle of Ogawara. But what is happening in the timeline now is quite different. Hojo Ujimasa seems to be winning the war, despite his inferior military forces. The reason for his incredible victories must be the aid of a mysterious

sect of ninjas called the Green Daggers which, with a mixture of assassination and sabotage, have changed the balance of the war. Recorded history never spoke of these Green Daggers and their assaults seem to have perfect timing, as if they knew the position of their targets in advance. If left alone, they could radically alter Japanese history.

Ancient China (2100 BC – 220 AD)

Characters: Artisan, Mandarin, Merchant, Monk, Poet, Warrior, Serf.

China has one of the longest and most complex histories of humanity, with its first hints starting in 2100 BC. Chinese civilization developed in the area around the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, but the first of these is considered the cradle of Chinese culture.

Chinese history is divided into dynasties. The oldest one, the Xia Dynasty, ruled from 2100 BC to 1660 BC, and ended with the famous Battle of Mingtiao.

Slightly overlapping with this, the Shang Dynasty followed (1700 BC – 1046 BC), where the first writings are found. The Shang moved the capital of the empire nine times, and the line of succession died out after thirty-one kings. From this period come the first reports of Chinese

religion: people worshipped sky and weather gods, ruled by a main deity called Shangdi, but they also had a very important cult of ancestor-worship.

The Zhuo Dynasty (1046 BC – 256 BC) followed, and was the longest-lasting of the Chinese empires. The Zhuo emerged from the Yellow River, and started menacing Shang territory, finally conquering it. They introduced a feudal system, and for the first time the Emperor was legitimized by the Mandate of Heaven, actually becoming a semi-divine figure. This was a double-edged sword because in dire straits (for example after a natural catastrophe), the population might decide that the Emperor had lost the Mandate of Heaven, overthrow him, and replace his dynasty with another.

The Zhuo Dynasty started to tremble in the period from 476 BC to 221 BC, called the Spring and Autumn Period, when local warlords started to fight for hegemony, and, at the same time, invaders came from northeast - the Qin. In a few centuries the structure of the empire shattered, feudal lords started to call themselves kings, and the Hundred States era began, a time of political turmoil but also of philosophical development. The Hundred Schools of Thought of Chinese philosophy blossomed during this period, and such influential intellectual movements as Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and Mohism were founded, partly in response to the changing political world.

The Hundred States led to the Warring States era (476 BC – 221 BC), when seven different realms fought amongst themselves, till China finally was united again, in the Imperial Era, under the Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 BC). It was a time of darkness, with the Qin Emperor ruthlessly crushing all opposition, even on the cultural side, with terrible measures such as the infamous book-burning and scholar-burying. It was also an age of stability, with several laws enacted, and the period when the construction of the Great Wall of China began.

This troubled age was followed by the Han Dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD) which emerged in 206 BC, with its founder Liu Bang being proclaimed emperor in 202 BC. This was the first dynasty to embrace the philosophy of Confucianism, which became the ideological underpinning of all regimes from then until the end of Imperial China. Under the Han Dynasty, China made great advances in many areas of the arts and sciences. Emperor Wu consolidated and extended the Chinese empire by pushing back the Xiongnu into the steppes of modern Inner Mongolia, wresting from them the actual-day areas of Gansu, Ningxia and Qinghai. This enabled the first trading connections between China and the West, along the Silk Road. Han Dynasty general Ban Chao expanded his conquests across the Pamirs to the shores of the Caspian Sea. The first of several Roman embassies to China is recorded in Chinese sources, coming by sea in 166 AD, and the second one in 284 AD.

TimeGuard has only recently started examining Chinese history, and this is mainly because of the Yellow Tiger emergency (see below), but no detailed monitoring of this era is done, due to the lack of resources. There are only three resident Watchers to supervise over two thousand years of time, but this situation will quickly change.

The Shaolin Mystery. On December 21st, 2012 in Seoul, Korea, the final fight of the K-1 World Grand Prix, a worldwide martial arts tournament pitting the top fighters of very different styles against each other, was held. That is, it would have been, if two martial artists, the

Netherlanders Peter Keen and Alistair Raboen, had not disappeared the night before. The same thing happened to famous karatekas of medieval Japan, and to a 1980s American action movie star. Security cameras show that both the Netherlanders and the American were in company of a strange Chinese man, dressed in garments identifying him as a Shaolin monk of the Qin dynasty period. The monk appeared very respectful, and all the missing people followed him outside the camera's field of view without any coercion.

Yellow Tiger. A terrible pestilence is ravaging southern China during 220 – 218 BC, killing thousands of people, and then spreading to the rest of the world. This is totally absent from the historical record, and, even more important, it seems that the event is spreading though history like ripples from a stone thrown in a puddle. The totally unknown malady assumes gigantic proportions over the next twenty years, killing 98% of the Chinese population. Scientists say it isn't a natural disease, but an artificial germ created in some far future laboratory, which is very resistant to treatment. The only way to stop the threat is by preventing the infection, codenamed Yellow Tiger, from spreading, by detecting and destroying it in the very beginning, in 220 BC; and if possible, capturing the culprits of the contagion.

Pre-Columbian Civilizations (1600 BC – 1492 AD)

Characters: Architect, Farmer, Jaguar Warrior, Mountaineer, Priest, Scribe.

Within the term Pre-Columbian civilizations are usually included the various Central America cultures developing before the arrival of Columbus and subsequent colonialism. Many exist, but this report focuses only on three: the Olmec, Aztec and Maya.

Before speaking in detail of these cultures, we must consider the *original* colonization of America: between 40,000 and 13,000 BC, various Asian populations migrated to America, crossing the Bering land bridge (now the Bering Strait) and giving rise to the Paleo-indians, who spread across America. This is proven by DNA studies evidencing many Asian genes in the Amerindians' genetic code. TimeGuard has tried in the past to monitor these migrations, but given the time span they haven't yet found the right moment in history. Some Field Specialists even think that these migrations weren't spontaneous, and that they were driven by some external force, possibly one from the future.

The earliest known civilization in Central America is the Olmec. This began with the production of pottery in abundance, around 2300 BC in the Grijalva River delta. Between 1600 and 1500 BC, the Olmec civilization had already begun to consolidate power at their capital, at Tenochtitlán (now known as San Lorenzo) near the coast in southeast Veracruz. Olmec influence extended across Mexico, into Central America, and along the Gulf of Mexico. They had a very advanced government, pyramid temples, writing, astronomy, art, mathematics, economics, and religion. Their achievements paved the way for the Mayan civilization in the east, and other civilizations to the west in central Mexico.

The Mexica, also called Aztecs, were the rulers of much of central Mexico by about 1400 AD (while Yaquis, Coras and Apaches commanded sizable regions of northern desert), having subjugated most of the other regional states by the 1470s. At their peak, 300,000 Mexica presided

over a wealthy tribute-empire comprising about 10 million people (almost half of Mexico's 25 million people). The modern name "Mexico" comes from their name. Their capital, Tenochtitlan, is the site of modern-day Mexico City. At its peak, it was one of the largest cities in the world, with an estimated population of 300,000. The market there was the largest ever seen by the Conquistadors on their arrival. The Aztecs are known for their bloodthirsty rites and for being very warlike. For TimeGuard, infiltrating the Aztecs is always very difficult: these people seem to have an uncanny ability to spot non-natives, and foreigners are usually captured and butchered on the altars.

Incas, the last population treated in this report, represent an unsolved mystery for TimeGuard. From their capital at the great city of Cuzco, the Inca civilization dominated the Andes region from 1438 to 1533. Known as Tawantinsuyu, or "the land of the four regions," the Inca civilization was distinctive and highly developed. Inca rule extended to nearly a hundred linguistic or ethnic communities, some 9 to 14 million people connected by 18,000 miles of roads. Cities were built with precise, unmatched stonework, constructed over many levels of mountain terrain. Terrace farming was a useful form of agriculture. There is evidence of excellent metalwork and even successful brain surgery in Inca civilization.

What is strange for TimeGuard is that the development of the Incas seem to have been directed by an unknown, outside force, which gave them some very advanced technologies (such as mathematics and brain surgery), but actually rooted out other ones (like the wheel). The same force, given the speed of the fall of the Inca empire, must have disappeared from the scene when the Conquistadors appeared, leaving the Incas alone and incapable of reacting. Who are these mysterious puppeteers? And where have they gone?

The Lines of Nazca. On the ground in Nazca, Peru, there are strange geoglyphs which, viewed from an aircraft, clearly resemble beasts, people and objects. These shapes have always raised wild hypotheses both from serious scientists and UFO believers and other crazy people. The shapes hide a mystery: who built them? And why? Are they really signals for visitors from space? TimeGuard has never managed to answer to these questions, because of a strange physical phenomenon. The area surrounding Nazca is permanently flooded by tachyons, making time travel really dangerous. A team of Field Specialists, all volunteers, was sent to Nazca some weeks ago, in TimeZero's time, but they haven't come back. Are they lost in the mists of time, victims of some temporal storm, or there is something more sinister going on?

The Thunder Warriors. The Jaguar Warriors are a caste of Aztec soldiers known for their ferocity and skill, but despite that they are only armed with Macuahuitl, wooden swords, and dressed in jaguar pelts. But now, reports speak of a new caste of warriors appearing in Tenochtitlan; they call themselves the Thunder Warriors, and they are armed with magical sticks capable of striking opponents dead hundreds of paces away. No Watcher has been able to examine these objects closely, but from the description they seem to be gunpowder weapons. It seems unlikely the Aztecs developed these by themselves, so someonehas given them this technology. Someone who must be stopped, and soon.

The Middle Ages (476 BC – 1492 AD)

Characters: Archer, Bandit, Bard, Knight, Man-at-Arms, Noble, Priest/Nun, Pilgrim, Scribe, Serf. Historians debate the exact boundaries of Middle Ages. TimeGuard considers it to be the period between the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century (with the deposition of Romulus Augustus, the last roman Emperor, in 476 AD) and the discovery of the Americas by Columbus (1492 AD). It is a long period of darkness and social turmoil, as the void left by the fall of the Roman Empire was filled by feudalism, a far less efficient social system. Scientific and cultural progress stopped and civilization took other, unexpected routes. The fragmentation of the old Empire created the basis for the rise of nation-states and the power of the Christian Church in the following centuries. It is an age very difficult to control for TimeGuard, given the general lack of written records and the myriad of different social environments to watch.

Usually the Middle Ages are divided into three rough periods, detailed below.

Early Middle Ages (700 – 1000 AD). This period, also called the Dark Ages, is one of progressive contraction and isolation of urban centers. Barbarians invaded Europe, becoming the new rulers of the former lands of the Roman Empire. The two cultures progressively merged, with the barbarians gradually assuming some of the customs of the conquered

populations. In particular the Ostrogoths, ruled by Theodoric (471-526 AD) settled in Italy, and the Burgundians settled in Gaul (present-day France), before being wiped out by the Huns, while in northern France, Franks and Bretons set up their own small kingdoms. Visigoths arrived in Spain and Vandals in North Africa. The absence of a strong central power caused the development of feudalism (lords renting lands from their patrons in exchange for military support) and manorialism (villages and farmers renting lands from lords in exchange for protection). In the religious field, monasticism was born, a religious movement based on communal life under the rules of Christ, loosely based on ideals from the eremites of Syria and Egypt. In Arabia, with the birth of Muhammad (570-632 AD), Islam sprang up and flourished.

High Middle Ages (1000 – 1300 AD). This central era sees a general increase in the population, with the introduction of better farming techniques (the iron plow and crop rotation), and a general improvement of climate conditions. In the political field it saw the creation of new states, with the Saxons ruling Germany and the Normans under William I the Conqueror (1028-1087 AD) invading and conquering Britain. The church became a secular power, reaching its apogee under Pope Innocent III and promoting the Crusades, military actions in Northern Africa aimed at recovering Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslims; in reality, a political manuever to conquer new lands for the many dispossessed lords of Europe. In the military field, there was the full development of heavy cavalry, and the first timid scientific innovations, among them clockwork and the first crude lenses (Roger Bacon invented eyeglasses).

Late Middle Ages (1300 – 1450 AD). The Late Middle Ages open with a period of famine and pestilence, which reached their height during the Black Death of 1347 – 1350. Famine, in particular, was also the effect of a major climate change, with the beginning of the Little Ice Age (1300 – 1700). On the political side, the Late Middle Age saw the creation of even stronger nation-states, like England, France, Aragon, Castile and Portugal. This was a process full of bloodshed: in particular England was ravaged by the Wars of the Roses, between Lancaster and York (1445 – 1485), and the Hundred Years War (1337 – 1453) between England and France for control of the French throne. Even more ground-shaking was the final collapse of Byzantium, with Constantinople being conquered from Ottomans in 1453. The Church suffered a great schism, which caused the birth of the Avignon Papacy. In the military field, there was the development of the longbow (English longbowmen dominated the battlefields of this era) until it was made obsolete by crossbows and the first gunpowder weapons. Literature underwent a renaissance, with the vernacular works of Chaucer, Boccaccio, Dante, Langland and Francois Villon. The development of the compass opened the way for explorers like Columbus, Vasco De Gama and Bartholomew Diaz.

The Eternal King. The myth of King Arthur Pendragon, ruler of medieval Britain, is one of the best-loved tales of any age. King Arthur unified Britain, fought the Saxons, created chivalry (particularly the famous Round Table) and died by the hand of his son Mordred, as a real tragic hero should do. Legends say that he is the Eternal King and that he sleeps somewhere, in a crystal grotto, ready to wake up to defend Britain in its hour of need. Well, there must be some truth in this, because there are unconfirmed sightings of Arthur Pendragon during the Battle of Hastings (1066) and the Battle of Britain (summer and autumn of 1940)!

These sightings need to be investigated quickly, before new wild legends spread.

Saint George and the Dragon. In 1978, amateur restorer and painter Pierre Dufaut made a strange discovery in a private chapel in the small village of Vergoncey, near Mount Saint Michelle, Normandy. Under several layers of paint he uncovered an ancient mural behind the church's altar. From the medieval period, it is a depiction of Saint George fighting the dragon, a common medieval theme. What it is really strange is that the dragon fought by the Saint is almost identical to a T-Rex and the "sword" of Saint George is a late 22nd century energy rifle. The local Watcher suggests that Pierre Dufaut must be silenced in some manner and then appropriate investigations carried out.

The European Renaissance (1300 -1600 AD)

Characters: Composer, Painter, Poet, Scientist, Sculptor, Statesman, Soldier, Spy.

The European Renaissance, whose name derives from the Italian "Rinascimento" (rebirth) is a social, cultural and scientific movement which started at the beginning of 14th century, in Italy (Florence, to be precise), and then spread throughout Europe. On the cultural plane, the Renaissance meant a new interest in Latin literature, a general rediscovery of the classics of the past, while in art it was famous for the development of perspective, a way of depicting the third dimension, depth, in painting; and in politics the concept of modern day diplomacy was born, with the various powers sending ambassadors to their respective courts.

For TimeGuard, the Renaissance is a stressful period because it is VIP-intensive: a number of great minds in several disciplines lived in this age. Leonardo Da Vinci is one of them and he has given TimeGuard a lot of trouble (see page 131). The

same can be said for Roger Bacon (philosopher), Niccolo` Macchiavelli (politician), Galileo Galilei (astronomer) and many others.

It was also an age of great discoveries: in 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered America, opening a whole new chapter in human history. Many forces constantly dabble with this era: Triad agents trying to steal the riches coming from the New World, Alternates trying to alter human history to delay the discovery of America as much as they can, plus a goodly number of temporal anomalies caused by Leonardo Da Vinci's time travel experiments and those of other Renaissance scientists.

The Missing Galleon. In June 1565 a Spanish galleon, the *Nuestra Senora de Madrid,* sailed from Caracas, Venezuela, with a hold full of gold, plunder from the Incas and Mayans, on its way to Spain. Apart from the gold and a large contingent of soldiers and marines, the ship carried a group of Dominican friars, who kept watch day and night over a mysterious cage, which seems to have been a personal gift to the Spanish crown from the famous Bartolome de Las Casas, the friar who Christianized the Indios. The cage, the report says, contains something very strange found in Machu Pichu by the Conquistadores, a gift that could make Spain great. Suspiciously the galleon never reached Europe: it disappeared somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle. An Operative was sent to question Bartolome de Las Casas, but the old man died a week before his arrival, an event even stranger given that recorded history says Las Casas died a year later, in 1566.

Dante's Apocrypha. Dante Alighieri, probably the most famous writer of Renaissance wrote the Divine Comedy, an allegorical poem describing his travels in Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. In 2006 an Italian researcher, Davide S. Mana, found in the archives of the Vatican libraries a manuscript in the personal archives of Pope Boniface VIII, clearly written by Dante Alighieri. It is an additional chapter of the Purgatory section, only half completed: unlike the other parts of the Divine Comedy this chapter isn't linked to Italian Renaissance politics, instead it describes a hellish prison, populated by terrible iron demons torturing poor souls. Comparative studies by TimeGuard Field Specialists recognized in the book a clear description of the maximum security prison of Gehenna, built on Mars in 2356, sadly famous for the insurrection of 2388, which ended in bloodshed.

The Age of Reason (1630 – 1750 AD)

Characters: Diplomat, Poet, Scientist, Spy, Social Reformer, Revolutionary.

In the period spanning from 1650 to 1700, a new way of thinking appeared, in Europe and in the American colonies. It was called the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason, and promoted science and research over superstition, bigotry and the abuses of Church and State.

It was an international movement, which produced some of the finest minds of humanity. Among them were

philosophers like Spinoza (1632-1677) and John Locke (1632-1704), and scientists like Isaac Newton (1643-1727). The cultural manifesto of the Age of Reason can be recognized in the Encyclopédie (1751-1752), a collection of 35 books gathering all the knowledge of the era, including essays of famous thinkers like Voltaire (1694-1778), Rousseau (1712-1778) and Montesquieu (1689-1755).

In politics, the Age of Reason had two faces: on one side, it influenced the most advanced political acts of the age, the American Declaration of Independence, the United States Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and the Polish–Lithuanian Constitution of May 3rd, 1791. On the other side, it supported the ideals of Enlightened Despotism, in which an absolute ruler, aided by modern scientists, enacts a series of reforms aimed at creating a strong nation-state, free from the influence of the Church. Among the most enthusiastic supporters of this idea are Frederick the Great of Prussia, Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, and Joseph II of Austria.

The Age of Reason is another delicate moment in human history, because from it originate a great number of later ideas. The Triad seems to not have much interest in the Age of Reason, while many Alternates have. By suppressing or misdirecting a single idea, they can drastically alter the next ten centuries. The most important of these is probably the scientific method, expounded by Rene Descartes in his main book "Discourse on Method" of 1637: if this is prevented from publication, the Field Specialists foresee a possible return to the Middle Ages. For this reason, Descartes is always on theTimeGuard VIP list and is protected day and night by a personal bodyguard who is above suspicion.

Descartes' Lost Equations. Despite all the surveillance of Rene Descartes, in 1920 TimeGuard found a handwritten booklet in the library of the Academy of Science of France, belonging to the great scientist. Opening a page at random a phrase caught the attention of the Operative: "if a tachyon well is brought over the Event Horizon in a non-Euclidean geometry…" The rest of the booklet is all on the same subject matter: advanced temporal physics theories, the same ones on which time travel is based, but with several new ideas, unknown even to TimeZero technicians! Unluckily the booklet is not complete; a second one must exist somewhere, with the conclusions of Descartes' studies. But this isn't the main question: who (and when) taught Descartes the basics of time travel physics? And how is it that the book seems to be no more than five years old, even though Descartes had already been dead for almost two centuries?

The Russian Counselor. Reports from British spies, intercepted by TimeGuard, reveal that Catherine of Prussia has a new, secret counselor. This isn't so uncommon; the strange thing is that the counselor isn't human, but a machine. Someone, in fact, has given the Empress a clockwork man capable of playing chess (one of the queen's passions). The automaton is so complex that not only can it win these games, but it can also converse as normal people do, and is well versed in philosophy, science and other matters. Its conversations with Katherine are subtly altering her political decisions, potentially disrupting the next two centuries of Russian history (and preventing the October Revolution). The British secret service supposes that the device hides a dwarf agent of a foreign power, but TimeZero believes that something much more dangerous is hiding within the metal chess player.

The Industrial Revolution (1750–1850 AD)

Characters: Anarchist, Luddite, Journalist, Scientist, Tycoon, Worker.

In 1720 German Scientist Jacob Leupold built a two-cylinder, high-pressure steam engine. This isn't exactly the start of the Industrial Revolution, but it can be taken as a symbol of the entire era. In a single century, starting in the United Kingdom and then spreading through Germany, North America and Japan, production techniques changed, with a huge impact on people's lives.

The principal idea behind the Industrial Revolution is *mechanization*. With improvements in the field of metallurgy and the discovery of steam (and later electricity) it was possible to create machines capable of doing the work previously done by many artisans in a cheaper and faster way. It was the textile industry where the machines were first introduced: first the water frame, then the Spinning Jenny and later the Spinning Mule allowed a massive increase in production.

An important side-effect of the machines was that they only required unskilled manpower: this caused great numbers of artisans to become unemployed (see Luddites below), and a general migration of people from the country to urban areas, where they were employed in factories.

Such a big migration deeply changed the landscape of the world: the early factories were huge, polluting monsters, and the houses provided to the workers were cheap, cramped and generally unhealthy. Operatives who visit London in 1800 often say that it is the closest thing to Hell that exists in the timeline: a nightmare smelling of coal and unwashed bodies..

Another great change introduced by the Industrial Revolution is in the field of transport: steam engines allowed ironclad ships and, more importantly, railways, which allowed a speed of movement unheard of before.

TimeGuard keeps an eye on the Industrial Revolution mainly because of one problem: Luddites. They are an illegal movement fighting actively against technology. The reasons for their behavior are easy to understand: machines allowed a few people to do the work previously done by great numbers of artisans in a better, faster way, so they caused a great number of people to become unemployed. From 1811, guided by their chief, Ned Ludd, they attacked and destroyed factories and machines, which they saw as diabolical devices which stole their jobs. Recorded history says that the Luddite movements ended in 1830, but actually they are continuing to cause damage later in the timeline: there are cases of Luddite attacks in 1850, 1870 and even in 1901. This makes TimeGuard suspect the existence of the Neo-Luddites (see sidebar).

Eidolon Clockwork. There is a curious report about a factory built in Birmingham, in 1866. It is called Eidolon Mechanics, founded by Swiss scientist and entrepreneur Jacob Eidolon. It specializes in a particular field, the construction of clockwork and mechanical gears, especially clocks; the finest on the market, and more advanced than any similar device constructed in this era. Even the British Army seems interested in some of Mr. Eidolon's inventions: there are unconfirmed rumors that he has signed a contract for the production of a clockwork soldier, and if that is true, this could totally alter human history! There is a serious need for TimeGuard

to poke its nose in Mr. Eidolon's business, and in particular to get inside his factory which is heavily protected and doesn't employ any local workers.

Pasteur the Gambler. Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) is one of the personalities changing history in an inconspicuous way. Of humble origin, he devised the germ theory, one of the pillars of modern medicine, and invented the first vaccines (in particular he made one against rabies and another for smallpox), potentially saving billions of people.

That is, if you pay heed to official history, but something weird is happening. An Operative, busy on a totally different mission, stumbled into Pasteur in 1842 in a casino of Las Vegas. He is a person very different from the mild scientist history remembers: a die-hard gambler, he has never studied medicine in all his life. At the age of eighteen he got involved with a charming Danish adventuress and explorer, Baroness Hela Stronheim, and joined the crew of her dirigible, the *Loki's Daughter*, in which they had some memorable adventures, exploring such faraway places as the South Pole and the springs of the Congo River.

Field Specialists did extensive research, and Lady Stronheim isn't named in any history book. Instead a far worst thing is discovered: without the medical studies of Pasteur, a large epidemic of smallpox infected Europe in 1880, killing millions of people and altering history forever.

OPERATIVE'S TIPS: NEO LUDDITES

The continuing assaults against machines in the second half of 19th century makes the Tactical Office suspect the existence of a hidden, very dangerous Luddite movement, called Neo-Luddism, which is probably more than it appears. The facts supporting this hypothesis are listed below:

1) Neo-Luddites are organized in cells, like modern-day terrorists, and seem to have received modern military and covert ops training.

2) Neo-Luddite attacks of 1895 and after employ the use of a total anachronistic device: Ludd Staves, tools capable of emitting an energy impulse which can fry any electrical device. The only sample of this weapon recovered, once studied, was revealed to be based on a technology very similar to Synthkiller weapons (see page 81), originally from the Synth Rebellion period (see Near Future era below).

3) In 2002, a group of terrorists makes an attack in Silicon Valley, USA, destroying various prototypes of several high tech industries. They were never captured but photos show they were armed with Ludd Staves.

Characters: Cowboy, Doctor, Explorer, Gunslinger, Native American, Saloon Girl, Soldier, Muckracker.

American history in great part consists of the history of the United States. The United States became an independent nation with the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. European colonists had reached the Gulf and Pacific coasts, but the largest settlements were by the English on the Atlantic coast, starting in 1607. By the 1770s, the Thirteen Colonies contained two and a half million people. They were prospering, and had developed their own political and legal systems. Britain tried to recover the costs of the French and Indian Wars by instituting a series of additional taxes on the Colonists, and had left parts of their army in the colonies to help provide for their defense. The additional taxes, and the continuous presence of British troops, posed a threat to American self-government. Political action in the early 1770s led to the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, and culminated in all-out war in 1775. After fierce debate among the colonies, it was finally agreed to declare their independence from Britain, and in 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed, formally and officially breaking all ties with the former mother country. With major military and financial support from France, the Patriots won the American Revolutionary War. During and after the war, the United States were united under a weak federal government established by the Articles of Confederation. When these became unworkable, a new Constitution was written in 1789, and it became the basis for the United States federal government, with war hero George Washington as the country's first president. The young nation continued to struggle with the scope of central government and with European influence, creating its first political parties in the 1790s, and fighting a second war with Britain in 1812.

U.S. territory expanded westward across the continent, brushing aside the Native Americans and Mexico, and rejecting the advice of Whigs who wanted to strengthen the economy rather than expand the States geographically. Slavery of Africans was abolished in all the Northern states at the turn of the 19th century, but it flourished in the Southern

states because of the heavy European demand for cotton. After 1820, a series of compromises postponed a showdown on the issue of slavery, but in the late 1850s, the new Republican Party took political control of the North and promised to stop the expansion of slavery, which led to its eventual death. The 1860 presidential election of Republican Abraham Lincoln triggered a crisis as eleven slave states seceded to found the Confederacy in 1861. The bloody American Civil War (1861–65) redefined the nation and remains its central, iconic event. The South was eventually defeated and, in the Reconstruction era, the United States ended slavery, extended rights to African Americans, and readmitted secessionist states under loyalist governments. The national government was much stronger, but the entire South remained poor, while the North grew rapidly.

American history is a very crowded period. In less than four centuries Americans rebelled against Great Britain, fought a Civil War, defeated slavery and expanded across the whole continent. They constructed railroads from the East to the West coasts, discovered gold in California and gradually took land from the natives. TimeGuard is acutely aware that they don't control the American History period enough. It is simply too vast an area, geographically, and many of the most important historical events aren't recorded properly, or are only written down in local documents. For this reason, groups of Field Specialists frequently visit this part of the timeline to explore local libraries, read newspapers and interview old people. They are slowly gathering a body of minor historical facts, but there is still a lot of work to do.

Salem Witch Trials. The Salem witch trials were a series of hearings and prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in colonial Massachusetts, between February 1692 and May 1693. Despite being generally known as the Salem witch trials, the preliminary hearings in 1692 were conducted in a variety of towns across the province: Salem Village (now Danvers), Ipswich, Andover and Salem Town. The most infamous trials were conducted by the Court of Oyer and Terminer in Salem Town during 1692.

Six weeks ago, TimeZero time, a field study specialist, Dr. Paula Hammond, an expert in the sociology of Wiccan cultures obtained permission to go to Salem to study the witch trials. Now, the historical record says that the condemned witches at Salem, originally three in number (Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne), are four. Dr. Hammond missed all the rendezvous points at the Timegate, and this suggests the worst has happened.

Someone stop Benjamin Franklin! Benjamin Franklin, scientist, politician and even musical and chess connoisseur is a real pain in the ass for the Old Man. Franklin somehow discovered how to travel in time (probably an accident during an experiment with lightning) and has been seen in London, 1984, trying to get an audience with the Queen to discuss American independence, and also at the Woodstock Festival in 1969, chatting with some hippies. Finally there is an unconfirmed sighting of old Benjamin somewhere around Sudan and Zaire in 1976 during the first EBOLA virus outburst. Someone must track that Free Player down and bring him home before the Old Man has a stroke!

A new hospital was built in New York in 1888, called Our Lady of Charity. It is a religious institution, run by an order of nuns, who call themselves the Pious Sisters of Charity. As the name suggests, it is a philanthropic organization, funded by donations from many important people. Among the various supporters of the hospital there are politicians, intellectuals and men of faith. The weird thing is that the creation of the hospital is totally unrecorded in the New York archives. The organization offers medical help to the homeless, and is entirely run by nuns and priests, all originally from Amsterdam, in the Netherlands.

A TimeGuard Operative, Timothy Eron, recently infiltrated the hospital, disguised as a homeless drunkard. To pass medical inspections, his liver was artificially ruined by TimeZero medical staff to resemble that of someone in the final stages of alcoholism. The trick worked too well, because officially Timothy Eron died from cirrhosis in the hospital in January of 1889, and his body was never returned to his family.

In truth, Timothy Eron stumbled into the legal offices of Tallbaum & Fisher (an undercover TimeGuard base in New York of 1880-1900) in February 1889, mortally ill. An emergency Gate to TimeZero was requested, but the agent died before reaching its medical facilities. The only word he managed to say before passing out was "Sakra". The autopsy revealed that the main glands of his body were damaged by massive surgical intrusion and that a great quantity of hormones was extracted from them, this being the cause of the Operative's death.

The First World War (1914–1918 AD)

Characters: Anarchist, Infantryman, Medic/Nurse, Officer, Pilot, Mechanic.

On June 28th, 1914, Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian-Serb student, murdered Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. A month later the First World War, one of the biggest conflicts humanity has ever seen, began. The war ended on November 11th, 1918, having caused more than nine million casualties and created an enormous number of missing people.

It is almost certain that Gavrilo Princip wasn't what he appeared to be: probably he was an Alternate agent, even if Triad influence on the case cannot be excluded. In this case TimeGuard simply avoided intervening: the political situation was too tense, and war was unavoidable, so the murder is now part of the official history. There is still a file open on Gavrilo Princip, but nobody is really looking for him.

The First World War, sad to say, is an excellent recruitment point for all the time-travelling powers: an enormous number of people disappeared from history in that period, killed or

simply missing in action, and some of them preferred to sign a Deal with the Devil and continue to live in another era than die in a gruesome way at the bottom of a trench.

A goodly number of TimeGuard members, and also Triad enforcers, come from this era.

WWI was started by a handful of states: the Triple Entente (United Kingdom, France and Russia) against the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy), but soon escalated, involving all Europe and other far-away countries.

It was the first technological war, and one of attrition, fought in trenches, dominated by artillery, machine guns and the dreaded poison gas, which caused many casualties even if it was never decisive in battle.

It also was the first time the tank had appeared on the battlefield, and submarines (in particular the feared German U-Boat) were used in naval warfare. TimeGuard always tries to monitor the technology used in WWI: occasionally, someone tries to cheat, giving one of the contenders slightly more advanced gear, small improvements usually, difficult to notice but that can change the tide of the conflict. For this reason a number of Watchers are stationed in this time, ready to signal any "cheating".

The Two Lives of the Red Baron. Manfred Von Richthofen, best known as the Red Baron, is probably the most famous Ace of the First World War. He had 80 confirmed air combat victories. The Red Baron ended his career on April 21st, 1918, near Amiens, killed in action. That is, if you believe recorded history. In the timeline, things seem to have gone differently. As history says, Von Richthofen was shot by a single .303 bullet, fired by novice Canadian pilot Wilfrid "Wop" May, but in some manner the ace pilot managed to survive this terrible wound, land, avoid capture and return to friendly lines. People who know him say that now he seems to be a different person, more interested in advancing his career in the army than in being the daredevil pilot he was before.

Time Mercs. A month ago, TimeZero time, a team of Operatives ended a threat during the Vietnam War. Specifically, they found a group of mercenaries, all German infantrymen of WWI but equipped with 30th century weapons, fighting on Ho Chi Minh's side. This isn't the first time this has happened: groups of WWI soldiers were found in Sinai around 1 BC, in the Boer War (1899-1902) and in various other conflicts. They aren't simply Lost Sheep, survivors of time anomalies: they are mercenaries, recruited by a still-unknown power, which saved them from certain death, gave them superb training, and now sells their services along the timeline. They call themselves the Time Mercs, and whoever is in charge of them is no a fool: before each mission any memory of their masters' identity is wiped from the soldiers' minds. The only hint TimeGuard has is that they are all recruited (from both sides) during 1915-1916 in the European theatre of WWI.

The Roaring Twenties (1920-1929 AD)

Characters: Archeologist, Cop, Gangster, Explorer, Movie Actor, Smuggler.

This is an age almost every Operative likes to be sent to. Starting in 1920 and ending in 1929, this is an age of wealth, of economic prosperity. Life concentrated in cities and urban

areas, which became centers of culture, art and economics. Politics returned to normal after the excesses of WWI, but the greatest changes happened in everyday life, with the mass introduction of modern-day inventions: telephones, cinema, cars and radios. It was also the era of media development, which centered on a new generation of heroes, sportsmen, who become the idols of the crowd, and movie stars, who won the hearts of the people.

But it isn't an epoch only of good things: alongside jazz music, Art Deco and the flappers, organized crime took root as never before: especially in big cities, gangsters took control. Names like Al Capone, Scarface, and Nick Angel Face represent the bad side of the Roaring Twenties. In economics, this is the first moment when stock exchanges played an important role in the lives of the common people, and this led to destruction. Germany could not pay any more war reparations to the Allies, which led to the Dawes Plan and massive investment by Wall Street in the German economy. This went on until Black Friday and the Great Depression of 1929.

Operatives sent to the Roaring Twenties can taste the pleasures of civilization and hear good music, but they are quite busy. The Triad has tried many times to dabble with this era: in particular they infiltrated organized crime (it is almost certain that one of the advisors of Al Capone doesn't belong to this era) and economics (speculating on Wall Street). But the major threat is still unseen: despite this being a modern era, great parts of the world, apart from Europe and North America, are still in more primitive conditions, and it is in these places, such as India, Amazonia and Africa, where the Triad and the Alternates carry out their most nefarious plans.

Lindbergh's Secret. Charles Lindbergh became famous because on the 21st-22nd May 1927, he made the first non-stop flight from America to Europe aboard the *Spirit of Saint Luis*, the craft symbolizing this era. Becoming a famous figure he used his influence to sponsor the Air Mail and to promote flight in general. Lindbergh was also famous for another, sadder reason. In March 1932, someone sneaked into his house in East Armwell, New Jersey, and kidnapped Charles Jr., his ten-month-old son. The crime had an incredible impact, becoming the first police case fully covered by the media. Sadly, the story had a bad ending and the baby was killed. The reasons for the kidnapping were never clear, the supposed culprit Bruno Richard Hauptmann declaring his innocence till execution, but after Lindbergh's death a Watcher recovered Lindbergh's private diary, which reports a disturbing fact. It seems that Lindbergh, in the weeks before the kidnapping, was writing a book about a strange, unreported event that happened to him during his solo flight from America to Europe, something destined to change human history forever, if revealed. The diary didn't say what this event was, but confirms that the kidnapping was part of a blackmail plan to prevent the book from being released: the kidnappers asked (and obtained) the original manuscript of the book, but they didn't give back Charles' son. After this tragic event, Lindbergh and his family moved to Europe to escape media pressure, and the pilot never talked (or wrote) again about the mysterious event that happened during his most famous flight.

Hollywood, Hollywood! In the 1920s the cinema industry flourished, and the first studios appeared in Hollywood. Some of them became famous and enormously rich, others simply died after a few years. Studio 20 was one of the second type. Owned by stock exchange tycoon

Edward Clemens, it produced one of the first science fiction movies in history, which received only a mild response. In 1929 Black Friday wiped out Clemens' fortune, and he ended his life with a bullet in his head in his Hollywood villa. Studio 20, only one of his many properties, closed and was put on sale to pay part of his debts. Given the economic situation, it remained unsold for ten years, and during this time it acquired the reputation of being a haunted place. Neighbors claim to have seen strange persons, dressed as people of the past, moving in and out of the gates. The most logical explanation is that homeless people sneaked inside and took some costumes, but this fails to explain the strange grunts and even growls frequently heard inside the gates of the abandoned place. Resident Watcher Alicia Fadden reports that the Studio is literally full of tachyon emissions.

Great Crimes of History: the Florist Cases

Not all temporal crimes are solved: Operatives are always in short supply and some criminals escape the hand of justice. One of these elusive bandits is the so-called Florist, a thief specializing in stealing very valuable things along the timeline, who always leaves a flower of some sort as his trademark. There are at least four open cases attributed to the Florist, and even today no advance in the investigation has been made. The cases, apart from the stolen Nazi gold case (see page 51), are:

The False Kohinoor. Also known as the Mountain of Light, the Kohinoor is the largest diamond in the known world, and is embedded in Queen Elizabeth's crown. During the Modern Era, it is on show in the Tower of London. In 1995, Synth Field Specialist Alexander Ho, disguised as a tourist, made a spectrographic examination of the gem. The results were embarrassing: the diamond is a fake, reproduced with the advanced molecular techniques of 36th century. Luckily the fake cannot be detected by 20th century technology. A night-time examination of the exhibit revealed pulverized traces of olive flowers, dating to Pompei, Italy, in the summer of 79 BC, some weeks before the volcanic eruption destroying the city.

Rex Stout First Editions. In 2065 Sotheby sold for the amazing amount of fifteen million Euros a complete set of the first editions of all Nero Wolfe novels, signed by the author. The buyer, Japanese collector Yoshida Kage, reported the theft of the books from his super-protected bunker-house on a private island in the Hawaii two years after. Mockingly, the mysterious robber left in place a rare specimen of orchid that would have been the joy of Nero Wolfe. The flower became extinct in 2000 BC.

The Spruce Goose Flies Away. The Hughes H-4 Hercules (also known as the "Spruce Goose") is a prototype heavy transport aircraft designed and built by the Hughes Aircraft company. The aircraft made

its first and only flight on November 2nd, 1947, and the project never advanced beyond the single example produced. Built from wood because of wartime restrictions, its critics nicknamed it the "Spruce Goose," despite it being made almost entirely of birch. The aircraft was borrowed to the Louvre museum of Paris in 2047 for a special exhibition, in a specially-built dome. On the morning of November 2nd, 2047, at the museum opening, the aircraft was missing and the security cameras were out of service. The real grass base on which the plane was positioned, was replaced with a small field of very rare tulips, coming from the Botanical Garden of Leiden, 1595, the oldest botanical garden in Europe.

The Second World War (1939-1945 AD)

Characters: Journalist, Mariner, Medic/Nurse, Officer, Partisan, Pilot, Priest/Nun, Soldier, Spy.

In 1939 war erupted again, this time involving almost all the world. Before the end of the conflict, more than 70 million people were killed. The major participants in the conflict, as is widely known, were the Allies (the United Kingdom, Russia and United States of America) and the Axis (Germany, Japan and, till October 8th, 1943, Italy).

WWII didn't start at a single moment. A series of preliminary conflicts and political events were necessary: the Italian invasion of Ethiopia (1935), the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), and the Japanese offensives against China in 1937 and Mongolia in 1938. All these events are important for TimeGuard, because a slight delay in one of them can have unpredictable effects on the decisions of the major powers about joining the conflict, causing serious historical alterations (see Aryan Alterarnates sidebar).

WWII officially started in 1939, with the German invasion of Poland, and was fought in many theaters: Europe, Africa, Asia and in the Pacific Ocean.

Apart from the military conflicts themselves, which must be minutely scanned by the Watchers, there are two other aspects of WWII which made it totally different from the other wars: the importance of scientific discoveries and propaganda.

In science, the most important focal point is surely the Manhattan Project, the team of American scientists who developed the atomic bomb. It is so easy to change the history of the world, preventing the construction of the bomb, or simply slowing the project down. A certain numbers of attempts were made, by the Triad and the Aryan Alternates (see sidebar), so that now in TimeGuard procedures there is a special code, called the Manhattan Code, with an absolute priority, meaning a threat to the atomic bomb. Luckily the situation has been quiet for a while, but it is always better to stay alert.

The second novel aspect of WWII, propaganda, is that it was the first total war, where the distinction between military and civilian resources faded, and winning the hearts and minds of one's own people (and spreading dissent behind the enemy's lines) was vital. This is called psychological warfare, and recently Field Specialists examining a collection of German war posters from 1943 are pretty sure some of them hide post-hypnotic suggestions typical of a psychiatric technique developed in the 24th century. Even more embarrassing was what happened in January 1944 in Italy: someone, as yet unidentified, hacked the frequencies of London Radio and broadcast transmissions with fake orders for guerrilla groups, almost causing a disaster.

So, this is WII for TimeGuard; a real nest of vipers.

Yalta Conference. On January 4th, 1945, the leaders of the Allies met in Yalta to discuss the division of the world after the end of the war. It is a focal point in history, and it is closely monitored by a resident Watcher. But there is embarrassing news: during the treaty's signing ceremony a strong tachyon flow was detected. The Watcher, Synth Annette Beaumont, is sure that one of the members of the delegations, maybe one of the leaders themselves, is a time traveler. Given the great number of people present, including security personnel, she wasn't able to discover his identity, but it is a matter for urgent investigation.

The Nazi Gold. On October 23rd, 1943, three SS trucks, commanded by Oberführer Kurt Wiegel, crossed the Swiss border, en route to the National Swiss Bank in Zurich. They unloaded thirteen locked cages, which contained a goodly amount of the gold stolen from the Jews in the years before. In 2002, the Israeli government finally managed to exerts its rights and obtain the cages. Opened in front of the bank's director for the first time in more than fifty years, the cages were empty, apart from one where a single, perfectly preserved black rose was found. Examining the photos appearing in the newspapers (no attempt to recover the flower has been made), TimeGuard Field Specialists recognized a specimen grown in lunar hydroponic farms around 2250. This is classified as a Florist Case (see page 49).

TimeGuard only recently discovered the existence of an alternative timeline where, due to a delay in the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the USA joined WWII a year later, and this allowed the Axis to win the war. It is unknown how that reality evolved after that event, but it seems that Nazi ideology took root and lasted for centuries.

This parallel universe is known as the Aryan Timeline, and they know how to travel in time too, even if the technology seems to be very different from that used by TimeGuard: for example, they don't have atomic energy or modern era computers, but reports say they are very advanced in chemistry and biology. Aryan Alternates are usually found in our timeline during WWII, plundering technology they don't have (they seem obsessed by atomic power).

They are a bunch of fanatics, and their plans are usually quite overt, but they certainly represent a menace for the timeline.

The Modern Era (1950-2070 AD)

Characters: Average Joe, Clerk, Drug Addict, Hippie, Housewife, Nerd, Teenager, Pop Star, White-Collar Worker.

Historians consider the Modern Era to run from the end of the Second World War (1945) to approximately 2070. Many events happened in these times in the political field, from the Cold War to the of the Eastern powers, such as Japan, India, and China. It was also an age of social changes, from the sexual revolution, to the 1968 era and the Arab Spring movement of 2011, and the birth of an ecological conscience. On the technological side, man finally reached the moon, but a much greater impact was made by the advent of the World Wide Web. It is an era from which many Operatives come. The modern era has known a lot of intervention by time travelers, because it is crucial for the development of the Near Future. In particular, Watchers have always had suspicions about events like Elvis Presley's death, the murder of Kennedy and the disappearance of the ship *Aquitania*.

Chronos Ltd. After a series of suspicious acquisitions, a new world-wide mobile company appeared in 2013, quickly conquering the market for smartphones, one of the most sought gadgets of the decade. Their main model, the Zeus Energy, quickly sold out, the great performance and the low price being its greatest advantage. Watchers report a disturbing fact: each phone manufactured by Chronos Ltd. generates a small, almost infinitesimal tachyon field. In addition economic specialists report a great, underground, acquisition campaign by Chronos Ltd., which now controls almost half of the new technology startups in Silicon Valley and is starting to expand into China. What is brewing in this industry and why is it impossible to arrange a personal meeting with Kage Mendoza, the Chronos Ltd. CEO?

The Sci-Fi Convention. In 1967, the customary annual Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America convention was held in California. One of the most important celebrities attending was Roger Zelazny, a famous science fiction writer, who was given a Hugo Award for his novel *Lord of Light*. Zelazny never arrived at the convention, and his publisher accepted the prize on his behalf. He was seen leaving his house, in Santa Fe, but then apparently disappeared. There are no signs of his presence in the world for a week. On his return, he started writing what became his best-selling fantasy cycle: The Chronicles of Amber, a tale about parallel universes and a family of princes with interdimensional travelling abilities. In the next few years he received visits from mysterious, cloaked individuals, the last ones being a few days before his death.

The Near Future (2070-3800 AD)

Characters: Humanist, Scientist, Slum Dweller, Offworld Colonist, Soldier, Spacer, Spy, Survivor, Synth.

The first thing to notice here is that seventeen centuries is a lot of time to consider as a single era. This is due to the limits of TimeGuard. For some reason, the Priors don't like the time cops dealing with the Near Future, so the information they have is quite scarce. They know that technology advanced a lot, that other worlds were colonized and that the world slowly moved towards global unification even if the identity of the new political and economic blocs is kept secret. TimeGuard agents are used in the Near Future era, but mainly as grunts and manpower in large scale conflicts with the Triad or during particular crises, like the Synth Rebellion (see below).

Operatives sent to the Near Future are usually kept in enclosed facilities, furnished with all comforts, till a few moments before being engaged in missions. Then, immediately after the mission's end, they are sent back to TimeZero. There is no need to say that behavior like this stirs the curiosity of TimeGuard agents enormously, and every Operative sent into the future is personally questioned by the Old Man on his return.

Neo-humanism. One of the few things Operatives have managed to understand about future people is that a way of thinking called Neo-humanism developed, according to which man and machine must be divided. A widely-diffused moral attitude, it caused a brusque halt to the development of physical prostheses, in particular those enhancing the human body beyond its natural limits. This is probably the cause of the great limitations on implants and cybernetics for TimeZero agents.

The Synth Rebellion. Even if humans remained humans, machines developed in an incredible way,

giving life to Synths, a totally artificial form of life. But, as has ever happened for minorities throughout history, integration wasn't easy and for a long time Synths were treated (and mistreated) as machines. At least, until the Synth Rebellion, a movement that seems to be still underway in the Far Future era: very few details are known to TimeGuard but it seems that Synths took up arms against men sometime during the 39th century, and a harsh war was fought. Occasionally Operatives are sent to that era to fight on mankind's side, but these are totally blind missions and very little evidence on the political background has been recovered. What is certain is that in some way or other humanity must have reached an accord with Synths in the end, given the current equal-rights attitude of TimeGuard toward artificial forms of life.

The Far Future (3800 – 4300 AD)

Characters: Unknown.

All the notions of TimeGuard about this era are totally theoretical. It is the home period of the Priors, the creators of TimeGuard, but nothing more is known about it. No Operative (if you take the record at face value) has ever travelled to this time, and the only communications from the future arrive from TimeEpsilon, the twin base of TimeZero. This doesn't mean that nobody has ever tried to travel to the 44th century or even beyond, but for some reason the Machine isn't able to send people so far, or, in the rare cases when it manages to do so, nobody comes back. This has created some very disturbing rumors (see below). The Commander of TimeZero has visited TimeEpsilon, but he did it using a Gate opened from the future.

Time's End or Time's Collapsing? There are basically two schools of thought about why it is impossible to travel past the 44th century. The first one is that time ends, with the universe starting to implode at that date. This is a not a very popular theory, given that scientists say that this universe has several billions of years yet to live. The second, more popular one, is that time is in some manner collapsing around the 44th century, the cause being unknown, although it is very probable that time travel itself is the cause, each Time Gate creating a small fissure in the bricks and mortar of reality. But all of these are only chats between Operatives at the bar, between one mission and the next…

OPERATIVES

THE FOLLOWING CHAPTER EXPLAINS HOW TO CREATE OPERATIVE PLAYER CHARACTERS, THE HEROES OF A *TIMEZERO* CAMPAIGN. BEFORE ALLOCATING ANY POINTS, THE PLAYER SHOULD IDEALLY CHOOSE A CHARACTER BACKGROUND AND AN ORIGIN TO CREATE A UNIQUE HERO. ALTERNATIVELY HE CAN SELECT AN ARCHETYPE (SEE NEXT CHAPTER), PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON IT AND JUMP INTO THE GAME!

Character Backgrounds

All human Operatives have one thing in common: they are recruited – more or less willingly – from history and trained to be TimeGuard agents. Despite the importance of the training at TimeZero, they are also chosen for their background. Before starting the mechanical part of character creation, players should take time to think about what their hero was before joining TimeGuard. They have the whole of human history to choose from, so this can be a little overwhelming.

To help you focus, here is a list of character types you can use to develop an Operative's past. Naturally these are only suggestions, and players are encouraged to invent their own background or tweak the following ones, maybe mixing them.

These are quite generic and, by combining them with different Origins (see below), you can create very different characters from the same character type.

Synth characters will also find this table useful (see sidebar on page 62).

There are exactly 20 entries in the following list, so you can choose a random character type by rolling a d20. By using it in combination with the Origin table and the Allies Personality table of the core *Savage Worlds* rules, the GM can create random NPCs and TimeZero staff in no time.

1 – Artist. This broad category includes sculptors and writers, but also fashion designers and similar individuals. An artist from Ancient Egypt might be a famous painter of houses, while an artist of the 21st century might be a topnotch hair stylist. TimeGuard recruits artists because they

tend to have a firm grasp of the culture of their own age and, when they are sent on a mission, they are able to notice subtle alterations that other more prosaic Operatives would not.

2 – Artisan. An artisan is mainly a worker, a man who makes things with his hands. He might be a candle maker in a medieval village, a skilled weaponsmith in Feudal Japan, or a car mechanic in the Roaring Twenties. They usually tend to be very practical people and, when they are alone in the mists of time, their manual skills can be the difference between life and death.

3 – Castaway. Operatives sometimes rescue people that simply cannot exist in our continuum. They belong to other realities that get mixed up with ours due to the actions of the Triad or other time-troubling agents. They often speak totally unknown languages and tell stories of cities, rulers, and religions that have never existed in our world. A very few of them even belong to non-human races. They are totally disoriented, so the Operatives call them "Lost Sheep".

As it is impossible to send castaways back to their own continuum, TimeGuard usually finds them a place to live in prehistory or another isolated part of time. A few of them, the most humanlike, are recruited and sent to fight the Triad and save the continuum.

4 – Commoner. The Average Joe of every era. He might be a plebeian in Ancient Rome, a farmer in the Middle Ages or an office worker in the 20th century. TimeGuard is interested in him because he is so, well… common. He can blend in with any crowd and no Triad agent will ever suspect that the fat man sitting in a fast-food restaurant eating nachos is in truth a skilled TimeGuard Operative.

5 – Clergyman. Priests, nuns, monks and other figures connected with religion have always had a great influence on human history. The character might be a priest of Apollo in ancient Greece, the keeper of the fire in a prehistoric tribe or a feared Spanish inquisitor in the Middle Ages. Clergymen are good Operatives because they are experienced in dealing with people.

6 – Dandy. A decadent Epicurean philosopher from Hellenic Persia, or a playboy like Rudolph Valentino, the dandy has a cynical view of the universe and is usually broad-minded. If properly motivated, he can become a very useful Operative, because his cynicism stops him from getting too comfortable in the time to which he is sent.

7 – Entertainer. A young lady participating in bull-jumping in ancient Crete, an Elizabethan actor, an opera composer of the 17th century, or a Moulin Rouge dancer during the Second World War, the entertainer is skilled in playing a role and being on stage. Her performing skills can be vital to gaining the trust of time-dwellers of any era.

8 – Explorer. Columbus and Erik the Red discovered America. They would not be good Operatives, because their role in recorded history is too great, but many others, less well-known and

sometimes less fortunate, are invaluable to TimeZero. Explorers are excellent at surviving in the wilderness and dealing with foreign cultures and, most importantly, they are driven by the lust for discovery. What could motivate them more than the chance to explore the endless paths of time?

9 – Medic. A witch doctor among primitive men, a medieval barber, a sawbones on the battlefields of WWI, a plastic surgeon in modern-day Hollywood. All these are incarnations of the medic, a man who heals other people and potentially a good Operative. He is always an esteemed member of the society he lives in. In addition, missions can sometimes be messy and a good doc on your team might be invaluable.

10 – Merchant. A pelt seller in prehistory, the owner of a trading post in the Far West, a Wall Street broker in the 1980s, this man is deeply involved in business and money and has access to a great deal of information. He is the right man to send to places and times where the economy drives the world, and there are plenty of those in the labyrinths of time!

11 – Pilot. A charioteer in Delphi, a caravaneer on the Silk Road, a helmsman on a Viking ship, a daring pilot in the Paris-Dakar rally, an aviator in WWI, pilots tend to be adventurous types who never pass up on a challenge, even when the odds seem to be completely against them. They are very good Operatives once they learn the inherent dangers of meddling with time.

12 – Primitive. A member of a technologically underdeveloped culture, he can be a barbarian of some sort, like a Hun or Visigoth in medieval Europe, an Indian in the Far West or an Aborigine in modern Australia. Primitives have a set of skills that many civilized races lack, useful for survival in hostile environments, and they can easily mix with other primitive cultures.

13 – Politician. A member of the political class, although he cannot be a significant figure in history. The chief of a tribe of hunter-gatherers in the Neolithic Age, an orator in a Greek polis, the mayor of a small city in the Middle Ages, or the public relations expert for a US Senator might all be very good operatives. They know how to lead, soothe and persuade people. Honesty is a good thing, but deviousness and a good dose of lies are common tools for TimeGuard.

14 – Outlaw. A highwayman in the Middle Ages, a burglar or a member of a criminal organization like the Mafia in modern times. They can be rough fellows, but they have a lot of useful skills, sources of inside information and more importantly, the attitude necessary to move outside the boundaries of the law.

15 – Outsider. An outsider is someone who is not truly integrated in her society. She can be a clochard in 19th-century Paris, a hippie in the Sixties, or a funny old lady with a soft spot for cats. For whatever reason, she does not think like the common people of her time. Everyone expects her to behave strangely, and no-one would ever suspect that she is a TimeGuard agent.

16 – Scientist. An Assyrian astrologer, a Greek mathematician, an inventor in the Renaissance, these are all examples of scientists. TimeGuard absolutely needs their minds to further scientific research in every field of knowledge. Many of them are only eggheads

who can't even tie their shoelaces, but among them there are some adventurous souls that can become very skilled, invaluable Operatives.

17 – Scholar. A historian of the Great Library of Alexandria, the personal biographer of some medieval prince, or a modern-day archeologist. These people are the lifeblood of TimeGuard, because they record and discover history, providing precious support in the perilous task of watching the timeline. With the right training they make good Operatives, because they have a great knowledge of the past and are aware of the inherent dangers of meddling with time.

18 – Slave. An Egyptian laborer who built the Pyramids, a medieval servant, a slave in the cotton plantations in America. They are deprived of the right to be free, and live under the control of others. Slaves possess an ability that is invaluable to TimeGuard: they know how to go unnoticed. If given freedom and a noble task, like watching over history, they can become invaluable agents.

19 – Soldier. A Hittite warrior, a Samurai, a US Marine, these are men of war and action. The Operatives must often use violence to stop the Triad's devious plans to alter history. Soldiers might be straightforward, but they are very useful in achieving the goals of TimeGuard.

20 – Spy. An undercover agent of the Papacy sent to some medieval court, a KGB or CIA operative, an undercover cop in the criminal underworld of the 1990s. A spy is used to the plotting, deviousness, and lack of morals that fixing time anomalies sometimes requires. TimeGuard can always find a good place for a former spy, but the Tactical Office constantly keeps an eye on her.

Players' Tips: Defining Personal Goals

Unlike other settings where heroes have a lot of leeway in defining and achieving their objectives, in **TimeZero** there is a different situation: characters are probably snatched from their own era, trained as Operatives and then sent elsewhen in the timeline to save the day.

Yes, apparently they are nothing more than tools in the hands of the Priors, with little chance to achieve their personal goals.

In truth an Operative has a life to live like any other person, and personal goals to achieve. Some ideas are listed below as examples:

+ Career Advancement. Yes, the job is important and a good Operative can become very powerful. Later in the book you'll find Promotion rules, and a lot of role-playing can revolve around office politics (rivalry, after all, is the same in any era).

+Relatives in the Timeline. You were taken away and given a second chance and a new life, but probably there is a wife, brother or some other person important to you, now lost in the mists of time. Maybe you have been forbidden to see them, or you have special permission to stay in their time when off-duty (so living an almost normal life). Or maybe you elected yourself protector of your own bloodline, and got in touch with nephews, grand-nephews and so on.

But what if the Triad discovers your loved ones?

+Humans versus Synths. Synths are accepted in TimeGuard, but with some reluctance. If you are a Synth how do you consider yourself? Are you proud of your condition? Do you want to be "more" human? What about a human mate? You'll be ageless, but your companion will die... And what about feelings? Are you sure you really understand them?

+Us versus Them. OK, TimeGuard saves the continuum, but this sometimes means supporting wars and killing people. What makes us different from the Triad and the other bad guys? Are we really sure we are on the right side? And what if the Triad made us a better offer? Would we switch sides?

+Us versus Them II. We are the guardians of time, and natives in the timeline are our little herd. Do we have responsibilities to them, or can we manipulate and toy with them as we wish? Are we, in fact, gods?

Origins

Operatives are chosen from various historical periods. An Operative in his own era has access to many little bits of information that no training course can give. In game terms, he has +1 to Common Knowledge rolls while in his own time. During character creation, each player must choose an era of origin for his Operative, which also gives him ideas to further develop the character's background. A list of sample eras that can be taken as origins is provided below, but players and GMs are encouraged to add their favorite times and places.

The list has exactly 20 entries, so you can roll a d20 and pick a random period.

Historical eras of Origin

D20	ORIGIN
1.	Prehistory (4570 million years BC)
2.	Stone Age (3.4 million years BC)
3.	Bronze/Iron Age Mesopotamia (3100 BC–539 BC)
4.	Ancient Egypt (3150–332 BC)
5.	Ancient Greece (700–300 BC)
6.	Ancient Rome (753 BC–300 AD)
7.	Feudal Japan (710 BC–1860 AD)
8.	Ancient China (2100 BC–220 AD)
9.	Pre-Columbian Civilizations (1600 BC–1492 AD)
10.	Middle Ages (476 BC–1492 AD)
11.	European Renaissance (1300–1600 AD)

12.	Age of Reason (1630–1750 AD)
13.	American History (1776–1865 AD)
14.	Industrial Revolution (1750–1850 AD)
15.	First World War (1914–1918 AD)
16.	Roaring Twenties (1920–1929 AD)
17.	Second World War (1939–1945 AD)
18.	Modern Era (1950–2070 AD)
19.	Near Future (2070–3800 AD)
20.	TimeZero Second Generation*

[*] **TimeZero Second Generation.** The character's parents are personnel of the time base, where he has lived the greater part of his life. He doesn't belong to any era, so he has no Origin, but has received an extensive education; he starts the game with one additional Skill point.

Life as a Synth

Synths are built to resemble almost any life form – there are Synth humans, Synth cats, Synth dogs and so on. According to 45th-century ethics, artificial life forms are seen as equal to biological beings.

There is no racism or ostracism against them, at least not officially.

But this is not always true within TimeGuard. Operatives, as well as other members of staff, are often recruited in very uncivilized and barbaric ages and, despite being trained and educated, they may dislike Synths. Humans find two main differences particularly unnerving: Synths don't age and don't have children, at least not in the way we, biological beings, do. So, many agents don't feel completely at ease around Synth forms of life.

The Baptism of Time: Origins and Characters Types for Synths

Synths are built; hence they don't have a past. So, how to realistically play a Synth Operative?

Well, no Synth is sent to meddle with time without some field experience. They usually spend some time in a specific era as a temporary or apprentice Watcher, which human Operatives call the "Baptism of Time".

This training period becomes their past. To create Synths you can still use character types and origins but only as guidelines for their background. In fact, Synths don't get a bonus when working in the age in which they were given their Baptism of Time; but their character type is based on the fake identity they used as apprentices.

Races

Humans

Humans (the term refers to *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*) are the usual choice for Operatives. They can integrate in almost every age and with a little makeup they can blend in with any ethnic group. Human Operatives are taken from various parts of the timeline, and there is a reason for this: Hypnotraining and studying can help them a lot when they are sent to a certain age, but actually having been born in it is a another matter entirely.

Humans start with a free Edge as per the standard *Savage Worlds* rules and must choose an Origin (see above).

Synths

Synths look identical to humans and only a detailed body scan can reveal their true nature. Synths are ageless, although some of them are programmed to simulate a physical aging process. To be as humanlike as possible, they have the same basic needs (food, air, etc.) and almost all the bodily functions of natural living beings, and they feel pain too. Built in the factories of TimeZero, the Synths have no past.

Synths have the new Synth racial ability which has the following effects:

- ☑ They have +2 to recovering from being Shaken;
- ☑ They don't suffer additional damage from called shots;
- ☑ They are not affected by diseases or poison and they don't really age;
- ☑ Unlike normal Constructs and to be more humanlike, Synths are affected by Wound Modifiers.

OPTIONAL RACE: LOST SHEEP

As said before, an interesting type of Operative is the temporal castaway, a person from another reality who, due to a mysterious accident, ends up on our timeline. With the GM's permission, you can play as one of these strange individuals. In gaming terms, you can create a custom race using the Race Creation rules in the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook, but with a limitation: your character must look human, otherwise she will never be able to operate along the timeline. Lost Sheep never have Origins and most of them, despite their TimeGuard training, start the game with the Outsider Hindrance. Several Lost Sheep races are detailed in the GM section of this book. Ask the GM if you want to play one of these characters.

Character Creation

As previously mentioned, TimeGuard employs a large number of people. There are technicians, who make the time machine work, historians, who record and check the huge numbers of reports coming from different sources, and then there are the Operatives, the trained agents who travel in time to save history. All the heroes are part of this select group of agents.

Creating an Operative is very simple. You simply need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook and this book.

1) Race

Usually only two races are allowed to be Operatives: humans and Synths. In very special cases, the GM can allow a player to play as a Lost Sheep (see sidebar on page 16). In no case the party should have more than one Lost Sheep. See the Races section for a full description of advantages and disadvantages.

2) Traits

Now it is time to choose your Operative's attributes and skills. As usual in *Savage Worlds*, every character starts with d4 in each of the five attributes: Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength and Vigor. You then have 5 points to distribute among them as you wish. Raising an attribute by a die type costs 1 point and you may not raise an attribute above d12.

You also have 15 points to buy skills. Buying a skill at d4, or raising a skill by a die type, costs 1 point as long as it is not higher than the attribute it is linked to. It costs 2 points per die type to raise a skill above its linked attribute.

All the standard skills are available in *TimeZero*.

Languages aren't a particular issue in this setting: Hypnotraining (see below) provides the Operatives with knowledge of the languages commonly spoken in the era they are going to visit. Among themselves Operatives speak a language called Temporal, based on 21st-century English.

Charisma is a measure of your hero's likeability and is added to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls. Your Charisma modifier is +0 unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

Pace is equal to 6", unless changed by Edges or Hindrances.

Parry is equal to 2 plus half your Fighting die type. Edges, Hindrances and some types of equipment can modify your Parry score. If the Fighting die increases above d12, round all fractions down.

Toughness is equal to 2 plus half your Vigor die type. Edges, Hindrances and Armor can modify your Toughness. Vigor can, in some cases, go above d12. In such cases, all fractions are rounded down.

3) Edges and Hindrances

Topnotch Operatives are far more than a collection of skills and attributes. It's their unique gifts, special powers, and tragic flaws that truly make them interesting characters to play. You can take one Major Hindrance and two Minor Hindrances. A Major Hindrance is worth 2 points and a Minor Hindrance is worth 1 point.

For 2 points you can:

* Raise an attribute by one die type (you may raise your attributes before purchasing skills).

* Choose an Edge

For 1 point you can:

* Gain another skill point.

* Gain an additional Budget Point for the first scenario only.

4) Hypnotraining

A very important part of every Operative's background is Hypnotraining, which gives her the chance to switch some of her Skills and Edges to fit the age she is sent to. The details of Hypnotraining are explained on page 91. Be sure to read them before starting the scenario.

5) Gear

Operatives are issued with the equipment needed for their particular mission. The Logistics Office gives them clothes and gear for the era they are sent to. As a rule of thumb, an Operative can take the weapons and armor that fit his undercover identity during the mission. So, if an operative is disguised as a Roman legionary, he will have medium armor, short sword, spear and shield, while a philosopher or a slave will normally have no weapons. The Logistics Office also gives the Operative a reasonable amount of cash, usually $100/ Rank in the common currency of the era, to take care of unexpected expenses during the mission.

All these items are perfect replicas of the objects used in that historical period and involve no risk of polluting the timeline.

The staff of the Logistics Office also provide plastic surgery and disguises, if needed. They can change an Operative's skin color and physical features but they usually don't go as far as changing his sex, as this has too big an impact on the human psyche.

In addition to the standard gear, TimeGuard has access to a vast array of 45th-century technologies, but is very careful about letting Operatives use them.

First, because there is always the risk of leaving them behind, polluting the timeline.

Second, because many of these technologies are very expensive.

After all TimeGuard does have huge resources, but they are not limitless. So every Operative wanting a special item for a mission must fill in some forms and await the response of the Costume Warehouse.

To simulate this, every Operative has a number of Budget Points she can use to acquire specific, advanced equipment.

Budget Points are reset at the start of every adventure and cannot be stashed or shared among characters. The equipment received with Budget Points must be returned after the mission, and the hero is responsible for it. Losing anachronistic items might have severe consequences (see Polluting the Timeline on page 95), the least of which is an official warning by the Torquemadas.

OPERATIVE'S RANK	BUDGET POINTS
Novice	4
Seasoned	4
Veteran	5
Heroic	5
Legendary	6

Forbidden and Modified Skills

The Knowledge (History) skill is too wide for the scope of this setting, so the hero must further specialize in a specific era, like Knowledge (History – Imperial China). You can use the Historical Eras table on page 61 to choose an appropriate specialization.

In addition you can choose the Knowledge (Alternate Timelines) skill, which gives you info about the main alternative universes.

Forbidden Hindrances

The following Hindrances don't make much sense in a *TimeZero* campaign: All Thumbs, Illiterate, Poverty.

New and Modified Hindrances

The following Hindrances are tweaked to better fit the setting, and several new ones are available to TimeGuard Operatives.

Burned (Major)

At some point in the past, the Operative was identified as a member of TimeGuard by the Triad or another evil organization. They have a file on him, and probably they have even done some research on his personal history (for example, tracked down his parents; they could want to prevent his birth and this could be a very personal theme for a scenario). A Burned Operative is in constant danger of being recognized when in the field. Even when using a cover identity the agents of the Triad (or some other evil group) are allowed a Notice (-4) roll to identify him the first time they meet him. The roll receives a bonus of +1 per each Grade of the Operative above Junior Agent (see Grades and Promotions on page 96).

Celebrity (Minor)

Usually TimeZero doesn't recruit famous people as Operatives. It is dangerous for the continuum. In your case they made an exception, and you were recruited (probably on the point of death) despite being a well-known person. Good examples of celebrities could be famous writers, poets and preachers (in the Middle Ages) or pop icons or athletes (in the modern era). Every time such an Operative is sent to his native era, people meeting him with a reasonable chance to know him (GM's decision), can identify him (usually with a Notice (-4) roll). If the hero is spotted, roll normally for reactions on the reaction table. Depending on the result, the discoverer could call the police, the newspapers (or the Spanish Inquisition to deal with the dangerous ghost!) or even declare himself a great fan of the Operative!

Whatever the effect, any cover identity assumed by the hero is destroyed, unless the group manages in some way to prevent the news from spreading.

Deal with the Devil (Minor/Major)

The Operative was recruited on death's door, saved and fully healed by TimeGuard, but for some reason he still feels the cold hand of Death on his shoulder, and deep in his mind he is convinced he has only delayed the inevitable. With the minor version of this Edge, he cannot spend Bennies to reroll a "dead" result on the Incapacitation table. With the Major version, in addition he receives –1 to any Vigor roll on the Incapacitation table.

Debt (Minor/Major)

The Operative owes a favor, a big one, to someone. Usually the benefactor of the debt is a member of TimeGuard (maybe in another branch) but for the Major version of the Hindrance the character owes a debt to an enemy of TimeZero, maybe a Free Player, an Alternate or even the Triad; in this case he is always walking a fine line between loyalty and treason.

When the Game Master so decides, the debt owner asks the hero to do something (usually in the era where the mission is set). It can be something harmless, like bringing back a souvenir or even an illegal activity, like smuggling classified information outside the timebase. Refusing is always an option with a debt, but this has consequences: the first time the hero refuses to honor the debt he loses a Benny, from the second refusal on the consequences worsen: at the GM's discretion he can get a bad reputation for not paying his debts (-2 to Charisma) or can even gain a powerful Enemy.

This Hindrance can be removed by spending an Advancement and doing a last, usually big, favor cancelling the debt forever.

Deep-Rooted Belief (Minor)

TimeGuard training tries in every way to shape Operatives into complete agents: the beliefs, ethos and political ideas of their past lives must be forgotten, replaced with the mission of protecting the timeline's integrity, without judging. This isn't always possible, and certain people, deep in their hearts, remain sons of their home cultures. For example, a Jew will have a hard time when ordered to save Hitler's life, a Christian won't dabble with Saints' lives and you cannot convince a pacifist that supporting a war, even to protect the timeline, is a good thing. A character with this Hindrance must choose a particular Deep-Rooted Belief: it can be philosophy, a religion, a personal credence deriving from his past or something similar. When, in the game, the character is forced to act against his Deep-Rooted Belief he receives -2 to all connected rolls. Alternatively, if he lets his Deep-Rooted Belief overrule his orders he should be rewarded with a Benny, but must suffer all the consequences of his actions.

Evil Twin (Major)

This is a particular version of the Enemy Hindrance, specifically reworked for the *TimeZero* setting. The hero has a double, created by a rip in the time continuum or a clash with an alternate reality. The double is identical to the hero, he has the same stats, but he is inherently evil. He has the same knowledge as the hero at the moment when this Hindrance is taken (usually during character creation), but from then on the two characters can diverge.

The main goal of the double is to destroy the hero and take his place. A double is forever linked to the hero. When the Operative travels in time, the double might be dragged along too, as if the two characters were linked by an invisible physical bond. This makes the double hate the hero even more, because he cannot settle down and lead a normal life. The time snatching doesn't happen every time, giving the GM the chance to decide when the Enemy Double will turn up to bother the hero. For some reason, Doubles seem unable to reach TimeZero, or at least, no record of this occurring is available to the heroes.

Limited Budget (Minor/Major)

Operatives are under strict surveillance by the Logistics Office and their requests for special equipment are carefully scrutinized and often refused. This might happen because in the past the hero lost some anachronistic item or simply because he doesn't get along with the guys at the Costume Warehouse. For this reason he suffers −1 to his Budget Points, -3 Budget Points for the Major version.

Loner (Minor)

Certain people work better alone. A loner hero cannot spend Bennies to reroll a double 1 when a comrade is within 12" of him, and he receives -1 to any cooperative roll.

Minority Culture (Minor)

The Operative is born in a very insular or small culture (for example, he is a member of a small tribe in Borneo or an Inuit). For this reason his knowledge of his own era is very slight.

Even when in his home era he doesn't receive any bonus to Common Knowledge rolls, and, in addition, he receives -1 to Charisma rolls when in his own era.

Naked Traveler (Minor)

For some reason, the Operative's body seems unable to anchor physical items during time travel. A Naked Traveler *always* exits naked from a Time Gate (regardless of whether he is going to or coming from TimeZero), and his stuff remains at the entering Gate time and location. This can be just a nuisance (after all he can hand his equipment to a comrade immediately before walking in the Gate) or a real problem (if the Operative exits the Gate in a dangerous, crowded place or is alone).

If you are playing in a one-to-one campaign (GM and a single player) this is a Major Hindrance.

Recruit (Minor)

The Operative is the new man in the team and fresh out of training. He only recently had the Baptism of Time (during which he threw up his lunch) and he must prove his skills to his comrades and gain their trust. He cannot spend Bennies to reroll Time Travel Sickness rolls, suffers -1 to Spirit rolls and receives -1 to all Common Knowledge rolls when outside his Origin era.

In addition he must be prepared to be called "Junior," "Probie," "Newbie" or some similar epithet, and the team usually assigns him the most boring duties.

With time and experience a Recruit will eventually overcome this status: every time he gets an advance he is allowed a Spirit (-2) roll. On a success he can remove one of the three penalties detailed above. When all penalties are removed he isn't a Recruit anymore and the Hindrance is removed. Usually this is celebrated by getting drunk with the team at Al's Bar in TimeZero.

Time Sensitivity (Minor/Major)

Time travel is quite exhausting for your Operative and his body and mind don't react very well to the stress of crossing through a Time Gate. With the Minor version of this Hindrance the hero suffers a –1 penalty to the Vigor roll to endure Time Travel Sickness. With the Major version the penalty is –2.

Undisciplined (Minor)

Operatives are selfish people, but some of them are more so than others. The Sun Tzus don't like such persons (even if they have good reason to behave that way) because they don't follow orders. This reflects badly on their careers: an Undisciplined character receives 1 less Promotion Point after each adventure (the only exception: 0 Promotion Points remain 0, not –1).

Forbidden Edges

The following Edges are not allowed in *TimeZero*: Arcane Background (any), New Power, Power Points, Rapid Recharge, Improved Rapid Recharge, Soul Drain, Champion, Gadgeteer, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Wizard, and Power Surge.

Altered Edges

The Rich, Filthy Rich, and Noble Edges make more sense if used as Hypnoedges (see page 91) to support an adequate undercover identity. So, an Operative working undercover as a medieval count's son will take the Noble Edge, but only for the current mission, while a hero impersonating an oil tycoon will have the Rich or Filthy Rich Edge.

Improvisational Fighter

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+

Operatives often have to fight with items not specifically designed for use as weapons: farming implements, torches, or whatever else is at hand. A character with this Edge has practiced using such improvised weapons and does not suffer the usual -1 attack penalty when wielding them. In addition, with a Notice roll, he automatically finds a Small improvised weapon (Str+d4) in the current location, a Medium one (Str+d6) if he scored a raise.

Linguist

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+

TimeGuard considers people with a knack for languages a great resource, both as trainers and as field agents. Given the special training TimeGuard linguists receive, they are far better than their standard counterparts. The Linguist knows an undefined number of tongues: in game terms, whenever she hears a language for the first time she is allowed a Smarts roll. With a success, she knows it because she has studied it or a similar tongue. In addition, when hearing a person speaking a language she knows, with a Smarts roll she can tell if he is a native or a foreigner. With a raise, she can also identify the speaker's possible era or area of origin.

Martial Artist

Requirements: Novice, Fighting d6+

Operatives are highly trained undercover agents, so many of them are taught techniques of unarmed personal defense. The reasons are many: martial arts are inconspicuous, don't require any time-polluting gear and give an unarmed agent a better chance of survival.

TimeGuard's martial arts are a very eclectic and pragmatic discipline containing moves from styles of many eras. This gives an additional advantage: when fighting bare-handed with another person using martial arts, the Operative is allowed a Common Knowledge roll, based on Fighting rather than Smarts. On a success he recognizes the style used by his opponent and

the era where he learned it. Triad agents are known to employ martial arts too, using a cross-time style very similar to TimeGuard martial arts.

Mentalist (Weird Edge)

Requirements: Novice, Intimidation d6+, Smarts d8+, Notice d6+, Persuasion d10+, Taunt d6+

This Edge is totally different from the standard rules version. A Mentalist in *TimeZero* isn't a psionic but simply a character with a great understanding of psychology and group dynamics. A Mentalist can convince you to act in certain way, and if he is really good you believe you are acting in this way because it is *your* idea!

In game terms, every time the Mentalist is dealing with a person who can understand his words and the situation isn't already in combat, he can spend a Benny to initiate a Social Conflict, pitting his Persuasion versus the opponent's Smarts. The player must declare a single topic on which he wants to persuade his opponent (for example, convince him to put down a weapon or let him past a guard post) before rolling, and must decide a Time Interval (see below), representing the actual length of his attempt. The longer the Time Interval, the easier it is to convince the victim, but in certain cases the Mentalist must act quickly.

If the Mentalist wins the Conflict with 1-4 successes, apply the normal Social Conflict results, if he wins with 5 or more, the victim is totally enthralled by the Mentalist; consider him under the effects of the *puppet* Power for a duration of time equal to five times the Time Interval.

The Mentalist isn't actually controlling the victim's mind, he is only persuading or manipulating him, so the nature of his orders cannot be totally against the victim's nature, and cannot be self-defeating.

The Mentalist can use this Edge against other player characters, but they have the chance to spend a Benny to negate the effects.

Having a Hypnoprobe (see Gear on page 87), is definitely a must for a Mentalist, granting him a bonus of +2 on his Persuasion rolls.

TIME INTERVAL	MODIFIER
Less than one minute	−2
1 minute	0
15 minutes	+1
1 hour	+2
1 day	+4

New Edges

The following new Edges are available to TimeGuard Operatives.

Background Edges

Time Resilience

Requirements: Novice, Vigor d6+

The Operative is quite impervious to the fatigue caused by Time Travel Sickness. He has a perfect biological clock or some other unknown characteristic. Whatever the reason, he adds +2 to Vigor rolls against Time Travel Sickness.

Combat Edges

Crowd Fighting

Requirements: Seasoned, Agility d6+, Fighting d8+, Notice d6+

During their missions in the timeline Operatives can find themselves in dire straits, fighting large groups of enemies. The instructors of TimeZero teach them how to use the opponents' numbers to their own advantage. A fighter with this Edge, when attacking while outnumbered, receives a bonus to his Fighting rolls equal to the number of opponents minus one. This bonus doesn't stack with the normal Gang Up bonus (the character can choose the more favorable one).

In addition, in an outnumbered situation, any opponent rolling 1 on the Fighting die, regardless of the Wild Die, automatically hits a comrade.

Example. Marcus Publius, side by side with Yumiko, is surrounded by three Triad goons. Having Yumiko's support, he should gain a +1 gang-up bonus to his Fighting rolls, but having the Crowd Fighting Edge he chooses to use that instead, receiving +2 to his Fighting rolls.

Veteran of the Synth Rebellion

Requirements: Seasoned, Fighting d8+, Repair d6+

Far in the future, men fought a tremendous war against rebellious Synths. The Operative lived in this dangerous era, or alternatively he has had many chances to fight against the Triad's artificial agents. Whatever the reason, he is skilled in fighting against Synths. He receives +1 to attack rolls and +2 damage rolls against Synths and robots of any type, and, in addition, anytime he fights a Synth enemy he is allowed a Common Knowledge roll to identify the model and remember one of their Weaknesses (if any).

Cosmopolitan

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, must be Human

The Operative has lived in several eras and numerous cultures have permeated his way of life. This isn't something that can be learned from books or through formal training; it is a gradual modification of tastes and perceptions that only humans can develop as they are immersed in a certain culture. That's why this Edge is forbidden to Synths.

When the hero has this Edge, he chooses two other eras from the Origin table (see page 61) or from any extended list of available eras the GM has created. These are times and places where he lived for a long time, and they are considered additional eras of origin. A Cosmopolitan character has +1 to Charisma and Streetwise rolls in all his origin eras.

Cosmopolitan heroes know their chosen eras so well that they receive +2 to Notice rolls to spot anything out of ordinary in that time (such as an undercover agent, an object not properly belonging to the current time, and so on).

Field Technician

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d8+, Repair d8+

The Operative has spent some time in serious training with the latest devices from the Costume Warehouse. In addition he always reads the attached manuals carefully (usually agents junk it without even opening it). For this reason, any time he is using a special TimeGuard device mimicking a *Savage Worlds* Power he receives +2 to the arcane roll. He has the same bonus if he must repair any TimeGuard device in the field.

Master of Disguise

Requirements: Novice, Notice d6+, Smarts d6+, Persuasion d6+

"Life is a stage" is the motto of this Operative. A professional actor and impersonator, he learned his tricks pretending in his life before joining TimeGuard or from the trainers of TimeZero. Whatever the origin of his skills, even his mother cannot recognize him when he is properly disguised. He receives +2 to Smarts and Persuasion rolls in preparing and using a disguise (see page 93) and, given his experience, he can improvise a disguise using very basic tools and by altering his facial expressions. He can ignore the no equipment penalty while working on a disguise, as long as he isn't trying to imitate a specific individual.

Shadower

Requirements: Novice, Notice d6+, Stealth d6+, Streetwise d4+

Many modern era secret services (KGB, CIA etc) train their agents in the art of shadowing. TimeGuard does the same and you are one of those lucky fellows. You gain +2 to Stealth rolls in shadowing situations and also start any shadowing scene with one more Shadowing Token (see Setting Rules).

Social Architect

Requirements: Veteran, Persuasion d8+, Streetwise d8+, Charisma 2+, Social Interloper

Through psychological studies of small groups and a lot of hands-on practice the Operative has learned how to quickly gain control of group of people, such as criminal bands, religious sects and so on, or, if it doesn't exist, to create such a group. Given enough time (at least 1d6 days), a Social Architect can recruit a band of hirelings in the current era. After this time he must make a Persuasion or Streetwise roll (players' choice): for each success and raise he gains the services of two hirelings (they have the stats comparable to those of Soldier Extras from the core *Savage Worlds* rulebook).

The hero must spend at least 4 hours a day with the hirelings during the recruitment process and they cost him $100 each (in tips, social engagement costs and so on). Hirelings are NPCs under the control of the Social Architect, they consider him their leader and are reasonably loyal, but require tight control: if the Social Architect abandons them for more than a week, roll a d6 for each hireling, and if a 1 is rolled, the hireling goes away; repeat the process after each week until the Social Architect returns.

The maximum number of hirelings a Social Architect can have at any moment is equal to half his Smarts die plus his Charisma bonus. So, a Social Architect with Smarts d8 and Charisma +2 can have up to 6 hirelings.

Characters with the Mentalist Edge are excellent Social Architects, consider their Smarts dice a step higher when calculating the maximum number of hirelings.

Social Interloper

Requirements: Novice, Persuasion d6+, Streetwise d6+, Charisma 0+

Certain people are particularly good at listening to gossip; others are professionally trained to retrieve information through small talk. Whatever the reason, a hero with this Edge can gather a large amount of information in the field. This can be done by spending time in taverns, wandering around marketplaces, or surfing through forums on the Internet. She gains a Wild Dice increase of one step (usually from d6 to d8) to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls, but only when she is looking for information, and being immune to social gaffes, can reroll for free any 1 she rolls on Persuasion or Streetwise rolls. Extras gain d6 Wild Dice.

Message in a Bottle

Requirements: Seasoned, Streetwise d8+

One of the principles of preserving the timeline and avoiding paradoxes is that Operatives must never know what they'll face during a mission. This means that they don't have access to their reports about future missions, otherwise their reactions would change, compromising the timeline.

This is good in theory, but no Operative worthy of the name will stay away from a little cheating, if this can help him to survive in the mists of time.

Having this Edge means that, thanks to a good friend in the Technical Office, a future version of the Operative has the chance to visit the locations of the current scenario and leave a hint for his former self – a brief note or something similar – in a well hidden place.

The note isn't important enough to disrupt the timeline, but it provides substantial help; it might be the location of a useful item or Ally, a warning about an ambush, or a similar piece of advice.

On one occasion, during the adventure, a player can tell the GM he has retrieved a note and ask for a brief hint about the future of the mission, such as a clue or the location of an Ally or an item. It is the hero's responsibility to devise a good explanation about how he has retrieved the note. In modern days, it could be a letter delivered to the Operative at the right time and place, a paid message in a newspaper, or whatever solution seems suitable.

The GM can refuse to reveal the hint, claiming that something has gone wrong but in this case the player immediately gets a Benny.

Resourceful

Requirements: Novice

The Operative is on particularly good terms with the Logistics Office or maybe someone in the Costume Warehouse owes him a big favor.

Whatever the reason, his requests for specific equipment are often accepted. He has an additional Budget Point at the start of every mission.

Built-In Equipment

Requirements: Novice, must be a Synth

The Synth has her body modified to permanently store TimeGuard gear. In game terms, this means that her body can store up to Vigor die type/2 Budget Points of special equipment. The equipment can be detected only through a detailed medical scan with advanced technology (21st century or later) and can be removed only by surgery.

Implanted equipment automatically has the Inconspicuous Enhancement (see page 85) for free, and becomes a permanent part of the character's assets (so it must not be returned at the end of every mission and costs no Budget Points but their cost is subtracted from the total Budget Points available to the Operative). Items with charges are recharged at the beginning of every mission at no cost.

Implanted items must be assigned to a suitable body part (Head, Torso, Arms or Legs). If the body part suffers an injury per the Injury table, the character must make an immediate Vigor (-2) roll. In case of failure the implanted item is damaged and cannot be used again until the injury is healed.

Obviously not all types of equipment can be built-in, for example Energy Bracers can, a Stealth Airship cannot. Using his common sense, the GM will decide which items can be built-in and which can't on a case by case basis.

Hypno Adept

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, must be human

The Operative's mind is very receptive and quickly assimilates Hypnotraining. This means that he gains +1 Hypnoskills slot and +1 Hypnoedge slot. This Edge can be acquired multiple times but only once per Rank. Each time it is chosen, the required Smarts bumps up by one dice step (so the second time it is Smarts d8+, the third d10+ and so on).

I am a Synth!

Requirements: Novice, must be human, must have been Incapacitated during the last session

The Operative, after being seriously hurt during a mission, suddenly discovers something he didn't know about himself: he is a Synth, part of an elaborate experiment by TimeGuard on Synths not aware of their real condition! He immediately gains the benefits of the Synth race (keeping the human free Edge) and he is allowed to change one or more of his Hindrances to reflect the psychological, ethical and moral impact of such a discovery. Depending on the circumstances in which the discovery happened, the new Synth status can be public or secret. As this is a very dramatic Edge, usually a single hero per party should be allowed it.

Tachyon Sense

Requirements: Novice, Notice d6+, Spirit d6+

The physics of time travel is based on the concept of tachyons, particles that travel faster than light. Time manipulations always involve generating and using a tachyon flow. The character has the innate ability to detect tachyons. In the case of a Synth, she might have a built-in tachyon sensor, while for humans it might be a particular sixth sense.

Whatever the trapping, this Edge works as follows: with a successful Spirit roll, the hero senses a perturbation of the tachyon flux in the area (like a Time Gate opening or the use of a Tachyon Grenade) within a day in the past. Similarly, she can "sniff" people and objects to detect if they have come from another time.

Double the time range for each raise on the roll (so if he rolls two raises, he can detect temporal anomalies in the area/objects in a time span of four days).

The radius of effect of the Edge is twice the Spirit die type, in yards.

Total Recall

Requirements: Seasoned, Smarts d8+, must be Synth

Synths' minds are quite different from humans'. They can store a large amount of additional data but, for technical reasons, this is not directly accessible without intense reprogramming – i.e., Hypnotraining. A Synth with the Total Recall Edge is capable of acquiring any dormant information autonomously and very quickly by erasing some of its current programming on

the fly. In game terms, by spending a Benny a Synth can change a Hypnoskill or Hypnoedge during the adventure, as if doing a Hypnotraining session. The switch is immediate, and counts as a free action.

Trademark Item

Requirements: Novice

The character elects a piece of his equipment (max Spirit dice/2 Budget Points value) as his "trademark item". This means that it becomes his property at all times, doesn't count against Budget Points, and, unless really anachronistic, the Torquemadas will allow him to take it in the timeline without too many problems. The item is so intimately linked to the character that cannot be lost during time travel, it remains "attached" to the hero.

If it isn't a weapon it also grants +1 to an associated skill roll. If it is a weapon the character can take the Trademark Weapon Edge ignoring all the prerequisites. Unlike Trademark Weapons, Trademark Items are really unique. If you lose one of them, the Edge is lost forever.

Legendary Edges

Clone

Requirements: Legendary, at least Lieutenant TimeGuard Rank

Some Operatives are simple too precious to TimeZero to be lost. So, in very special cases, their memories and DNA are copied and stored. When the Operative dies, and only when the death is certified and sure beyond any reasonable doubt, the DNA is retrieved, a clone of the Operative is produced and is imbued with the stored memories. When the character takes this Edge, make a copy of his character sheet and give it to the Game Master. In case of death, a clone of the hero is created. It has the exact stats of the original hero at the moment of cloning, but permanently loses a Benny, because copies are never perfectly identical to the original. Every time he gets an advancement, the clone is allowed a Spirit (-4) roll; in the case of success he recovers the lost Benny.

When the Clone is activated he becomes the new character of the player. The old one, even if he escaped death in some way, becomes an NPC controlled by the Game Master. Note that cloning is a "one shot" Edge: if the hero dies a second (or a third) time, a new clone is activated, using the same base stats as the first one. This Edge can be taken multiple times in the life of an Operative, every time a new, more advanced copy of the character is done (overwriting the old one).

GEAR

It is impossible to list all the equipment manufactured by humans throughout history. The *Savage Worlds* core rulebook has a good list of items commonly available in each and every era. Players and GMs can use it to determine the weight, cost and effectiveness of almost any object they want. Instead, the following section covers the specific gear available to TimeZero Operatives.

Currency and Common Item Availability

The costs of items rarely matter to Operatives. They simply ask for, and get, the gear they want from the Logistics Office, if it is considered necessary. Note that a standard Time Gate is usually a circle of nine feet radius, and making it bigger is very expensive. A car, horses or a small ship can pass through it, an aircraft or a battleship definitely not.

Prices are useful only if they need to buy items and gear during a mission.

Availability: There is no strict rule for item availability. If unsure about whether an Operative can find a specific object in a given age or location, the GM can ask for a Streetwise roll.

Generic Armor

Human history has produced an almost infinite array of types of armor. In order to keep the game Fast, Furious and Fun, armor has been divided into five broad classes (three for ancient armor and two for modern armor). The weight and cost entries have two figures: the first refers to protection for the torso only; the second refers to a full suit covering the torso, arms, legs and head.

Far future armors are deliberately left out: TimeGuard won't allow any of that gear to be brought in the timeline, at least by Operatives.

Light ancient armor. Leather, cuir bouilli, and similar.

Medium ancient armor. Chain mail, Roman legionary armor, and similar.

Heavy ancient armor. Medieval knight armor, Greek hoplite armor, and similar.

Light modern armor. Kevlar jacket or full-body light armor.

Heavy modern armor. Heavy infantry armor.

Generic Armor

Type	Armor	Weight	Cost	Notes
Light ancient armor	+1	10/15	50/100	
Medium ancient armor	+2	20/30	300/500	
Heavy ancient armor	+3	25/50	500/1000	
Light modern armor	+2/+4	8/12	100/200	+2 vs. melee damage, +4 vs bullets
Heavy modern armor	+2/+8	12/18	2000/4000	+2 vs. melee damage, +8 vs bullets

Special Items

Special items are usually made to be easily concealed and disguised. As a rule of thumb, if a normal item cannot be taken to the past due to its anachronism, the same is true for its special counterpart (unless the Inconspicuous Enhancement is taken). So, if an Operative cannot take a standard pistol to Ancient Greece, the Costume Warehouse will also deny her the use of an enhanced (see below) pistol, unless they choose the Inconspicuous Enhancement .

Budget Points

Special Operative equipment has a cost in Budget Points. Budget Points are strictly for an individual and cannot be traded, pooled or stashed by the players in any way. Losing an item that has a cost in Budget Points always has consequences on the Operative's service status. The following are only some examples of the amazing technology available to TimeZero Operatives. GMs can use them as guidelines to invent their own devices.

Power-like Devices: certain items mimic a *Savage Worlds* Power, with an arcane skill depending on the object. Characters can decide to use their Repair skill, if higher. Unless differently said, items with Power Points recharge at the standard rate of 1 Power Point per hour.

Special Items Table

Type	BP	Wgt	Notes
Adrenal Buff	3	–	+2 to a Trait roll, after rolling, number of charges equal to Vigor dice
Advanced Disguise Kit	3	2	See description
Bioscanner	2	–	See description
Chameleon Suit	4	4	See description
Communicator	1	–	Two devices. See description
Databank	1	–	Pick a specific Knowledge at d8
Synthbreaker Weapon/Ammo	+1/ 2 die steps of the weapon	–	See description
Energy Bracers	3/5	–	Basic/advanced version
Enhanced Armor/ Weapon/Vehicle/Tool	1+ (double)	–	See Enhancement lists in the description
Feigndeath	1	–	10 doses
Franklin Apparatus	2	1	3 units
Gravitic Belt	4	3	*fly* Power
Hypnoprobe	3	–	See description
Lethe Serum	1	–	10 doses
Long–Range Surveillance Kit	2	–	
Low–Light Visor	2	–	Ignore all lighting penalties except total darkness
Makeup Kit	1	4	Useful for disguises
Morpheus Serum	2	–	5 doses
Pet Synth	4/6	–	
Stimulants	1	–	3 doses
Stealth Airship	Special	–	Lieutenant Grade characters only
Tachyon Generator	4	3	See description
Tachyon Grenades	2	2	4 grenades. Range 5/10/20
Toolkit	1	2	+2 to skill roll until 1 is rolled, available for: Climbing, Healing, Lockpicking, Repair, Stealth, Survival

Adrenal Buff

Adrenal Buffs are one of the few bodily modifications allowed to Operatives. They are artificial glands surgically implanted in the body of the Operative and loaded with specific substances. The implant itself need only be paid for once, costing 1 BP, then charging it costs 3 BP, so it costs 4 BP the first time. With a simple mental command, or in response to certain stimuli

(like pain, fear, or rage) the implant releases a dose of drugs into the body of the subject. Three types of Adrenal Buffs exist, each linked to a single Attribute: Agility, Strength and Vigor. The player must choose one in the briefing phase of the mission, when spending his Budget Points. During the adventure, *after* making a Trait roll or a Skill roll linked to that Trait, the Operative can decide to spend one of the Buff charges, gaining +2 to the roll. Adrenal Buffs contain a number of charges equal to your Vigor dice. A character can only have a single type of Adrenal Buff drug loaded at any given time, but they can change the type of drug contained between adventures. Only humans can have Adrenal Buffs. Adrenal buffs can be recharged only in TimeZero medical facilities.

Advanced Disguise Kit (ADK)

This kit contains sufficient ultra-tech prosthetics and makeup to drastically change a person's aspect. It can also fake a sex or race change (provided that the person is at least partially dressed) and can imitate a specific voice via special vocal simulators. It gives +4 to Smarts rolls to create or use a disguise (see setting rules). The ADK requires thirty minutes' makeover time and it stores the components of a disguise for future reuse, but only if the user and the disguise are the same. For example, if Operative Marcus Publius uses the ADK to create a French Hussar disguise, he can freely reuse it, but he cannot "lend" the disguise to his comrade, Yumiko. Combat cancels out any disguise: as a rule of thumb, when the disguised individual suffers an unsoaked Wound, the ADK is automatically destroyed.

Bioscanner

A Bioscanner is small device capable of detecting the position of life forms with a margin of half a yard. It has a range of 100 yards. The sensor is capable of distinguishing humans from animals; it also measures the approximate size of targets and their health and strength, based on their vital signs. Stealth devices, like chameleon suits, can hide from a Bioscanner. In this case, the Bioscanner must win an opposed roll against the stealth device using its Notice skill (d10).

Chameleon Suit

The Chameleon suit is a black body suit, covered with millions of sensors that can change color to blend in with the surroundings, providing great assistance in stealth operations. Due to its high energy consumption, two settings are available. Switching from a setting to the other requires a round.

Stealth mode. It gives +2 to Stealth rolls. This mode uses 1 Power Point/10 minutes and no activation roll is required.

Invisibility mode. This works exactly like the *invisibility* Power of the *Savage Worlds* core rulebook, with the standard Power Points costs and arcane skill d8. It can be tracked by detection devices, like the Bioscanner.

The Chameleon Suit has 15 Power Points and recharges at standard rate. Recharging occurs only when the device is turned off.

Communicator

Communicators are micro radios, usually concealed in an earring, bracelet, or similar accessory. They enable vocal communication with an identical device within 10 miles. They must be used with caution, because recent reports indicate that the Triad has decoded some of their security frequencies and so its affiliates can eavesdrop on TimeGuard Operatives' communications. This is no more than a rumor, but cautious Operatives tend to stay alive longer than overconfident ones. Acquiring a set usually gives two communicators.

Databank

Databanks are generic sources of information about a specific subject. They are usually disguised as books or similar objects.

A databank grants d8 in a specific Knowledge skill. If the Operative already has the relevant skill, it increases his Wild Die by one step (or gives a standard d6 Wild Die in case of an Extra).

Synthbreaker Weapons/Ammo

Synths can be frightening opponents, as was discovered during the Synth Rebellion in the far future. But they are machines, and have weaknesses that can be exploited. In particular, they are vulnerable to certain radio waves which can overload and scramble their neural processors. In game terms, any Synth opponent successfully hit by a Synthbreaker weapon or ammo must immediately make a Vigor (-2) roll. In case of failure he suffers a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Exhaustion and even death. Note that the roll must be made even if the character soaks all damage.

Any melee weapon can be transformed into a Synthbreaker weapon: this simply requires fitting it with a micro power plant and a wave generator. The cost in Budget Points is one per two die steps of bonus damage the weapon has, rounded up. So a dagger (Str+d4) or a short sword (Str+d6) costs 1 BP, a long sword (Str+d8) or a great sword (Str+d10) cost 2 BP and so on. The power plant requires a lot of energy, and, despite being very advanced, is prone to voltage drop: if the wielder rolls 1 on the Fighting dice, regardless of the Wild Die, the device exhausts its charge and cannot be used for the next hour.

Ammo works in the same manner, but since each bullet (or arrow or sling shot) requires its own generator and power source, they are issued in batches of 10, and they are single-use only. They always cost 1 BP, regardless of the caliber.

Energy Bracers

These bracers, usually issued in pairs, can create a small, invisible force field around the hands of the user, transforming them into lethal weapons. They exist in two models, the basic one (costing fewer Budget Points) and the advanced version. Any character fitted with the basic

version gains the effects of the Martial Artist Edge. A character who already has that Edge (or the Improved Version of it) receives an increase in his unarmed damage of one die step (Martial Artist: Str+d6, Improved Martial Artist: Str+d8). Bracers can work indefinitely using the bio-electricity of the human body.

The advanced version works exactly like the basic version, but in addition it has 3 energy Charges that can be used for specific effects, detailed below. Each of these effects requires spending a Charge (this doesn't count as an action and doesn't require any roll) and lasts 3 rounds. The Charges can be restored by TimeZero power plants in few time or they slowly recharge using the bio-electricity of the user: he is allowed a Vigor (-2) roll per day. In case of success a charge is restored.

Penetrating Force Field. The Energy Bracers' attack receives AP 6.

Vibrating Force Field. The Energy Bracers receive the Heavy Weapon ability.

Personal Force Field. The force field of one of the bracers expands to become a sort of invisible shield. It counts as the *deflection* Power.

Enhanced Armor, Weapons, Tools and Vehicles

The factories of TimeZero are specialized in crafting gear that looks identical to objects built in ancient times. But the Operatives often want their equipment (armor, weapons and vehicles) to be better than its historical counterpart, despite looking like them.

This is managed through Enhancements. An Operative can choose one or more of the following Enhancements for his object of choice. No enhancement can be chosen more than once for each object. An item can have more than one Enhancement, but every time the cost doubles. So an item with one Enhancement costs 1 BP, with two 2 BP, with three 4 BP and so on.

Armor Bonus (armor and vehicles only): This grants +1 Armor to Ancient Era armors, + 30% Armor to Modern Era or later armors or +25% Toughness, in case of a vehicle.

Damage Bonus (weapons only): The weapon deals +1 Damage.

Extra Range (ranged weapons only): The range brackets of the weapon are increased by 50%.

Inconspicuous (weapons, armor and tools): The object is made to look like something different. For example, a rapier can be disguised as a walking stick, medium armor as a monk's tunic, a Bioscanner as a Bible or something similar. When selecting this modifier the player must propose to the GM a suitable disguise for the item. If he can't, the item cannot be made inconspicuous. Detecting the real nature of an inconspicuous item requires a Notice roll, opposed by the TimeZero factories' excellent Stealth (d10), but using it in plain sight automatically reveals its true nature. Inconspicuous items are usually allowed to be taken into times they don't belong to (for example a pistol disguised as a cross can be carried in the Middle Ages), but losing them incurs severe penalties from the Logistics Office (consider the item Budget Points cost doubled for purposes of the Polluting the Timeline Setting Rule).

Lightweight: The object weighs 50% less.

Maneuverability (vehicles only): This adds +1 to Boating, Driving or Piloting rolls.

Silenced (ranged weapons only): The weapon is perfectly silenced by an advanced sound suppressor made in the *TimeZero* factories. It cannot be heard outside a Medium Burst Template centred on the shooter. Within that range the shot can heard with a Notice (-4) roll.

Speed Bonus (vehicles only): This adds +25% to Acceleration and Top Speed.

Feigndeath

Feigndeath is a special drug created by the Drugs Department of TimeZero. Usually produced in pills, a specific concentrated version is concealed in fake teeth and can be released with a particular tongue movement. Feigndeath basically simulates a heart attack in the user, within a minute of use. The user apparently dies and remains in that state for 12 hours per dose used (max. 5 days), then he wakes up. During the fake death stage, the vital signs of the subject are minimal and a Healing (-4) roll, in conjunction with the use of Modern Era medical equipment, is required to discover the ruse.

Feigndeath has a second use: since it greatly slows the metabolism, it can slow down the effects of many toxins and illnesses. Consider the progression of the poison blocked during the whole time the Feigndeath is active.

At least a week must pass between uses of Feigndeath, otherwise it becomes a Lethal (-4) Poison.

Franklin Apparatus

Operatives are usually forbidden to use explosives in pre-gunpowder periods, since their impact on history is too big. But the Operatives must sometimes destroy buildings or create a diversion, so the Logistics Office has devised the Franklin Apparatus. It is a small device, the size of an egg, that can be activated remotely (from up to 1 mile away). The device, named after the famous Benjamin Franklin, attracts lightning in an incredible way. It is best used in bad weather, but the phenomenon of lightning in clear skies was quite well-known even in ancient times. It might be considered a sign of the Gods' anger, but surely not as some type of alien technology. In game terms, after the Franklin Apparatus is activated, the GM rolls a d10 every minute. If an even number is rolled, lightning strikes the Apparatus, causing 3d10 damage (Heavy Weapon) in a LBT area centered on the device with the usual chance of catching fire depending on the target's composition. If a 0 is rolled, lightning strikes but the Franklin Apparatus is destroyed, and so its effect ends.

Franklin apparatuses are issued in sets of three.

Gravitic Belt

A gravitic belt resembles a normal belt but it is heavier and has a bigger buckle. These modifications are needed to house an internal gravitic engine.

It grants the *fly* Power. The Gravitic Belt has 20 Power Points, recovered at the standard rate.

Hypnoprobe

A Hypnoprobe is a small device, the size of a medallion. It emits an invisible ray at very short range (6 yards) that interferes with the synapses of the human mind, causing a state of slight confusion. It gives +2 to Persuasion rolls but if a 1 is rolled on the Skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the target understands that something is interfering with her mind and automatically becomes Hostile.

The Hypnoprobe can also be used in combat, giving +2 to Tests of Will. It only affects humans; Synths and animals are immune.

Lethe Serum

Sometimes the worst happens and some locals see or hear what they shouldn't. Killing them must be avoided as much as possible, because removing someone from history can have unpredictable consequences. So the Lethe Serum, named after the fabled river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology, was created.

A target injected with it falls into a long sleep (6 hours plus one hour per dose).

The serum isn't instantaneous, it takes 10 minutes to take effect. In this period the subject is drowsy (Fatigued), and the effect of the drug can be countered with a Healing (-4) roll, provided that the medic has at least a TimeGuard Toolkit (Healing) available.

When he wakes up, the subject has no memory of what happened in the 6 hours prior to being given the serum. The range of the amnesia can be increased by another 6 hours for each additional dose used, to a maximum of 48 hours.

The Lethe Serum is provided in a sturdy hypodermic injector that holds 10 doses and that can be used in combat as an Improvised Weapon.

Long-Range Surveillance Kit

This is a kit containing a directional microphone, a long-range electronic telescope, micro-earpieces and some micro-cameras.

The active devices (directional microphone and telescope) require a Notice roll to actually spy on a distant scene. The passive devices (micro-earpieces and micro-cameras) must be placed with a Stealth roll. They can be spotted by minutely inspecting the area with a Notice roll (-4 if the placer obtained a raise on his Stealth roll). At the GM's discretion, the Long-Range Surveillance Kit can give the Operative a +2 bonus on shadowing attempts (see setting rules).

As a rule of thumb, both the active and the passive devices have a range of half a mile.

Low-Light Visor

This item is often disguised as a pair of glasses or sometimes as a helmet. It gives the ability to see better in darkness, actually granting the Low Light Vision monstrous ability. The user ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting, enabling her to see in any lighting condition except pitch black.

Makeup Kit

This kit contains basic makeup items: fake beard, fake hair, colored contact lenses, cosmetics, masks and similar things. The Makeup Kit can be used an unlimited number of times but,

whenever a 1 is rolled on the Smarts die to create the disguise, the kit's resources have run out and it cannot be used until replenished at TimeZero.

Morpheus Serum

Often Operatives need to quickly take people down without killing them. The Morpheus Serum is the perfect answer to this need. It is a multipurpose liquid substance which must be administered to, inhaled by or injected into the victim, to knock him out.

In game terms the victim must make a Vigor (-2) roll or fall asleep, as per the *slumber* Power. He remains asleep for four hours (eight with a critical failure). A double dose causes the penalty to be doubled.

Administering it simply requires pouring it in food or beverages (it is tasteless and odorless). In combat a piece of cloth can have the Serum poured on it, and put on the face of the victim to take effect: usually this requires winning a Grapple attempt. The kit also contains a special sturdy syringe (similar to a stiletto) which deals Str+1 damage. In order to inject the Serum, subtract the Armor value of the defender from the Fighting roll, representing the added difficulty of finding an unarmored spot. Finally, the kit contains some special low-powdered projectiles (fitting any pistol made from TimeZero), which can be charged with the substance. In this case the victim can be hit with a normal Shooting Attack, dealing half normal damage plus the Serum's effects; subtract the Armor value of the defender from the Shooting roll.

A set contains five doses of serum, plus five projectiles of a specific type and five syringes.

Pet Synth

Synths aren't built only to resemble humans. They can also resemble animals and pets of various types, and can be invaluable companions for Operatives during missions. The most common types are dogs, cats, horses, hawks, parrots and other inconspicuous animals. A pet Synth has the same stats as a real animal except Smarts, which is always d6, plus the racial abilities of a Synth. The Pet Synth can be fitted with a Communicator, which costs additional Budget Points. For 5 Points, the Pet Synth can be upgraded to Henchman status.

Stealth Airship

A stealth airship is only given to Lieutenant ranked Operatives, and only to one in each group. It is quite big, with a lounge, a kitchen, an infirmary and two private rooms for the crew. It is fitted with a supercomputer (Smarts d10, Wild Card), which can also pilot the airship, and is armed with a laser cannon. Consider the computer to have d10 in Piloting, Shooting and Healing, limited to its built-in facilities. Mainly a tactical vehicle, it is equipped with a vertical takeoff and landing system. It is rarely used, only in cases of massive military attack. It must be returned to the Logistics Office after use.

Acceleration/Top Speed: 60/600; **Toughness:** 14 (4); **Handling:** +0; **Crew:** 1+6
Notes: 1 x AMCM, Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Improved Stabilizers, Spacecraft, Stealth Device
Weapons: * 1 x laser turret (Range: 12/24/48; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; AP 6, HW)

Stealth Device. A stealth device makes the ship perfectly invisible both to sensors and to human eyes. It can only be detected by high-tech sensors (at least late 21ˢᵗ-century technology) with a Notice (-4) roll. The device also works when the airship is on the ground, and is used to camouflage it. The Stealth Device uses a lot of energy and must be turned off when the laser turret fires.

Stimulants

Stimulants are customarily produced in pills. They allow a character to ignore penalties from Wounds or Fatigue. But, remember, stimulants don't heal damage or illness, they only temporarily relieve its symptoms. A dose lasts for 12 hours, allowing the hero to ignore any effects of Wounds (apart from Incapacitation) or Fatigue (apart from death) after which the character suffers all the effects of the damage he suffered, plus he gains a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation or to death.

Another use of Stimulants is administering them to fight the effects of Morpheus Serum or other soporific drugs: a pill administered to a sleeping victim awakens him in 2d6 minutes.

Fatigue caused by stimulants is recovered by bed rest for at least 24 hours for each level of Fatigue. They are issued in packs of five.

Tachyon Generator

This device is usually fitted into body armor, a helmet or a weapon of at least medium size. It is a miniature version of the tachyon generators used in the time machine and can produce a brief warp in spacetime around the user, making him move faster than the surrounding world.

It has the same effect as the *quickness* Power, with range Self and 5 Power Points. Its drawback is that it is tiring to use and, when the user switches it off, he suffers a level of Fatigue, which can be recovered from with a good night's sleep. The device produces a tachyon flow, which can be "sniffed" by characters having the Tachyon Sense Edge. It recharges as normal.

Tachyon Grenades

These items are usually disguised as jewelry, tennis balls or something similar. Each of them contains a small tachyon reverse flux device and a one-shot battery. Each grenade can be activated in two different ways: triggered on impact or by a timer (max. 24 hours). When triggered the grenade doesn't explode in any way but creates a field of inverted tachyon flux where everything moves very slowly. In gaming terms any target in a LBT is under the effect of the *slow* Power, cast with skill d10 and lasting 5 rounds. Tachyon Grenades can be clustered: each additional grenade enlarges the burst template by 3" and add 3 rounds to the basic duration. Characters under the effect of the *quickness* or *speed* Power are immune to Tachyon Grenades.

Sealing Rifts. Another use of Tachyon Grenades is sealing temporal Rifts (see page 132). It is enough to activate one in proximity (3" or less) of a Rift and make a Smarts (+2) roll. On a success the Grenade "explodes" and seals the Rift. Grenades used in this manner don't have any other effect: the tachyon flux is "absorbed" by the Rift.

Toolkit

"Toolkit" is a generic name for resources that help you in using a Skill. So, a Healing kit contains antibiotics, healing nanoids and similar things, while a Survival kit includes vitamin pills, water filters and other survival gear.

Each toolkit grants +2 to all rolls for the specific Skill linked to it.

Consumables: Toolkits are based on consumable resources (like drugs, batteries and so on). They are usually well stocked, but sooner or later the supplies run out. When a 1 is rolled on the Skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the kit is depleted.

SPOILS OF WAR

Operatives may find exotic technology during their missions: for example high-tech gadgetry belonging to Triad agents or similar. The official TimeGuard policy is that all such items must be given to the Costume Warehouse to be examined, studied and probably disassembled.

In reality, things are more relaxed: if the Operative finds a really dangerous device, such as an atomic bomb, he will surely be asked to give it to the Technicians, likewise for any device allowing time travel. But if he finds something less earthshaking, like a personal weapon, armor or a useful trinket usually the Techies turn a blind eye, but only one: the GM should assign the item a Budget Points value, which isn't accounted for in any manner, but is used if the Operative forgets it in the timeline...

SILENCERS

Silencers are a staple of spy movies and fiction. The special gear section details a very advanced silencer, made with technology equivalent to that of the 23rd century, so it has a cost in Budget Points.

20th century-equivalent silencers (which can be found in the timeline or added to the mundane gear of an Operative at no cost) work in a different manner: they reduce the range brackets of a weapon by one third, and the sound is heard in a Large Burst Template centred on the shooter with a Notice (-2) roll. For purposes of the Invention rules (see page 119) they are considered an Average invention.

Very crude silencers can be improvised (for example a cushion on the face). In this case halve the range brackets of the weapon and subtract 1 from the damage roll.

SETTING RULES

This section deals with the specific rules of this setting and explains how to handle some common situations during *TimeZero* games.

Hypnotraining

An Operative is asked to work in several different eras and to impersonate various figures. He must be a Viking warrior one day and a Roman senator the next. No human or Synth can master all the skills and knowledge necessary to these diverse roles, so the TimeZero instructors devised Hypnotraining, a quick and dirty forced-learning method.

After the briefing but before the start of a mission, the Operatives undergo a hypnosis procedure that implants into their minds all the knowledge they need for their mission. They learn the normal languages of the era they are sent to and all the basic information necessary to

live and act normally in that time. This means they acquire the Common Knowledge of a real inhabitant of that specific period in history.

They also learn particular abilities useful for the specific mission, at the cost of temporarily losing other skills.

In game terms this means that, during character creation, every Operative must select a certain number of his Skills and Edges as Hypnoskills and Hypnoedges, they are collectively called Hypnotraits. New slots are added every time a new Rank is attained, as per the table below.

Before being sent into the timeline (usually after the mission briefing) a player can swap a Hypnoskill for another linked to the same Attribute, maintaining the current level. Similarly, she can switch an Edge with another Edge for which she meets the requirements. Background Edges (except Noble, Rich and Filthy Rich) or Weird Edges cannot be Hypnoedges.

Hypnoskills advance as normal through gaining experience and behave exactly like normal skills.

Even Synths can use Hypnotraining; in their case it simply means that they are partially reprogrammed. Mark Hypnoskills and Hypnoedges with an (H) on the character sheet to quickly recognize them. Note than changing a Hypnoskill that is a requisite for an Edge means you cannot use the Edge until the prerequisite is restored.

Example: Marcus Publius is a Novice character, so he has one Hypnoedge and two Hypnoskills. During the creation process, the player decides that the First Strike Edge and the Shooting d6 and Notice d8 skills are Hypnotraits. It means that at the start of any new adventure the player can freely replace the First Strike Edge with another Novice Edge, for example Command, and can swap Shooting with another Agility-related skill, for example Riding, and Notice with another Smarts-related skill, for example Repair, maintaining the same values, respectively d6 and d8.

OPERATIVE'S RANK	HYPNOSKILLS	HYPNOEDGES
Novice	2	1
Seasoned	3	2
Veteran	4	3
Heroic	5	4
Legendary	6	5

Time Travel Sickness

Traveling in time is usually as safe and easy as walking down the street. You simply step into a Time Gate and come out at the other end. But, as every experienced Operative can tell you, time is a tricky thing. First, it isn't homogeneous. Along the continuum there are temporal storms, space anomalies and other weird things that make navigating time as dangerous and unpredictable as sailing the sea in ancient ages. Second, the human body and mind sometimes don't like being snatched away from a time and thrown into another one. Imagine it as jet lag after a very long flight, but many times stronger. Even Synths suffer from Time Travel Sickness,

their programming falters and must be restored with auto-diagnostic routines. As a rule, they suffer the same effects as their human counterparts.

Every character must make a Vigor roll and suffer the effects listed in the table below. If the face card is black, they suffer an additional −2 to the roll. This table is very general, the GM can tweak it and add other complications to fit the scenario (for example, the Time Gate might open very far from the chosen place).

Time Travel Sickness Effects Table

CRITICAL FAILURE	The trip was stressful, the hero is Fatigued. He can try to recover from this state after an hour with a Vigor roll, and an additional roll can be attempted every hour thereafter. In addition he arrives at his destination totally naked, as per the Naked Traveler Hindrance!
FAILURE	The trip was stressful, the hero is Fatigued. He can try to recover from this state after an hour with a Vigor roll, and an additional roll can be attempted every hour thereafter.
SUCCESS	The trip was smooth and the hero is only a little disoriented. He is Shaken.
RAISE	The h ero is wholly unaffected by the time trip.

Disguises

Operatives always operate in disguise when they are on a mission. Their disguise might be as simple as a black suit to go to the 21st century, or as complex as the one needed by a Caucasian Operative to travel to Feudal Japan. In this case the disguise involves suitable clothes and gear as well as minor surgery to fit the age.

How good is an Operative's disguise?

To keep the game simple, there are two types of disguise.

Undercover Identity

The undercover identity supplied by the Costume Warehouse is always very good. The clothes and makeup are excellent and the Hypnotraining provides the Operative with all the information (language, mannerism, personal information) she needs to fit the role she has been assigned. So an Operative normally runs no risk of being detected as a time traveler, unless she does something very strange, like using anachronistic technology. Triad agents also usually have this type of disguise, so detecting them isn't simple, but having Edges like Cosmopolitan or Tachyon Sense can help.

Field Expedient Disguise

Sometimes the Operatives need to quickly change their disguise during a mission. This can happen because their undercover identity is discovered or because they need to accomplish a specific task. All the Operatives are trained to face these situations and, with a little preparation, they can improvise a disguise.

In this case, going unnoticed is not guaranteed and the following rules must be used.

Disguise is handled in two steps. Preparation involves putting on the right clothes and make-up and studying the appropriate mannerisms, while Use refers to when the disguise is actually used to interact with other people.

Preparation. Putting on the disguise and practicing the mannerisms is handled with a Smarts roll and requires some basic equipment (a Makeup Kit). If the roll is successful, the hero has +1 on the subsequent Use rolls (see below); the bonus becomes +2 if he scores a raise. In case of failure, the preparation is poor and suffers -1; with a critical failure, the preparation is so poor that all Use rolls suffer -4.

Since the Operative has no way of knowing how good his disguise is until he tries it, the Preparation roll is made immediately before he is scrutinized for the first time, during Use.

Use. Once the character is disguised, he can pass for the person he is trying to impersonate if the individual observing him isn't paying too much attention (no roll required if he hasn't scored a critical failure in Preparation). In the case of closer inspection, the disguise is put to the test and the impostor must use his acting skills. It is an opposed roll between the hero's Persuasion and the observer's Notice. If the hero wins the roll, he passes the test; if he scores a raise, his disguise is so believable that he receives +1 to all subsequent Use rolls. If he loses the roll, he is discovered, with consequences left to the GM.

Preparation Modifiers Table	
Mod	Condition
–2	No equipment
–2	Impersonating a specific individual (i.e. Father Jacob rather than a generic priest)
–2	Different sex or race
+2	Disguise limited to a single physical feature (i.e. pretending to be one–armed, imitating only the voice of an individual)

Use Modifiers Table	
Mod	Condition
–2	The observer is actively looking for an impostor
–2	The observer knows the individual being impersonated very well
+2	The impostor knows the individual he is impersonating very well
+2	Disguise limited to a single physical feature (such as voice)

Shadowing

TimeZero adventures have a strong espionage element. So, shadowing and following Triad agents without being noticed is a staple of the genre. You can use the following rules to simulate Shadowing.

Shadowing sequences have a fixed duration decided by the GM, just like Chases: Standard (5 rounds) or Extended (10 rounds). These rounds can last any amount of time, depending on the situation, and each represents a potential occasion for the shadower to be discovered.

Give the shadower three Shadowing Tokens. Then, each shadowing round an opposed roll is made between the shadower's Stealth and the victim's Notice. The winner of the roll takes a Shadowing Token from his opponent for a success and each raise (if he has any).

If the shadower is left with no tokens, he is discovered. Depending on the situation, the victim can flee (turning the scene into a Chase), set an ambush, or behave in the way the GM considers the most appropriate.

If, at the end of the last Shadowing round, the shadower still has Tokens, he has managed to stealthily follow the victim to his destination.

Adding Complications. Optionally, each character involved in the Shadowing can be handed an Action Card. If it is a Club, a Complication occurs. Use the Complications Table from *Savage Worlds* Deluxe Edition replacing "chase" with "shadowing". In case of Distraction, the character cannot gain any Tokens during the current round (but can lose them).

Group Shadowing. Groups of people can shadow individuals or other groups. This is handled exactly as above, with cooperative rolls: both the shadowers and the victims choose a leading character and the others help him with their rolls. Any helper failing the roll causes the leader's Stealth roll to be made at -1.

Henchmen

Sometimes an Extra is too feeble and a Wild Card is too strong to represent an opponent. In this case the GM can choose to promote an NPC to the status of Henchman. Henchmen have three Wounds, like Wild Cards, but no Wild Dice and no Bennies.

Right Hands

Unlike Henchmen, Right Hands tend to be skilled pros that rarely miss a shot. They work like Extras, but they have a Wild Die.

Polluting the Timeline

As said before, leaving something behind along the timeline ("junking" in the Operatives' slang) is prohibited. Any Operative guilty of junking is harshly punished. In his next mission he suffers a penalty to Budget Points equal to the Budget Points value of the gadget he left behind. He also starts the adventure with one less Benny, to simulate the unnerving effect of being questioned by the Torquemadas.

TimeGuard is a military organization, so status is important, as is the chain of command. Any team has a commander (usually the character with the highest number of Promotion Points), so ideally the other members of the team (the other players) should obey him. This is a rather different approach from the standard roleplaying party dynamic, where everybody in the group collaborates on an equal basis, and can be disruptive, if the commanding player has a bullying personality. So, the suggestion is to stay light on in-group chain of command: after all the Operatives already have the Sun Tzus, the Torquemadas and even the Commander of TimeGuard to deal with…

Grades and Promotions

Note that the following rules are fully optional and can be ignored if you want the Operatives' life to be simpler.

Operatives start the game as Junior Agents but, by doing their jobs well, they can advance through the ranks. After missions, in addition to Experience Points, they receive Promotion Points, representing their advance through the ranks of TimeGuard.

By attaining a certain number of Promotion Points they gain specific benefits, detailed below.

PROMOTION POINTS	GRADE LEVEL	GRADE	RANK CAP
0–19	0	Junior Agent	Novice
20–39	1	Agent 2nd Class	Seasoned
40–59	2	Agent 1st Class	Veteran
60–79	3	Senior Agent	Veteran
80–99	4	Lieutenant	Heroic
100+	5	Senior Lieutenant	Legendary

Charisma Bonus. . The Grade of an Operative is important within TimeGuard. This means that when he deals with lower ranking TimeZero staff (not only Operatives but also Technicians, Field Specialists, and so on) he has a Charisma bonus equal to the difference in Grade Levels. So a Senior Agent (Grade Level 3) dealing with a 2nd Class Technician (Grade Level 2) has +1 Charisma. So a Senior Agent (Grade 3) dealing with a 2nd Class Technician (Grade 2) has +1 Charisma.

Grade Level. Grade cannot be higher than the character Rank, so a Seasoned Operative cannot rise higher in TimeGuard than an Agent 2nd Class. He continues to gain Promotion Points, but he is not promoted until he achieves a new Rank.

Receiving Promotion Points

After each mission Operatives are judged by Sun Tzus and other high-ranking functionaries, usually people who have never been in the field; this is how it works. Each player makes a Smarts roll, applies the modifiers below, and totals the results. He receives 1d4 Promotion Points for each success and raise he achieves on the roll (max 3d4). This roll cannot Ace. In the case of failure he receives no Promotion Points, while with a negative result things are much worse: he loses Promotion Points equal to the negative number achieved. So, if he rolls -3 he loses 3 Promotion Points and he must answers lots of questions from the Torquemadas.

Rank Achievement. Whenever a character achieves a new Rank, he automatically receives 5 Promotion Points.

MODIFIER	EVENT
–2	Routine Mission*
0	Standard Mission*
+1	Difficult Mission*
+2	Hard Mission*
+4	Suicide Mission*
–4	Mission Failed
+2	Operative wounded during mission
+2	Operative performed an outstanding act of bravery witnessed by others
–Budget Points he lost	Operative polluted the timeline

* GM judgment

Benefits of Grade

For each 10 Promotion Points an Operative has, he can choose one of the following benefits. Note that being demoted can cause an Operative to lose some privileges and in this case the character loses the assets gained immediately. Some of these Benefits can be taken multiple times.

Assistant

Max. Times: 1

Requirements: Senior Lieutenant

The men upstairs decided you need an aide, it seems. Someone to help you with filling in the paperwork and maybe poking his nose in your personal affairs along the timeline. The boy isn't too bad, but he is green, as you were twenty years ago, more or less. He is trustworthy, or at least he seems so. You gain the Sidekick Edge.

Dirty Little Debt

Max. Times: Unlimited

Requirements: None

In the past you covered for someone in TimeGuard who made an error. It could be a Technician who sent you to the Cretaceous instead of the Middle Ages, a Sun Tzu who screwed up a mission or even an absent-minded Field Specialist who forgot his computer in Tutankamon's tomb. Whatever he did, now he owes you a favor and you can remind him about it. You gain the Connections Edge, with a particular individual of TimeGuard, which you can use once per adventure. Unlike the normal Edge you can decide to roll on Intimidate or Taunt instead of Persuasion when using it.

Experimental Gear

Max. Times: 2

Requirements: Agent 1st Class

The Operative is given access to advanced prototype gear. In game terms, one of the special items he requested with Budget Points, if it mimics a Power, can be more powerful (+5 Power Points or 50% extra charges), more accurate (arcane skill dice raised by one step, Wild Die) or simply with more ammo (50% more uses). As a drawback Experimental Gear is well... experimental, this means that on a critical failure the equipment fizzles and cannot be used again before an hour passes or a successful Repair roll is made (whichever happens first).

Field Experience

Max. Times: 1

Requirements: Agent 2nd Class

No training can really prepare you for the problems you are going to face in the timeline. Only people who have been on missions truly understand this. At the start of each session you receive one additional Benny.

Operative's Badge

Max. Times: unlimited

Requirements: Junior Agent

A common joke among Operatives is that they are cops but have no badge. Ideally you gain a badge after completing a number of missions without being killed in action or getting lost in time. Every time you choose this benefit, you gain a Combat Edge of your choice, respecting all the prerequisites.

Secret Cache

Max. Times: 2

Requirements: Agent 2nd Class

Your grade means you have access to items of classified info. One of the most important ones is the locations, in various eras, of secret TimeGuard caches along the timeline. Once

per adventure, you can declare that one of these places is nearby. The Secret Cache contains a 2d4 Budget Points of special equipment of your choice, plus at least $1000 in currency and appropriate clothes for the era. Whenever it is visited, the Game Master secretly draws a card from the Action Deck: if it's a Club, something bad awaits you in the Cache: maybe it is protected by a security device you don't know about, maybe it is under Triad surveillance or maybe it is just empty.

"We Can Rebuild Him"

> **Max. Times:** 1
> **Requirements:** Agent 1st Class

TimeGuard usually doesn't allow cybernetic implants. The risk that an Operative dies on a mission is simply too high, and everybody at TimeZero has heard the funny story about Hippocrates being brainwashed after doing an autopsy on a Synth Watcher…

The only exception is when an Operative is seriously wounded in an action (receives a Permanent Injury). In this case only, TimeGuard allows a cybernetic implant: this completely cures the wound and grants a free Attribute advance to the Operative (Agility, Strength or Vigor only). This option can be chosen only once in the Operative's career, regardless of how many times he is seriously wounded.

Retirement Plan

> **Max. Times:** 1/Origin Era
> **Requirements:** Agent 1st Class.

During a mission to your home era, you spent some time on personal matters: for example you placed a bet on the right horse, bought the right stocks or gave the right advice to a nobleman, gaining his eternal gratitude. Whatever you did, it gave you a solid economic background in that era. You gain the Rich Edge in your Origin era (if you have several Origin eras, choose one). As long as you keep a low profile and don't try to influence politics or economics, TimeGuard lets you enjoy your money. Occasionally TimeZero could ask you to use your wealth and/or social position on a mission. You can choose this benefit multiple times, choosing a different era each time.

Stealth Airship

> **Max. Times:** 1
> **Requirements:** Lieutenant

The Operative and his team are permanently given a Stealth Airship for their use. Only a single Airship is given to each group. Airships are excellent bases, and usually they are "shot" into the past through special Time Gates. Losing a Stealth Airship is one of the worst things that can happen to an Operative's career: he immediately loses 20 Promotion Points.

Time Traveler

Max. Times: Unlimited

Requirements: Agent 2nd Class

You have hopped about the timeline quite a bit and you feel at home in many places and times now. Choose other two eras from the list on page 61, they are considered additional Origins.

Tough Reputation

Max. Times: 1

Requirements: Agent 1st Class

You are reputed to be a tough guy, and indeed you are; you receive +1 to Soak rolls.

Warehouse Priority

Max. Times: 4

Requirements: Agent 2nd Class

The Operative's equipment requests are given greater consideration; he receives +1 Budget Points at the start of each mission.

ARCHETYPES

In this chapter are some ready-to-play characters, useful when you need to quickly create heroes or for convention games. With some finishing touches, and rolling 1d20 respectively for Background and Origin you can create very different characters!

Note that while your character's Background and Archetype may have the same name, the Background is what he did before being recruited into TimeGuard, and the Archetype is what he does now – your Explorer PC may have been a Modern Era Explorer before he enlisted, but he could just as easily have been a Prehistoric Hunter.

The archetypes below are for human characters; to make them Synths, remove one Edge and apply the Synth racial abilities.

Note: Edges and Skills marked with * are Hypnoedges and Hypnoskills

EXPLORER

Background: Preparing for a mission in prehistory, looking for some fresh dino specimens? Or are you going to Antarctica to find a lost comrade? Whatever your destination, if it means staying outdoors and lots of mosquitoes, the Explorer is your guy.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6*, Notice d6*, Swimming d4, Survival d8, Shooting d6 + 4 additional skill points.

Edges: Time Resilience, Woodsman.

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Toolkit (Survival), enhanced ranged weapon (+1 damage, +50% range brackets), enhanced melee weapon (+1 damage).

FACILITATOR

Background: Facilitators are sly individuals expert in social skills. Their role, in the field, is making things go smoothly with the Natives and to open doors with fast-talking rather than weapons. Usually they are the "facemen" of the group.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d6* + 2additional skill points.

Edges: Charismatic*, Cosmopolitan, Luck.

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Hypnoprobe, enhanced armor fitting the era (+1 Armor).

FIELD TECHNICIAN

Background: This guy is the specialist in the high-tech department when in the field. He is also the guy you rely on when you have to quickly improvise something technical, whether in prehistory or WWII doesn't matter.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Lockpicking d6*, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6* + 3 additional skill points.

Edges: McGyver*, Field Technician.

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Long-Range Surveillance Kit, Toolkits (Lockpicking, Repair).

IMPERSONATOR

Background: Impersonators are masters of disguise and professional actors. With a little time they can become entirely different people, and blend in with any crowd. You'll never find one if he doesn't want to be found.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10, Taunt d6*, Stealth d6 + 1 additional skill point.

Edges: Master of Disguise*, Shadower.

Hindrances: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Advanced Disguise Kit (ADK), Lethe Serum.

Background: Call them "recon specialists" or, as other Operatives do, "Burglars". Infiltrators are skilled at breaking in (and occasionally breaking out), shadowing and all those not–so–legal activities that are often part of missions.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6*, Notice d6, Lockpicking d6, Stealth d8, Shooting d6* + 2 additional skill points.

Edges: Danger Sense, Thief*.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Chameleon Suit.

Background: Operatives get wounded on missions, and there isn't a hospital on hand in the Middle Ages. A Medic is responsible for patching up wounded comrades, administering drugs and similar stuff.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6*, Healing d8, Knowledge (pick any) d6*, Shooting d6 + 4 additional skill points.

Edges: Common Bond, Healer.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Toolkit (Healing), Lethe Serum, Morpheus Serum.

OBSERVER

Background: In-field reconnaissance is vital for all TimeZero missions. This Operative is an expert in noticing facts and details, and his comrades know that they must rely on his observations.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6*, Shooting d6* + 3 additional skill points.

Edges: Alertness, Danger Sense, Tachyon Sense.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Bioscanner, low-light visor.

PILOT

Background: Wherever there is the need for a quick vehicular extraction (or insertion) a pilot is required. These guys are at their ease driving a Ferrari, piloting a Stuka or holding the wheel of a Spanish Galleon. Apart from driving, they have a set of other useful skills.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Boating or Driving or Piloting d8, Fighting d8, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6* + 4 additional skill points.

Edges: Ace, Quick.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Adrenal Buff (Agility).

SECURITY EXPERT

Background: All Operatives undergo basic combat training before being sent into the timeline, but this Operative is an expert soldier. His role in the field consists of protecting the other members of the team and kicking some ass, if the need arises; but always using the minimum necessary violence and avoiding unnecessary (and potentially history–disrupting) deaths.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Healing d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d4, Throwing d6, + 3 additional skill points.

Edges: Crowd Fighting*.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Enhanced armor fitting the era (50% weight, +1 Armor), enhanced weapon fitting the era (+1 damage), stimulants.

SECURITY EXPERT – UNARMED FIGHTER

Background: Operatives must go unarmed on certain missions, but this doesn't mean they must be helpless. A Security Expert with an unarmed fighter specialization doesn't need any gear to kill you, apart from his hands and feet, of course.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d6, Healing d4, Stealth d6*, Throwing d6*, + 3 additional skill points.

Edges: Acrobat*, Martial Artist.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Energy bracers (base version).

CLEANER

Background: Do you remember when at the training course you were told an Operative must avoid killing Natives? Well, you can, sometimes you even must. In certain cases things in the timeline get so messed up that certain people must be "removed" and the situation cleaned up. You are the cleaner.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6*, Stealth d8, Throwing d6*, + 1 additional skill points.

Edges: Assassin, Improvisational Fighter*.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Inconspicuous enhanced melee weapon (+1 damage, inconspicuous), inconspicuous ranged weapon (+1 damage, inconspicuous).

SPECIALIST

Background: Ok, this is the polite term for "egghead", as Operatives call science guys. The character is an expert in a particular field of knowledge, but his adaptability and capacity to think on his feet make him a good Operative too.

Origin: Pick or randomly select any one.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (pick any) d8*, Knowledge (pick any) d8*, Investigation d8, Notice d6, +2 additional skill points.

Edges: Jack-of-all-Trades, Linguist*.

Hindrance: One Major, Two Minor

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Budget Points: 4.

Special Gear: Pet Synth.

RUNNING THE GAME

This section provides the GM with useful hints on running a *TimeZero* campaign smoothly, from how to manage scripted adventures to how to create awesome tales of saving the timeline. Players shouldn't read this part to avoid spoiling the fun of the game.

Character Creation Hints

TimeZero is built around a single type of character, the Operative. Other settings, like fantasy or space opera, allow for more variety, so this design choice might seem a little limiting at a first glance. Well, it isn't.

Background Differences. Operatives are all very different from one another. First, in relation to their background: Origins and Character Types are powerful tools to determine who a character was before being recruited by TimeGuard, and this will be reflected in some of his abilities too. For example, a Phoenician merchant will have a set of skills that a WWI biplane pilot does not.

After training they will have some skills in common, like Fighting and Notice, but as for the rest, they will be completely different.

Role Specialization. Second, each character is best suited to a particular role in the team: no Operative can specialize in every field, even with the advantage of Hypnotraining. So, one of them will be an expert in stealth operations, another a socializer, another a soldier ready to take on the Triad's bad guys, and another a medic/field specialist/jack of all trades.

Have the players take a look at the Archetypes on page 101-107, to get an idea of what the common specializations among Operatives are, and suggest they choose a particular niche where they can shine. This must not prevent the other heroes from being competent in the same field, but by identifying a specific individual for each role all the party members will feel useful.

Undercover Identities

One of the unique aspects of this setting is the chance to play in different ages and with very different characters in each game. This opportunity is given by Undercover Identities.

There are two ways to handle Undercover Identities in the game.

The first option is to give the heroes a generic idea of the era they are going to visit during the pre-mission briefing, and allow them to propose an Undercover Identity. This method can be a lot of fun, adding an element of randomness and unpredictability to the game, but has some disadvantages.

First, it can be time-consuming. If your players are a slow-paced group, you can easily spend an entire session creating undercover identities. Second, you must be able to think on your feet to quickly adapt your scenario to the impromptu undercover identities your clever players have devised.

The second option is to give the players some pre-generated identities to choose from. This is the approach chosen for the published scenarios, in which it is the Tactical Office's task to create fake identities for the Operatives, and the heroes must stick to them.

You can find some examples of undercover identities in the sidebar on page 112-113 to use as a guideline for your own adventures. This is by far the easiest and most common method, because it gives the GM the chance to include some interesting plot twists and make sure that the characters are suited to the particular features of the scenario they are going to play.

When you are creating your adventures, be sure to create some good Undercover Identities. While you are doing this, try not to think of the stats; it will be the players' task to use Hypnotraining to tailor their character to a given identity. Instead, concentrate on the background, trying to keep it short and quite generic if you can, so that the players can add to it during the game, if the need arises.

So give it some thought, but not too much. After all the players will change their Identity in every adventure, so creating a very complex personality or background story isn't always worth the effort, and, in certain cases, can even be confusing.

SAMPLE UNDERCOVER IDENTITIES

Master Merchant Alejandro Villalobos from Cordoba

Era: European Middle Ages, Spain (1400-1500)

Alejandro is a merchant from Cordoba, son of Alvaro and Doña Beatriz. He counts a prince of Cordoba among his ancestors. Alejandro has (fake) letters of credit from all the major merchant houses in Europe. He is renowned as a connoisseur and very fond of women, good food, and wine.

Doña Carmen Villalobos from Cordoba

Era: Middle Ages, Spain (1400-1500)

Doña Carmen is Alejandro's sister, a rich widow with a turbulent past. Now she follows her brother on his travels, with the aim of visiting major religious sites to pray and atone for her sins. Her high social rank allows her to move in medieval society with a degree of freedom very few women have.

Herr Klaus Kloden

Era: Middle Ages, Spain (1400-1500)

Klaus Kloden is a German mercenary from Antwerp. He fought in various religious wars in Northern Europe and served in the army of the Duchy of the Palatinate. Then he left the army and wandered around for many years before arriving in Cordoba, where he was hired by Alejandro and became his personal bodyguard.

Brother Rodriguez

Era: Middle Ages, Spain (1400-1500)

Rodriguez is a minor cleric; he has been at the service of the Villalobos family for many years. He is both Master Alejandro's scribe and accountant and Doña Carmen's personal confessor. Rodriguez has quite a few contacts among the clergy in Spain, France and Italy. Among his possessions he has some (fake) blank writs of indulgence.

BREAKING UNDERCOVER IDENTITIES

Usually the Costume Warehouse creates very good undercover identities: they don't only provide props, but also documents, histories and so on. But even the best cover identity, if deeply probed, can be discovered, especially if the investigator has the resources of the Triad or some other powerful

organization (like the CIA, KGB or the Catholic Church). The rules below allow you to check if a TimeZero cover identity is broken, but use them only when strictly necessary plot-wise, or to speed up the game if the players are too slow in making their decisions.

Skill Choice. Breaking an Undercover Identity is handled through a series of skills rolls: use Investigation in modern eras where documentary sources are available to the investigator(s) (the Internet, police archives and so on) or Streetwise in ancient times, if he must rely on legwork and interrogating witnesses.

Frequency of Rolls. Once the skill is decided, the investigator rolls at –2, with the modifiers below. Groups of investigators can make cooperative rolls, successes and raises are totaled, and the roll can be repeated after a reasonable time interval (from one day in the modern era with Internet access, to one month in ancient periods, at the GM's discretion). When the investigator manages to gather five success and/or raises he discovers the suspect identity is a fake.

MODIFIER	CONDITION
+2	Target has the Celebrity Hindrance and belongs to the current or previous era.
+2	Target has the Burned Hindrance (only if the investigator belongs to the Triad or a similar organization)
–2	Target is in his Origin era.
+1 to +4	Target made a blatant mistake in performing his role (GM discretion)

Tweaking the Setting

TimeZero is a setting with some strong assumptions, in three particular areas: the type of heroes, the equipment level and the supernatural level. Each of these three factors can be varied and changed a bit, to fit your personal taste.

Type of Heroes

Default. The heroes in this game are that of Operatives, highly-trained agents of TimeGuard, coming from any era.

Free Players. The heroes are common people, who, for one reason or another, have acquired the means to travel in time (see Advanced Temporal Physics on page 129). They could even be

involuntary time travelers, periodically snatched from their position in the continuum by some permanent Winds of Time effect (see page 131). This type of hero has an additional problem to face: they don't have access to Hypnotraining, so they arrive in an era without knowing the language, customs and so on, potentially encountering serious trouble. They also don't have the support of TimeGuard resources; but they have more freedom of action.

Equipment Level

Default. Operatives are allowed a goodly number of gadgets, usually superior to the technology level of the times they visit, but their number is limited by the budget restrictions of TimeGuard.

The following are possible tweaks.

Big Guns. In this style of game, the heroes are super-equipped: raise the players' Budget Points by 50%. If you want to maintain game balance, we suggest increasing the number of Extras in published adventures by one, and adding some extra gear (3 BP equivalent) or an Edge to enemy Wild Cards.

Naked in Time. If you use this tweak, there is an additional law in temporal physics: Operatives can move through time, but they cannot bring with them any items (clothes included). In game terms, all the characters are under the effects of the Naked Traveler Hindrance. At the GM's discretion, this can apply only to the TimeGuard time machine or to any type of time travel. As a consequence, since the heroes arrive naked, TimeZero has several secure places where they store equipment locally. The only problem is reaching it before the natives find you poking around naked. With this tweak, Edges like Martial Artist or McGyver become really useful.

Supernatural Level

Default. TimeZero is a totally rationalist setting. Magic and superpowers don't exist: even when the heroes witness similar phenomena, they are only the effect of very advanced technology or temporal anomalies.

Psychic Forces. If you want to include a supernatural element in TimeZero, you could allow the use of the Psionic Arcane Background: psionics are powerful evolutions of *homo sapiens*, they are very rare mutations always present in the human history. As an alternative, psionics can be the exclusive domain of Lost Sheep and Alternates. Whatever you choose, we suggest strictly limiting psionics to a single player character in the gaming group, and to allow only inconspicuous trappings, like those listed below.

Suggested Trappings: mind control, psychokinesis, mind reading, enhanced empathy, enhanced danger sense, invisible mind blast, implanting false memories, precognition, psychometry ("reading" the past of objects), aura reading.

ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Setting Keywords

Before starting to play, you should get into the right mood. The keywords below give you an idea of the main themes of the setting. Each *TimeZero* campaign is a balanced mixture of the factors below, but the exact amount of each ingredient is left to the personal choice of the Game Master and his players.

Humanistic Sci-Fi. *TimeZero* is clearly a science fiction setting, but one where the man is the main character, not the technology. Heroes will frequently face social, political and moral challenges, and they should overcome them with their wits and adaptability, not by relying on some super-gadget.

Cultural Relativism. Time travelers, and Operatives in particular, are at their ease in any era, but they truly belong to none: after you have heard the ideologies of politicians, priests and social revolutionaries and you have seen all of them collapse under the weight of time, it is difficult to truly believe in anything other than the ineluctable laws of time.

Duty. The Operatives are the men in charge of saving the day, or, more precisely, of saving the timeline. An enormous responsibility is placed on them, the thought of billions of existences that will be changed (or wiped out) if they don't manage to save the continuum. Is this overwhelming? Yes, it can be.

Little Gods. Operatives are gods compared to the people they'll meet in the timeline. This isn't a matter of power, even if they are highly trained and fitted with all the trinkets of the Costume Warehouse. They are gods because they *know*; they have the knowledge of what is going to happen, what must be and what must not be. This can also mean that they are called on to take harsh decisions: if an innocent must die for the continuum's safety, they are the ones pulling the trigger, and pity, anguish or some other human emotion mustn't stop them. But it isn't easy to be a god, if, after all, you are only a man.

Bureaucracy. Operatives save the timeline, they do it twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. But they aren't alone: a great number of people, civilian and technical personnel alike, are necessary to let a single Operative travel in time. And this requires resources, a budget,

paperwork to fill in and so on. So don't hide it: TimeGuard is a bureaucracy, and it is run by white-collar workers, people like you and me, sitting in front of a computer, who do most of the boring work. These people won't enter a Time Gate in all their lives, and they don't understand why they should have to miss their vacations so a bunch of Operatives can save Napoleon…

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" This is a famous phrase taken from *Satire VI* by Juvenal, a famous Latin poet. It means "Who Watches the Watchmen?" It is a question that every Operative sooner or later will ask himself during his career: TimeGuard exists to preserve history, at least the version of history written in history books; but who says that they are the right guys doing the right thing? What if the Triad were the real fixers of history and the Priors are time criminals modifying the continuum for their own ends? Who is acting in the "right" way? And, more important, who will judge their actions?

Campaigns

There are several ways to build a *TimeZero* campaign. Some ideas are detailed below.

Time Hopping. This is the standard, classic campaign for which the official adventures of this line are written. The heroes, members of an Operative team based at TimeZero, are elite specialists sent on missions all over the timeline, saving history, battling the bad guys and generally trying to gain some insight into their agenda. Each adventure is diverse from the others, in a totally different age and circumstances. Sometimes the party will visit multiple eras in the same adventure. The heroes will be very malleable: they'll have different skills and Edges, different gear and even different cover identities. This is a good way for players to experiment in various roles and learn a little bit about different eras.

Advantages: Great variety both in places and stories, requires only Vanilla History knowledge (see page 127).

Disadvantages: The historical depth of the adventures won't be great, mainly because of time: if you have only one session in Ancient Rome, there is no sense in making an over-detailed setting.

Era Guardians. In a totally different approach, the heroes are assigned to a specific era: it can be a narrow period, like the Roaring Twenties or something more loose, like Ancient Egypt. Usually Operatives stay at TimeZero and are sent into the timeline only when a problem of some type emerges in the era of their specialization, but it is also common to have them permanently deployed in their era (even for all their lives), cooperating with a resident Watcher. These types of characters are more stable than Time Hopping Operatives: they have more detailed cover identities (maybe they have even families and children in the era) and they only go back to TimeZero for periodic reports or other special occasions. This is also reflected in their skills: they have access to Hypnotraining, but will rarely change their characters' cover identity. It isn't uncommon for Era Guardians to "die" in their era (usually when their cover identity is burned) and to return with another identity and physical appearance.

Advantages: Allows exploring history in detail, more focused adventures and NPCs.

Disadvantages: Requires at least Basic Research (see page 137), characters are less malleable, you explore only a single age.

Temporal Castaways. Time traveling isn't always safe: 99% of the time you arrive where you wanted to, the only nuisance being some nausea, but in the remaining 1%... well, things can go really badly. In the Bad Weather chapter you'll find a number of suggestions about the bad things that can happen in cases of rough travel. Temporal Castaways are people that for one reason or another don't arrive where they are sent, and get lost in time and other dimensions. Basically Lost Sheep are Temporal Castaways, but as the Operatives are trained to face similar events, they have a better chance of survival.

Imagine, you are an Operative sent to the court of Louis XII, France, 1502. You learnt French, you know the most popular dances of the age and some spicy gossip to swap with the courtesans. And then you exit from the Time Gate and find yourself in Mesopotamia, 2000 BC. You don't understand the language, are dressed in an alien manner and, more importantly, you don't know how to get back home…

Temporal Castaways can be great campaign, based on the assumption that the heroes, displaced, must find a way to get back home, possibly without messing up history too much. It usually means finding a resident Watcher, or, if really desperate, some of the enemies of TimeGuard, to stow away on a trip to a more civilized era…

Temporal Castaways campaigns are particularly good if you like sandbox style games: you basically have no prepared plot, and react to the players' actions.

A final word of warning: this type of campaigns doesn't require great plot preparation, but it does need a lot of research, if you want to present a believable environment. Alternatively, remember that a bad trip can lead the heroes into the wrong dimension as well as the wrong time -> time (see Alternate Universes on page 137).

Advantages: Very freeform style of play, open setting, unconventional adventures.

Disadvantages: Lack of focus, players can easily die or pollute history, requires at least Basic Research.

Mixed Campaign. You can always make a campaign including any or all of the ideas above. If you divide your game into story arcs, you can include them all.

Example. You can start the campaign with the heroes being guardians of a specific era. There, during their first missions, they discover a particularly nasty Triad agent who is behind several time destabilizations. They hunt him down, but he manages to escape in a spectacular way, destroying the Operatives' cover identities in the meantime. TimeGuard is forced to remove them hastily from the timeline and to employ them as a time-hopping squad. After a couple of secondary missions, they again face their Triad nemesis. In a hair-raising chase across various eras something goes wrong in their time travels and they end up as castaways in a parallel universe, where their archenemy has become the main advisor of the tyrannical ruler of the region. Capturing him and returning to the time base ends the campaign.

TEMPORAL CASTAWAYS: REINVENTING THE WHEEL

The typical attitude of Operatives on a mission is to blend into the era, so they don't use anachronistic technology (or if they do, are very careful about hiding it) and they absolutely don't build or introduce future technology.

The situation is a little different if they are castaways, particularly if they are in dire need and the chances of actually polluting history are low. In these cases, the players could ask to use the advanced knowledge of their heroes to create tools.

This is a delicate matter to judge and requires some common sense. The first suggestion is to be basically positive on it: a player declaring his hero is going to build a rifle in prehistory is adding something to the story, so he should be rewarded, not punished, and you can use the following quick rules.

First, decide the difficulty of an invention, between Easy, Average, Hard, Very Hard and Impossible (there are examples below). When deciding the difficulty of an invention consider also if the character has the proper tools: if he doesn't, consider the difficulty raised by one step, if he has no tools at all, consider it two steps higher. This represents the added problem that the inventor must first create some suitable tools for his work. If the invention difficulty goes higher than Impossible it cannot be built.

A TimeZero toolkit is usually considered adequate even for Impossible inventions, as long as it doesn't become depleted.

Then decide the right skill to devise the invention: usually it is Repair, but others skills can be used (for example Healing or Knowledge (Chemistry) to create a medicine, or Survival for primitive weapons). If you have the McGyver or Mr Fix It Edges, consider your die a step higher (two steps if you have both) before checking the table below.

The difficulty of the invention also tells you how frequently you can make the roll. Cross-referencing the Difficulty of the invention with

your actual skill you obtain the number of successes and/or raises you need to create a working example of the device.

Mass Production. Unless you have a factory, mass production is outside the scope of these rules, but if you manage to build the first prototype, making later ones will be a lot easier: consider the difficulty of the invention one difficulty level less (up to two).

Example. Yumiko, a young Operative cast away in Prehistory, tries to build herself a rough crossbow to survive the dinosaurs. She has Repair d6 and the McGyver Edge and (thanks be to God) she decided to pack a TimeZero Toolkit (Repair) before being sent down the timeline.

A crossbow is considered an Average device, and she has all the proper tools to do it. As she has the McGyver Edge, her Repair is considered d8. Checking the table below, the number is 4. She has to gather 4 successes and raises to build one, and can roll every 12 hours. In a day or two she can do it, unless she is eaten by a T-Rex before then…

Invention Difficulty

Easy: Fire, levers, slings, axes, bandages, bows.
Average: Crossbows, wheels, pottery, canoes, smelting (low temperature metals like copper).
Hard: Smelting (steel), black powder weapons, glass, basic surgical instruments, steam engines, hot-air balloons.
Very Hard: Clockwork, combustion engines, chemicals, ships and aircraft.
Impossible: Transistors, lasers, prosthetics, plastic.

Difficulty	Time Interval	Skill Level						
		D4	**d6**	**d8**	**d10**	**d12**	**d12+1**	**d12+2**
Easy	Every hour	5	4	3	2	1	Auto**	Auto**
Average	Every 12 hours	No*	5	4	3	2	1	Auto*
Hard	Every Day	No*	No*	5	4	3	2	
Very Hard	Every Week	No*	No*	No*	5	4	3	2
Impossible	Every Month	No*	No*	No*	No*	No*	5	4

[*] No. Impossible to create the device with such a skill level.
[**] Auto. No need to roll. Created in the minimum time interval.

Adventure Themes

TimeZero campaigns can support various themes. The most important of them are listed below.

Investigation. Almost all the adventures revolve around an investigation. Thanks to the pre-mission briefing, the heroes usually know that the timeline has been changed. But they have to discover how, by whom, and why. Only when they know the answers to these questions are they able to fix the problem.

Action. Investigation is a big part of an Operative's life, but action is just as important! It might involve fighting barbarians hired by the Triad in ancient times, participating in daring car chases with time bandits on the streets of 1920s Chicago, or saving important people from "accidents" caused by Alternate agents.

Secrecy. The Operatives are destined to live in the shadows. A terrible war is being fought across time between the goodies (TimeGuard) and the baddies (the Triad, the Alternates and the occasional Free Player), but the locals must know nothing; otherwise, history would be changed. Hence, the heroes who saved Columbus must remain faceless, and the SS officers who killed Rommel's Evil Twin during WW2 must never be found.

THE RECRUITMENT ADVENTURE

If you are the slow-paced type of GM, one who likes investigate the lives of the heroes in depth, you can play some Recruitment Adventures as introductory scenarios for the setting. Alternatively, you can play one of them as a flashback to a hero's past.

Recruitment Adventures are (usually short) stories showing how the Operatives got involved in TimeGuard. The basic structure of these scenarios is the same: the characters, in their home time, are in one of the following situations:

1) They face certain death.
2) They become involved in a time-traveling threat (such as a Triad plot, a dangerous Alternate plan and so on).
3) They are caught in a temporal anomaly and are saved by TimeGuard

At some point during the scenario an agent of TimeGuard, their future mentor, asks them to join TimeGuard. In case 1, this is a typical Deal with the Devil. The mentor could become an important character in the campaign's structure, and different players can share the same one.

Blind Games. This type of introductory scenario is perfect if matched with a "blind" type of game, one where players don't know in advance they are going to play in a time-travel setting. This has the added advantage that you can manage the quantity of information your players have: everything they know about TimeGuard will be through your words. Players should be allowed to read the Player's Guide only during their actual training, *after* the Recruitment mission.

Character Creation. Players should create normal Novice heroes for their first adventure, using only the *Savage Worlds* core rules (apart from forbidden Edges and Hindrances). They should be told they are going to play an historical type of campaign. The best thing would be if they prepared the character at home, before the game session starts. After the recruitment adventure they are allowed to re-create the hero, changing whatever they want and using the additional rules of this book.

Groups and Recruitment Adventures. In a perfect world, Recruitment Adventures should be played one-to-one, with a single player and the GM. Because this is rarely possible for organizational reasons, several options are possible.

1) **Play by Email.** Being quite short, these stories can be played outside the normal gaming evening, by email, forum or other asynchronous manner.

2) **Playing Characters as Mentors.** One of the heroes can be the mentor of another player. In game terms it won't have any effect (the mentor has absolutely no in-game power over the recruit), but it is a nice background touch and can have interesting role-playing repercussions. You should warn the mentor player that the aim of the adventure is getting the recruit into TimeGuard (maybe after testing him). If the mentor collaborates and plays his role well, he should be rewarded with a Benny at the start of the next adventure.

3) **Introduce a New Player.** A recruitment adventure can also be the way to introduce a new player to the group. In this case the whole party can act as mentors, and this can be a very good way to welcome a newcomer, because this puts him in the spotlight.

4) **Fill-In.** You can play a Recruitment Adventure every time you have players missing on game night. In this case the adventure is a flashback, and starts with something like "Hey, you remember how you got involved in all this mess?"

Finally, remember that not all players in the group must play the Recruitment adventure: it doesn't award the recruit any Experience Points, so there isn't a balance issue if a character doesn't play it.

Adventure Types

Several types of scenarios are possible in the mist of times. Here follows some ideas for your own stories.

Save the Continuum. The commonest type of adventure in TimeZero consists of saving the continuum. Ideally the mission starts with an anomaly detected along the timeline. At this point the Tactical Office summons the Operatives' team for a briefing, where the objective of the mission is explained, cover identities for the mission are assigned, special equipment is requested and Hypnotraining is done. Then the heroes are sent in to save the day.

Surviving the Timeline. This type of adventure is less common, but happens. For one reason or another (usually investigating an anomaly as for Save the Continuum or for a routine mission) the Operatives are sent into the timeline. But traveling isn't always safe, so they encounter Bad Weather. This can be just a nuisance if the effect is weak, or completely change the focus of the story: instead of saving the timeline, the Operatives must save themselves and return back home!

TimeGuard's Inner Politics. These scenarios shouldn't be frequent, but one every now and then can be good. TimeZero includes various Offices, each with its own agenda and funding. Sometimes an Office steps on the toes of another, generating an internal power struggle, and the Operatives are caught in the middle. For example, the Logistics Office might provide weak undercover identities for a routine mission, to prove the Tactical Office's incompetence in devising their plans. The mission is blown and the heroes are captured by locals. They must save their skins, get back to TimeZero and have those responsible for the mess punished. And don't forget the mysterious Priors, the gray eminences of TimeGuard, who are surely involved in TimeZero's politics, even though in a secretive way. Probably some members of TimeGuard staff are spies of the Priors or Priors themselves, cleverly disguised. A good thing to do with internal politics is putting a little bit of it in each scenario, just to remind the heroes they are in a bureaucratic structure…

Enemies

Bad guys are important in every type of story, but they are fundamental in *TimeZero* adventures. As mentioned in the opening chapter, they are basically of three types.

The Triad. The Triad is a *very* powerful tool in the hands of the GM. It is a criminal organization, so it is capable of all kinds of evil deeds: theft, kidnapping, political destabilization, and so on. The Triad has a pyramid structure; it usually sends one or more enforcers along the timeline and recruits thugs and generic help in the field. Triad enforcers are usually very skilled and powerful; they can be compared to the Operatives and even use similar methods.

Ideally, completing an adventure involving the Triad should give the players a glimpse into its affairs. This evil organization has several secrets that stir the Operatives' curiosity. It has a secret time machine somewhere along the continuum and it is led by the mysterious Triumvirate. Who are these men and women? Are they simple criminals or there is more to their motivations? Why do they want to change specific moments in history? Maybe there is a greater scheme behind their actions, something that the TimeGuard hasn't yet discovered…

Alternates. Alternates are a group, sometimes even a race, of people from an alternate universe, which, in one way or another have found the way to travel between dimensions and

time, usually employing a very different technology from TimeGuard (see page 155-157). Alternates usually have agendas which clash with those of TimeGuard. Some of them, like the Aryan Alternates, are the result of small differences in the continuum (in this case the Nazis winning WWII), while others, like the Sakra, are the outcome of a totally different evolutionary process during prehistory, with reptilians taking the place of mammals. There is a still unproven theory about alternate universes: some of them can coexist in parallel, while others are doomed to collide and in this case only the reality with the strongest timeline survives. This could be the reason for the hostile attitude of many Alternates.

Free Players. This term refers to the occasional scientist or other weirdo who discovers time travel by chance (for example Leonardo da Vinci). The good thing with Free Players is that they are totally unpredictable and can be quite a headache for the party. Note that not all the Free Players are evil guys trying to twist history (even if some are): usually they are casual time travelers, who, anxious to test their new invention, happily stomp about in the timeline causing trouble of various types. Once caught, some of them can be convinced to stop their time-dabbling, others even accept being recruited into TimeGuard, while for the most riotous bunch the only solution lies in a big injection of Lethe Serum…

Putting It All Together…

To add a little complication, you can put more than one faction or bad guy in the same scenario.

Imagine a Free Player, a scientist who has devised a revolutionary time traveling system. The Operatives are sent to recruit her, but the Triad has just laid its hands on her, and the battle to save the scientist generates a terrible time anomaly…

TimeZero Personalities: Base Buddies

TimeZero is a setting of double lives: the timeline, where the Operatives work (and risk their necks) and the time base, where they actually live their "off-duty" lives and generally interact with other non-Operative base personnel. These NPCs are important to the campaign as they are stable points in the heroes' lives: they can be love interests, rivals, friends or simple workmates. Here are some example Base Buddies, but you can easily invent other ones.

Ana Akja. This black-haired, 25-year old girl is second generation TimeZero, being the daughter of a Samoan warrior (12th century) and an Inuit huntress (14th century). Her mixed blood gives her an exotic appearance that men find irresistible. Ana is a mid-level secretary in the Costume Warehouse, and is one of the most popular girls on the base. Gossip says she finds Operatives very attractive.

Erasmus Wolt. A quiet man in his forties, Erasmus was a master clock-maker in Switzerland, during the 18th century. People say he has the face of a sad dog, but Erasmus hides a subtle irony in the few words he lets

slip. Erasmus is a mechanical genius and is one of the technicians who keep the Time Machine in good shape. He has a strong, well-known passion: chocolate. The TimeZero synthetic one isn't good enough for him, and Operatives bringing back some original Swiss sweeties are sure to win his friendship (and maybe a free, off-the-record time trip).

Joaquin Pinto. Joaquin is a stern, thin man in a wheelchair. He was an officer of Napoleon, commanding artillery, and lost the use of his legs during the battle of Waterloo (June 15th, 1815). Recruited on the point of death for his tactical acumen, he joined the ranks of TimeGuard as a member of the Sun Tsus, and quickly became distinguished for his skill. Unlike other Tactical Office members he has been on the battlefield and knows what it means to send men to their deaths. Operatives respect Capitaine Pinto, as he is nicknamed, because he is a harsh but just tactician, and, more importantly, a war veteran.

Yumiko Q. Yumiko lived for twenty years in the rock-punk musical circles of Los Angeles around 1990-2010. She is a Japanese woman, with red painted hair, noticeably blue eyes, body piercings and a really bad-girl look. She has a very artistic and explosive personality, and this caused her retirement from missions into the timeline, because she wasn't deemed fit for an Operative's role. The most remarkable thing about Yumiko is that she is a Synth, one of those programmed to be even more human than normal humans. She is a Field Specialist in postmodern subcultures. Her office is always submerged in deafening punk music: in truth she doesn't need to play it out loud, because she can directly hear it through her Synth circuits, but she knows her neighbor, Professor Robert Mitchell, specialist in comparative Medieval literature, hates it...

TimeZero Location: Al's Bar

Alf Egilson is massive Viking warrior, born in present-day Scandinavia in 812 AD. Recruited by TimeGuard in his twenties, he has more than forty years of missions in the timeline under his belt. After losing his right leg (which he always refused to have replaced with a high tech prosthesis) he retired and opened Al's Bar in TimeZero's recreational area.

It is certainly a colorful place, with torches on the walls and straw on the floor, and closely resembles a Viking mead hall. Al personally brews his own beer and mead, and this place is a favorite meeting place for Operatives, mainly because Al won't allow anyone, even the Torquemadas, to intrude on the privacy of his customers. The last time they tried, there were several broken limbs. Casual friendly brawls aren't uncommon in Al's Bar, and this is very weird in the over-civilized, shining time base.

Alf Egilson has quite a number of stories of his past life (the greater part of them being classified), and is always ready to hear sob stories and offer a free beer to a down-hearted Operative.

Plot Design

Most *TimeZero* adventures are plot based. This doesn't mean that the game isn't suitable for sandbox-style play: Operatives are usually alone in the timeline, giving them great freedom of action. But their missions usually have very focused goals, such as preventing history from being changed, or fixing an unwanted change to history. In other words, they have to make a certain "plot" happen. The paragraphs below briefly describe various scenario design strategies.

Deconstructing History

The usual problem when designing a plot-based RPG adventure is inventing a good backstory. In *TimeZero* you have a noticeable advantage, because you have a great number of pre-made plots at your disposition: actual historical events. You can simply choose an event, devise an enemy, a motivation and a way for the Triad or another enemy to alter it. The Operatives' mission consists of patching up the alteration. This design strategy is called Deconstructing History and can be a lot of fun, but that hides a critical point: it requires research (see sidebar).

Example. A report from America, 1881 AD, says that the elected President of the United States is George Armstrong Custer, the famous Colonel who should have been killed in 1876 in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. But this never happened. Little Big Horn was one of the Colonel's biggest victories, opening the way to his political career. How did Custer win the battle? Who helped him? Is this Custer the real one or some impostor from the future? This bare-bones statement can be the basis of an entire scenario (or even campaign).

Justifying History

Always remember the basic assumption of TimeGuard: Operatives must preserve the history written in books. But in a universe where time travel is possible, who is the real author of events? The natives or the time travelers? Certain adventures will have the Operatives as major, if unwitting, historical figures. This is also the reason for the rule that no Operative has access to his own future reports.

Example. History books say that Julius Caesar was killed by his son Brutus on March 15th, 44 BC. But what if Brutus had been an Operative and Julius Caesar a Triad agent? In truth Caesar was so clever and cunning because he came from the future, but TimeZero identified him and sent some Operatives to stop him, in the guise of Brutus and the other conspirators (the other members of the party). The changes Caesar made to history are so deeply rooted in the timeline that it is impossible to remove them; only by killing him can history be fixed. In this manner Caesar will never become emperor of the world (which was the Triad's devious plan) but he created the basis for the Roman Empire, which is actual history, and the heroes become, willy-nilly, major historical figures.

Once you practice a little, it is quite simple to "reread" history as if it were written in the future.

While designing a **TimeZero** adventure can be an easy way to create plot structures, this hides an additional difficulty compared to other genres, like fantasy or science fiction: it requires a certain knowledge of historical facts on the part of the Game Master, and this means that you'll have to do some research, which can be a time consuming activity (no pun intended).

Now, it isn't necessary to spend days in the local library to create a good time travel adventure (but if you do, you'll certainly learn a lot and your story will be better). There are various levels of research that can be acceptable, depending on your gaming group's tastes and your resources:

Vanilla History. This is the very basic level. You design the entire scenario only with the very few, basic facts about an historical event you can find in twenty minutes of Internet surfing or you remember from high school. This is perfectly acceptable if your party isn't made up of history geeks and will give your game a vaguely historical feel. This can be very enjoyable: if your only knowledge of the French Revolution is based on the novel *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, your adventure will be romantic and dashing, even if it's not very much like the real France of the 18th century. But if your group enjoys it, what's the problem?

Basic Research. If your players (or you) have a passion for history, you can find good info in your local (or online) library. The approach in this case is to not only concentrate on the bare facts, but spend some time on the environment and colorful details of the epoch. For example, if you are planning a scenario based on the Battle of Poiters (732, Medieval Spain) and one of the scenes is set during a banquet, look for a list of typical Medieval dishes: describing them during the game will add some depth to the story.

Advanced Research. This level of research is recommended only if you really like a particular era or you plan to play an entire campaign in a specific age. In this case you should start your research on the Web, looking mainly for bibliographies and history book titles (and trust me, there are a lot of them for almost every historical era). At this point, with the books and some patience you can become a real expert on your chosen period...

Accuracy vs Fun. The results of your research shouldn't clip the wings of your imagination, but only provide you with extra ideas. If you have to choose between historical accuracy and a cool plot twist, pick the second, and don't let written history bully you: if during WWII the Allies conquered a certain city in April 1943 and in your mission you want to have it under German control until May 1944, don't lose sleep over it, just go for it. Your players are very unlikely to notice the discrepancy and, even if they are history geeks and point the mistake out to you, you can always say that the timeline was changed elsewhere so *now* history is as you tell them.

Paradoxes

One of the biggest traps of a time travel setting are paradoxes. The basic idea of this setting is that through time travel you can play diverse adventures in various ages always using the same characters. You can be in ancient Mesopotamia one day, in the Falklands War the next, and so on.

The problem with time travel RPGs starts when the heroes can do things like playing the adventure up to a certain point and then, just before being killed horribly for a mistake they made, going back in time to take another path.

Or, even worse, they go into the future, discover how they managed to complete the mission, and then go back in time to finish the scenario.

These situations are paradoxes and spoil the fun of the game.

TimeZero has several security measures to avoid paradoxes. We've explained them before but it is worth summarizing them here from the Game Master's perspective:

1. *Player characters cannot (and must not) control time travel directly.* They are sent by Technicians through Time Gates and the Time Gates open at set times. They don't know how use the Time Machine and don't normally have access to it on an individual basis.

2. *Subjective time of time travelers cannot be fooled.* If you enter a Time Gate and stay a week in Ancient Persia, when you come back to TimeZero a week is passed.

3. *No super-accurate time traveling.* The Time Machine has a margin of error of twelve hours, more or less, in normal circumstances. This is a good window of time for an adventure, but doesn't allow the players to do things like start a fight, escape into the timeline in round four, heal for a week in a safe haven and come back to the fight in round five.

4. *No one can coexist with himself in the same instant.* If someone tries to do this, one of these three things happens: he cannot manage to enter the Time Gate, one of the two identities ceases to exist or an Evil Twin (see page 68) is created.

5. *Time tends to protect itself.* A specific moment in history can only be visited once or twice before it becomes impossible to reach. So it is very difficult for the Operatives to receive external help once they are on a mission, and they have only a single chance to fix a specific event (this also means that bad guys, once defeated in a particular historical moment, cannot try again).

Follow these rules and you'll have very few problems with paradoxes during your game.

ADVANCED TEMPORAL PHYSICS

This section expands on the time travel background and rules from the GM's perspective.

Types of Time Machines

TimeZero time machine is only one of the various devices and techniques allowing time travel. This represents the basic "default" method of time travel, but other ones, belonging to Lost Sheep or Alternates, can exist. The heroes should not know of these devices at the beginning of the game. Discovering them should happen during adventures, while confronting the bad guys. We distinguish Time Machines by several parameters: Travel Type, Means of Travel, and Peculiarities.

Travel Type

Basically two types of travel exist: movement along the timeline (the basic, customary, type of time travel) and movement between universes. TimeZero Technicians call them respectively *vertical* machines and *horizontal* machines. In fact, if you imagine time as a line drawn from top to bottom of a piece of paper, a vertical machine allows you to move up and down the line. If you consider the existence of parallel universes, alternative dimensions, simply draw parallel lines to the main one, each of them representing a slightly (or substantially) different universe. Horizontal machines are capable of moving you through different versions of the world, maintaining the same time coordinate. In truth, these timelines aren't perfectly parallel, but collide at some points, generating new universes and destroying old ones.

For example, with a vertical machine you can move from 753 BC (the date of Rome's foundation) to 1 BC, on your timeline, while with a horizontal machine, starting in 753 BC, you can move to 753 BC of a universe were Rome was founded in that year to one were Rome weren't founded or even to one where the human race didn't exist in 753 BC!

TimeZero's machine (and probably the Triad's one) is a vertical device, while the machine of the Aryan Alternates seems to be a horizontal one. The Sakra, instead, seem to own a very advanced device capable of movement both in the vertical and the horizontal.

Uncontrolled Effect: a very important factor to take into account is that the physics behind time (or dimension) travel isn't perfectly understood and the number of variables is so great that sometimes a machine moves in a second direction in addition to the main, intended one: so a vertical time machine can make an unwanted lateral movement, sending the heroes into a slightly different alternative dimension.

Means of Travel

Under this heading we organize the various approaches to time travel: basically there are three of these: *projection*, *carriage* and *time surfing*.

Projection is by far the most common way to travel, and is the one used by TimeGuard and the Triad: a powerful machine opens a rift in time, shooting the operatives through it. The machine itself doesn't move (usually being very big and enormously energy-hungry). This type of machine is usually quite reliable, but the main problem is that the travelers cannot decide when to come back, they must use pre-arranged rendezvous points.

Carriage machines are the dream of every Operative: they are reasonably small and portable devices which allow the traveler to be carried inside and move themselves along the timeline, exactly as a car moves with the driver. Probably there exist various types of these machines (reports say the Sakra use one of them), but the only one TimeGuard ever managed to briefly get their hands on was Leonardo's Lost Machine (see sidebar). Carriage machines are quite unreliable, because, for one reason or another, they don't seem to be able to perfectly lock on to spacetime coordinates, and getting lost with one of these babies is quite easy. In addition, they create great rifts in reality, potentially being one of the causes of Bad Weather (see below).

Time Surfing is a totally unconventional manner of traveling in time and space. It simply means using the natural rippling of time and space (scientists would say abnormal tachyon fluxes) to carry oneself to different points of the continuum. Identifying these "ripples" requires special equipment (for example, a device able to detect tachyon flow) or supernatural senses, as some Alternate creatures and even some people have, but there are places on Earth where the rippling is naturally more frequent. They are "magic" places, like the Bermuda Triangle, Ayer's Rock in Australia, Mala Strana in Prague and even Avalon (if you can find it!). Once you have found one of these places, you simply jump in and are carried away. The main side effect is that you have absolutely no control of where and when you are thrown out.

Leonardo's Time Machine represents one of the biggest defeats of TimeGuard in the last twenty years (in subjective TimeZero time). As noted on page 14, Leonardo has invented time travel three times (actually, he managed to re-walk the path of his original thoughts, making the same discovery three times). All three times he was discovered, the memory was gently removed from his mind and a Watcher placed to guard him, but the first attempt was really badly managed: Leonardo actually built a fully functional carriage-type machine, and sent it into the timeline, with a single passenger, his patron Ludovico Sforza, also known as Ludovico il Moro (1452-1508), the Duke of Milan and an important historical figure!

Given the totally different technology of Leonardo's machine (and given that he doesn't remember exactly the date he set), the device and the passenger are lost somewhere in the timeline, and were never seen again.

Apart from giving a tremendous blow to the Tactical Office's reputation (and the replacement of the old Commander of TimeGuard with the current one), Ludovico il Moro was hastily replaced with a Synth, who impersonated him for the rest of his life. A messed-up solution for a messed-up problem.

Finding Leonardo's lost machine is one of the secret dreams of the Old Man, and the Operative(s) accomplishing this are certain to have a great career advancement in their future...

Peculiarities

Every machine (or method to travel) has its strengths and weaknesses. Some of them, like the TimeGuard one, allow you to take a certain amount of gear with you, but aren't very precise; other ones can be extremely accurate on the vertical line, but totally random in the horizontal one. Other ones can require very special types of energy to function (like mental powers) or function as "sails" using the same principles as Time Surfing. The possibilities are endless…

Bad Weather

Several things can go wrong while traveling in the continuum. Grizzled time travelers, as Operatives are, call them all "bad weather". The most common ones are detailed in this section.

Game Masters can easily build an entire scenario (even a campaign if things go badly enough) on cases of Bad Weather, otherwise if you want to add some extra spice to the day-to-day time travel of the Operatives you can use the optional rule A Bumpy Ride described below.

A Bumpy Ride (Optional Rule). Instead than having the players rolling for Time Travel Sickness you can decide to simply roll a d6. If a 1 is rolled, draw a card from the Action Deck and use the relevant result from the list below, or choose your favorite one.

Time Resilience Edge. Some of the effects of Bad Weather can be overcome with an Attribute roll. A character with the Time Resilience Edge gains +2 to those rolls.

Deuce – Time Loop

This accident can be used as a basis for a whole adventure. The travelers arrive at their destination in the timeline apparently without problems. Then, after an amount of time decided by the Game Master, events return to the exact moment when they arrived in the era and restart, thus creating a potentially infinite loop. In other words, the travelers are doomed to live the same day, hour or other chosen time interval - forever. It is very important for the Game Master to design the moment when the cycle ends and the clock restarts well: it must be a climax event like a battle, a natural accident and so on. The only way the travelers can exit from this situation is by finding a way to break the loop. Usually the key resides in the climax event. If, for example, the loop restarts after the characters' defeat in a battle, finding a way to win the battle (or to not start the fight at all!) is a good way to break the loop. Time loops can be frustrating to play if the players are blocked in them for a lot of iterations, but can also be very interesting because they allow exploring alternative paths through the story. While in a Time Loop the travelers are unreachable by any external aid, because they are actually "out of time".

Three – Out of Phase

The travelers and their destination era are slightly out of phase. In game terms they are treated as Time Ghosts (see page 149). Each traveler must make an immediate Vigor (-2) roll. In case of failure they gain the Ethereal Monstrous Ability for 1d6 days, and appear as translucent ghosts. They feel no thirst, hunger or other physical need, but at the same time they cannot touch anything. The only way to interact with the environment is the *telekinesis* Power, which they can use freely with Spirit (-2) as their Arcane Skill and 10 Power Points. Natives are usually scared by out of phase time travelers, and must make a Fear Check in their presence. Out of phase travelers are probably the cause of the various legends of ghosts in human history.

After each day in this condition (or at the end of the period rolled), the unfortunate traveler is allowed a Vigor (-4) roll to become "in-phase" with the current time and to be normal again. The only exception happens if he rolls a critical failure on the Vigor dice, in which case he becomes totally out-of-phase and transforms into a real Time Ghost (see page 149), a creature under the control of the Game Master.

Four – Rifts

The journey apparently goes well and the travelers reach their destination without problems. But their arrival produces a further rip in the fabric of time, not so large as to create an alternate universe, but strong enough to create a series of "Rifts", unstable gates to other times and places.

Roll a d4: this is the number of Rifts created. Now, for each Rift the Game Master must decide to what era it goes (to keep this totally random he can roll on the Origin table on page 61).

Each Rift can be up to 100 miles from the arrival coordinates of the heroes. Any character with the Tachyon Sense Edge can detect a Rift with a Spirit roll (+2), at -1 for every 5 miles of distance from the source. Rifts have various aspects: some of them are obviously openings to other times and places, very similar to Time Gates, while others are invisible, and it is very easy for a passerby to step into them.

This is in fact the main problem with Rifts: natives, on both sides, can inadvertently (or willingly) step into them! For this reason, Operatives who learn about the existence of a Rift should put aside any other mission, locate them, and depending on their equipment, secure or even close them. This can be done with a Tachyon Grenade (see Gear section) or a Temporal Sealer (see sidebar).

Nobody can say what happens in a Rift, so draw a card from the Action Deck for each open Rift. If a face card is drawn it means something happened, as per the table below.

Clubs – Hostile Matter. Something annoying or potentially dangerous arrives in the current place through the Rift. Depending on the era it can be industrial smoke, lava, dangerous radiation or even something more subtle, like an invasion of cockroaches or a malady (like the Plague).

Diamonds – Guests Calling. Something (creatures, people, even a vehicle) entered the Rift and arrived in this time. Depending on the nature of the visitor he can be a confused Lost Sheep to be taken back or a dangerous monster to be dealt with!

Hearts – The Boys are Out. A curious (or simply unfortunate) native steps inside the Rift, ending up on the other side of it! The Operatives' manual, in this case, says that the agents must follow the wanderer on the other side and bring him back - after a good shot of Lethe Serum, obviously.

Spades – Flotsam and Jetsam. Reality reacts to Rifts as a living body reacts to wounds, trying to heal them. This generally has a very bad effect on weather conditions. A massive storm, a hurricane, or a flood (in some cases even an earthquake) starts, with all the dangers that brings. The weather anomaly ends in a natural way when the Rift is closed or when another Spade face card is dealt for the current Rift.

Joker – Closure. The Rift finally closes. This can be the end of the problem unless someone is trapped on the other side. That usually means a rescue mission of some kind is necessary.

TimeZero Special Gear: Temporal Sealer

This cumbersome device, nicknamed "The Welder" by the Operatives looks like... well, a professional welder, powered by a battery pack. It contains a very powerful tachyon apparatus capable of projecting a flux which can seal Rifts. It is considered a missile weapon and it is used with the Shooting skill. If the situation is calm, a single successful Shooting roll and five rounds of time are enough to seal a Rift with it. In combat or other dramatic moments, consider the act of sealing a Rift a Dramatic Task and each success and raise on the Shooting roll count as a success. Remember to apply range modifiers to the roll.

Using the Welder Against Living Targets: This is a very bad thing to do, because it has unpredictable effects. Any living being hit by a Temporal Sealer must immediately make a Vigor (-4) roll or suffer a Wound, two if the modified roll is below 1. Only characters with the Time Resilience Edge can soak this type of Wound, with a penalty of -2. Whenever the character suffers three or more Wounds he becomes transparent and disappears. His fate is unknown: he could be destroyed, translated in space and time or even reach a new state of existence...

Receiving/Losing the Welder. Temporal Sealers are never given away lightly by the Costume Warehouse. They don't have a cost in Budget Points and are assigned to the Operatives if the mission needs them. For the purpose of Polluting the Timeline consider them worth 6 Budget Points.

Temporal Sealer	Damage: special	Range: 3/6/12	Shots: 20	Weight: 8

Five – Winds of Time

Temporal scientists describe the act of traveling in time as like throwing a rock in a pond: the ripples are the effects of the tachyon flux and certain beings or machines (the Time Surfers, see page 130) can ride them. But what happens when the gentle ripples are gale-strong waves? Then the poor time travelers are caught in the Winds of Time!

The first effect of the Winds of Time is that the travelers don't reach their original destination, but another time and place of the Game Master's choice: it can be quite near to their target, or far away in the timeline. But this isn't the main problem. The travelers, even if they don't know it, are on the crest of a temporal wave. Any time the Game Master considers it dramatically appropriate (during a combat, a chase, immediately before or after making an important discovery) the temporal wave catches the travelers and moves them away in time and space! The number of times (no pun intended), the GM can use this option depends on the suit of the card drawn (check the table below). When the force of the temporal wave ends, the travelers are usually (but not always) brought back to the place and time before the first wave, by a reverse flux effect. Winds of Time can be really frustrating for the players, so it is suggested that, after each use, they are awarded a Benny.

CARD SUIT	NUMBER OF TIME RELOCATIONS
Clubs	1
Diamonds	2
Hearts	3
Spades	4

Six – Babel's Curse/ Brainwashed

Sometimes time travel does strange things to the traveler's mind, in particular, short term or weak memories (like those from Hypnotraining) are prone to being washed away. Each of the following effects can be resisted by making a Spirit (-2) roll.

Clubs – Babel Curse. Tthe heroes suffer stress on the part of the brain dealing with speech: they forget any language acquired during the Hypnotraining (they only know Temporal and their Origin Era's language).

Spades – False Memories. The heroes are affected by artificial memories of the era: they acquire the Clueless Hindrance while they remain in this era.

Hearts – Hypnodream. The heroes lose half their Hypnoskills (rounded up, player's choice).

Diamonds – Hypnonightmare. The characters lose half their Hypnoedges (rounded up, player's choice).

Realism Check. Because it is rare that all characters suffer from the same problem, you can decide to have each player draw an additional card, consider the suit drawn as the one affecting them.

TEMPORAL CASTAWAYS: UNDERSTANDING THE NATIVES

Whoever has had the experience of visiting a foreign country without understanding the language, knows how bad it can be. If you are a temporal castaway, you'll probably face a similar problem. Using sign language and patience it is possible to understand and be understood, but any communication requires a Smarts (-4) roll. In the case of a critical failure some serious misunderstanding happens. You can learn the language for free, with an awful accent, after you practice it for a while (after you get a new Advancement while practicing it)) by making a Smarts (-2) roll. It is free, but not perfect: the Game Master can always ask you to make a Smarts roll to understand a phrase if someone speaks very fast or has a strong accent. Otherwise, you can spend an Advancement to fully learn the language.

A character with the Linguist Edge, even if he failed the Smarts roll to see if he already knows a language, automatically learns it after a month of practice.

Seven – "Crusoed"

The name of this accident derives from the famous novel by Daniel Defoe. It means that the travelers are "shipwrecked" in time and space, away from their proper destination: they are temporal castaways. If the card drawn is a Club, it means the travelers arrive in an earlier time with respect to their desired destination (the exact time difference is left to the GM), but in the same era. If it is a Spade, the situation is worse: as well as being in the past, the travelers are in another era. If the card drawn is a Heart, the travelers moved into the future, but remained in the same era, if it is a Diamond they moved into the future, but also into a different era. Being

cast away is only part of the problem of being Crusoed. The travelers are also stripped of their belongings. Each hero rolls 1d6/2: this is the number of items they can keep: everything else is lost in the timeline. Heroes with the Time Resilience Edge add +1 to the roll. Crusoed heroes can expect to be searched for, but if they are in an obscure era their rescue can take years: in such a case the best thing to do is trying to find a resident Watcher, if there is one, or devise a way to send a message to TimeEpsilon…

Eight – Standing Out of the Crowd

The journey went well, but left a sort of mark on the travelers, lasting for 1d4 days. The mark isn't dangerous or harmful in any manner, but makes them very conspicuous. Examples of the mark are: a halo of light surrounding the characters, a radio emission originating from their bodies causing electronic devices to crackle in their presence, beasts being very nervous in their presence, minor poltergeist effects surrounding the travelers and so on. In game terms, the effects are limited to the area of a Medium Burst Template centered on the travelers, and the effect gives -2 to Charisma plus -2 in two other Skills, chosen by the GM from the following list: Gambling, Intimidation, Notice, Persuasion, Stealth, Riding, Repair, Taunt.

Each day the traveler is allowed a Spirit (-2) roll, on a success the mark expires before the standard duration, but if a 1 is rolled on the Spirit die, regardless of the Wild Dice, it becomes permanent, until he travels in time again, when the tachyon flux "cleans" him.

Nine – Passengers

The journey is smooth and the wanderers arrive where they planned to, but they aren't alone: their movement through the ages has dragged some unwilling passengers with them, exactly as a net dragged on the bottom of a pond catches some fish. The "fish" can be an operator of the Time Machine (or whoever is nearby when the Time Gate is open) or someone (or some beast, or even a building) from a random era in between. If the card drawn is red, the passengers are generally friendly or neutral (even if they could be very worried at first); if it is black the passengers are hostile or inherently dangerous (as can be the case with some animals). Distance is also another random parameter: if the card drawn is a Heart or Spade, the passengers materialize near the travelers, if it is a Diamond or Club they materialize far away - 4d4x100 yards (this roll can Ace).

Ten – Deja Vu

There is a sort of "echo effect" surrounding the travelers: for some reason their present selves and their future selves touch, luckily without causing annihilation, but leaving them with a constant sense of "already lived". Each traveler gains an additional Benny. For the remainder of the adventure they can spend a Benny to use the Danger Sense Edge, or two Bennies to cast the *divination* Power, using Spirit as arcane skill, with no Power Point cost but limited to the basic duration. The trapping of this power is a sudden vision of the future, with the sensation of having already lived it.

On the down side, the Deja Vu can manifest itself at inappropriate moments: every time the character is dealt a black Action Card he must make an immediate Spirit roll or be Shaken.

The Deja Vu basically lasts until the traveler leaves the current era, but he is allowed a Vigor (-2) roll at the end of each day, on a success he shrugs off it.

Jack – Aftermath

The time travelers arrive on the right place, but a little too late! If they are traveling to witness or modify a particular event, they arrive only after the event has happened. For example, if they are Operatives visiting the past to prevent a battle from being fought, they arrive only when the fight is done. This doesn't automatically mean that the mission fails: there is always a way to put history back on the right track, even if it's harder than the original plan. In the example above, if the battle was fought and won by the wrong side, the winner can be fooled or persuaded to behave in the right way. Operatives, regardless of their field of specialization, are an adaptable and inventive bunch and must be able to improvise a solution on their feet: the GM should always leave the players a way to fix the situation.

Queen – What an Arrival!

Usually time travelers like to arrive (and leave) in a quiet way: the fewer people know of them, the better. But this time, that is not the case. They arrive in a blatant, very public way. For example, the Time Gate opens in a crowded plaza or during a public event. Or maybe their arrival is accompanied by a spectacular weather event, like a thunderstorm. This can lead to the creation of wild stories and legends, but, more importantly, makes the heroes widely known. They suffer -2 to Charisma rolls till the end of the adventure (unless through good role-play they convince the natives they are supernatural creatures, making the penalty a +2 bonus). In addition, the GM should draw a card from the Action Deck for each NPC in the arrival area.. If it is a face card the NPC has heard (or even seen) the characters arrive.

King – Alternate Universe

The travelers, while moving on the vertical timeline, inadvertently drifted on the horizontal line. In practical terms, they arrive in another timeline, a different version of the era where they were sent. The suit of the card determinates the type of universe where they landed.

Clubs – Minor Safe. The alternate universe where the travelers arrived has only minor differences from their own timeline. The difference might be in historical events, which caused a chain of changes in the future, but the world is still recognizable and follows the rules of our physics. The travelers can act in it without enormous problems. In game terms they suffer from the Clueless Hindrance. The nature of the alternate universe doesn't make it automatically more dangerous than their native universe.

Examples: a universe where America was discovered two centuries later, a world without alcoholic beverages, a reality where man never reached the Moon or one where the Roman Empire never fell.

Diamonds – Major Safe. This alternate universe is *very* different from the original one, and the changes extend to some physical laws or to major evolutionary changes. The travelers are real outsiders in it: they suffer -2 to any Survival and Healing roll, plus the Clueless Hindrance. Luckily this universe isn't inherently more dangerous than our one.

Examples: a universe where glaciations never happened, a world with different gravitational constants, a world without/with many moons, a totally barren (or lush) world, a world destroyed by a global nuclear war in the past (but not actually radioactive).

Hearts – Minor Dangerous. The change to this universe is quite small (the heroes suffer from the Clueless Hindrance), but by its nature it is dangerous for the heroes. They suffer from one of these Hindrances, decided by the Game Master: Enemy, Outsider or Wanted.

Examples: a universe where the Nazis won WWII, a world where cannibalism or slavery are a common way of life, a world where the race or sex of the travelers is an oppressed minority.

Spades – Major Dangerous. This is the worst that can happen. The travelers have ended up in a very different world (Clueless Hindrance, -2 to Survival and Healing rolls), which is far more hostile than their native reality (choose one Hindrance from Enemy, Outsider or Wanted). Their main goal should be finding a way back home.

Examples: a universe where the dinosaurs never died out, a world conquered by an alien empire, a primitive, savage world where the moon is very close to the Earth, causing terrible tsunamis and earthquakes, a reality dominated by artificial life.

Alternate universes confuse the TimeZero time machine, influencing the precision of the Time Gates. At the GM's discretion this can cause the Gate opening to be delayed (or brought forward) and moved into another position.

Getting Used to Other Universes

Ending up in another universe might appear very unpleasant (and in many cases it is), but Operatives are trained to face this type of situation and to adapt quickly. After a week in an alternate universe Operatives are allowed a Smarts roll, with +2 if they have the Cosmopolitan Edge. In the case of success they lose one of the Hindrances or penalties caused by the different reality. The roll can be repeated after two weeks, then after a month and so on (double the time increment each time) till all the penalties are removed.

Ace – Evil Twin

Sometimes the worst happens, and this is just one of these times: moving individuals along the timeline causes a sort of "echo," creating a duplicate of the travelers, each of them animated by deep hatred for the original: in game terms this means permanently acquiring the Evil Twin Hindrance . The Game Master should decide if he wants only a single traveler to be twinned, or the entire party (a rarer occurrence). In the first case, have each player draw a card from the Action Deck; the player drawing the lowest card is twinned. In the second case there is no need

to draw: the whole party is duplicated. Heroes with the Bad Luck Hindrance draw two cards and must pick the lower one.

The players should not be alerted to what has happened: the Evil Twin rarely appears close to its associated hero, usually appearing in another place, but since it has the same knowledge as the main character it will quickly move to the location of the mission, ready to cause mayhem…

Joker – Pocket Dimension

The travelers have ended up in a very peculiar temporal anomaly. Pocket Dimensions have the same features as Alternate Universes (draw an additional card to determine them), with an additional twist: they are enclosed, limited spaces. The bad thing about Pocket Dimensions is that they are "outside" the normal time flow and cannot be entered in the standard way: even standard Time Gates cannot normally reach them. Usually travelers get into a Pocket Dimension by chance, because the Gate malfunctioned, and must find a way out. It isn't uncommon for these castaways to spend their whole lives in such a place, trying to escape. Three factors are important when dealing with Pocket Dimensions: the Environment, the Barrier and the Door.

Environment – Pocket Dimensions vary in appearance, but they always have recognizable physical boundaries: a building (even a room), a natural or geographical feature (like a wood or an island). The Pocket Dimension can be populated or a desolate place, and the inhabitants can be ignorant natives unaware they are living in a sort of cage or other unfortunate castaways, desperately looking for a way out.

Barrier – Usually there is something marking the boundaries of the Pocket Dimension. It can be something very definite (perhaps an incredibly tall wall), mysterious mists in which the unfortunate traveler always gets lost and returns to their starting point or even an enormous horde of nasty critters perpetually besieging the Pocket Dimension.

Door – Every room has a door, and a Pocket Dimension is a sort of room. There is always a passage or a gate of some sort allowing escape from the Pocket Dimension. It can be a real opening (such as a door leading elsewhere), a particular moment (for example, a single night in which the mists can be crossed) or even something weirder, like a particular mathematical formula allowing the travelers to "warp" the Pocket Dimension and create an opening. Usually, finding the Door (and the way to open it) is the main occupation of travelers caught in a Pocket Dimension.

TEMPORAL BESTIARY

This chapter describes some of the nasty adversaries the operatives will find in their travels along the timeline, whether human, animal or totally weird beings!

Creatures

Dimensional Hunter

These terrifying creatures arrived in our reality through some dimensional rift, and have a single goal: hunting sentient beings. A Dimensional Hunter has a roughly humanoid figure, with two legs, two arms and a proto-head, but that's the end of any other similarities with our race: they are composed of a murky substance, similar to dirty water, and are covered with dozens of narrow, yellowish eyes in all the wrong places (but always a multiple of three). They have no mouth, and it is unknown how they

consume their victims. Dimensional Hunters are always found in packs with a number of members which is a multiple of three.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Stealth d10, Throwing d8.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6/7; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Hunter Trident (melee – Str+d6, 2 hands +1 Parry, Reach 1/ranged – damage: Str+d6, Range: 4/8/16, see below).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Horrifying Alien:** Dimensional Hunters can cause nightmares even for veteran Operatives. The first time they are seen, they cause a Fear check.
- ☞ **Hunter's Trident:** The trident is the only weapon these creatures are known to use: made of a strange hard substance, it is linked to the owner with a thin, cord-like filament of the same matter of which their bodies are made. If the Dimensional Hunter throws the trident and misses the target, with an action he can retrieve his weapon. If he hits the target with a raise, he can try to pull his victim closer: this is an opposed roll between the Hunter's and the victim's Strength (the Hunter rolls with +2). If the Hunter wins the roll, the quarry is pulled 4″ nearer the Hunter. If the victim wins he stays in place, but continues to be pierced by the trident; only if he wins with a raise does he get free.
- ☞ **Mimesis:** Dimensional Hunters are natural ambushers and their skin can change color to perfectly blend with their surroundings. If Dimensional Hunter is standing still, it receives +2 to Stealth rolls.
- ☞ **Rule of Three:** There is an unknown connection between these creatures and the number three. For each three Hunters in the pack, they receive a Benny, which can be used by any Hunter in the group. Anytime the pack size is reduced from a multiple of three to a number which is not a multiple of three they must make a group Spirit roll or lose a Benny.
- ☞ **Watery Body:** A Dimensional Hunter body doesn't contain any recognizable organs. It is an undefined mass of dense goo. For this reason it doesn't suffer Wound modifiers and is immune to called shots.

Densomorphic Hologram

One of the marvels of the 35th century (and later), Densomorphic Holograms are hyper-realistic 3D simulations of persons, beasts, objects, even entire buildings, created by a matrix of recombined photons: in other words, solid-light constructs. To the five senses, a Densomorphic Hologram is as real (and as dangerous) as the living creature it simulates. It is kept active by a continuous emitter, called, in general terms, a Projector. The Projector, a very sophisticated computer, moves the Hologram and keeps it alive. Destroying a Hologram has little effect: the Projector will reconstruct it in few moments. The best way to stop a Densomorphic Hologram

is by locating and destroying the Projector. Usually these items are well concealed and difficult to spot, but not very sturdy.

Racial Template: any creature can be a Densomorphic Hologram. Simply take the basic profile and add the Densomorphic Hologram and Projector Special Abilities below.

The stats below represent a holographic swordsman bodyguard, a very popular personal defense measure in the 35th century.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Block, Counterattack, First Strike.

Gear: rapier (Str+d4, +1 Parry), gaudy armor (+1).

Special Abilities

- **Densomorphic Hologram:** Despite being quite solid, Densomorphic Holograms are fragile. Whenever the hologram is Shaken by a wounding effect, it suffers a Wound, usually being destroyed in a flash of light. This doesn't mean it is dead: at the beginning of the Projector's next round (see below), it is allowed a Smarts roll, which represents the efficiency of the programming routines in restoring its photonic integrity. On a success the Hologram heals a Wound. A dead Hologram it comes back to life, in the same place where it was "killed", unshaken and ready to act in the current round.

- **Projector:** The real mind of the Hologram is the Projector, the device creating it. It is the Projector, not the Hologram, receiving the Action Card during combats. A typical Projector has Toughness 5 and is cleverly disguised: a Notice roll opposed by the disguise's quality (usually d10) is required to identify it. Using a Bioscanner grants +2 to the roll, given that it can track the power emissions of the Projector. Whenever the projector is destroyed, any Hologram it controls is permanently and immediately destroyed. The Vigor stat of the Hologram also represents the Projector's range: multiply the die's maximum score by 3" to get the actual range. The Hologram cannot move (or influence the environment) beyond that range. So, the Hologram with a Vigor d6 Projector cannot go farther than 18" from the power source, and if equipped with a ranged weapon, its bullets cannot go farther than that range. A single Projector can usually manage several Holograms: one Extra Hologram per die step of Smarts, while a Henchman counts as three die steps. So, a Smarts d10 Projector can have active at the same time up to four Extra Holograms, or one Extra and a Henchman.

DENSOMORPHIC HOLOGRAPHIC OBJECTS

Densomorphic Holograms are also used to produce artificial buildings and barriers, like walls, furniture and similar things. As rule of thumb Holographic objects have two fewer points of Toughness, and cannot emulate Heavy Armor. For size, consider that a Projector can create an item of Size 0, +1 per

Smarts die step. So, a Projector with Smarts d8 can create an item of Size +3. It can create additional items, but each of them costs one Smarts die step per Size 0. So, the same Projector as before can create a first item with Size +2 (two steps), plus one at Size 0 (one step).

Densomorphic Holograms can also be used as trappings for Weird Science Powers. The trapping has the following effects:

- ☞ It lowers the casting cost of the Power by one.
- ☞ Powers granting an Armor bonus or attack penalties have their effect reduced by one (so Holographic *armor* grants +1 Armor if cast with a success, and +3 with a raise).
- ☞ Created barriers or creatures have the Densomorphic Hologram Special Ability. The Projector is the Weird Science device creating the power (e.g. a holographic headband). Use the arcane skill in place of Smarts for the purposes of "healing" the hologram. Each Wound healed costs the device one Power Point, unless the arcane skill roll was a raise, in which case the Wound is healed for free.
- ☞ The following Powers can have a Densomorphic Hologram trapping: *armor, barrier, deflection, disguise, summon ally.*

Dinosaur

The rulers of prehistory, dinosaurs represent a great threat even to fully equipped, well-trained Operatives. Dozens of different species of these beasts exist. A couple of iconic ones are detailed below.

T-Rex

The Tyrannosaurus Rex is the uncontested king of prehistory. No other beast can compete with its sheer size, strength and ferocity; other dinosaurs tremble when they hear its mighty roar. Luckily, it isn't very smart. Tyrannosaurs are originally of the Cretaceous period.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation 10, Notice d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 15 (2)

Special Abilities:

- ☞ **Armor +2:** The T-Rex's hide is very thick.
- ☞ **Bite:** Str+d8; AP 2.
- ☞ **Hardy:** A double Shaken result doesn't inflict a wound.

- ☑ **Hulking Giant:** It ignores Difficult ground.
- ☑ **Large:** Creatures add +2 when attacking a T-Rex due to its great size.
- ☑ **Roar:** As a full action the T-Rex can let out a terrifying roar. Place a LBT in front of it. Targets within the template must make a Spirit roll or be Shaken.
- ☑ **Size +7:** These fearsome creatures are 30' long and 12' tall.

Velociraptor

A very aggressive and intelligent bipedal dinosaur, the Velociraptor, despite its relatively small size, is very dangerous, compensating for its size with an uncommon ferocity. Usually they hunt in packs, which communicate among themselves using whistles and other sounds. Velociraptors are originally from the Cretaceous period, but it is known that the Triad has snatched some specimens and use them as ferocious guard beasts.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ☑ **Claws:** Str+d6.
- ☑ **Frenzied Hunters:** The Velociraptor is particularly fast and responsive when it smells blood. If a member of the pack is within 12" of a Wounded character (or a character Shaken by a damaging effect), all the Velociraptors in the pack discard and redraw Action Cards under 5 and gain +1 to Spirit rolls.
- ☑ **Size +1:** This creature is a little bigger than a man.

Hobbomok

The Hobbomok are a parasitic race coming from another planet in another dimension. They visited Earth to find new bodies to infest, because it is the only way of life they know. They invaded Earth in a parallel universe where Native Americans aren't already in contact by Europeans and started a savage war against the Wampanoag, an Indian tribe, which is aided by the good counterpart of the Hobbomok, the Kehtannit, a race of peaceful symbiotic creatures. The Hobbomok are on the losing side of the war, and are now invading our reality to escape their sworn enemies and find new hosts to infest.

Hobbomok Invader

A Hobbomok Invader is the full grown form of the Hobbomok. Usually these creatures choose human beings, but merging with beasts, especially big and dangerous ones, isn't unknown. A Hobbomok Invader retains his own shape, but his skin is replaced by a smooth, black surface, as if it was covered in petroleum. Some Invaders have a patchwork appearance, with areas of normal skin mixed with black ones, while others are only black silhouettes. The Hobbomok's main nourishment comes from the host body, but since this process is very taxing for the host, it acquires the capacity to feed on raw meat, of any type.

Usually a Hobbomok Invader is met in the company of 2d6 Hobbomok Larvae.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Stealth d10.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Claws:** Str+d6.
- ☞ **Fear:** Any person seeing a Hobbomok Invader for the first time must make a Fear check.
- ☞ **Infection Attack:** A Hobbomok can try to infect a victim with a Called Shot (-4). On a success he deals Str+d4 damage, ignoring any armor. If the attack shakes or wounds the victim, she must make a Vigor (-4) roll or transform into a Hobbomok Larva in 1d4 days. An infected victim can be cured of a Hobbomok infection only with the *healing* or *banish* Power.
- ☞ **Invulnerability:** A Hobbomok Invader is invulnerable to any physical attack, apart from those linked to its Weaknesses.
- ☞ **Master of Darkness:** A Hobbomok Invader is perfectly at ease in darkness. It sees perfectly in any type of darkness and receives +2 to Stealth rolls in a dark environment.
- ☞ **Slow Regeneration:** Provided it has a dark area where to rest and an adequate amount of food (at least half the weight of the host body in meat) a Hobbomok Invader can make a natural healing roll each day.
- ☞ **Tentacles of Night:** A Hobbomok Invader can temporary transform into a cloud of darkness full of tentacles. In the process he suffers an automatic, un-soakable Wound, and creates a LBT area, which has the same effects as the *darkness* Power

and causes 2d6 damage to whoever is caught in the template (an Agility (-2) roll is required to step out of harm's way). The Tentacles of Night lasts for a number of rounds equal to half the Hobbomok's Vigor dice.

- ▷ **Weakness (Energy):** Energy based weapons (like lasers, tachyon grenades and Kehtannit weapons) do normal damage to Hobbomok Invaders.
- ▷ **Weakness (Light and Fire):** Light and fire wound Hobbomok. Any Trick based on light receives a +2 bonus against them, in addition a source of light (say, a flashlight) or fire (like a torch) deals them Str+d4 damage.

Hobbomok Larva

Larvae are the basic form of Hobbomok: they are emaciated persons and beasts, with large patches of darkness on their bodies, and yellow, empty eyes. Created by Invaders, these wretched creatures have only animal-like intelligence, but are guided by their feral instincts toward a single thing: fresh meat.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Tracking d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- ▷ **Claws:** Str+d4.
- ▷ **Improved Frenzy:** A Hobbomok Larva can make two claws attack per round without any multi-action penalty.
- ▷ **Light Antipathy:** Hobbomok Larvae aren't totally integrated with their Hobbomok parasite, so they aren't so sensitive to light. Nevertheless, light-based Tricks made against them receive a +2 bonus.
- ▷ **Quick:** Hobbomok Larvae are lightning fast. If they are dealt a card lower than 5 from the Action Deck, they can draw another one, but they must keep with the second, even if it is worse.

Time Ghost

Human history and legends are full of ghosts, some of them imaginary and others documented by various pseudo-scientists. TimeGuard investigated these phantoms and discovered that for some of them there is a scientific explanation: they are simply people (animals and even objects and places) which, for one reason or another, went "out-of-phase" with the normal flow of the time. These unfortunate souls, called Time Ghosts, exist in a slightly different continuum, but one so close to ours that they appear as translucent ghosts in our reality.

They are spooky apparitions if you don't know the tragedy of their situation: in fact, such creatures don't age anymore, being frozen in time, but are physically intangible, and cannot interact with our world on a regular basis. This alienated condition, year after year, destroys the psyche of these poor beings, which are, for the most part, torn apart by madness.

TimeGuard hasn't yet discovered a way to restore these creatures to a normal temporal status, but at least knows how to release them from their suffering (see Weaknesses below).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d10.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Ethereal:** Time Ghosts are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.
- ☞ **Insane Witness to History:** Time Ghosts have lived in our world for centuries, some of them even for millennia. For this reason their minds are broken, but they have witnessed a huge range of events. Time Ghosts have the Knowledge (History – specific era) or Area Knowledge (local area) skill at d12 and one Hindrance chosen from Bloodthirsty, Delusional (Major), Vengeful, Quirk.
- ☞ **Poltergeist:** Time Ghosts have weird effects on physical objects. When they manifest their rage, objects start flying in an erratic (and very dangerous) way. Decide the attitude of the Time Ghost (or roll on the Reactions Table on page 26 of SWD), and check the table below for the size of the Burst Template, the damage, and the duration of the poltergeist's effect. After unleashing this power, a Time Ghost disappears for 3d6 hours.

ATTITUDE	TEMPLATE SIZE	DAMAGE	DURATION
Neutral	Small	2d4	2 rounds
Uncooperative	Medium	2d6	4 rounds
Hostile	Large	3d6	6 rounds

- ☞ **Weakness (inverted tachyon flow):** Time Ghosts can be released with an inverted tachyon flow, such as that released by a Tachyon Grenade or the Welder (see page 89, 133). A Tachyon Grenade causes 3d6 damage and the Welder 2d10. A Time Ghost "killed" by this effect is released from his status and must make a Vigor (-4) roll. On a raise the ghost returns to his normal physical status, otherwise he is annihilated forever.

Synth

Synths are an artificial form of life, created in the future. The first models were only rough imitations of men, clearly recognizable as machines, but the most advanced ones are totally undistinguishable from humans. In the beginning these creatures had strict programming forbidding them to harm human beings, these rules are hard-coded in their artificial minds as the Laws of Robotics, but when later models started to be used in violent roles, like soldiers and bodyguards, these Laws were relaxed and in the end totally abandoned, giving the most advanced models human-like freedom of choice.

In the future, Synths fight a harsh war against humans to be free and have their rights recognized. This obscure moment of human history is called the Synth Rebellion. The archives of TimeGuard don't reveal how the war between humans and Synths ends, but a peaceful solution must have been found, because TimeGuard actually has both human and Synth personnel.

Synth Servant

The original Synths were created for a single task: serving humans. This can have a very loose meaning: a serving Synth can be a house cleaner, a teacher for your children or even a pleasure girl to satisfy your most secret desires. This type of Synth tends to have rather primitive programming and they are always very aware of being machines, simple tools in the hands of men.

Customization: Manservant (Persuasion d6), Robodoc (Healing d8, Healer Edge), Robotic Hover Taxi Driver (Piloting d6), Pleasure Synth (Agility d8, Persuasion d8, Attractive or Very Attractive Edge), Scholar Synth (two Knowledge skills at d8, Scholar Edge).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Knowledge (specific trade) d8, Persuasion d4.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Tools of their trade.

Special Abilities

- **Primitive Synth:** Synth Servants receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken, and are immune to poisons, illnesses and called shots. They don't age and don't suffer penalties from Wounds.
- **Robotic Laws:** Synth Servants are considered simply tools, and have absolutely no civil rights. For this reason they suffer -2 to Charisma and Tests of Will versus men. In addition, their strict programming forbids them to harm any human being (as per the Pacifism (Major) Hindrance).
- **Tin Man:** Synth Servants, even the most beautiful ones, are clearly artificial and cannot be mistaken for humans.

Combat Synth

These Synths are the next evolution of Synth Servants, satisfying a basic need of mankind: violence. They can be used as personal bodyguards, soldiers in corporate wars or even as gladiators in far-future blood sports. Remember: if you are pitting two Synths against each other in combat you aren't violating any law, you are only making two tools clash. Combat Synths, obviously, don't follow the Laws of Robotics.

Customization: Assassin Synth (Climbing d8, Fighting d10, add the Assassin Edge, add high tech dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2) to Gear, usually a Wild Card), Gladiator Synth (Fighting d10, add Attractive and Brawny Edges, replace Gear with high tech broadsword (Str+d8+1, AP: 1)), Martial Artist Synth (Fighting d10, add Acrobat and Improved Martial Artist Edges), Sniper Synth (Fighting d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d8, replace Block and Dodge with Marksman).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7/8 (1/2)

Gear: high tech rifle (Damage: 2d8+1, Range: 24/48/96, ROF: 2, AP 3), combat vest (+1/+2).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Combat Synths:** Combat Synths receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken, and are immune to poisons, illnesses and called shots. They don't age and don't suffer penalties from Wounds.
- ☞ **Combat Programming:** Combat Synths received detailed combat programming, depending on their role. A basic Combat Synth has two Combat Edges, usually Block and Dodge, but others are possible depending on the Customization (see above).

Synth Rebel

This Synth has the same emotions and basic needs as a man. Almost indistinguishable from his organic counterparts, he craves liberty. He joined the Synth Rebellion and is ready to die for it.

Customization: Movement Ideologist (Persuasion d10, Charismatic and Command Edges), Silent Supporter (drop Fighting and Shooting to d6, add Streetwise d8), Suicide Commando (fitted with an internal bomb, doing 3d10 damage, AP 10, Heavy Weapon, deals damage in LBT, triggering the bomb automatically kills the Synth), Rebel Soldier (add Block and Dodge Edges, add high tech rifle (Damage: 2d8+1, Range: 24/48/96, ROF: 2, AP 3), combat vest (+1/+2) to Gear).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: high tech pistol (Damage: 2d6+2, Range: 14/28/56, ROF: 3, AP 2), civilian clothes.

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Synth:** Synth Rebels receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken, and are immune to poisons, illnesses and called shots. They don't age but their programming is so advanced that they actually feel the pain caused by Wounds and so suffer Wound Penalties like humans.
- ☞ **Higher Goal:** Synth Rebels have an inhuman dedication. When making a roll directly linked to furthering the Synth Rebellion cause, Extra Synths receive a Wild Die, while Wild Cards have their Wild Die raised by one step.
- ☞ **Member of the Rebellion:** Synth Rebels are part of a secret society, and can count on a network of friends and supporters, both Synths and humans. They receive the Connections (Synth Rebellion) Edge.
- ☞ **No Other Choice:** Synth Rebels are hunted by human police forces, and if captured usually they are dismembered and their artificial minds connected to interrogation computers to find out any useful info about other rebels. A Synth Rebel prefers to die rather than face capture, so he suffers from the Death Wish and Wanted Hindrances

Almost any form of animal life can be reproduced as a Synth by future science. If you want to create a Synth animal, simply add the Synth racial ability (see page 63) to the template.

150 Saber-Toothed Tiger

Smilodons or Saber-Toothed Tigers are massive cats, common in the prehistoric period, in particular during the glacial eras. Fitted with two sword-long teeth, these creatures were the terror of mankind when we lived in caves. Only fire and bravery could keep them at bay.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Stealth d8.

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities

- ▷ **Ancestral Terror:** Smilodons are a terror of mankind, one written in the very genetic code. Any time one of these beasts is spotted, it causes a Fear check. In addition, any time they roar, they gain +2 to Intimidation rolls. Only humans (not Synths) are affected by this Special Ability.
- ▷ **Bite:** Str+d8, AP 2.
- ▷ **Low Light Vision:** Saber-Toothed Tigers ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- ▷ **Size +2:** Saber-Toothed Tigers weigh over 500 pounds.

Siren

Siren is the only appropriate name for this dangerous dimensional traveler. A siren appears as a normal human, apart from a single physical outstanding feature (e.g. very bright eyes, incredibly blonde hair and so on). Sirens are dimensional travelers which feed on a single thing: human emotions. A Siren arrives in a place, blends in with the crowd and then starts sucking away emotions to feed herself. People who undergo this treatment find themselves empty of any emotion, feeling and desire to live, and become thralls subjugated by their mistress' will. In the end, many of them let themselves die or are consumed by the Siren. When she is adequately sated (or feels in danger), the Siren uses the acquired energy to open a rift to another dimension (see sidebar) and starts the cycle again. The rift-opening process is very energy-consuming, and requires the lives of many thralls.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8-d12+2, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Clothes, disguised dagger (Str+d4).

Special Abilities

- **Feeding:** A Siren feeds off the emotions of previously created Thralls (see below). A Siren's base Spirit is d8. To stay healthy she needs to consume at least a Fatigue level of energy per dice step of Spirit she has per day (so usually 3 Fatigue levels). She can do this simply by inflicting Fatigue levels on a Thrall, by spending ten minutes in physical proximity to him (the victim must be within Spirit range in gaming inches). If she consumes less, her Spirit drops by one die step and when it drops below d4 the Siren dies. On the other hand, if she overfeeds (consumes double the necessary Fatigue levels), she raises her Spirit by a die step, to a maximum of d12+2. With a good source of energy a Siren can be really powerful. The GM should decide what the initial Spirit of the Siren is (d10 is a good option).

- **Siren's Chant:** A Siren can emit a musical, hypnotic sound from her throat, focusing it on a single target within 12". The victim must make an opposed Spirit roll with the Siren. If the Siren wins the roll, her opponent is Shaken, if she wins with a raise, the victim falls under the control of the creature, becoming one of her Thralls. Characters with the Hard of Hearing (Minor) Hindrance receive +2 to the roll to resist. Synths or characters with the Hard of Hearing (Major) Hindrance are immune.

- **Striking Appearance:** A Siren is usually quite striking, she receives +2 to Charisma.

Siren Thrall

A normal person, fallen under the control of a Siren. A Thrall can continue to live his life, but he feels depressed and emptied of any mental energy. He is totally subjugated by the Siren's will and must obey her orders.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d6.

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Clothes, improvised weapon (Str+d4, -1 to Fighting rolls).

Special Abilities

- **Getting Free:** A Thrall recovers his freedom only when the Siren dies or he leaves her area of influence, i.e. her Spirit x2 miles. So a Siren with Spirit d10 can control Thralls within 20 miles from her.

- **Fanatics:** Siren Thralls use the Fanatics Setting Rule to protect their mistress.

- **Mental Link:** Thralls can communicate telepathically with the Siren, in a range of half a mile per Spirit die type of the Siren (so a Siren with Spirit d10 can communicate with a Thrall within 5 miles).

- **Source of Food:** Thralls are basically a source of food for the Siren. Each Thrall can give her up to three levels of Fatigue before dying. Very strong souls (Spirit d10+) can give her an additional level. While a Thrall is under the control of a Siren he never recovers this Fatigue.

Having a Siren open a rift should be the climax of an adventure. To do this, the Siren must gather a number of Thralls around her (within feeding range) and sacrifice their living essence to tear reality apart. In game terms it is handled as a Dramatic Task, based on Spirit (-2). Rounds are of decreasing length: the first is twelve hours long, the second six, the third three, the fourth one and the fifth five minutes, for a total of 20 hours more or less (the GM can alter this time for plot purposes). Each round requires at least five levels of Fatigue from thralls, plus another five to reduce the penalty on the roll by one - by sacrificing additional Thralls she can gain a maximum of a +2 bonus). If after five rounds she has managed to score at least five success, a rift in the reality opens (see page 133), leading to another place in the continuum, usually leaving a trail of bodies behind.

Non-Player Characters

This chapter contains several NPCs useful for your games. For each profile, several customization options are presented: for example, if you need a Sakra Rifleman, by tweaking the standard Sakra Trooper profile a bit you can create it in no time, or even on the fly. Game Masters are encouraged to create their own "tweaks."

Aryans

Aryans are a dangerous group of Alternates, coming from a parallel universe where the Nazis won WWII and the atomic bomb was never discovered. The technology of the Aryan Continuum evolved in a different manner from our own: computers are very primitive and in general, mechanics seem to have remained at the level of 1945-1950. Instead, chemistry, biology and genetics are all very advanced, thanks to the insane experiments carried out by Nazi scientists after conquering the world. Aryans have a special type of Time Machine: it is gate based, as is the TimeGuard one, quite limited on the vertical line (there are very few sightings of Aryan time travelers after 1960), but very good on the horizontal line: the Aryans are visiting and raiding parallel universes, trying to further the cause of the Führer (in worlds where a version of him exists), or simply stealing technology.

Aryans found in the timeline are always military, members of special units. It is not known how the common man lives in the Aryan Continuum.

Auserwählter (Chosen Soldier)

The soldiers of the Zeitangriffsgruppe (ZAG), the Aryan Temporal Invasion Corps, are all tall, blonde and handsome, with fierce blue eyes. They are the outcome of genetic selection and tightly-controlled interbreeding, which have removed all the "wrong" genes from their blood. In truth, despite being quite strong physically, many of them lack imagination, but compensate for this with absolute loyalty to the cause.

Customization: Assault Chemical Troops (Throwing d6, add Trooper Armor (+2) and Gas Grenades (x3) to Gear), Nazi Spy (Attractive, Charismatic, Persuasion d8, Streetwise d8, replace Gear with normal clothes, Air Pistol (damage: 2d4/Drugged Shot, range: 8/16/24, ROF: 1, silenced) with Sleeper drug), SS (Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Shooting d8, add the Brave Edge).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: -

Hindrances: Loyal, Outsider.

Gear: Aryan uniform, rifle with (optional) fixed bayonet (bayonet: Str+d6, 2 hands, +1 Parry/ rifle: Damage: 2d8, Range: 24/48/96, AP 1), helmet (+2, only head), Gehorsamskragen (see below).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Gehorsamskragen (Obedience Collar):** Chosen Soldiers are fitted with metal collars, engraved with a skull over a swastika, which are filled with exotic chemical substances. Whenever the soldier is Shaken, the device releases a shot of adrenaline, granting him +2 to recover from Shaken, as per the Combat Reflexes Edge. Wild Cards or Henchmen Chosen Soldiers have an additional advantage: the drug grants them the Nerves of Steel Edge. Further, whenever a Chosen Soldier is captured, a posthypnotic suggestion causes him to trigger a massive overdose of drugs, killing him in 1d6 rounds, unless a Healing (-4) roll is made. The same thing happens if the Obedience Collar is hit (Toughness: 5, Called Shot -2 required) or if it is dabbled with (i.e. a Lockpicking (-4) roll is failed).
- ☞ **Unimaginative:** Aryan Chosen Soldiers aren't known for being bright. They suffer -1 against Smarts based Tricks.

Wehrwolf (Werewolf)

This soldier looks exactly like any other grunt, but he volunteered to be subjected to genetic experiments to create the ultimate soldier. So, the Wolf

Virus lies dormant in him. At will the Aryan Werewolf can transform into an ugly, scary humanoid with bulging biceps, animated by an unnatural force.

These stats represent the Aryan Werewolf's monstrous form. He can assume this form with a Spirit roll; the transformation requires one full round, and can be started even if the Werewolf is stunned.

Customization: Heavy Weapon Specialist (drop Fighting d6, add Shooting d8, Rock and Roll Edge, Big Machine Gun (Damage: 2d8, Range: 24/48/96, ROF: 3, AP 2 May not Move); note that despite the weapon's May Not Move attribute, an Aryan Werewolf is so strong he can still move half his Pace while using it).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+1, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6.

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: -

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Ugly.

Gear: Torn uniform.

Special Abilities

- ▷ **Fists:** Str+d4. A Werewolf is always considered armed.
- ▷ **Hardy:** A Werewolf doesn't suffer a Wound from a double Shaken result.
- ▷ **Scary:** Any creature seeing a Werewolf for the first time must make a Fear roll.
- ▷ **Size +2:** Werewolves are up to eight feet tall, and weigh almost 500 pounds, all of it muscle.
- ▷ **Return to Human Form:** The Werewolf must make a Spirit roll to reverse the transformation process. When again in human form, he must make a Vigor roll. On a success he is Fatigued, with a failure he is Exhausted and with a critical failure he dies due to system shock.

Offizier (Officer)

The *crème de la crème* of the Zeitangriffsgruppe, Officers are the leading minds of the offensive in our reality. Some of them are fanatic worshippers of the Führer, while others are cold-hearted soldiers

Customization: Master Tactician (Smarts d10, add Tactician and Elan Edges), Wissenschaftsoffizier – Scientific Officer (add the Arcane Background (Weird Science), the Power Points and new Power Edges. He knows the following Powers: *bolt* (Tesla gun), *boost/lower trait* (experimental drug), *stun* (electrically charged whip)).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 6

Edges: Command, Command Presence, Hold the Line!, Nerves of Steel.

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Aryan officer uniform, Luger-like pistol (damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 1), Gehorsamskragen (see below), Hand des Befehls (see below).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Gehorsamskragen (Obedience Collar):** Officers are fitted with metal collars, engraved with a skull over a swastika, which are filled with exotic chemical substances. Whenever the Officer is Shaken, the device releases a shot of adrenaline, granting him +2 to recover from Shaken, as per the Combat Reflexes Edge, and the Nerves of Steel Edge. Further, whenever an Officer is captured, a post-hypnotic suggestion causes him to trigger a massive overdose of drugs, killing him in 1d6 rounds, unless a Healing (-4) roll is done. The same thing happens if the Obedience Collar is hit (Toughness: 5, Called Shot -2 required) or if it is dabbled with (i.e. a Lockpicking (-4) roll is failed).

- ☞ **Hands des Befehls (Hand of Command):** Aryan Officers are fitted with a special device - a sort of armored gauntlet covering the hand and forearm. Apart from giving +2 armor to the arm, the device is tipped with drug injectors, one on every nail. As well as being a nasty melee weapon (Str+d4), the device has 10 doses of assorted drugs (see Battle Syringe on sidebar on page 155).

ARYAN SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Aryans soldiers are an invasion force, so they are fitted with an assortment of weapons and armor, in typical Forties styles. But don't be fooled by aesthetics, they are really dangerous!

Kampfinjektion (Battle Syringe). This little metal syringe would be the dream of any sadistic nurse, but it is far more than this. It contains a single dose of a drug, some of them restorative, others terribly destructive. A Battle Syringe can be used on a willing or subdued target with an action and no roll, or on a hostile target with a

successful Fighting roll (subtract the armor modifier from the attack roll, because the needle must hit an unprotected part of the body). A slightly different type of Battle Syringe is the Drug Dart, a miniature syringe fired from an Air Pistol, with the same effects as a Battle Syringe (see below). Battle Syringes are probably the devices that inspired the syringes for TimeGuard's Morpheus Serum.

The basic types of drugs that can be loaded into a Battle Syringe are the following:

Aufputscher (Metabolic Enhancer). Grants the subject +2 Toughness for one hour, then he must make a Vigor roll or be Fatigued.

Blutfeuer (Blood Burn). This substance, if injected, reacts with the iron contained in the blood causing a bad case of self-combustion. Each round, for three consecutive rounds, the victim must make a Vigor (-2) roll. If he fails, he suffers a Wound, two if he rolls less than 1. He smoulders and, if Incapacitated, he catches fire, dying in agony!

Wotans Faust (Fist of Odin). A mix of psychotropic drugs and amphetamines, granting the Brave Edge, +1 to Fighting rolls and +1 Pace for ten rounds, plus the Overconfident Hindrance. When the effect expires the subject is deeply depressed (-2 to Spirit rolls and the Death Wish Hindrance) for 1d4 hours, unless he makes a Vigor (-2) roll.

Schläfer (Sleeper). This poison is mainly used by spies and covert operations specialists. It works exactly like the Morpheus Serum of the Operatives (see page 88), with the added effect that the victim wakes up Fatigued.

Kampfharnisch (Trooper Armor). Trooper Armor is the standard uniform of the dreaded Chemical Assault Troops, Nazi soldiers employing gas weapons. It was nicknamed by a modern era Operative because they look like the Nazi version of the storm trooper armor of a popular sci-fi movie of 1977. They grant Armor +2 and total protection against gasses. Due their bulk, they cause -1 to Pace and -1 to Notice rolls.

Druckpistole (Air Pistol). This Luger-style weapon shoots projectiles using compressed air instead of normal bullets. This gives the weapon a shorter range, but it is absolutely silent (like a TimeGuard silencer, see page 90) and can be used to fire Drugged Shots.

Air Pistol			
Damage: 2d4/Drugged Shot	Range: 8/16/24	ROF: 1	Shots: 6

Gasmaske (Gas Mask). Aryan gas masks are issued to all soldiers working with gas. They give complete protection to any inhalation-based toxin, but are ineffective against other types of gasses.

Gasgranate (Gas Grenade). A standard grenade, but full of gas instead of explosives. When it hits the ground it releases a cloud of LBT size, which remains in the area for three rounds, unless there is a strong wind or other similar weather in effect. Effects are as per the Gasses below.

Gas Grenade	
Damage: gas	Range: 5/10/20

Gasses. Aryan scientists developed many terrible gasses used on the battlefields of their own world. The Invasion Corps imported them into our reality with terrible effects.

Angstgas (Terror Gas). This odorless substance causes terrible hallucinations to anyone who breaths it. Victims must make an immediate Fear check at -4.

Fleischfressendes Gas (Flesh–Melting Gas). This contact toxin causes the very skin of the victim to melt. For each round of exposure it causes 2d8 damage, ignoring all types of armor.

Genomgas (Genome Gas). The propaganda says that the Genome Gas simply reveals the genetic flaws of inferior races. In reality it is a cocktail of bacteria conveying genetic alterations to the victims. Anyone exposed (inhalation only) must make an immediate Vigor (-2) roll or in the next 24 hours they'll develop a Long Term, Chronic, Debilitating illness of genetic origin (such as anemia). Advanced genetic therapy is necessary to overcome the malady (available after the 24th century or in the TimeZero medical facilities). Genome Gas is usually used in a massive way on civilian populations, to cause logistical problems for opponents.

Verbessertes Senfgas (Advanced Mustard Gas). This advanced version of the infamous mustard gas is a Venomous poison (-2) which manifests its effects 12 hours after exposure. The ground remains contaminated for a day and, more importantly, victims are contagious by touch for 48 hours.

Free Player

Free Players are individuals, usually scientists, who, in one way or another, have discovered how to travel in time and own a personal time machine. This makes them exceptionally dangerous for the safety of the continuum, because the damage they can do with their casual explorations is enormous. Some of them are only curious, absent-minded old men, for whom a good dose of Lethe Serum is enough, while others are real criminals, ravaging the timeline for their own ends.

Customization: Dinosaur Hunter (Shooting d10, Survival d8, Tracking d8, replace Gadgeteer Edge and Power Points with Giant Killer and Marksman, replace Powers with

boost trait (shooting, survival and tracking only) and *smite* (dinosaur-killer bullets), replace gear with dinosaur rifle (Damage: 2d10+2, Range:24/48/96, ROF: 1, AP 6); Psionic Time Surfer (replace Arcane Background (Weird Science) with Arcane Background (Psionics), replace Weird Science skill with Psionics, replace Powers with *deflection* (short-range precognition), *fly* (levitation), *puppet* (mind control), *quickness* (time-slowing), replace Gear with vest, staff (Str+d4, +1 Parry, Reach1, 2 hands) and psionic crystal (grants the Fast Recharge Edge). Psionic Time Surfers don't have a time machine, but can travel in time with a Psionics (-2) roll by spending 20 Power Points).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d6, Persuasion d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Repair d8, Throwing d6, Weird Science d10.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science), Gadgeteer, Luck, New Power, Power Points.

Powers [20 PP]: *bolt* (ray pistol), *deflection* (personal force field), *fly* (flying belt), *teleport* (portable wormhole creator).

Hindrances: Curious, Overconfident.

Gear: high tech pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, AP: 2), defensive vest (+2), Synth manservant (Henchman), time machine (see below).

Special Abilities

> ▷ **Time Machine:** What makes a Free Player really dangerous is his time machine. Every scientist creates his own version, working and acting in different ways from the others. Each time machine should be designed on an individual basis, depending on the Free Player's nature. The basic version, adequate for a far-future scientist, is a carriage-type, vertical-traveling machine. It is quite sturdy (Toughness 9), and requires 10 Power Points and a Weird Science (-2) roll to be used. In case of a failure on the roll, the machine works, but a card must be drawn from the Action Deck and the result checked on the Bad Weather table on page 131.

FREE PLAYERS' TIME MACHINES

If you pit a Free Player against the Operatives, sooner or later they could get their hands on his time machine. But this isn't much use to them. Usually, a Free Player's machine is so weird and different that years of study are necessary for other people to correctly use it. In dire need, an Operative can try to use it, but must roll on Weird Science (-2) to activate it. As Operatives usually lack this skill, this is a desperate move.

The common fate of captured Time Machines is being confiscated by the Technical Office, which disassembles them trying to learn something new about time travel.

Lost Sheep, in the Operatives' lingo, are all those creatures which, for one reason or another, got lost in the timeline. So, yes, a Tyrannosaurus Rex appearing in the streets of New York could be considered a Lost Sheep, but usually this term is given to a peaceful creature (or group of creatures) confused and dazed by temporal displacement. If possible TimeGuard tries to make peaceful contact with them and find a way to send them back to their home time or universe, or to find a suitable place in our timeline, where they can live peacefully and quietly without polluting official history. Here are some examples of such creatures.

Kehtann Hunter

The Wampanoag are a tribe of Native Americans based in Massachusetts. Their universe was invaded by mysterious visitors from space during the 15th century after Christ. The invaders belong to two different races, one good and peaceful, which the Indians called "Kehtannit" (a word in their language meaning "great spirit"), and a second one, dark and twisted, which they call "Hobbomok", which in their tongue means "evil spirits". Both races are very weak physically, little more than amoebas, but have the capacity to merge with other forms of life, forming a parasitic or symbiotic relationship. While the Kehtannit use their merging ability only on willing partners, granting them great powers, the Hobbomok use it on everyone, seeking dominance over other races and transforming their hosts into twisted abominations.

The Kehtann are the offspring of the union between the Kehtannit and the Wampanoag Indians, a blessed merging which brought knowledge and wisdom to both parts of the relationship. In appearance, they are only very fit Native American people, but there is something in their eyes, a strange shimmering, which becomes a true light when they "watch within themselves", tapping into the alien powers of their symbiote.

They fight a centuries-old war with the Hobbomok, sprawling across all the Indian Nations (Europeans haven't yet discovered America in the Kehtann universe). Recently the Kehtann have gained the upper hand, but they discovered that the surviving Hobbomok are escaping, looking for new hunting grounds in other realities, which they can reach through temporal rifts, a rather common occurrence in their world. The Kethan cannot allow their mortal enemies to leave and bring death and destruction to other universes, so the most valiant of them willingly entered the rifts, their goal being to finally track down and destroy their hated enemies. Some of them, wandering across the parallel worlds, reached our reality and are dedicated to finding and rooting out the evil Hobbomok, which are establishing numerous nests across the timeline.

The stats below represent a typical Kehtann Hunter.

Customization: Kehtann Medicine Man (Spirit d10, Pacifism (self-defense only, apart from Hobbomok which can be attacked normally), the Symbiotic Bond Special Ability which has 20 Power Points and grants him the *banish* (a shriek that can detach a Hobbomok from his host, killing the parasite but leaving the host intact) and *healing* (the symbiote heals the target) Powers, replace Energy Spear with Medicine Baton (damage: Str+d4, create at will a

SBT of energy, centered on the Medicine Man, dealing 2d6 non-lethal damage to whoever is caught in the template (Agility roll to evade)).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Survival d8, Stealth d6, Tracking d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 7

Edges: Block, Brawny, Tachyon Sense.

Hindrances: All Thumbs (non-Kehtann technology), Vow (eliminate all the Hobbomok).

Gear: Energy spear (Melee – Str+d6+2, 2 hands, +1 Parry, AP: 2, Reach 1/Ranged – damage: 2d6+2, range: 12/24/48, ROF:1, AP: 2), Native American dress.

Special Abilities

- ▨ **Energy Spear:** The Kehtannit brought to the Wampanoag the gift of their science, which is very different from that of our reality, and is based on the manipulation of subtle energies. Kehtann Hunters are usually equipped with their traditional weapon, the Energy Spear (or Thunder Spear), a melee weapon similar to a powered trident, which is capable of shooting rays of energy). The weapon recharges itself. Whenever the user rolls a 1 on the Shooting die, regardless of the Wild Die, it means the charge has run out and the ranged ability of the Spear cannot be used for 24 hours.

- ▨ **Symbiotic Bond:** The Kehtannit are almost helpless in their amoeba-like form, but they grant great powers to the host body. In gaming terms they raise the Spirit of the host by one die step (already accounted for in the stats), and grants him the capacity to "see within himself", a manner to temporarily improve their own strengths. In game terms a Kehtann has the *boost/lower* trait (boost only, personal only) Power. The Traits raised depend on the individual Kehtann, but usually Kehtann hunters can boost the following ones: Strength, Agility, Vigor, Notice, Fighting, Shooting. The Power is cast using Spirit as Arcane Skill, and the Hunter has a reserve of 10 Power Points.

Native

Operatives use this derogatory term for all the people actually living in the timeline, unaware of the existence of time travel. This covers the great majority of mankind, and would require hundreds of templates to be described fully. The following ones are generic and can easily be tweaked to represent particular individuals.

Primitive Native Commoner

This template represents the average men or women of the ancient and medieval eras.

Customization: Artisan (Knowledge (trade) d6), Healer (Healing d8, Healer Edge), Lowlife (Stealth d6, Streetwise d6), Merchant (Persuasion d6, Connections (merchants) and/or Rich Edges), Noble (Noble Edge, Fighting and Intimidation d6), Serf or Slave (Outsider Edge, Notice d6, Stealth d6).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (trade) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: Commoner's clothing, small improvised weapon (Str+d4, -2 to Fighting rolls), tools of his trade.

Primitive Native Soldier

This template represents the average soldier of the pre-gunpowder era. It is also easily adapted to city watch, bandits and inquisitors.

Customization: Archer (Shooting d6, replace weapons and shield with bow (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48, ROF 1) and dagger (Str+d4), Bandit (Survival and Stealth d6, Wanted and Poor Hindrances, replace short sword with mace (Str+d60)), Horseman (Riding d6, add horse to gear), Sheriff (Investigation, Notice and Streetwise d6), Veteran Soldier (Strength d8, Fighting d8, Combat Reflexes).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6 (1)

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6) and medium shield (+1 Parry, +2 Toughness vs ranged weapons) or Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry), light leather armor (+1).

Modern Native Commoner

This template represents the average Joe or Jane of the Modern Era (after 1900).

Customization: Athlete (Strength d6, Agility d8), Journalist (Connections (sources), Investigation d6, Persuasion d6), Billionaire (Charismatic and Filthy Rich Edges), Politician (Persuasion d8, Noble and Connections (politics) Edge), Criminal (Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Stealth d6, add the Wanted and Greedy Hindrances, add pistol (damage: 2d6, range: 12/24/48, ROF 1) to gear).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (trade) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: Commoner's clothing, small improvised weapon (Str+d4, -2 to Fighting rolls), tools of his trade.

Modern Native Soldier

This template represents the average grunt of the modern era. It is also adaptable to policemen, firemen, investigators and similar individuals the Operatives can encounter in their adventures.

Customization: Cop (Notice d6, Intimidation d6, Streetwise d4), Enlisted Infantryman (add helmet (+2, head only)), Detective (Smarts d8, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d8, Investigator Edge), Fireman (add Heroic Hindrance, Agility d8, Climbing d6, replace gear with protective clothes (+2, vs fire only) and hatchet (Str+d6), Pilot (Boating or Driving or Piloting d8) .

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 1) or rifle (Damage: 2d8, Range: 24/48/96, ROF: 1, AP 2).

Near Future Native Commoner

This template represents the average person of the Near Future.

Customization: Corporate Employee (Add the Connections (corporate) Edge), Slum Dweller (Add the Poor Edge, Strength d6, replace gear with club (Str+d4)), Techno Medic (Healing d8, Repair d8, Healer Edge).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Knowledge (trade) d6, Notice d4, Persuasion d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: Intelligent clothing (changes color at will), connection to the universal network, tools of his trade.

Near Future Native Soldier

This template represents the average soldier of the Near Future era.

Customization: Synth Rebellion Soldier (Add Vigor d8 and the Veteran of the Synth Rebellion Edge), Future Police Investigator (Smarts d8, Investigation d8, Notice d6, Streetwise d8, Investigator Edge, add high-level access to the universal network (+1 to Investigation and Common Knowledge rolls) to gear).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Piloting d6, Shooting d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6/7 (1/2)

Edges: -

Hindrances: -

Gear: High tech pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 3, AP 2) or high tech rifle (Damage: 2d8+1, Range: 24/48/96, ROF: 2, AP 3), tactical vest (+1/+2), connection to the universal network.

Neanderthal

Neanderthals, in the *TimeZero* setting are a separate human race, who lived in the Pleistocene (between 600,000 and 300,000 years ago). Neanderthals are stouter than *homo sapiens*, with a bigger cranial size. Their larynx is also quite different, and they are incapable of speech like that of *homo sapiens*, so they developed a non-verbal communication system which, according to TimeZero's Field Specialists, borders on telepathy. Neanderthals were quite advanced, and were among the first hominids performing burial rites of their ancestors. The cause of their extinction is still unknown, but TimeGuard doesn't consider it realistic that they simply mixed with *homo sapiens*: a temporal anomaly of some type must have occurred, but it hasn't yet been discovered.

Customization: Artisan (Smarts d8, Repair d8, add stone chopping tools; can fabricate bows, slings, spears and clubs in 1d6 hours, half that with a raise on a Repair roll), Hunter (Survival and Tracking d8, Woodsman Edge), Sage (add the Arcane Background (Psionics) Edge, and Psionics d8. He is a Wildcard with 15 Power Points and knows the following Powers: *beast friend* (soothing gestures), *confusion* (mind song), *detect/conceal arcana* (detect life), *mind reading* (telepathy)).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Survival d6, Tracking d6.
Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)
Gear: Crude stone axe (Str+d6) or spear (Str+d6, Range: 3/6/12, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), furs (+1).
Special Abilities

- ☞ **Mild Telepathy:** Neanderthals don't speak, they only emit low grunts and use some gestures, which isn't enough to convey complex meanings, but it is supported by a limited sort of telepathy. Humans are sensitive to this contact, and they require a single Smarts roll to create a link with a Neanderthal and to freely communicate with him. Synths cannot do this.
- ☞ **Racial Memory:** Neanderthals don't pass experience to their children through words: they simply know instinctively what they have to do to survive, as it is written in their genetic code. For this reason, when making a Survival, Tracking or Notice roll Extra Neanderthals. can use a Wild Die. Wild Card Neanderthals have their Wild Die raised by one step (usually from d6 to d8).

Primitive Man

This rather inaccurate term represents all the primitive human races (apart from Neanderthals) living in the Stone Age. They include *homo erectus*, *homo habilis*, Cro-Magnons and the first *homo sapiens*. They are fairly different aesthetically from each other, but they have similar stats.

Customization: Gatherer (Survival d8), Hunter (Tracking d6), Shaman (Healing d8, Intimidation d6, Healer Edge), Tribal Chief (Strength d8, Vigor d8, Fighting d8, Charismatic Edge, armed with a crude stone axe (Str+d6)).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6, Throwing d6, Tracking d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: All Thumbs.

Edges: -

Gear: Club (Str+d4) or crude short spear (Str+d6, Reach 1), thrown rock (Damage: Str+d4, range: 3/6/11, Improvised Weapon).

Special Abilities

- **Superstition:** Primitive Men live in a superstitious, symbolic world. For them things like fire, storms and other similar events are considered magic. For this reason, any Persuasion or Intimidation attempt against them made showing a technology level higher than theirs receives a +2 bonus. On the other hand, any critical failure on the roll triggers the opposite effect: in the case of a Persuasion roll it causes an automatic Hostile reaction, in the case of an Intimidation roll all the Primitive Men who witness it gain the Berserk Edge (already activated) for the remainder of the scene. In narrative terms this represents the Primitive Men considering their opponents to be demons or other similar creatures.

Sakra

The Sakra are one of the most dangerous Alternates TimeGuard has ever dealt with: organized, advanced and totally ruthless, they are a threat still largely unknown. They belong to a parallel universe where reptilians are the dominant species on Earth. Sakra is a collective name for many species of humanoid reptilians. Unlike humans, the Sakra are a group of sub-races, organized in a complex system of clans. The True Sakra are dominant. They are bipedal saurian humanoids, not very tall, with a pointed face, a whitish scaly skin, retractable claws and even a short, stout tail.

Sakra of all sub-races are cold blooded beings, which causes them to be lethargic in low temperatures, but they managed to overcome the problem even in very ancient times, by wearing earthenware jugs full of hot water, a crude but effective solution. Today Sakra are far more advanced: each of them has had a secondary, artificial heart implanted (that they call the "Sak", hence their name), which keeps their bodily temperature constantly high.

Sakra are also advanced in another very important field: time travel. Reports say that they travel in the continuum, both in the vertical and horizontal lines, using a carriage-type device, far more flexible than TimeGuard one!

So what does such a powerful race want from our reality? There are many answers to this question, as numerous as the Sakra factions. In fact, despite being them officially ruled by a god-emperor figure, called the Absolute, the various clans and factions behave in very different ways, often at odds with each other, reflecting their internal struggles.

One certainty is that the Sakra are interested in human bodies as a source of some exotic substance. Corpses retrieved from Sakra laboratories show clear signs of gland removal and hormonal extraction. Another is that they fear mankind for some reason, as if their very

existence depends on the destruction (or enslavement) of the human race. These two very unpleasant facts create an even more foggy picture if linked to the existence of the Talek'Sal'Sak (the Eternal Wise Hearts), a group of Sakra which instead has tried to contact and to initiate cautious negotiations with TimeGuard, even if this is a secret only known from the Old Man and the highest ranks of the Sun Tsus.

Sakra Scientist

Probably "scientist" isn't the right word to describe this old, tall and gaunt Sakra, but it is the best term found by TimeGuard linguists. Sakra scientists are the elders of the race, wise in Sakra technology, and are paid the respect normally due to important religious figures. Usually a Sakra Scientist is in charge of a mission in our timeline, and he is the only one knowing the real agenda of the Empire. Some of them are cruel scientists who consider men only as guinea pigs (or even worse, as living sources of exotic hormones), while others are civilized diplomats and philosophers, ready to deal with humankind on an equal basis.

Customization: Hormonal Extractor (Add the Quirk (sadistic) Hindrance, Sakra Science d8, he fits his Sakra Troopers with hormonal injectors, granting him the Command Presence, Inspire and Hold The Line! Edges over them), Virtual Reality Master (Add the Delusional Hindrance, Persuasion d10, replace the *bolt* power of the Scientific Staff with *summon ally* (with a Densomorphic Hologram trapping)).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d8, Notice d6, Sakra Science d10, Persuasion d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d6.

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Edges: Level Headed, Noble.

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Scientific Staff (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands, see below), Imperial Diadem (see below).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Boosted Metabolism:** A Sakra can command his artificial heart (the Sak) to raise his body temperature, granting him a substantial speed boost. Whenever he is dealt a red non-face card from the Action Deck he can decide to discard it to draw another one. He must stick with the new card.

- ☞ **Imperial Diadem:** This headgear projects an invisible force field all around the Sakra Scientist, granting him +2 Armor and +2 to Soak rolls. The Diadem can be disabled with a Called Shot (-4), has Toughness 6 and if destroyed it releases a blast of energy at the user, causing him 3d6 damage.

- ☞ **Prestige Figure:** Sakra Scientists are too important to use Flesh Dresses, they wear one only when absolutely necessary.

- ☞ **Retractable Claws:** Str +d4. One action is required to extend or retract them.

- ☞ **Scientific Staff:** This technologically advanced staff is both a sign of power and the main tool of every Sakra Scientist, who can use it for many advanced purposes. Basically, it grants him the Command Edge toward other Sakra and in addition he has 30 Power Points and the following Powers, activated with the Sakra Science skill: *bolt* (crackling energy bolt), *boost trait* (research enhancer: boosts only on Smarts, Healing, Notice, Weird Science), *deflection* (shimmering energy shield), *divination* (parastatistic probability calculator).
- ☞ **Weakness (Sak):** A Called Shot (-4) is necessary to hit the precise location of the Sak, slightly under the sternum. If this succeeds the Sakra must immediately roll Vigor (-2) or die.

SAKRA TECHNOLOGY

Sakra opponents are usually equipped with very powerful technology. Giving this to players can seriously alter game balance. Luckily Sakra devices are fitted with a security system preventing them from being used by creatures with non-Sakra DNA. In game terms any device stolen from Sakra stops working at the end of the current scenario and cannot be saved for future adventures. Needless to say, the Costume Warehouse is **very** interested in any Sakra artifact the Operatives can retrieve.

Sakra Titan

Titans are a minor race of the Sakra Empire. They are massive, bulking giants of humanoid shape and have a series of vestigial triceratops-like horns over the nose plate. Titans were the dominant species during the dawn of Sakra civilization, but now are totally subjugated by the True Sakra. The reason is simple: they are quite dumb, and centuries of selective breeding favoring strength over intelligence transformed them into docile heavy shock troops.

Customization: Heavy Fusilier (Fighting d6, Shooting d8, add the Rock and Roll! Edge, replace Titan Energy Maul with Titan Hand Cannon (Damage: 2d10, range: 24/48/96, ROF: 3, Shots: 40, AP 4, Auto)), Piebald Titan (Smarts d6, Remove the Docile and Dumb Special Ability, Size +1).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12(3)

Edges: Improved Nerves of Steel.

Hindrances: Outsider.

Gear: Titan Energy Maul (Str+d10, 2 hands, -1 Parry, Reach 3 (short range energy projector)), imperial heavy armor (+3).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Big Brutes:** Sakra Titans are Henchmen.

- ☞ **Docile and Dumb:** Sakra Titans are trained from the egg to obey orders. If nobody orders them to do something they are lost. Every time a Sakra Titan is more than 12" away from another (non-Titan) Sakra, if he is dealt a Club he remains idle, deciding what to do next.
- ☞ **Size +2:** Sakra Titans are up to nine feet tall.
- ☞ **Weakness (Sak):** A Called Shot (-4) is necessary to hit the precise location of the Sak, slightly under the sternum. If this succeeds the Sakra must immediately roll Vigor (-2) or die.

Sakra Trooper

Troopers, belonging to the True Sakra species, are the commonest type of Sakra sent into our reality. The reason is simple: they are exceptionally good with disguises. In truth you'll very rarely see the true shape of a Sakra Trooper: if you are allowed to, probably you won't live much longer. Sakra Troopers move in our world actually "dressed" (there is no better word) in a very advanced flesh costume, a sort of soft exoskeleton, which makes them indistinguishable from real humans. The Flesh Dress, as they call it, is so sophisticated that it allows the Sakra Trooper inside perfect control of its muscles, from the biggest ones (those powering the legs and arms) to the smallest and most delicate ones (the facial muscles, responsible for human expressions). The only thing a Flesh Dress cannot simulate is the voice, but Sakra usually overcome this problem using a vocal synthesizer implanted in the throat.

Customization: Clan Rifleman (Shooting d8, Spirit d6, Preparation and Use of disguise rolls d8, replace Sakra energy flail with Sakra energy staff (melee weapon – Str+d8, 2 hands, Reach 1, +1 Parry/ranged weapon – damage: 2d8+1, Range: 24/48/96, AP 3), Undercover Specialist (Charisma: +2, Lockpicking d8, Persuasion d10, Stealth d8, Preparation and Use of disguise rolls d12, replace Sakra energy flail with implanted energy claws (Str+d6, AP 3)).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5 (1)

Edges: -

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Sakra energy flail (melee weapon – Str+d6/ranged weapon – damage: 2d6+1, range: 12/24/48, AP 3), armored coat (+1).

Special Abilities

- ▷ **Boosted Metabolism:** A Sakra can command his artificial heart (the Sak) to raise his body temperature, granting him a substantial speed boost. Whenever he is dealt a red non-face card from the Action Deck he can decide to discard it to draw another one. He must stick with the new card.

- ▷ **Flesh Dress:** A Sakra Trooper, when in our world, is encased in an artificial human body, which he can control as his own. The Flesh Dress grants him +1 Armor, until it is destroyed. The first time a Sakra Trooper suffers a Wound he can make a free soak roll, representing the capacity of the Flesh Dress to absorb blows. Regardless of the wound is soaked or not, the Flesh Dress is destroyed. A Flesh Dress is almost undistinguishable from a human body. Sakra Troopers are considered to have d10 both in the Preparation and Use rolls when using a disguise, but a character with a Bioscanner receives +4 to rolls to spot the disguise, because the artificial hearts of these creatures leave a very noticeable track.

- ▷ **Retractable Claws:** Str +d4. One action is required to extend or retract them.

- ▷ **Size –1:** Sakra Troopers are usually only five feet tall.

- ▷ **Weakness (Sak):** A Called Shot (-4) is necessary to hit the precise location of the Sak, slightly under the sternum. If this succeeds, the Sakra must immediately roll Vigor (-2) or die.

TimeGuard

TimeGuard is the temporal police force of which the heroes are part. The following templates can be used to portray allies and buddies of the party or during interactions in the time base.

Resident Watcher

This dedicated agent, usually a Synth, resides almost permanently in a specific place on the timeline, to monitor it. In certain cases he is also a scientist of some kind, collecting material for research. When trouble arises, he usually sends a report to TimeZero, and then the Operatives arrive.

Customization: Scientist Watcher (add Knowledge (any) d8), Family Member (add Connections (family)), Invisible Man (add Outsider and Poor Hindrances, the Master of Disguise Edge, Streetwise d8).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d8, Knowledge (history – specific era) d8, Persuasion d6, Streetwise d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Edges: Alertness.

Hindrances: Cautious.

Gear: Clothing appropriate for the era, dagger or other small weapon (Str+d4), may have access to Time Radio (see sidebar).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Secure Cache:** Resident Watchers must always have a Plan B ready, in case they are discovered and must leave their place in hurry. Having a Secure Cache of suitable equipment is usually part of the plan. The Secure Cache contains a 2d4 Budget Points of special equipment of the Watcher's choice, plus at least $1000 in currency and appropriate clothes for the era. Whenever the Cache is visited, the Game Master secretly draws a card from the Action Deck: if a Club is dealt, something bad awaits you in the Cache: maybe it is protected by a security device you don't know about, maybe it is under Triad surveillance or maybe it is simply empty.

- ☞ **Synth:** Synths receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken, and are immune to poisons, illnesses and called shots. They don't age and don't suffer penalties from Wounds. The Resident Watcher is modified so that he simulates the aging process.

TIME RADIO

It isn't entirely true that TimeGuard agents are totally alone when in the timeline. Scientists have managed to create a device called the Time Radio which allows asynchronous message sending from the timeline to TimeZero. Not every Resident Watcher has one, only those in very delicate places of the timeline (GM's discretion).

The device works by creating an almost instantaneous Time Gate to TimeZero, enough to send a compressed video/text message. It is very useful, but far from perfect.

First, it is asynchronous: in terms of subjective time the message requires 12 hours to reach TimeZero and, allowing a reasonable time for the base to consider their reply, no response can be expected within a day of transmission.

Second, it is bulky, the size of a small recording studio (a console and 50 lbs of assorted equipment).

Third, it requires a tremendous amount of energy to create a gate for a tenth of second. Unless a suitable energy source is available (equivalent to a 20th century power station) the internal energy cells require a week to recharge after sending a message.

Time Radios are highly secure devices, they require a secret code and the right genetic code to use, and if either of the two checks fails, they self-destruct. Losing a Time Radio is tremendous damaging for TimeGuard; so any Operative losing one immediately loses 10

Promotion Points, 20 if the device ends up in the hands of the Triad, and is put under scrutiny by the Torquemadas.

GM's Note. The Time Radio is an excellent way to help the players when they are stuck, or to give them an extra clue. Players should not have regular access to it.

TimeGuard Security

These soldiers, equipped with future-tech weapons, patrol TimeZero and are responsible for its security. Despite their efficiency and firepower, they aren't normally used in the timeline: they haven't the proper training to act with caution and their presence alone pollutes history.

Customization: Combat Medic (add Healing d6 and an Healing Kit), Sniper (add Shooting d10, the Marksman Edge and TimeGuard Marksman's Rifle (Damage: 2d10+1, Range: 24/48/96, AP 3, Snapfire Penalty) to Gear; usually a Right Hand), Ranger (Climbing d8, Swimming d8, Survival d8, Woodsman Edge, add Survival kit to gear).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Throwing d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge.

Hindrances: -.

Gear: TimeGuard Security armor (+2), energy pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP 1, Semiauto), radio communicator, shocker-tonfa (Str+d4, +1 Parry; if a target is hit, he must immediately make a Vigor roll to avoid being Shaken).

Special Abilities

- ☞ **Sergeant:** Every groups of five or more TimeGuard Security are led by a Security Sergeant, a Henchman/Right Hand with the Command Edge.

Triad

The Triad is a mysterious syndicate of temporal criminals. With agents throughout the entire continuum, they are TimeGuard's major nemesis. Below are some of their typical representatives.

Triad Goon

Goons are the lowest-level manpower of the Triad. Usually they are local thugs recruited directly in the current era. The majority of them don't even know they are working for an organization of outlaw time travelers!

Customization: Martial Artist (Agility d8, Fighting d8, Shooting and Throwing d4, add the Martial Artist Edge, remove pistol and brass knuckles from Gear), Thief (Agility d8, Smarts d8, Lockpicking d8, Stealth d8, add the Thief Edge and Lockpicking Kit to Gear), Gangster

(Brawny Edge, Intimidation d8, add Tommy Gun (Damage: 2d6+1, Range:12/24/48, ROF: 3, AP: 1, Auto) to Gear).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4, Throwing d6, Stealth d4.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6(1)

Edges: -

Hindrances: Greedy.

Gear: Pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, ROF: 1, AP: 1), brass knuckles (Str+d4) or dagger (Str+d4), light protective jacket (+1).

Special Abilities

☞ **Triad Training:** Triad Goons usually receive training by Enforcers (see below), so they are quite good at their job. If a Triad Goon rolls 1 on a Fighting, Shooting or Stealth roll and he is within the Command Radius of a Triad Enforcer, he can reroll it for free. He must stick with the second result.

Triad Enforcer

Enforcers are the next level up in the Triad organization. They are trained in secret boot camps somewhere in the timeline (there are hints that one of them is located in Feudal Japan) and are equipped with special gear. Usually they aren't sent alone into the timeline, but act as backup for Triad Agents (see below), who command missions. One of their typical roles is recruiting and training potential Goons in a certain era.

Customization: Agent in Training (Smarts d8, draw a card and check the Triad Special Abilities table on page 172), Assassin (Shooting d10, Assassin and Marksman Edge, add Triad Sniper Rifle (Damage:2d10+2, Range: 36/72/144, AP 3, Snapfire Penalty) to Gear), Femme Fatale (Very Attractive, Charisma: +4, Persuasion d10), Martial Artist (Fighting d10, Strength d8, Brawny and Improved Martial Artist Edge).

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6, Throwing d8, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7(2)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Martial Artist.

Hindrances: Loyal.

Gear: Inconspicuous Triad body armor (+2), Triad energy pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 14/28/56, AP 2), Inconspicuous Flash Grenade (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, same effects of the *stun* Power, cast with arcane skill d10).

Special Abilities

☞ **Goon Leader**: Triad Enforcers are responsible for training Goons, so they have the Command Edge, but it only works on Triad Goons.

☞ **Second in Command**: Triad Enforcers are opponents of some importance. They are Henchmen or Right Hands (GM's decision).

☞ **Triad Training:** Triad Enforcers receive top training, so they are very good at their job. If a Triad Enforcer rolls 1 on a Fighting, Shooting or Stealth roll he can reroll it for free. He must stick with the second result.

Triad Agent

Agents are the highest grade of the Triad's forces, and the counterparts of TimeGuard's Operatives. Given the slightly different organizational hierarchy (the Triad employs Goons and Enforcers, TimeGuard only Operatives), Triad Agents are usually very experienced, after a career as Enforcers, and can be compared to Senior Agents of TimeGuard.

Strong Personalities: Triad Agents are usually unique personalities, so they should be designed on an individual basis by the GM. This template represents a good foundation for creating new Agents.

Customization: See Triad Special Abilities.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Driving d6, Fighting d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d8, Stealth d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(2)

Edges: Block, Connections (Triad), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Martial Artist.

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal, Wanted.

Gear: Inconspicuous Triad jumpsuit (+2, can be concealed under normal clothing), Triad Energy Pistol (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 14/28/56, AP 2), Inconspicuous Flash Grenade x2 (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, same effects of the *stun* Power, cast with arcane skill d10).

Special Abilities

☞ **Another Trick in the Bag:** Triad Agents are very special individuals, so they have peculiar capabilities. Draw two cards from the Action Deck and check the Triad Special Abilities sidebar.

TRIAD SPECIAL ABILITIES

The table below details some special abilities of Triad Agents. If the same face value is drawn twice, apply the Focussed result. If the same value is drawn three or more times, simply redraw until a new card is dealt.

Deuce – Monstrous Agent. The Agent is a Lost Sheep, recruited by the Triad when he arrived in this continuum, or a traitorous member of an Alternate race. If the card drawn is red he is quite big and has a hard, scaly skin or carapace (receiving the Size +1 and Armor +1 Monstrous Ability). If it is black, his appearance is so bad that it causes a Fear check for any person seeing him for the first time. In both cases he has the Ugly Hindrance.

Focused: The Agent is a real monster. As well as the advantages of both cards, he has the Slow Regeneration Monstrous Ability.

Three – Psionic Agent. The Agent is one of the very few individuals gifted with mental powers. He has the Psionics skill at d8, 5 Power Points and depending on the card drawn he knows one of the following powers:

Clubs – *boost trait* (psionic surge),
Diamonds – *fear* (psychic scream),
Hearts – *entangle* (paralyzing stare),
Spades – *deflection* (short-range precognition).

> *Focused: The Agent has the Powers of both cards and 10 Power Points.*

Four – Implants. The Triad doesn't have the same limitations as TimeGuard on cybernetic implants, and this Agent is fitted with very special gear. She automatically receives an extra die step in one of the following Attributes: Agility, Strength or Vigor.

> *Focused: As well as the benefits of both cards, the Agent has synaptic receptor circuits, allowing her to disable pain sensations at will. This counts as the Improved Nerves of Steel Edge.*

Five – Celebrity. The Agent is an historical figure (usually a minor one), which the Triad has managed to recruit in some way. She has the Celebrity Hindrance (in this case working in the Operatives' favor) and +2 Charisma. TimeGuard isn't happy at all when a Celebrity is killed: they must be captured, brainwashed and sent back to their original era, to avoid historical pollution. If the Operatives kill a Celebrity they start the next mission with one Benny less and suffer -4 to Promotion rolls.

> *Focused: Celebrities have fans, and this agent is no different. Goons and Enforcers use the Fanatic Setting Rule when they are under the orders of a Celebrity.*

Six – Pet. The Agent has a beast of some type at his service. It can be the classic black panther for a femme fatale Agent, a trained dog or even something weirder, like a Synth animal, or a monstrous creature originally from another reality. The Pet is a Henchman.

> *Focused: The Pet is really outstanding specimen: it is a Wild Card. In addition, the Agent has the Beast Bond Edge.*

Seven – Roguish Luck. The Agent is exceptionally lucky. He has the Luck Edge.

> *Focused: The luck of the Agent is legendary, he benefits from the Great Luck Edge.*

Eight – Combat Master. The Agent is expert in hand-to-hand fighting. If the card drawn is a Club he receives the Sweep Edge, if it is a Diamond he has First Strike, while with a Heart he has Frenzy and with a Spade he has Extraction.

> *Focused: The Agent receives the Edges of both cards, plus raises Fighting by one die step.*

Nine – Seducer. The Agent is gorgeous-looking, in game terms she has the Very Attractive Edge. She knows how to use her appearance to seduce others: she has Persuasion d10 and +2 to any Persuasion rolls against people with a suitable sexual orientation.

Focused: The Agent's glands are genetically modified to release pheromones at will, and she uses them to provoke primitive reactions in targets and manipulate them. The Agent has the puppet Power (pheromone control) with 5 Power Points and uses Vigor as the arcane skill.

Ten – Chameleon. The Agent is a master of disguise. He has the Master of Disguise Edge, and is considered to have Smarts and Persuasion d10 for the Preparation and Use rolls for his disguises.

Focused: The Agent's body was modified so that now his facial features, his skin and even his apparent sex can be changed at will. This capacity works exactly like an Advanced Disguise Kit, but requires 5 minutes of time to be used. Unlike a normal ADK it can be used an indefinite number of times.

Jack – Scientific Genius. The Agent is a master scientist, in game terms he has the Weird Science skill at d8, 10 Power Points and a device with a single Power, depending on the card drawn. The Powers are:
Clubs – *bolt* (ray pistol),
Diamonds – *armor* (energy field),
Hearts – *blast* (energy gauntlet),
Spades - *smite* (vibro-sword).

Focused: The Agent has both Powers deriving from his cards, with 15 Power Points each. In addition he has 4 Budget Points to spend on Enhancements (see Gear Chapter) on his weird devices.

Queen – Shadow Guardian. The Agent has a faithful bodyguard, who will give his life to protect his master. The bodyguard is a Triad Enforcer Henchman, with the following Special Ability:

Bodyguard: Whenever the master of the Bodyguard is hit by a blow, and the Bodyguard is within 1" of him, he can willingly step in the way of the attack and suffer all the damage himself (he is allowed Soak rolls as normal). If the Bodyguard suffers a Wound in this way, he receives a Benny.

Focused: The relationship between the Shadow Guardian and his master is very close. Anytime the two of them are within 6" and one of them rolls a skill the other has, he automatically gains a +1 bonus. If either the Shadow Guardian or the master are Incapacitated the surviving member of the pair gains the Berserk Edge.

King – Goon Master. The Agent literally has a legion of goons at his service, and can use them at will. In game terms he has the Command and Command Presence Edges.

Focused: The Agent is a real commander. He also has the Tactician and Hold the Line! Edges.

Ace – Clones! The Agent has one or more clones of himself. The strange "family" works in perfect harmony, and they consider the original their leader. The original one has only one Benny, while the others are considered Right Hands. The number of doubles depends on the card drawn: Club (one), Diamond (two), Heart (three), or Spade (four).

Focused: Consider only the card with the highest number of clones, and add one to the result. In addition, anytime a clone (not the original) dies, another clone or the original (GM's choice), gains a Benny.

Joker – Old Fox. The Agent has been in the field from a while and has some experience under his belt. He rolls a d8 as his Wild Die and has one extra Benny.

Focused: Choose one Attribute and Two skills for the Old Fox: they are raised to d10.

Optional Player Races

This short chapter takes some of the races detailed in the Non Player Characters section and offers them as player races. The Game Master is free to allow or deny the players their use. As a rule of thumb, to keep them special, a single character in each Operative team should be allowed to have a non-human, unless you desire a very weird and noticeable party of heroes.

Kehtann

Kehtann, as detailed on page 147, are Native Americans from a parallel universe, invaded by a hostile parasitic form of life, the Hobbomok, which they have been fighting for centuries, with the aid of a friendly symbiotic race, the Kehtannit.

Some Kehtann, in their merciless hunt for the Hobbomok, have reached our reality, which is so different from their own that they feel totally lost. Some of them, found stranded by TimeGuard Operatives, decided to join forces with TimeZero, becoming quite straightforward but very competent Operatives.

A Kehtann has the following Racial Abilities:

From Another World: Kehtann come from a dimension which is quite different from our own. They suffer from the Outsider (apart from in Native American Cultures before 1700 AD) and the All Thumbs (apart from Kehtannit technology) Hindrances. They don't have the benefit of an Origin Era.

Synaptic Difference: Kehtann's minds and bodies are too different to be compatible with TimeZero hypnotic techniques, so they cannot use Hypnotraining.

Symbiotic Awareness: The Kehtannit in their body makes them more aware and self-centered than other persons. They begin the game with Spirit d6.

See Within Himself: A Kehtann, thanks to the symbiote, can "see within himself", a technique allowing him to perform amazing feats. In game terms he has the *boost/lower trait* Power (boost only, personal only). During character creation he chooses three Traits on which the Power works; he can add another one for free for every two advancements he gets. He uses Spirit as his arcane skill and has Power Points equal to his Spirit die plus one per Rank. So, for example, a Seasoned Kehtann with Spirit d8 has 8+2=10 Power Points.

Kehtann Special Weapon: A Kehtnann character can decide to start the game with an Energy Spear (see page 160 for details). This permanently costs him2 Budget Points Points, and the object is subject to the usual TimeGuard gear restrictions.

Neanderthal

Neanderthals are a race of prehistoric men who lived in the Pleistocene. In the *TimeZero* setting they have minor psionic abilities. It has been known for a Neanderthal to be enlisted in TimeGuard, even if it is a rare occurrence.

A Neanderthal has the following racial abilities:

Larynx Modification: To allow the Neanderthal verbal communication (indispensable for being sent into the timeline), TimeGuard medics perform surgery on him, so that he can speak normally, but with a rather rough voice. He suffers -1 to Charisma in any situation where voice matters (from oratory to disguise).

Man of the Past: The physical frame of Neanderthals stands out among *Homo Sapiens*. He suffers from the Outsider Edge everywhere apart from among Neanderthals.

Racial Memory: Neanderthals don't pass experience to their children through words: they simply know instinctively what they have to do to survive, as it is written in their genetic code. For this reason when making a Survival, Tracking or Notice roll, Extra Neanderthals can use a Wild Die. Wild Card Neanderthals have their Wild Die raised by one step (usually from d6 to d8) when using those skills.

Natural Psionicist: Neanderthals' mild telepathic abilities are trained and encouraged by TimeGuard trainers. A Neanderthal starts the game with a Power of his choice (with a suitable telepathic trapping) and 5 Power Points, and gains another 2 Power Points per Rank. He uses Spirit as his arcane skill.

A Neanderthals' Origin Era can only be Stone Age or TimeZero Second Generation.

CHARLEMAGNE CROWNING

This section contains an adventure for a group of four TimeGuard agents. The scenario is tailored to Novice characters but it is easily scalable. We suggest adding an Extra to encounters for every Rank of the heroes above Novice. So, if the text says that the Operatives meet one Triad Agent per hero and you have a party of five Veteran Operatives, they'll meet seven enemies.

To play this adventure, you can use some of the Archetypes you find in this book (see pages 101-107) or let the players create their heroes from scratch. In addition you will find handy to have gaming stones of two different colors and several copies of the standard Savage Worlds burst templates to represent terrain and props.

But now stop talking and go to the Hypnotraining room.

A new mission is about to start!

Characters Requirements

This adventure requires the Operatives to use ancient era melee weapons (Fighting), undertake some recon operations (Stealth), gather info and socialize with the locals (Persuasion), break and use Triad high tech equipment (Repair). They could also find some knowledge of practical medicine (Healing) handy.

If the players are building characters using Archetypes, they could find the following particularly suitable for this scenario: Field Technician, Security Expert, Infiltrator and Medic.

Although all the skills above are useful, none is essential to play the scenario.

Background for the Game Master

This short adventure starts in the most mundane way. The Operatives are sent into the timeline on a research mission: they must interview Charlemagne, the first Holy Roman Emperor, and if possible, recover a sample of his DNA for TimeZero's archives. In particular, they must meet him immediately before his coronation, which happened on 25 December 800, to solve an additional historical mystery: according to many sources, Charlemagne didn't want to be crowned, but Pope Leo III crowned him "by surprise" during the Christmas Mass. According to other sources the entire crowning affair was a careful plot by Charles himself.

This may sound like a difficult task, but it is routine for Operatives, who are usually employed on high risk missions. Given the apparently low profile of the operation, this is a good mission to bring wet-behind-the-ears Agents into the field for the first time.

But nothing is simple when you wade through the waves of time.

Unbeknownst to everyone, even to the Sun Tzus (the Tactical Office of TimeZero) there is Triad plan underway in that particular place and time. The evil criminal organization sent a particularly skilled agent, the Synth Skotos, to kidnap Charlemagne and brainwash him so that the day after, he'll refuse the crown and declare his intention to retire to a monastery.

In this manner the creation of the Holy Roman Empire will be delayed, creating a snowball effect which will change human history forever.

But unluckily for the Triad their plan is going to be ruined…

TimeZero, Prehistory

Mission Briefing

When the alert lights on your desk, you feel a little thrill along your spine. Finally, it has come. The call for your first mission in the timeline. After so much study and testing you are going to be sent into the field.

When you enter the briefing room you find a short, stocky man with graying hair waiting for you. You recognize him from the uniform; he is a member of the Tactical Office, a Sun Tsu as Operatives call them.

"Hi guys. I am Piotr Vasilij, and I am the Tactical Officer assigned to your Squad. In other words I am the guy telling you what you have to do in the timeline."

He stops to drink some water from a glass.

"Don't worry, we know you are freshmen, and the mission you have is going to be routine. You have to go to Rome, 800, the day before Christmas. The day after, Pope Leo III is going to crown Charles, King of Franks, the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Now the historian eggheads on the upper floor are quarreling about whether the whole crowning thing was the Pope's idea or whether it was carefully planned by Charles. You must meet the King the day before and try to pry some info on this topic out of him. Ah, by the way, you should also retrieve a sample of his DNA, you know, for the archives."

Piotr stares at you, looking for your reaction, then he throws a dossier on the table and continues.

"Well, if there aren't any questions, in these files you'll find your cover identities and the forms to fill in for Hypnotraining and special gear requests."

The he looks at the wristwatch and ends: "Hurry up, the time machine doesn't wait for anybody."

It's time to prepare for the mission. Read out to the players, or give them a copy of, the Undercover Identities in the sidebar. Then, let them do their Hypnotraining and choose their equipment for the mission. Naturally, as they are traveling to ancient times, no firearms or similar devices are allowed.

The Undercover Identity sidebar suggests some basic equipment, but the Operatives can choose other normal equipment that suits their Undercover Identities within reasonable limits, and spend their Budget Points as usual.

In addition to the standard gear, the Operatives are also issued the Tears of Saint Rosamund (see below).

The Tears of Saint Rosamund

Saint Rosamund is a rather obscure Saint of German origin, of whom very little is known. One of the few facts recorded is that she was the mother of a soldier, who later became a protector of the realm. This story, if told in an entertaining way, should be enough to capture King Charles' imagination.

The relic is a *lacrimarium,* an object quite common in the Middle Ages: it is a decorated bottle, used to contain the tears of people (usually Saints). This is obviously a replica made by the Costume Warehouse (as the Logistics Office of TimeGuard is nicknamed), and contains three doses of Lethe Serum (see page 87). It should be used on Charlemagne if, during the interview, he becomes too suspicious.

Undercover Identities

Sir Berengier of Erfurt (Young Knight)

Sir Berengier is young noble of Thuringia (the central region of Germany). His family owns a Christian relic, the Tears of Saint Rosamund, and he is going to Rome to offer it to King Charles. He hopes to join Charles' men and become, one day, a Paladin of Charlemagne.

Suggested Gear: Long sword, medium shield, medium armor (chainmail), dagger, Tears of Saint Rosamund.

Lukas (Squire)

Lukas is a middle aged, squat man. Although quite old to be a squire, he is a practical man, appointed by Lord Erfurt (Berengier's father) to protect his son. He is very good with manual tasks, capable of fixing a horseshoe or demolishing a bridge.

Suggested Gear: Mace, medium armor (banded cuirass), crossbow, dagger.

Brother Callisto (Monk)

A monk of ephebic beauty, he is the confessor of Sir Berengier and, despite his young age, very learned. He has a marvelous voice, and draws the attention of many young women. Note: Brother Callisto could easily be portrayed by a woman.

Suggested Gear: Staff, robes, lute, dagger (under the robes), crucifix, holy bread.

Hans (Forester and Archer)

Hans is the forester of Sir Berenger. At home he manages the kennel and the hunting hawks, when his lord travels he provides fresh game for his table and scouts the road to avoid bandits. He is a skilled archer, with a penchant for red wine.

Suggested Gear: Bow, light armor (leather armor), short sword, dagger.

Rome, 24 December 800

Arrival in Rome

The time travel is quite smooth. Characters must roll on Time Travel Sickness, adding +2 to the roll.

The Time Gate materializes you on the outskirts of Rome, just by the Via Salaria, an ancient road connecting northern Italy with the Eternal City. The weather is bad, with some snowflakes falling down from the steel-gray sky. After all, it's nearly Christmas.

The Tactical Office didn't give you horses, but you shouldn't need them, Rome is only a couple of miles away. It is very early, around five o' clock in the morning.

The road to Rome is muddy but safe, and the trip to the city uneventful. The Operatives enter the city through the Porta Salaria (Salarian gate), and are watched with suspicion by the guards, who are Frankish warriors.

When the Operatives enter the Eternal City they feel the tension in it: Frankish warriors are everywhere, patrolling the roads, and the few locals on the road stare at the strangers, Operatives included, with open mistrust. The reason is simple: Charlemagne (only known as King Charles of the Franks at this moment) came down to Rome the 1st of December to aid Pope Leo III against some of his relatives, who tried to overthrow him. In particular they wanted to maim him (cutting his tongue out and ears off) to make him unfit to be Pope. The King of the Franks, summoned by the Pope, came down to Rome a month ago and since then he has imposed respect for the Bishop of Rome by force.

Charles I is a very busy person, and a common hedge knight will find it almost impossible to arrange a meeting with him. But the Tactical Office has laid out a plan: the King of the Franks is now

a guest of his close friend, Winnichis the Duke of Spoleto, and the two men have the habit of attending a very early Mass in the Church of Holy Mary, not far away from there. Given the early hour, the two nobles go there alone, disguised, so that nobody recognizes them. If you reach the Church now, you can stop them in the road back to the palace, and offer the King of the Franks the relic.

This will definitely impress him.

A Pious King

The Operatives meet the two nobles in the middle of the road.

They are a medium height man in a long red cloak, and a guy almost seven feet tall with a gray mantle. Nobody told you that Charlemagne is so tall: he is really a giant of a man!

With their hoods up, nobody will recognize them as the Duke of Spoleto and the powerful King of the Franks. However the party approaches them, the Duke of Spoleto puts himself in front of his king to protect him.

The two nobles are very surprised to have been recognized, and if the Operatives are smart enough to say something like that "the relic of Saint Rosamund guided us", they certainly gain the attention of the King.

This situation can be handled with a simple Persuasion roll or with some role-play. Let the heroes introduce themselves to the King and the Duke and then go on.

At this point something unexpected happens. From the road behind you shouts are coming: "Death to the invaders! Death to the King of the Franks! Death to the false Pope!" Suddenly a crowd of the enraged citizens comes out. They are led by a tall, bald monk with wild eyes. He wields a long staff in one hand and a smoking censer in the other, spreading holy smoke over the crowd.

"My King, we must go back," the Duke of Spoleto says.

Then he turns, ready to retrace his steps, when other shouts are heard from the opposite side of the road: another crowd, with clubs and stones, is coming from that side. You understand you are surrounded!

At this point a metallic sound is heard. King Charles has unsheathed his sword, Joyeuse, and is ready to do battle!

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Escape in Rome

Even armed and armored, the party has no chance against a raging mob. In addition, Charlemagne is an important historical character and he isn't supposed to die there.

Let the party make a Notice roll. With a success, they see an escape route: a secondary alley nearby. If no Operative makes the roll, the Duke of Spoleto spots it. But there is still a problem.

"Your Majesty, please go that way!" the Duke says, worried.

"The King of the Franks doesn't flee from rabid dogs!" Charles snarls back.

Now you remember what you read in the history books: Charlemagne always hated to retreat. You must persuade him, and you must do it quickly: the crowd is very near now, and you can smell the strange, sweet fumes coming from the censer of the monk.

This is the moment for some Persuasion rolls or some good role-play. In the end Charles agrees to escape, he isn't a fool, but if the heroes don't convince him, he argues and everybody loses important time.

Then a Chase sequence in the streets of Rome starts. It is of Standard length and based on Agility. To make the game flow more smoothly, the Duke of Spoleto and King Charles don't roll for themselves, but are considered "attached" to one of the Operatives.

The crowd is very big, but only a minimal part can get into actual contact with the fugitives. There are four groups of pursuers, each of them composed of five Roman Rebels, which join the Chase. Consider each of them as a unique entity, making group Agility rolls (d6 plus the Wild Dice). Given the mass of people, each casualty they suffer is immediately replaced the next round.

Ignore the Complication rules, instead each round the Chase occurs in a particular place, or a specific event happens, as shown below.

Important Note: Throughout the Chase, the thundering voice of Brother Justus, the rabid monk, is heard cursing the King and inciting the crowd, but he stays carefully outside range. Each round he shouts a particular phrase, as indicated.

Round 1 – Narrow Alley. The Operatives are running along a narrow, dark alley. It is considered to be in the Dark lighting condition (the penalty applies to the Chase rolls). As it's very narrow, only two groups or Roman Rebels can actually join the Chase this round.

Brother Justus: *"Stop Them! False King, you cannot escape the wrath of God!"*

Round 2 – Crossroads. The narrow alley ends in a crossroads, with many different escape routes available to the fugitives. If they want to, they can roll on Stealth instead of Agility, while the pursuers are forced to roll on Smarts (d4).

Brother Justus: *"Rome is only for the Romans!"*

Round 3 – "I Beg Your Pardon". The road where the Operatives are is a dead end, but luckily there is a door in the wall! The door is the back entrance to a house. It is closed and must be bashed open, with a Strength (-2) roll, which can be cooperative, or broken (Toughness: 6) to continue the escape. The Operatives reach the door according to the card order they had in the previous round. Each of them can try to break down the door (or can wait to help a companion). Until the door is bashed in, no Operative can make a Chase roll. If one of the heroes manages to break down the door, the group enters the kitchen of a stupefied family, busy eating around the table. They can beg pardon, run through the house and exit through the front door. In game terms the heroes roll for the Chase as normal, but can decide to use Persuasion as their Chase skill. In case nobody manages to break down the door, at the end of the round the house owner opens it to check who is making all this ruckus and the heroes can swarm inside (but they skip their next Chase roll).

Brother Justus: *"You who cleanse the world of sin shall yourselves be cleansed! Kill them, but bring me the Frank alive!"*

Round 4 – Marketplace. Romans are early risers, so the small market where the Operatives are running is crowded with people, wares and stalls. Run the Chase as normal, but each Operative can make a Notice roll if he wants (this counts as an action). In case of success he grabs

a useful prop of his choice from one of the stalls. This prop can be saved for a Trick later (+2 to the roll), or can be used to slow down pursuers: the character can expend it to make a pursuer discard his higher Action Card (if the pursuer is dealt more cards, he can act with a lower one).

Brother Justus: *"The Frankish pig wants to enslave us all and ransack Rome!"*

Round 5 – Stairs Up. The Operatives stumble on one of the many flights of stairs in the streets of old Rome. Running up them can be exhausting, especially if there is a crowd of wild people chasing you! During this round, the Operatives use Vigor as their Chase skill. The pursuers, being whipped on by Brother Justus's words, roll on the rabid monk's Spirit (d10) instead, but without a Wild Die.

Brother Justus: *"They are near! They are near!"*

At the end of the fifth round, the chase ends with a very bad surprise, go on with the next scene.

(M) Roman Rebel (unlimited): See page 199.

(M) Winnichis, Duke of Spoleto (1): See page 201.

Charlemagne (1): See page 197.

Last Stand

You arrive, puffing, in a small plaza. In the middle there is a small ruined building, probably one of the many Roman ruins. The plaza, apart from the stairs you used to arrive there, has only one other exit, a street on the opposite side. You are about to run into it, when a second crowd of enraged people comes from that direction. You are trapped!

"Come on!" King Charles orders "In the building we can defend ourselves!"

The heroes have to fight for their lives, and to defend Charlemagne, against the raging crowd. Luckily, the position favors them, but that is the only advantage they have.

The battleground is the small ruined building. Only the perimeter wall is still standing. It is a rectangle 5" by 7", with very thick walls (1"). There are a number of openings, 2" wide, equal to half the number of Operatives + 2. The Operatives, the Duke and the King should be placed defending these accesses to the building. Try to mix PCs and NPCs so that an Operative is placed fighting with the King and another one with the Duke.

Should the enemies swarm inside, the party will be doomed. The whole plaza is full of Roman Rebels, but each round only a limited number (two per opening) can attack the party. Each Rebel is replaced immediately after he falls.

The Operatives have no chance to win the battle, they must only resist for seven rounds. Feel free to reduce this number if the heroes are losing the battle very badly (i.e. two of them are knocked down).

During the battle, several scripted things happen, depending on the round.

Round 1-7. With a Notice (-2) roll, any character in the battle spots a peculiar thing: all the Rebels have red, bloodshot eyes. The cause could be the smoke spreading from the rabid monk's censer (see below).

Round 4. Heroes with the Tachyon Sense Edge can use it. With a success they suddenly notice the presence of someone or something not belonging to this era. He is in the crowd, but picking him out isn't easy.

Round 7. Charlemagne is in the thick of the fight, as are the Operatives. Suddenly one of the Rebels fighting him is replaced with a muscular man, who is wielding a future tech stunner! The man (his name, as the Operatives will discover later, is Gero) attacks for a round, aiming at the King, then, when the horns are heard (see below), he disappears in the crowd.

At the beginning of the eighth round, when the situation is desperate, the sound of horns is heard, go to the next scene.

Charlemagne (1): See page 197.

(M) Gero, Triad Enforcer (1): See page 198.

(M) Roman Rebel (unlimited): See page 199.

(M) Winnichis, Duke of Spoleto (1): See page 201.

Terrain and Props

▷ **Broken Table:** In the middle of the room there is a pile of rubbish, with a single useful thing: a broken table. It is 1″ by 2″ and quite solid (Toughness 6). It can be used to block a 1″ part of a passage or as Medium Cover, and can be moved by a single man.

▷ **They are Climbing Up!** Crowds are totally unpredictable, and this one, drugged by the Triad, is even worse. Any time the Rebels are dealt a deuce, 1d3 Rebels climb over the building! Place them randomly on the top of the wall. During the next round they jump inside (Agility roll to avoid being Shaken).

Here Comes the Cavalry!

The sound of horns is immediately followed by other noises: the thunder of hooves on the paving, and the shouts of the crowd, now terrorized. The Scara, Charlemagne's personal guard, has arrived! The ruthless Frankish cavalrymen cut through the crowd like a knife through butter, and in few moments they manage to

reach you and the King. A one eyed, burly fellow offers horses to Charles and Winnichis, while his comrades drive away the rebels.

Charlemagne and the Duke are taken to safety, while the Scara methodically disperse the crowd. After the battle is ended, the one eyed Scara approaches the party.

"The King wants to thank you personally for your aid and your bravery. You have an audience with him this evening, at the palace of the Duke of Spoleto. May God protect you!"

186 New Priorities

At this point the Operatives are free and safe, but with a lots of things to think about.

First, there is something very strange about the rebellion: recorded history says that Rome was pacified in a few days at the beginning of the month and that nobody dared contest the authority of Charlemagne.

Second, Operatives with the Tachyon Sense Edge probably detected someone not belonging to the current time.

Third, a man tried to attack King Charles with a modern stunner, so a time travelling threat, probably the Triad, is involved!

These circumstances drastically change the priorities of the mission: interviewing Charlemagne and retrieving a sample of his DNA become absolutely secondary to uncovering the current Triad plan.

It is morning, so the Operatives have all day to make their Investigations. They can start there, in the plaza, and then continue around the city.

In the Plaza

The Scara aren't famous for their kindness. They ruthlessly trampled the crowd under the hooves of their horses, killing and maiming many. Capturing a wounded rebel before he gets away is simple.

They catch Marianna, a washerwoman of middle age, who seems tired and confused, with a pounding headache and bloodshot eyes. With a simple medical inspection (Healing roll) an Operative can diagnose that she was exposed to Dymelix, a mind-affecting drug produced in the far future, which makes people violent and extremely gullible at the same time.

Here follow some of the more likely questions the Operatives could ask the woman, and their answers.

Q: Why did you rebel?

A: Because Father Justus told us that the King of Franks came here to enslave Rome and the Romans!

Q: Who is Father Justus?

A: He is a wandering preacher, a good man, a friend of the poor people. He calls himself Justus because he says just things, things that other priests don't dare to speak.

Q: How long have you known him?

A (Hesitation): Er… he appeared the Day of the Immaculate Conception (8 December)*, and started preaching, showing us the truth about this false Pope and his Frankish watchdog.*

Q: Where we can find him?

A: He usually wanders in the area around Saint Joseph's Gate. He doesn't have a fixed place where he lives, but he frequently preaches around the Tavern of the Grape, it is the place where we rebels gather.

Q: Do you know a muscular, lean man (the attacker with the stunner)*?*

A: Yes, I have seen him sometimes. He is Gero, a stonemason from Ostia (a town near Rome)*. He can be seen hanging around the Tavern of the Grape, listening to Father Justus's words.*

The Tavern of the Grape

After questioning Marianna, it is imperative to visit the Tavern of the Grape. It is a watering hole in a poor quarter of Rome, with delapidated walls and holes in the roof. The heroes have no time to go in because they spot a man leaving it and entering a dark alley. There is no doubt: he is Gero, the man with the stunner!

The right thing to do now is begin quietly shadowing him, because there is a good chance that by locating where is going, the party will also find Brother Justus.

Entering the Tavern. If an Operative spends some precious time entering the Tavern he finds it almost deserted. The only occupant is the tavern-keeper, a black-haired woman called Sophia. If successfully questioned, with a Persuasion (-2) roll, about the man leaving the tavern a moment ago, she says that he is Gero, a local ne'er-do-well. He came inside to ask about Brother Justus, the preacher, but she hasn't seen him for a while. Then he left in hurry.

Shadowing Gero

The scene is handled with the standard Shadowing rules (see *TimeZero*, page 94). The Shadowing is five rounds long. Ignore the normal Complications rules. Instead during each round a scripted event, described below, happens. As Gero is a Triad-trained enforcer, many of them are standard techniques.

In truth it isn't very important if Gero spots the party or not. If he is successful, he decides to play dumb to lure his pursuers into a trap (see the "Trapped!" scene below), while if he fails to notice them, the alarm on the secret door in the palace of Countess Tusculana will alert him (see page 189). In the second case, the heroes should be rewarded with a Bennie.

Round 1 – Climb a Wall. Gero enters a smelly alley full of rubbish, walks along it, then climbs a wall, entering a small private garden. Then he crosses the garden and climbs the wall on the opposite side, reaching another road. This round Climbing is used as the Shadowing skill, unless the heroes make a Smarts (-4) roll. In this case they understand that this is only a deceptive maneuver, walk around the garden and pick up their quarry again. In this case, skip the standard Shadowing mechanics, the Operatives cannot lose Shadowing Tokens this round.

Round 2 – Crowded Road. The Triad Enforcer dives into a road full of people, and tries to shake off any pursuers. During this round both the Operatives and Gero use the lower of Stealth and Notice as their Shadowing skill. If an Operative rolls 1 on the skill die, regardless of the Wild

Die, he loses Gero and follows another person. He cannot participate in the Shadowing during the next round. If Gero rolls 1, he gives an additional Shadowing Token to the Operatives.

Round 3 – Enter a Shop. The Shadowing continues into a butcher's stall. Gero enters, and, given that he knows the owner, a burly fellow with a big meat cleaver, he is allowed to use the back door. If the Operatives want to pass through the same door they must intimidate or knock the butcher over with a solid punch! During this round the heroes use Intimidation or Fighting (depending on what they decide to do) against the Spirit d8 or Vigor d8 of the butcher.

Round 4 – Lonely Road. Now Gero is almost outside Rome, and he is walking along a lonely road. A group of people shadowing him is very likely to be noticed. All the Operatives have a modifier to their Shadowing roll equal to 2 minus the total number of Operatives actively shadowing during the current round (i.e. if a single Operative shadows, he has a bonus of +1, if there are three shadowers, all of them suffer -1).

Round 5 – Grab a Cloak. Now Gero is outside Rome in the hilly area of the Tusculana Hills. He has previously hidden a ragged cloak and a staff with small bells (identifying the bearer as a leper) behind a big rock. He picks them up and tries to pass for a sick beggar. During this round, Gero uses Persuasion as the Shadowing skill, and the Operatives use Notice.

At the end of the fifth Shadowing round the Triad Enforcer reaches the gate of an old villa, surrounded by a big garden, on the outskirts of Rome.

The Palace of Countess Tusculana

Staying at a distance, you see the muscular man, who has turned out to be quite evasive, approaching a large villa in the middle of the hills. He looks around a couple of times then he takes a large key from under his cloak, opens the massive gate and disappears into the big garden inside.

There is a coat of arms painted on the wall near the villa's gate. It represents an eagle made of black and white squares. Since the heroes received Hypnotraining they know the common information of the era, so they are allowed a Common Knowledge roll. With a success they recognize the emblem as belonging to the Counts of Tusculana, a powerful Roman noble family of the era.

With a Knowledge (History – Middle Ages) or Common Knowledge (-2) roll they remember that Miranda, Countess of Tusculana was one of the main opponents of Pope Leo III (in fact she belongs to the family of Adrian I, the previous Pope). Historians are fairly sure she was behind the assault on Pope Leo III, the event which brought King Charles down to Rome!

The villa is in good shape, but clearly abandoned: there is no smoke coming out from the chimneys, no dogs and no sounds coming from inside. The Countess and all her followers hastily left Rome a couple of days before the arrival of King Charles, to avoid the rage of the Franks, but Skotos, who knows her, is still using this place as his base.

There are two ways to get inside: opening the gate (with a Lockpicking roll) or climbing over the wall (this is quite easy - a Climbing (+2) roll).

Once inside the Operatives must locate Gero. This isn't difficult. While they are standing near the gate, they get a brief glimpse of a light, probably an oil lamp, coming from the stables.

Moving quietly, the Operatives can reach them. The stables are quite large, and totally empty, apart from several piles of hay. They are also without any exits, so the Triad Enforcer must have used a secret passage of some sort.

This isn't too difficult to discover, a Notice (-2) roll, which can be cooperative, is necessary. If the party fails, they can make another attempt in five minutes.

Finally you find it! It is a stone in the wall slightly different from the others. Pressing it you hear a faint click and then a small part of the wall silently moves on well-oiled hinges, revealing a corridor dimly illuminated by a series of torches. You cautiously sneak inside and the passage ends after a dozen paces, in front of a metal pressurized door, something totally anachronistic in this place and time!

The door is only ajar and can be easily opened. Spying inside, the heroes see a small warehouse full of modern-looking crates and several shelves crammed with spare future-tech parts. Another pressurized door on the opposite side of the room is the only available exit.

It is an interesting place to explore, but when all the Operatives are inside, something unexpected happens!

Trapped!

You have just stepped in the room, when you hear a slam behind you. The door you came in by has closed! In the same moment you hear a mocking voice coming from a speaker concealed somewhere.

"So in the end the mice found the cheese! Now enjoy it!"

There is a hiss, and gas starts pouring from a valve hidden in the ceiling!

There is an alarm linked to the secret door in the stables, and when the heroes opened it Gero was alerted, so he decided to capture the pursuers using the defenses of the base.

The Operatives must leave this place quickly if they want to avoid the effects of the gas, and this means breaking down the door in front of them in some manner. It is quite sturdy (Toughness: 13) so the team must find an alternative way to pry it open.

Given the shortage of time, this is handled like a Dramatic Task, but there is no time limit: instead, each round they have to fight off the effect of the gas (see below).

There are several ways to open the door; three of them are listed below, but creative players can devise others. Given that the door isn't very big, only up to three heroes can cooperate on the same task. For the second and the third entries the McGyver Edge applies, while the Field Technician Edge grants +1 to the roll, Triad technology being similar to TimeGuard's.

Lockpicking. The most straightforward way. The heroes must gather at least five successes/raises on Lockpicking (-2) rolls.

Short Circuit. The door is electrically controlled, so if the Operatives short-circuit the energy link feeding it, the door opens. It requires a Notice roll to find another wire powering one of the many devices of the room, an Agility (-2) or Repair roll to cut it without being fried (in case of failure the character suffers 2d6 damage from the electrical discharge) and then a Smarts roll to use the cut wire to short circuit the door.

Explosives! This warehouse is full of components, included chemicals and electronic parts. With three successful success/raises on a Smarts (-2) or Repair roll the character creates an explosive. Then a Smarts (-2) roll is necessary to properly set it. With a success the charge explodes, demolishing the door, with a raise it works so well that all the occupants of the room next door (Gero and the dogs) must make a Vigor roll to avoid being Shaken, with a failure the door is broken but the charge is badly placed and all the Operatives suffer 2d6 damage. With a critical failure the device simply fizzles and doesn't work.

Gas Effects. Luckily for the party, Gero is only using soporific gas because he wants to take the Operatives alive. Each round the characters must make a Vigor roll, with the modifiers listed below. With a failure, they suffer a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation, in this case the Operative dozes off. The effects of the gas are luckily short-lived, and, unless the heroes are knocked out, a level of Fatigue is regained after a minute in fresh air. If the whole team succumbs to the effects of the gas, see the "Captured by the Triad" sidebar.

Blocking the Valve. Smart Operatives can decide to block the exit of the gas in some manner. The easiest way consists of climbing on a crate, reaching the valve, and blocking it with a piece of cloth. In this case subtract one from the round number in the table below, but a character must stand still on the crate keeping the gas blocked all the time. Using mastic is much better, but it requires a Notice (-2) roll to find some in the room. If used, it reduces the round number by three and doesn't require constant attention.

When the Operatives finally manage to escape the trap, go on with the next scene.

Soporific Gas Vigor Modifier Table

Round Number	Vigor Roll Modifier
1	+2
2	+1
3–4	0
5–6	−2
7+	−4

If all the Operatives go down, they are taken and locked in the cell (see "Looking for Clues" paragraph). They stay unconscious for d4 hours, giving them a very short time to end the scenario successfully. In addition they have to escape (the door has Toughness 12 and can be opened with a Lockpicking (-4) roll) and then try to overcome Gero and his dogs. Not an easy task even for trained TimeGuard agents...

Gero

You open the door and storm into the next room! It is a modern workspace, with computers, a couple of desks and some assorted furniture. Crouched behind a desk is Gero, who watched your efforts through a computer. He welcomes you with the deadly energy bolts of his gun!

"Deimos! Phobos! Attack!" he shouts.

Two lean shadows came out from behind the second desk: they are big, muscular Dobermans and you see the glint of metal on their heads. They are brain-chipped dogs of the Triad!

The battlefield is a room 12" by 6" with the long side on the north-south axis. There is a 1" wide door in the southern wall, while other two are placed in the middle of the eastern and western wall, respectively leading to a toilet and a small cell.

Scattered around the room there are two desks, a couple of beds and two mannequins (see "Furniture" below). The Operatives start within 3" of the southern door, while Gero is placed in Medium Cover behind one of the desks. The two dogs start within 2" of the Triad Enforcer.

Gero's tactics are straightforward: given the bad situation which he is in, he tries to kill the Operatives, or, if given the chance, to escape through the south door. Probably the heroes will try to capture him alive, in this case he will reveal some useful info (see below). Both dogs fight to the death.

(M) Gero, Triad Enforcer (1): See page 198.

(M) Brain-Chipped Dogs (1 per 2 Operatives): See page 198.

Terrain and Props

☞ **Assorted Furniture:** The desks and the beds are 1" by 2" big on the battlefield and quite sturdy (Toughness: 6), while the mannequins are 1" by 1" and more fragile.

Looking for Clues

Once Gero is defeated, the Operatives must look for clues in the Triad base. This can basically be done in two ways: the first is questioning the Triad Enforcer (if they got him alive) and the second is searching the base.

Questioning Gero. The man is fanatically loyal to the Triad, but some info can be gathered from him with a successful Intimidation or Taunt roll (depending on the role-playing of the

player questioning him). The Operatives have three available questions, plus two for each raise, before the Triad Mind Bomb Special Ability triggers. One particular question, the last one, automatically triggers the Mind Bomb.

Here follows a series of the most likely questions the heroes can ask him.

Q: Who are you and who is your employer?

A: I am Gero, and I am working for the Triad, dirty cop!

Q: What is your connection with Brother Justus and the rebels?

A: Ah! Brother Justus! You know nothing cop! That 'man' is a special Triad agent, my boss in this operation. We cultivated the rebels as smokescreen to cover our operation.

Q: Who is Brother Justus?

A: I can tell you now, because you cannot stop him. He is called Skotos, and comes from the far future.

Q: What is the goal of your operation? Killing Charlemagne?

A: Nothing so obvious. We want to kidnap him for a couple of hours to plant a post-hypnotic suggestion in his mind so that tomorrow when Pope Leo III offers him the imperial crown he'll refuse and will announce his decision of retiring to a monastery. This will delay the creation of a strong Roman Holy Empire long enough to favor our plans on other points of the timeline.

Q: Where is Skotos?

A: I don't know. After you messed up our main plan to capture Charlemagne we got separated in the crowd. He probably arrived here before me, took the equipment for the backup plan and left.

Q: What is the backup plan? (Note: Asking this question automatically triggers the Mind Bomb Special Ability)

A: Ah! You cannot force me to reveal that! Cough… cough… I die happy. (Gero dies)

"Skotos" is a name the Operatives have surely heard. It is one of the top-notch known agents of the Triad. With a Smarts roll they can know two additional pieces of info. With a success they remember he is a master of disguises, with a raise that he isn't human, but a Synth.

Searching the Base. Exploring the base allows the heroes to find some very interesting things, listed below.

The Mannequins. These two mannequins, very similar to a tailor's one, are used to keep disguises and costumes. On one of them is the entire "costume" of Brother Justus, including robes and a mask reproducing his face in detail. It is tailored for a specific individual (Skotos). The second mannequin is empty, but surely contained a similar disguise.

This is what happened: Skotos ran back to the base, the base, threw away the face of Brother Justus (now useless and even dangerous) and took another disguise. The question is, what appearance does he have now?

Remote Control Console. Finding this object requires a Notice roll, and a Repair (+2) or Smarts (-2) one is necessary to recognize it. Disguised in a small bible, there is a small console. It seems to be a remote control for a vehicle or something similar. In truth it is a manual controller for Skotos' drones, which could be very useful later (see the "Death Under Saint Peter's" scene below).

The Holographic Cube. On the desks there are two laptops, which probably contain a lot of very important Triad data, but they are heavily protected by security codes and will

require days of work to hack (the Operatives can take them back to TimeZero to have the technicians examine them). But the important thing is a sort of knick-knack, a crystal cube 3" by 3". In truth it is a holographic projector. Touching it creates, shimmering in the air, the perfect representation of the face of an old man, a cleric. Operatives can recognize him with a Common Knowledge (-2) or a Knowledge (History – Middle Ages) (+2) roll. He is Alcuin of York, eminent scholar, counselor to the throne and teacher of the King's sons, one of the few people Charlemagne will really trust. History says that he wasn't in Rome when Charles was crowned, because his bad health kept him in a monastery far away. The hologram also includes anthropometric data, useful only if you want to prepare a high-tech disguise to impersonate this man! . The hologram also includes anthropometric data, useful only if you want to prepare a high-tech disguise to impersonate this man!

This is the identity that Skotos took. The King of the Franks is in serious danger: the heroes must run to the palace of the Duke of Spoleto to warn him!

A Letter to the King

You have to cross half of Rome to reach the palace of the Duke of Spoleto, where Charlemagne is staying, and when you finally arrive it is late evening. The place is more like a barracks than a real palace, given the number of armed Frankish warriors all around.

Usually having a meeting with a King requires days, if not weeks of waiting, but the Operatives have an audience scheduled with him and important news to tell.

They were seen with the Duke of Spoleto, owner of the palace, and this makes things smoother: the sentinels quickly bring them to Lord Winnichis.

The Duke of Spoleto is very happy to meet them, and he personally leads the Operatives to the chambers of the King.

You enter the private audience hall of King Charles, a plain room with a crackling fireplace and wood-covered walls, but to your dismay, it isn't the King waiting for you, but only a somberly dressed old man.

He is Ethelbert, personal chamberlain of the monarch: "The King apologizes, but urgent matters required his attention tonight, so he had to miss the meeting. He sent my humble person to praise and thank you…"

Ethelbert is good man, but very verbose. The heroes, and the Duke of Spoleto alike, are very alarmed by those words, and must know more.

Ethelbert is close-mouthed about the King's location, but, in the best interest of his master, can be made to speak. The King received an important message this evening, calling for a secret meeting in the Church of Saint Peter. Ethelbert has the letter somewhere, and he can show it to the party.

The letter is quite short, and written in convoluted handwriting.

"My King, I have important news for you, but it is not safe for us to be seen together. Please meet me tonight in the Tombs of the Popes in the Cathedral of Saint Peter. In front of these great saints, I'll reveal an important secret to you.

Your ever-faithful servant, Alcuin of York"

Ethelbert says that the King departed in great secret an hour ago. Charlemagne has already fallen in the trap: he is going to fall in the hands of Skotos!

If the heroes reveal their suspicions of a conspiracy against the king he becomes very nervous. Luckily Charlemagne isn't a fool, he hasn't gone to the meeting alone, he brought with him his personal guard of six chosen Scara. This fact calms the Duke of Spoleto, but only a little: he wants to gather a number of soldiers and go to help his King.

This will require some time, but the party doesn't have to wait: they can run to Saint Peter's just now, with fast horses the Duke gives them.

Death Under Saint Peter's

When you arrive at Saint Peter's the snow is falling on Rome. There are seven horses outside the church and a single Frankish warrior guarding them.

If the Operatives identify themselves and question him, Grold, the Scara guarding the horses, says that all is calm. The King and the other guards entered the church twenty minutes ago. He received precise orders, but with a Persuasion roll the heroes can convince him that there are troubles inside. He can also be convinced to join the party, if they are looking for extra help (consider the Scara as a Primitive Native Soldier see page 161, with Vigor and Fighting d8).

Inside, the church is dimly lit by the many candles burning all around, as is normal in the night before Christmas. Saint Peter's isn't the marvelous beauty that it will be in the 15th century after the work of Leon Battista Alberti and Rossellino, but it is very evocative. And completely devoid of human presence. There is no trace of King Charles and the Scara.

The King has gone into the underground Tombs of the Popes, whose entrance is on the left side of the church. Entering the tombs is easy; the door protecting the stairs is unlocked.

The stairs lead to an antechamber, which leads to the various rooms where the Popes are buried; then the PCs have a nasty surprise.

There is a pile of bodies lying on the ground. You count five of them and their identities are clear: they are the remaining bodyguards of the King.

The soldiers aren't dead, only knocked out. With a Healing roll the Operatives understand they were stunned with an energy weapon. While the heroes are there, inspecting the fallen, they hear voices coming from a crypt nearby, where Adrian I, the Pope immediately before the current one, is buried Sneaking inside, they see the following scene.

A wise-looking old man, dressed as a monk, stands in the middle of the room, near the sarcophagus of the Pope. You recognize him from the image you saw in the Triad's crystal: he is Alcuin of York, or someone very similar to him!

He is speaking with Charlemagne, who is in front of him, the proud head strangely bowed.

Alcuin is speaking very slowly, and his eyes are glowing unnaturally.

"God orders you to renounce to the earthly life," The impostor says.

"Tomorrow, you'll refuse the crown and will announce your decision to retire to a monastery…" he continues

The King, stunned, repeats the same words in a sleepy tone.

Skotos is going to hypnotize Charlemagne. The party must intervene before the King's mind is totally compromised! At this point Skotos/Alcuin reveals his true face.

"You again!" He hisses. "But this time you arrived too late! His mind is already mine! Charles! Kill them!"

Charlemagne, totally mindless, draws Joyeuse, his famous sword, and charges you like a raging bull! In the same moment, a number of spider-like floating globes fall down from the ceiling. Each of them is as big as a baseball and armed with a dangerous energy weapon.

You recognize them: they are Triad combat drones!

This is the final battle of the adventure and it is going to be a tough one! The party must try to knock Charlemagne out without hurting him; if they kill the King of the Franks, history will be compromised and the Triad will win anyway.

The battleground is the tomb, 6" by 12", with the long side on the north-south axis. There are two openings, 1" wide, on the southern and northern walls. Place the heroes within 3" of the southern wall, while Skotos and the Combat Drones are placed within 6" of the northern one. Charlemagne is placed in the middle of the room, near the Pope's tomb.

The tactics of the bad guys are as follows: Charlemagne attacks the Operatives wildly until sedated or freed from Skotos' mind control (see below). The Drones obey their programming, attacking the nearest enemy, while Skotos tries to keep mental control of King Charles or alternatively, he attacks the most dangerous Operative. If seriously wounded (two Wounds or more) he tries to escape through the northern opening (see sidebar).

The combat ends when Skotos dies or flees, and King Charles is freed from his mind control. When this happens, go to the The End.

🏛 **Charlemagne, King of the Franks (1):** See page 197.

🏛 **Skotos, Triad Agent (1):** See page 199.

(M) Triad Combat Drone (1 per Operative): See page 200.

Terrain and Props

▱ **Freeing Charlemagne's Mind**: Skotos used a special version of the puppet Power to hypnotize King Charles (see his stats). It is very powerful, but luckily for the Operatives it requires some time to take root in the psyche. This means that it can be broken. Charlemagne begins with 5 Domination Tokens. Every time he suffers a shock (for example a Wound) he loses one. He can also be talked into recovering his mind, with an opposed roll between Charlemagne's Spirit and the Operative's Persuasion, Intimidation or Taunt, depending on how the attempt is role-played. If the heroes win, for each success and raise, they remove a Domination Token from the King. Skotos can also try to reinforce his grip on the King, with an opposed Smarts roll. If he succeeds, the King acquires a Domination Token. Wrestling for the King's mind can be a cooperative action. The King cannot have more than seven Tokens, and whenever he drops to zero Tokens he is free from the mind control and

Shaken. Knocking him out, or making him drink the Tears of Saint Rosamund, have the same freeing effect.

- ⮞ **Pillars:** There are eight big stone pillars, four on each long side of the room. They are 1" by 1" on the battlefield, very sturdy (Toughness 14) and grant Heavy Cover.
- ⮞ **Pope Tomb:** Pope Adrian I is buried in an engraved stone sarcophagus, 2" by 1" on the battleground. It has Toughness 12 and grants Light Cover.
- ⮞ **Gaining Control of the Drones:** The Drones follow programming which forces them to obey Skotos' commands, but if the Operatives find the Remote Control Console they can use it to overcome this programming and gain control over a drone. This is an opposed roll between the Drones' Smarts and the Operative's Repair or Smarts (-4). Two successes or a raise are enough to gain control over the Drone's action. After gaining control over the first drone, the others are easier and the Operative receives +2 to the opposed roll. The Field Technician Edge applies.

Skotos Escapes!

If Skotos escapes, he tries to shake off the operatives in the network of tunnels under Saint Peter's. This can lead to an interesting Chase sequence of Standard length. If by the end of it the heroes haven't managed to capture him, he reaches the sewers and disappears. In this case Charlemagne is safe, but a dangerous enemy agent is free and ready to return in future adventures to harass the squad…

The End

The text below supposes the Operatives kill Skotos, feel free to alter it to fit the actual situation in your game.

With the last blow Skotos falls to the ground, in pieces. Under the mask of humanity of the mild Alcuin of York you see circuits and other mechanical parts. This can be annoying for you, but it is absolutely devastating for King Charles. The man of the 9th century stares, slack-jawed, at the pieces of the Synth.

"A devil!" He says "He was a devil!"

Charlemagne has seen too much and, apart from potentially losing his sanity, he risks seriously altering history. Luckily the Operatives have a solution handy: the Tears of Saint Rosamund. If they make him swallow the Lethe Serum the King falls asleep, and when he wakes up he remembers nothing of the past two days. In this manner the Operatives can also manage to recover some of his DNA.

The Scara aren't a big problem: the drones caught them by surprise and they remember almost nothing.

The Operatives only have to create a credible story for Winnichis when he arrives, half an hour later, with an army of Frankish soldiers, or can simply decide to disappear.

King Charles wakes up in the late morning, just in time to attend the morning of Christmas Holy Mass in this very church, where he will be crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire from Pope Leo III.

Is the coronation the King's idea or the Pope's one? The characters can ask King Charles before making him drink the Lethe Serum. The answer is unimportant for the scenario and is left to the Game Master.

Promotion: If the Operatives bring the computers of the Triad Base back to TimeZero, the data inside, once decrypted, can contribute to unravelling the future plans of the bad guys; in this case they receive +1 to their promotion rolls.

If Skotos escapes they have missed an important chance to inflict serious damage to the Triad, so they suffer -1 to the same roll.

Dramatis Personae
Charlemagne, King of Franks

Charles I, King of Franks, was best known as Charlemagne. A born warrior, he also possessed an inquisitive mind and under his rule Europe knew an age of peace and development. Despite his rough appearance he knew four languages, including Arabic, was literate and surrounded himself with learned men, such as Alcuin of York. Charles always liked to take his own risks and led his armies from the front at the head of his personal guard, the Scara.

On the day of his coronation as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire he was 58, but still a strong man.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d6, Intimidation d8, Persuasion d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8.

Charisma: +4/+6; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8(1)

Edges: Brawny, Charismatic, Command, Noble.

Gear: Joyeuse – long sword (Str+d8, AP 1, see Special Abilities), dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12, ROF: 1), cloak, leather armor (+1).

Special abilities:

- **Joyeuse**: Charlemagne's sword; there are many legends surrounding this blade. In some cases it is even conflated with Excalibur. It is a long sword with a golden hilt, of great quality. The wielder gains +2 to Charisma toward Franks and if shown in battle, Joyeuse doubles the Command Radius of the user.

Brain-Chipped Dog

These Dobermans have a special brain chip implanted, which renders them particularly obedient to the orders of their masters (in this case Gero and Skotos). They are perfectly-honed killing machines, with their reflexes enhanced by the chips directly connected to their spines.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Tracking d6.

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- ▷ **Bite**: Str+d4.
- ▷ **Brain Chip**: Brain Chipped Dogs are tightly controlled by computer, this means that their movements are synchronized so they work well as a team. Whenever they are attacking the same target, they receive an additional +1 Gang Up bonus. The same bonus applies to their Parry if they are both engaged by the same opponent.
- ▷ **Fleet Footed**: Dogs roll d10 instead of d6 while running.
- ▷ **Go for the Throat**: Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. If they hit with a raise they automatically hit the least armored location of their target.
- ▷ **Weakness (Brain Chip)**: The brain chip of the dog is what makes him move. If it is destroyed, the beast is suddenly freed and usually drops down dead. Hitting it requires a Called Shot (-2), but the chip has only Toughness 5.

Gero, Triad Enforcer

A lean but muscular man in his thirties, Gero is dressed and has the mannerism of a medieval stonemason, but in truth he is a dangerous Triad enforcer, under the direct orders of Skotos, the main agent of the mission. Gero comes from the far future and is absolutely loyal to the Triad.

He is a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Throwing d8.

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Edges: Brawler, Improved Martial Artist, Nerves of Steel.

Hindrances: Death Wish, Loyal.

Gear: Triad Stunner (Str+d4, see Special Abilities), Triad Pocket Gun (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 10/20/40 ROF: 1, -2 to Notice rolls to detect it), dress appropriate to the era, mason's tools.

Special abilities:

- ▷ **Nose Plugs**: Gero has had a set of nose plugs implanted, which makes him immune to any inhaled poison, Dymelix included.
- ▷ **Triad Mind Bomb**: Gero has a microscopic toxin sac implanted in his head, directly connected to his brain. If he is captured and subjected to interrogation, the post-hypnotic training he received causes the release of the toxin if he has to

answer the wrong questions. The toxin is strong enough to kill him in less than a minute and is a common security measure of the Triad.

☞ **Triad Stunner**: This device is a sort of short, collapsible stick, containing an internal power source. When it hits an enemy it delivers a non-lethal charge, intended to disable the target. Characters hit by a Triad Stunner, regardless of damage suffered, suffer the effect of the stun Power, cast with arcane skill d8. The device has 5 Power Points, which recharge normally.

Roman Rebel

A Roman citizen, enflamed by Skotos' words, and artificially enraged by the Dymelix gas.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (one craft) d6, Notice d4, Throwing d6.

Charisma: 0; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 4; **Toughness**: 5

Edges: -.

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty.

Gear: Improvised Weapon (Str+d6, -1 Fighting rolls, -1 Parry), stones (Damage: Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12).

Special abilities:

☞ **Dymelix Drugged**: An infamous drug used in 27th century, Dymelix, similar to other substances of the Melix family, triggers aggressive reactions in whoever is exposed to it. In game terms the victim gains +1 to attack and damage rolls, and +1 to recover from being Shaken. On the down side, he is very gullible and suffers -2 to all Smarts-based Tricks and to Social Conflicts.

Skotos

A senior agent of the Triad, Skotos is a Synth from the far future. TimeGuard doesn't know if he is one of the individuals who joined the criminal organization after the Synth rebellion, a stolen and reprogrammed individual or simply a bad guy, but it has heard quite a lot about him. A master of disguise, he is also very skilled in various types of mental control. He prefers stealth and subtlety, but he is more than capable of using brute force when necessary. Classified as "very dangerous".

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10 Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Healing d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Repair d8 Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Taunt d8.

Charisma: +2; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 8

Edges: Charismatic, Master of Disguise, Social Architect.

Hindrances: Loyal (Triad).

Gear: Robes, disguise kit.

Special abilities:

- ▷ **Hypnotic Implant**: Skotos is fitted with a high-tech hypnotic implant in his eyes, which, through a series of light impulses, can affect the mind of a person. To be completely effective, the device must be fine-tuned to the brain of a specific person (during this scenario it is fine-tuned to King Charles' mind), in which case it works as the *puppet* Power, with permanent effect, limited to a single post-hypnotic suggestion, cast with arcane Skill d10. A dose of Lethe Serum ministered within half an hour of the suggestion cancels it.

- ▷ **Implanted Blade**: Str+d4, AP 1. Skotos has a knife-long blade, made of advanced plastic polymers, concealed in one arm and can extract it with a single action. It is razor sharp and capable of cutting even the hardest armor.

- ▷ **Shimmering Eyes**: Skotos can use his Hypnotic Implant on targets other than the person it is fine-tuned for. In this case it grants +2 to winning Tests of Wills and to Smarts-based tricks.

- ▷ **Synth**: Synths receive +2 to rolls to recover from Shaken, and are immune to poisons, illnesses and called shots. They don't age, but their programming is so advanced that they actually feel the pain caused by Wounds and so suffer Wound Penalties like humans.

- ▷ **Weakness (Model K-26)**: Skotos is a Synth of the infamous K-26 line, which suffers from a drawback: a weak heat-dissipating conduit, placed just under the neck. It can be hit with a Called Shot (-4). In this case no damage roll is necessary, but the Synth starts accumulating heat, and must make a Vigor (-2) roll each round or suffer a wound. If the Operatives discover that Skotos is a Synth they are allowed a Smarts (-4) roll to remember about this weakness, with no modifier if they have the Veteran of the Synth Rebellion Edge.

Triad Combat Drone

Several models of these exist. This one is slightly bigger than a baseball. It uses levitation-like propulsion and has a set of eight retractable claws, quite delicate, which are used to cling to walls. It is armed with an energy gun, which can be used both to stun and to kill.

Note: the Smarts of the Triad Combat Drone are classified as (A) to show its very limited programming.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6.

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special abilities:

- ▷ **Construct:** The Triad Combat Drone receives +2 to Toughness and to rolls to recover from Shaken. It is immune to illness, poison and called shots.

- ▷ **Energy Gun:** It is fitted with a small energy gun (Damage: 2d6, Range: 12/24/48) which can deal lethal or non-lethal damage.

- ☞ **Flying:** The Triad Combat Drone has a flying Pace of 6″ and Climb 3.
- ☞ **Size −2:** The Triad Combat Drone is quite small, the size of a baseball.
- ☞ **Small:** The Triad Combat Drone's size and specialized combat routines make it a difficult target: attacks against it suffer -2 to the roll.
- ☞ **Wall Walker:** The Triad Combat Drone has small claws generating a tractor field which allow them to walk and stand even on inverted surfaces.

Winnichis, Duke of Spoleto

A man of average height with a pleasant smile, the Duke of Spoleto is in his thirties and famous for his mane of blonde hair, which has captured the favors of more than one lady. He is also reputed to be a skilled blade. Winnichis is one of the most trusted men of King Charles, and his representative in Rome. He is bold and loyal and will die for his King, but he is also very aware of the subtleties and dangers of Roman politics, a factor that Charles refuses to consider.

He is a Henchman.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Riding d6, Shooting d6.

Charisma: +2; **Pace**: 6; **Parry**: 6; **Toughness**: 6

Edges: Counterattack, First Strike, Noble.

Hindrances: Cautious, Loyal.

Gear: Long sword (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4, Range: 3/6/12, ROF: 1), cloak, robes.

Special abilities:

- ☞ **To Protect the King**: Winnichis swore loyalty to King Charles and truly meant it. He will give his life for him. He can use the Fanatic ability, if within 3″ of Charlemagne.

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